

Figurine Report 2006 / Figürinler - Carolyn Nakamura (Columbia University) and Lynn Meskell (Stanford University)

Abstract

This season produced a very large number of figurines compared to previous years. Over 300 figurines were excavated this year, more than five times the number of figurines found in 2005. This trend, generally seen across all other data sets, was due to the fact that the excavations were largely digging in midden. Virtually all of the 2006 figurines came from midden contexts that date roughly to the same level. This season we also carried out some basic spatial and temporal analyses of the entire corpus across the site. We found that such studies will be severely limited by a number of factors, the most significant being the various excavation methods employed across the site over its history. Other types of analytical inquiries and activities concerning the figurines proved to be more productive. We made substantial progress in refining aspects of our recording methods and database structure, investigating aspects of figurine clay materials, and thinking through themes of disarticulated bodies, exaggerated forms and the circulation and installation of body parts (primarily heads) that also occur in other media such as wall art and plastered wall features.

Özet

Bu sezon, önceki senelere oranla çok fazla sayıda (300 adet) figürin bulundu. Bu sayı 2005 yılında bulunan figürin sayısının beş katından daha fazladır. Bu duruma sebep olarak çöplük alanlarında yapılan kazılar gösterilebilir. 2006 sezonunda bulunan figürinlerin tamamı çöplüklerde bulunup, hemen hemen aynı tabakaya tarihlenmektedirler. Ayrıca bu sezon tüm alanı kapsayan, tarihleme ve alanlarla ilişkili basit bir analiz çalışması da yapılmıştır. Bu tip çalışmaların bir takım faktörler tarafından etkilendikleri çok açık görülmektedir. Bu faktörlerden en belirginini, kazılmaya başladığı günden bu yana tüm alanda uygulanan farklı tarzlardaki kazı metodlarıdır. Figürinlerle yakından ilişkili diğer analitik araştırma ve aktivitelerin daha üretken oldukları gözlemlenmiştir. Aynı zamanda bu sezon, kayıt sistemi ve veri tabanımız üzerinde önemli değişiklikler yaparken, figürin yapımında kullanılan kil malzemesi, eklemsiz vücutlarla ilgili temalar üzerindeki yorumlamalar ve duvar sanatında da görülen, abartılarak yapılmış vücut kısımlarının değişik alanlarda uygulanması (öncelikle baş betimlemeleri) konularında da araştırmalar yaptık.

Clay Technology

This year we assembled all the 2006 season finds along with the remaining 2005 examples to assess the range of fabrics. With the assistance of Chris Doherty, a materials expert from Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art (RLAHA), Oxford University, we took initial steps in situating our fabrics within a tripartite scheme of the white marl, black back swamp and red alluvial materials found in the local region. The local clays appear to have a very fine texture so the coarseness of the clay fabrics we see is either due to the presence of inclusions or processing techniques. The natural clays range from very 'clean' (pure) to 'dirty' (containing various degrees of intrusions from the alluvial deposits such as sand, silt

and additional organic materials). Pure marl tends to be very white in colour with a powdery texture due to the high limestone (calcium carbonate) content. Marl with an increasingly higher clay content will become more dense, plastic and will tend towards more creamy and yellow hues. The black colour of the back swamp clay is due to high organic content and may also have some iron mineral content. And the alluvial clay appears red due to the high iron content. Siltier clays tend to be less plastic and fracture when bent, whereas those pieces with high pure fine clay content will provide the most workable and sturdy fabric. Pure fine clays tend to be extremely dense, with excellent plasticity that dry to a very hard exterior with minimal heat exposure (e.g., sun-drying). The black clay and red clay examples also tend to be much denser and heavier than the marl examples of comparable size. The black clays can also achieve a polished or burnished surface with little effort due to the organic components.

Our procedure then was first to designate groups on the basis of colour, an expedient or useful first step, albeit with the recognition that this is a rough first categorization given that many factors determine the colour such as fabric make-up and heat exposure. At the most general level our fabrics fall within two extremes: the white marl and the black back swamp. We then try to arrange examples within each group on the basis of colour gradation. In the first group we have cream, buff, light grey, yellow brown to pink brown. In the second group we have a range from grey to very dark grey: all examples are given Munsell designations.

At the next level we examined the fabric texture. Within fabric texture we have to determine whether the coarser material is due to the presence of courings or from particular modeling techniques. For instance the presence of sand, pebbles and silt which is a factor of the fabric itself can yield a jagged appearance at the points of fracture and give way to a rough, less plastic appearance overall. Alternatively, the 'coarseness' we observe in some figures that are often larger may be due to fabric processing techniques. For instance some examples appear to be self-tempered, that is the fabric consists of a single material but in different states of processing (e.g., the re-use of dried clay mixed with fresher clay). This technique can produce a fabric and coarse appearance overall as well (Chris Doherty pers. comm.).

