Chapter 1

Developing a Reflexive Method in Archaeology

Ian Hodder

The aim of this chapter is to situate the methods used at the site into the contexts in which we work. This contextualizing of method is one of the key struts of a reflexive method. Rather than the emphasis on universal method seen in positivist archaeology, the emphasis is on developing methods sensitive to context and problem.

Where is Çatalhöyük?

The first and simplest answer to this question (see also Chapter 8 by Ayfer Bartu) is that Çatalhöyük is in central Turkey, near Çumra in the Konya region. The East mound is largely Neolithic in date and has a range of radiocarbon dates for its 20 m sequence from 6400 BC to 5600 BC (Hodder 1996). Çatalhöyük was first excavated between 1961 and 1965 by James Mellaart (Mellaart 1967) and became of international importance because of its size and complexity at an early date outside the Fertile Crescent — i.e. outside the heartlands of animal and plant domestication in the Near East. But the importance of the site transcended these factors because of the sculpture and painting found at the site. Indeed, the site has retained a central significance despite the discovery in the last thirty years of large complex sites at earlier dates in Turkey and the Near East. It is the art which has won for Çatalhöyük this continued reknown. Mellaart understood the art to have been produced in a priestly quarter of the city and he suggested a social and political organization of some complexity.

The site was abandoned in 1965 and the present project began work in 1993. The first three years of work concentrated on the study of surface features using non-intrusive techniques. These studies *On the Surface* were published in 1996 (Hodder 1996). From 1996 the project has had three components. First, archaeological excavation has concentrated on continuing the work of Mellaart in the southwest of the East mound and it has begun to expose buildings on the north part of that mound. Regional survey has been undertaken by a team led by Douglas Baird and palaeoecological work by a team led by Neil Roberts. Second, conservation research has been led by Frank Matero from the University of Pennsylvania and his team. This has concentrated on methods for the conservation and lifting of paintings and sculpture. Third, a team led by Orrin Shane from the Science Museum of Minnesota has dealt with various aspects of the public presentation of the site, including educational programmes, CD-Rom (also produced by a team from Karlsruhe), and a visitor centre.

The context in which we work

One immediate context is the people from the local village and town, several of whom work at the site. Their interests in the site are varied, from the commercial desire to set up a shop, to the desire for labour, to the sets of local beliefs in the mounds. These latter include the idea that the ancient mounds in the Konya plain contain the spirits of the dead, which can sometimes be seen at night moving from mound to mound (for these and other local beliefs see Shankland 1996). But local communities also use the mounds of the plain (although not Çatalhöyük which has been fenced and is continually guarded) to obtain earth for making mud-bricks. The mounds are also used for picnics and leisure pursuits.

Whenever we hold a press day we get massive press coverage, in both local and national media. This is at least partly because Çatalhöyük is taught in schools and in the press as one of the 'origins of Anatolian civilization'. The exhibit about the site in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations at Ankara has recently been re-installed as a major feature.

The project caters for this national interest by developing a programme for schools. This involves local schoolchildren who come to do activities at the site. Another version is the British Airways competition in collaboration with the national newspaper Yeni Yüzyil. Schoolchildren were asked, through the news-

paper, to write an essay on the title 'Why is Çatalhöyük important for Turkey?'. Those who won the competition were brought to the site and then to Cambridge.

The nationalist emphasis has a different flavour locally. The site is located in a conservative area of Turkey in which Islamic fundamentalism and nationalism are strong forces. Many local politicians and officials are members of religious fundamentalist parties (e.g. *Refah*, now banned) or of nationalist parties such as MHP. When these politicians talk to the press at the site they drape the podium in the Turkish flag and talk of the importance of the site for the Turkish nation. But their relations with the site are often ambiguous. After all, the site is pre-Islamic and clearly pre-Turkic. In addition it is being excavated by an international team funded by international companies. But the politicians manage to twist these features of the site to their advantage and they talk of the international focus showing the importance of the site, region and nation. They talk of the gift they are making to the world. They point to the long tradition of achievement in Anatolia.

When the European Union Ambassador to Turkey visits the site, his rhetoric in front of the press is very different. In fact it is diametrically opposed to the national politicians. He talks of the contribution made by the European Union to the project and the site. He talks of the Union's interest in Turkey and in its culture. He emphasizes precisely the non-Islamic character of the site in order to argue for a secular state in modern Turkey. He argues that at the time of Çatalhöyük the boundaries between Europe and Asia did not exist, that we are all part of a common culture, that nations had not yet come into being. He links the site to Europe and to international relations and cooperation.

And then there are the sponsors. When they talk to the press at the site, they drape the podium in the logos of their companies. They have their own specific agendas. For example, a credit card company wishes to show that the obsidian exchanged at the site is the origin of the credit card. They wish their sponsorship to be used to further this idea in an exhibit in the Visitor Centre that we are building by the site. Other sponsors emphasize the scientific aspects of the project's work, or an airline company uses the images of flying vultures in the art to advertise 'flying back to the past'. A Turkish bank supports the project because the obsidian was 'banked' in hoards below the floors. In our reports to these various sponsors, different aspects of our work have to be emphasized and given prominence.

There are many other special interest groups. For example, the nearby city of Konya has long been central to the trade in *kilims* (a type of Turkish carpet). There is a widespread belief that the origins of the designs found in *kilims* can be traced in the art at Çatalhöyük. But the most important group, numerically, with which have to deal are the varied New Age or Women's Groups. Busloads of tourists on Goddess Tours of Turkey make Çatalhöyük the highpoint of their visit. Other Goddess communities visit in smaller groups or interact with the project via the Web. There are several alternative Çatalhöyük websites provided by New Age or Goddess groups. In fact there is a great diversity of groups ranging from hardline feminist, to eco-feminist, to Goddess worshippers, to women simply interested in the role of women in early times. Although for many of these groups Marija Gimbutas and James Mellaart are focal figures, there is no consensus of viewpoint.

