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Citation: Croucher K (2010) Tactile engagements: the world of the dead in the lives of the living... or 'sharing the dead'. In: Benz M (Ed) The principle of sharing : segregation and construction of social identities at the transition from foraging to farming : proceedings of a symposium held on 29th-31st January 2009 at the Albert-Ludwigs-University of Freiburg, hosted by the Department of Near Eastern Archaeology. Berlin: Ex Oriente. pp 277-300.

Tactile engagements: the world of the dead in the lives of the living ... or 'sharing the dead'

Karina Croucher

Abstract: When excavating mortuary remains, we are invariably, at least when dealing with the Prehistoric Near East, left with dry, sterile bones which represent past lives, burial practices and 'ritual' activity. This paper will discuss how an approach which considers tactile and sensory interpretations of the material may be beneficial in examining bodily perspectives during this period of perceived social change, and discusses what an examination of mortuary practices might reveal about changing attitudes to the body, people's identities, and their engagements with their worlds around them.

Drawing on case studies of mortuary practices from the Natufian to the late Neolithic, this paper will examine relationships between the living and the dead, and the role that treatment of the dead might play in the lives of the living. Methodological questions of large-scale vs. 'bottom-up' approaches will also be examined, looking into how social change may be played out through the mortuary domain, and questioning whether the concept of social change is the most useful framework for investigating the evidence, or whether there may be other, more fruitful, avenues for discussion.

Zusammenfassung: Bei Ausgrabungen von Bestattungen – zumindest die Urgeschichte des Vorderen Orients betreffend - bleiben stets nur trockene und sterile Knochen, in denen sich aber das Leben, Bestattungsbräuche und rituelle Praktiken der Vergangenheit widerspiegeln. In diesem Artikel soll einerseits dargelegt werden, wie eine Untersuchung, die haptische und sensorische Aspekte des Materials berücksichtigt, Gewinn bringend für eine körperzentrierte Perspektive während dieser Phase sozialen Wandels eingesetzt werden kann. Andererseits soll aber auch untersucht werden, welche Informationen Bestattungsbräuche über sich verändernde Haltungen gegenüber dem Körper, der menschlichen Identität und dem Verhältnis der Menschen mit ihrer Umwelt geben können.

Anhand mehrerer Fallbeispiele von Bestattungsbräuchen, vom Natufian bis zum späten Neolithikum, soll das Verhältnis der Lebenden zu den Toten analysiert werden und die Rolle, die die Behandlung der Toten für das Leben der Anderen gespielt haben könnte. Hinsichtlich der Methodik werden breit angelegte Untersuchungen induktiven Analysen gegenübergestellt, wobei das Hauptaugenmerk den Fragen gilt, wie sozialer Wandel durch Bestattungsbräuche manifestiert werden kann und ob das Konzept des sozialen Wandels überhaupt eine sinnvolle Annäherung darstellt, um die Daten zu interpretieren oder ob es nicht andere, viel versprechendere Ansätze gibt.

Introduction

When excavating mortuary remains, we are invariably, at least when dealing with the Prehistoric Near East, left with dry, sterile bones, which represent past lives, burial practices, and so-called 'ritual' activity. Yet the processes of excavation are far removed from the processes of burial and interment, with the remains often entering the ground in varying states of decomposition, often at least partly still fleshed; such states are difficult to envision when dealing with excavated, dry bones. However, a fuller understanding of the past can be gained through an awareness of the reality of the processes involved

in the handling of the deceased, practices which may not have been pleasant or 'clean' by our standards.

This paper will discuss how considerations of the tactile and sensory nature of the events surrounding mortuary practices can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the Neolithic Near East, a period spanning the 10th to the 6th millennia BC in Mesopotamia, Anatolia and the Levant, modern-day Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Syria, Jordan and Southeast Turkey. Research into this period is often dominated by concerns with the origins and spread of agriculture and domestication, and the perceived accompanying social changes, namely increasingly complex social structures and developing hierarchies, and a trajectory toward the earliest state societies, in a social evolutionary framework of understanding (see Pluciennik 2005 for a discussion of Social Evolutionary frameworks and their drawbacks).

