Figured Lifeworlds and Depositional Practices at Çatalhöyük

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The corpus of figurines from Çatalhöyük has attracted the attention of diverse audiences but there has been an overwhelming focus on a selection of female figurines, many of which lack exact provenience. Excavation from 1961 to 1965 yielded more mundane examples classifiable as anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and abbreviated forms. New work attempts to balance the picture through various methods and strategies. The research presented here collates the artefacts from these early seasons with those retrieved from 1993 to 2006 to gain a fuller understanding of figurine practice. The figurines almost exclusively represent secondary deposition. We can now assess the number and type of figurines deposited in buildings, middens, burials and elsewhere. Reassessment of the entire corpus has prompted interrogation of the category of 'figurine' and reconsideration of the taxonomies along with other artefacts and image production at Çatalhöyük. Depositional practices at the site suggest processes of mobility and circulation that have rarely been considered in studies of figurines. Typical 'representational' or aesthetic approaches imply that the figurines were a special category with particular values of religiosity and gender; but attention to the archaeological context can imply meaning from the material practices within which 'figurines' were enmeshed.

Çatalhöyük

Çatalhöyük was well known to local villagers before James Mellaart and others identified it in surveys of the Anatolian plateau in the 1950s. Mellaart (1962; 1963; 1964; 1965; 1966; 1967; 1975) went on to excavate the site in the 1960s. These excavations were confined to an estimated four per cent of the East Mound in the southwest section and two small trenches in the Chalcolithic West Mound. Throughout his publications, both scholarly and popular, Mellaart's reconstructions and isometric drawings of houses or shrines and their internal decoration captured the imagination of various audiences and they still do (Hodder 2006b, 15; Meskell 1998b). Much was made of the figurines, particularly as the 'female' examples were marshalled for a metanarrative of matriarchy and mother goddess worship that raised considerable controversy (Meskell 1995; 1998a,b; Hamilton 2006; Gimbutas 1989; 1991; Mellaart *et al*. 1989). Çatalhöyük was also touted as one of the largest early sites for the Neolithic. Numerous recent excavations have challenged much of this notion that it was exceptional.

New excavations began under Ian Hodder in 1993. While Mellaart's might well be termed 'extensive', the current project would best be described as 'intensive' (Hodder 1996; 2000; 2005; 2006a). The site is currently dated from 7400 to 6000 cal. BC and is considered late in the central Anatolian sequence (Hodder 2006b, 15; Cessford *et al.* 2006). Yet, revisions notwithstanding, Hodder maintains that the 'narrative character of the wall paintings remains unparallelled in the Near East for this date. The sheer amount of the art — its concentration in so many houses in one site — remains particular. Indeed, the main mystery of Çatalhöyük remains the question of why all this art and symbolism, this flowering of imagery, should occur in this place at this time' (Hodder 2006b; 16). In this article,

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we focus on one important corpus within what Hodder and others (Last 1998) generally term 'art' — the figurines — and, where appropriate, we do link these objects to other visual forms, whether wall paintings or plastered features (see also Nakamura & Meskell 2004; 2006; Meskell & Nakamura 2005). In general, we can say that the paintings display images of wild animals rather than domesticates, hunting and baiting, and other intense human–animal interactions. The plastered forms almost exclusively feature the skulls, horns and teeth of wild animals. The figurines depict animals in the main, cattle being represented the most.

We diverge from many prior treatments of figurines in that we are not primarily offering an aesthetic analysis of their potential 'meanings'. Rather, we are working from a more contextual perspective based on a depositional analysis of the artefacts. Hodder has argued that the specific depositional practices at Çatalhöyük are another feature that renders the site distinctive. As he and the team have amply demonstrated, through much of the site's sequence we are offered a richly textured window onto the details of daily life. For example, on an annual or even monthly basis, lime-rich floor and wall plasters were resurfaced in thin layers as revealed by hundreds of layers of plaster, thus enabling micromorphological analysis (Matthews 2005). Middens too are finely layered, so that individual dumps of refuse from the hearth can be identified (Hodder *et al*. 2007). Both the specific depositional practices outlined here and the soil conditions have permitted excellent survival of carbonized plants, phytoliths and animal and human bone, alongside clay and plaster objects. For instance, when a house was abandoned, an event that happened at regular intervals (Hodder & Cessford 2004), paintings were covered over, and ovens and other internal features sometimes carefully filled with earth (see below). During abandonment, the upper walls were demolished and the lower half of the house often carefully filled in with fairly clean soil, thus preserving the lower parts. New dwellings used these earlier filled-in houses as their base. As a result of this technique, the East Mound has accumulated some 21 metres of deposit in approximately 18 layers of occupation (Hodder 2006b, 17). The dwellings were densely packed together so that, in most phases, there were no streets, another distinctive characteristic of the site. There are other general patterns throughout the settlement's history. Entrance to the dwellings was through the roof and evidence of ladders or stairs has been found, using the same hole that allowed smoke from the oven to escape. The main oven was often built directly beneath the ladder or stairway. The larger rooms contained many burials under the very same white plastered platforms where people probably slept. Houses also included features such as large wooden posts, ovens and small storage rooms. Yet some dwellings had more elaborate benches, installations of bucrania and other plastered features and different kinds of wall paintings including bands of colour, geometric designs and figurative depictions.

A fuller account of the current excavations and specialist reports can be found in the six published volumes, numerous articles and the annual excavation reports (www.catalhoyuk.com). The work presented here is part of ongoing research and will be open to scrutiny and revision in future seasons.

What is a figurine?

In 2004, a new team began examining the figurine corpus at Çatalhöyük with a different set of questions and concerns (Meskell & Nakamura 2005; Nakamura & Meskell 2004; 2006). An immediate priority was to rethink the language we employ to describe what are ostensibly pieces of shaped clay. This has implications for any recording and analysis of finds and our arrival coincided with the construction of a new site-wide data base devised by Mia Ridge and Sarah Jones. A vocabulary shared by specialists working on ceramics, clay balls and clay building materials also enables and facilitates a wider cross-taxonomic analysis. We have similarly dispensed with previous terminologies used by Mellaart and Hamilton, such as 'humanoid', 'ex voto', 'schematic', 'mother goddess' and 'fat lady', as they cannot be disassociated from problematic narratives from art and religion.

The first level for data entry for all clay specialists is Object Category, for which we specify the term 'figurine'. The next is Object Type, divided into 'figural', 'indeterminate', 'non-diagnostic' and 'geometric'. We are most concerned with the first two categories, with 'figural' clearly designating figurine forms or fragments thereof, and 'indeterminate' designating probable figurine fragments that display some trait characteristic of a known form. Typically, these indeterminate pieces are small and likely were parts of horns or limbs. The designation 'non-diagnostic' refers to shaped clay that is suggestive of a demonstrable figurine form but the term does not include scrap from manufacture or unidentifiable fragments collected from heavy residue sorting. The difference between 'indeterminate' and 'non-diagnostic' is ostensibly a matter of degree: indeterminate pieces are suggestive enough for us to assign to them a form (anthropomorphic, zoomorphic or abbreviated),

while non-diagnostics remain too ambiguous for us to surmise anything about the original form. In our general tallies of figurines by Object Form, these values include both figural and indeterminate types, while non-diagnostic pieces remain separated out. Finally, we do occasionally come across pieces that appear to be bead blanks, miniature clay balls or 'tokens'. These latter objects are described as 'geometric'.

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, '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 visual proxies, as we contend that they were things in themselves with their own spheres of interaction. By calling them representations, we might incorrectly infer that figurines stand in for something real and reflected that reality, of someone or something; but these objects were not necessarily referents for something else tangible; they could have been experienced as real and tangible things in themselves. They may not be simply emblematic or allegorical, as the term 'figuration' might imply. This is not to argue that figurines were necessarily agentive (Meskell 2004; 2007; Mitchell 2005) but such possibilities should not be dismissed from the outset through an elision of language.

The Object Forms are anthropomorphic, zoomorphic, abbreviated, phallomorphic and hybrid. While terms such as 'anthropomorphic' and 'zoomorphic' are generally understood, we devised the category 'abbreviated' to account for the broad range of condensed, truncated human and animal types that typically present only a head and torso; in some cases these figures also depict the suggestion of lower limbs. 'Phallomorphic' refers to figural artefacts that clearly emulate male genitalia. Some examples are explicit and echo the now famous examples of male imagery found at sites including Göbekli and Nevalı Çori (Schmidt 2002; Hauptmann 2007). Those examples that combine aspects of human and animal form have been designated 'hybrid', while others that are clearly figural but non-specific are labelled as 'indeterminate'. We should also emphasize that, given the three-dimensional form of figurines, some examples are suggestive of hybrid forms when viewed from different perspectives (e.g. human/phallus, human/animal, human/skeleton). While, from a compositional standpoint, these do not piece together features from different beings, their over-all forms are suggestive of visual puns or bodily transformation.

The figurines were manufactured from fine, naturally clean clays. The makers chose a high clay content fabric for crafting the expedient, small, well-smoothed, sturdy figural pieces with minimal effort. Fabric with more inclusions or sand would have required more working, modelling, smoothing and heating to achieve a similar product. Çatalhöyük figurines were not subjected to high firing. The vast majority could be described as lightly baked or passively baked by the sun, by being adjacent to ovens and hearths, or by burning in middens. Our current corpus appears to consist of a range of black back swamp and marl fabrics in, approximately, a 3 to 2 ratio. Compared to 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 were expediently manufactured, so too the gathering of the source materials was expedient.

For the purposes of this article, we focus on the major higher-order categories of anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and abbreviated. At present count, zoomorphic figures predominate. What might it mean to have a wider focus on animals than people and, specifically, the notion that figurines are proxies of a 'mother goddess'? Similar patterning has been found at other Neolithic sites across the Middle East (Kuijt & Chesson 2005; Verhoeven 1999). Depictions of animals predominate in wall paintings, plastered features and the figurine corpus, yet Mellaart and others have never advocated animal worship or totemism, nor do we.