So there are a large number of groups of people who want to tell different and conflicting stories about Çatalhöyük. We are in various ways dependent on these different constituencies (financially, administratively, politically, socially, local goodwill, etc.) and have to find ways of working with them if we want to survive. The interactions between these groups are often dangerous and threaten to undermine the project. For example, there is considerable tension between some Goddess communities and the local people as will be described below. There is some doubt about the viability of an international project dealing with pre-Islamic and pre-Turkic remains in a part of Turkey which is religiously fundamentalist and politically nationalist. At the very least, survival of the project, if that proves possible, is enhanced by a fuller attempt to understand and interact with the multiple voices which surround it.

Method: where IS Çatalhöyük?

So how should we respond to the fact that so many groups want to tell different stories about the site? One response in archaeology has been to erect barriers and to police the boundaries of the discipline. Archaeologists have increasingly faced a plethora of alternative voices, especially in a post-colonial context where archaeology is involved in indigenous rights and claims. Many archaeologists have been frightened by this proliferation of voices and have sought comfort in an authoritarian archaeological science; science as objective and untrammeled by politics. But, on the whole, this oppositional strategy has proved less successful than accommodation and compromise, as seen in the passing of the NAGPRA act in the United States.

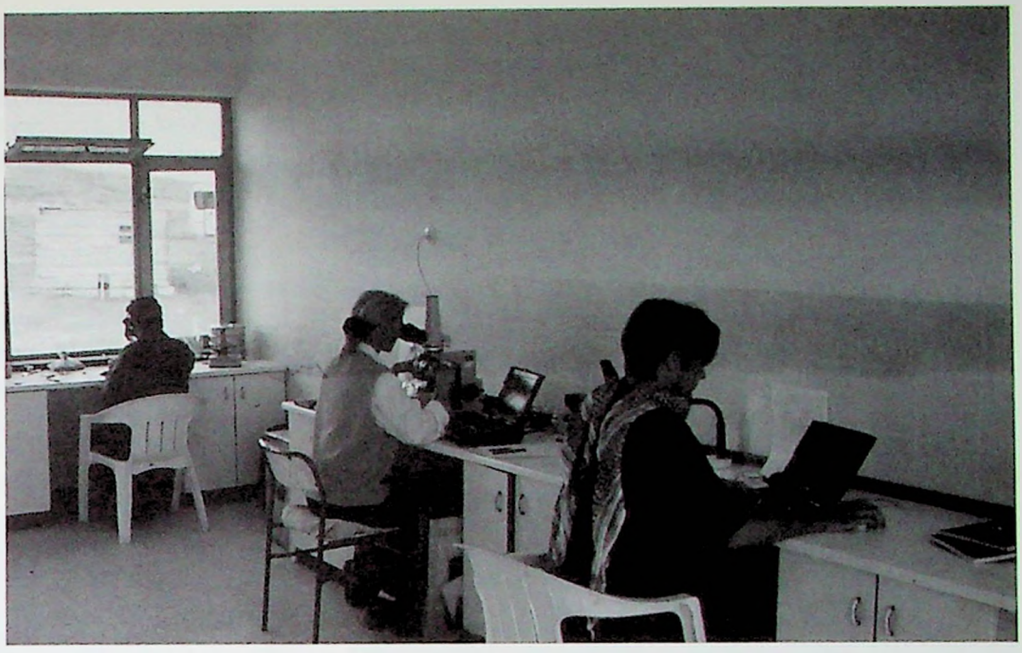


Figure 1.1. *Working in one of the laboratories in the Çatalhöyük dig house.*

Another response to multivocality in archaeology is to emphasize the presentation of the past to different communities and constituencies. And certainly, at Çatalhöyük, we have programmes for the presentation of the site and its interpretation in the Visitor Centre, where there will be multilingual displays and a community exhibit. We have obtained sponsorship funding for the experimental construction of replica houses, and the Friends of Çatalhöyük are seeking funds to build other reconstructions. The Friends have also provided a tent over part of the excavations so that they can remain open to visitors all year round. We provide panels which explain our work in the different parts of the site to tourists.

But all this emphasis on the presentation of the site leaves untroubled the ascetic and antiseptic calm of the research laboratories in the dig house. Archaeologists readily deal with multivocality at the interface between their work and the outside world. They less easily allow that outside world to interfere into the calm objective world of the scientific analysis of data. But as the outside voices increase their intensity and volume, and as they become ever more sophisticated and well-informed, this monastic desire for closure is threatened. At Çatalhöyük, the confrontation occurred early on in discussions with Goddess groups, often composed of highly articulate and well-educated professionals. They applauded the emphasis on presentation of the past, and they welcomed the idea that alternative voices would be included in the displays about the interpretation of the site. But they pointed out that if we as archaeologists handed over the data to others to interpret, a bias remained. They said that 'the data are already interpreted by you'. This statement confronts the ascetic calm of the laboratory scientist and the self-contained methods of the field excavators. It shows that alternative voices have to be included in the very construction of the data themselves. We cannot just hand over objective data to interested groups. At least some of those groups recognize that interpretation is involved in the very collection of evidence, in the laboratory itself, and at the trowel's edge.