Through placing greater emphasis on individual actions and experiences of people in the past, our understanding of the period can be enhanced. This paper examines mortuary practices, focusing on the case studies of Çayönü Tepesi and Domuztepe in Southeast Anatolia, demonstrating that a bottom-up approach to the past which examines the small-scale first (as advocated by e.g. Shanks, Tilley 1992; Hodder 1986), can reveal insights into changing attitudes to the body, people's identities, and their engagements with their worlds around them. This can inform discussions about relationships, including sharing (the focus of this volume), and the material remains that such negotiations of power, relationships of reciprocity, and contexts of social change, leave behind.

Traditional approaches to the archaeology of the region

Given that the region during this period is one where fundamental changes occur, in terms of sedentary behaviour, agriculture and domestication, it is easy to see how social evolutionary frameworks of interpretation often dominate research, with sites being situated along a perceived ladder of development. Chronological frameworks for these developments are constantly, and understandably, sought, and much valuable research has been dedicated to defining cultural groups, with an aim of understanding the social changes behind increasing complexity and developing hierarchies (e.g. Roaf 1990; Charvát 2002; Kuijt, Goring-Morris 2002:362 and critiqued in Matthews 2003:64). This research has been important for the discipline, giving archaeologists a framework to work within, where the development of sites and practices can be mapped and traced. Nevertheless, there are inherent problems that often accompany the use and understanding of these frameworks and chronologies.

For instance, cultural groups are often portrayed as real entities in the past, rather than contextualised as simply being tools for archaeologists (see Campbell 1998, 2007; Croucher, Campbell 2009; Watkins 1998 for a more in-depth discussion of these issues). Attempts to provide neat, chronological patterns can often negate the complexity of evidence (Barrett pers. comm.). Furthermore, greater in-depth information may be gained from studying sites and groups in their own right, rather than viewing them as trajectories towards agriculture or complexity (Pluciennik 2005:129).

The search for the origins and the development of social complexity is further flawed, as it projects our modern understandings of social status and inequality back into the past. For instance, we expect to find inequalities reflected through architecture, burial practices, trade and exchange indicators, and 'wealth', yet these are our perceived indicators, rather than universally-applicable markers. It seems inevitable that power-relationships and negotiations were in existence; however, they may not necessarily leave archaeologically-detectable evidence. As Christensen and Warburton (2002:170) have emphasised, even primates have hierarchies, competitive social orders and power structures, yet these are not demonstrated in ways we would recognise archaeologically, through determinable

characteristics such as material wealth, architecture, grave goods or mortuary practices. Yet these criteria are repeatedly used in the search for social inequalities (/equalities), positioning each site into its correct rung on the socio-evolutionary ladder. For instance, discussions around 'ritual' behaviour and mortuary practices often directly relate back to the development of social complexity and organisation (i.e. Hauptmann 1999; Kuijt 2000, 2002; Özdoğan 2004; Schmidt 2005; Kuijt, Goring-Morris 2002; Verhoeven 2002). Clearly this work is valuable, and forms a basis for future research. Yet it is becoming clear that there are other questions we can ask of the data; Pluciennik (2005:131) suggests that "*we can perhaps ask other questions about transformation and change if we retreat from subsistence and social complexity as the measure of all things*". Viewing the evidence in reference to our expected indicators of social status can overlook vital information.

This is not to say that we should not investigate the concept of power in the past *per se*. However it should be remembered that power is not so much a possession that can be owned (see Miller, Tilley 1984 and references within), but is contextual and transient, dependant on circumstance, and negotiated through relationships (see, for example, Spikins 2008; Casella 2007 for discussions of power in different archaeological contexts, the Mesolithic and the Industrial). If we can accept that power relationships were inherent and inevitable, as well as being contextual and circumstantial, we can also begin to look beyond the search for the manifestations of these power interactions, and investigate other areas of life, such as examining relationships between the living and the dead, between people and animals, and their interactions with material culture and the landscape, and their rituals, beliefs and actions; yet we need to ensure that we do not simply apply our own understandings of these experiences onto the past.

As a means to understanding the past differently, the body can be taken as an alternative focal point, in place of subsistence, hunting or agriculture. Through approaching the material from a bodily perspective, we can begin to build up a picture of how people viewed their bodies, and how this was expressed through both daily practices and the mortuary domain. However, it is essential that we do not expect to find modern Western bodily perspectives in the past, but instead view the evidence within its own contextual and historical situation. To do so, we should first consider the concept of 'the body', or more accurately, 'the person'; as Shilling (2008) has recently cautioned, simply focusing on the body in archaeological studies reinforces a Cartesian separation of the mind and body. I should state here that I am referring to the 'person' during this paper, including mind, body, intentionality and relationships, rather than simply the physical body alone.