Yet it is critical to point out that theories of matriarchy and the worship of a female divinity have been espoused on the basis of a very small data set, and one that has been challenged by the recent excavations. For example, the splayed figures that were moulded and plastered on walls which Mellaart considered female, are now considered more likely to be animal forms, given the recent findings of splayed bear imagery and faunal remains at the site (Türckan 2005). In fact, visually, these plastered features connect most directly to the figurine corpus, specifically the articulation of bucrania, horns and the depiction of cattle generally. They combine parts of real animals (e.g. skulls or horns) and were then typically plastered over to resemble living animals. The connections between skeletal and bony elements and plastered, fleshy constructions have been explored elsewhere in relation to specific Çatalhöyük figurines (Meskell 2007). While there are clear overlaps between these media, the figurines are portable, as opposed to the plastered objects fixed in

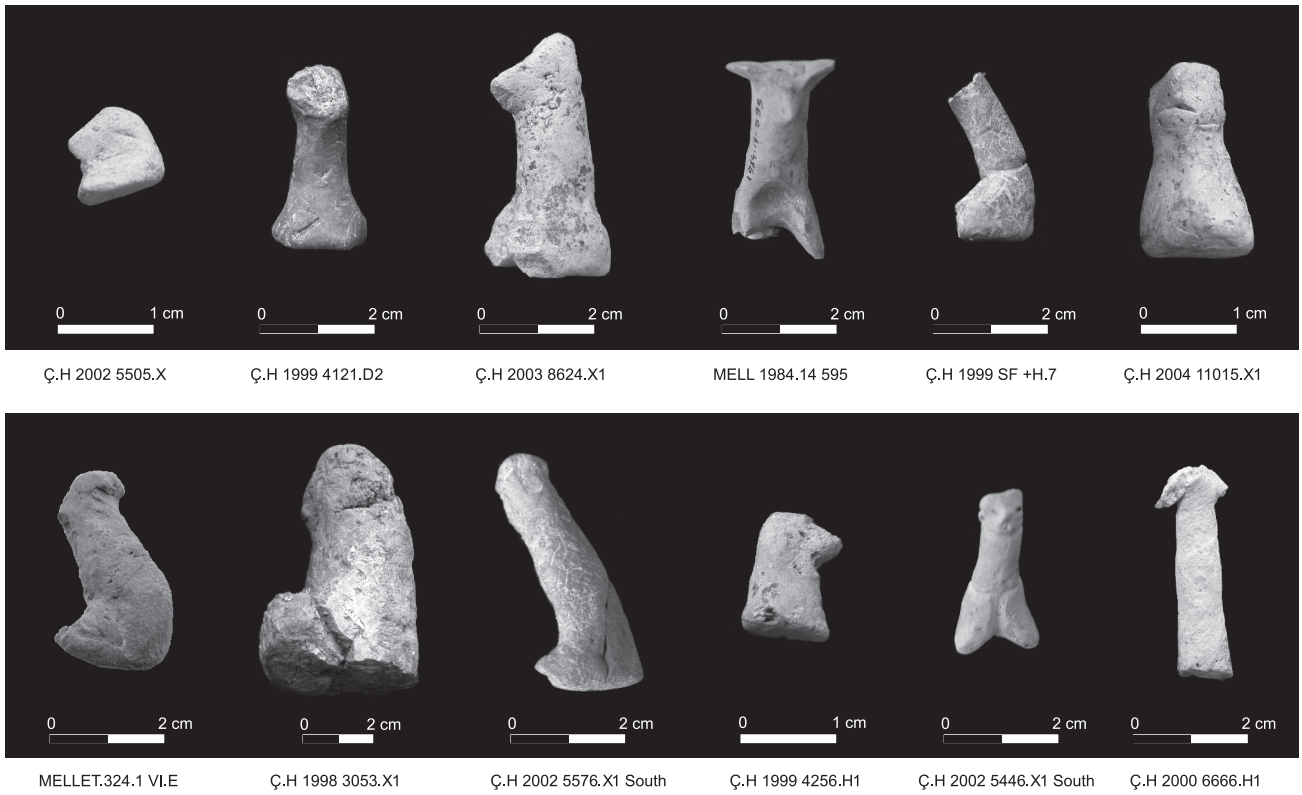

Figure 1. *Abbreviated forms.*

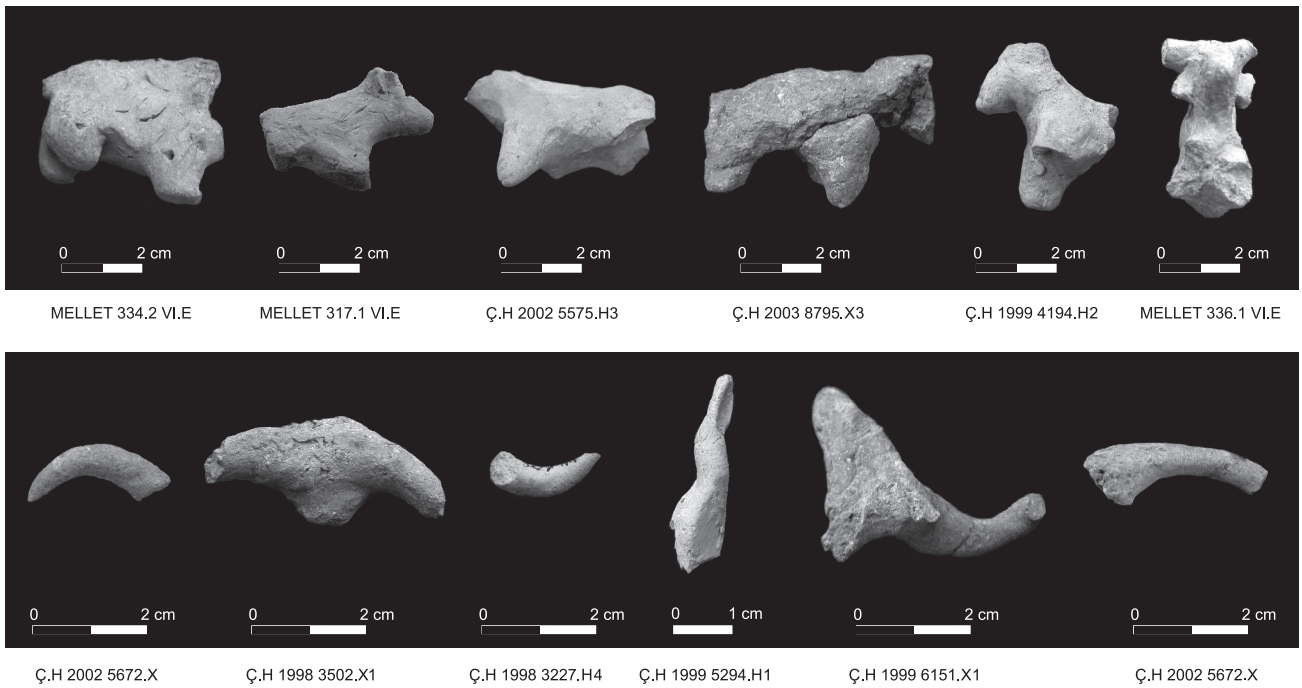

Figure 2. *Zoomorphic forms: quadrupeds (top) and horns (bottom).*

houses. In the following sections, we attempt to move beyond a visual reading of individual objects to the spatial analysis of the 1990s figurine corpus.

Deposition

From the outset, one of our larger goals was to perform a site-wide analysis of the figurine assemblage through time and space. Based on this preliminary information, we have found that a number of factors make intra-site comparison challenging. For instance, not surprisingly, Mellaart in the 1960s, the current core excavation team, and the recent semi-autonomous Turkish, Polish, Greek and North American teams, digging different areas (the 4040 Area, South Area) with different methods, have produced sometimes different archaeological 'records'.[1] Whereas the BACH (Berkeley Archaeologists at Çatalhöyük) team spent five seasons excavating a complete single building (Building 3), recovering 141 figurines, in other areas portions of various buildings were excavated in one season. TP (Team Poznań) has found very few figurines; in the 2006 season, only three examples were recovered from very disturbed contexts from various buildings. This might be significant given that this is very close to where Mellaart excavated in the later levels and found the iconic seated female figure that has become synonymous with the site (Mellaart 1967; 1975). Working at the top of the mound, the Polish team have encountered significant later intrusive features such as Roman burials and rodent burrows. Considering these variations, we decided that the most appropriate method would be to examine figurine density across the site and through time. Since the excavations are ongoing and some trenches have only recently been opened up, figurine counts alone could skew patterning around frequency, circulation and discard.

Despite these limitations, we still maintain that it is useful to make some general comparisons between figurines found in association with buildings and figurines found in large middens and between exterior walls. Significantly, more figurines come from these external areas, which are all secondary deposition; and, of these figurines, most come from middens (590). One notable pattern that emerges in the comparison of building and non-building deposition is that the distribution of figurine types remains the same (Table 1). Zoomorphic forms dominate, followed by abbreviated forms and then anthropomorphic forms. Although not conclusive in itself, this general result supports the idea that figurines were circulated rather than kept and guarded. Notably, all form types are found in

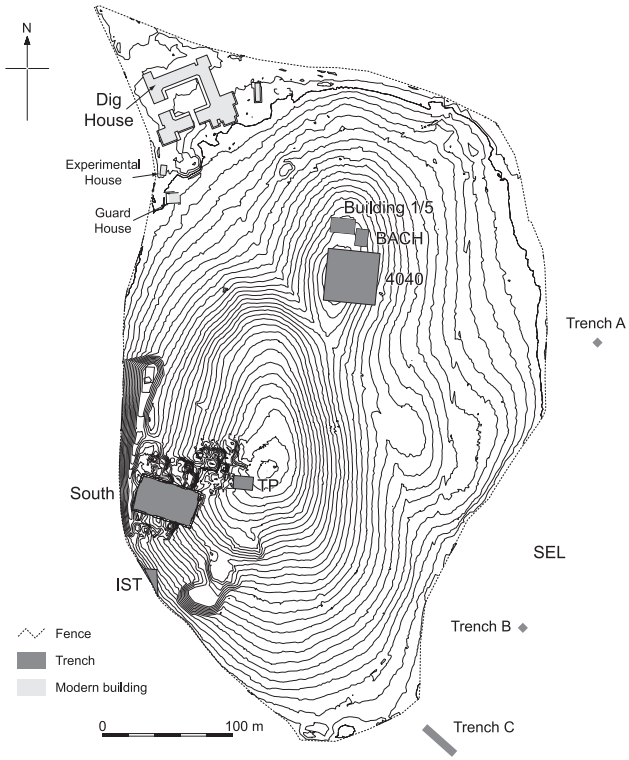

Figure 3. *Çatalhöyük, showing excavation areas on the East Mound.*

secondary building and discard contexts (for specific parallels at Nevalı Çori, see Morsch 2002), contradicting the idea that the elaborated human forms might have been treated differently from the more expediently made animal and abbreviated forms.

