

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

6000 BC

Transforming and Changing the Neolithic World in Southwest Asia and Europe

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THIS BOOK

THIS BOOK IS ABOUT transformation and change – both rapid and long term – in Southwest Asia and Europe. Although the title *6000 BC* is only a random year in our western calendar, it symbolizes the divide between the so-called Late Neolithic and Early Chalcolithic in the Anatolian chronology. In addition, it represents the physical move from the East to the West Mound at Çatalhöyük – the world-famous site inscribed in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List – which is the general reference stratigraphy for the Neolithic and early farming in Anatolia, and which represents one major thread of Neolithization: movement. And finally, it relates to the so-called 8.2 climate event which has been at least partially connected with this transformation and change across the Near East and Europe (Biehl and Nieuwenhuyse 2016). We wanted to create an artificial time marker in order to ask the authors, “Which changes and continuities can we see around 6000 cal BC in your region?” Though we were aware of the fact that in Anatolia both 6,500 cal BC and 5,500 cal BC are probably considered more significant in terms of cultural change (Özbaşaran and Buitenhuis 2002; Düring 2011; see also M. Özdoğan this volume), we wanted to problematize chronologies and histories (Figure 1.1) of cultural and environmental change and transformation within this specific timeframe of about 2,000 years of a broadly defined Neolithic. We also

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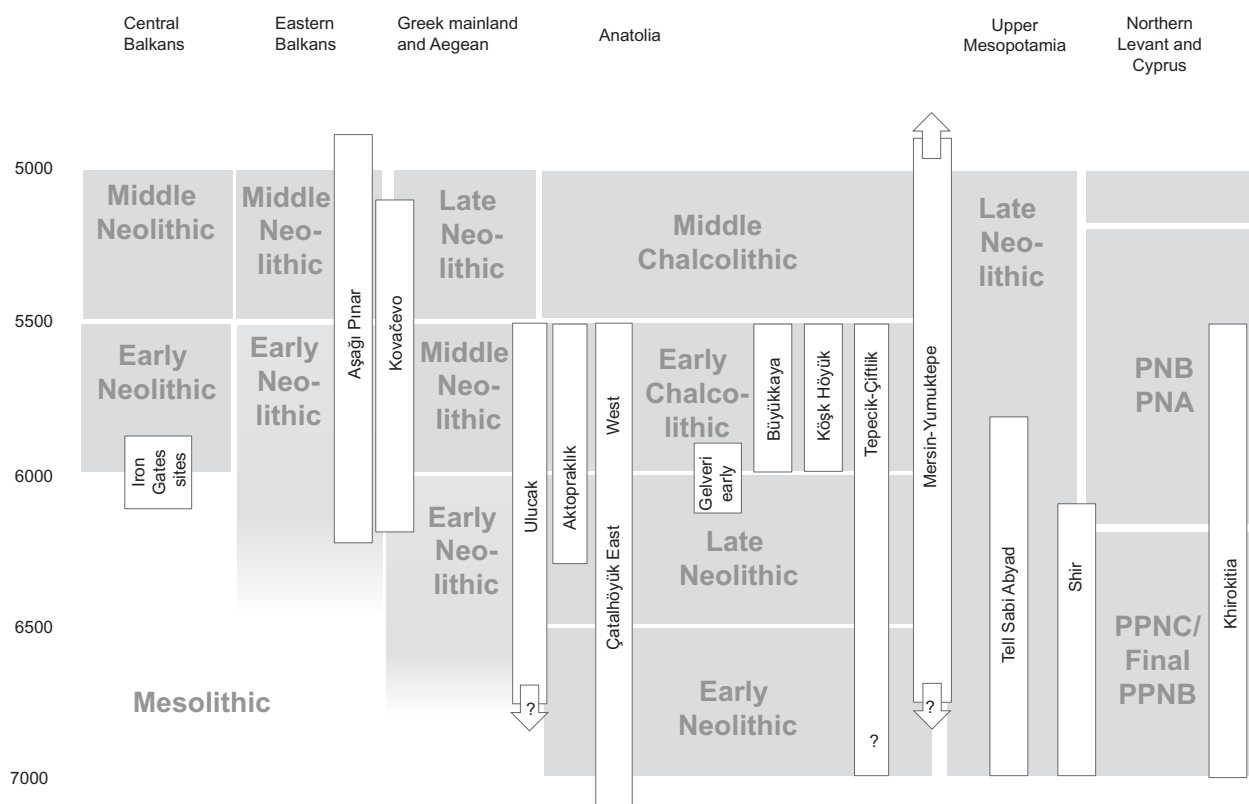