The body

As human beings, it is through our bodies that we experience the world, albeit in culturally contextual ways. For us in the modern West, the experience of 'being' is accompanied by an understanding of what it is to be an 'individual'. The body in modernity has been discussed by Giddens (1991) and Shilling (1993), who have suggested that the importance of the 'self' arises from a modern concept of individuality, and a move away from communal identity; that there is a need to work on and define the individual body in absence of, or as a replacement for, the communal body (see also Vale, Juno 1989; Turner 1991; Demello 1995; Gill et al. 2005; Crossley 2005; and for commodification of the modern body, see Scheper-Hughes 2001; Fisher 2002).

Ethnographic research has demonstrated however that the concept of the 'individual' is not a universal understanding, but is culturally constructed (Strathern 1988; Barraud et al. 1994; Busby 1997; Bird-David 1999; Fowler 2004;). Strathern's (1988) work in Melanesia, and Bird-David (1999) and Busby's (1997) research in South India, for instance, have demonstrated that there are other ways of experiencing the body. These include concepts such as 'dividual' or 'partable' bodies, whereby each person is a composition of their

relationships with others. In such understandings of the body, a person's identity is dependant on and relates to the people around them, and is constructed through their relationships and the exchanges of inalienable objects, substances, and negotiations (see also Bloch 1988; Nast, Pile 1998; Thomas 2004:119; Brück 2004; Giles in prep.). Consequently, objects may be closely related and bound to a person's identity, with the exchange of such objects contributing to identity constructions. Thus items of material culture take on a significant role in negotiations of identity, as they are perceived as retaining an essence of the giver, retained throughout subsequent exchanges. Such concepts have been discussed more widely in studies of Neolithic Britain and Europe, such as by Fowler (2001, 2004), Brück (2006) and Chapman (2000). During the 1980s, greater focus was given to investigating relationships between people and material culture, and the role that objects play in identities (e.g. Appadurai 1986 and chapters within; Gebel this volume), a research theme that has continued to grow. Discussions of this theme with relation to a variety of archaeological contexts can be seen in a recent volume edited by Jorge and Thomas (2006/2007), including the role of stone tools in Mesolithic Britain (Cobb 2006/2007), miniature stone axes in England (Waddington 2006/2007), Neolithic engagements with Irish passage tombs (Cochrane 2006/2007), and human, animal and object relationships in Lower Bavaria (Hofmann 2006/2007). Thomas (2004:147) has suggested that the treatment of people, animals and material culture suggests "*a set of practices that cited and reiterated forms of personhood that were not bounded and individuated. Instead, in life and death Neolithic peoples were immersed in a world of relations between persons, places, animals and artefacts*".

Particular objects, in certain circumstances, may be believed to represent the person, with objects and identities closely entwined (Mauss 1970 [1922]; Battaglia 1990; Gell 1993; Busby 1997), examples of which are often demonstrated in mortuary contexts. As well as relationships represented through the placement of items in the grave, particular objects may be believed to represent or house the dead. For example, the Ga'anda of Northeast Nigeria (Berns 1988) decorate ancestor vessels with the same bodily markings as applied to females during scarification. The deceased person is then believed to inhabit a vessel for a seasonal year, during which time they are offered libations and communicated with, until a seasonal cycle has passed, when the vessels are then smashed at a sacred grove, releasing the spirit to an afterworld (Berns 1988:72-73). In examples such as this, there is an intimate relationship between the identity of the deceased, the material object, and the living carer. Such examples suggest perceptions of death which are vastly different from our modern, western experiences.

As well as the placing of items in the grave, the way the dead body is treated reveals particular understandings of death, and the role of the deceased in the lives of the living. There is often a perceived link between treatment of the dead body, and the successful departure of the deceased from this life (see for example Frazer 1924:43; Rudd 1960; Parry 1982; Munn 1986; Cederroth 1988:41; Barrett 1994:50). As well as a notion of departing, the transformative nature of death is often understood as leading to a different life, rather than an actual end. For example, the Karanga of Zimbabwe understand death as a continuation of life, albeit in a different sphere (Aschwanden 1987), or the Haya of Tanzania perceive that death is rebirth (Weiss 1996).

