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Time trajectories for the Neolithic of Central Anatolia

by Laurens THISSEN

Introduction

In a major article in *Paléorient*, Jean Perrot recently stressed the long-term processes in the history of the Near East, denying the ‘shock elements’ of the kind favoured by Jacques Cauvin when explaining the neolithisation of that region. He took a stand against terms such as ‘revolutions’, ‘*ébranlements idéologiques*’ (perhaps best translated as ideological shakings) or what were called ‘*ruptures mentales*’ – ‘drastic breaks in the mentalities of the people’ (Perrot 2000:16, 21). Instead, he argues for a basic continuity in thinking and mentality – humans being always inclined to appropriate that which surrounds them, to fulfil their basic needs, but also, beyond that, inclined to appeal to their memory, and to use memory to reach a synthesis with their surroundings (*ibid.*, 21). Conceived in this way, Perrot regards neolithisation, for instance, as a normal process, where humans possess and make use of an accumulated memory, a body of knowledge and experience. Given the unchanging basic condition of human mentality, he puts emphasis on repetition and reduplication of practices, on processes being halted through deteriorating climatic circumstances, to be taken up when things grew more favourable again. The history of the Near East may be seen as an alternation of mobility, and of, what Perrot calls, a ‘*fixation au sol*’ – an attachment to the soil (*ibid.*, 18ff.).

It is along this viewpoint that I would like, here, to make some comments on Central Anatolian prehistory. For this reason, I propose to treat it as a trajectory of time having its repetitions and reduplications, its recurrent patterns, – a standpoint first put forward by Neil Roberts in a fascinating study published in 1990 on landscape change in Southern Turkey during the later Holocene. Speaking on Central Anatolian settlement patterns for the historical period, Roberts noticed a kind of fluctuation, or an ‘oscillation’ even, between economically and politically stable periods with sites established in the plains, and periods of instability, where sites moved into the mountains and foothills – becoming, however, archaeologically less visible (Roberts 1990:58).

Such a pattern of alternation might have been at play within prehistoric Central Anatolia as well. If we make here a geographical distinction for Central Anatolia in a western and eastern part, that is, in the Konya-Ereğli Plain on the one hand and Cappadocia on the other, then we can notice such alternative patterns for both areas, which are different in rhythm but similar in the way the alternations follow upon each other. The differences in rhythm therefore might be taken as describing two separate time trajectories, and in this paper I would like to give a short overview of these separate sequences.¹

¹ The reader is invited to consult Figure 1 for matters concerning ¹⁴C dates and sequences mentioned in the text. Additional information is found in Appendix I at the back of this volume.

Cappadocia

Starting with Cappadocia, it is the site of Aşıklı Höyük that yields the earliest evidence thus far of permanent occupation at a fixed spot. The exact point in time at which people decided to stay near the Melendiz River cannot as yet be established. Virgin soil has not yet been reached. ¹⁴C data stemming from the visible base of the site do, however, suggest a date as early as 8500 cal BC, and we may take this date, the middle of the 9th millennium, as the starting point for Aşıklı (Appendix I). The site will continue to be inhabited for over a thousand years, deep down into the 8th millennium cal BC. Recent surveys have discovered many more sites dating somewhere in that time-span between 8500 and 7500 BC. The CANeW Sites Database has enumerated 22 sites possibly belonging to this time-span (see Appendix II). Some of these sites appear to have been obsidian workshops; others must have been village settlements like Aşıklı Höyük, as for instance the Aceramic site of Hacıbeyli south of the Sultansazlığı Lake.² At a certain moment in time then, Cappadocia must have been quite densely settled, with sites close to each other, and perforce aware of each other. We may envisage a dynamic archaeological landscape, possibly containing smaller and larger villages, of shorter duration and of very long duration; of obsidian workshops and campsites. At the end of the period, at about 7500 cal BC, there is evidence of sites with additional, special purposes, like Musular, as argued by Güneş Duru (this volume). About 7400 cal BC, Aşıklı Höyük is abandoned, and most probably, the use of Musular came to a halt as well.³ Here we must be aware of the very strong tradition evident from the continuous pattern of rebuilding at Aşıklı, where the earliest known settlement already is a blueprint for the latest occupation – basic building materials, building layout and orientations not changing over 1000 years. We could be tempted to view this abandonment of tradition, this halt of permanent settlement, and the suspension of the use of special-purpose sites, as a general pattern afflicting the whole of Cappadocia. Frédéric Gérard has discussed the possible causes for this abandonment (see Gérard, this volume), where I would not like to imply that abandonment is equal to depopulation. Concerning the outward form of post-abandonment society – currently invisible archaeologically – we could perhaps think in the direction where people reverted to a life-style existing prior to the establishment of permanent settlements, a life-style the memory and remembrance of which was preserved through time,⁴ but remains equally elusive for us archaeologists. From this perspective, Cappadocian history as very sketchily outlined here, inserts itself in a much longer span of time and tradition harking back way beyond the event of founding Aşıklı and other sites.

It is only more than a thousand years later, at about 6000 cal BC, that we see the first signs of re-establishment of permanent places in the area, avoiding, however, the old sites. The most notable of these new locations are at Köşk Höyük and Tepecik-Çiftlik (Bıçakçı 2001). Many more sites, surveyed in the 1960s by Ian Todd, exist in Cappadocia and may be dated to this general

² Not excavated, but a deposit amounting to 2m in thickness containing sections of mud-brick walls has been reported (Fujii 1995).

