

Conference

# Contextualizing the Neolithic: Regional Approaches to Sedentism and Domestication in the Konya Plain



8-10 December 2023  
Bilkent University

Hybrid event

**BIAA** British Institute at Ankara 1948 **75** 2023





# Contextualizing the Neolithic: Regional Approaches to Sedentism and Domestication in the Konya Plain

Intense and sustained research focussed on a well-defined, circumscribed region, across several decades and through numerous archaeological and palaeoenvironmental projects has created a uniquely rich and well contextualised evidence base for understanding the Neolithic in the Konya Plain (central Turkey). This provides an exceptional opportunity to analyse questions such as sedentism and domestication from different analytical perspectives and at different spatial scales, from the household to the interregional level.

The UNESCO World Heritage site of Çatalhöyük, first investigated in the 1960s, has in many ways acted as a catalyst in igniting scientific interest in the area, sparking some of the earliest interdisciplinary works in Southwest Asia, and sustaining the elaboration of cutting-edge conceptual and analytical models across 60 years. This has further stimulated the development of numerous excavations and survey projects that have in time provided a nuanced and complex understanding of communities caught up in the transition from Pleistocene to Holocene and forager to farmer. The resulting long-term commitment to studying a sequence of sites and sets of contemporary sites, in the same circumscribed area, through evolving approaches and methodologies, has generated an unmatched volume of research that has changed the way we look at prehistoric archaeology today.

This conference, co-sponsored by the British Institute at Ankara and Bilkent University, is therefore dedicated to celebrating this commitment, by highlighting the importance of this historical legacy and its connection to present and future collaborative research in the Konya Plain. It aims at assessing our current models of the development of the Neolithic for the area through the integrated perspective of excavation, survey, geoarchaeological and palaeoenvironmental research, and a range of analyses of animal, plant, human and material culture, often employing innovative scientific approaches. There has been a long-term commitment to public outreach and community archaeology and these aspects of work in the Konya Plain will also be highlighted.

# Date

8<sup>th</sup> December | 18:00-19:30 | **Evening keynote lecture**  
9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> December | 9:00-18:00 | **Conference**

# Venue

Bilkent University, Main Campus, Building V, Amfi 1

# Participants

Gianna Ayala, Sheffield University  
Christoph Bachhuber, Oxford University  
Douglas Baird, Liverpool University  
Adnan Baysal, Ankara University  
Emma Baysal, Ankara University  
Amy Bogaard, Oxford University  
Tristan Carter, MacMaster University  
Mike Charles, Oxford University  
Güneş Duru, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University  
Müge Ergun, Oxford University  
Andy Fairbairn, Queensland University  
Shahina Farid, Historic England  
Scott Haddow, Copenhagen University  
Ian Hodder, Stanford University  
Emma Jenkins, Bornemouth University  
Ceren Kabukcu, Liverpool University  
Nurcan Kayacan, Istanbul University  
Ashley Lingle, York University  
Arek Marciniak, Poznań University  
Louise Martin, University College London  
Michele Massa, Bilkent University  
Allison Mickel, Lehigh University  
Gökhan Mustafaoğlu, Hacı Bayram University  
Rana Özbal, Koç University  
Mihriban Özbaşaran, Istanbul University  
Eylem Özdoğan, İstanbul University  
Özlem Sarıtaş, British Institute at Ankara  
Mehmet Somel, Middle East Technical University  
Fatma Şahin, Çukurova University  
Ali Umut Türkcan, Anadolu University  
Katheryn C. Twiss, Stony Brook University  
John Wainwright, Durham University  
Trevor Watkins, Edinburgh University  
Nurcan Yalman, Nişantaşı University

# Conference Program

## Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>

18:00 - 19:30 **Keynote lecture**  
**Contextualizing the Neolithic: Re-shaping an old story**  
Trevor Watkins

## Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>

9:00 - 9:15 **Introductory speeches**

9:15 - 9:45 **Neolithic Environments and the Riverscapes of Çatalhöyük**  
Gianna Ayala & John Wainwright

9:45 - 10:15 **The Neolithic as a Regional Process:  
Environment and Settlement in the Konya Plain, ca 9000-6000 BCE**  
Michele Massa *et al*

10:15 - 10:45 **From further away and earlier...**  
Güneş Duru *et al*

10:45 - 11:15 Coffee Break

11:15 - 11:45 **The synthesis of anthracological research at Çatalhöyük -  
characterising early anthropogenic woodlands of semi-arid Southwest Asia**  
Ceren Kabukcu & Eleni Asouti\*