If the project responds to multivocality simply by building a visitor centre and making a CD-Rom, then the authority of archaeological science is retained. The archaeologist acts as the guardian and interpreter who hands over knowledge to a wider world. But once we let these conflicting voices into the construction or discovery of data, the old centres of archaeological authority begin to be eroded. Archaeological knowledge becomes part of a network or flow.

We need different methods to handle this new situation and it is these we are calling a 'reflexive method'. This debate in archaeology is parallel to those in ethnography (e.g. Clifford & Marcus 1986) but the challenge in archaeology is different because archaeology bridges into the natural sciences. The focus in ethnography has been on writing. But in archaeology a critical reflexivity has to deal not just with writing but also with those aspects of method which involve scientific observation and natural science techniques — that is with the laboratory and the excavation trench.

The challenge of introducing multivocality and reflexivity in the laboratory and trench is being dealt with by taking 12 tentative steps at Çatalhöyük. These are only examples in an ongoing process of experimentation with different ideas.

1. Every one or two days during the excavation, the laboratory staff visit the excavation areas on the site. This is possible because faunal, archaeobotanical,

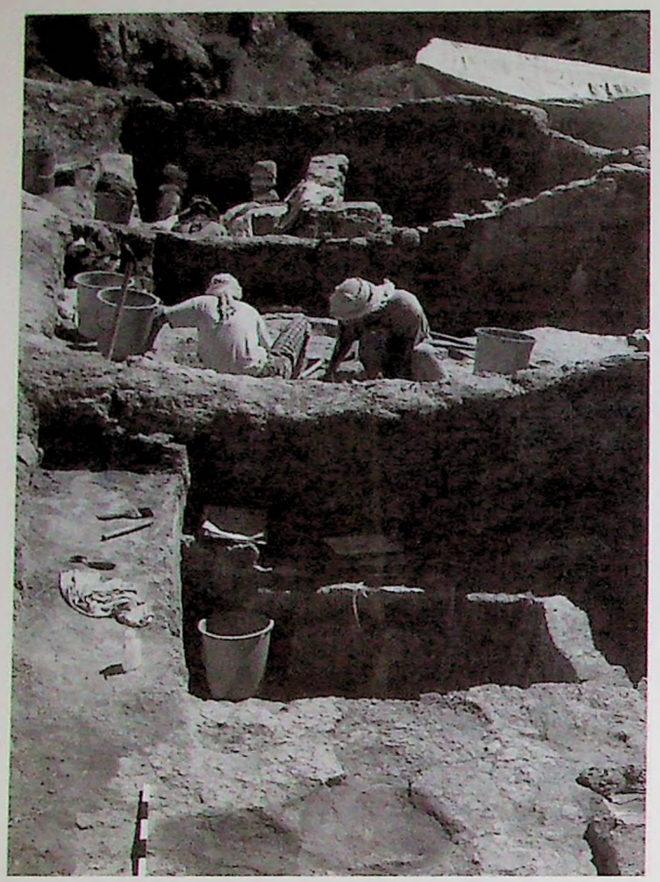


Figure 1.2. *General view of excavation underway in the South area.*

lithic, ceramic, soil micromorphological, ground stone, human remains and other specialists are present on the site during excavation. The aim of the discussions between the laboratory and field staff is twofold. From the point of view of the laboratory staff, information is gained about context. For example, it is helpful for the ceramics specialist to know if there is some uncertainty about the stratigraphical relations and dating of a layer, hearth or other context. From the point of view of the field staff, the tours by the laboratory specialists provide them with information about what they are excavating. For example, a faunal specialist might be able to recognize in the field the animal species and skeletal parts. This might help the excavator to interpret what is being excavated and thus make appropriate decisions about sampling strategies. This takes us to a second part of the Çatalhöyük methodology.

2. Many approaches in field archaeology assume, despite provisos about 'theory-ladenness', the objective sanctity of the archaeological data. As a result, sampling strategies are often developed which can be applied in a wide variety of different contexts. The codification and systematization of archaeological recording procedures have also been encouraged by the development of cultural resource management. Sampling strategies are adopted 'off the shelf', using pre-set formulae. In practice, archaeologists have a duty to be responsible to what they find. As a result sampling strategies are often changed as a survey or excavation progresses. But even the most codified of sampling strategies involves making interpretive decisions. For example, it may have been decided to excavate 10 per cent of all pits on a site, but 20 per cent of the hearths. It becomes necessary to interpret a feature as a pit or hearth before excavation. And what happens if a new category of feature is found, such as a ritual hearth? In order to avoid these difficulties at Çatalhöyük, we have replaced decisions about sampling with negotiations about priorities. When the laboratory staff tour the excavation areas, they discuss with the field staff which layers and features should be prioritized. Different members of the team argue for this or that layer or feature to be sampled more intensively (wet-sieving as opposed to dry-sieving for example). The percentages of deposits of a particular type which have been prioritized can be monitored. The priority contexts are retained in all further laboratory analysis. In this way, the sampling (prioritizing) can be related to the changing interpretation of the site and its features. It can be moulded to the particular site and adapted to the particular interpretation. But also this process ensures that all specialists look at the same samples so that for those samples studied there is the maximum contextual information available.