Since archaeologists tend to privilege stone over clay, we were interested in determining whether specific types of figurines were deposited in midden as opposed to buildings. We discovered that stone figurines are found in both midden and buildings, which suggests that there was no distinction between the treatment or deposition of stone and clay figurines. Up till the end of the 2006 season, 61 of some 1966 examples are stone, only 3.1 per cent. From a modern perspective, we might expect that carved stone pieces were considered as more labour-intensive, more precious or more ritually charged pieces by their makers. Most of the stone figurines from Çatalhöyük were found during the 1960s, but those excavated since the 1990s with exact provenience suggest that they were deposited no differently from their seemingly humbler clay counterparts. Of the eight stone figurines found during the current excavations, four come from buildings and four from external or unstratified contexts (Table 2). Taking a larger view, this pattern may

Table 1. *Figurine types found in buildings and outside.*

	Anthropo-morphic		Abbreviated		Zoomorphic		Non-diagnostic		Other		Total
Location	**Figs**	**%**	**Figs**	**%**	**Figs**	**%**	**Figs**	**%**	**Figs**	**%**	
Buildings	20	6	50	14	109	31	105	30	65	19	349
External	49	8	72	12	223	38	166	28	80	14	590

Table 2. *Deposition of stone figurines (B. for Building).*

Item	Form	Deposition
1505.X1	Phallus	Midden/construction
4116.D1	Human	unstratified
5189.X1	Abbreviated? (fragment)	B.17 - construction
7814.X1	Human	midden
10264.X1	Human	B.58 – fill
10475.X2	Human	B.42 - fill
11324.X3	Human	B.42 - fill
12102.X1	Human	midden

further indicate that, irrespective of material chosen, there was some consistent classification of 'figurines' for the inhabitants of Çatalhöyük. This should not be assumed *a priori*, as type of material chosen may indicate specific contextual hierarchies of production, use, value, meaning and deposition.

Most Çatalhöyük figurines are from middens rather than houses (Table 1). This is a general pattern across the site for all materials. However, shell, bone and obsidian were periodically curated or cached in houses and these have been interpreted as materials preferred for the crafting of memory or long-term social identity. Since these materials were consistently cached, embedded and buried, it is striking that figurines were not typically treated this way. Depositional practices at other Neolithic sites (see Gebel *et al*. 2002; Kuijt & Chesson 2005; Verhoeven 2002) often indicate protective, magical and ancestral concerns. We have to ask why figurines at Çatalhöyük were not intentionally placed in burials, in foundation deposits, around platforms, ovens and basins, plastered into house features or left on floors. Perhaps ease of manufacture and ubiquity meant that they were considered commonplace and easily reproducible, thus not 'special'. Conversely, an argument could be marshalled to the effect that their very frequency and quotidian characteristics suggest that they were central to the Çatalhöyük lifeworld: they may have operated not in some separate sphere of 'religion' or 'ancestor worship' but, rather, in the practice and negotiation of everyday life. Ideas of cult and religion, while seemingly commonplace in archaeological narratives, do not find much purchase with the actual figurine data at Çatalhöyük.

Like the obsidian, stamp seals, and so on, Çatalhöyük figurines come from secondary deposits, mostly midden and fill (Tables 4 & 5). The midden number is especially high because vast swathes of midden excavated in the 4040 and South areas produced enormous amounts of materials, including figurines, during the 2006 field season. Again it is notable that figurines have not been found intentionally placed on benches, around hearths or buried with individuals but, rather, were retrieved from the mix of materials used to fill houses after abandonment, as well as from other deposits and middens. It has been suggested that both the abandonment of houses and subsequent filling in was underwritten by both practical and symbolic motives, possibly in an attempt to maintain continuity across generations or lineages (Hodder 2006b, Ch. 6). These practices were repetitive, time consuming and meaningfully enacted. Some of the fills were carefully processed or even screened, as in Buildings 1, 4 and 5. The amount of soil that went into filling Building 5 is comparable to the amount of mudbrick and earth that could have been obtained from the destruction of the upper walls and roof (Hodder *et al*. 2007). But there are also cases of houses filled with midden when they were not to be rebuilt, as for Building 2. Earlier, Mellaart (1967) also noted large amounts of burnt material and construction debris in buildings that constituted another kind of fill. Additionally, there is some evidence that different fills were placed in different rooms within a single building at Çatalhöyük. One might deduce that there were various methods appropriate for filling a house in throughout the site's history, and that each was carefully executed (Hodder *et al*. 2007).

Focus on house life-cycles and their distinct processes of infilling, reuse and abandonment provides a practical analytical horizon for the study of figurine work, since here our attention is drawn to process rather than to a defined space or product. Work by Cessford on dating house life-cycles at Çatalhöyük is salient to our analysis, since any easy determination of observable phases for houses is complicated by an elaborate and unending repertoire of rebuilding and replastering practices. Using various measurements, he demonstrates with a reasonable level of agreement that the life-span of houses was from 50 to 80 years (68 per cent probability) or from 45 to 90 (95 per cent probability). These results are broadly comparable with ethnoarchaeology that posits that mudbrick

buildings in semi-arid climates tend to last 50 to 100 years (see Cessford *et al.* 2006).

In order to get at both site-wide and localized patterning, we worked strictly with the volume of sieved fill from individual houses and middens to ascertain the density and type of figurines present. Most useful are those buildings excavated by the current project, particularly those fully excavated, with substantial volumes, and which do not significantly overlap with buildings excavated in the 1960s.

One of our first tasks, then, was to investigate the density of figurines retrieved during the current excavations and to try and work in a limited comparison with the earlier, less reliable, data from Mellaart's excavations where possible. In fact, such a comparative analysis is necessary. If one were to take the Mellaart finds at face value, specifically the published pieces, and thus ignore the wide variation in figurine types, one might posit that two rather different settlements had been dug (Mellaart 1962; 1964; 1965; 1966; 1967; 1975). Mellaart would have uncovered a large number of impressive stone and clay pieces, whereas the new project would have found more mundane clay examples of quadrupeds, horns and bucrania, and abbreviated forms. Although we have found a few impressive examples, the mundane dominate numerically.

Might this discrepancy be explained by differences in excavation methods and goals or does it, in fact, present some kind of meaningful patterning? Clearly, we need some dialogue between the two periods of excavation, despite the fact that exact contexts are not available, given the lack of specificity in recording during the 1960s (Todd 1976). The scale and speed of the early work uncovered a dazzling array of materials but lacked the benefit of the current team's contextual methods. This is evinced very clearly with the figurine corpus. As was typical of the 1960s, most of the noteworthy objects (totalling only 277 figurines) were hand selected while most of those considered more 'ordinary' were neither recorded nor kept. Moreover, since Mellaart's workmen were rapidly excavating one house per day, it is not surprising that they did not record the exact provenience of each figurine. Excavated deposits were not sieved either, which accounts for the differences in retrieval rates between the two projects.

One way to explore this scenario is to re-excavate Mellaart, to literally work in his areas and through his spoil heaps. Under the aegis of a wider EU educational programme called TEMPER, a children's summer school is conducted every year (Bartu Candan *et al.* 2007). Part of the children's activities on site is to excavate and sieve the 1960s spoil heap and we now have a much clearer idea of what Mellaart's team missed, overlooked or even discarded. Our numbers indicate that he missed significant amounts of whole figurines (abbreviated and zoomorphic), along with figurine fragments, non-diagnostic pieces, shaped clay pieces and scrap that is probably ceramic debitage (see also Morsch 2002). The school project removed approximately 23,050 litres of dry sieve from Mellaart's spoil over several years,[2] retrieving some 52 clearly identifiable figurines to date. This gives us a density of 2.51 figurines per kilolitre, rather high in comparison with the buildings on site (see discussion and Table 3 below), and a clear indication of the materials that were missed in the 1960s.

Materials from the current excavations in Mellaart's area (now called the South Area) also contribute to balancing out the profile of the 1960s excavation. The current figurine data base includes these older materials, recorded in appropriate detail, yet, since contextual information is missing or minimal for most of these finds, they cannot be used in analyses that directly target patterning over time and space. Our analyses of figurine densities are based on data collected from the recent excavations at Çatalhöyük. The densities presented here are the ratio of figurines to kilolitre of the total material excavated from buildings prior dry sieving for individual small finds. Despite protocol stipulating that every unit excavated should be documented and its dry sieve volume and small finds recorded, several points regarding our excavation data must be made. First, the dry sieve volumes reported for each unit, while well noted in the excavation reports, are not the most accurate estimates possible, given the excavation conditions, not absolute quantities; but they indicate the relative proportion of contents from each building at this stage in the excavation process. Second, we do not include in our analyses buildings that have only a small proportion excavated by the current project, such as those in the South Area where Mellaart left small portions of houses unexcavated. These tend to have few or no figurines and yield almost no deposit for dry sieve, such as Buildings 7, 8, 16, 21, 22, and 40. Other buildings, in the new 4040 Area, only partly excavated at the time of writing, will not be considered in detail here, but in future work. These include Buildings 47, 54, 55 and so on (see Table 3).

Building biographies

As outlined above, figurines and shaped clay objects are largely found in secondary contexts (Table 4); within buildings, figurines most commonly appear in fill (Table 5). Only very occasionally have they been found

even near floors in buildings. In the current excavations, we do not see the patterns that Mellaart evinced, namely that anthropomorphic figurines were retrieved from special or cultic areas associated with features such as platforms, shrines, grain bins and so on. For example, Mellaart (1964) described finding a 'goddess figurine' painted red in an associated shrine. We too have found red paint on clay figurines but none from such grandiose contexts since the whole notion of what constituted a 'shrine' has been cogently deconstructed (Hodder 1996). Mellaart often claimed that figurines were found only in 'shrines', whereas the more rigorous excavations over the past decade have shown them to be consistently in rubbish and fills alongside vast quantities of animal bone, plant remains, ground and chipped stone and other small finds.

In general, we must remember that figurines and fragments of figurines were deposited in these fills and dumps alongside many other cultural and organic materials. Although these are secondary deposition contexts, such assemblages still provide useful information concerning the range of figurine practice at the site. While the broader site-wide patterning suggests that all figurines were treated equally and randomly, the resolution at the building level could present a somewhat different story. In the buildings, the assemblages vary significantly, from quantity of figurines to the assemblages of form types. However inconclusive, certain building complexes are quite suggestive.