11:45 - 12:15 **Tiny Treasures:  
Insights into Life on the Konya Plain from the microfauna and phytoliths**  
Emma Jenkins *et al*

12:15 - 13:15 **Plant Management Strategies and Foodways in the Early Farming  
Çatalhöyük Community: A Macrobotanical Perspective**  
Müge Ergun *et al*

13:15 - 14:15 Lunch Break

14:15 - 14:45 **Interaction, innovation and insularity in the adoption of cultivation on  
Konya Plain: The long view from 9,600-6,000 BC**  
Andy Fairbairn

14:45 - 15:00 **An overview of human-animal relations at Boncuklu Höyük, with a focus on cattle**  
Louise Martin *et al*

15:00 - 15:30 **Animal Management in the Konya Plain - A focus on pig and caprines  
at Boncuklu Höyük (9300-7600 cal BC) and Canhasan III (7500-7000 cal BC)**  
Özlem Sarıtaş *et al*

15:30 - 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 - 16:30 **Evolving perceptions of evolving economies:  
Human-animal dynamics at Çatalhöyük**  
Katheryn C. Twiss\*

16:30 - 17:00 **Obsidian Exchange, Supra-Community Relations, and Social Reproduction  
at Neolithic Çatalhöyük East**  
Tristan Carter

17:00 - 17:30 **Identities, technologies and mobilities:  
unravelling personal ornamentation in the Neolithic Konya Plain**  
Emma Baysal

## Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>

- 9:00 - 9:30 **An Experimental Approach to the Use of Fire and Hearths in Boncuklu Höyük**  
Gökhan Mustafafoğlu
- 9:30 - 10:00 **Recent archaeogenomics results from Çatalhöyük: biological ties and mobility**  
Mehmet Somel
- 10:30 - 11:00 **From Parts to a Whole:  
25 Years of Research on Mortuary Practices at Neolithic Çatalhöyük**  
Scott Haddow\*
- 11:00 - 11:30 Coffee Break
- 11:30 - 12:00 **The Means of Outreach, Engagement, and Collaboration in the Konya Plain**  
Allison Mickel
- 12:00 - 12:30 **Conservation as context: Çatalhöyük in the Present for the Future**  
Ashley Lingle\*
- 12:30 - 13:00 **Public archaeology and heritage management at Çatalhöyük**  
Aylin Orbaşlı & Shahina Farid
- 13:00 - 14:00 Lunch Break
- 14:00 - 14:30 **Things that shape a settlement:  
An Ethnoarchaeological Perspective in the Konya Plain**  
Nurcan Yalman
- 14:30 - 15:00 **The Konya plain 15000 - 7500 cal BC; key results from Pinarbasi and Boncuklu**  
Douglas Baird
- 15:00 - 15:30 **Canhasan Project: New Research and Excavations**  
Adnan Baysal
- 15:30 - 16:00 Coffee Break
- 16:00 - 16:30 **Çatalhöyük -  
Heritage and paradigms in the light of recent excavations since 2020**  
Ali Umut Türkcan
- 16:30 - 17:00 **The temporal amplitudes and spatial scales in the Near Eastern Neolithic.  
The case of Çatalhöyük**  
Arek Marciniak
- 17:00 - 17:30 **New results regarding social organization at Çatalhöyük**  
Ian Hodder
- 17:45 - 18:30 **Panel discussion**  
Rana Özbal  
Eylem Özdoğan  
Shahina Farid

# Keynote Lecture

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## Contextualizing the Neolithic: Re-shaping an old story

We are at an exciting point in the exploration of the Epipalaeolithic and Neolithic in the Konya Plain, as a regional Epipalaeolithic-Neolithic-Chalcolithic cultural sequence emerges. That is very rare in southwest Asia. The long archaeological sequence within a particular local environment allows us to investigate the interlocking cultural, social and economic processes involving the emergence and early development of sedentism with its attendant developments in subsistence strategies. We will be introduced to various pieces in the jigsaw, and I hope that we shall begin to be able to discern the emerging outlines of the regional picture. But how does this Konya Plain part of the jigsaw relate to the whole? The whole subject is (still) often referred to as 'the origins of agriculture' in the 'Fertile Crescent'. Those and similar phrases have a history, and they are embedded in the consciousness not only of the archaeologists who work within the subject, but also of archaeologists in general, and the wider public. They are not just convenient phrases that are widely understood: they are the labels on packages of outdated ideas that are still subliminally present. What is emerging from the research on the Konya plain sites is much more than another regional study; it requires a change of overall perspective, a reshaping of the terminology, and, more importantly, a reframing of the outdated assumptions behind the words. It will involve rewriting, or at least rephrasing, the whole story of the Epipalaeolithic-Neolithic transformation in southwest Asia.

