

# Remixing atalh y k

**By:**  
OKAPI



# Remixing Çatalhöyük

**By:**

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**C O N N E X I O N S**

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# Chapter 1

## Welcome to the Çatalhöyük Project<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1.1

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NOTE: An aerial view of the East Mound at Çatalhöyük, looking towards the north. This photograph was taken from a balloon flying above the mound. The original Mellaart excavation (called the South area) can be seen in the left of the picture. The North area, opened in 1995, including the white shelter of the BACH area, lies at the top of the picture. The guardhouse and the archaeologists' compound is in the top left corner of the picture, including the road leading west to the town of Cumra and east to the village of Küçükköy. In this picture you cannot see the wire fence that surrounds the East Mound.

### About Çatalhöyük

Çatalhöyük is a settlement mound made up of the remains of a Neolithic farming community that lived in central Turkey more than 9,000 years ago. First excavated in the 1960s by British archaeologist James

<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m15210/1.2/>>.

Mellaart, Çatalhöyük became famous worldwide for the dense arrangement of its buildings and its spectacular wall paintings.

After Mellaart's initial work at the site (1961-1965), Çatalhöyük remained abandoned until archaeologist Ian Hodder (then at Cambridge University; currently at Stanford) began a new series of excavations in the 1990s. From 1997 until 2003, archaeology and media specialists from the University of California at Berkeley (aka the Berkeley Archaeologists at Çatalhöyük, or "BACH" team) worked alongside scholars from around the world at Çatalhöyük. Where Mellaart's original work exposed more than 150 houses in the settlement, the BACH team took a different approach, excavating in minute detail the remains of a single house known as Building 3. The data and discoveries from that excavation have been made available to the public through the resources in this and other websites.

#### About Life and Work at Çatalhöyük 9,000 Years Ago

In Turkish, the word Çatalhöyük (say "cha-tal-HU-yuk") means "forked mound," referring to a footpath that once split between the east and west mounds that make up the 70-foot-high remains of the settlement today. In Neolithic times, the two mounds straddled a river, long gone today, which could provide fresh water and food for the village, including fish and the eggs of water fowl. At the time, the environment was a semiarid plain, dominated by low-growing grasses, sedges, and small bushes. In the spring, the area would have been surrounded by wetlands, offering mud and reeds as building materials.

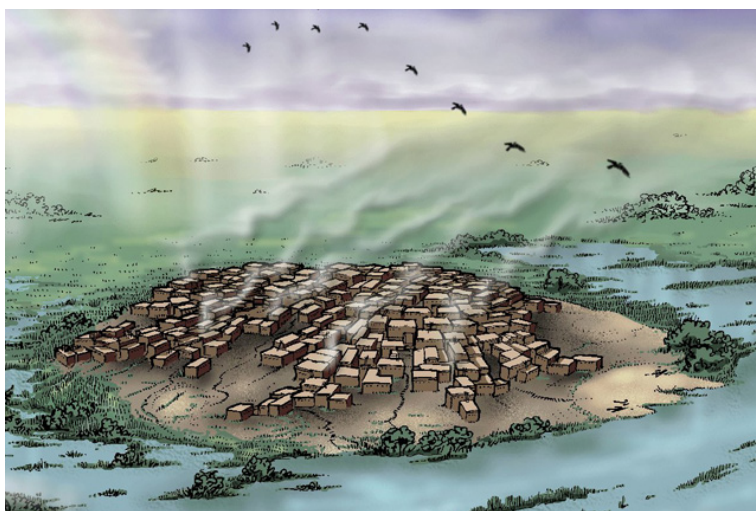


Figure 1.2

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NOTE: Çatalhöyük project illustrator John Swogger created this visualization of the Neolithic settlement of Çatalhöyük during a spring flood. During this season, when all the land around the mound became waterlogged from snow runoff, the place abounded with growing vegetation and wildlife, including migrating birds on their way north. These spring floods no longer happen at Çatalhöyük, since the intensive modern agricultural use of the land, including the use of drainage ditches, has lowered the water table so much it is difficult even for trees to grow. The Neolithic was a time when people were beginning to settle down, living in collected family groups and staying in one location throughout the year, rather than travelling from place to place depending upon the season. This new way of life—sometimes called the “Neolithic revolution”—drew on the most sophisticated skills and abilities of the people of the time. People began to find new uses for all of the materials their environment had to offer. Perhaps most important, they began to work



together, forging long-term relationships that intensified as each generation added to the skills, knowledge, and abilities of the group. In the environment of a settled village, these increasingly complex interactions began to require new types of organization and structure, ultimately laying the foundation for our modern way of life.

During the Neolithic, people learned to weave baskets from plant materials, and to make cloth from a variety of sources, including plant fibers and animal hair. They used animal furs and hides, as well as vegetable fibers such as flax, for clothing and bedding. They used wood, stone, shell, bone, and animal horn to make tools, weapons, and household implements. At Çatalhöyük, the local clays were used to make building bricks and plaster for construction, to create decorative items (such as the tiny beads found in an infant's grave at Building 3), and to make sculptures. In fact, though we can only speculate about spiritual belief during the Neolithic, clay sculptures of corpulent female nudes found throughout the settlement have been the source some people's beliefs that an "earth mother" cult once thrived there.