³ Compared to Southeast Anatolia, 7400 cal BC is the time to which at Çayönü the Cell Buildings Subphase is dated, followed by the Large Room Subphase. Also Gritille and Akarçay Tepe may have continued to be occupied over the second half of the 8th mill. cal BC (cf. Appendix I).

⁴ 'Conserver le souvenir', as Perrot put it in a slightly different context (2000:21).

period as well.⁵ As Todd was able to observe, it was strategic positions overlooking thoroughfares, or spots optimal for the exploitation of a specific good – obsidian in Cappadocia, salt in the Salt Lake area – that determined the choice of suitable locations by post-6000 BC society (Todd 1980:113, 118, 121). Coupled with an emphasis on storage, as exemplified by large storage vessels dug into the floors of veritable storage buildings in Köşk Höyük, and coupled also with a certain affluence visible in a rich and diversified material culture, post-6000 BC Cappadocian society – traditionally labelled as ‘Early Chalcolithic’ – appears to have been successful and confident. At Köşk, huge blocks of obsidian were found ‘ready to be worked’, as its original excavator, Uğur Silistreli, put it (1986:204). Rich grave objects accompanied the dead of Köşk. And the surface of Ilıcınar, a site SW of the Salt Lake, was littered with obsidian, although far removed from the sources. It may have been directly related to the Cappadocian communities, possibly exchanging salt for obsidian, as Mellaart has argued (1958:83).

In contrast to the long-lasting, earlier period of permanent, sedentary settlement involving Aşıklı and other sites, the Early Chalcolithic is unlikely to have lasted as long. Time-depth is much less in evidence now. Abandonment, or better: non-continuation, of these prosperous communities can be pinpointed at about the middle of the 6th millennium cal BC. One of the decisive reasons for the collapse may ultimately be linked to a decreasing importance of the raw material to which several sites apparently owed their existence and wealth, that is, obsidian. James Mellaart in his masterly 1975 book *The Neolithic of the Near East* made an intriguing remark in this context, saying that ‘with the Halaf orientation of Northern Syria (...) Mersin’s obsidian trade may have suffered a reverse since it was East Anatolian obsidian that was now used in the Levant’ (Mellaart 1975:125f.).

His remark raises several questions: if correct, would it mean that Köşk Höyük and related obsidian-procuring and processing sites in the region were dependent on an *external* trade in obsidian, for instance, by way of Mersin? Would it also mean that this network of ‘obsidian sites’ – to give them a name – did not play a role in the distribution of obsidian within the Central Anatolian Plateau itself? It is a fact that obsidian in the western part of Central Anatolia, in the Konya area, and also further to the west in the Lakes Region, did not know the sophistication and diversity, nor the abundance as encountered in Cappadocia. Mellaart described the obsidian industry of contemporary Çatalhöyük West, for instance, as ‘poor’ and restricted to blades (Mellaart 1965:136).⁶

⁵ The dating of the sequence excavated at Köşk Höyük to the Early Chalcolithic has some important repercussions. It suggests that the obsidian industry and technology as best exemplified at Çatalhöyük East, did continue generally unaltered into the 6th millennium cal BC. Indeed, the obsidian tools and weapons now known from Köşk (Silistreli 1985, Fig. 12; 1986a, Fig. 12; 1989a, Fig. 9) supplement the material collected by Todd (1980, Figs. 16:11,12; 25; 26) and provide an explanation for Todd’s difficulty in assigning his sites to a particular stage on the basis of the lithic industries (Todd 1980:109f.). Accordingly, the possibility that several sites from Todd’s survey may postdate the Çatalhöyük East sequence should be kept open; these sites may, in fact, fit in anywhere from Çatalhöyük to the end of Köşk, i.e., a period spanning the 7th and first half of the 6th millennia cal BC. This goes as well for the dating of the site of Ilıcınar west of the Salt Lake (Mellaart 1958). Assigned to the Early Neolithic by Mellaart, the obsidian from Ilıcınar might certainly postdate Çatal, considering the maintenance of the sophisticated lithic tradition as evidenced now from Köşk. The possibility cannot be ruled out that Ilıcınar is not an Early Neolithic site, but an Early Chalcolithic one, where we may add that Todd pointed out that the pottery found on its surface does not resemble that of Çatalhöyük East (Todd 1980:53, Fig. 12:14-27).

⁶ Despite the fact that the obsidian of Hacilar was retrieved from the Acıgöl source, Mortensen, in his analysis of the Hacilar obsidian, was not able to relate it to the obsidian industry in the Konya region or to Mersin (Mortensen apud Mellaart 1970:156f.). Chronological difference between Çatalhöyük and Hacilar might be adduced to explain this contrast. However, the Early Chalcolithic obsidian industry of Köşk still seems to be wholly in the Çatal tradition, exemplifying its preservation even after a millennium.