3. Another characteristic of many field approaches is that they assume the self-evident nature of 'the archaeological object'. For example, when trays of artefacts are brought into the laboratory from the field they are usually divided into pottery, metal, bone, shell, lithics and so on. These divisions determine how these objects are then studied and published. The artefacts are sent off to the pottery, metal, bone and so on specialists. This common archaeological procedure involves wrenching artefacts out of their context. Decontextualized they become difficult to interpret except in universalist terms. At Çatalhöyük we have recognized that this process does not help the understanding of the site or of individual object categories. The need for interaction and integration

lies behind our emphasis on having all the different types of specialist present at the site. But we have also recognized that the categories themselves are arbitrary and dependent on the scale at which we happen to work. At the microscope level small pieces of obsidian might be used as filler in pottery. They are thus not 'lithics' but 'pottery'. At the large scale, we have attempted to define 'objects' which cut across traditional categories. For example, the study of 'refuse' involves all types of materials, as do the 'objects' 'burning', 'decoration', 'food' or 'domestication'. In these ways the interactions between the different types of specialists are again maximized.

4. Another aim of the tours by the laboratory staff is to get information back to the field staff as quickly as possible. The reason for this is to discourage the idea of excavation as a mechanical process of recording objective data. Rather, the aim is to encourage the idea of excavation involving interpretation at the trowel's edge. In order to interpret stratigraphy properly, it helps to know the date of the pottery in the layers. In order to identify a floor it may be helpful to know about the degree of abrasion of pottery and bone. So, as we dig, we need to know as much as possible about what we are digging. This knowledge and our interpretations will determine the sampling strategies we use. At Çatalhöyük, the laboratory staff are thus asked to 'fast-track' the material from some layers and contexts. In other words, they look at this material quickly and feed back the results to the field staff. Other potential ways of speeding up the flow of information include digital recording and planning. In this way plots and plans could be examined immediately. Histograms and comparisons could be made immediately so that excavation can take place with maximum knowledge of what is being uncovered.

5. An integrated and fluid data base is essential for any attempt to link different participants in an archaeological project. At Çatalhöyük we have invested in a computer network so that the field and laboratory specialists can query each other's data and make comments on the provisional interpretations of their colleagues. All the different types of data, from field records to plans and drawings to measurements of lithic and ceramic artefacts to the film and diary data to be described below are available on the same data base. The separate computers are linked by a hub to one central computer to which all have access. The high degree of circuitry that is thus produced means that interpretations can always be in a state of flux, 'data' can continually be reconsidered and transformed, and conclusions are momentary.

6. However much one might want to create a fluid and flexible data base, some degree of fixity and codification is necessary. This is in order to allow comparison and in order to handle very large amounts of data. But any data base is a construct, and it is important that the user understands it as such. The user of a data base has to be able to situate it within its own context of production. In order to do this at Çatalhöyük we have reverted to the writing of a diary. This is written into the data base and cross-referenced. Thus, if a user wants to find out about layer 321, it is possible to find all the diary entries relating to layer 321 as well as the codified lists of animal bones, ceramics etc. found within it. The diary allows the user of the data base to understand what the excavators were assuming as they excavated a particular layer. It allows understanding of why the layer was excavated and sampled in a particular way. It allows the biases and preunderstandings to be explored. But writing the diary too has a beneficial effect. Other people read the entries as they are made and so the circuitry of information is enhanced. Also, the writing of the diary makes the excavator reflect on the excavation process and evaluate that process in relation to the questions that are being asked.

7. In the same way, video recording of the excavation process leads to a reflexive stance. At Çatalhöyük, the discussions by laboratory staff on the tours of the site (see point 1 above) are video recorded, as are summaries of their work by the field and laboratory staff. These video recordings are then digitized and edited into 1- to 2-minute clips which are placed on CD-Roms. The clips can be accessed by a keyword search system. Thus, it is possible to search for layer 321 in the data base and not only find the artefact and field records and the diary entries but also the video clips. These clips may show the excavator of layer 321 describing her or his work, pointing to the layer, and explaining its interpretation. This process allows the user of the data base to understand using visual information. It also allows the user to understand the assumptions and misconceptions under which the excavation was undertaken. The 'data' thus become relativized within a particular context of production of archaeological knowledge. Again, as with the diary, the process of filming itself means that information is circulated around members of the project as recording and viewing take place. Reflexivity occurs as project members are

Figure 1.3. *Investigating different modes of representation: Mark Knight and Nessa Leibhammer engaged in recording the same bins in 'scientific' and 'artistic' modes.*

asked to explain their work and assumptions before the camera.

8. Being reflexive and self-critical involve a considerable amount of energy and commitment to theoretical awareness. In practice, archaeologists may have little time for and inclination for 'navel gazing', despite the benefits derived. In addition, most archaeologists are not trained in the observation of living cultural behaviour. Thus, at Çatalhöyük, anthropologists work with us, dedicated to the study of the construction of knowledge at the site. They participate in our daily lives on the site, observing and conducting interviews. One studies the ways our interpretations are embedded within unrecognized assumptions and pressures. Another explores the visual conventions through which we see and record the site (in the form of plans, section drawings, artefact drawings, photographs and video clips, and see Fig. 1.3). Another studies the impact of our presence on the local community. The presence of people questioning assumptions has a destabilizing effect on the excavation and research teams. But a lack of stability is necessary if a critical approach is to be taken and if the project is to remain responsive to a changing world around it.

9. In order to facilitate maximum participation in the interpretation of the site from a variety of different communities, steps are being taken to place the entire Çatalhöyük data base on the Web. The aim is to provide a data base which is accessible and multimedia. This type of openness may conflict with the interests of individuals and groups with special access to the site. For example, the career paths of younger members of the project may be threatened if others have access to, and publish, primary data. Indeed, it is conceivable that alternative Çatalhöyük Web sites be set up by competing groups. However, while the rights of individuals and groups need to be protected, such concerns cannot justify the long-term secreting of archaeological information. Immediate accessibility encourages participation and engagement in the research process itself. It enhances multivocality.

