RELIGION AT WORK IN A NEOLITHIC SOCIETY

This book tackles the topic of religion, a broad subject exciting renewed interest across the social and historical sciences. The volume is tightly focused on the early farming village of Çatalhöyük, which has generated much interest both within and outside archaeology, especially for its contributions to the understanding of early religion. The chapters discuss contemporary themes such as materiality, animism, object vitality, and material dimensions of spirituality while exploring broad evolutionary changes in the ways in which religion has influenced society. The volume results from a unique collaboration between an archaeological team and a range of specialists in ritual and religion.

Ian Hodder is Dunlevie Family Professor of Anthropology at Stanford University. He previously taught at Leeds University and Cambridge University. His main large-scale excavation projects have been at Haddenham in the east of England and at Çatalhöyük in Turkey, where he has worked since 1993. He has been awarded the Oscar Montelius Medal by the Swedish Society of Antiquaries and the Huxley Memorial Medal by the Royal Anthropological Institute, has been a Guggenheim Fellow, and has Honorary Doctorates from Bristol and Leiden Universities. His main books include Spatial Analysis in Archaeology (Cambridge, 1976), Symbols in Action (Cambridge, 1982), Reading the Past (Cambridge, 1986), The Domestication of Europe (1990), The Archaeological Process (1999), The Leopard’s Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Çatalhöyük (2006), and Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things (2012).
RELIGION AT WORK IN A NEOLITHIC SOCIETY

Vital Matters

Edited by

IAN HODDER
Stanford University
This volume is dedicated to the memory of Alejandro Garcia-Rivera.
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Quentin D. Atkinson is Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology at the University of Auckland and a visiting research Fellow at the Institute of Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology at the University of Oxford. His research uses method and theory from evolutionary biology to understand the evolution of human culture. This includes work on the evolution of religious beliefs and practices and the application of phylogenetic methods to linguistic data, linking the spread of language families with archaeological and genetic evidence of expansion.

Anna Belfer-Cohen is Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her main interests of research relate to cultural “beginnings” observed in the archaeological record, namely, the appearance and evolution of the first modern human cultures and the incipient and sometimes subtle changes during Pre-Neolithic times in the Levant, developing into the full-fledged Neolithization processes, culminating in the world we are living in today. She has been engaged in fieldwork at various sites in Israel and in Georgia and published numerous archaeological reports as well as comprehensive papers drawing from the data at hand on cognitive and spiritual aspects of human existence.

Victor Buchli lectures with the material culture group in the Department of Anthropology, University College London. He works on architecture, domesticity, the archaeology of the recent past, critical understandings of materiality, and new technologies. He has conducted fieldwork in Russia, Britain, and Kazakhstan. His books include An Archaeology of Socialism (Berg 1999) – an ethnohistorical study of a constructivist housing block in Moscow – and Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past (Routledge 2001) with Gavin Lucas – an examination of the critical issues that arise when the archaeological method is applied to the study of contemporary material culture.
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Alejandro Garcia-Rivera is Professor of Systematic Theology, Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, California, passed away in 2010 and it is to him that this book is dedicated. His research interests included interfaith aesthetics, theology and the arts, theological aesthetics, suffering and the human person, the intersection between science and theology, fundamental theology. He had won several awards for his writings, which included spiritual essays in publications such as *U. S. Catholic* and *Memento Catolico* and scholarly works such as *St. Martin de Porres: The Little Stories*, *The Semiotics of Culture*, *The Community of the Beautiful: A Theological Aesthetics*, *A Wounded Innocence: Sketches for a Theology of Art*, *Living Beauty: A Liturgical Aesthetics*.

Nigel Goring-Morris is Professor at the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His primary research interests concern the investigation of changing settlement and adaptive patterns during the transformation of mobile hunter-gatherer groups through to and including the emergence of early settled farming communities and pastoral societies in the Middle East. His current field research focuses on the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B cult and mortuary site of Kfar HaHoresh in lower Galilee. His publications include “The Quick and the Dead: The Social Context of Aceramic Neolithic Mortuary Practices as Seen from Kfar HaHoresh” in *Life in Neolithic Farming Communities: Social Organization, Identity, and Differentiation* (edited by Ian Kuijt 2000).