We concluded that all of our figurine fabrics could be described as manufactured from fine, naturally clean clays. People seem to be choosing these specific clean clays that would be easily locatable within close proximity of the site. What is interesting is that the makers are choosing a high clay content fabric for the figurines since this fabric provided the best material for crafting the expedient, small, well-smoothed, sturdy figural pieces with minimal effort. Fabric with more inclusions or a higher sand content would have required more effort (working, modeling, smoothing and heating) to achieve a similar end product.

It is likely that we do not have figurines that have been subjected to high firing given the features observed to date. The vast majority are best described as baked, whether directly sun baked or in association with ovens and hearths within buildings. We tried an experiment with local mud around the dig house, formed into shapes and dried them in the sun. Colour is also effected by heat exposure and we will need to carry out a range of experiments on local clays at different firing temperatures to approximate the levels of heat or baking that is required to produce our specific range of colours.

Clays higher in organic content will tend to get lighter and those rich in iron will tend to bake redder.

To summarize, clay is selected for high clay content, since it is the most plastic and would not require much heat to achieve a hard state. These clays, by their nature, will be clean and inclusion free. Our current sample appears to consist of a range of black back swamp and marl fabrics in approximately a 3 to 2 ratio. Given that these fabrics are basically inclusion free, we will be modifying our fabric recording methods and thus the structure of the database. The fact that it is inclusion free means that much traditional analysis, typical with ceramic analysis, is not possible. Compared to other clay industries such as ceramics and building materials, figurine production required basically no preparation beyond selection and acquisition of a relatively small amount of material. Clay sources would have been close by and readily available and, therefore, might have been used over long periods. Just as the figurines are expediently manufactured, so too was the gathering of the source materials.

In future seasons we will continue this work on clay fabrics, particularly investigating the effect of different heating events and potential sources for the clays.

Clay Database

During this season we continued our dialogue over the specifications for the shared clay database. These meetings have included Mia Ridge, Chris Doherty, Serena Love, Burçu Tung, Nurçan Yalman, and ourselves. The idea has been to develop a standardized list of shared recording fields. As outlined in our 2004 report, the clay materials database would ideally have addressed the similarities in materials and techniques across a host of different specializations from clay objects to building materials and ceramics. Over the past seasons we have come to appreciate the differences between clay groups, even though the base materials may superficially seem alike. Love's and Tung's ongoing respective work on architecture and building materials has shown us the variety of materials and constituents that are now represented in our own corpus. In conversations with Doherty it became clearer that the figurine corpus is a small subset of the other clay specializations yet is very different in a number of key ways that make comparison difficult and possibly unhelpful. For instance, analysis of ceramics and building materials often hinges on temper and inclusions — two major constituents lacking in the figurines generally. This season it has been very useful to define what are relevant areas of possible analysis for us specifically and what we can now largely discount.

Common Fields: The structure of the clay database begins with Object Type: Building Materials, Figurines, Clay Balls, Beads, Ceramics, and Shaped Objects, Scrap, and so on. The next level is Primary Material; although all of these object types are generally made from clay, classes such as beads and figurines are also made of other materials such as stone. We also changed the category of Material Quality to Manufacture since this term has less subjective and qualitative designation. Treatment and Elaboration is next, followed by Use Wear and Residue.

To accommodate our integration with the general Clay Database, we have changed some of the field names and values of the figurine database. Since the common link between building materials, figurines, clay balls, beads, pottery, and so on, is clay material, we developed a new set of terms to characterize the figurine clay fabrics.

Clay fabrics will be described at three levels: 1) clay matrix (marl/white), back swamp/black, alluvial/red, 2) inclusions (size, frequency and type), and 3) microtexture (density/compactness, plasticity, sheen, fracture pattern). Figurine fabrics primarily derive from white marls and black back swamp clays; very few examples are made from alluvial clay. Next season we hope to investigate the location and range of clay colours and perform experiments on the effect various heat exposures have on the colour of the clays. Since figurine fabrics are essentially free of inclusions and are not tempered, we will not record this level.

Issues of Terminology

In the past three seasons we have sustained an ongoing dialogue concerning the language we employ to describe shaped clay pieces. We began with the idea of ‘shaped clay’ so that we would better be able to connect with specialists working on building materials, clay balls and ceramics. Over the past few seasons, however, it has become clearer that the figurine materials are sufficiently different in terms of treatment, processing, fabric and form to craft a more distinct and specific range of terminologies. This is being refined this season with the construction of the new database. Our main or first level is Object Category, which for us is Figurines. The next is Object Type that is divided into non-diagnostic or figural. The choice of the word ‘figural’ is key here.

