

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04733-4 - Religion at Work in a Neolithic Society: Vital Matters

Edited by Ian Hodder

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## 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).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04733-4 - Religion at Work in a Neolithic Society: Vital Matters

Edited by Ian Hodder

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04733-4 - Religion at Work in a Neolithic Society: Vital Matters

Edited by Ian Hodder

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

# RELIGION AT WORK IN A NEOLITHIC SOCIETY

*Vital Matters*

*Edited by*

**IAN HODDER**

Stanford University



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-04733-4 - Religion at Work in a Neolithic Society: Vital Matters  
Edited by Ian Hodder  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107671263](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107671263)

© Cambridge University Press 2014

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2014

Printed in the United States of America

*A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data*

Religion at work in a neolithic society : vital matters / [edited by] Ian Hodder.  
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-04733-4 (hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-67126-3 (paperback)

1. Çatal Mound (Turkey) 2. Neolithic period – Turkey. 3. Religion, Prehistoric – Turkey. 4. Excavations (Archaeology) – Turkey. 5. Turkey – Antiquities.

I. Hodder, Ian.

GN776.32.T9R43 2014

939'.2–dc23 2013035748

ISBN 978-1-107-04733-4 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-67126-3 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04733-4 - Religion at Work in a Neolithic Society: Vital Matters

Edited by Ian Hodder

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*This volume is dedicated to the memory of Alejandro Garcia-Rivera.*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04733-4 - Religion at Work in a Neolithic Society: Vital Matters

Edited by Ian Hodder

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of Tables</i>	xii
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xiii
<i>Preface</i>	xix
1. The Vitalities of Çatalhöyük <i>Ian Hodder</i>	1
PART I. VITAL RELIGION: THE EVOLUTIONARY CONTEXT OF RELIGION AT ÇATALHÖYÜK	
2. Different Strokes for Different Folks: Near Eastern Neolithic Mortuary Practices in Perspective <i>Nigel Goring-Morris and Anna Belfer-Cohen</i>	35
3. Excavating Theogonies: Anthropomorphic Promiscuity and Sociographic Prudery in the Neolithic and Now <i>F. LeRon Shults</i>	58
4. Religion As Anthropomorphism at Çatalhöyük <i>Stewart Elliott Guthrie</i>	86
5. The Historical Self: Memory and Religion at Çatalhöyük <i>J. Wentzel van Huyssteen</i>	109
6. Modes of Religiosity and the Evolution of Social Complexity at Çatalhöyük <i>Harvey Whitehouse, Camilla Mazzucato, Ian Hodder, and Quentin D. Atkinson</i>	134
PART II. VITAL MATERIALS AT ÇATALHÖYÜK	
7. Relational Networks and Religious Sodalities at Çatalhöyük <i>Barbara J. Mills</i>	159

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04733-4 - Religion at Work in a Neolithic Society: Vital Matters

Edited by Ian Hodder

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

Contents

8.	Using “Magic” to Think from the Material: Tracing Distributed Agency, Revelation, and Concealment at Çatalhöyük <i>Carolyn Nakamura and Peter Pels</i>	187
9.	“Motherbaby”: A Death in Childbirth at Çatalhöyük <i>Kimberley C. Patton and Lori D. Hager</i>	225
10.	The <i>Hau</i> of the House <i>Mary Weismantel</i>	259
11.	Material Register, Surface, and Form at Çatalhöyük <i>Victor Buchli</i>	280
12.	The Use of Spatial Order in Çatalhöyük Material Culture <i>Anke Kamerman</i>	304
PART III. VITAL DATA		
13.	Theories and Their Data: Interdisciplinary Interactions at Çatalhöyük <i>Ian Hodder, with Contributions from Project Participants</i>	337
	<i>Postscript: On Devotion at Çatalhöyük</i> <i>Alejandro Garcia-Rivera</i>	357
	<i>Index</i>	365