Figure 1.1 Regional periodization schemes ca. 7000 to 5000 cal BC (see also Parzinger 1993:355, fig. 16); Bami (2019:19, table 1) and dating of sites discussed in the conference according to the authors. (Eva Rosenstock)

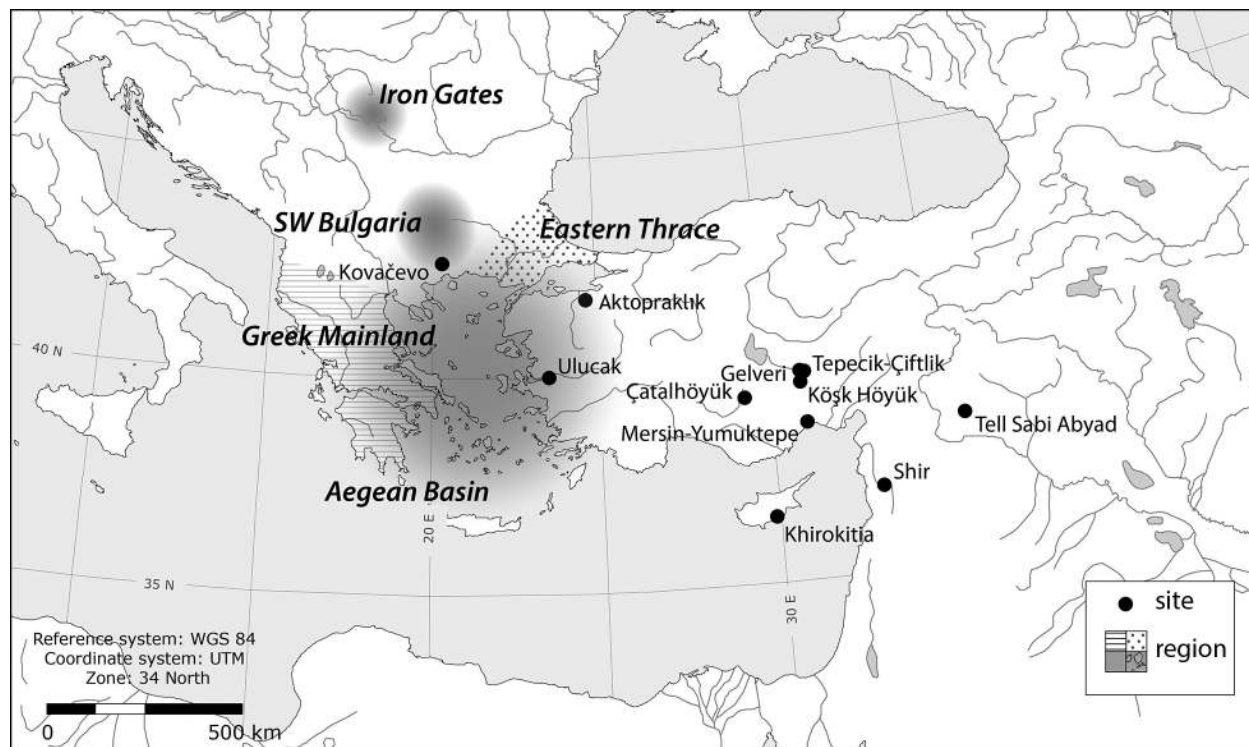


Figure 1.2 Map of the regions and sites discussed in this volume. (Conception: Eva Rosenstock/Peter F. Biehl, Cartography: Daniela Kelm)