10. The linearity of most archaeological narrative restricts the complexity of the stories that can be told. It also encourages the separation of evidence and interpretation. The latter is usually presented after the evidence has been set out. Hypertext, on the other hand, allows accounts with multiple pathways and incorporating multimedia. Thus a narrative account can be given and links provided between the narrative and pictures, plans, and coded artefact data. On the computer, the hypertext user can 'click' from narrative text to data base evidence in order to check the basis on which interpretations are made.

11. Archaeologists have always made plans, drawings and models of the buildings they excavate. These and other reconstructions allow hypotheses about original construction techniques to be experimented with. They also allow wider public participation in the understanding of a site. Today, the techniques of virtual reality allow greater speed and flexibility in the reconstruction experiments. The construction of a virtual world on the computer allows visualization and the experimentation with alternative reconstructions. Also, the virtual world can be made interactive so that the user can ask questions about a site and explore it from a non-specialist point of view. At Çatalhöyük the aim is for a virtual reconstruction of the site to become the 'front-end' to the data base. Non-specialist users can thus 'travel' to the virtual site and then find out about the archaeological information to a required level of detail. Virtuality allows experimentation with different ways of experiencing the site. Also, virtual reality allows us to break down the separation of 'plan' or 'architectural drawing' from 'artefact' and 'activity' (Small pers. comm.). Rather than the plan or wall elevation being seen as mere backdrops, virtual techniques can be used so that distributions of artefacts or chemical readings from floors can be placed in a three-dimensional

context which includes architecture, sculpture and painting. The underlying idea here is that the whole (the overall visual impression of patterns and relationships in a three-dimensional environment) is greater that the sum of the parts (the plans, artefact distributions, microdebitage plots, and so on).

12. At Çatalhöyük teams from different parts of the world are encouraged to excavate their own parts of the site. Equivalent recording and data systems are used, but each team uses its own traditional techniques of excavation and analysis. The assumption here is that the different teams, using different methods, will produce different results. By looking through different windows each team will see and find different Çatalhöyüks. Rather than being decried as chaotic, this diversity is welcomed since it is preferable to a single perspective and monolithic approach. The latter would produce a coherent account but that account would be based on the taken-for-granted assumptions of a particular archaeological tradition.

There are four themes underlying the 12 reflexive strategies being used at Çatalhöyük:

Reflexivity
By this I mean the examination of the effects of archaeological assumptions and actions on the various communities involved in an archaeological process, including other archaeologists and non-archaeological communities. Examples of this type of emphasis at Çatalhöyük include the work of anthropologists who study the impact of the project on the local community as well as on national and international groups interested in or visiting the site. Reflexivity is also engendered by the diary writing and video filming, since these processes encourage those on the team to examine their own assumptions. The diaries and videos also provide contextual information about the excavation process so that others can look back and critically evaluate the claims that have been made. The results of archaeological research are reflexively related to the context in which knowledge is produced.

Relationality or contextuality
The notion here is that meaning is relational. This emphasis is seen in the reflexive attempts to relate findings to a specific context of knowledge production. But the emphasis is also visible in the interrelations of contextual and artefactual information. Thus the date of a layer depends on the artefacts found in it. But in some cases, the date of the artefacts may depend on the stratigraphical relationships of the layers. In another example, at Çatalhöyük the interpretation of a building as a house rather than a shrine depends on the artefacts within it. But the interpretation of the artefacts partly depends on whether the building is seen as a house or shrine. So, usually in archaeology, everything depends on everything else within an hermeneutic whole. Our aim at Çatalhöyük has been to facilitate this circuitry, for example by having information about artefacts available to excavators as they dig contexts in a trench. The interpretation of artefact and context depend on each other and so it is necessary to have many artefact and context specialists present together on site so that information can be mutually available, especially for the excavators themselves. The aim is to be highly integrated and inter-disciplinary. Relationality also implies flexibility in the research process. If everything depends on everything else, then as I change one variable in my analysis so there are knock-on effects on all other variables. Thus the data base at Çatalhöyük is as open to change and as flexible as possible; conclusions are seen as momentary and always subject to change.

Interactivity
The aim here is to provide mechanisms for people to question and criticize archaeological interpretations that are being made, as they are being made. During the excavation process, interaction between laboratory and field staff is encouraged by the tours of trenches. The prioritizing (sampling) procedures are arrived at by negotiation between staff members. Interactivity is also facilitated at Çatalhöyük by the provision of the data base on the Web and by the provision of access routes (e.g. virtual reconstructions) that are 'user friendly'. It is also facilitated by the provision of information in diary and video form that situates the data base and opens it up for critique and alternative interpretation. The aim in the on-site museum is to have a community section in which a display about the site is constructed by members of the nearby village. In the museum too an interactive CD-Rom will be provided with hypertext and Virtual Reality components so that visitors and students can find out about the site in a non-linear way.

Multivocality
A wide range of different groups often have conflicting interests in the past and wish to be engaged in the archaeological process in different ways. The same point is often made in feminist archaeology (Conkey & Gero 1997). Mechanisms need to be pro-

vided so that different discourses can take place. For example, at Çatalhöyük different teams excavate different parts of the site and present their own 'windows' into the site. While the Web site may allow interaction with international, educated and networked groups, the local rural community is best able to interact through museum displays and visits to the site itself. In the future it may be conceivable to provide a modern shrine so that religious groups such as Mother Goddess visitors can pray at the site.