# Conference Abstracts

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# Neolithic Environments and the Riverscapes of Çatalhöyük

We have carried out geoarchaeological research in the direct environment of the site of Çatalhöyük since 2008. To disentangle the complex Neolithic riverscapes, a multi-method approach has been followed based on an intensive and high-resolution coring programme (Ayala *et al.* 2017; 2021), using palaeoclimate proxies with regional and local palaeohydrological modelling (Wainwright and Ayala 2021), and integration of a range of palaeoenvironmental data (Wolfhagen *et al.* 2021; Ayala *et al.* 2023). The patterns and evolution of the Çarşamba river-channel are considered in relation to the possibilities and uncertainties of landscape occupation and its interaction with the people of Çatalhöyük.

We identify a wide channel belt of a dryland anastomosing river contemporary with the Neolithic occupation, constrained by landscape evolution following the desiccation of the Palaeolake Konya. This channel belt would have provided a mosaic of local environments and habitats. While it would have been affected by seasonal flooding, we revise the timing and extent of this flooding and add nuance to its impact on site occupation and potential cultivation zones. We highlight the variability of the potential flooding regime over a range of different timescales during the occupation. This reconstruction of the Çarşamba riverscapes would have provided wetland resources while allowing for extensive drylands to have formed outside of the channel belt which would have been appropriate for dryland agriculture to the east and also west of the Neolithic site. We conclude by considering how current uncertainties in the reconstructions might be addressed by continuing research.

# The Konya Plain 15000-7500 cal BC - Key results from Pınarbaşı and Boncuklu

This presentation focusses on some evidence from the sites of Pınarbaşı and Boncuklu between 15000 and 7500 cal BC that cast light on the earliest development of sedentism, cultivation and herding in the Konya plain, attendant social developments and questions of continuity and change during the Epipalaeolithic to Neolithic.

# Canhasan Project - New Research and Excavations

The Canhasan sites were first excavated by David French between 1960-70. Since the new and renewed excavations in the Konya Plain that have focused on Neolithic and early sedentary ways of life have revealed new data regarding the Neolithic, the importance of the potential contribution of the Canhasan sites has been highlighted by the lack of evidence and data in the southern part of the Konya Plain. The Canhasan Sites are now host to a renewed research programme and excavations after a 50-year break in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the whole of the Konya Plain and its close cultural links with SE Anatolia and Northern Mesopotamian cultures. This talk will explain the aims of the new Canhasan excavation and research project started in 2021.

# Identities, technologies and mobilities - unravelling personal ornamentation in the Neolithic Konya Plain

Personal ornaments arguably offer the most comprehensive window onto conceptions of self and others, distinction of roles, experimentation in materials and interactions with landscape of any category of prehistoric material culture. As a relative latecomer to the gamut of material culture studies in Türkiye and surrounding regions, they have begun to be widely studied within the last decade. While we can only guess the true scale of Neolithic ornamentation practices, the ornaments that remain with us show the interplay between group and individual identities through time, while broad traditions are juxtaposed with personal attachment to individual artefacts, defining ongoing gestures and artefact biographies. We have gained insight into ornaments as an experimenting ground for new technological adventures, the first forays into metals and transformational technologies. As small and mobile artefacts, ornaments tell tales of journeys and interactions to find materials and to cement relationships, permeable regionality in preferences and actions showing how landscape was understood and ideas spread.

In this presentation I consider the role of the Konya Plain Epipalaeolithic and Neolithic excavations in how we now understand the human ornament relationship at the transition to settled life. The presentation evaluates how the Neolithic transition might be characterised as a long period of experimentation with materials and exchange of ideas as people adapted their identities and activities to their gradually changing ways of life.

# Obsidian Exchange, Supra-Community Relations, and Social Reproduction at Neolithic Çatalhöyük East

This paper attempts to review the long-term history of obsidian exchange-circulation-consumption during the Neolithic at Çatalhöyük East, drawing on 50 years of theories and analyses, from the evocative claims, and detailed work of Mellaart and Bialor, via the integrated characterisation and consumption studies of the Cambridge/Stanford project. The paper tacks from the regional (Konya Plain/Cappadocia), to the supra-regional (those social networks that coalesced at the sources), then back to the intra-community and context specificity of Çatalhöyük's buildings. The significant shift in raw material and technological traditions, attested around halfway through the East Mound occupation sequence, is re-examined through the lens of interpersonal relations, value regimes, and shifting modes of social reproduction.