wanted to compare material culture in this time-frame across the wide geographical scope from southwestern Asia and Near East to southeastern Europe (Figure 1.2) and to overcome the borders between modern geopolitical entities as well as between archaeological sub-disciplines.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The book builds on a sequence of conferences about the Neolithic and early farming and its important role for Near Eastern and European Prehistory that took place in the last two decades and which are briefly described here: the first conference and proceedings is the *Central Anatolian Neolithic e-Workshop* (CANeW; Gérard and Thissen 2002) which highlights the importance of Central Anatolia in the Neolithization process; *How Did Farming Reach Europe? Anatolian-European Relations from the 2nd Half of the 7th through the First Half of the 6th Millennium BC* (Lichter 2005) also discusses Neolithization but with a particular focus on the Aegean and Southeast Europe. The same is true for *Going West? The Dissemination of Neolithic Innovations between the Bosphorus and the Carpathians* (Reingruber, Tsirtsoni and Nedelcheva 2017b) as well as *Beginnings - New Research in the Appearance of the Neolithic between Northwest Anatolia and the Carpathian Basin* (Krauß 2011a), which both trace the western expansion of early farming communities to the Balkans. *The Central/Western Anatolian Farming Frontier* (Brami and Horejs 2019) focuses on the major change between ca. 6800 and 6500 cal BC in Turkey and discusses in detail the beginning of farming and its spread westward. Several chapters in the last volume of the series *Neolithic in Turkey* address the Turkish Neolithic in the context of research done in the Levant, Mesopotamia and the Persian Highlands as well as eastern and southeastern Europe (Özdoğan, Başgelen and Kuniholm 2014). A conference

volume solely focused on the Near Eastern Neolithic entitled *Interpreting the Late Neolithic of Upper Mesopotamia* (Nieuwenhuys et al. 2013) discusses the changes from the Mesopotamian Pre-Pottery to the Pottery Neolithic and describes the period as “an epoch of tremendous change in social, economic, and symbolic realms” (Bernbeck and Nieuwenhuys 2013:18). The most recent conference volume, *Concluding the Neolithic. The Near East in the Second Half of the Seventh Millennium BC*, is edited by Arkadiusz Marciniak and provides an excellent overview of the period preceding our book, the 7th millennium cal BC in the Near East and Anatolia (Marciniak 2019a). Marciniak summarizes succinctly that at the end of the 7th millennium BC, “social and ideological changes [...] not only contributed to the disintegration of constitutive principles binding larger social groupings of the preceding period and initiated the development of a new social system, but more importantly contributed to the development of fully-fledged farming communities in the Near East and beyond” (Marciniak 2019b:12). Our book highlights several new key themes from a chronologically and geographically diachronic and methodologically and theoretically multi-scalar perspective.

KEY THEMES

Let's start with **chronology**. On the one hand, the general chronological framework based on radiocarbon dating has been widely accepted. On the other hand, the culture historical phasing terminology is still far from being unified across Upper Mesopotamia, Anatolia and Southeastern Europe (see Figure 1.1; see also Brami (2019). For example, the term *Late Neolithic* is used in Upper Mesopotamia for the entire Pottery Neolithic until the first smelted copper artifacts appear at the end of the 6th millennium cal BC, marking the beginning of the *Chalcolithic* (Bernbeck and Nieuwenhuys 2013). In Anatolia, however, following the first

pottery production of the *Early Neolithic* at the beginning of the 7th millennium, the term *Late Neolithic* refers to a phase of more developed pottery production in the second half of the 7th millennium cal BC. For reasons rooted in the history of research (Schoop 2005:14–17; Rosenstock, Scharl, and Schier 2016:63), it is followed by the *Early Chalcolithic* and *Middle Chalcolithic* of the 6th millennium cal BC; these misnomers (Mellaart 1975:111) have survived despite explicit attempts at aligning Anatolian terminology with neighboring areas (Özbaşaran and Buitenhuis 2002). However, with a few exceptions (e.g. Duru 2012), tacitly, the Neolithic is also defined as ending around 5000 cal BC in Anatolian archaeology (see the scope of the *Neolithic in Turkey* volumes (Özdoğan, Başgelen and Kuniholm 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2014). At the same time, the Greek *Early Neolithic* is roughly contemporary with the Anatolian *Late Neolithic*, and the Bulgarian *Early Neolithic* is contemporary with the Anatolian *Early Chalcolithic*. We hope that Figure 1.1 helps to better contextualize and incorporate this inconsistency regarding the diachronic comparisons in this book.

Second, the process of *Neolithization* stands for the spread of the Neolithic as a discontinuous, leap-frogging process (Guilaine 2003, 2019; Schier, this volume) out of its core area of domestication of animals and plants in the Fertile Crescent. While it is still debated whether Central Anatolia belongs to this core area or rather represents a case of early secondary expansion of Neolithic farmers (Düring 2011; Brami 2019), it is an accepted fact that the Neolithization of the Aegean is a result of culture transfer. Here as well as in the Central Balkans (Borič – Cristiani, this volume), the interaction between foragers and farmers (Reingruber, this volume; see also Hansen, Klimscha, and Renn (in press) seems only to be visible and evidenced in lithics sometimes originating from Central and Eastern Anatolia as well as from Melos (Çilingiroğlu, this volume) or Greece (Reingruber, this volume); and so far Mesolithic

sites are only known from Greece and Northwest Anatolia (Perlès; Karul, this volume) though M. Özdoğan (this volume) points out “that considering that the sea levels were at that time still about 30–35 m below its present level, it is also evident that most of coastal Mesolithic settlements must have been submerged and that our visibility is limited only by those located on higher areas.”