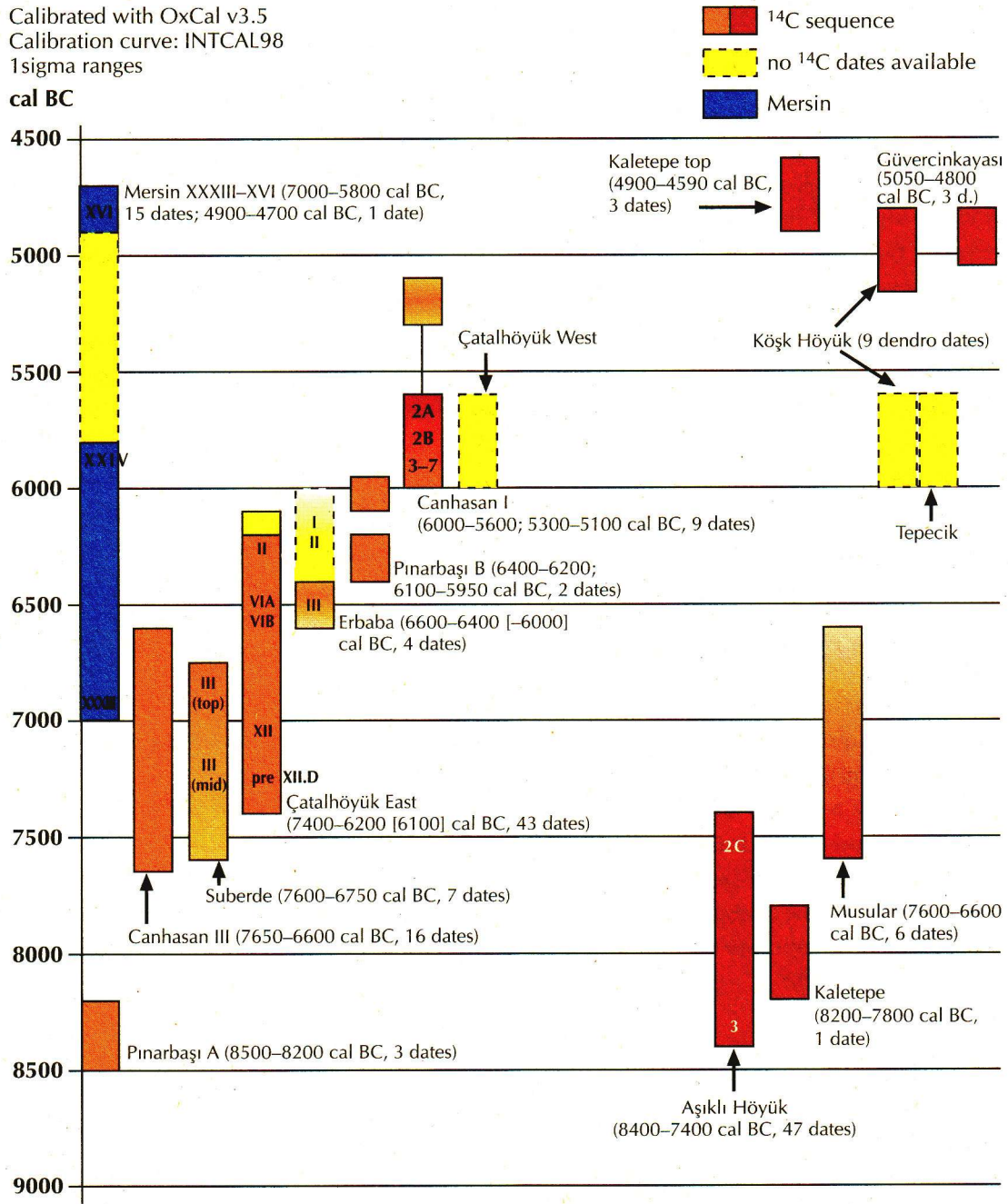


Fig. 1

Central Anatolia and Mersin 14C Chart: 10,000 – 5000 cal BC
 split between the Konya Plain (orange) and Cappadocia (brown)

Whatever the exact reasons for the end of Early Chalcolithic Cappadocian communities, Köşk Höyük may have been resettled only by the end of the 6th millennium cal BC, as indicated by the dendrochronological work carried out by Peter Kuniholm and Maryanne Newton on samples from the top level of the site (see Appendix I). A rough 5000 cal BC marker is also the date for the intricate structures excavated by Sevil Gülçür at the site of Güvercinkayaşı. The three ¹⁴C dates available for the top levels of Kaletepe suggest use of that site (cq. of the obsidian workshop?) again in the early 5th mill. cal BC. More settlements are known for that period in Cappadocia (Gülçür 1997), where we could, very provisionally, include the pottery-bearing site topping Aceramic Musular (pers. observation). Both in Köşk and in Güvercinkayaşı, storage facilities, storage rooms and huge pots suggest a continuation of the earlier pattern of accumulation (to which may, albeit very tentatively, be added a renewed use of the Kaletepe workshop) – although data are still very fresh and in the process of analysis.

Having sketched a scenario of stability and tradition for the Aceramic period, and, demonstrably for the post-6000 BC period of economic affluence, there remain the intervening stages of longer- and shorter site-abandonment. The enormous span of time of over a thousand years following the giving-up of Aşıklı and possibly of the whole of Cappadocia of sedentary villages is perhaps mirrored by the shorter interval of site-abandonment in between the Early Chalcolithic and the late-6th millennium re-establishment of settlements. The Early Chalcolithic sites appear to be on a completely new footing when compared with the Aceramic sites. Settlements are now small, but rich, and bent on accumulating wealth, showing that wealth. Times appear to have been more dynamic, and time-depth was shallow, changes possibly more quick, compared to the repetitive patterns evident from Aşıklı. Moreover, the 6th millennium period of site-abandonment may not have been as disruptive as the earlier one: late Köşk and Güvercinkayaşı suggest a continuation of Early Chalcolithic practices.

Taken as a whole, this Cappadocian tract of time conforms to the alternative pattern of Perrot's attachment to the soil and mobility, the latter of which results in invisibility and volatility for archaeology.