**Güneş Duru** Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University  
**Nurcan Kayacan** Istanbul University  
**Mihriban Özbaşaran** Istanbul University

## From further away and earlier...

Research carried out in Central Anatolia by the British Institute at Ankara in the late 1950s revealed many new, unexpected sites and finds from the Neolithic period, especially Çatalhöyük. Undoubtedly Aşıklı Höyük, the chronological predecessor of Çatalhöyük, was also a part of this context and process. The Neolithic of Central Anatolia and the neolithisation of the region have long been cited and interpreted with these two successive key settlements. Nowadays, the dots that are slowly increasing on the map of Central Anatolia express more than just new settlements. In addition to increasing research, multidisciplinary studies and collaborations with a variety of other sciences continue to provide us with new and surprising data about the neolithisation process of the region. Our talk aims to take a comparative look at volcanic Cappadocia to the Konya Plain, which have two completely different landscapes, environmental characteristics as well as different social and vital rhythms.

**Müge Ergun** Oxford University  
**Amy Bogaard** Oxford University  
**Mike Charles** Oxford University

# Plant Management Strategies and Foodways in the Early Farming Çatalhöyük Community - A Macrobotanical Perspective

Research on Neolithic southwest Asia evidences a long and complex co-evolutionary process for the beginnings of sedentary and farming life. This process encompasses multiple geographic regions and trajectories, and diverse forms of interactions between people and other ecologies. Within this context, Central Anatolia exhibits distinctive traits for the assessment of local processes and pathways to plant management, domestication and to a wider context the emergence of early farming communities.

Long-term intensive and systematic archaeobotanical work in the Çatalhöyük Research Project (1994-2017) contributes to our understanding of the dynamics of the development of agricultural lifeways and adaptation processes in the Konya Plain, Central Anatolia. Embracing a holistic and chronological approach, this paper first introduces the earliest known longue durée integration of different plant management strategies and domestication in Central Anatolia, outlining the recent evidence from the Aceramic Neolithic Aşıklı Höyük (mid-9th- mid/late-8th millennium cal. BCE) in volcanic Cappadocia. The paper later focuses on major outcomes stemming from the macrobotanical analysis of the long-lived early farming Çatalhöyük community (late 8th- early 6th millennium cal. BCE) and presents an exceptionally high-resolution picture of broad-spectrum food plant choices, diet and culinary practices and innovative farming strategies. The results based on cultivated and gathered plants will be discussed from spatial and temporal perspectives, with a highlight on the social and ecological implications arising from plant management strategies. The Çatalhöyük dataset will finally be assessed within the context of Central Anatolian Neolithic, through a broader evaluation, especially on the local processes within agricultural and sedentary life.

## Interaction, innovation and insularity in the adoption of cultivation on Konya Plain - The long view from 9,600-6,000 BC

BIAA-supported research on the Konya Plain has been fundamental in understanding the development of early farming from Hans Helbaek's collections of crops stores at Çatalhöyük East in 1961, to the initiation of flotation at Canhasan III in 1969 and the ongoing research projects at Boncuklu and Pınarbaşı. This paper reviews the current state of knowledge and identifies further priorities for research offered by new projects, including a new phase of excavation at Canhasan. Though occupation is known from the 10<sup>th</sup>-millennium occupation at Boncuklu and Pınarbaşı, clear evidence for crop use appears in the wetland setting of the former settlement by 8,300 BC. While artefactual evidence hints that crops had strong personal association with some individuals or kin groups, they remain sparse and narrow in diversity until the mid-8th millennium, when crops come to dominate the archaeobotanical assemblages of Canhasan III. Narrow crop diversity remains at Canhasan through its occupation, with a more diverse crop suite developing through the occupation of Çatalhöyük East. The initial appearance of crops is seen as primarily a result of exchange, with artefact exchange networks to Cappadocia and the Mediterranean, though the early appearance and dominance of 'new type' glume wheat on the Konya Plain suggests local innovation as cropping expanded in significance, with Canhasan also having evidence for the dominance and decline of cultivated legumes. The crucial period from 7,800-7,500 BC remains poorly understood and chronological concerns with Canhasan III's main archaeobotanical sequence (7,500-7,100) means further research is required to understand more fully the circumstances of farming's initial expansion from an element of the subsistence system to its foundation.