The book shows that within the long-lasting process of Neolithization four major time markers of change can be identified based on pottery typologies: 7000, 6500, 6000 and 5500 cal BC. Several authors in the volume argue that pottery can also be used as a proxy for subsistence and social practices (Nieuwenhuyse; Godon – Özbudak; Pyzel – Franz; Last, this volume). After an early appearance of the so-called White Ware of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic in Mesopotamia and the Levant, it is around 7000 cal BC that we see the first ceramic containers in the entire Near East including Anatolia. Cookware with a wider range of forms for new culinary applications starts to appear slowly but is common around the middle of the 7th millennium cal BC (Nieuwenhuyse; Çilingiroğlu, this volume). Around 6000 cal BC commensal practices become centered on elaborately fashioned, intricately painted bowls, goblets and small jars (Nieuwenhuyse; Caneva; Pyzel – Franz; Last; Perlès, this volume). The only exception seems to be the rare variant of the so-called exotic/Gelveri-style ware (dated ca. 6000 – 5700 cal BC), which has incised, rather than painted decorations (Godon – Özbudak, this volume). Other chapters demonstrate the regionality of certain pottery types and styles. Cappadocia is a good example as it shows the sites of Köşk Höyük (Düring, this volume) and Tepeçik-Çiftlik (Bıçakçı, this volume) in the 7th and 6th millennia BC can stylistically be separated from Central Anatolia, with Çatalhöyük as its most important site. The same is true for the monochrome pottery of Western Anatolia (Çilingiroğlu, this volume),

and the Fikirtepe-type ceramic traditions of the Marmara and Thrace regions (Karul; M. Özdoğan, this volume).

Olivier Nieuwenhuys succinctly described this phenomenon of the sudden emergence of painted pottery in a vast area ranging from the Persian highlands (Bernbeck et al. 2003) to Greece (Perlès, this volume) as a “Painted Pottery Revolution” (Nieuwenhuys 2006) with a common and widely understood material vocabulary (see also Last; Demoule – Manolakakis, this volume) accompanying this time of change and transformation.

Third, several chapters clearly demonstrate that *cooking and food habits* change at ca. 6500 cal BC (Nieuwenhuys; Last; Godon – Özbudak; Pyzel – Franz, this volume), a process that might at least partially be triggered by an increase of dairy production (Hendy et al. 2018; Nieuwenhuys, this volume). The pottery discussed in various chapters also represents new ways of not only making food but also serving, displaying and consuming as well as storing food and drink around 6000 cal BC. Human dancing scenes and animals painted on vessels have been interpreted as representations of feasting (Nieuwenhuys; Brady et al., this volume). In addition, we have for the first time evidence for storage vessels representing either means of sharing and restituting equality or competitive practices to be understood in the context of increasing household storage at Shir, Sabi Abyad, Khirokitia, Mersin, Çatalhöyük and Ulucak (Bartl; Nieuwenhuys; Daune-Le Brun et al.; Caneva; Brady, et al.; Çilingiroğlu, this volume). And finally, a general growing importance of the household as a social unit – what Verhoeven (2012:799) calls domesticity – can be observed not only in Shir and Sabi Abyad (Bartl; Nieuwenhuys, this volume), but also from the so-called change at level P onwards in Çatalhöyük East (Czerniak – Marciniak, this volume). And especially the emergence of

two-storied buildings consisting of basements dedicated to storage and first floors dedicated to housing, buttressed architecture at Çatalhöyük West (Brady et al., this volume) and Canhasan I (French 1998), as well as Hacilar and Kuruçay in the Lakes Region (Mellaart 1970; Duru 2012) all demonstrate the new importance of food storage. This new form and function of buildings and their modified circular arrangement in the Marmara region such as in Aktopraklık (Karul, this volume) and Ilıpınar (Roodenberg 1995; Roodenberg and Thissen 2001; Roodenberg and Alpaslan Roodenberg 2008), continues to spread in the first half of the 6th millennium cal BC into Thrace and Greece (Perlès; E. Özdoğan; Lichardus-Itten, this volume).