Figural denotes a form of signification that relies on imagery and association rather than on rational or linguistic concepts. This may seem to be a more fitting definition than the more common term of ‘representation.’ The notion of representation entails a remove from the real, it depicts a likeness, rendition or perception rather than the immediacy of the object in question. It is not enough to say that these figurines are representations or visual proxies, they are things in themselves with their own spheres of interaction. By employing the notion of representation we infer that figurines stand in for something real and are a reflection of that reality, of someone or something. And yet these objects are not necessarily referents for something else tangible, but could be experienced as real and tangible things in themselves. They may not simply be emblematic or allegorical devices as the term figuration might imply. And while this is not tantamount to arguing for figurines as necessarily agentic beings, such possibilities should not to be dismissed from the outset through an elision of language.

In our current terminology the designation non-diagnostic refers to shaped clay that is suggestive of a figurine form. Usually these pieces are small and fragmentary and probably represent parts of horns, limbs or abbreviated examples. For those pieces we complete the object category, object type, form, type, manufacture, material, we take a weight, Munsell, a photograph and note any distinctive features like fingerprints.

The next level of the database is Object Form, which splits into anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, abbreviated, phallomorphic, hybrid, and indeterminate. In previous years, the abbreviated forms were seen as predominantly as anthropomorphic but given the forms that have appeared in this season we have modified the term. Several of the abbreviated objects could be zoomorphic in shape and so we now consider the category more broadly. The ‘abbreviated form’ now appears at this higher order level alongside the category ‘anthropomorphic’ etc. The remaining levels of the database remain unchanged and will not be discussed here.

This season we also did some data cleaning, going back through the past season's recorded finds, eliminating 'scrap' and we have moved 'mini clay balls' and 'geometric objects' to the shaped clay category which we will not be studying. We have refined the heavy residue collection process to streamline and divide materials so that we only receive figurine fragments rather than all clay materials retrieved. As stated in last year's report this will eliminate the inflation of figurine numbers.

Preliminary Contextual Analyses

From the outset of our research, one of our larger goals has been to perform a site-wide analysis of the figurine assemblage through time and space. At the moment we are still constrained by the fact that the figurine materials have been the last to be integrated into the centralized database system. However, we attempted a rough count of Neolithic figurines numbers per building across the site. Based on this preliminary information, we have found that a number of different factors will make this kind of intra-site comparison exceedingly problematic. For instance, the number of different teams, areas and excavation methods (4040, South, TP, IST, BACH) not surprisingly produces sometimes vastly different archaeological 'records'. Where as the BACH team spent five seasons excavating a single house, other areas, excavate a few houses in one season. The TP area near the top of the East mound had to deal with a

<u>Building</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Level</u>	<u>Figurines</u>
1	North	VII-VI	8
5	North	VII-VIII	5
16	South	IX	6
17	South	IX	22
18	South	X	15
2	South	IX	30
21	South	VIII	1
22	South	IX	1
23	South	X	6
24	South	7	1
25	West	Chalco	6
3	Bach	VII_VI	151
4	South	VIII	4
49	4040	VII-VI	14
43	South	VIII	4
42	South	V-IV	7
44	South	IV	2
45	4040	V-IV	1
47	4040	IV-III	1
5	North	VII-VIII	13
53	South	VI	1
6	South	VIII	17
7	South	VIII	4
8	South	VII	6

Table 47: Number of figurines per building

significant amount of later intrusive features such as burials and rodent burrows. Such intrusive elements are issues across the site, but are particularly acute in the latest levels near the surface. In addition to the current core excavation team project, the site has supported a number of historically and regionally different excavation techniques and methodologies from Mellaart in the 1960's to the recent semi-autonomous Turkish, Polish, Greek, North American teams. And even within these diverse methods, the broadly adopted core protocol of "fast-tracking" some units will produce less of the smaller materials. Although some level of comparison between these different areas is possible, in many cases the factors mentioned above prohibit a meaningful comparative analysis at the spatial and temporal levels for materials such as figurines. It is possible that we might obtain more workable results from this kind of analysis if we to also take into account the volume of soil removed per building (Hodder, pers. comm.). While we will explore this avenue further in future seasons, the issues discussed above nevertheless must also be addressed.

Deposition Contexts

As in previous seasons the 2006 figurines come from secondary contexts, mostly midden or fill. This year vast swathes of midden were dug in the 4040 and South areas. This confirmed a pattern that had emerged earlier: we find the various forms across the site but rarely from primary contexts. As stated above, we need to take into account the different excavation methods employed at various areas within the main project (4040 and South) as well as other teams (BACH, TP) and how these potentially skew the figurine data. TP has found very few examples, this season 3 examples in very disturbed contexts and in potentially 3 buildings. This might be significant given that this is within close proximity to where Mellaart excavated in the later levels and found the iconic seated, female figures that have become synonymous with the site. Alternatively, the BACH team turned up very different results; they found 175 figurines and figurine fragments in Building 3 over its years of excavation (Table 47).