## Figures

1.1. The chronological relationships between sites in the Middle East and Turkey.	<i>page</i> 4
1.2. Distribution of main Late Epipaleolithic and Neolithic sites in the Near East.	5
1.3. View of the Çatalhöyük excavations undertaken by James Mellaart in the 1960s.	6
1.4. Building with leopard relief, excavated by James Mellaart.	7
1.5. Excavation areas at Çatalhöyük.	8
1.6. Map of buildings excavated in the North or 4040 Area of Çatalhöyük.	10
1.7. The 4040 or North shelter at Çatalhöyük.	11
1.8. Excavations in the South Area at Çatalhöyük.	11
1.9. The sequence of buildings 65-56-44 in the upper levels at Çatalhöyük.	14
3.1. Conceptual scheme for terms used in this chapter.	61
3.2. Female statuette found by James Mellaart in A.II.1.	65
3.3. Burial platform from Building 49.	67
3.4. “Shrine 8” as reconstructed by James Mellaart.	68
3.5. Reconstruction of burial in Building 42.	73
3.6. Theolytic mechanisms as defined in this chapter.	80
6.1. Midden deposits: density of animal taxa through time.	140
6.2. Density of pottery through time.	142
6.3. Average internal area of houses (not including walls) in levels at Çatalhöyük and at two earlier sites in central Anatolia. The Çatalhöyük data include buildings excavated by Mellaart.	143
6.4. The area of buildings excavated by the current project in different levels at Çatalhöyük (area calculated from GIS incorporating building walls).	144

6.5. Scatterplot of logged density on floors (faunal remains, chipped stone, pottery, and ground stone) versus building size, by elaboration index.	144
6.6. Density of pottery, chipped stone, faunal remains, and ground stone in floors through levels, 4040 and South for data collected 1995–2008 (botanical remains have been excluded because of missing samples for the early levels).	145
6.7. Density of pottery, chipped stone, faunal remains, and ground stone in middens through levels, 4040 and South for data collected 1995–2008 (botanical remains have been excluded because of missing samples for the early levels).	145
6.8. Densities of fire spots in middens and other external areas by level.	146
6.9. Chronological distribution of densities of special deposits among all excavated units.	147
6.10. First two factors resulting from principal components analysis of densities of animal remains, chipped stone, figurines, and pottery in pre–South P level equivalents in the southern and northern parts of the site. Special deposits (S) and feasting deposits (F) cluster on the plot differently from daily consumption deposits (D).	148
6.11. First two factors resulting from principal components analysis of densities of animal remains, chipped stone, figurines, and pottery in post–South P level equivalents in the southern and northern parts of the site. Special deposits (S) are less distinctive in relation to daily consumption deposits (D) in the upper levels of the site.	148
6.12. The density of individuals buried beneath floors in the different levels.	150
6.13. Percentage of burial types through levels (series1: primary, series2: secondary, series3: tertiary, series4: primary disturbed, series5: unknown, series6: primary disturbed loose).	150
7.1. Zuni Hle'wekwe Society Room (after Stevenson 1904: plate CVIII).	172
7.2. Building 77. Jason Quinlan and Çatalhöyük Research Project.	176
7.3. Figure from hunting scene with leopard pelt.	178
8.1. Occurrences of materials in surface and horizon contexts. NB: These counts include only the most likely surface and horizon clusters from the excavations of 1995–2008 (n = 85).	203