Behind the 12 strategies and 4 themes there is *one theme* which can be described as *non-dichotomous thinking*; that is the breaking down and questioning of categories and boundaries. Archaeologists have always built clear boundaries around the discipline, and in recent decades they have policed its boundaries very carefully, especially as various 'other' claims on the past have proliferated in a postcolonial and global world. In this new context, it is necessary for archaeologists to break down categories and boundaries, for example, the boundaries around the discipline, the author, around lithics, or Classical Archaeology, or faunal analysis. It is necessary to bridge the divide between archaeology as either science or humanity, as either history or anthropology, as either objective or subjective.

One clear example of this move towards non-dichotomous thinking is the breaking of boundaries around the site. The notion of 'the site' is one of the main building blocks of archaeological knowledge and archaeological authority. Archaeologists talk of 'my site'; they say 'come and visit my site', or 'what site are you digging at the moment?' There is some notion in these statements of ownership, and indeed the discipline is full of unstated rules such that individuals hold the 'rights' to dig a site or to survey a region and to publish the findings.

But at Çatalhöyük we see the site disperse. Different teams produce different Çatalhöyüks. Archaeologists and religious experience different sites, as do the different local, national and international constituencies. Different Çatalhöyüks can be visited by accessing different Web sites. Numerous people interact in the interpretation of the site so that it becomes unclear who is in and who is not in 'the team'.

So, another answer to the question 'Where is Çatalhöyük?' is to say that the one place Çatalhöyük is not is at Çatalhöyük. By this is meant that as varied groups, with their different interests and expectations approach the site, they construct different versions of it which are only partly rooted in the finds made at the physical location called Çatalhöyük. These varied interpretations are located at other sites, globally distributed. They are grounded in different locales, away from the archaeological site itself.

This idea of dispersing the archaeological site is parallel to Marcus' (1995) notion of multi-sited ethnography. In archaeology the main fear has been the loss of authority that seems to be implied as bounded categories become dispersed into networks. But in the daily practices surrounding the Çatalhöyük project, we are, willy-nilly, seeing a shift from the archaeological site as a source of knowledge and authority to the archaeological site as mediating between many sites. The archaeological authority can no longer be assumed — it has to be argued for within a diverse network. The archaeologist contributes to this network but does not dominate it.

In the practices surrounding Çatalhöyük, archaeologists increasingly act as providers or mediators. A common experience has come to be the following. A TV producer approaches the project. They wish to make a film which includes the site and the project. They want to know what we have to say on some theme, often something to do with New Age movements, the Goddess and alternative religions. The archaeologists get interviewed and are politely listened to, but the agenda of the producer is clear and cynical. Whatever the specialist archaeological perspective, the programme makers have to make a film that will attract public attention. In the editing process, the archaeological perspective is placed on an equal footing with other points of view. The archaeological view is seen as one among many. The archaeological statements may get re-interpreted within a quite different story.

We can decry this situation and lament the loss of archaeological authority. Or we can embrace such experiences as a function of the erosion of boundaries between 'high' and 'low' culture. In the latter case, the archaeologist welcomes the wider public appeal and recognizes the need to speak to different communities and to argue a case in relation to a variety of different points of view. The boundaries around the discipline are eroded, and the enclosed self-sufficiency of the archaeological academy is punctured, but as mediator and provider, the archaeologist enters into a wider debate, often full of dissonance and frustration, but in which active social engagement becomes possible.

Taking a stand

As the archaeological site becomes involved in a negotiation with many other sites, it is impossible to

try and remain neutral, objective, distanced. As one's words and as the data get taken and reinterpreted within other sites, there may be a desire to scream that 'there is no evidence for that'. But in that same desire to produce the evidence as objective, one recognizes the desire of others to do the same, from a different point of view. One recognizes that it is impossible to remain simply a service provider or a mediator. The message that is provided is not neutral — it is immediately picked up in the interests of one or other group at the expense of others. As a professional archaeologist and as a member of society one has to be responsive to the impact of one's work.

One is forced, then, to take a stand. As the evidence is taken by others to show that a matriarchy existed at Çatalhöyük, the archaeologist is drawn into an opinion, for or against. For example, in my view the evidence that we have gained at Çatalhöyük suggests not an all-powerful Goddess and a priestly élite, but daily domestic rituals and a set of beliefs and myths in which both men and women play a role. When talking to Goddess groups, many of whom have provided, or have the ability to provide, funding for the project, this alternative perspective has not always been well received. In my lectures to such groups, I have had members of the Goddess community walk out in anger. I argue that Goddess or other groups sometimes make claims that cannot be supported by any evidence. But I recognize that counter claims can also be made.

Indeed, negotiation with such groups has had an impact on our own research agendas and strategies. For example, the interests of the Goddess communities have provided an impetus to explore the role of women at Çatalhöyük. One response has been to develop a research strategy based on the analysis of ancient DNA. In a female-centred society one might expect that the inhabitants of houses would be linked through the female line. Thus as house is built above house and as family members are buried beneath the floors of the successive houses, one should find that daughters of daughters of daughters would be found. Analysis of ancient DNA should be able to distinguish such a pattern from one based on male household lineages. There are of course many difficult assumptions here (such as that those buried beneath a house lived in that house, and so on), but the example is presented to show how research directions in the scientific analysis of the material from the site can be designed to respond to questions from multiple sources and interests.

Negotiation with multiple voices is being undertaken on the project's Web site where a dialogue between myself and Anita Louise, a member of the Goddess community, has been posted. There is also the facility on the Web site to make comments and to enter into dialogue with project members. On the whole, there has been a positive response to the provision of as much information as possible on the Web site, including data files and diary entries. These are certainly read and we hope that a more informed debate may gradually take place. It is possible to provide data while at the same time taking a stand. It is possible both to mediate and to participate in debate, as long as a reflexive context is provided — i.e. as long as attempts are made to involve multivocality, reflexivity, interactivity and contextuality. It is possible to break down boundaries but still take a stand in a dispersed debate.