**Figure 1.3**

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NOTE: Small clay figurine of an animal, possibly a wild pig. The people who lived at Çatalhöyük were experimenting with breeding and domesticating both cattle and pigs. They also hunted deer and other animals. Sheep and goats, however, were fully domesticated at the site. Figurines of humans have also been found. The purpose of such a figurine is very much open to interpretation.

At Çatalhöyük, people had begun to experiment with making pottery by firing objects such as figurines, clay balls, and even containers; and while they were still relying on many wild food sources, they were beginning to domesticate both plants and animals. In Building 3, the remains of boars (wild pigs) and aurochs (wild cattle, now extinct) have been found alongside the remains of domesticated sheep and goats. Cultivated foods such as wheat, barley, peas, and lentils have also been found inside the houses, but these were not grown in the marshy areas around the houses. Çatalhöyük was a farming settlement, but evidence has shown that some of the crops they tended were located well away from their homes.

The buildings at Çatalhöyük were built side by side and one on top of another for more than a thousand years, starting around 9,000 years ago. Houses were built right up against each other, interlocking like the cells of a honeycomb, with few spaces in between for pathways or roads. In fact, there were few exterior door

openings in the maze of buildings at Çatalhöyük. Instead, most houses were entered through openings in the roof. Archaeologists have found evidence that people climbed up and down steep stairs or ladders to enter and exit most buildings. As a result, the roofs of the houses served as the “streets” of the village, offering additional work and living space. In some places, piles of refuse and rotting organic material filled the spaces between the buildings—conditions that may have contributed to the rooftop habits of the inhabitants.

Inside each mud-brick house were one, two, or three multi-purpose rooms that would have been shared by a family of five to ten people. Some parts of the house were used for storage and work spaces; other areas were used for food preparation, sitting, sleeping, and perhaps telling stories. Clay ovens provided warmth, light, and fires for cooking, but there is evidence of open hearths in other areas of the houses as well. Floors and walls were plastered with layers of thick white lime mud, and then regularly replastered to protect the structure beneath.

Rendering by project artist John Swogger of a wall painting discovered at Shrine 14 during the original excavations of Çatalhöyük by British archaeologist James Mellaart in the 1960s. A popular interpretation of this painting is that it is the oldest map in the world, representing the plan of the houses in their neat rows at Çatalhöyük, nestling in the shadow of Hasan Dag, the erupting double-peaked volcano that lies to the northeast of the mound. There are many arguments against this interpretation, and some alternative plausible interpretations, but it is the one that sparks the imagination of all who see it. Vividly colored designs and murals were found painted on many of the house’s interior walls. Some walls were painted bright red all over; others were decorated with leopard motifs or complex patterns that may have mirrored the designs in woven wool or flax. One painting shows vultures flying over headless human bodies; another seems to show the houses of Çatalhöyük with an erupting volcano in the background.

Against the perimeter walls of the houses, rectangular areas of the floor were built up into raised platforms that may have been used for seating and sleeping. When people died, they were most frequently buried beneath selected platforms inside the house, and sometimes under other areas of the floor.

When a house was no longer usable, it was cleaned out, filled with dirt, refuse, and rubble, and a new house would be built, sometimes right on top of the original house walls below it. In this way, the remains of hundreds of years of occupation were preserved, offering views of the past, layer by layer. In some places, 18 consecutive house layers have been excavated. These layers create the mound we see today.

About Life and Work at Çatalhöyük Today



Figure 1.4

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NOTE: The northwest platform of Building 3 showing the multiple burials beneath its floors. Four individuals were buried under the floors of this platform, all probably at different times. The earliest were two immature adults, then a woman aged about 45, and finally a small child. Note the red-painted wall to their west. After each burial, the pit was filled in with earth and midden materials and then carefully plastered over with white clay. It takes more than 24 hours of travel time to get from California to Turkey, and then more than an hour to drive from the nearest urban area to Çatalhöyük. Visitors are welcomed at the Visitor Center, but must be escorted throughout their tour of the site. Few people get to work at the mound itself. Archaeologists, however experienced, cannot work there without official permission from the Turkish government. A fence surrounds the mound and a guardhouse protects it.

In the relative isolation of Çatalhöyük, which is today surrounded by intensively cultivated agricultural fields, the BACH team (along with the rest of the Çatalhöyük project team) lived in their own modern version of a working village. A typical day would find them excavating at the site and working at the research labs in the compound nearby. At night, they slept in the compound's dorm rooms. Meals were served in the dining room. Bathroom areas were shared, and hot water came from solar-power collectors on the roof. Away from modern lights and life, their focus was on interpreting the past, while also participating in the intensive social whirl of life on a big archaeological project.

During their time at Çatalhöyük, the BACH team excavated one of the settlement's houses through five phases of occupation, and studied it in detail, paying particular attention to interpreting the "life histories" of the people, places, and things they found there.