## Figures

xi

- 8.2. Materials found in surface and horizon contexts. The additional category of surface/horizon was added to indicate those deposits that are ambiguously placed on surfaces just prior to being concealed, such as in acts of building infill. 204
- 8.3. Plans of B.44–B.56 sequence showing cluster deposits.  
 (a) Construction phase of B.44, SW platform.  
 (b) Occupation phase of B.44. (c) Infill of B.44 before  
 (d) construction of B.56. Occupation phase of B.52. 207
- 9.1. (a) A pregnant young adult female who died with her full-term fetus engaged in the birth canal. Later, the young woman’s head was taken and the upper neck vertebrae displaced (left center); (b) schematic drawing of “motherbaby” in situ by D. Mackie and C. Hall. 230
- 9.2. Headless figurine (12401.x 7) recovered from the Istanbul Area of the East Mound: (a) front; (b) back, and (c) side views. 236
- 9.3. Detail of object between feet of figurine of an enthroned adult female with felines in Mellaart’s “Shrine AII.1.” 238
- 9.4. A reconstruction of the burial scene for the young woman who died in childbirth in Building 60. By Mesa Schumacher. Note that the basket was found under the belly of the pregnant corpse, not beside it as depicted. 241
- 12.1. The four “leopards” look rather rigidly fixed in place by their formal positioning. 314
- 12.2. (a) In this “vulture” painting a human figure swinging some kind of stick is running toward us along a Z axis. (Mellaart 1967: 94); (b) painting interpreted by Mellaart as showing bees. (Mellaart 1967: 163). 315
- 12.3. Defaced bear relief positioned on X, Y, and Z axes covered by patterns. 318
- 12.4. So-called reptile found in Göbekli. 319
- 12.5. Similarity of motifs on leopard relief and seals (illustrations of separate seals from Türkcan 1997: 3). 324
- 12.6. (a and b) Similarity of motifs on bear reliefs and seals (illustrations of separate seals from Türkcan 1997: 3). 326
- 12.7. The bear seal and other stamp seals (illustrations of separate seals from Türkcan 1997: 3). 327
- 12.8. Stamping the seals next to each other in the direction of their formal positioning creates a never-ending pattern (illustrations of separate seals from Türkcan 1997: 3). 328
- 12.9. The navel dissolves in the multiplying patterns (illustrations of separate seals from Türkcan 1997: 3). 329

## Tables

1.1. Chronological relations between occupation levels excavated by James Mellaart and the current project and their approximate radiocarbon dates BC	<i>page 12</i>
7.1. Nested scales of social networks communities of practice at Çatalhöyük	164
7.2. Cross cutting social networks and communities of practice at Çatalhöyük	167
8.1. Number of intentional and ritualized deposits in buildings; counts include only most likely clusters and deposits	199
8.2. Examples of deposit types from nonritualized to likely ritualized	200
8.3. Materials in clusters: occurrences in all cluster deposits versus deliberate/ritualized deposits	201
8.4. Spectrum of surface and horizon deposits	202

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04733-4 - Religion at Work in a Neolithic Society: Vital Matters

Edited by Ian Hodder

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Contributors

**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.

**Alejandro Garcia-Rivera** who was 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 Momento 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.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04733-4 - Religion at Work in a Neolithic Society: Vital Matters

Edited by Ian Hodder

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Contributors

xv

**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

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.

**Kimberley C. Patton** is Professor of the Comparative and Historical Study of Religion at Harvard Divinity School. She specializes in ancient Greek religion and archaeology, with research interests in archaic sanctuaries and in the iconography of sacrifice. She is the author of *The Sea Can Wash Away All Evils: Modern Marine Pollution and the Ancient Cathartic Ocean* (Columbia 2006) and *Religion of the Gods: Ritual, Paradox, and Reflexivity* (Oxford 2009). She is also coeditor of and contributing author to three other books: with Benjamin Ray, *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age* (Berkeley 2000); with John Stratton Hawley, *Holy Tears: Weeping in the Religious Imagination* (Princeton 2005); and with Paul Waldau, *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science, and Ethics* (Columbia 2006).

**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



**Contributors**

xvii

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).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04733-4 - Religion at Work in a Neolithic Society: Vital Matters

Edited by Ian Hodder

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-04733-4 - Religion at Work in a Neolithic Society: Vital Matters

Edited by Ian Hodder

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Preface

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



The project participants and friends at Çatalhöyük in July 2011. Clockwise starting at top left: Paul Wason, Ofer Bar-Yosef, Ian Hodder, Shahina Farid, Harvey Whitehouse, J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, F. LeRon Shults, Barbara Mills, Mary Weismantel, Nigel Goring-Morris, Victor Buchli, Peter Pels, Veysel Apaydin, Anna Belfer-Cohen, Kimberley Patton, Rosemary Beck, Rob Swigart, Anke Kameron, Stewart Guthrie, Çakan Tamdık, Serap Özdöl, Sadrettin Dural, and Banu Aydinogluğil.

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.

The John Templeton Foundation provided a grant in support of the project on which this book is based.