In terms of quantity and density, Building 3 presents a striking example. Excavated by the BACH team over several seasons, this house produced the largest quantity of figurine materials (141), over four times more than the building with the next highest quantity (Table 3). This high number in itself may not necessarily be significant and we must also compare the Building 3 figurine density with others from the same levels (VII–VI): Buildings 1, 5 and 49. Building 49, which dates to Level VI, had a similar and even slightly higher density than Building 3's. However, Building 49 had a significantly lower dry sieve volume and figurine total than Building 3, and its assemblage, comprising almost exclusively quadrupeds, is rather different from the spread of figurine types most commonly found within buildings (see discussion below). The composition of the Building 3's assemblage, on the other hand, matches closely the more common pattern we see in buildings across the site. Given these differences, comparisons between these two buildings are rather uninformative. More telling is the comparison of Building 3 with other fully excavated Level VII–VI buildings that have comparable dry sieve volumes. Buildings 1 and 5 from Levels VII–V are interesting in this regard: by comparison, Building 3 does appear to have a significantly higher density of figurines (Table 3). This may suggest that Building 3 was associated with more intensive figurine activities. Although the fragmentary nature of the assemblage and its secondary deposition do not offer detailed information on these activities, there is some indication that figurine quantities are higher in the northern 'clean' part of the house than in the southern 'dirty' (i.e. occupation) part of the house. At present, we do not have densities for these specific areas and cannot confirm if these numbers reflect a significant difference in deposition.

Yet the general picture of Building 3 does show one important aspect of figurine practice, namely that, regardless of form, most clay figurals seem to have been very commonplace, disposable and mobile. The midden associated with Building 3, Space 85, has a very high density compared to the building and other midden spaces from Levels VII–VI across the site (Table 3). Furthermore, the composition of the Building 3 and Space 85 assemblages is very similar. Zoomorphic forms are the most common, followed by abbreviated and then anthropomorphic forms, and the figurines from both areas are very fragmentary. Evidence from Building 3 does suggest, as we observe across the site, that figurine practices were not necessarily confined to the house interior. The high density of figurines in midden rather supports the idea that these were everyday objects and practices that circulated between different spaces and contexts. The similarity in type distribution of the midden and Building 3 assemblages lends further support to the idea that clay figurines were rather 'mundane' objects. There does not appear to be a certain type of figurine that is treated differently by the occupants of this building; rather, all types were found with equal frequency in buildings and in midden.

This picture clearly deviates from the traditional idea of figurine practice at Çatalhöyük espoused by Mellaart (1967) and Gimbutas (1989; 1991). If Building 3 did, in fact, house some form of intensified figurine production and activity, then these practices clearly did not articulate any kind of reverent religious or ritual expression, especially those related to notions of a 'mother goddess' or fertility.

In terms of assemblages associated with particular buildings, Buildings 42 and 49 stand out from the rest. Building 42, in the South Area (Fig. 4), has revealed a number of interesting characteristics and associations. Although severely truncated and therefore not a complete building, excavators were able to reveal the southern part of the building, which was extremely

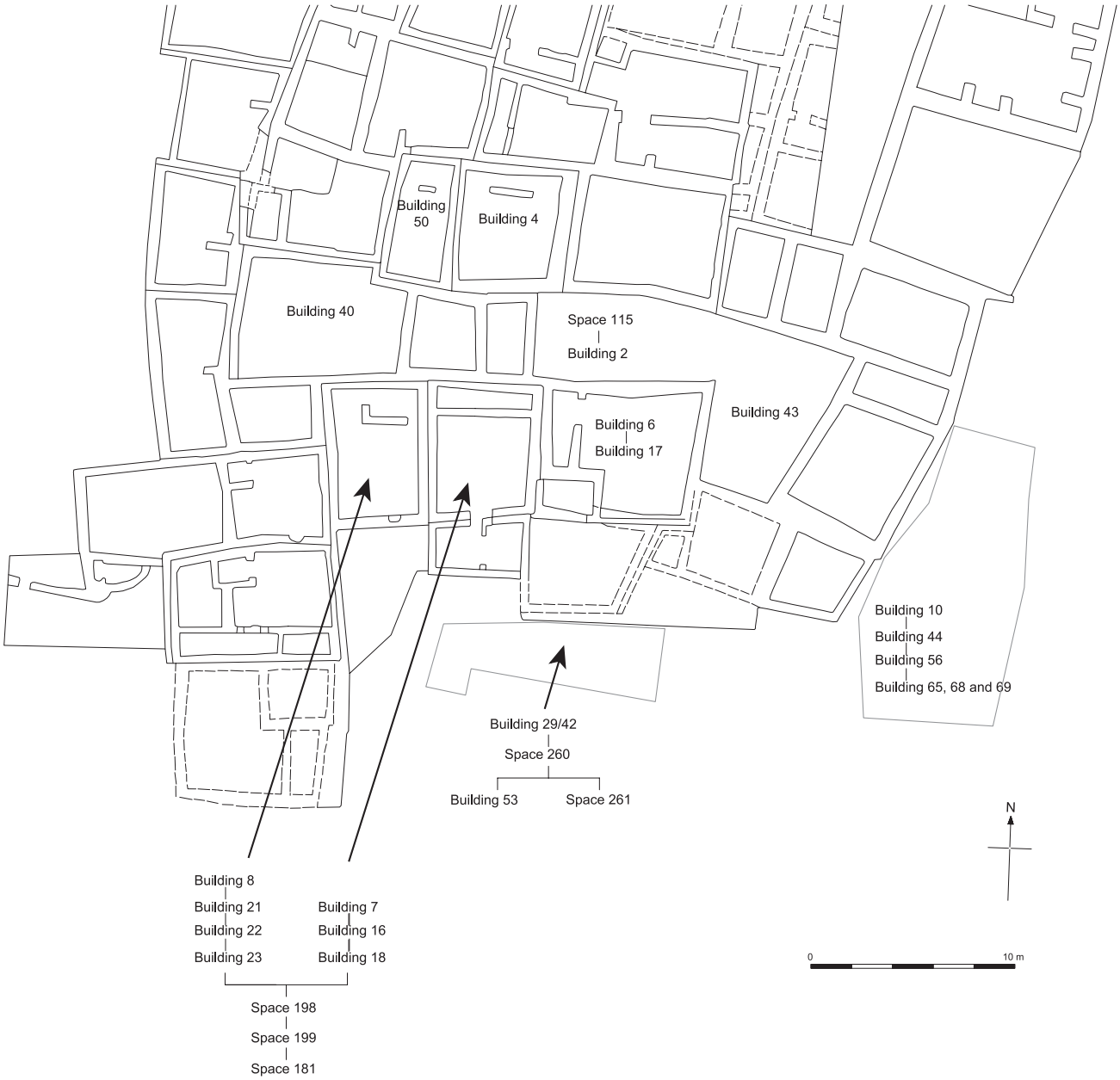

Figure 4. *Plan of the South Area, Çatalhöyük.*

well preserved (Chaffey & McCann 2004). They noted a particular division of space where activity focused around two platforms and a bench in the eastern part of the building. Initially, the excavators were inclined to interpret this space as perhaps 'different' from the typical Çatalhöyük house. The space formed a single layout that was maintained throughout the building's life, with the platform and bench features, 'clean' and 'dirty' spaces remaining constant. However, such conservation of layout and division of space is typical of many houses, and while Building 42 has some interesting features, it is not so different as to support a claim that its purpose was less 'domestic' or more 'ritual'.

There are, nevertheless, some interesting aspects of Building 42's assemblage. A foundation burial containing a female holding a plastered skull was dug. Second, the only two figurines to come out of Building 42 (Figs. 5–6) were, notably, both elaborated human forms depicting limbs and head or face features, and made of stone. Such human stone figurines have been the rarest finds of the current excavations. While their deposition in building and redeposited burial fill sug-

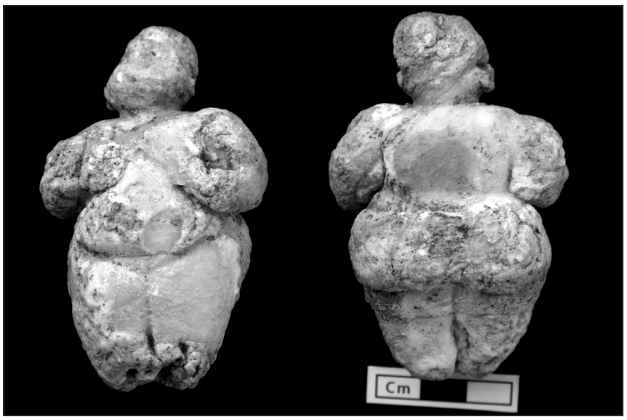

Figure 5. *10475.X2: front (L) and back (R) views (7.5 cm high × 4.9 cm wide × 3.5 cm thick, 84 g).*

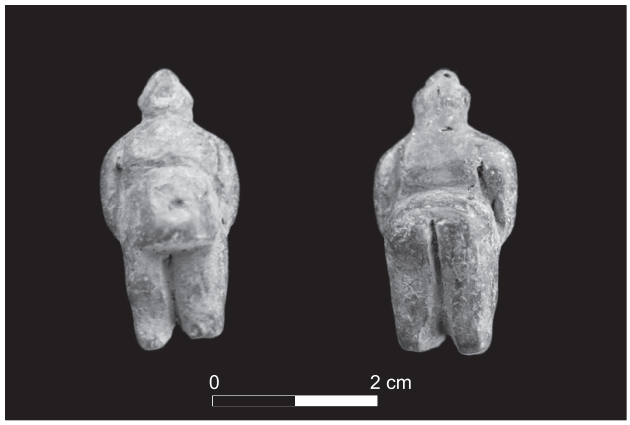

Figure 6. *11324.X3: front (L) and back (R) views (2.8 cm high × 1.4 cm wide × 1.1 cm thick, 2.5 g).*

gests that these were not highly revered, 'inalienable' objects, the plastered skull burial and figurine forms associated with Building 42 might articulate a focus on persons or certain treatments or aspects of the human body. Given the particularities of Çatalhöyük house life cycles, we might consider the possibility of the biography or use lives of certain figurines as being connected to a particular house or place. This idea does not imply that such figures were static religious objects of worship; rather, they might have belonged to a certain spatiotemporal setting or genealogical lineage. Although the effort made to preserve and maintain the building in its original plan is not unique to this house, such concern, coupled with the interment of a rather elaborate burial assemblage and durable human figurines in house and burial fill, does seem to articulate a special concern for human relations within this household during its main use and perhaps afterwards. These practices — one concealed and carefully structured, the others haphazard yet very durable — somehow served to bring an intense focus to this household: perhaps its multigenerational duration reinforced a concern for durability and memory. Statements crafted in durable media or contexts in some sense strive to become objects of memory, as if created for descendents. Even when these memory anchors are not visible, they may continue to 'work' in being remembered, forgotten and rediscovered.