The point at which death is perceived to take place can also be culturally determined. For instance, whether death occurs with the cease of breath, stopping of the heart, brain death, or social death, are all cultural understandings of the point at which death is declared (Hertz 1960:28; Bloch 1988; Barraud et al. 1994:12). Even after 'actual' physical death has occurred, the dead are still often perceived of as having an identity, a presence, and even a purpose. It seems that the presence or absence of a body does not necessarily define community involvement and identity (see Hockey, Draper 2005 for a discussion of the dead and the unborn).

There are, then, a wide range of experiences that relate to the body, identity during life, and perceptions of death. Closely related to this latter point are the variable emotional and physical experiences which accompany dealing with the dead, and it is such emotional and sensory experiences that this paper will next discuss.

Senses and emotion

One component of being human is our ability to experience the world through our senses; hearing, seeing, tasting, touching and smelling. Whilst they are generally expected to be present in most people, there are many exceptions, and the different senses are experienced in differing degrees. Senses may be absent, and they often change during life, with eyesight, taste and hearing, for example, becoming less proficient with age.

Particular senses are often prioritised according to cultural expectations. This is especially noticeable in today's Western world with eyesight, and to some extent hearing, where enhancements can be worn or surgery undertaken for those with less than perfect vision or hearing. It has become expected that people have good, or at least corrected, eyesight, and our methods of communication reflect this, with signs and visual indicators giving cues and information.

The prioritisation of vision can also be seen in archaeology, a situation which impacts upon our interpretations of the past. It is beginning to be recognised that the senses of touch, smell, taste and sound need to receive greater attention in archaeological interpretation and methodology (Macgregor 1999; Watson 2001, 2009; Croucher, Croucher 2005; Campbell 2009; Thomas 2009; Ray 2009; Hamilakis in prep.). Archaeological methodology itself prioritises the visual, seen most prominently in archaeological publications, which focus on features visible to the eye. Yet in reality, excavation is a multi-sensory process, which more often than not, relies as much on what is heard and felt through the trowel, than on sight.

It is interesting that so much importance is placed on vision when it is often other senses that could be considered more potent in the way that they stimulate emotions and affect our moods. Particular sensory awareness can trigger particular emotions, whether it is a particular kind of music, evoking emotions such as calmness or joy, or smells provoking feelings of disgust. In addition, what produces various reactions and sensations can be culturally constructed. This is an issue that has been addressed by Lupton (1996), regarding food and taste, and Hertz (1960:32), discussing smell in relation to mortuary practices and decomposition. Sounds, tastes and smells can also be highly mnemonic, triggering memories in a way which links memories of events in our minds to the senses originally experienced.

The tactile nature of materials can also influence emotions and sensations. As discussed by Giles (2008) in relation to Iron Age art, objects can be experienced phenomenologically, and can be manipulated to induce particular reactions and feelings. The manipulation of materials can be sensory; the moulding of clay for instance stains the skin, and the skin's boundary becomes almost permeable, if only temporarily (Waddington nd.). Yet it is difficult to evaluate how such experiences would have been meaningful in the past, culturally contextual as they are. However, we can recognise that such engagements with the materiality of objects would have influenced experiences, as would handling and processing the dead in the mortuary arena. Practices such as plastering of skulls, defleshing or processing of the dead, and the handling of bones through secondary burial, for instance, would have been events that were embedded in sensory experience, involving touch, sight, smell, sound and potentially taste. Such events would have been highly significant in creating and recalling memories. Recognition of these mnemonic activities can impact on our archaeological interpretations, as will be discussed in case studies below.

Linked to an appreciation of the role of the senses is a greater awareness of emotion in the past, which can differ vastly from our modern Western experiences (i.e. Rosaldo, [R.I.] 1984; Rosaldo, [M.Z.] 1984; Levy 1984; Svašek 2005). Cultural constructions often dictate whether grief or joy is felt arising from particular circumstances (comparing the modern-day Hindu cremation scene to a western funeral for instance, where feelings of calm and content contrast with those of grief and despair). Cultural experiences can also influence reactions to sensations such as pain or displeasure (or pleasure), whether physical or emotional. As argued by Tarlow (2000:729), archaeology needs to legitimately consider emotions, and also recognise their contextually and culturally dependent experiences, as part of a wider study of 'cultural human experience' (see also Harris 2009 for a discussion on emotion and memory with relation to early Neolithic Dorset).