Levels

Previously, Naomi Hamilton has suggested a certain change in the figurine corpus through time (Hamilton 1996, Hamilton in press). Specifically, she argues that there is a shift in “gender ideology” around Level VI. She claims that male figures are present in the early levels (up to Level VI) but cease in later levels, during which time female figures become common. Most of Mellaart’s “mother goddess” figurines (23 total) come from Level II (16) and the rest from Levels III-V(VII). Of the 16 from Level II, half derive from a single context: Mellaart’s ‘Shrine A.1’. While the clustering of female figures in the late levels is certainly provocative, this occurrence as evidence alone for a shift in gender ideology is not compelling. Mary Voigt (2000) also arrives at a similar conclusion when examining the same data set.

However, when we consider the distribution patterns of the materials more closely these assertions are based on data that are rather problematic. Again, we find that the history of different excavation methods at Çatalhöyük needs to be taken into account when interpreting patterns in the data. For instance, 769 figurines have come from Levels XII to VI, and most of these were recovered by excavations under the current project. In contrast, until this year, 60 figurines have come from Levels VI/V to I, and almost all of these were recovered by Mellaart in the 1960’s. This pattern is in part due to differences in the finer grain excavation methods and goals of the current project and Mellaart’s more expedient methods. Consequently, the total number of figurines from the later levels is certainly underestimated. This assertion has been confirmed by brief investigations by the TEMPER project (Doughty 2003), that have turned up numerous animal, horn and abbreviated figures in Mellaart’s spoil heaps.

In the past, the current excavation teams have dug primarily in Levels VI-VII. This year it is thought that many of the teams (4040, South and IST) are now in Level IV-V. Only team TP is potentially in Level III abutting one of Mellaart’s old trenches; perhaps significantly, there are very few figurines found in this area. As excavations have turned up nearly 400 figurines this season, we are now approaching a more representative picture of the figurine corpus from these later levels. In our future work on the figurines, we plan to reconsider past interpretations of the corpus with this expanded data set.

Disarticulated Bodies

This season we have uncovered a greater number of discrete heads and headless bodies made as ‘complete’ or intentionally separate pieces. Of four human heads found this year, three are broken at the neck but one (12988.H4), interestingly, has a deep wide depression on the underside of that looks as if made by the 5th phalange or pinky finger, which could have been fitted over the top of a stub of a like the one of 12394.H1. There is also a blank, possibly unfinished head with various shaped, tool marks and a dowel hole (13139.H1). There are also several detailed clay heads that have been broken from bodies, two of these are created in buff marls and closely resemble the worked stone examples we have uncovered in previous years (Fig. 43). They resemble SE European



Figure 143: Example of elongated head 13142.X3 (4040)

and Mediterranean stone figurines with their elongated heads and necks and minimal facial features made from buff coloured marble. The two examples we found this year are distinctive (13352.H1) parallels with previous well-published examples now in Ankara (79-452-69, 79-800-65, 7922-65) they’ve been interpreted as representing both males and females. There is also one clay example (79-803-65). They are from Levels VI, IV and II. In all these examples there is a focused attention on the hairstyle or head gear, prominent ears, and the nose is emphasized whereas the eyes and mouth are under-emphasized. Heads often tilt backwards as well and this can similarly be detected in some of the human figures in the wall paintings. There are details on the back of the neck that might indicate hair or skin. There is a band indicated high on the forehead at the front, which is then detailed into a ring with a hollowed center. This is a very typical head style that we have seen over and over again at the site and elsewhere.



Figure 144: Headless body with dowel hole in the neck 13167.X10, 4040 Area

Six ‘headless’ bodies have been found this season (12 total), five with a dowel hole in the neck (12420.H1, 13159.X7, 13140.H3, 13167.X10, 13129.X1, see Fig. 44), and one with a neck ‘stubb’ (12394.H1, see Fig. 45). This figure and especially 11874.X1 from 2005 from Neolithic levels at Çatalhöyük perhaps anticipates the later Chalcolithic ‘violin figures,’ typically carved from pale marble (Ankara 98-1-64, 19160, 13193) from Beycesultan and Canhasan.

Headless human figures, depicted in the Çatalhöyük wall paintings, have attracted much scholarly attention. One key example is the headless body shown in association with birds of prey interpreted as vultures. This led to the speculation that bodies were excarnated — fleshed bodies were plucked clean by vultures before final burial. It is a prime example of the pitfalls of reading directly off the images at Çatalhöyük as expressions of narrative events or happenings. It does indicate a concern with the fleshing of bodies at a conceptual level and their subsequent transformations. Whether it has didactic elements or story telling value, or presents a nightmarish vision, the fixation of headlessness remains central. We might suggest, however, that a headless state looms large in the imaginary and was emphasized in the mythic arena. Many cultures vividly portray deathly scenes involving what we would deem negative



Figure 145: Headless body with a neck 'stubb' 13167.X7, 4040 Area.

scenarios. Yet these histories and mythologies are part of a domesticated social reality, grappling with the vagaries of the past, the fear of the unknown and a control of the future in an existential sense. Our categorization of myth, may in fact be their conjuring of a felt history and the two genres may form a continuum rather than discrete knowledges in prehistoric times. Linearity, evidence and specificity have come to denote history for us, whereas we define mythology as the realm of folklore, tradition, and storytelling.