All these changes and transformations start from the middle of the 7th millennium cal BC and go hand in hand with the further spread of farming from the core zone of the Neolithization process across Central and Western Anatolia into southeastern Europe.

Finally, *climate and subsequent environmental change* is discussed in detail in most of the chapters in this book referring to both a longer period of rapid climate change (RCC) between ca. 6600 and 6000 cal BC (Weninger et al. 2006; Clare and Weninger 2015) and a short so-called 8.2 cal BP climate event between ca. 6200 and 6000 cal BC (Roffet-Salque et al. 2018). Although several papers state that establishing a clear cause-and-effect scenario remains difficult (see also Biehl and Nieuwenhuys 2016:5), short- and long-term changes in the environment would certainly have compelled communities to adapt. But the current data for the sites discussed in this volume indicate that adaptations in the material culture start prior to the beginning of the RCC period (Godon – Özbudak; Nieuwenhuys, this volume); the foundation of Shir (Bartl, this volume), Sabi Abyad (Nieuwenhuys, this volume), Çatalhöyük and maybe Mersin-Yumuktepe (Caneva, this volume) starts around 7000 cal BC. The major changes from around

6500 cal BC described earlier do not correspond to the beginning of new sites or the abandonment of existing sites. But around 6000 cal BC we can see a number of new sites from Thrace (Kovačevo, Aşağı Pınar) to the Iron Gates region (Lichardus-Itten; E. Özdoğan; Borič – Cristiani, this volume). Furthermore, only the site of Mersin-Yumuktepe remains settled across all four time markers. Around 6000 cal BC, some sites, including Shir (Bartl, this volume), are abandoned, while 5500 cal BC is a major phase of abandonment in Cyprus (Daune-Le Brun et al., this volume), Anatolia (Düring; Bıçakcı; Brady et al; Çilingiroğlu; Karul, this volume) and southeastern Europe (E. Özdoğan; Lichardus-Itten, this volume). Partial abandonment or a shift in settlement has also been observed at Shir (Bartl, this volume) and Çatalhöyük (Brady et al., Czerniak – Marciniak this volume) around both 6500 and 6000 cal BC and at Lepenski Vir around 6000 BC (Borič – Cristiani, this volume).

Although we are still unable to fully understand such events, we believe that they represent new and still understudied cases for research of change and transformation in the Neolithic World in Europe and the Near East. The following summaries of the book chapters illustrate this.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

The book is organized into six parts beginning with this introductory chapter, followed by eighteen chapters geographically organized in four parts ranging from Upper Mesopotamia and the Eastern Mediterranean, Anatolia, Aegean and Marmara to Southeast Europe; the fifth part includes two chapters with supra-regional chronological and methodological discussions, followed by two commentary chapters in the concluding sixth part of the book.

In the following, we briefly summarize the eighteen chapters as they hang together in addressing the key themes outlined above: chronology, Neolithization, cooking and food habits, and climate and environmental change in the Neolithic World around 6000 cal BC in the Near East and Europe.

UPPER MESOPOTAMIA AND THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Bartl discusses the settlement of *Shir* in Syria which began, according to new radiocarbon dates, around 7000 cal BC. This is a period marked by the appearance of pottery production in the northern Levant, which defines the beginning of the Late Neolithic period. *Bartl*'s chapter describes the extension and gradual growth or “shifting” of the settlement. It also shows that at around 6500 cal BC significant changes occur in architecture, finds, and particularly in the development of pottery. Like a number of settlements discussed in this book, the site was abandoned around 6100 or even 6000 cal BC and after that never resettled. *Bartl* proposes four models to explain the abandonment: (1) a long-term change in climate, (2) short-term natural catastrophes, (3) war-like conflicts, and (4) even reasons in the symbolic sphere such as a “bad spirit” connected with specific events before the abandonment. *Bartl* also considers “a change from stationary settlement to a mobile or semi-mobile way of life and habitation forms, which were more flexible in consideration of climatic challenges, as far as subsistence is concerned.”