It is also interesting to consider the different scales of these two figurines. While 10475.X2 appears to depict a female form with hands held up to its chest and is of substantial size, 11324.X3 is a small androgynous form. Given the occurrence of both relatively large (palm-sized) and extremely small (fingertip-sized) elaborated forms within the Çatalhöyük assemblage, we have often wondered about the significance of this difference. We have noted previously that the human figurines tend to receive a rather non-sexualized treatment; genitalia are not depicted, but rather buttocks, stomachs and breasts are emphasized (Nakamura & Meskell 2006). *In toto*, the human figurines from the current Çatalhöyük excavations do not articulate the reproductive life cycle of pregnancy, birth, adolescence and death. We have found only one figure possibly depicting pregnancy and no examples depicting any of the other events. Both of the Building 42 figures display exaggerated stomachs and buttocks, which are redolent of a non-generative sexuality or personhood rather than a focus on reproductive life.

Building 49, in the north part of the 4040 Area (Fig. 7), presents a very different scenario. Almost all figurines found here were expediently made animal quadrupeds (14 quadrupeds or fragments thereof and two non-diagnostic pieces), eight of which were found in a cluster (7958; Fig. 8). Building 49 is still under excavation but it appears to have been occupied for a considerable time, based on the number of wall plaster applications and possibly the number of burials. Intriguingly, its complex stratigraphy indicates that it was subject to constant alteration and modification. At least superficially, this building seems to have a strong association with animals, since both the building infill and post retrieval pit (13641) contained horn cores (some deliberately plastered) and other interesting animal bones. Russell *et al*. (2004) regard the former as a large spread of feasting remains and installations, and the latter animal bone assemblage as something atypical for the site, given the extensive range of taxa represented in a fairly small assemblage (at least three different species of birds, large amounts of eggshell and fish bone, as well as equid, pig, deer and dog; small quantities of cattle bone, antler, some turtle shell;

Figure 7. *Plan of the 4040 Area showing buildings mentioned in the text.*

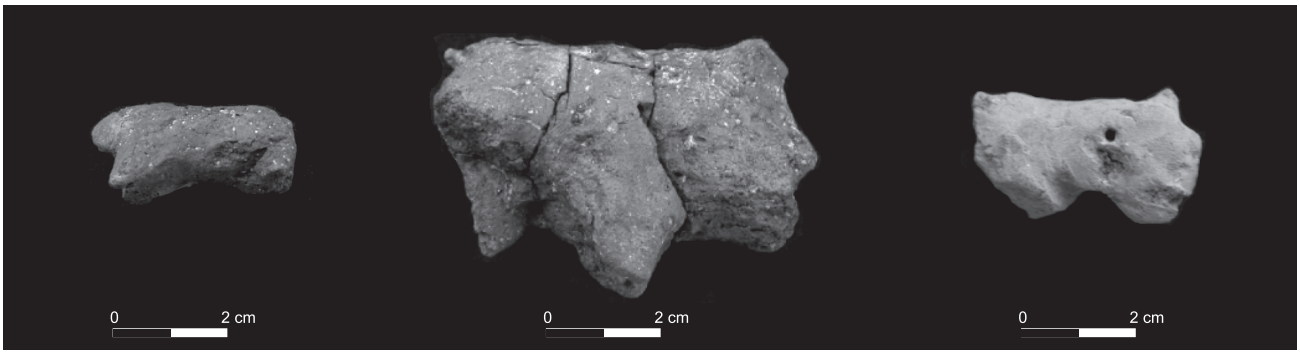

Figure 8. *Figurines from Building 49: left, 7958.X5, quadruped; centre, 7958.X2, quadruped; right, 7938.X1, quadruped with 'stab mark' from wall baulk.*

a hedgehog bone; and two or probably three juvenile sheep and at least one perinatal sheep/goat). The faunal team suggests that this sequence may represent the remains of a special meal or closely spaced series of special meals.

While the composition and density of such faunal assemblages are thought-provoking, these deposits do not necessarily indicate feasting events or the concomitant interpretations of 'ritual' activity. This building could also be read as more generally evoking a place of human-animal relations, perhaps those of a more regular or repetitive nature. Other notable features of Building 49 include several layers of painted plaster on the northern and western walls. Excavators note that on the western wall, paintings consisting of red and black geometric designs appear to have been plastered over relatively quickly and then repainted with an identical design in the exact same location every time. This all suggests some kind of frequent, repetitive activity possibly related to animal control, processing and/or consumption.

Certain aspects of the figurine assemblage in this building may lend support to this idea. As mentioned briefly earlier, the quadrupeds are rather expediently made. While they are certainly recognizable as animal forms, their proportions and renderings are not naturalistic (Fig. 8). Rather, efforts seemed to focus on the treatment of these forms perhaps immediately after their fabrication. For instance, eight of the 12 quadruped figurines bear some evidence of intentional puncture marks (four), breakage (two) or deformation (two). The other four figurines are fragmentary and inconclusive in this regard. At least the puncture marks and deformation must have been carried out while the clay was still plastic.

These characteristics would seem to indicate that it was the process of making, acting upon and discarding or depositing these figures that was deemed salient — not the final product. While these and other events associated with Building 49 to some extent appear to have been 'ritualized', it is important not automatically to assume that they comprised special rites radically set apart from everyday life. In fact, it is quite possible that they were part of quotidian or regular activities.

Buildings 3, 42 and 49 offer very different views of figurine practice. It must be emphasized, however, that these assemblages have been discussed because they diverge from site-wide patterning. While such examples suggest various uses for different kinds of figurines, in most other buildings such patterning is not evident and we are left with a combination of figurine forms in different depositional contexts. Moreover, we do have a few striking examples of buildings that do not have any figurines, notably Buildings 52 and 60 (Table 3, Fig. 7).

There does not seem to be a consistent correlation between elaborated architectural features such as plastered bucrania and the presence of figurines, elaborated or otherwise. In contrast to Building 42, no figurines were recovered from the closure phase of Building 52 (Bogdan 2005), which contained rooms with bucrania and benches with protruding horns (Space 94). This particular building phase, with its evocative features, would definitely have been categorized as a 'shrine' during Mellaart's excavations. Because the entire building was burned at high temperatures, other specialists have drawn attention to the striking preservation of a whole range of finds. So far, however, the building has not produced a single figurine. As the authors make clear, 'Building 52 has provided the richest combination of faunal, botanical, and lithic assemblages of all the buildings uncovered since work at the site renewed in 1993'(Twiss *et al.* 2008). The house was burned

along with a household assemblage including food in storage bins, grinding stones on the floors, the horned bench intact and bucrania fixed to the wall (Bogdan 2006). We can also add that Building 52 was a typical Çatalhöyük house in the sense that it had platforms, bins, niches and so on — it was neither under-elaborated nor overly elaborated. In one bin, excavators retrieved an antler tool, a stone grinder, an obsidian blade, animal bones and a sheep horn. It may be the kind of context where one would expect to also find a figurine, especially if one were to take Mellaart's recording at face value. It is compelling to consider what this very notable absence might suggest about the status of figurines.

For Building 52 (see Fig. 7), Twiss *et al*. (2008) posit three scenarios: intentional burning, accidental conflagration, and a combination of these two events. If we consider the first, then the occupants did not consider figurines a necessary part of the ritualized event nor any filling events that followed. If this was an accidental event, then it is also noteworthy that figurines were not part of the household assemblage associated with either ritual or mundane activities during its occupation. The third might lead us to consider that figurines were not static objects to be placed in houses but, rather, could live a mobile existence and may even have spent most of their lives outside. The higher density of figurines in middens and external spaces as opposed to buildings supports this suggestion. Another interpretation is that figurines might not have been typically kept within houses at all times but, rather, produced and employed at specific times.

Building 60 presents another context in which we might expect to find figurines but do not. While this building was completely devoid of any figurines, its associated midden, Space 279/280 (Level V), produced 159 figurines. This midden was also possibly contemporary with Building 66, which also has no figurines to date. This scenario lends weight to the argument that most figurine practice was highly flexible and not anchored to the interior of houses.

Building by building, the assemblages suggest a very diverse set of practices. Figurine assemblages, like building plans, seem to conform to certain general patterns, yet they also demonstrate remarkable flexibility and diversity. In the best cases, the consideration of figurine patterning alongside other building features and practices suggests some compelling notions related to a house's character and biography, its associated activities and the concerns of its inhabitants. The Building 42 scenario, with human figurines and a plastered skull burial, might support the idea that some figures were meaningful or 'working' objects that were essential parts of the house. Furthermore, their affective presence might have continued even after the house was buried. In contrast, the animal-rich Building 49 assemblage suggests that some figurines were more spatially and temporally circumscribed by specific locales and practices. The absence of figurines in phases such as the closure of Building 52 contrasts with the ubiquity of figurines in building infill (e.g. Building 3) or with a ritualized 'closing event' (Building 17, discussed below). That Building 52 had no figurines but contained a room with striking architectural features casts further doubt on a tacit connection between figurine work and ritual or religious practice.

The ubiquity of figurines in fill and midden initially led us to ask if some figurines were made primarily for discard. Unlike other materials such as clay balls and obsidian, figurines are not found stored in caches or bins inside buildings, nor are they embedded in architectural features, like certain animal bones. Relatively easy to make, many clay figurals might have been quickly made and quickly discarded. A few deformed pieces suggest that the clay was still somewhat wet and plastic at the time of discard. In other cases, however, patterns of wear contradict such a theory. Much has been made of a broken figurine (5043.X1) in Building 17, where the head and body were found within an ashy fill associated with a hearth. It has been interpreted as part of a ritualized 'closing event' (Hamilton 2006); but it is equally possible that the figurine was accidentally broken as the house was filled. Another head of a similar type, though missing the body, was discovered in the fill of this same house (Farid 1999).