The Konya-Ereğli Plain

When we now turn to the western part of Central Anatolia for the time-span interesting us here, we can see a different time trajectory, foremost lacking the long periods of site abandonment, lacking the reversion to prior ways of life. At a certain moment, at about 7500-7400 cal BC, so at a time when in Cappadocia sites were being abandoned, people decided to settle at Çatalhöyük East (see Cessford 2001). There has been lots of discussion in the CANeW e-mail debate about the origin of these people, and there was a kind of agreement that the settlers of Çatal were in fact of a mixed constitution reflecting diverse origins. But permanent settlement had a longer ancestry in the Konya-Ereğli Basin. The Aceramic site of Canhasan III in the Karaman Plain, as well as, what has been termed, the 'hunters' village' at Suberde on the shores of the Suğla Lake date back to about 7600 cal BC on the basis of the ¹⁴C dates (Appendix I). Earlier occupation in the Konya area is proven by the rockshelter at Pınarbaşı A, dating to the second half of the 9th millennium cal BC, and Douglas Baird has found at least one other Aceramic site in the Konya Plain (see Baird, this volume). These examples illustrate that the Konya region was not empty of people prior to the founding of Canhasan III and Çatal. They further demonstrate that the long-term settlement of Çatalhöyük East can be inserted in a much longer tract of time, and should, consequently, be inserted in an older tract of accumulated knowledge and experience.

Viewed like this, it is not necessary to treat the settling of Çatal as caused by people from an extra-regional origin, even if we accept these people to be of a mixed constellation. And if we read the sophisticated analyses of various Çatal specialists, a 'local' origin for Çatal seems indeed undeniable. Eleni Asouti and colleagues, in the Çatal Archive Report for 1999, make it clear that the use of the nearby and further away environments by the Çatal people was intense, knowledgeable and diversified. These people knew exactly which plants to use, what to use them for, where to find them and how to get them. The same goes for fruits, like almonds, figs, acorns, etc. The botanists also demonstrate that this knowledge existed from the earliest occupation onwards (see also Asouti and Fairbairn, this volume). In short, Çatal settlers must have had an extremely good general and detailed knowledge of the region and also of the wider region, building on memory and experience. They might have exchanged products they knew of, but didn't grow in the area, like figs. And as is also clear from Çatal material culture, they were inserted in a wide regional network of possibly great ancestry, and fraught with tradition.

While Çatalhöyük East is rightly considered by many as a unique site, it was possibly not altogether an isolated settlement in the area. James Mellaart found a few sites that could possibly date to the earlier part of the Çatal sequence, although the evidence is slight (cf. Baird, this volume). Again, the site of Suberde comes into view, where pottery has been found which looks similar to the early ceramics from Çatal.

Çatalhöyük East yields a continuous sequence from about 7400 cal BC to the later centuries of the 7th millennium cal BC. Of equally long duration as Aşıklı earlier, Çatalhöyük shows, however, a much more dynamic history. At about the middle of the Çatal sequence, Levels VII-VI, there occurred major changes in pottery manufacture and use, in the layout of the site and also in the lithics industry. Pottery manufacture shifted from the earlier chaff-tempered tradition to grit-tempered and burnished wares, very suitable for cooking (see Last 1996; Thissen 1999). The lay-out of the settlement plan moved towards a more open concept of arranging buildings, as Bleda Düring has argued (Düring, this volume; Düring 2001). James Conolly noted an increase in the production and use of prismatic blades at about the time of Level VIA, and he linked this to an increased dependence on domestic foods at Çatal (Conolly 1999). We might add that both phenomena might be related to changing cooking habits, as exemplified by the burnished wares.

Exactly during these major shifts occurring in Çatal at about 6500 cal BC, an - what we could call - *external* dynamism is at play in the area. Along the shores of the Beyşehir and Suğla Lakes to the west a host of small village sites were established on rocky outcrops overlooking the lakes.⁷ Both in pottery and in settlement plan they resemble Çatal concepts, as is clear from the site of Erbaba (see Bordaz and Bordaz 1982:93 Fig. 33). In fact, there is a parallel here in site location between these villages and the earlier village of Suberde, and this offers food for the thought that Erbaba and the other sites did represent a local adaptation to sedentary farming by hunter-gatherers exploring the lake region. So, we could argue for a different, but eventually converging time trajectory for the Beyşehir-Suğla Lakes area. Different, because the decisions to establish

⁷ At least 14 sites are currently known from this area, and being roughly contemporary to the second part of the Çatal sequence. Among them count settlements such as Alan Höyük, Çukurkent, Erbaba, Kanal Höyük, etc. (see Appendix II).

villages at Suberde at an early age and later at Erbaba, etc., were most likely local, independent ones. Convergence set in when, after the abandonment of Suberde, these people did re-establish themselves fully hundreds of years later, this time practising full-bodied farming, borrowing knowledge of pottery-making from Çatal East, and, in due time, carrying out their own experiments in the craft, ameliorating the cooking pots by making full use of the advantageous properties of the abundant shell as a tempering material.⁸

Another possible effect of the dynamism evident in Çatal society from Levels VII-VI onwards, and possibly in parallel to the Beyşehir-Sugla Lakes area, could be the establishment of farming sites towards the Anatolian Northwest, roughly at about 6400 cal BC (Thissen 1999). Settlements like Neolithic Demircihüyük near Eskişehir, and Menteşe in the Yenişehir Basin, Ilıpınar at the İznik Lake, and the Fikirtepe sites along the eastern Marmara coast, might all have received specialist knowledge both on farming practices and pottery manufacture from the wider area of Konya society. Foremost in the pottery of these northwestern sites are the technological aspects and the ways in which the pots must have been manipulated and used, that lead me to relate all this back to the concepts fashionable at Çatalhöyük East from Levels VII-VI onwards (Thissen 1999:35ff.). Do we have to do here with exogamous marriage patterns, involving Çatalhöyük society and northwestern hunter-gatherers? Is there a link in the new pottery technology, in the increased dependence on domestic foods as Conolly has argued for, in farming itself, and in the transition to farming in the Northwest?