Nieuwenhuys discusses pottery from Mesopotamia in general, and from Tell *Sabi Abyad* in Syria in particular. Characteristic for this and other central villages in Mesopotamia is a dense agglomeration of large multi-roomed buildings, used collectively for storage and towards more secluded forms of ritual centering on the individual household as well as large

collective feasts in the Pottery Neolithic. About the role of climate change, he points out that “certain key innovations in the later 7th millennium had roots stretching back centuries before the 8.2 ka event, and changes in the ecology would certainly have compelled Late Neolithic communities to adapt, but some of their ‘adaptations’ seem to have been well under way irrespective of climatic-environmental changes.” Importantly, Nieuwenhuyse stresses that “almost no pottery containers were around at about 6700 cal BC and some five centuries later pottery containers were everywhere.” This was also the time of the development of specialized cooking wares which he connects to the domestication of cattle as a trigger for stimulated culinary changes – with the world’s earliest evidence for dairy processing from the site.

Caneva discusses the site of *Mersin-Yumuktepe* in Southeast Turkey with its uninterrupted stratification of building levels. This spans from the early 7th to roughly the mid-6th millennium cal BC, with the 8.2 ka climatic event falling in the very middle of this time interval. Though the use of wattle and daub architecture continued until the uppermost level of the site, stone-based architecture was introduced for a storage structure as well as the emergence of massive basements built using several courses of river stones starting in about 6250 cal BC; in general, there is a change in the layout of the village, including new elements such as large houses, ovens, silos, and open working areas. Particularly, the emergence of numerous silo structures indicates the increasing importance of storage, which is also something noted in other sites discussed in the book. Substantial changes also occur in ceramic production, including a decline in the Dark-Faced Burnished Ware and the appearance of the first painted pottery. We also see a new vessel repertory, with the so called *yıldırım*, “waving” vertically from a horizontal band, as the most frequent motif. Finally, a remarkable innovation

of this phase is the presence of child and adult human burials in close association with the dwelling areas, particularly with storage structures.

Daune-Le Brun et al. focus in their discussion of the settlement of *Khirkitia* on Cyprus on the time period between 6600 and 6100 cal BC, which was “encircled by an enclosure wall that’s outline has been modified several times.” They describe episodes of erosion, flooding and re-location of this settlement close to a river; furthermore, circular buildings with changing architecture through time, such as internal arrangements, stone and mud brick architecture, and massive pillars – interpreted as supports for a loft (second storey) probably for storage. Unlike other settlements in the book, there are human burials in individual pits dug inside the buildings throughout the settlement occupation. Similar to the settlements on the Konya Plain, “after ca. 5500 cal BC, the *Khirkitia* culture disappears from the archaeological record of Cyprus, and there is a gap of about a millennium before evidence of any settlement on the island reappears, the populations there having likely reverted to small mobile communities, far less visible archaeologically.”

ANATOLIA

Bıçakçı discusses the long sequence of the Cappadocian settlement of *Tepecik-Çiftlik*, which stretches from the beginning of the 8th to the middle of 6th millennium cal BC and provides evidence of cultural stability from the early Pottery Neolithic to the Middle Chalcolithic (from ca. 7000 to 5500 cal BC). Though domestication of animals existed throughout the Neolithic levels, it interestingly decreased toward the end of the settlement when hunting clearly increased. There are also changes in the layout of the settlement and its architecture; densely clustered buildings were now

separated by open areas including a large central open area. In addition, skulls were removed from some individuals buried in certain buildings – a practice which *Düring* discusses at *Köşk Höyük*.

Godon and Özbudak focus on the pottery of the *Tepecik-Çiftlik* sequence and point out that “it is around 6400–6300 cal BC, at the turn between Levels IV and III that major typological, technological and decors-related developments are seen.” This includes new vessel creation methods, such as the use of baskets as pottery moulds and the beating method; it further includes new vessel types such as jars – indicating different cooking habits – the increasing use of red slip along diversification in firing methods, and the development of applied zoomorphic and anthropomorphic decors. As one of their major contributions, they confirm the dating of the Gelveri Early Phase with its typical incisions around 6000–5700 cal BC. They also highlight that as in other sites in Anatolia, this incised decoration style, with a mere 4 percent of the pottery production for an overall time frame 500 years, was a rarity. They echo other authors in the volume that “if major cultural changes or developments need to be underlined around 6000 cal BC, their roots may be traced back to around 6400 cal BC, as far as central Anatolia is concerned, to the time when Neolithization spread toward western Anatolia.”