Figurines are also commonly found in exterior middens. Some of these are contemporary and associated with certain buildings, while others cannot be connected to particular buildings and habitations. Space 85 can be associated with the house, Building 3, and Space 279/280 with Building 60 (see Table 3). In both cases, the figurine density is significantly higher in the external midden than in the buildings, and, although Building 60 is still under excavation, no figurines have been found in this building thus far. We should not be surprised that there are higher densities in middens, and little or no presence of figurines in adjacent houses. Activities employing figurines such as narrative, play and performance, as well as their original manufacture and decoration, might have taken place outside. Their ubiquity in dumps points to the highly disposable nature and perhaps brief use life of most figurines.

Table 3 . *Numbers and densities of figurines in buildings and external spaces.* [1, 3]

Buildings	Levels represented	Portion excavated	Notes on % excavated	Dry sieve volume (kl)	Figurines	Figurines/ kl
1	VII–VI	completed	Defined in 1993–4 scrape; exposed to surface erosion. Fully dug by HT, 1995–8.	60.555	30	0.495
2	IX	⅔ ongoing	Upper walls defined by MT. Infill & occupation fully dug by HT in Space 117. Smaller room, Space 116, only half excavated of infill, 1995–9.	30.446	24	0.788
3	VII–VI	completed	Defined in 1993–4 scrape. Surface erosion. Dug by BACH under HT 1996–2003.	35.322	141	3.992
Sp. 87 (room)	VII–VI	½ ongoing	Defined in 1993–4 scrape. Surface erosion. Dug by BACH under HT.	0.968	4	4.132
Sp. 88 (room)	VII–VI	completed	Defined in 1993–4 scrape. Surface erosion. Dug by BACH under HT.	8.440	13.5	1.600
Sp. 89 (room)	VII–VI	completed	Defined in 1993–4 scrape. Surface erosion. Fully dug by BACH under HT.	7.250	16.5	2.276
4	VIII	⅓ ongoing	HT dug half infill and some occupation sequence in 1995–2001.	5.195	2	0.385
5	VIII–VI	½ on display	Building 5 infill dug down to the latest occupation sequence by HT.	37.564	19	0.506
6	VIII	completed	MT dug larger room as Shrine E. VIII.10. HT completed excavation and dug smaller room.	31.508	17	0.540
7	VIII	completed	Dug by MT as Shrine E. VIII.8. HT excavated small stub of the west wall plus small niche in the east wall.	0.362	3	8.287
8	VII	completed	Dug by MT as Shrine E.VII.1. HT dug west wall and between wall fills (between B.8 and Spaces 168 & 169)	0.361	6	16.62
10	III – IV	completed	Dug by Thessaloniki team under HT 1996–7 and HT from 2003. Surface erosion. Walls and basal deposits only. Features redefined as belonging to underlying Building 44.	6.232	1	0.160
16	IX	completed	Dug by MT as Shrine E. IX. 8. HT excavated a small wedge of occupation sequence in 1999.	0.035	6	171.429
17	IX	½ ongoing	Below Building 6. Building 17 infill and 3 occupation phases in the two rooms dug by HT in 1999.	36.838	22	0.597
18	X	½	Dug by MT as Shrine E.X.8 infill down to occupation sequence. Features and floors dug prior to deep sounding in 1963.	3.305	13	3.933
21	VIII	completed	Excavated by MT as Shrine E.VIII.1. Only SE stub of wall dug by HT.	0.000	1	-
22	IX	completed	MT excavated all except walls as Shrine E.IX.1. HT dug East wall and sliver of unexcavated fill against wall.	0.075	1	13.333
23	X	½ ongoing	Dug by MT as Shrine E.X.1. HT, 1999, dug remaining occupation sequence and eastern wall. Small room to N requires full excavation.	9.365	5	0.534
29/42	V–IV	completed	Partly dug as B.29 in 2002 for the South Shelter's foundations; the rest numbered B.42 on resuming dig, 2003.	1.131	2	1.768
40	VI VII	completed	Dug by MT as E.VII.2 (Space107) and E.VII.12 (Space 108). HT excavated remnants in 1995.	0.000	1	-
43	VIII	less than 5% ongoing	Dug by MT as Shrine E.VIII.27. Re-opened by HT 2004 with partial excavation of some features.	6.990	2	0.286
44	IV	completed	Complete sequence dug by HT 2004–5.	1.152	4	3.472
45	V–IV	⅓	Dug by HT 2004. Some surface erosion. Defined and excavated of infill to latest occupation horizon.	0.400	1	2.500
47	IV–III	20% completed	Excavated by HT 2004–5. Heavy surface erosion.	0.000	13	-
49	VII–VI	¾ ongoing	HT 2003. Defined at top of mound: some erosion. Small but complex and apparently long lived building. Excavated of infill to mid occupation sequence.	3.228	13	4.027
50	VII	completed	Dug by MT as Shrine E.VII.9 and re-opened by HT 1995 as Space 112. Expanded 2003 when complete building incorporated within South Shelter.	0.000	0	0.000
51/52	VI–V	⅔ ongoing	HT 2003. Some surface erosion. Defined originally as two buildings, 51 and 52, later as two phases of same building.	0.030	0	0.000
53	VI	⅓ completed	Dug by HT below B.29/42 sequence on S edge of South Area. Full extent unknown.	6.379	2	0.314
56	V–IV	completed	Excavated by HT; below B.44.	0.015	7	466.667
57	IV–III	⅓ ongoing	Dug by HT 2004. Surface erosion; heavily cut by Byzantine foundation trenches. Defined and excavated of infill to latest occupation horizon.	0.026	0	0.000
58	IV–III	⅓ completed	Dug by HT 2004. Surface erosion. Defined and emptied of infill with partial investigation of some features and occupation phases.	0.060	0	0.000

Table 3 . *(cont.)*

Buildings	Levels represented	Portion excavated	Notes on % excavated	Dry sieve volume (kl)	Figurines	Figurines/ kl
59	VI–V	completed	Dug by HT 2006. Surface erosion to W. Sealed by B60 to E. Complete sequence of infill and occupation dug except walls.	0.180	0	0.000
60	V–IV	⅓ completed	Dug by HT 2006. Surface erosion; only E half survived. Defined and dug shallow infill over floors and features.	1.44	3	2.080
61	I–0	½ completed	Full extent unknown. TP under HT excavated infill and occupation sequence.	1.878	0	0.000
62	II–I	½ completed	Full extent unknown. TP under HT excavated infill and occupation sequence.	3.251	0	0.000
63	V–VI	¼ ongoing	Full extent unknown. Heavily eroded. IST under HT excavated infill: occupation sequence partly investigated.	0.030	0	0.000
64	V–VI	⅓ ongoing	HT excavated down to latest occupation sequence 2006. Heavily truncated.	0.210	0	0.000
65	VI–V	completed	HT excavated. Below B.56. Infill and complete occupation sequence.	0	2	–
66	VI–V	none ongoing	Excavated by HT 2006. Walls defined and building number allocated but building sequence unexcavated.	0.040	0	0.000
67	IV	20% ongoing	HT dug infill and part of occupation sequence, 2006. Heavily eroded.	1.448	0	0.000
68	VI–V	20% completed	Full extent unknown. HT, 2006, dug sequence of infill and occupation.	0.120	0	0.000
69	VI–V	⅛ completed	Full extent of building unknown. HT dug sequence of infill and occupation.	0.000	0	0.000
Space 121	IV–II	unknown	Thessaloniki Team under HT, 1996	0.015	5	333.333
Space 229	VI–V	⅓ ongoing	Excavated by HT 2004. Surface erosion. Defined and excavated of infill to latest occupation phases.	0.120	1	8.333
External spaces						
60	V–IV	less than 10% ongoing	Open area defined by HT, 2003, between central zone of buildings and those to north.	6.880	39	5.670
85	VII–VI	less than 10% ongoing	Defined by BACH under HT, 1993, in surface scrape. Half of the space incorporated in BACH shelter, 1996. Part dug to relate midden deposits to B.3.	1.837	54	29.396
106	VII	20% completed	Dug by MT as House E.VII.16 and dug further by HT in 1995. Space 106 created by surrounding standing structures.	5.092	2	0.393
107	VII		See B.40	1.215	5	4.115
107–108 Transition	VII		See B.40	0.735	3	4.082
108	VII		See B.40	5.397	7	1.297
115	VIII	⅓ ongoing	Partly excavated by MT; full extent unknown	38.484	66	1.715
117	IX		See B.2.	21.992	108	4.911
181	pre-Level XII	unknown	Interpreted as off-site midden. Extent unknown; overlain by Level XII.	34.285	84	2.450
226	V–III	unknown ongoing	Defined by HT in 2003 between central zone of buildings and those to south.	14.780	15	1.015
227	IV–III		See B.58.	0.120	2	16.667
260	VI	unknown ongoing	Area of midden below B.42, therefore heavily eroded. Partly excavated for South Shelter foundations in 2002.	1.440	4	2.778
261	VI	unknown ongoing	Earlier phase of Space 260. Sealed by B.42 and associated with use of B.53. Midden partly excavated for South Shelter foundations in 2002.	10.563	51	4.828
268	IV–II	¼ ongoing	Defined by HT, 2003. in central zone of buildings. Large area of midden excavated in discreet areas in 2005 and 2006 seasons.	3.190	11	3.448
279	V		Same as Space 268.	17.125	85	4.964
280	V		Same as Space 268.	12.540	65	5.183
283	V–IV		Same as B.63.	0.030	1	33.333
294	V–IV	unknown ongoing	Defined by IST in 2006, extent unknown.	0.000	3	-
295	IV/V	unknown ongoing	Defined by IST in 2006, extent unknown.	0.000	1	-
301	V–IV	unknown ongoing	Defined by IST in 2006, extent unknown.	0.000	1	-
306	IV/V	unknown ongoing	Area defined by HT 2003; full extent unknown.	5.680	1	0.176

Table 4. *Figurine distribution in excavated Buildings and Spaces*[4]