## From Parts to a Whole - 25 Years of Research on Mortuary Practices at Neolithic Çatalhöyük

At Çatalhöyük, as elsewhere in the Neolithic Near East, there is an emphasis on the manipulation and redistribution of human body parts, with particular attention paid to the skull. Evidence for this practice occurs with the observation of 'headless' primary burials and the secondary re-deposition of disarticulated crania and mandibles within primary and secondary burial contexts. The manner in which these practices were carried out and the motivations for such behaviour have been the subject of much debate since the site was first excavated in the 1960s. In recent years, our understanding of the mortuary customs practiced by the Neolithic inhabitants of Çatalhöyük has changed considerably, largely as a result of new insights and new personnel, but also by revisiting previously discounted interpretations which had long been ignored. In honour of 25 years of the Çatalhöyük Research Project, I will discuss the most recent interpretations of the mortuary practices, while also providing a critical appraisal of the ways in which these interpretations have evolved over the years.

## New results regarding social organization at Çatalhöyük

Does it make a difference? Does it make a difference to engage a large amount of resources and experts at an archaeological site? Is the result qualitatively different? The Cambridge/Stanford excavations at Çatalhöyük involved a large team and substantial funds. About 1000 radiocarbon determinations were made for example, and about 125 genomes were sequenced. As a result, can we say something different about the site that goes beyond the usual questions about subsistence economies and social hierarchy? This paper explores the questions about social organization that the Çatalhöyük project has been able to open up.

**Emma Jenkins** Bournemouth University  
**Michelle Feider** University of York  
**Paul Clarkson** Bournemouth University  
**Sarah Elliott** Bournemouth University  
**Ambroise Baker** Teesside University  
**Lisa Yeomans** University of Copenhagen  
**Thomas Cucchi** Natural History Museum of Paris  
**Katerina Papayianni** The American School of Classical Studies at Athens  
**Sabrina Renaud** University of Lyon  
**Greger Larson** University of Oxford  
**Kristina Tabbada** University of Oxford

## Tiny Treasures - Insights into Life on the Konya Plain from the microfauna and phytoliths

Research conducted on the microfauna and phytoliths from key Epi-palaeolithic and Neolithic sites on the Konya Plain over the past two decades has revealed how critical the study of the 'micro' is in understanding how people interacted with and impacted their environment once they became settled farmers. Research on microfaunal assemblages from Pınarbaşı, Boncuklu Höyük, and Çatalhöyük showed how human occupation and activity gradually altered the species diversity over time. The Epi-palaeolithic phases of Pınarbaşı comprised a diversity of wild microfaunal species; the Boncuklu assemblage had the earliest house mice (an anthrodependent species) found in the Konya Plain as well as other micromammal and herpetofaunal species; and Çatalhöyük was almost entirely dominated by house mice which were predated upon by unknown species of small mammalian carnivores. Scats from these carnivores were found in discrete locations across the site including within human burials. The microfauna also revealed much about the environment, particularly at Pınarbaşı, and Boncuklu where toad, water vole and water snake indicate that the sites were located within or adjacent to wetland environments. At Boncuklu there is also evidence that frogs and potentially water vole were being eaten.

These findings align with results from the phytolith analysis. Pınarbaşı, and Boncuklu both had high proportions of reeds and sedges and Boncuklu had high numbers of conjoined grass phytoliths indicating wet growing conditions. Both the microfauna and phytoliths from Boncuklu showed burning and it is likely that reeds were used for a variety of purposes including construction, fuel and matting. Wheat and barley were present in the Boncuklu assemblage and there is tentative evidence to indicate that cereals were grown in drier areas around the site while wheat processing was taking place off site.

## The synthesis of anthracological research at Çatalhöyük - characterising early anthropogenic woodlands of semi-arid Southwest Asia

In this talk we will present a synthesis of anthracological research from Çatalhöyük East and West mounds carried out between 1999-2017, and place our findings in the context of anthracological research in Southwest Asia. To date, our work in south-central Anatolia represents well over 10,000 identified charcoal fragments from long-term fuel waste accumulation deposits, allowing us to chart the complexities of woodland vegetation change in the broader region, as well as major shifts in woodland use practices of site inhabitants. Backed up by further detailed analyses, such as dendro-anthracology and contextual analysis, our aim in this talk is to reframe the evidence for wild plant food and woodland vegetation use with a view to examining the development and expansion of socialised, anthropogenic, landscapes. Supported by our ongoing work elsewhere in Southwest Asia, and present-day observations of traditional woodland management practices in Antaolia, we propose ways in which we can trace the development of anthropogenic vegetation types and how these relate to the sustainability and endurance of human occupation in the region.