Düring focuses on the Early Chalcolithic Levels 3 and 2 of the Cappadocian site of *Köşk Höyük* and its burials (only neonates, infants, and children) and plastered skulls – a well-known tradition in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B in the Levant. Based on the iconography as well as data from domesticated animals, he points out that the Early Chalcolithic was the ‘true Neolithic.’ Most importantly, he succinctly stresses “that it is time to start taking the diversity that characterizes Anatolian prehistory seriously and counter efforts to fit the data into overarching narratives that link key sites into single syntheses whilst glossing over the manifold archaeological

and chronological facts and discrepancies in the rich records of primary archaeological data that have been amassed over the last decades.”

Czerniak and Marciniak present data from the top of the East Mound at *Çatalhöyük* that add to the now accepted fact that two contemporaneous settlements existed on the East and West Mounds at *Çatalhöyük* around 6000 cal BC. They discuss changes in almost all domains, including settlement layout, house architecture, burial practices, human-animal relations and lithics procurement and technology toward the end of the East Mound settlement. Of particular note is the removal of burials from the house – here in the form of the two, so-called burial chambers. The demise of a long-lasting burial practice was the most significant development in the final stage of the East Mound settlement occupation. It marks the beginning of a new tradition of placing the adult dead outside living areas. *Czerniak and Marciniak* describe the shifting of settlements on the East Mound itself and eventually to the West Mound in the context of continuous migration of segments of the population within and beyond the Konya Plain. They also discuss the ethnic composition of the *Çatalhöyük* populations and its importance in regard to the socio-political units of house, household and community neighborhood as well as feasting and migration as major forms of social practice.

Franz and Pyzel focus on the pottery from *Çatalhöyük* and point out that “one of the most important discoveries on the West Mound of recent years is a dark-colored, double-sided burnished restricted ellipsoid carinated bowl with S-profile, knoblets, and standing, which represents a ‘missing link’ between the East and West Mound pottery assemblages.” This pottery type combines elements of both traditions: the shape is typical for the West Mound pottery, but color, surface treatment and fabric are typical of East Mound pottery. They also demonstrate the

evolution of cooking and serving ware which is later added by storage vessels. They argue that the skill of painting – so typical for the Early Chalcolithic – originated in the Late Neolithic in the form of red slip and single paint trials. Importantly, they are able to show for the first time that there is a continuation in pottery from the East to the West Mound both in form and decoration, as well as with specific techniques such as the use of pot-stands for cooking, which also originated in the Late Neolithic.

Last also focuses on pottery from *Çatalhöyük* – in particular from building 25, which he excavated on the West Mound – but contextualizes it across Anatolia. He highlights the importance of the new form emerging in the Early Chalcolithic, the S-profile or carinated bowl. He compares the East Mound wall paintings and these vessels which were re-slipped and re-fired over older decoration, literally embedding decoration within the vessel; the practice has intriguing parallels with the East Mound practice of re-plastering and repainting house walls. The idea that decorated ceramics took the place of wall-painting was first proposed by Mellaart (1970:38). *Last* suggests their portability, capacity to stand metaphorically for categories of people, and association with the serving and consumption of food and drink may all be relevant to the question of why pots were decorated rather than houses. Consequently, he argues that social networks were stretching well beyond *Çatalhöyük*, and pottery may have been implicated in the expression and differentiation of community identities at a time of settlement expansion and/or fission; and in the 6th millennium cal BC, it seems that spatial relationships in the present were of more significance than historical links with the past.

Moving from Central to Western Anatolia, *Çilingiroğlu* discusses Late Neolithic Level V and the Early Chalcolithic Level IV (ca. 6400/6300–5800/5700 cal BC) at *Ulucak* in the context of “an abrupt and region-wide abandonment of settlements [that] occurs first around

5700/5600 cal BC.” She also points out that painted pottery does not emerge as a significant component of the material culture at any of the excavated sites in Aegean Turkey which differentiates the region from Central Anatolia and limits the role of pottery as a chronological marker. But there are several other changes which can be connected to Central Anatolia such as the storage practices from bins to large storage vessels. Though the size of the buildings increases through time, their architecture with mud brick and single rooms continues. Another difference with Central Anatolia is the reliance on Melian instead of Cappadocian obsidian.