Level	Bdg or Space	Total	Primary			Secondary			Internal midden		
			volume (kl)	figurines	density	volume (kl)	figurines	density	volume (kl)	figurines	density
IV	1	0	0.000	0	0.000	0.365	0	0.000	0.000	0	0.000
	10	0	0.000	0	0.000	0.410	0	0.000	0.000	0	0.000
	44	4	0.090	0	0.000	1.062	4	3.766	0.000	0	0.000
	47	1	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	1	-	0.000	0	0.000
V–IV	1	2	0.320	0	0.000	1.041	2	1.921	0.000	0	0.000
V	45	1	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	1	–	0.000	0	0.000
	56	7	0.000	0	0.000	0.015	7	466.667	0.000	0	0.000
	Sp. 229	1	0.000	0	0.000	0.120	1	8.333	0.000	0	0.000
VI–V	1	28	6.728	5	0.743	27.656	23	0.832	0.000	0	0.000
	5	0	0.000	0	0.000	5.433	0	0.000	0.000	0	0.000
	65	2	0.000	1	-	0.000	1	-	0.000	0	0.000
VI	3	143	7.245	5	0.690	25.336	116	4.579	2.741	22	7.661
	Sp. 87	4	0.000	0	0.000	0.986	4	4.057	0.000	0	0.000
	Sp. 88	13.5	0.835	0	0.000	2.606	13.5	5.180	0.000	0	0.000
	Sp. 89	16.5	3.094	2.5	0.808	4.336	14	3.229	0.000	0	0.000
	6	1	0.000	0	0.000	0.330	1	3.030	0.000	0	0.000
	40	1	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	1	-	0.000	0	0.000
	49	13	0.000	0	0.000	0.465	13	27.957	0.000	0	0.000
VII–VI	1	0	0.000	0	0.000	23.834	0	0.000	0.000	0	0.000
	5	19	0.030	0	0.000	32.101	19	0.592	0.000	0	0.000
VII	2	0	0.000	0	0.000	0.020	0	0.000	0.000	0	0.000
	7	0	0.000	0	0.000	0.120	0	0.000	0.000	0	0.000
	8	6	0.000	0	0.000	0.360	6	16.667	0.000	0	0.000
	40	0	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	0	0.000
VIII	1	0	0.000	0	0.000	0.105	0	0.000	0.000	0	0.000
	2	0	0.000	0	0.000	0.773	0	0.000	0.000	0	0.000
	4	2	0.405	0	0.000	4.790	2	0.418	0.000	0	0.000
	6	16	0.000	1	-	31.178	15	0.481	0.000	0	0.000
	7	3	0.000	0	0.000	0.240	0	0.000	0.000	3	-
	17	4	0.000	0	0.000	6.665	4	0.600	0.000	0	0.000
	21	1	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	1	-	0.000	0	0.000
IX	2	24	0.398	1	2.513	29.060	21	0.723	0.195	2	10.256
	16	6	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	6	-	0.000	0	0.000
	17	17	0.000	0	0.000	24.730	17	0.687	0.000	0	0.000
	18	0	0.000	0	0.000	0.060	0	0.000	0.000	0	0.000
	22	1	0.000	0	0.000	0.075	1	13.333	0.000	0	0.000
X	17	1	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	1	-	0.000	0	0.000
	18	13	0.000	0	0.000	3.245	13	4.006	0.000	0	0.000
	23	5	0.385	3	7.792	8.980	2	0.223	0.000	0	0.000

Table 5. *Figurine types by context: all Buildings.*

Context	Anthropomorphic	Zoomorphic	Abbreviated	Non-diagnostic	Other/unknown	Totals
Construction/make-up/packing	1	23	4	19	16	63
Fill	11	57	29	54	31	181
Floors	2	14	5	17	13	51
Midden	5	9	9	8	5	36
Other (back-fill, animal hole, unknown)	1	2	3	4	0	11
Total	**20**	**105**	**50**	**102**	**65**	**342**

Table 6. *Figurine types by Level (CH = current digs, M = Mellaart digs, F = Figural, I = Indeterminate, ND = non-diagnostic).*[5]

Level	Anthropomorphic				Abbreviated				Zoomorphic				Other	ND	Scrap	Totals: Forms		Grand totals
	CH		M		CH		M		CH		M							
	F	I	F	I	F	I	F	I	F	I	F	I				CH	M	
II	0	0	11.5	1	2	0	0	0	8	0	0	1	2	1	1	10	13.5	27.5
III	2	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	6	0	2	12	5	25
IV	1	1	2.5	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	5	3.5	9.5
V–IV	0	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	11	6	0	0	0	7	0	34	0	41
V	21	3	2	0	5	4	2	0	43	17	1	0	13	43	15	93	5	169
VI–V	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	7	6	0	0	3	8	0	19	0	30
VI	7	3	33	0	32	11	36	0	65	41	65	0	14	80	1	159	134	388
VII–VI	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	0	0	1	6	0	12	0	19
VII	3	0	5	0	9	0	1	0	3	0	2	0	5	1	2	15	8	31
VIII	12	3	1	0	15	0	1	0	28	2	20	0	19	6	6	60	22	113
IX	15	3	0	0	6	0	0	0	8	4	0	0	9	15	0	36	0	60
X	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	0	0	0	7	4	9	0	20
XII	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
pre–XII	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	0	0	0	47	0	6	32	0	85
Subtotals	***72***	***14***	***60***	***1***	***87***	***15***	***41***	***0***	***220***	***89***	***89***	***1***	***119***	***175***	***37***	***497***	***192***	***1020***
unassigned	27	7	14	3	32	10	21	0	63	31	32	0	25	52	16	170	70	333
MEL backfill/spoil	-	-	1	3	-	-	21	1	-	-	18	8	10	19	8	-	52	89
Totals	**99**	**21**	**75**	**7**	**119**	**25**	**83**	**1**	**283**	**120**	**139**	**9**	**154**	**246**	**61**	**667**	**314**	**1442**

Social patterning

Importantly for scholars interested in the social dynamics of Çatalhöyük, we are interested in exploring meanings associated with the spatial and temporal variation of figurine types. Inferences about patterning are usually mobilized to discuss theories of change around ritual, gender and status. Since Mellaart's influential ideas about matriarchy and mother goddesses, other scholars have offered theories concerning figurine patterning at the site (Hamilton 1996; 2006; Voigt 2000). However, we have to be aware that such analyses tend to assume equivalence between excavation methods of the 1960s and the 1990s.

Hamilton (1996; 2006) has suggested that the figurine corpus shows 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 later, when female figures become common. Most of Mellaart's 'mother goddess' figurines (22 of 60 human figurines found) come from Levels II –VI. Of the seven from Level II, six derive from Mellaart's Shrine A.1. While the clustering of female figures in the later levels is certainly thought-provoking, by itself this evidence for a shift in ideology is not compelling. Voigt (2000)

also arrives at a similar conclusion when examining the same data. Regarding the anthropomorphic types, Hamilton (2006, 205) proposes that human representations become more common in Level VI and dominate in Level V, and 'humanoids' (what we call 'abbreviated') cease after Level V. However, such arguments are difficult to substantiate with the present data. Although we currently have no completely excavated late buildings with figurines (Levels III–II), the present project has excavated two external spaces with figurines dating to these later levels. Space 226 is a midden that spans Levels V–III; most of the 15 figurines from this context are indeterminate forms, with the clear figurals all being zoomorphic. Similarly, external midden Space 268 from Level II produced 11 figures of zoomorphic and abbreviated forms. These numbers somewhat balance Mellaart's predominantly anthropomorphic finds and also challenge Hamilton's claim that abbreviated forms cease after Level V (see Table 6).

Over all, when we consider the distribution of the materials more closely, many of these previous assertions are based on problematic data. For instance, 633 figurines have come from Levels XII to VI,[6] and most of these were recovered by the current project (Table 6). In contrast, until the 2006 season,[7] only 62 figurines could be assigned to Levels VI/V to II, and many of these were recovered by Mellaart's project in the 1960s. 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 the summer school excavations on Mellaart's spoil, that have turned up numerous animal, horn and abbreviated figures (Table 6). Furthermore, the dry sieve volumes from the current excavations (Table 7) reveal that the current excavation teams have moved significantly less soil from Levels 0 to VI (147.84 kl) than from Levels VII/VI to pre-Level XII (269.54 kl). The current excavation teams have dug primarily in Levels VI–VIII. During the 2006 season, it was thought that some of the teams (4040, South and IST) were excavating in Levels IV–V. Only the Polish team is potentially working in Level III abutting one of Mellaart's trenches. Significantly, they have recovered very few figurines in this area, as stated above.

We must also consider the particular nature of excavation history, which results in certain levels, buildings and areas being more represented than others. Various areas of the site have been dug with very different goals. For instance, archaeologists in the 4040 have excavated a relatively large area dating primarily to Levels III/IV and VI/V, while, in the South Area, excavations have focused on building sequences, such as Buildings 17, 6, 24 in the Mellaart 'Shrine' 10 sequence from Levels IX–VIB, and Buildings 10, 44, 56 and 65. Additionally, certain buildings, such as Buildings 1 and 17, persist throughout several levels. Over all, the current excavations have focused more in the early Levels (pre-XII–VI) than the later Levels (V–II). Neglecting to consider these factors, previous interpretations tended to aggregate all materials and contexts and assume even comparability. Consequently, these analyses do not present compelling arguments.

Table 7. *Figurine totals (Figs) and densities in buildings and external areas by Level.*[5]

Level	Buildings			External			Total		
	Volume (kl)	Figs	Density	Volume (kl)	Figs	Density	Volume (kl)	Figs	Density
II	-	-	-	3.19	14	4.39	3.19	14	4.39
III	-	-	-	14.90	20	0.13	14.90	20	1.34
IV	1.93	5	2.59	-	-	-	1.93	5	2.59
V–IV	1.36	2	1.47	6.88	39	5.670	8.24	41	4.98
V	0.14	9	64.29	29.695	155	5.220	29.84	164	5.50
VI–V	39.82	30	0.75	-	-	-	39.82	30	0.75
VI	47.97	190	3.96	1.95	54	27.69	49.92	244	4.89
VII–VI	55.94	19	0.34	-	-	-	55.94	19	0.34
VII	0.50	6	12.00	7.07	17	2.40	7.57	23	3.04
VIII	44.16	26	0.59	39.61	70	1.77	83.77	96	1.15
IX	54.52	48	0.88	20.84	15	0.72	75.36	63	0.84
X	12.61	19	1.51	-	-	-	12.61	19	1.51
XII	-	-	-	0.81	1	1.23	0.81	1	1.23
pre-XII	-	-	-	33.48	85	2.54	33.48	85	2.54

It is important to factor such issues into analyses of general patterning across the site and through time since they can skew interpretation. For instance, Table 7 presents basic counts of figural object types found by level. Most of them cluster in Levels V–VIII, with Level VI producing the largest number. The number of figurines declines dramatically after Level V. Rather than assume that this patterning is meaningful, we must at least investigate the possibility that it might be because the upper levels are under-represented in the excavated areas or because other factors skew the numbers.