At about 6000 cal BC, that is the beginning of the Early Chalcolithic, a reshuffling of settlement is taking place in the Konya-Ereğli Basin: occupation of Çatalhöyük is transferred to the West mound; Canhasan I, c. 1 km SE of Canhasan III, is settled for the first time, and several other sites are founded as well (Mellaart 1954, 1961). The question of continuity with the previous tract of time is crucial here, and unfortunately not yet solved. In his surveys in the Konya area, Douglas Baird noticed that the pattern of smaller sites around Çatalhöyük East continued unaltered for Çatalhöyük West, even finding evidence for an increase in site frequency (Baird 1997:13, and this volume). That would suggest simple continuity from one segment of the time tract into the other. However, Early Chalcolithic material culture in the Konya-Ereğli Basin does not yield much that relates to the earlier tradition. Pottery is quite different, while new ways of cooking are suggested in the abundant occurrence of portable pot stands in Çatalhöyük West. As mentioned earlier, the poor blade industry in obsidian observed from the site cannot stand comparison with the lithic industry at its more famous neighbour, nor, for that matter with lithic industries in Cappadocia. It is in fact a curious thing that several aspects of tradition in Çatalhöyük East, in terms of iconography, in terms of lithic tool industry, and in terms of the use of obsidian in general, live forth not so much in the Konya area proper, as they do in Early Chalcolithic Cappadocia as well as in the intermediate Karaman Plain.⁹

⁸ The pottery from Erbaba shifts over time from a grit-tempered ware in level III to a shell-tempered ware in levels III. Shell is an excellent tempering material particularly suitable for cooking pots (see Ryc 1981:33).

⁹ Consider, for instance, the transference of similar motifs from the Çatal wall paintings and reliefs to the storage vessels at Köşk and Tepecik-Çiftlik, in the form of appliques (Silistreli 1989; Bıçakçı 2001). Consider further the transference of meander patterns from the 'seals' or *pintaderas* of Çatalhöyük East to pottery and wall plaster of Canhasan I, layer 2B, in the form of incisions and painting (see French 1962:33, Pl. II and Fig. 9:4).

So we do see a certain convergence of east and west by Early Chalcolithic times. In Canhasan I (French 1998), for instance, we have in its Layers 3, 2B and 2A a small, nucleated, possibly special-purpose site similar to Köşk, with a comparable stress on storage, on accumulation of resources. Canhasan I is on an almost perfect strategic location, sitting, as David French puts it 'on one of the great routes through the Taurus and one of the easiest' (1962:27).

It is also the end of Canhasan I by a huge conflagration that shows parallels with the Cappadocian evidence. Sites ceased to exist at what seems the top of their affluence and success, and in the Konya Plain both Çatalhöyük West and Canhasan I came to a halt. A period of non-site occupation of the area followed, comparable to that occurring in the same period in Cappadocia. At Canhasan I a new, open village of extensive nature was finally built spreading out along the edges of what must have looked like a small mound containing the big buildings of the Early Chalcolithic occupation (French 1998:50ff.). New pottery categories implying divergent use belong to this latest Canhasan village, possibly datable to the later centuries of the 6th millennium.¹⁰ To the same period of time, roughly converging around the 5000 cal BC millennium shift, can be assigned a series of settlements, none of which are yet excavated, clustering around the modern city of Çumra and also in the Karaman Plain itself.¹¹

Outlook

The abandonment of sites at the end of the Early Chalcolithic both in the Konya-Ereğli Basin and in Cappadocia may be due to similar causes. But where in Cappadocia the Middle Chalcolithic settlements appear to continue previous practices, in the west a major transformation may have affected society. At about 5500 cal BC a new period of site-invisibility, perhaps representing one of Neil Roberts's unstable stages, conforms to a larger, more widespread disruption taking place in many areas of Asia Minor. At least a similar and total disruption is attested in Ilıpınar, where its Phase VB denies almost all of the Early Chalcolithic tradition accumulated at that site before being itself followed by a final denial of the area for further occupation lasting two thousand years (Roodenberg 2001:231ff.). The Middle Chalcolithic, the label with which we might stamp this period, as well as the ensuing re-occupation of sites, coincides with a profusion of newly founded villages in Aegean Turkey, along the shores of the Black Sea and, as mentioned above, in the Konya Basin. From a formalistic point of view, this re-occupation of the land through permanent villages heralds a new age of internationalisation, of contacts with Greece and the Balkans, of sea traffic linking the Aegean to the Black Sea (Thissen 1993). The period, and the material culture, is, however, also in conflict with the pattern I mentioned in the beginning: there appears to be a conflict in the Middle Chalcolithic evidence and the concept that humans normally make use of an accumulated memory, body of knowledge and experience. To put it more precisely – I mean to say that the memories, know-how and

¹⁰ In contrast to previous layers of the site, there is strong emphasis on unpainted, large-sized, sloping-sided dishes, on deep, carinated bowls with large loop handles, and on funnel-necked jars or bottles with strap handles on the shoulders (e.g., French 1963, Fig. 5, 1964, Figs. 7-8, 1965, Figs. 4-5).