About Building 3



Figure 1.5

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NOTE: This magnificent flint dagger with its carved bone handle was found in 1997 in a small cell (Space 89) just south of Building 3, in the area being excavated by the BACH team. It was located at the top of the room's fill, together with a large, burned bucranium (cow horns and skull), and had been broken by a falling mud brick. In many parts of the world, flint and related materials are the dominant materials for making sharp-edged tools. At Çatalhöyük, however, 90 percent of edged tools were made of obsidian; flint is quite rare. Flint of this quality and size would have had to be brought from a great distance to Çatalhöyük, so its use in making this dagger gives great

significance to this object. Only one item like it has ever been found at Çatalhöyük, and this was during James Mellaart's original excavations in the 1960s.

Building 3, a 400-square-foot mud-brick structure, was probably home to several generations of a Neolithic family. Excavations revealed painted walls, a flint dagger with a carved bone handle, the remains of a collapsed roof and the residue of woven baskets, a domed clay oven, and burials of both children and adults beneath the floor.

To really understand what life might have been like in the Neolithic, the Çatalhöyük team built a Replica House based on their finds at Building 3. They climbed in and out through the roof opening. They lit fires in its clay oven to find out how well food cooked in it, how smoky the building might have been, how warm or cold it was inside, and how dark it might have become at different times of day or night. (With the white walls and daylight streaming in through the opening in the ceiling, it was brighter inside than expected.) In essence, they created experiences that would

give them clues they could not have found in their excavations.

The team also kept regular, detailed records of their finds—notes, drawings, photos, and videos—and consulted with specialists who could look most closely at their discoveries. All of these records were digitized and entered into the database that served the entire Çatalhöyük archaeological project. When they used microscopic analysis to study the soil where the imprint of a basket was found, for instance, they discovered that the material was from a plant that came from the Levant, hundreds of miles away. Other materials at the site came from outside the local village area as well, including obsidian, the glassy black rock used to make sharp-edged tools and points, which came from another area of Turkey. These finds support evidence from throughout the site showing that, in addition to establishing and maintaining complex activities and interrelationships within the settlement, the people of Çatalhöyük were also engaging in long-distance exchanges of materials, and probably of ideas and people as well.

Little by little, the BACH team interpreted the clues and created their own stories, once again bringing to life the people, places, and things of Çatalhöyük.

[Click to download this PDF<sup>2</sup>](#)

[Remixing Çatalhöyük Project<sup>3</sup>](#)

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<sup>2</sup>[http://cnx.org/content/m15210/latest/okapi.berkeley.edu/res/sites/catal\\_archive/](http://cnx.org/content/m15210/latest/okapi.berkeley.edu/res/sites/catal_archive/)

<sup>3</sup><http://okapi.berkeley.edu/remixing>

## Chapter 2

# Remixing Çatalhöyük: Life Histories of People, Places & Things<sup>1</sup>

### Life Histories of People, Places, and Things

How are the lives of people intertwined with the lives of the houses in which they live?

What can clues left within a house tell us about its former occupants?

How do archaeologists construct the lives of people, places, and things from what remains?



**Figure 2.1**

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NOTE: Two skulls intentionally placed at the abandonment of Building 3. The skulls were found immediately on top of the latest occupation floor in the central area of Building 3. Their placement seems to have been deliberate, probably as part of the “closing ritual” of the building.

Clues from the past that survive into the present, such as artifacts, architectural structures, and burials, provide windows into the past. The Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük in Central Turkey is just such a window. By studying the landscape that surrounded Çatalhöyük, the houses that made Çatalhöyük, the objects and

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m15212/1.3/>>.

burials we find in the houses, and even the middens—the areas where people discarded the refuse of their day-to-day activities—archaeologists are able to re-create the life histories of people, places, and things.

Çatalhöyük was a Neolithic settlement that was inhabited continuously for more than 1,200 years, over 9,000 years ago. The Neolithic was a time when people began to cultivate plants and domesticate animals. In this part of the world, people were “settling down,” living less nomadic, more sedentary, lives. They were creating more permanent settlements—settlements that were occupied for longer than one season. These changes had significant effects on how people lived.

At Çatalhöyük, people lived side-by-side with their ancestors. When people died, they were buried in pits dug into the floors of their homes. After the burial, the pit was filled with the soil dug out, which might contain both clean earth and organic-rich earth from older middens below floor-level. The filled pit was then covered with a plaster lid that looked just like the floor plaster, the whole floor was renewed, and life continued. Although most burials came from inside the houses, one burial—an old, crippled man—was found in a midden from a different part of Çatalhöyük. Had he lost his family, or was he a traveler?



**Figure 2.2**

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NOTE: The northwest platform of Building 3 showing the multiple burials beneath its floors. Four individuals were buried under the floors of this platform, all probably at different times. The earliest were two immature adults, then a woman aged about 45, and finally a small child. Note the red-painted wall to their west. After each burial, the pit was filled in with earth and midden materials and then carefully plastered over with white clay. The buildings at Çatalhöyük were built out of mud-brick, or adobe, in rectangular shapes. Wooden posts supported the roofs, which were made from packed mud and reeds. Each building had one, two, or three rooms separated by thinner walls. The houses had flat roofs, which added additional work and living space. Typically, the people of Çatalhöyük entered their houses through the roof. When a building got “old” and became unusable, it would be abandoned and often used as a foundation for a newer building. The layering of the buildings, which eventually formed the mound itself, is very complex: if you could cut a slice through the mound, it would look more like a honeycomb than a layer cake.