It has previously been argued that figurines could be associated with ashy deposits interpreted as oven rake-out on occupation floors (Hamilton 2006, 193); but after closer examination of the finds, we can demonstrate that most of these examples derive from heavy residue collections and are actually non-diagnostic pieces of clay or scrap which cannot be identified as figurines. Many pieces collected from heavy residue over the years are so small as to be unidentifiable even in terms of base material. The methods for identifying figurines from heavy residues were thus modified in 2005 at the point of collection and recording (Meskell & Nakamura 2005). Hamilton suggested that there is patterning indicating that figurines were associated with oven floors, and floors in general. In our recent counts, only 17 figurines can be found in rough association with floors, of which few can be assigned with certainty. Again, the numbers Hamilton based her assertions on are too small to be considered significant. She does, however, conclude that very little can be said about context through deposition, given that most of the figurines derive from secondary contexts (Hamilton 2006, 195). On this point we concur.

If we look across the buildings at Çatalhöyük, we find that zoomorphic figurines predominate, followed by abbreviated forms and lastly anthropomorphic examples. It could not be claimed that animal figurines belonged to a world of experience outside the house, were made outdoors and were variously involved in rituals solely connected to the larger landscape of hunting. Moreover, while there may be unique contexts where we could argue that anthropomorphic figurines were related to specific ancestors, such examples were not more prevalent in the domestic sphere. There is no simple equation that links people and houses, or animals and the outside. Our analyses show clearly that there is no such differentiated patterning across the site. Both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic examples were generally subject to the same depositional practices and locations.

Archaeologists have always privileged figurines over other sorts of objects and thus fetishized their meanings in overtly familiar, modern ways. Yet it is entirely possible that figurines inhabited a more mundane domestic category of human invention. The examples we have, particularly those modelled in clay, entail uncomplicated local materials, resource extraction and manufacture. We have previously argued that figurines were subject to significant degrees of circulation and mobility across the site; but these are easily replicable and replaceable things, so discard was not necessarily taking something inalienable out of social circulation. These were objects made throughout the site's history, some 1200 years. Our analyses suggest that there were no appreciable differences between the treatment of clay examples and those carved from stone. The latter are in the minority of the corpus over all. These too have been retrieved from house fills and midden areas, just like those crafted from clay.

A material habitus

The spatial analysis leads us critically to examine whether modern categories might have been meaningful in the past. For instance, while there may be substantive differences between manufacture and meaning, stone and clay figurines, and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic examples, we have shown that the ultimate treatment, circulation and deposition of all figurines across the site is the same. They are all found predominantly in house fills and midden. Similarly, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic categories were deposited in the same way. Archaeologists tend to assume that there is an inherent cultural cohesion to the category of the 'figurine' without demonstrating contextual patterning; and they tend to privilege specific types on an aesthetic basis. Our spatial and temporal analysis lends weight to the idea that the inhabitants of Çatalhöyük subscribed to the category of 'figurine' without discriminating materials or forms.

Figurines commonly evoke or have even become synonymous with notions of a 'Mother Goddess', the female domestic sphere, and ritual or cultic activities; but such ideas do not account for the striking diversity in the Çatalhöyük assemblage, which features objects spanning a spectrum from highly elaborated to abbreviated forms, representing both humans and animals. All of these figurine types ended up in similar secondary contexts. There was no tradition of purposeful burying, embedding or caching. Although some of the objects may hypothetically derive from 'ritual' activities, the vast majority were associated

with contexts suggestive of more everyday practices. A strict division between the 'everyday' and the 'magical' or 'ritual' might not have been operative in the past (Nakamura & Meskell 2004).

A central aim of our recent work is to rethink the categories that Mellaart so successfully instantiated (Meskell 1998b), to try and refigure the corpus: to take figurines out of the static, assumed position of religious statues, destined to spend their lifetimes sitting it out upon altars and pedestals being contemplated or worshipped. Archaeologists typically represent figurines in the same static and unmoving manner, producing technical drawings that place them in their sitting, upright postures. By showing various views of these objects we inhibit the possibilities that figurines were handled, moved and thus viewed in a variety of positions from various viewpoints (Knapp & Meskell 1997; Bailey 2005). Working with the project artist, John Swogger, we suggest that some figurines were carried, possibly in bags, probably with a range of other items (organic and inorganic). As stated above, there is evidence of wear on the small clay anthropomorphic and zoomorphic examples (see www.figurines.stanford.edu). While many of the small, abbreviated anthropomorphic figures sit on bases like some of the stone examples, the notable marble examples have no feet and neither sit on stools or chairs nor have flat backs. This suggests that they may have been positioned in reclining postures and passed from hand to hand. This, in turn, has led us to move away from purely aesthetic approaches that focus on visual appearance and our concomitant interpretations, and more on to material properties and enabling characteristics. Figurines are small, light and portable, often do not sit or stand, and are quickly modelled. Some have moveable heads; others show evidence of additional attachments. All of this leads us to regard the objects that have survived in the record as only a partial picture of a figured lifeworld. They are material remains of a set of social and material processes rather than static, finished things in themselves.

The notion of process can refer to almost every stage in the life of a figurine. From their inception, we begin with the social process of procurement, whether sourcing local stone or clays or combining the plaster from regular wall plastering activities with marl to fashion figures of remarkably fine quality and light appearance. In all of these activities we could imagine a collective sphere where various individuals were present and collaborating. In the case of clay examples, after retrieval came the preparation and cleaning of clays. Many but certainly not all of our examples are made from relatively clean clay with little chaff and small grained inclusions. If we turn to stone figurines, we believe that most of the marble and calcite came from within 15–20km of the site. Thus, the inhabitants of Çatalhöyük would have had relatively easy access to the materials, and it is likely that they manufactured their figurines regularly around the settlement.

Speculating a bit further, we might posit everyday social lives as incorporating much image making, from the repeated layers of wall painting, embedding and plastering parts of animals, to decorating with stamp seals on skin or fabrics, crafting items of personal adornment, and, of course, making figurines. Given the quantity of clay scrap and non-diagnostic pieces found in domestic contexts (over 500 on last count), we might suggest that figurines were made around houses and middens and not normally away from the settlement. Since many appear to be very lightly and unevenly baked, firing has taken place near hearths or ovens, again in domestic contexts. To date, there is no evidence for specially built kilns at Çatalhöyük. As with other clay objects, figurines were likely exposed to heat during secondary processes of cooking, burning and heating or lighting houses. Again, these were all communal activities or at least household practices.

Figurines were probably moved about during their use lives as well and it is unlikely that they were static or sitting about. Though we can say little about their original use lives from the excavation and contextual data retrieved, we know, from their use-wear, damaged state and final deposition in fill, that they were not like 'cult statues' that were separated from human affairs, spatially and temporally. The figurines from Çatalhöyük were incorporated into practice, a moving and mobile suite of embodied actions. Thus we need to reconfigure the world of figurines as one of *process* rather than inert objects of worship or contemplation.

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Notes

1. Abbreviations: BACH, the Berkeley team; HT, Hodder team; IST, the Istanbul team; MT, Mellaart team; TP, the Poznan team.
2. It is difficult to quantify this volume with respect to normal building volumes, as the fully excavated buildings on site have yielded very different dry sieve volumes — from 60.56 kl in Building 1 to 0.40 kl in Building 45.
3. Several buildings are listed without Levels and, or, percentages excavated. This is because excavations are not complete of these buildings; we, therefore, have not been able to assess how much remains to be excavated and where the building is located in the chronological sequence. The percentages excavated listed are based on excavators' reports where they feel confident about the amount of excavation remaining. The level assignments in Table 3 may differ from Table 4's. The span of occupation is phased into Levels, based on Mellaart. A span of Levels is used where phasing cannot be determined stratigraphically but has been determined based on artefacts.
4. Due to the recording procedure, some of this material was recorded as belonging to particular buildings but could not be assigned to particular levels. Therefore, there is a discrepancy of a few litres between the total volumes reported in Table 3 and those in this Table. This discrepancy does not affect the conclusions drawn from the data shown here, nor does it greatly alter the reported figurine densities. For further explanation, see http://www.catalhoyuk.com/database/catal. A span of Levels is used where phasing cannot be determined stratigraphically but has been determined based on artefacts.
5 A span of Levels is shown where phasing cannot be determined stratigraphically but has been determined based on artefacts.
6. These numbers only include those figurines that can be assigned to levels with reasonable certainty. This is true for all tables that break down numbers by Level.
7. In 2006, large swathes of external midden dating to Level V were excavated. These produced many figurines, such that the volume of soil and number of figurines increased dramatically, as reflected in Tables 6 and 7.

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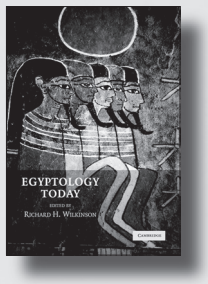

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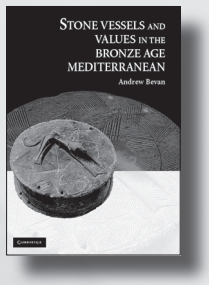

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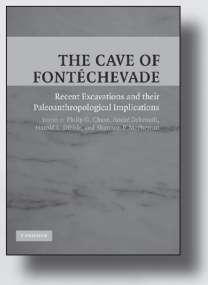

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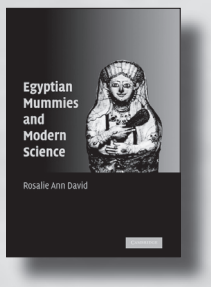

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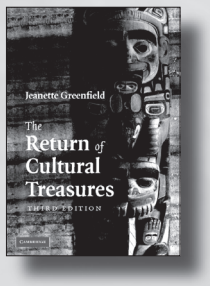

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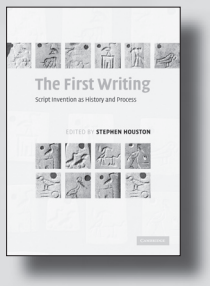

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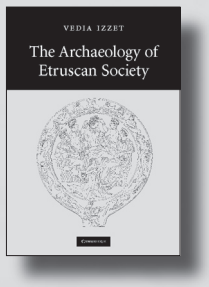

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