## Conservation as context - Çatalhöyük in the Present for the Future

The intangible and tangible essence of Çatalhöyük creates an important lineage for linking the past to the future. Though only a small portion of the site's story has been revealed, the exposed in-situ structures and interred material culture have inspired powerful narratives of egalitarianism, economic growth, spirituality, decay and renewal. Those caring for the future of Çatalhöyük in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not unlike their Neolithic counterparts, must overcome rapidly changing environments to ensure a contextual narrative remains. Challenges to preserving Çatalhöyük's structural elements have existed since its earliest excavations. Current climatic instability has accelerated deterioration, and displaying the site has become increasingly complex, putting access to Çatalhöyük at risk.

From 2012 to 2019, site conservators undertook extensive environmental monitoring to better understand the condition of the site. Through this data collection, site conservators were able to understand annual patterns of deterioration and recognise the current preservation risks to the in-situ heritage. This work resulted in the introduction of appropriate, sustainable treatment strategies and created opportunities to improve the conservation management programme for the site. Further work with 3D documentation of the structures and an examination of the archaeological record demonstrated the value of traditional earth-building maintenance strategies for preserving this unparalleled UNESCO World Heritage Site. This paper will examine the confluence of these methods and highlight the important role of preventative conservation in site management strategies. Çatalhöyük is an incredible testament to human ingenuity and, with concerted conservation efforts, will continue to inspire generations for years to come.



# The temporal amplitudes and spatial scales in the Near Eastern Neolithic - The case of Çatalhöyük

The progression of the Neolithic in the Near East had an arrhythmic form. It is made up of a repeatable sequence of short bursts of intense development followed by lengthy periods of stabilization and then abrupt disappearance. Çatalhöyük is an exemplary case of this modus operandi. The objectives of the paper are twofold. Firstly, it will situate the site in the context of the arrhythmic trajectory of the development of the Near Eastern Neolithic. It will outline its constituent elements and characteristic features. Secondly, it will scrutinize the emergence, subsequent development, and then abrupt demise of the incipient Neolithic in Central Anatolia by examining the changing connectivities and dependencies of the inhabitants of Çatalhöyük with the outer world throughout the settlement's occupation. Special attention will be given to the causes and mechanisms of its demise.

**Louise Martin** University College London  
**Özlem Sarıtaş** British Institute at Ankara  
**Douglas Baird** University of Liverpool

## An overview of human-animal relations at Boncuklu Höyük, with a focus on cattle

In this paper we examine the role of Boncuklu Höyük in the Konya Plain Neolithic, focusing on human-animal engagements, both within the settlement and in the wider landscape. The challenges and opportunities of living in a wetland are explored, and symbolic practices relating to animals and animal body parts are also discussed. Particular focus is on cattle.

**Michele Massa** Bilkent University  
**Christoph Bachhuber** Oxford University  
**Fatma Şahin** Çukurova University

# The Neolithic as a Regional Process - Environment and Settlement in the Konya Plain, ca 9000-6000 BCE

In this paper, we propose a multi-proxy, region-wide reconstruction of hydrological landscapes in the Early Holocene, including the drying of the Konya Palaeolake and the development of the Çarşamba river delta, integrating previous studies with a high-resolution satellite imagery analysis of palaeochannels and palaeobeaches. We then compare this model with an archaeological dataset of ca 450 sites from legacy projects and a recently completed survey (KRASP), which covered areas neglected by previous research including crucially the piedmonts of the Taurus and Boz Mountains.

This combined approach allows us to better characterize different modes of subsistence among contemporary groups occupying different ecological niches, across the Neolithization process. In particular, we highlight the limited expansion of sedentary, agropastoral communities until the late 7th millennium BCE and the possible symbiosis of “mounded communities” in the Çarşamba delta with mobile groups in the steppe and highlands.

# The Means of Outreach, Engagement, and Collaboration in the Konya Plain

In the last thirty years, approaches to community archaeology have developed and changed. Such shifts and transformations in community archaeology are visible in the Konya Plain, and especially at Çatalhöyük, where community outreach was an important priority of the project from the beginning of the 1990's excavations. There is often a gap, however, between the activities undertaken as part of social outreach and engagement, versus the scientific work of the excavation. I will discuss how the research design of an excavation shapes not only the knowledge produced but the social relations of the excavation. Some archaeological methods enable a one-way outreach toward local community members, others promote a more dialogic engagement. True and full-on collaboration between archaeologists and community members will require creative imagining of new archaeological methods, built into the core of archaeological research design. I will raise some of these possibilities, and what they might mean for archaeology in the Konya Plain.