Çatalhöyük is marked by change as well as continuity. Some parts of life stayed the same over long periods of time, while others changed more quickly. Some of the houses are what archaeologist Ian Hodder calls

“ancestral homes,” in that they were built in the exact same way as previous houses. There are some cases where such continuity is seen in the building of four consecutive houses. But some newly built houses only partially overlapped with earlier houses, and some houses—as in Building 3, where the Berkeley Archaeologists at Çatalhöyük (BACH) team worked—were built on top of middens. Only intricate excavation can reveal such histories.

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**Figure 2.3**

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NOTE: The ladder and newly constructed oven in the Replica House in 2002. As in many other houses at Çatalhöyük and in Building 3 in its later phases, the ladder and oven are in the southeast corner of the building. The doorway that can be seen to the right of the oven is to facilitate the entrance of modern visitors to the Replica House, since entry down the ladder might be difficult. Side entrances have rarely been found in Çatalhöyük houses. However, at the beginning of its history, Building 3 had a side entrance in its eastern wall, which was later blocked.

Why did people build their houses so closely together and enter from the roof? Why does Çatalhöyük show this remarkable continuity? How did the people of Çatalhöyük engage with their surroundings and with one another? These are some of the questions archaeologists are still trying to answer. They know, for instance, that the houses at Çatalhöyük changed over time in form and use. For example, the archaeologists have been able to discern a number of different phases of the life history of Building 3.

The BACH team believes that Building 3 went through five general phases of use and modification. Phase 1 was a long phase that started with the establishment of the building itself. In phase 2, a large crawl-hole or door in the northern part of the eastern wall was blocked. It is possible that the earliest burial, that of a baby found in the center of the house, dates to this phase. In phase 3, two small children were buried in the building. In phase 4, two small partitioning walls and a curtain or screen wall were constructed dividing the large living space into two rooms. In this phase, an adult female, two younger people, and a child were buried under the northwest platform in the larger room; an adult (probably male) was buried under the northeast platform in this same room. During phase 5a, the smaller room was completely filled in. The larger room was also abandoned after some ritual deposits had been placed in the center of the room. Phase 5b represents a disturbance of the abandoned Neolithic building by the burial of five people from the late Roman period (150-250 AD).



Figure 2.4

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NOTE: This poignant scene of two small children buried in front of the screen wall was excavated in 2000. The two were probably buried at the same time; both are less than ten years old. In 2001, we discovered a slightly earlier burial of a baby in the space between and below them. Their three small interlocking pits were dug through the central floor of Building 3, south of the platforms where the adult burials were found. These child burials are all earlier than the burials under the platforms.

During these phases, the configuration of architectural features went through substantial changes. As the house was occupied, some features needed to be fixed or moved according to use. For example, the location of the oven changed three or four times during the time of the building's use.

The BACH team dated different phases in the life of Building 3 using different dating methods. For example, archaeologists used micromorphology to study the layers of floor and wall plasters in the tiniest detail, and carbon 14, or “radiocarbon” dating, to find out the age of the building. By analyzing organic material from Building 3, and comparing its composition to the known decay rate of an unstable form of carbon (an isotope called carbon 14), specialists estimated that Building 3 was approximately 8600-8700 years old.

When a burial was discovered by the team it was a sacred and special event. In the field season of 2,000, for example, two children were found buried by the BACH team in Building 3. These children were



probably about ten or twelve years old, and are interesting in that they were not only buried together, but that they died at such a young age. What were their jobs or roles at Çatalhöyük? What are some possible reasons for their early death? Why were they buried together? Another intriguing burial, dubbed “Dido” by Ruth Tringham, Principal Investigator of the BACH project, was found in Building 3. We know that this individual was a mature female who had arthritis. How had she died? What did she mean to the household?

These are the kinds of questions that arise when we think about the possible life histories of the people who once lived in Çatalhöyük. The process of determining what their lives could have been like 9,000 years ago requires archaeologists to make educated guesses, or hypotheses. But archeologists also use a variety of scientific methods to understand their subjects. For example, to find clues as to whether the individuals in the burials were related or connected in some way, archaeologists can take DNA samples or study the form of the subject’s teeth. The study of the bones themselves, called osteology, can also show us how people were using their bodies.

Although these archaeologists are “digging up the past,” they are careful to respect the finds they make and properly document and record what they discover. In doing so, they tie their own life histories to these archaeological remains. In the seven summers the BACH team spent living inside Building 3, they left clues for the future as well, so that others, like yourself, can also make hypotheses about the life histories of the people, places, and things at Çatalhöyük, both past and present.