¹¹ The date argument here is white-painted pottery found on at least eight sites near Çumra (e.g., Sarıhasantolu) associated with plain pottery attested also at Canhasan layer I (cf. Mellaart 1963, Figs. 2:10; 3:16; 4:18, 21, 22, 24, 30, 32; also French 1963, Fig. 5:11). Parallels exist with İkiztepe II and Kalythies. Elsewhere I have argued that both these sites together with a series of others (such as Büyük Güllücek, Alaca Höyük, Samos-Tigani I-III, Emporio X-VIII) may be dated contemporary to the Bulgarian Karanovo IV period, datable to the last quarter of the 6th mill. cal BC (Thissen 1993).

experiences contained in the Middle Chalcolithic evidence seem to be different from those within which we could position all previously sketched development in Central Anatolia. One of the indications for this difference is that the Middle Chalcolithic pottery suggests a completely new categorisation, entailing new ways of use, new ways of manipulation, new gestures, and new dimensions. Within the time-span between 5500-5000 cal BC one can conceive of having two strands of memories, know-how, experience and categorisation existing side by side, finally giving way to the replacement of the earlier one by a later, conflicting one. It is the beginning of a new stage in the history of Anatolia.

Discussion¹²

Geoffrey Summers (chairman): Should I perhaps ask Professor Kuniholm to respond from the point of view of dendrochronology to what we've heard about ¹⁴C dates?

Peter Kuniholm: Depressing. It's not the fault of the excavators so much. At Çatalhöyük, for example, there was a post 25cm in diameter which had 576 rings in it. And when they took the bag - we got the bag from MASCA - we realized that what they had done, they had taken a piece from the centre of this post and this is the famous, anomalous date which appears in all of Mellaart's reports, 500 years too early. Maryanne (Newton) reconstructed that post for her masters thesis amongst other things, and found that we could get a perfectly reasonable set of dates. It was all one piece of wood but there were 42 little pieces and they just grabbed something from the middle without any appreciation. This was in the early days of radiocarbon. They ended up with a completely erroneous date, 500 years out. And what makes me wonder is - I look at these other sites. Any site that has one or two or three or four dates, if it's on anything that has a long life, such as a tree, you have some very serious error possibilities.

Didier Binder: I have three points to comment. With these kinds of charts we have to clean the data.¹³ First of all you should delete data with standard deviations of more than one century, because it's a source of noise. One thing about Bayesian statistic - I tried to make the sequence to the Aşıklı series, taking care of the boundaries. The computer collapsed... So... I have a questions for Laurens. One of the questions linked to what he exposed is that it does not give so much importance to mobility. I wonder if it is correct to discuss different territorial strategies in the Konya region and in Cappadocia if you don't take into account aspects of mobility, especially because it is obvious that there are strong links between the Konya Plain and Cappadocia, beginning with obsidian procurements of course. So, there are social links, people are moving, and therefore you cannot have an independent view of the developments. Second point is that I think that Anatolian archaeology is focused on centres, on big settlements. We know nothing about the periphery, we know nothing about territorial

¹² [EDITORIAL NOTE]: Originally, part of the discussion included a talk by Craig Cessford on Bayesian statistics and ¹⁴C, and some of the comments more particularly refer to that part. Craig Cessford's comment has been reworked into a paper and is included in the present volume.

¹³ [EDITORIAL NOTE]: reference is made to the charts as presented in Appendix I in the back of this volume, and to a similar chart as included in the present paper.

logistics, we know nothing about rhythms of occupation or seasonal activities. So it is very difficult to give a general outline for this region and discuss palaeohistorical differences in developments if we do not take into account, first, mobility and second, territorial strategies.

Laurens Thissen: Let me just say a few things about the ^{14}C charts first. Please don't see these chronological charts as the ultimate proof – they are meant as tools only. Indeed, there are many uncertainties, as also Peter Kuniholm expressed, referring to sites having only one date, or three dates. The charts are a presentation of all the ^{14}C dates available for this time span and for this area. And I wanted to keep them as objective as possible, including all the dates, even those with large standard deviations. So I didn't want to make interpretations of reliability, apart from the fact that in drawing the timespans for the individual sites I gave their summed values based on the 1 sigma ranges. And if there were some additions to make, these are put in the comments going with the charts. I must stress that you cannot say, on the basis of this chart for instance, that Aşıklı Höyük is contemporary with Kaletepe, or Musular with Suberde, as the chart suggests. It may be possible on other grounds, but you cannot argue with the chart itself, saying, well here are the ^{14}C dates, so there is the proof. The chart is not useful and was not meant to be treated as a clear statement of contemporaneity or non-contemporaneity of sites.

About Didier's comment on mobility, in fact you suggest taking into account the contacts between west and the east, areas that in my story were perhaps a little bit too opposed to each other. Yes, that's indeed right, I think – I was quite fixed on this opposition. I even rearranged the Central Anatolian ^{14}C chart according to a Konya area and a Cappadocian area (see Fig. 1), and which is not on the web site. I was quite fascinated by these different rhythms and patterns, which I think have some validity at least as a point for discussion. Given the openness of the landscape of Central Anatolia as a whole, it is of course obvious that there must have been constant contacts, whether in obsidian exchange or trade (or whatever term you want to use), etc., but the fact remains that the time paths of Konya and Cappadocia were differently structured, and that might give clues as to deeper patterns of difference.