Evidently, people's reactions and interactions with each other, and understandings of the body and their worlds around them, are vastly divergent. Thus there is far more information to be gained from bodies archaeologically than traditional approaches which relate them to indicators of status and social complexity. Yet methodologically we need to consider whether we can discover how people would have experienced their bodies, their relationships with the dead, and their related material culture. To begin with we can start from the bottom-up, examining the small scale, and individual sites and features, to try to unravel greater detail about interactions with the dead and experiences of the body.

I will discuss two examples from Southeast Anatolia, separated by several millennia in time; Çayönü Tepesi's Skull Building (c. 9,000-7,600 BC) and the Death Pit at Domuztepe (c. 5,500 BC), which each offer insights into experiences in the past, before discussing their broader context and bigger picture of mortuary practices in the Neolithic Near East.

The Skull Building, Çayönü Tepesi

Çayönü Tepesi is situated in the Diyarbakır region of Southeast Anatolia, and is traditionally studied for its transition to domestication and agriculture, and for its architectural phases, given that the site was occupied from around 9,400-6,900 BC cal (Redman 1983:189; Schirmer 1990; Özdoğan, Özdoğan 1998; Özdoğan 1999).

Çayönü Tepesi

DATE BC	PERIOD	SITE SUBPHASE	SKULL BUILDING PHASE
9400-8500	PPNA	Round Building Subphase	Earliest BM1c
8500-8200	PPNA / EPPNB	Grill-Plan Building Subphase	BM1a-b
8200-8100	MPPNB	Channelled Building Subphase	BM2c – Earliest Rectangular Phase
8100-7600	MPPNB	Cobble-Paved Building Subphase	BM2a-c + 1st Pebbled Plaza
7600-7300	LPPNB	Cell Building Subphase	Terrazzo Building & Standing stones/Plaza
7300-6900	PPNC	Large Room Building Subphase	

Fig. 1: Skull Building chronology (based on Özdoğan 1999).

Whilst the site as a whole is worthy of study, this current work will focus on the Skull Building, a building of 'special purpose' (Özdoğan, Özdoğan 1998), in use from the PPNA-MPPNB (Fig. 1). The building contained the disarticulated and further fragmented remains of around 450 people (Özdoğan, Özdoğan 1998:584), some recovered from rooms and their cellars in the northern section of the building, others from pits (Schirmer 1990; Özdoğan 1999).
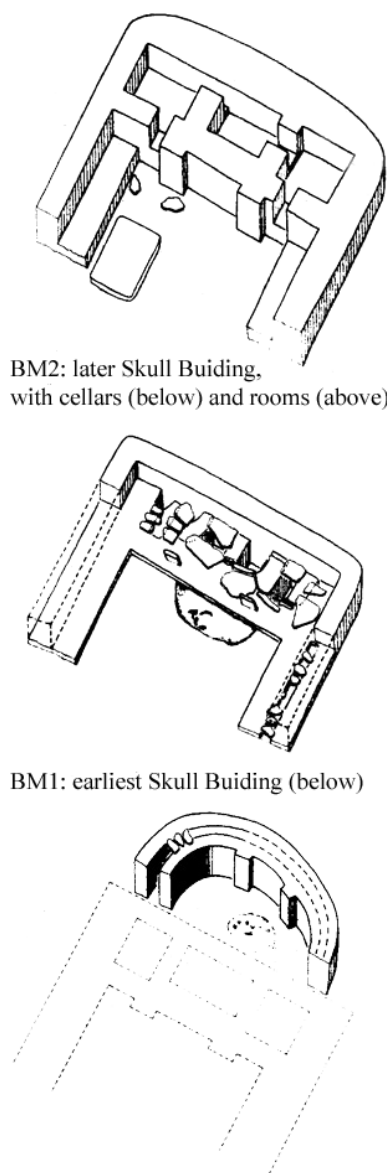
BM2: later Skull Buiding,
with cellars (below) and rooms (above)

BM1: earliest Skull Buiding (below)

Fig. 2: Architectural phases of the Skull Building (after Schirmer 1990).