Click here to download this PDF and view the Life Histories Collection.<sup>2</sup>

Click here to download the K-12 activity.<sup>3</sup>

Remixing Çatalhöyük Project<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup><http://okapi.berkeley.edu/res/sites/life>

<sup>3</sup><http://okapi.dreamhosters.com/docs/catal/activity.pdf>

<sup>4</sup><http://okapi.berkeley.edu/remixing>



## Chapter 3

# Remixing Çatalhöyük: Senses of Place<sup>1</sup>

### Senses of Place

How do archaeologists build on their discoveries to imagine the sights and sounds of the past?

How do archaeologists represent Çatalhöyük, both as it is today and as it once was?

What media and methods can archaeologists use to communicate a sense of place to others?

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**Figure 3.1**

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m15216/1.3/>>.

NOTE: This signpost is one of the vestiges of the original excavations of British archaeologist James Mellaart, from the 1960s. Wherever we live, we exist within landscapes that have been formed through natural processes and transformed through cultural practices. Although our modern and urban lifestyles, in many cases, inhibit our full appreciation of the landscape around us, we all manage some escape or another: going to the beach, for example, or hiking in the woods. In archaeology, understanding the landscape around a settlement is crucial in interpreting the activities and lives of people who live within that landscape. How landscapes have been modified and changed to create a built environment to accommodate a society, and how a society works within that built environment, are issues tackled by archaeologists interested in the concept of place.

In the concept and study of place as it has been developed by geographers and anthropologists, place is created through intricate networks constructed by people. According to these researchers, a place is lived in with both the mundane and festive social practices that form the different elements of society. Most importantly, a place is experienced differentially, where individuals have different impacts on the making and changing of their traditions. But how do archaeologists then use the concept of place in their archaeological interpretations?



Figure 3.2

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NOTE: The lesson to be learned from this picture of archaeologists Ruth Tringham and Tish Prouse excavating house floors in Building 3 is that vision alone is not enough when excavating. By demonstrating with his trowel, Tish explains that he can detect a change marking a different layer in the sound and feel of the trowel's edge scraping across the floor. Ruth is also listening and has her trowel poised to check on what Tish thinks he has found. They worked together for many hours in 2001, scraping away the floors one by one in the northern end of Building 3. Archaeologists can take an important step toward understanding how a place may have been constituted in the past by reconstructing that place. That is what Mirjana Stevanovic did at Çatalhöyük when she built a replica house. Once in the house, one can imagine how constricted people might have been in their space, with no windows, dark corners, and smoke lingering around the ceiling. One can imagine the poignant odors that may have drifted from the nearby middens, the household's refuse heaps. Was incense burnt to conceal the smell? What were people hearing, and how did it affect their senses of place? How did they see their own walls? Were they as dark as we see them today?

In these small spaces, we know through micromorphological investigation that some areas were used for food preparation, and others for knapping obsidian, the glassy black stone used to make sharp-edged tools. Perhaps the elderly slept on the platforms found in the houses, with their ancestors buried below them. But whatever the people of Çatalhöyük did at a given time, we know that their lives were changing as they were living: a little girl would ultimately become a mother; a family would abandon an old house and build a new one. For archaeologists who study senses of place, it's important to be able to express these changes.

Using multimedia and the World Wide Web offers an excellent way of presenting place and promoting different experiences through audio and visual reconstructions. In 2001, for example, archaeologists from the BACH team presented a series of multimedia/live-action performances called RAVE (Real Archaeologists, Virtual Excavations), in which videos of the excavation process of Building 3 allowed non-archaeologists to see archaeological practice through different windows. These videos are currently available on the RAVE website at [www.mactia.berkeley.edu/features/rave/default.html](http://www.mactia.berkeley.edu/features/rave/default.html). To facilitate explorations of the senses of place, site excavator Ruth Tringham, in collaboration with others in the Remediated Places project, developed video tours that guide users through the site based on different perspectives of fictional Çatalhöyük settlers. In these walks, not only can one see place, but one can also hear what it may have sounded like.

But it is also important for archaeologists to emphasize that “archaeological” places are still active places. The local people at Çatalhöyük today, for example, see the mound not only as a grazing ground and picnic spot, but also as a marker in the landscape that situates their village of Küçükköy, just two kilometers away. For the archaeologists who come to excavate at Çatalhöyük, it is a meeting point, a working environment, an intellectual challenge, a socialization sphere, and more. For a tourist, it may only be a curious memory, but it can also be a sacred place. Every person has a different experience at Çatalhöyük. And to make it even more complex, every person has changing experiences at Çatalhöyük.

Needless to say, it is difficult to express all of the meanings Çatalhöyük can have for all of the different people who visit or learn about it. Using this website, you can explore the site through different media, and “remix” them to create your own version of Çatalhöyük. The possibilities are endless.

Click here to download this PDF and see the Senses of Place Collection<sup>2</sup>

Remixing Çatalhöyük Project<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup><http://okapi.berkeley.edu/res/sites/senses>

<sup>3</sup><http://okapi.berkeley.edu/remixing>



## Chapter 4

# Remixing Çatalhöyük: Archaeology at Different Scales<sup>1</sup>

### Archaeology at Different Scales

How do archaeologists weave far-reaching events with details of everyday life to create a rich approach to history?

How and why do archaeologists study Çatalhöyük at many different scales?