Figure 146: Reconstruction of 'storytelling'

What we might be seeing, however, is the process of articulation or disarticulation. The practice of removing and circulating heads is something we have witnessed across media from the wall paintings and burials to the figurines corpus. Interestingly this process largely refers to human examples. Heads of animals in the forms of skulls (bulls, vultures, goat, wild boar jaws) were attached to walls and embedded and ‘re-fleshed’ with wall plaster in houses and may be related to the practice, and there is one unclear example of a wall painting showing a headless animal in a hunting scene: so there may be some element of overlap. Returning to the plastered features in Çatalhöyük houses, what is notable is their very lack of movement or circulation. Rather, these examples are permanently fixed to walls, benches and pillars (buchrania) and parts of skulls (boar jaws) are embedded within plaster, within the lifecycle of the house. Our faunal experts (Russell pers. comm.) agree that there is a focus on animal heads rather than other parts within the most dramatic plastered features. Russell has noted instances of plastered skulls both with plastered horn cores (suggesting more decomposition) and non-plastered horn sheaths (less decomposition). These treatments might indicate different levels of enfleshment; the horn large sheaths will eventually deteriorate and it is possible that after this happened, people would then plaster and ‘rebuild’ the remaining horn core to achieve a similar effect. Scapulae are often found completely embedded within the base of house walls (present but rendered invisible), but are not generally set into dramatic installations like heads, and could reflect their use more as plastering implements. At various stages after the end of the house cycle, the impressive plastered elements of heads and horns are often removed and/or retrieved and potentially re-used in other structures. Their retrieval suggests their potent or salient status in many, but not all instances. We should remember too that plastered anthropomorphic features like the splayed figures also had their heads and hands or paws removed at closure (Mellaart’s Shrine VI, 23). Plastered animal heads and human plastered skulls may share this facility for monumental treatment, for retrieval, circulation and sharing, for memorialization through time and over generations. It is noteworthy that we have not yet found clear examples of separate animal heads and bodies with dowel holes and attachments in the same manner as anthropomorphic examples. This suggests that there is not a complete overlap in treatments or significances, but a subset of shared treatments and practices.

The head is a very obvious locus of identity, so the ability to remove and replace certain heads might allow for multiple identities and potential narrativization. The remaining bodies range from the very aged female bodies to more neutral in the majority of cases. We tend to find more bodies with dowel holes than heads made for attachment, which could suggest that the head is more determinative and the bodies are deemed more generic: though this may not imply a hierarchy. The pairing or duality of heads and bodies may suggest that the act of combining or manipulating is the significant aspect and that this ‘bringing together’ might refer to social factors such as different genders, identities, kin, groups, ritual groups or the like. Ethnographically several southern African groups use the discrete iconography of heads and bodies to denote the blending of male and female and kin lines at the point of marriage when a woman enters the household of her husband. Imagery on headrests, for example, plays on the notion that the locus of female identity rests within the body, whereas maleness is located within the head.

It is notable that it is very difficult to specifically identify the quadruped figurines (e.g. Fig. 147). Cattle are the most common/identifiable by the presence of curved horns (and ears). Boars are the second most identifiable quadruped shown with curved, ridged back, prominent tails and delineated snouts. Other varieties such as sheep/goats are present, but more difficult to identify. Overall most attention seems to be paid to horns and ears and snouts and tails to a lesser degree. A few examples depict manes and navels. The quadruped bodies appear to be more generic and there is no attempt to depict sex characteristics in the figurines as there is in the wall paintings.



Figure 147: Example of a quadruped figurine 13115.X2, 4040 Area.