# An Experimental Approach to the Use of Fire and Hearths in Boncuklu Höyük

Undoubtedly, fire has a vital importance in the context of human biological and cultural evolution. As a sustainable energy source, it has been used in the context of socialization, craft, art, production, and the creation of the symbolic world, as well as its basic functions such as heating, cooking, and obtaining light since the Paleolithic age. It is seen that the hearths inside and outside the houses and similar structures that emerged in many radical changes brought by the Neolithic after the Paleolithic age turned into permanent structural elements in the center of daily life. This transformation has been clearly observed in the houses excavated in Boncuklu Höyük and the determination of hearth areas of different forms and sizes in open areas outside the house. However, the fact that these elements have been identified during the excavations is may not sufficient to understand the use of fire and therefore hearths from an archaeological point of view. For this reason, as a result of experimental studies based on archaeological data, some inferences have been made that will make it possible to understand the use of hearths for cooking and heating purposes and their effects in the building. In the studies carried out in the experimental houses, it has been understood that the different fuel raw materials, especially in Boncuklu Höyük, vary in the context of elements such as heat, light, calories, and smoke. In addition, it has been understood that Neolithic people may have taken some mitigation measures by making feasible or possible structural adjustments in the building in order to control the effect of the amount of fuel used on the flame sizes and the smoke density. It has also been observed that the use of fire is an activity that seems to be simple but is shaped by a set of decisive behaviors in highly variable conditions such as wind, humidity, and temperature, and can be realized with experience.

# Public archaeology and heritage management at Çatalhöyük

A commitment to public archaeology was an integral part of the Çatalhöyük excavations directed by Prof Ian Hodder from the very beginning. In this paper we will outline the various approaches to public engagement that were practiced and discuss their impacts on Çatalhöyük's many communities and archaeological practices in Turkey to the present day. This discussion will cover engagement with the local community and the role of some members in the co-creation of knowledge, management planning as a participatory process, wider stakeholder engagement practices, an inspired education programme involving school groups, and novel approaches to visitor experiences at prehistoric sites. We will conclude by reflecting on how these practices pioneered and implemented at Çatalhöyük have influenced archaeological practices, public engagement and visitor management and their respective academic discourses in Turkey.

**Özlem Sarıtaş** British Institute at Ankara  
**Louise Martin** University College London  
**Douglas Baird** University of Liverpool

## Animal Management in the Konya Plain - A focus on pig and caprines at Boncuklu Höyük (9300-7600 cal BC) and Canhasan III (7500-7000 cal BC)

The development of caprine herding and management of pig in central Anatolia is a long and potentially complex process, for which the settlements of both Boncuklu Höyük and Canhasan III appear to have crucial evidence. Caprines (sheep-goat) were especially important to central Anatolian Neolithic communities, and their earliest management is a matter for debate. However, the initial spread of domestic pig out of the Levantine zone and across Central Anatolia is poorly understood, and evidence of pig management is equally limited. The taxonomic abundance data revealed that *Sus* sp. is the most dominant species overtime at the 9th Millenium Boncuklu Höyük, and caprines comprise 4.9% of the identified species and do not appear to have been of much economic importance. However, the zooarchaeological analysis from the 8th Millenium Canhasan III indicates cattle and caprines dominate the site, and only 8% of the pig are present. The Canhasan III sequence commences approximately 100–200 years after the end of the Boncuklu sequence, thus making it vital for understanding the development of caprine herding and possibly early pig management. This research concerns animals' role in the Neolithic Boncuklu Höyük and Canhasan III in Central Anatolia. The zooarchaeological analysis, including the tooth eruption and wear data and epiphyseal fusion for ageing, metric and biometric data from teeth/postcranial bone measurements and geometric morphometric analysis were used to understand the statue of the *Sus* sp and Caprines at both sites. These analyses will re-examine the status of pig (*Sus* sp) and caprines (*Ovis-Capra* sp) to the Neolithic Boncuklu Höyük and Canhasan III and the use of animals at these sites.

## Recent archaeogenetics results from Çatalhöyük - biological ties and mobility

Here we present genetic results from close to 400 Neolithic human skeletal remains. The majority of the analysed individuals could be genetically sexed, but only about a quarter yielded sufficient ancient DNA for studying population relationships and genetic kinship, with a strong bias towards subadults. Nevertheless, the sample reveals a number of interesting observations on various aspects of Çatalhöyük society and culture. These include the changing frequency of genetic kin among individuals co-buried within the same buildings, differentiation among buildings with respect to genetic and material culture similarity, postmarital residence patterns as inferred from population genetic data and genetic kin networks, the temporal dynamics of population structure, the genetic structure across space, as well as different traditions related to postmortem body treatment and burials goods.