How can archaeologists use “multi-scalar data” to create comprehensive descriptions of place?

From galaxies to planets, from continents to cities, from people to atoms, the universe around us exists and changes over time at vastly different scales. People also interact and communicate with each other within different scales, and thus many anthropologists and archaeologists use a “multi-scalar” approach to study human culture.



**Figure 4.1**

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NOTE: An aerial view of the East Mound at Çatalhöyük, looking towards the north. This photograph was taken from a balloon flying above the mound. The original Mellaart excavation (called

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m15227/1.3/>>.

the South area) can be seen in the left of the picture. The North area, opened in 1995, including the white shelter of the BACH area, lies at the top of the picture. The guardhouse and the archaeologists' compound is in the top left corner of the picture, including the road leading west to the town of Cumra and east to the village of Küçükköy.

Consider this example: Jose, born in Los Angeles, speaks English (national). He likes to watch Spanish telenovelas produced in Mexico and Argentina (ethnic), surfs the World Wide Web, and is concerned about global climate change (global). Elaborately decorated tiles remind him of his mothers' cooking (family), and he greets his friends with a specific hand gesture (personal). All of these, and more, make up parts of Jose's culture, and all of these things exist in different scales.

In archaeology, it is essential to observe and interpret a site at many different scales of resolution in order to reconstruct the past. Archaeologists have always made detailed observations of specific artifacts and finds. When archaeology was still a young science, however, the finds considered most important tended to be unique, exotic, elaborate, aesthetically pleasing, or chronologically diagnostic. Interpretation of these detailed observations was made at a very broad scale of resolution in terms of the Big Picture of history. This macro-scale approach defined cultural variation over large, often continental-wide, geographies, and took place over large swaths of time.

In the 1960s and 1970s, these analyses began to be broadened. Observations were made on statistically valid sets of artifacts from which variability was extrapolated at regional scales. The use of computers and other analytical and observational technologies increased the quantitative complexity with which archaeological data could be observed. Thus, a set of observations about a building at Çatalhöyük could "stand for" or "be typical of" all the buildings at the site, even those that had not yet been excavated, or the pattern of plant domestication observed at Çatalhöyük could be considered the model for the process of "neolithization" of all Anatolia. The focus here was more about regional, cultural ecology and cultural evolution, and understanding the relationships between culture and environment, than about the "noise" of the details of social practice.



Figure 4.2

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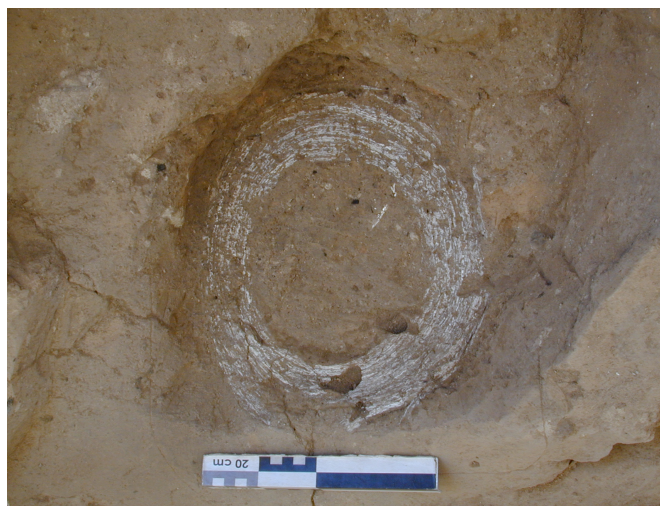
NOTE: Anne-Marie Vandendriesch, a former student at UC Berkeley, in the process of taking a block sample from the outer wall of Building 3 for micromorphological analysis.



During the last two decades, archaeological researchers have begun to interweave a more intimate or micro-scale understanding of individual households, and the people who made up these households, into broader scales of interpretation. The development of analytical and observational instrumentation and digitization at the micro-scale (including, for example, techniques for studying micromorphology and microstratigraphy, and for the analysis of DNA) has increased immensely the detail and complexity with which archaeologists can observe data.

The excavations at Çatalhöyük provide an important example of archaeology at multiple scales. Recent work done by different specialists has shown that the people of Çatalhöyük were part of a large social network of trade: date palm baskets may have come from as far away as the Levant (the southeast Mediterranean coast); obsidian used to make stone tools was brought in from Cappadocia (a region in central Turkey); some shells found at the site came all the way from the Red Sea. Although we know the site was part of a regional network system, it was made up of different households that participated in the system. What is very important in archaeological research is to connect smaller households' intimate stories to larger systems. The individual stories of households are important because culture and social networks exist through combinations and interactions of these intimate histories.

At Çatalhöyük, we are able to connect these households and intimate stories through meticulous excavation and detailed analysis. For example, the baskets are known to exist because we find their imprints on the floors of the houses. By taking a small sample of the soil containing the imprint and analyzing it under a microscope, a specialist trained in identifying the silica remains of plants (called phytoliths) can identify the basket as having been woven from date-palm leaves not native to the area.