Stewart Elliott Guthrie, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at Fordham University, received his PhD from Yale University in 1976. His first book, *A Japanese New Religion* (Michigan 1988), was based on fieldwork in a Japanese mountain hamlet. He began writing on cognitive and evolutionary aspects of religion with “A Cognitive Theory of Religion” (*Current Anthropology* 1980), which held that religion can best be understood as systematized anthropomorphism. His *Faces in the Clouds* (Oxford 1993) extends that paper’s key arguments, which are now widely adopted in the cognitive science of religion.

Lori D. Hager is a bioarchaeologist studying the biology of ancient people and their burial customs from sites in the Americas, Europe, and the Near East. She is a Research Associate at the Archaeological Research Facility, UC Berkeley, and a Senior Osteologist at Pacific Legacy, Inc., Berkeley. Dr. Hager considered evolutionary narratives in *Women in Human Evolution* (edited by L. D. Hager 1997) and in *Sex Matters: Letting Skeletons Tell the Story* (edited by L. Schiebinger 2008). As a participant in the human remains team at Çatalhöyük for more than a decade, Dr. Hager has written on the burial practices of these Neolithic people on the basis of her lengthy involvement in the excavation and analysis of the burials.
Contributors

Ian Hodder is Dunlevie Family Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Stanford University. His main large-scale excavation projects have been at Haddenham in the east of England and at Çatalhöyük in Turkey, where he has worked since 1993. His main books include *Spatial Analysis in Archaeology* (Cambridge 1976), *Symbols in Action* (Cambridge 1982), *Reading the Past* (Cambridge 1986), *The Domestication of Europe* (Blackwell 1990), *The Archaeological Process* (Blackwell 1999), *The Leopard’s Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Çatalhöyük* (Thames and Hudson 2006), and *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Wiley-Blackwell 2012).

Anke Kamerman is a freelance sociologist and interior architect. She did her MA on the relation between movement patterns and the articulation of material culture in de Krimpenerwaard, a “traditional” farmer community in Holland. She worked on material culture and spatial ordering in working-class neighborhoods in the Hague supported by the Hague Municipal Museum. She graduated as an interior architect from the Rietveld Academy of Fine Arts and has worked since 1995 as an interior architect on rebuilding and furniture design specializing in the relation between behavior patterns and spatial organization. From 2007 she combined her work as an architect with working at the Foundation for Papua Cultural Heritage, doing research on changing oral and material culture by migration of Dutch Papuans.

Camilla Mazzucato is a member of the Çatalhöyük Research Project and a researcher on the Ritual, Community and Conflict Project in the Centre for Anthropology and Mind at the University of Oxford. She began her studies at the University of Bologna, first obtaining a BA in Middle Eastern archaeology, followed by an MA on the Bronze Age–Iron Age transition on the Levantine coast and Iron Age Mediterranean archaeology. She then obtained an MSc degree in geographic information systems (GIS) and spatial analysis at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. She has been working as a professional archaeologist in Italy and England since 2000 and as a GIS specialist for the Giza Plateau Mapping Project in Egypt and for the Çatalhöyük Research Project in Turkey since 2007.

Barbara J. Mills is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Arizona. She has conducted most of her archaeological research in the Southwest United States, focusing on ancestral and historic Puebloan societies, especially the Zuni, Chaco, and Mogollon Rim areas. She currently directs the Southwest Social Networks Project, focusing on the application of social network analysis to archaeological data across the region. Her research interests include the intersection of material culture with social questions...
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relating to migration and identity, ritual and religion, and different dimensions of inequality and prestige. Professor Mills is the editor or author of eight books and monographs and dozens of articles and book chapters. She is the recipient of the Gordon Willey Award for her 2004 *American Anthropologist* article “The Establishment and Defeat of Hierarchy: Inalienable Possessions and the History of Collective Prestige Structures in the Puebloan Southwest.”

**Carolyn Nakamura** is a postdoctoral researcher at Leiden University, where she coordinates the Global Interactions research profile. She obtained her PhD in anthropology from Columbia University. She specializes in the archaeology and material culture of the Near East and has worked with museum collections and done fieldwork in Turkey, Romania, and the United States. Her research has focused on the sociomaterial ecologies of ritual and magic. More recently, she has become interested in studying the histories/heritage of informal communities in Mumbai.