The building was constructed using a specific and continued architectural style, rebuilt over 800-1,500 years to the same orientation, with 5 phases of rebuilding (the main three building styles are shown in Fig. 2). Within the building a definite use of space seems to develop (Croucher 2005, 2006), especially with regard to the northern and southern areas of the building. The two areas are materially very different, the northern area is constructed of stone and the southern area sees repeatedly-plastered floors. A step and standing stones originally separated the two areas, before these features were incorporated into a wall. The step, standing stones, and later the wall with doorways, restricted access and dictated movement through the northern section of the building.

There is also the more open, southern area, to consider. This apparently had a more public focus. As well as being architecturally suitable for larger numbers of people (McBride in prep.), the presence of white ware suggests communal consumption activities took place (Özdoğan, Özdoğan 1993:93). Within this southern area had been placed a large, highly-polished, stone slab, measuring 2m^2 and 10cm deep, from which were recovered blood residues from human, aurochs and sheep (Loy, Wood 1989; Wood 1998). Whether this constitutes sacrifice, or swift decapitation and processing of the remains is undeterminable, but it does seem the case that the events taking place presumably involved, at least some of the time, the processing of the dead (Wood 1998:764; Özdoğan 1999:52). This suggestion is supported by evidence for cut marks and attached mandibles and second vertebrae on some of the skulls within the Skull Building (Özbek 1988:129; Loy, Wood 1989:452).

The architectural style enabled access to the remains. Perhaps the process of placing the remains was actually more cyclical (Croucher 2005, 2006). We find stray finds of bone elsewhere on site (Özdoğan 1999:47), and a lack of post-cranial bones within the Skull Building (Özdoğan 2001:2), it is therefore feasible that bones were being removed from, as well as deposited in, the Skull Building. Perhaps the building was viewed as one for transition, positioned in a liminal area on the site; the special architecture was always constructed to the east, away from residential areas. Whatever the case, the building was in some respects, at least at certain times, used for practices related to the dead, and it is often perceived that those recovered from the Skull Building may represent differential status in society (Özdoğan 1999:51), and a stratified social system which, at the very least, controlled construction (Özdoğan, Özdoğan 1998:591-592). Moving away from the topic of social elites, it is feasible that the events taking place were not dependant on membership to an elite group. It may be the case that deposition here was related to some other factor, such as the circumstance or time of death. It is also evident that inclusion here was not limited to some of our categories of person, such as gender or age (Özbek 1988:129; Özbek 1992). The different treatments of burials within the building itself are also factors to consider; the eastern cellar contained jumbled remains, in contrast to the western cellar which contained more

ordered, stacked, remains, with over 90 adult skulls (aged 18-50, both male and female) arranged in north-south lines, all facing either east or west, with deliberately stacked piles of longbones (Özbek 1992). Other cellars contained less-ordered remains than the western cellar, although they usually contained layers of skulls, and an articulated leg had been placed in one cellar. There was also one primary burial of a female, of poor health, aged around 45-50 years (Özdoğan 1999:51). Clearly treatment of bodies was not uniform within the Skull Building, with differing treatment perhaps dependant on the type of person and identity, time or circumstance of death, or the required differential treatment of certain parts of the body. Perhaps the significance of certain bodies and bones changed over time.

Aside from status and hierarchy, one thing we can be certain about is that very real processing of the dead took place there. This would have entailed a very tactile and immersive experience, involving blood, muscle, tissue, bones; this is something we tend to neglect in archaeology, in part due to the sterile dryness of the bones that we recover as archaeologists. Yet clearly the processes of deposition would have differed vastly from the remains we find today; very bloody, possibly smelly, involving use of tools, no doubt some hard work, and presumably some kind of cleaning activity following all of this. And this treatment was not reserved for people, but for animals too, evidenced by aurochs remains within the Skull Building, and blood crystals from both the stone slab and a knife recovered there, with aurochs and sheep haemoglobin present (Wood 1998:764). Such treatment is usually related back to hunting in our interpretations, however, it could instead be conceptualised as indicative of an alternative conceptualisation of human/animal relationships (as will be discussed below).