Previously the project had been interested in interpreting figurine quadrupeds as specific animals; however, we are wary of assuming that these depictions were intended to portray naturalistic images of specific animal species. In contrast to the animals in wall art, which show details of sex, and characteristic markings and features that make them clearly identifiable as boars, deer, cattle, leopards, etc., the figurine varieties are much more impressionistic and denote the outline of things. It is possible that some of this difference arises from a various factors such as speed of manufacture and whether the images invite visual vs. tactile engagement. For instance, the comparatively un-detailed figurines were made quite rapidly and their three-dimensional form suggests that tactility and handling was more salient than their visual specificity. The opposite would be true for the wall paintings, which likely took more time to render. Also, the location, scale, two-dimensionality and detail of these images suggest that they were meant to viewed by more than one person. In conversation with John Swogger, these different media then seem to articulate a certain hierarchy of recognition but one that might seem somewhat counterintuitive. Usually one might expect a three-dimensional form to offer a more complete rendition by its very materiality. Rather our examples portray a type of snapshot, emphasizing a selective suite of features and are only readily apprehended by constantly handling and turning each piece, thus engaging both tactile and visual senses. For three-dimensional figurines, the basic horn and body silhouettes are sufficient to communicate a clear, if somewhat ambiguous animal form. There have been almost no attempts made to demarcate textures of hides, skins, hoofs, tails, and so on and yet we know they were aware of such differences, evidenced by one of the examples found by Mellaart that shows detailing of a quadruped's coat (Mellaart 1967: Fig 66): he believed this to be a boar with bristles. Whereas, the two-dimensional paintings rely on a more elaborate detailing of markings, sex and breed traits to communicate general animals from cattle and boars to more specific species such as vultures, leopards, vultures, and cranes that are absent among the figurines. This distinction may infer that the wall paintings collectively and figurines as a group engage people and things in different ways. This kind of recognition hierarchy also might suggest that the figurine process involves a more intimate relation with the maker in the sense that they may not have been meant to be viewed or handled by others or group of

people. Yet with the wall paintings, already positioned in more communal spaces, the visual cues must be legible by a wider array of participants. While wall paintings impose an experience of distance, the figurines invite a more visceral, intimate bodily connection.

We might be witnessing the personification or individualization of cattle. Cattle are given individual names in various cultures, are anthropomorphized in others – though these are often domesticated herds such as Nguni cattle. In other work, one of us has conducted interviews touching upon the significance of cattle in South Africa and several cattle burials now situated in Kruger National Park (Meskell 2006). Belonging to local communities such as the Mkhabela, these animals were seized and slaughtered by park authorities many decades ago the descendants continue to press for the proper memorialization of their herds. At Çatalhöyük the greatest parallels occur between humans and cattle in iconographic spheres, since they occupy the most attention, are both shaped, modeled, painted, in 2D and 3D media. On a more pragmatic level, one might also deduce that the vast majority of forms represented among the figurines pertain to meat producing animals: cattle, sheep/goat and boar. This fits well with the stab marks that we see, often in strategic points on the body that would kill or potentially immobilize the animal. If we were to think of another parallel, that of South African San rock art, we would see that the notions of social significance and meat provisioning are not necessarily mutually exclusive. San hunters killed and consumed the eland, for example, but simultaneously venerated them as sources of potency and as the creator's favoured animal (Blundell 2002, 2004). Such a tension was culturally reconciled in the southern African context. Ancient Egyptians also managed to venerate animal-inspired deities and consume their more mundane counterparts on a regular basis with little ideological conflict (Meskell and Joyce 2003). At Çatalhöyük we could be witnessing a different set of potentially reconciled tensions around the celebration of wild beasts and of the hunt as a particular event, recognition of (male) hunting prowess, memory and veneration, even possibly ancestral, gendered or individual associations with specific animals or species.

Narrativizing animals must have occupied a central role in the Çatalhöyük lifeworld, covering social, economic, ancestral, historical and spiritual aspects. If we think of the broader meaning of religion, it is constituted from people's attitudes, beliefs, and opinions concerning existence and nature. What we witness in the figurine corpus could certainly form part of that existential engagement, though may not represent 'organized religion' in a familiar sense.



Figure 148: Figurines from unit (12946), 4040 Area.

Abbreviated Forms

This season we found an array of abbreviated forms comparable to those of previous seasons and some new variations on the type. We are now considering that some of these forms might also be of zoomorphic as well as the anthropomorphic examples (see Fig. 148). We have thus modified our recording system to allow for this variation. In the South Area this season we also uncovered a new extreme type of abbreviated form with a conical base, an elongated body and a folded top or head (12524.X5, 12524.X11). Oddly these examples resemble a ‘golf tee’ shape that we have only seen once before in the 2005 season. Some rather abbreviated types also depict protruding buttocks (5813.H1). What emerges, even in the abbreviated forms, is a trend toward exaggeration, usually the head or nose. As we discuss below, this desire for exaggeration or certain pronounced features is a repeated element throughout the figurine corpus. This returns us to our choice of the word figurinal and is propensity to describe forms of signification relying on imagery and association.