Didier Binder: It is also linked to mobility – the question of centre and periphery. And what do we know about the seasonal activities of these people?

Laurens Thissen: There is one instance I know of where you can talk indeed of two more or less contemporary settlements, which are Aşıklı, or better the top layers of Aşıklı, and Musular. Güneş Duru will talk about this extensively so I will not talk about it now, but I can comment that there is a possibility to think about strategies of territoriality within these two sites. More so, there seems to be a connection between not only Aşıklı and Musular but also with Aşıklı and other sites in the direct surroundings. So there must be things going on – the use of special sites – in relation to the village of Aşıklı, which we can now start to investigate on the basis of excavated data.

Marcel Otte: You should stress, I think, the last hunter-gatherers and then the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A and B, if it has still a meaning in Central Anatolia. I mean that you should make many categories inside your different red bars. It would help us to understand your chart, or the other charts. And the second point is about Öküzini that we have been excavating. There are many more ^{14}C dates than given on the chart (cf. Appendix I, Southwest and Aegean Anatolia, Northwest Anatolia). There is a much longer period covered by ^{14}C for Öküzini.

Laurens Thissen: Thank you, Marcel. About Öküzini, you are right, there are many more dates. They are, however, much earlier than the framework CANeW set itself. About your comment on the red bars, as I said in answer to Didier, CANeW wanted to keep these charts as dry and as objective as possible. So, were we to put in labels like Mesolithic, PPNA or PPNB or whatever you want, the whole thing will not be flexible anymore. We would get the confusion of terminology, as stressed by Mihriban and Hijlke in their talk, and we definitely wanted to avoid that, even when risking the charts not to be immediately appreciable by the eye and the mind. But presented as they are, our charts remain flexible and open, where the labels themselves will change constantly anyway.

Marcel Otte: Everything is changing. Even the carbon dates.

Laurens Thissen: Well, no. The calibration curve may be changing, but the ^{14}C dates themselves will not change.

Mehmet Özdoğan: Just looking at the general picture which has been presented in the morning and with these ongoing discussions, there is one thing that is clear from Central Anatolia, and that is that our knowledge is still poor, and for almost the whole time range we just have one site per date. And concerning Aşıklı and Musular I am not even sure whether they are two different sites. I think they are basically separated by a river, but that is another problem. So we have so little data with an enormous area. And from this huge region, for a period of more than 5000 years, we have so few excavated sites to be able to build up a picture. And I perfectly agree with Marcel Otte and also with what Didier has been saying, that our evidence is still not enough to separate it into regional differences I think. When we look at one site from one region and one site from another region, there seems to be a pattern. But with that slight evidence it is not really that crystal-clear whether they are kind of a merging type of differences or whether they are really territorial boundaries. And concerning what Craig has been saying, and also with Peter's comments on the ^{14}C dates, first we have too few sites, and then we have some basic question marks with the validity of ^{14}C dates, and finally, as Marcel pointed out, not all the dates have been incorporated in the charts. For example, we know that there are some published dates from Aşıklı, but there are more: half of the dates have not been published. So, coming back to what Marcel has been saying, I think when we try to make such charts, we should also always include the cultural identity, or cultural characters so as to understand what these dates or what these horizons really mean. I think, as archaeologists we should not completely forget about their cultural characteristics. The traditional way of looking at culture is still valid. And if we go with the surface sites I think we have much more evidence than securely dated ^{14}C dates. As a starting point these charts are all right, but we should really try to avoid dividing up Central Anatolia into portions, or to balkanise it. To divide it into a Konya Plain - we have no idea what is happening north of the Konya Plain. There is a huge area there that is now being explored by our Japanese colleagues, and they are finding sites north of the Niğde region which we know very little about.

Laurens Thissen: As I said, the charts *do* include all the available data for the timespan set by CANeW, which is 10,000 to 5000 cal BC, and for the regions concerned. Again I can say that this chart is not the truth, it is just the beginning. And you can of course do nothing when data like in the case of Aşıklı are left unpublished, even if we succeeded in including many data that are also still unpublished, but we could acquire thanks to the kindness of

many colleagues, where I want to refer to: Gritille, Nevalı Çori, Bademağacı, Mersin, Güvercinkayaşı and Musular, not to forget the wonderful cooperation of the Cornell Dendrochronological Lab. About the segmentation of Konya and Cappadocia of Central Anatolia, I have to stress that also according to the geomorphologists' information there is indeed a difference in regions, in the geomorphology (see Kuzucuoğlu, this volume).

Reply from Laurens Thissen

In addition to the paper and the ensuing debate, I would like to use the opportunity for responding to dwell a little bit on the main issue of my contribution, i.e. the division between the Konya Plain and Cappadocia during the early Holocene, and to venture some thoughts in the spirit of the CANeW project. As was duly recognised by the discussants, the opposition I drew was for a large part based upon the evidence of only two sites, Çatalhöyük East and Aşıklı Höyük. There are many differences between the two, time being perhaps the biggest. However, by laying stress as I did on conceiving their respective histories as part of much larger trajectories, and their individual occupations as fortuitous events only coincidentally stepped chronologically, I intended to neutralise the temporal argument in explanations of whatever variations there were at play.