**Peter Pels** has been Professor in the Anthropology of Africa at Leiden University since 2003. He earned his PhD in 1993 at the University of Amsterdam with a dissertation that appeared in 1999 as *A Politics of Presence: Contacts between Missionaries and Africans in Late Colonial Tanganyika* (Harwood Academic). Since then he has published work on the anthropology of religion and magic, the anthropology of colonialism, the anthropology of politics, the anthropology of modernity, the history of anthropology, social science ethics, material culture, and interpretation in archaeology. He is working on a book with the provisional title *The Spirit of Matter: Religion, Modernity, and the Power of Objects* and on essays on science fiction and the future, heritage, and qualitative methodology.

**F. LeRon Shults** is Professor of Theology and Philosophy at the University of Agder in Kristiansand, Norway, and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for the Biocultural Study of Religion at Boston University. He
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has doctorates in philosophical theology (Princeton) and educational psychology (Walden). Shults is the author (or coauthor) of eleven books and more than sixty scientific articles and book chapters. His current research interest is on philosophical issues surrounding the cognitive science of religion.

J. Wentzel van Huyssteen is the James I. McCord Professor of Theology and Science at Princeton Theological Seminary. His area of special interest is religious and scientific epistemology. He earned a doctorate in theology from the Free University of Amsterdam in 1970 and was ordained a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church the next year. He was named Professor and Chair of Religious Studies at South Africa’s University of Port Elizabeth in 1972, a post he held until going to Princeton. The author of some fifty articles published in academic journals, he is the editor (with Niels Henrik Gregersen) of Rethinking Theology and Science (Eerdmans 1998) and the author of eight other books, including Essays in Postfoundational Theology (Eerdmans 1997) and The Shaping of Rationality: Towards Interdisciplinarity in Theology and Science (Eerdmans 1999).

Mary Weismantel is Professor of Anthropology at Northwestern University and Director of the Gender and Sexuality Program. She has done ethnographic research in the Andean region of South America since 1980. Her first book was Food, Gender and Poverty in the Ecuadorian Andes (University of Pennsylvania Press 1989), an ethnographic study of the diet, cuisine, and kitchen practices of an indigenous agricultural community. She has also written about race and racism, gender, sex and sexuality, adoption, and kinship and is currently writing about pre-Columbian art. Her more recent book, Cholas and Pishtacos: Tales of Race and Sex in the Andes (University of Chicago Press 2001), won several awards. Her articles have been published in American Anthropologist, American Ethnologist, Bulletin of Latin American Research, Identities, Modern Language Notes, and Food and Foodways, as well as in edited volumes.

Harvey Whitehouse is Professor of Anthropology at Oxford University. He obtained his PhD from Cambridge in 1991. A specialist in Melanesian religion, he carried out two years of field research on a “cargo cult” in New Britain, Papua New Guinea, in the late 1980s. In recent years, he has focused his energies on the development of collaborative programs of research on cognition and culture. His books include Inside the Cult: Religious Innovation and Transmission in Papua New Guinea (Oxford 1995), Arguments and Icons: Divergent Modes of Religiosity (Oxford 2000), The Debated Mind: Evolutionary Psychology versus Ethnography (Berg 2001), and Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission (AltaMira 2004).
This volume results from a seminar funded by the John Templeton Foundation that took place at the Neolithic tell site of Çatalhöyük in Turkey over three years (2009–2011). The processes of engagement that led to the volume are described in Chapter 1. At the end of 2010, one of our original group, Alejandro Garcia-Rivera (Professor of Systematic Theology, Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, California), passed away at fifty-nine. This volume is dedicated to his memory.

Alejandro was mischievous, warm, brilliant, and creative, a wonderful mix of reverence and irreverence. He insisted that he and I should edit a “Journal of Irresponsible Archaeology,” and at the same time he came up with a whole series of wonderful ideas about Çatalhöyük that he had only begun to explore. With the permission of his wife, Kathryn, I have included as a postscript a note he sent me after his visit to the site in 2009. Preliminary as the text is, the writing is, on the one hand, remarkably prescient – picking up already the themes that have become dominant in this volume, such as vitality and the symbolic importance of flesh – and, on the other hand, his text shows what a long way we as a project have still to go. Alejandro was already well ahead of us and he raised issues and ideas, such as devotion and the dramatic horizon, that I hope others may be stimulated to pursue.

I am deeply grateful to the John Templeton Foundation for its long-term support of the Çatalhöyük research initiatives, and in particular to Paul Wason. I am also deeply indebted to all the many members of the Çatalhöyük team who have, with great forbearance and goodwill over
Preface


The years, welcomed and engaged with the Templeton scholars. And finally I wish to thank the Templeton project members for making this such a pleasant and rewarding experience.

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