**Figure 4.3**

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NOTE: Phytolith (plant remains) from a round basket found in the middle of the western room (Space 158) of Building 5, which was the focus for food preparation and storage. Microscopic examination will help specialists identify the species of plant that the basket was made of. Some baskets at Çatalhöyük have been made from date-palm fibers that came from many hundreds of miles away in the Levant, on the eastern Mediterranean coast.

Careful excavation also reveals clues as to what people were doing within a space. While excavating Building 3, for example, Ruth Tringham and Mirjana Stevanovic identified a collapsed roof by its remains. However, they did not have any clues about what had actually happened on the roof in the past, as there were no

activity remains. When a block of material from the roof was analyzed under a microscope, however, remains of a burnt surface showed that there had been a hearth on the roof. Microscopic bits of refuse from stone-tool production were found in the material as well, showing us that people also worked on top of their houses.

At the same time, the intimate events and histories of Çatalhöyük can also contribute to our understanding of the past at a larger scale. They allow us to interpret different paths of change within Anatolia, such as the processes of sedentism (settling down), for example, or the domestication of plants and animals, social transformation, urbanism, and so on, within the context of the Near East and Europe. These characteristics of change can be further interpreted as part of a larger evolutionary pattern, and even on a global scale. This multi-scalar approach ensures that the Big Picture is constructed on a solid framework of all the smaller events and processes from which it is constructed.

Click here to download this PDF and see the "Archaeology at Different Scales" Collection<sup>2</sup>  
Remixing Çatalhöyük Project<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup><http://cnx.org/content/m15227/latest/okapi.berkeley.edu/res/sites/scales>

<sup>3</sup><http://okapi.berkeley.edu/remixing>

## Chapter 5

# Remixing Çatalhöyük: The Public Face of Archaeology<sup>1</sup>

### The Public Face of Archaeology

How are archaeologists like—and not like—Indiana Jones?

How is the Berkeley team (BACH) using digital technologies and the World Wide Web to make their process of investigation accessible to the public?

People have always been attracted to the unknown, and it is this curiosity that brings us where we are today, culturally and technologically. The monumental remains of past cultures adorn Hollywood films, television commercials, newspapers, magazines, and the World Wide Web. As in the popular Indiana Jones movies, mythology and archaeology serve as keys to unlock mysteries. In the real-world case of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922, the story of the past that appeals to the mainstream media are those that are luscious and rich, those that are connected to kings and queens. And, of course, the archaeologist is an adventurous hero, aiding the world by uncovering its lost civilizations.



**Figure 5.1**

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m15228/1.2/>>.

NOTE: In 2004, the Replica House was complete both inside and out. A team from the Discovery Channel came to Çatalhöyük and used the Replica House in a re-enactment of prehistoric life at this settlement. They used some of the project team as actors, as in this scene on the roof. (Do we believe everything we see on TV?)

Thankfully, with the aid of new information technologies and an increased awareness toward their outreach responsibilities, archaeologists are slowly but surely deconstructing preconceived ideas on archaeological practice. More than the popular view of the intrepid adventurer, archaeologists are in fact meticulous and patient researchers who work like forensic scientists to uncover and retrieve clues about the past. In order to understand the diverse sets of clues they unearth, archaeologists tend to specialize in certain materials and then work collaboratively to piece a story together. A single find, for example, may be analyzed by animal-bone specialists (zooarchaeologists), plant specialists (palaeoethnobotanists), earth-science specialists (geoarchaeologists), ceramics specialists, and the list goes on. This is the case at Çatalhöyük.

Unlike the agricultural landscape of Turkey where Çatalhöyük is located, most archaeological work takes place in familiar urban contexts, rather than in exotic or rural places. Many archaeologists work in Cultural Resource Management (CRM), which is basically the necessary documentation and protection of archaeological sites threatened with damage by development. Through television shows like the Time Team in the UK, and different educational and informational websites, archaeologists have been promoting the importance of seeing cultural heritage not just as monumental achievements, but also as the traces of ordinary people who once made up places, just as they make them up now. But why are personal histories important? How can people benefit from archaeological practice?

One important aspect of archaeology is its ability to document the past in multiple scales, and be able to draw on the different perspectives that make up the past. A reflexive methodology in archaeological practice, as in the case of Çatalhöyük, allows the construction of different stories in the archaeological past, shares the documentation of how these constructions were made, and emphasizes the importance of revealing these stories to the public. These last two points are avenues that lead to democratization of the past by inviting people who don't have historical or archaeological training to access archaeological information and add their own interpretations, building on those of archaeologists by reusing the primary archaeological data.



Figure 5.2

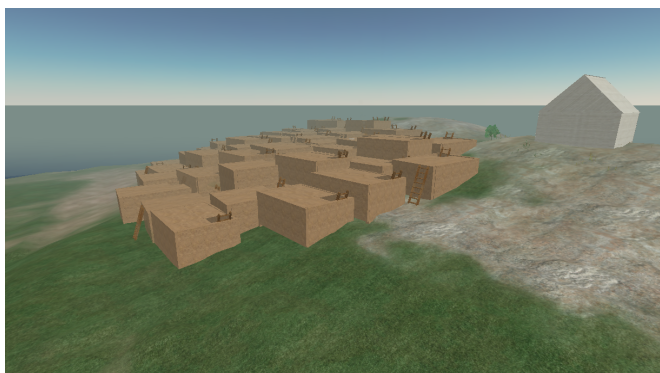
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NOTE: Press Day at Çatalhöyük, 2002. After visiting the Visitor Center and the Building 5

exhibition house, the Press are guided to the excavation areas. Boundary lines of red tape are set up so that the press photographers, in their enthusiasm, do not step too close to the fragile edges of the excavation. The Press delegates are divided up into groups according to their access needs and language comfort.