As implied by more participants (see Duru, Gérard, Matthews, this volume), the Aşıklı evidence suggests a homogeneous society, peacefully traditional. What did the inhabitants do with the people from the Levant or their middlemen coming to get their obsidian? What did they talk about, what kind of information did they exchange? Were the southerners received in the large buildings that were visible from afar? Were these non-domestic buildings open and accessible, or were they closed although located amidst the dwellings, very much like colleges in Oxford and Cambridge, as Roger Matthews aptly remarked during the CANeW email discussions? Were these HV-T buildings multi-purpose - used for feasting, reception, council, initiation rites, sports even? Was, finally, the very wide street (3.4 metres!) running along the buildings' northern façade only there to demarcate them, or did it play rather a crucial part in the use of these buildings - was the street part of the buildings?

When you look at the plan of Aşıklı, its houses, in all their individual building palimpsests, seem to encircle the non-domestic building complex, orienting themselves towards it, and even today quite nicely following the contour lines. Given the tradition in building at Aşıklı it is not illogical to assume that, as the domestic structures were built upon each other, so was the non-domestic complex in the southwest part of the site. Why not indeed assume such a complex right from the beginning of settlement? Where it is further to be assumed that the rhythm of rebuilding differed for this complex and for the dwellings surrounding it (the rate being possibly much lower for the HV-T buildings, considering the differences in the present-day elevations of the site, which are lowest where HV-T are located).

As one of the solutions (simultaneously one of the explanations) for the abandonment of Aşıklı, I have spoken of a reversal to old practices, a falling back on memory, on what went on before people settled at the site, a thousand years ago. This may not have been an initially conscious process, but the accumulated stress, as suggested by Frédéric Gérard (this volume) to have come to impinge on the lives of Aşıklı people over the centuries, eventually caused to

bring into practice a dealing with the world as they remembered it, through legends and stories, from a 'golden age'. But of course things were no longer the same. New knowledge and techniques, for instance concerning plants and animals, had been added on to the collective memory; they could not simply be done away with, as the people could with living in a village. Aşıklı people did not simply go back to hunting – it may indeed have been rather the pastoralism (or even nomadism) as Frédéric and Hilke have suggested (Gérard, discussion, this volume). Were the structures excavated at nearby Musular of similar function as the HV-T complex at the old site? Was Musular perhaps a reference point, just as Göbekli Tepe was a reference point in a different time and space? Was Göbekli part of the memory too?

Possibly there were more sites like Aşıklı in Cappadocia (e.g. Acıyer, Hacıbeyli, İninönü, Sırçan Tepe, Toparın Pınar and Yelibelen – see Appendix II). I don't know in fact if they all ran through a history similar to Aşıklı, as I did, perhaps too rashly, suggest in my paper. We don't know because they are not excavated. The next excavated sites in time all date earliest 6000 cal BC (Köşk Höyük, Pınarbaşı-Bor and Tepecik-Çiftlik), and they are rich sites, showing their wealth in art and burial, the like of which was not known at Aşıklı.

Even if I balkanise, even if there are few sites presently known, Çatal is quite different. True, houses here were also built on top of each other, accessible from the roofs, and this undoubtedly caused similarities in daily life between Aşıklı and Çatal. But I doubt if the open spaces in both sites were used similarly also. One could interpret the evidence concerning the animals (cf. Martin, this volume, and also discussion there) in the sense that open spaces at Çatal were used for animal penning, but not so or much less so at Aşıklı where the sheep may have been rather kept outside the settlement (cf., however, Wendy Matthews in Asouti and Fairbairn, discussion, this volume for a contrary view).

At Aşıklı there is no 'killing' of the house by filling it with clean clay as done at Çatal. There are none of the elaborate interior features. Çatal houses, despite all the art inside them, seem much more 'lived-in' than the Aşıklı houses. Many Aşıklı houses do contain ovens/hearths, but there are no sleeping platforms or small annex rooms. Aşıklı people seem to have lived much more *outside* than *inside*, in contrast to Çatal. They seem to have been much less bound by the house than Çatal society. Aşıklı houses look like mud-brick 'tents' rather than 'homes'.

Is this just a matter of time? Yes, from an evolutionist perspective. But given the fallacies of evolutionism when applied to human culture (given the absence of 'progress' in Aşıklı architecture and settlement layout), we might think of quite different explanations, certainly so if we accept the Aşıklı people eventually to have gone 'in the field' again.

If we may tentatively talk of a collective memory of the Aşıklı inhabitants, may we then speak, considering the mixed origins of Çatal, of an assemblage (or set) of memories? It would be an explanation of the dynamism apparent in the history of Çatal, in terms of building and material culture, in terms of external contacts and feed-back, in terms of the patterns of living themselves, with constant changing in wall decorations, constant elaborate 'house killings' that should have caused an enormous restlessness or agitation, I could imagine, to the inhabitants.

The different constitution of memories present in the two sites discussed here, directly link to origins, in my opinion. Heterogeneous memories stem from heterogeneous origins, and

lead to a segmented society, even if outwardly (or to us, archaeologists) there appears to be consensus in ritual and daily practice. Heterogeneous memories cannot lead to a collective turn to the 'old ways' – as was done at Aşıklı. As people of heterogeneous constellation cannot decide in unison how to solve conflicts, they reach heterogeneous solutions, creating contacts with hunter-gatherers (in the north [Eskişehir, Marmara] or in the west [Beyşehir-Suğla]), merely *shifting* the site (from Çatal East to Çatal West) instead of *abandoning* it, and continuing living as they did: in a village in a wetland environment, from the Neolithic through the Chalcolithic.

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