# Evolving perceptions of evolving economies: Human-animal dynamics at Çatalhöyük

Over the last several decades, researchers from around the globe have investigated the ways in which humans and non-human animals interacted and shaped each others' lives at Çatalhöyük. Faunal research at Çatalhöyük has exemplified changing approaches in global zooarchaeology while progressively complicating and enriching our understanding of how human-animal entanglements evolved over the course of the site's occupation. I explain how and why inferences about Neolithic animal production have shifted over the years and summarize current thinking about animals at Çatalhöyük.

## Çatalhöyük - Heritage and paradigms in the light of recent excavations since 2020

James Mellaart's wide scale excavations on site in 1960's revealed the World's one of the most unique material culture, household and famed by its wall paintings and symbolic culture. After Mellaart, approximately 60 years of research at Neolithic Period Anatolian Site Çatalhöyük have had an unprecedented impact on Anatolian and European archaeology, probably on World archaeology as well. The early years of Mellaart Era yielded spectacular discoveries that have yet to be surpassed as the iconic Fat Lady figurines, paintings, and reliefs on the walls of elaborated shrines showed a different and more developed phase of the Neolithic universe and triggered the development of different theories pertaining to egalitarian and urban society.

30 years later Ian Hodder started to investigate the site with modern techniques and a new approach. His Project lasted 25 years and large number of specialists contributed to Project. Ian Hodder, the most influential figure in the postprocessual movement of the 1980s and 1990s, has taken up the challenge offered by the site, began surface research in 1993 and excavations in 1995. One aim of the project was to use modern field techniques to investigate the structure of the site and the functioning of its buildings and so to answer some of the central questions left unresolved by Mellaart Era. The Project missioned itself as not only being an archaeological dig, also aimed as a school and progressive history of archaeology where influences took place to both Project itself and archaeological currents. The theoretical identity of the Project and shared interests in the Project brought many scholars social and political groups into one place and this caused interactive impact which we can still the effects on many boulevards of prehistoric archaeology.

The new Çatalhöyük Project since 2020 aimed in order to conduct the excavations with a strategy on 3 new areas as connected with former excavation areas on East and West Mounds. One area is on Northern submound named as Northern Terrace Area. Here in this area (appr. 200 m<sup>2</sup>) dated to Middle Levels horizon (mainly level VI and VII, North F and G) a new big building (B.180) with long side rooms and some spaces (S. 66 and 68 ,63) were excavated . Majority of the area that was already exposed in 1994 and 2003 surface scrapings in former Project and showed a radial street or a wedge aligned in N-S direction. Aligned on western side of that area it is aimed to see whether a new insula or a quarter of the settlement

separated by a new street could be. It is also an objective for understanding radial boundaries and probable terraces thus structured Neolithic occupation for ages.

Second area is on other area of eastern slope of the mound, named as Eastern Area excavated under coordination of Poznan team since 2018, a big area (appr. 300 m<sup>2</sup>) was excavated belonging to the Final Phases of Neolithic settlement. An outstanding new big building with many cell type spaces and one shrine type building (with many symbolic features with some more adjacent side compartments have been exposed in recent years. Third area is a new trench (AH 22) was opened and excavated in eastern slope of West Mound, adjacent to Trench 5 (of former Project in 2000' s) in order to gain a larger insight of Early Chalcolithic Mound settlement layout and prepare as going down to earlier phases of settlement in future probably connected to Trench 7 deep trench in modern ditch aligned with these areas.

UNESCO World Heritage Site management studies within conservation and yearly evaluations on remained problems of former projects will be ongoing and presented.

## Things that shape a settlement - An Ethnoarchaeological Perspective in the Konya Plain

The layout of a settlement reflects long-term processes and mutual interactions among many variables. While some factors are the result of deliberate decisions, indirect effects also play a role in shaping settlements. When excavating archaeological sites, we may only observe parts of a settlement, and therefore, many components may be missing. This can make it challenging to interpret the community and how they organize themselves within the settlement, especially in prehistoric sites with no predictable site plan. Understanding the positioning of the smallest unit in relation to others and the general society, as well as the presence and absence of shared spaces, is crucial in the interpretation process.

Neolithic Çatalhöyük, which is a large and multi-layered settlement, generally repeats its structural arrangement. Although this may initially suggest that predictions can be made about unexcavated areas in that site, we can see significant differences between Çatalhöyük and Aşıklı Höyük, which initially resemble Çatalhöyük's plan. In this case, it is important not to overlook the basic arrangements that help us understand the community structure in a settlement. Ethnoarchaeology helps us observe in more detail the factors that influence and are influenced during the formation of a settlement.

This paper will discuss the relationship between a community and settlement layout and the factors that make a settlement nucleated, dispersed, or agglomerated, through an ethnoarchaeological study conducted in the Konya Plain.



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