Exaggerated Bodies and Body Parts

This year excavations have found several figurines of human bodies with exaggerated features, most commonly stomachs (often with breasts) and buttocks. Although the figures with both prominent breasts and stomachs are generally interpreted as pregnant females, these features often appear rather flattened, drooping and angular rather



Figure 149: Examples of flattened, downward sloping stomachs and breasts which might represent aging bodies 13140.H3, 13140.X20, 4040 Area.

than robust and rounded in shape, as one might expect of a healthy pregnant female (Fig. 149). It is possibly that the more flattened, downward sloping stomachs and

breasts might rather represent aging bodies as Mary Voigt has argued for some depictions at Haçılar, (forthcoming). There is also an occasional emphasis on the navel among figures in the figurine corpus, more dramatically upon plastered splayed wall features and in the one example of the ‘bear’ stamp seal.

Thus the figurines of seated, weighty individuals are perhaps more reminiscent of geriatric, unsexed bodies rather than pregnant female bodies. Many of the examples we describe for this season emphasize the navel, are small and highly detailed for the size, some with remains of red or white paint on the surface, with of course significant variation. There are seated, squatted examples, with parallels to larger, well published pieces examples (Ankara 79-246-65, 79-247-65, 79-245-65, see Fig.150) and also to later examples from Hacilar that are progressively exaggerated (Ankara 116-1-67, and 19590). These have distended stomachs, coupled with geometric and angular bodily forms.

With the finds from this season we are discerning various iconographic schemes with body form. Males and females both have breasts, yet the typical means of sexual differentiation — the genital region — is not elaborated in almost every case. Not all of these features are represented in standardized ways. Across our entire database breasts range from flat and pendulous (79-798-65, 79-799-65), pendulous (13140.H1), small round (5112.X1) to large and exaggerated (12401.X7). We also have examples of paired flabby stomachs and flat, pendulous breasts (13103.X19, 13140.H3) or stomach, small round breasts and pronounced navel (13143.H10).



Figure 150: Example of a seated, squatting figurine 13167.X10, 4040 Area.

Often the breasts are not portrayed symmetrically. Many are suggestive of aging bodies rather than young and reproductive types, as indicated above. Oddly there is little attention to any shape that might suggest a young or adolescent body type, which would tend to be a focus in other cultural repertoires. We have only one example that (13129.X1), a somewhat more slender piece without a head, hands placed on a protruding stomach, with traces of red paint on the surface. Generally such human forms are not present in either the wall paintings or the plastered forms. The majority of the human images in wall paintings are, of course, male and the plastered anthropomorphic examples are androgynous and some of those may have been zoomorphic, as in the case of the ‘bear’.

Generally our figurine types are not found in the regular population. Nor does the mortuary data demonstrate evidence of obesity in either males or females. This is not an instance such as the Maltese case where the figurine forms matched the human populations in terms of obesity. These larger forms at Çatalhöyük, which we would assert are not rigidly gendered in every case (and thus not always female), were not drawn from daily life scenarios, as borne out in the wall paintings. Together they are extreme examples of the fleshing and re-fleshing of bodies and skulls that we witness across the site and most poignantly within burials. They are images of excess and exaggeration. The figured world at Çatalhöyük directs our attention to heads and

necks, stomachs and buttocks, with scant attention to arms, legs, feet, facial features. The torso is the main area of interest. Figures are naked for the most part, though there are a handful of dramatically costumed examples (79-162-65, 70-24965). This again is at variance with the wall paintings that show a predominance of male figures costumed in fabrics that mimic leopard skin, with tails or feathered attachments, sometimes with headgear. Given the leopard's solitary and cunning nature, it strikes us as an animal that the villager's may not have had regular access to. It should be remembered too that there are no leopard or feline skulls within the plastered forms as there are with other animals.

Bodily features that are exaggerated, and have become more obvious in this season's finds, are the stomach and buttocks (Fig. 151). We have found several examples with angular stomachs and angular buttocks from the 4040 midden area (13167.X7, 13140.H3, 11848.X1, 11324.X3, 5843.X2). Others simply focus on the angular buttocks (12502.H1, 11854.X2, 12394.H1, CHC570) or are simply abbreviated types with rounded platform base, emphasizing the buttocks (14120.X1). Many simply focus on the protruding stomach (12988.H15, 13103.X12) or the stomach with pronounced navel (13129.X1 possibly with very small breasts; and 12401.X7 with breasts). Other combinations include small round breasts and angular buttocks (13159.X7, Mellet.167.1) or flat squared



Figure 151: Example of exaggerated stomach and buttocks 12502.H1, South Area.

breasts and large angular buttocks (12102.X1). In prior seasons we have noted this attention to the buttocks, to their careful delineation or pronouncement, typically at the expense of other bodily characteristics (see especially 5446.X1, Mellet.167.1, 11848.X1, 11324.X3). There are of course many cultures, including contemporary ones like our own, that place enormous emphasis on the buttocks in social, sexual and visual terms.