Karul discusses the Western Anatolian site of *Aktopraklık*, where the oldest layers found date to 6400–6300 cal BC. On the one hand, he compares *Aktopraklık* with the important sites of *Fikirtepe*, and *Pendik* and *Ilıpınar*, and on the other some characteristics such as the buttressed structures with *Çatalhöyük West* and *Canhasan 2B*. On the other hand, he underlines that settlements in this region including Layer 6 of *Aşağı Pınar* in eastern Thrace and *Hacılar I* in the Lakes Region differ from the Central Anatolian settlement with their circular layout. At the end of the first quarter of the 6th millennium cal BC, *Aktopraklık* as well as *Fikirtepe* and *Pendik*, were abandoned and at the same time, hillside settlements in the *Eskişehir* region, such as *Orman Fidanlığı* and *Kanlıtaş*, emerged. *Karul* points out that during the Late Neolithic–Early Chalcolithic period, the Bosphorus was a uniting element rather than a barrier, but also that it did not play a significant role in the spread of innovations in architecture and material culture further west into the Balkans. It is also worth mentioning that this seems to be the only place from which we have been able to gain information on Mesolithic societies in Anatolia, although this information is at present based only on surface collections, and that the Mesolithic way of life continued during the Neolithic period. Around 5800 cal BC,

impressed decorated pottery begins to appear in Aktopraklık and the other settlements in the region, and continues until around 5500 cal BC, when the Early Chalcolithic settlements in the whole region are abandoned.

Eylem Özdoğan discusses the site of *Aşağı Pınar* in Turkish Thrace and its connections to both Western Anatolia and the Balkans. She focuses on its Level 8, which predates Karanovo I in Bulgaria and does not show any changes into Layer 7. She also discusses relief-decorated sherds depicting bucrania motifs from *Hoca Çeşme*, which earliest horizon dates to ca. 6200 cal BC. She also compares the applied relief decorations with those from Tepecik Çiftlik and Köşk Höyük. The curvilinear layout of the settlement in *Aşağı Pınar* bears significant similarities to that of sites on the Anatolian side of the Marmara Sea such as Aktopraklık-Area B and Ilıpınar VI. She highlights both similarities and differences between eastern Thrace and Anatolia.

Perlès discusses the Middle Neolithic (ca. 6140–6000 cal BC) in Greece, which is primarily defined and characterized by the development of fine, inventive, regionally distinctive painted wares. She points out that continuity of sites from the Early to the Middle Neolithic prevails in most domains and that of 300 sites where Early Neolithic occupation has been recorded from surface surveys and excavations, about 80 percent were still occupied during part or all of the Middle Neolithic. Most settlements continued vertically, rather than horizontally, and building materials and architecture continue to be as varied as they were during the Early Neolithic, both within and between settlements. However, a tendency for more partitioning within the houses emerges, which can be seen as a response to an increase in village population. In addition to new firing techniques for pottery, bulk storage and cooking in coarser and larger pots are part of the functional diversification signaling increasing household independence for food storage and

preparation, and feasting as an important practice in the Neolithic of Greece. *Perlès* also discusses the change in the social role of pottery. The insistence on visual display leaves little doubt that pottery, formerly restricted to rare ceremonial, possibly ritual occasions, now enters a broader social sphere as an item of reciprocal exchange, display and competition. Furthermore, she argues that “pottery, and painted pottery in particular, takes on the dual function that we commonly associate with body ornaments” and “establishing differences of status within the group, while, at the same time, asserting local or regional identity.”

As a starting point for her discussion of Aegean networks, *Reingruber* states that “around 6400 cal BC the Neolithic way of life appeared together with *tell*-settlements in Thessaly.” But she also highlights that the absence of Mesolithic sites limits our understanding of the Early Neolithic in the Aegean. She discusses obsidian from Melos as a connecting element across the Aegean. There are changes in pottery around 6000 cal BC when flat bases predominate and large storage vessels appear; painted pottery appears only during the Early Neolithic II (c. 6300/6200–6100 cal BC) and from around 6100/6000 cal BC added by *impresso*-decoration. Furthermore, mud-brick constructions appear as well as figurines, stamps and domesticated crops. She describes how an Aegean identity had been molded by Anatolian influences, and that at the beginning of the Middle Neolithic, the Aegean-Anatolian network reached its peak with the appearance of *impresso*-pottery. She interprets this new style as a strong signal for integration and cooperation.

Lichardus-Itten discusses in detail the Early Neolithic site of *Kovačevo* in the Struma Valley in Bulgaria and dates its founding to the time between 6200 and 6100 cal BC. This makes it “not only the longest time of occupation, but it is also the most ancient durable Early Neolithic settlement in Bulgaria.” She stresses that of its about thirty, generally badly preserved buildings,