Çatalhöyük has an important public face. Many books describe Çatalhöyük as the first urban center in the world, and the Turkish Government relies on this interpretation as an important aspect in promoting the site (with the possibility of it becoming a World Heritage site). For the community who believes in the spiritual existence of the Mother Goddess, Çatalhöyük is important because of the many female figurines found there. The local people who live around the site see the daily life of agricultural activities and housework at Çatalhöyük as being not very different from their own. For many, Çatalhöyük is an economic opportunity to attract tourism.

Archaeologists who excavate the site do not always agree with these different interpretations, but because Çatalhöyük has become the focus of multiple voiced opinions, the team working there has made significant efforts in public outreach and education. There are programs for local schools that bring in their students to learn about the archaeological process and the site itself. There is a small information center that presents different perspectives on the site and emphasizes the fact that archaeological interpretations are not necessarily definitive. There is an effort to bring the local farming community to the site in order to explain the purposes of the excavation, and how they can benefit from having a World Heritage site at their door.



**Figure 5.3**

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NOTE: Virtual “residents” of Second Life—a massive multiplayer online environment—can visit Okapi Island to explore 3D representations of Çatalhöyük as it exists today, and as it may have looked in the past. UC Berkeley undergraduate student Daniel Wei terraformed the island to resemble the East Mound at Çatalhöyük.

In cyberspace, the website for the Çatalhöyük Research Project provides detailed explanations of the work conducted at Çatalhöyük, and offers free access to the archaeological data. Websites like RAVE (<http://www.mactia.berkeley.edu/features/rave/default.html>), created in conjunction with the Berkeley Archaeologists at Çatalhöyük (BACH), and the Science Museum of Minnesota’s Mysteries of Çatalhöyük website ([www.smm.org/catal](http://www.smm.org/catal)), offer exploratory content to a global public who cannot readily visit the physical site. Online visitors can also explore Çatalhöyük in the multiplayer virtual environment of Second Life. Last, but not least, the website you are visiting now, *Remixing Çatalhöyük*, offers access to information in different media that can literally be “remixed” to create new interpretations. These efforts are done not only to promote archaeological ethics, but also to advocate transparency of research and aid in the democratization of information.

Click here to download this PDF and view the Public Face of Archaeology Collection <sup>2</sup>  
Remixing Çatalhöyük Project<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup><http://cnx.org/content/m15228/latest/okapi.berkeley.edu/res/sites/public>

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## Index of Keywords and Terms

**Keywords** are listed by the section with that keyword (page numbers are in parentheses). Keywords do not necessarily appear in the text of the page. They are merely associated with that section. *Ex.* apples, § 1.1 (1) **Terms** are referenced by the page they appear on. *Ex.* apples, 1

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|--|--|
| <b>A</b> Archaeology, § 1(1)   | Second Life, Building 3, BACH, UC Berkeley, Archaeology, § 5(21)                           |
| <b>B</b> BACH, § 1(1)<br>Building 3, § 1(1)  | Remixing, Çatalhöyük, Scales, Building 3, BACH, Archaeology, UC Berkeley, § 4(17)          |
| <b>I</b> Introduction, § 1(1)  | Remixing, Çatalhöyük, Senses of Place, Building 3, BACH, UC Berkeley, Archaeology, § 3(13) |
| <b>R</b> Remixing, § 1(1)<br>Remixing, Çatalhöyük, Life Histories, Building 3, BACH, Archaeology, UC Berkeley, k-12 activity, teacher's guide, § 2(7)<br>Remixing, Çatalhöyük, Public Face, Indiana Jones, Press Day, Public, Democratization, | <b>U</b> UC Berkeley, § 1(1)   |
|  | <b>Ç</b> Çatalhöyük, § 1(1)<br>Çatalhöyük Research Project, § 1(1)                         |

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### **Remixing Çatalhöyük**

Welcome to the Remixing Çatalhöyük Project! Çatalhöyük is a Neolithic settlement mound, enclosing the remains of a honeycomb of mud brick buildings, built side by side and one on top of the other for a thousand years, starting around 9000 years ago. This project focuses on the excavation conducted by the Berkeley Archaeologists at Çatalhöyük (BACH) team. From 1997 to 2003, the BACH team focused their attention on excavating the life-history of a single building—termed Building 3— and three separate small cells adjoining it. The Remixing Çatalhöyük Project is composed of three parts: a website, four themed-collections, and a raw research archive. One of the theme collections, Life Histories, contains a K-12 activity. To view this project, please see: <http://okapi.berkeley.edu/remixing>.

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