An extension of this is large downward sloping stomachs, some of which have been described as composite figures. In Ankara Museum there is the limestone male riding leopard (ANK 79-167-65), the stone male mounted on bull (ANK 79-191-65); male on bull (ANK 79-457-65); marble seated male (ANK 79-801-65)—all show protrusions out from the waist with at least one possible animal heads. One of our figurines (13167.X7) may be part of that phenomenon, albeit crafted from clay.

In discussions with John Swogger, we have been considering the non-generative emphasis of the human figures across the site. As stated previously for other media, genitalia are not represented, but rather buttocks (Mellaart's example from E.VI.44), stomachs (with navel) and breasts, in different combinations: some depict one, two or all three features. Taken together this might indicate a non-sexualized treatment. The

divergent examples are those that are purely phallic that we have discussed in more detail in our 2004 and 2005 reports (Meskell and Nakamura 2005, Nakamura and Meskell 2004). These, however, are isolated phalluses of idiosyncratic type rather than whole bodies. For the most part this pattern also follows for the wall paintings (animals are shown with erections, but this may also be indicative the death state).

There is a seeming aversion to depicting children, adolescents, mothers with babies, or obviously pregnant females. Our material in toto thus suggests a severely curtailed presentation of the lifecycle. As in other cultures, some aspects of the cycle may invite prohibition since they represent dangerous or liminal life experiences.

If we turn to the wall paintings depicting human forms, there is less emphasis on exaggeration and more on a dynamic yet roughly natural rendition. One gendered example that diverges from the others is the exaggerated female from the lower edge of the famous Bull Painting from Mellaart's north wall shrine F.V.1. Apart from its downward sloping stomach, and heavy thighs this image has black detailing at the armpits and feet. This could be a depiction of an unclean or odorous bodily zone, although this is highly speculative. None of the male figures on the panel have similar treatment, which suggests a real gendered difference in several regards.

Ongoing work

As with previous seasons, we continue our video work, our exploration of figurines as embedded within processes rather than as end products as themselves. We also continue working with the excavators, specialists and site illustrator to re-think the manufacture, circulation and uses of figurines at the site. We remain interested in investigating the notions of embedding, fleshing and re-fleshing of figurines, plastered features, and bodies of humans and animals. When the clay databases are integrated into the main site structure we hope to be able to continue our spatial analysis as well.

We continue to consider the extensive range of possibilities for figurines by their very materiality. These developments, we found, had resonance with the interests of the anthropologists who worked with us at the site this year. They too are concerned with what can figurines do as a result of their physical properties: they can be carried, hidden, and be proxies (see also Nakamura 2005). As material objects, particular for their size and form, they can be present in many ways, they can travel, and can be representative when actual persons are not present. Figurines can also be lost, accidentally or purposefully, as Webb Keane pointed out. Given their technological range everyone can make the clay pieces and possibly even stone examples. Their size suggests a form of mastery that we have explored elsewhere in previous years reports. We need to acknowledge the persistence of objects, and that their makers can take advantage of that property for new agendas and practices.

References

- Blundell, G. 2002. *The Unseen Landscape: A Journey to Game Pass Shelter* (Guide Booklet). Johannesburg: Rock Art Research Institute.
- . 2004. *Nquabayo's Nomansland*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- Doughty, L. 2003. *The 'TEMPER' Project in 2003: Training, Education, Management and Prehistory in the Mediterranean*.

- Hamilton, N. 1996. "Figurines, Clay Balls, Small Finds and Burials," in *On the surface: Catalhoyuk 1993-95*. Edited by I. Hodder, pp. 215-263. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.
- . in press. "The Figurines," in *Çatalhöyük perspectives: themes from the 1995-9 seasons*. Edited by I. Hodder. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.
- Mellaart, J. 1967. *Çatal Hüyük: A Neolithic Town in Anatolia*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Meskel, L. M. 2006. *Deep Past, Divided Present: South Africa's Heritage at the Frontier*. Western Humanities Review.
- Meskel, L. M., and R. A. Joyce. 2003. *Embodied Lives: Figuring Ancient Maya and Egyptian Experience*. London: Routledge.
- Meskel, L. M., and C. Nakamura. 2005. *Çatalhöyük Figurines*. Archive Report on the Catalhöyük Season 2005 www.catalhoyuk.com.
- Nakamura, C. 2005. "Mastering Matters: Magical Sense and Apotropaic Figurines Worlds in Neo-Assyria," in *Archaeologies of Materiality*. Edited by L. Meskel, pp. 18-45. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Nakamura, C., and L. M. Meskel. 2004. *Figurines and Miniature Clay Objects*. Archive Report on the Catalhöyük Season 2004 www.catalhoyuk.com.
- Voigt, M. M. 2000. "Çatal Höyük in Context: Ritual at Early Neolithic Sites in Central and Eastern Turkey," in *Life in Neolithic Farming Communities: Social Organization, Identity, and Differentiation*. Edited by I. Kuijt, pp. 253-293. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.