The impact of our work on the local communities is less easy to evaluate and is on-going. Certainly tensions have arisen. In particular, the support of Goddess communities has had a negative impact locally. There is local suspicion of some of these groups. A traditional society in which women are covered and expected to be deferential is likely to look askance at New Age feminists, naked Goddesses, and groups dancing and chanting on the mound. Many in the local community are wary of newcomers and outsiders.

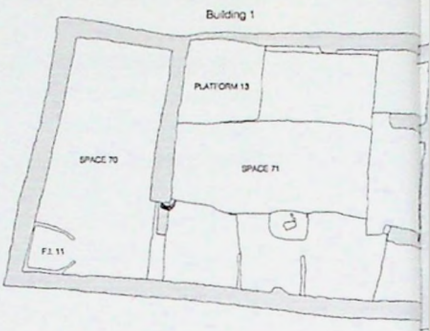
At some moments it has been important to take a stand and not to participate in Goddess events so as not to confront local feelings. It is important to respond to the local interests in the site and a community exhibit is to be incorporated into the Visitor Centre and people from the local community have been asked to make a video about their own interpretation of the site and about the work of the project. But local views have also been important in understanding the site itself. Our various ethnoarchaeological projects have depended very much on local practices in their attempts to understand micromorphological information about the use of floors etc. The local women have suggested uses for the ovens found on the site which had not occurred to the foreign members of the team.

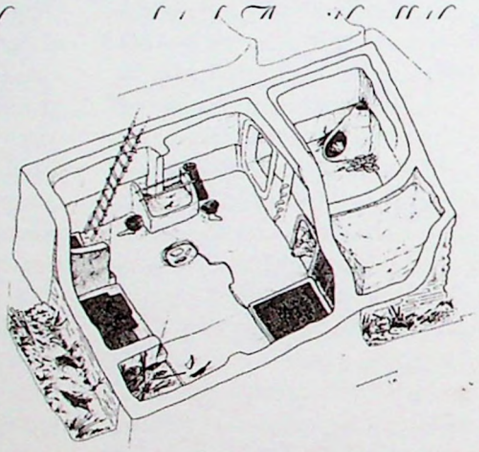
It has also been necessary to take a stand in relation to sponsors and local and national political interests. Many of these groups want our work to prove that the site is the biggest, earliest, most original, and so on. Much of our renewed work at the site has led to a 'normalization' or 'de-mystification' of some of the more exorbitant claims that have been made for it. This tendency tends to disappoint many of these groups and there is a concomitant danger of a loss of support and revenue for the project. But it is

On 11/08/97, Gavin wrote:

Arrived almost two weeks ago but the first week was taken up with the construction of the steel shelter o
and in the end a professional construction team had to be brought in from Konya to complete the job wh
building had been protected by plastic sheeting and some spoil infill and had survived very well althou
the walls a very litt last s
Naomi ha Mellaa has
working in ces to rem e ain.
I such as t nd F.37, 8 an
still taking le infant e wa
disarticula remnants of F. 38 and a lower one, beneath
mostly wor has just skeletal remains, they appea
Unfortunately F.44 has just been shown which is now being remove
moulding (F.26) and step (F.46), some still continues un
ructi ary element of th
rticu peared at the ba
ds a ims to have found
e bu ls the same, inclu
een f nder F.41 - this may be one of
e the extent of the cut was never fully resolved last year, but there ar
was helping. Some of the floors from here have also been taken down ost floo
re king off some of the wall plasters down -
the me re-acquainted with the phasin re
and it almost certainly needs refin
ek. This is further beset by the prob
e whole building - and with othe fe
to be checked, the big problem is not so much the stratigraphic relations
relationships are crucial. Moreov ich a
year some on site interpretations u think
whether it is over-emphasising dis s one o antages of a mai









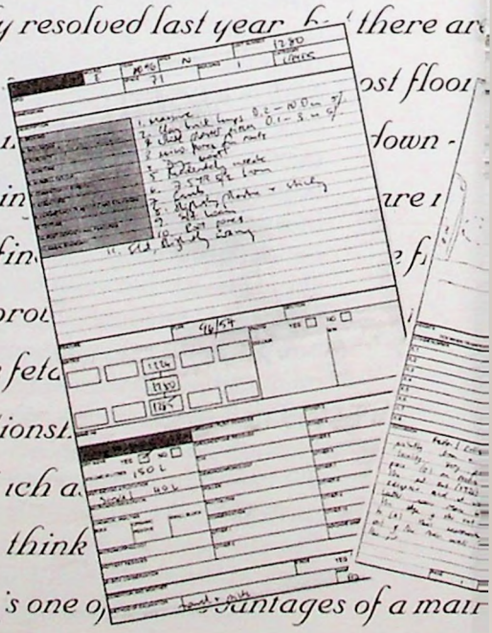
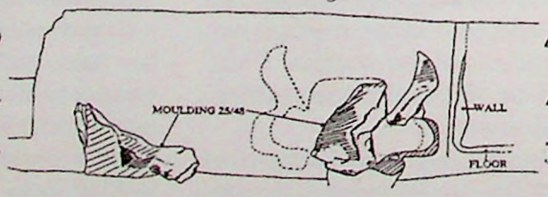
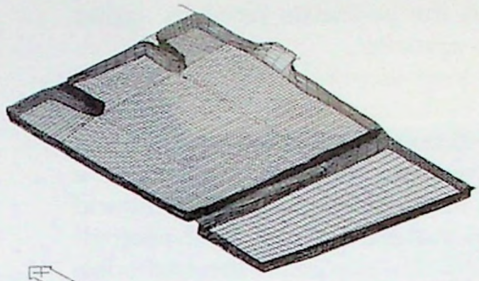



Figure 1.4. *Photomontage: Building 1 representations.*

Ruth's area, just adjacent to the North; unfortunately, this took a m



hap

he p

began on the North area just o

ps a little too damp as a thin fi

e D. who, as last year, will onl

had and Charlotte. At the moment this is a good size as we are

hen begin the removal of the architectural features of Building

layers below. Less burials than I thought were remaining which was a relief although they are

, F.40 another double infant b removed last year, disturbed/

burials (F.29) under platform e team has been up helping and

rly solid but are extremely brittle suffered much over the winter.

Charlotte; also some skull fragmen f the fill for F.44 under the wall

suggests t ial which perhaps F.44 has cut.

, we have fairly conclusive evidence of at least one burial like this; after the

mation with its head lying well south of F. y floor

corroboration; my worry is that more may want is

s under platform F.13 are being fairly rc early,

earliest under the platform and has a greenstone pendant associate n F.37

ree groups/individuals at least, one of which has now come out. Na arlotte

mains. Although then, most ed on the burials, remove

mpleted mor hese. In terms of the interpretive issues surrounding

ed out. Th r Building 1 was done in almost a day by Roger and

e studied m onjunction with the drawn sections, something which

floor units) stratigrap isually

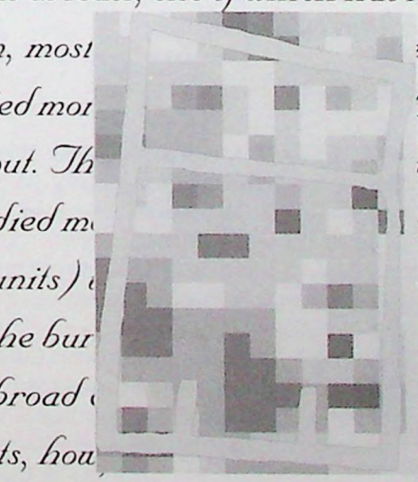
ion of the bur eeds to be t needs

ing or broad urials and ct floor

nterments, hou t a sequen re last

haps check Roger's diary?). Beyond this, ther elf and

es not need phasing. Having said that, there are ding 1,



necessary to take a stand and point to alternative ways in which the site can be seen as appealing. In doing so, the interests of sponsors and political groups can be catered for, in partnership rather than opposition.

So we cannot simply act as neutral mediators — providing a service to varied communities so that they can access the past. Rather, it becomes necessary to accept that our 'mediation' involves a particular perspective which has to be negotiated in relation to other perspectives. The aim has been to provide mechanisms so that others can engage in a debate. But such a process means that we have to enter into the debate ourselves. We cannot impose an authority based on an objective science. Rather, we have to argue an authority in terms of a well-informed understanding of the data. We have to recognize that that understanding is better informed if opened up to alternative voices. But we also have to act as members of society, aware of the conflicts and tensions between diverse perspectives, and aware of the benefits and dangers of specific uses of the past. We have to take a stand as archaeologists and as members of society, but we can do so in an inclusive and non-confrontational manner.

Conclusion

The archaeological site at Çatalhöyük does have an impact on diverse communities in the present. It mediates between these various groups and individuals and their constructions of the past. The archaeological site at Çatalhöyük is one site among many Çatalhöyük sites and it is dispersed into those sites, not existing independently of them. Yet the archaeological site impacts on the diverse communities which are networked to it. By breaking down boundaries, and by involving people in the construction of data, people's experience of the world changes. The archaeologist is involved in an on-going negotiation, one that penetrates into the laboratory and into the trench. It does seem possible to argue for a certain authority but be involved in a plural, multivocal debate. It does seem possible to break down boundaries, and move to networks and flows, without losing impact and purpose.

Postscript: the 1999 season

This book describes mainly the early seasons of excavation at Çatalhöyük from 1995 to 1998. During this time the methods discussed in this volume were experimented with. But during 1999 a six-month season took place, prompted by the need to evaluate potential damage to the lower levels of the site caused by a dropping water table. A team of 20 professional archaeologists, half field and half laboratory, were recruited. During this long season, the methods which had been developed in previous years became a routine and the problems faced in earlier seasons were not as apparent.

The aim of the long season in 1999 was to reach natural at the base of the mound in the South area, which involved the excavation of about six metres of stratigraphy and much shoring. The season was a success not only in reaching the base of the mound and keeping within budget, but also methodologically and communally. The success of the methodology is probably largely attributable to the use of a smaller and wholly professional team so that the close interaction between specialists in different fields was easier. Individuals had enough experience to cope with the integration of large amounts of information and with the detailed recording and sampling.

Continuity over six months resulted in efficiency and team stability, and familiarity lessened inhibitions in group discussion and interaction. The process of excavation, recording and interpretation was familiar to everyone. Methodologies were adopted with relative ease, and time was not needed to train students.

With a smaller team and more computer terminals, field data entry was more efficient allowing quicker data querying. This was possible as with more than one competent excavator in an area individuals were able to spend time in the laboratory on paper and computer work. Video records were made by a trained excavator who had closer contact with daily activities in the trench and was better equipped to know what was archaeologically important both whilst filming and editing.

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