We can begin to build up a picture of actions and processes behind the events of final deposition that we recover as archaeologists. It appears that retaining the whole, integral body in the mortuary arena was not desired here in the Skull Building, but rather, the deceased needed to be dismembered, decapitated and de-constructed, suggesting a dissolving of the original living identity, perhaps in favour of an alternative, changed or new identity on entering the mortuary domain; or perhaps even reflecting a view of the body as being composed of different elements during life. Whatever the case, the treatment was not reserved solely for human deaths.

This understanding of the dead changed through time; during the later Cell Building Subphase, bodies begin to be buried whole, under house floors, accompanied by more (archaeologically) 'traditional' expressions of individuality and wealth (Özdoğan, Özdoğan 1993:93; Özdoğan 1999:49). This brought the dead into the homes and spaces of the living, if out of actual sight. So, on the surface we have a picture of development, at least within this site – but how does this fit into the bigger picture?

Domuztepe

Remaining in Anatolia, we can relocate to Domuztepe, a traditionally-termed 'Halaf' site, dating to the mid 6th mil BC cal. (Campbell et al. 1999; Carter et al. 2003; Campbell, Campbell 2008; Carter in prep.). Domuztepe dates from around 1,500 to 2,000 years later than Çayönü Tepesi. The expectation inherent in the social evolutionary framework is that there should be clear development, in terms of social organisation, hierarchy, wealth and ritual expression. However, there is still no definite evidence of established hierarchies (at least not in ways we are looking for), and there remains comparable treatment of human remains, in terms of disarticulation and fragmentation.

One of the recent focuses of excavation has been a feature termed the 'Death Pit'. The pit, around a metre in diameter, contained the dismembered and fragmented remains of around 40 people, as well as animal remains, and various material culture, such as pottery, flint and obsidian (Campbell et al. 1999; Kansa, Campbell 2004; Irving, Heywood

2005; Kansa 2009). The human remains were highly processed, demonstrating evidence of butchery, including marrow extraction, evidence of heating, an under-representation of pelves and ribs, and the consistent treatment of the skull, where a section of the skull was consistently missing (Campbell 2002; Gauld, Oliver in prep.).

Evidence from the Death Pit can be interpreted in several ways, and there are still ongoing debates about the circumstances of deposition. This could have been a violent event, involving sacrifice, whether conducted on inhabitants, or another group of people, or events may have been more venerational in nature, comprising a funerary event. The latter seems possible, given the findings of deliberately placed pieces of human remains marking the Death Pit after its use (Campbell 2007/2008), with the suggestion that some remains were curated and potentially circulated prior to their deposition in the Death Pit (Campbell et al. 1999:402-403; Campbell 2007/2008; Croucher 2010). Whatever the circumstances of deposition, the activities would have involved a very tactile engagement with the deceased. That there was active contact with the dead is further reinforced by a burial; this adult female had been returned to some time after burial, her femur had been removed and replaced the opposite way around. From examining the evidence we begin to build up a picture of handling the dead and involvement with the deceased (Kansa 2009). The nature of processing the remains would have involved the cutting of skin, flesh, muscle, and bone (Croucher, Campbell 2009). There would have been organs, entrails and sinews to deal with, as well as the suggested consumption of the deceased. Cannibalism does not necessarily need to be an aggressive or vile act; ethnographic examples have attested to its practice as a means of honouring the dead (most notably, Conklin 2001). Consumption of the deceased produces an entirely different picture of funerary events and bodily experiences.

The activities surrounding deposition in the Death Pit, and other treatment of human remains, call to mind a very sensory experience, involving touch, taste, smell, and potentially the use of sound to demarcate the event; clearly the experience too would alter according to whether this took place during the day or night, so the visual impression would also change at different times of the day (Croucher, Campbell 2009). As the Death Pit area was covered over with a layer of ash following the burial of the human and animal remains, it is feasible part of the motivation behind this would have been to neutralise smell, one of the properties of ash being its effectiveness at covering odours.

We can ask who would have been involved in these activities. It might be tempting, following a social evolutionary framework, to argue that involvement in these events was reserved for particular individuals or elites (as argued, for example, by Rollefson [2000] for ritual involvement at 'Ain Ghazal, or Özdoğan [1999] for the Skull Building at Çayönü).

However, there is no real evidence of elite or hierarchical involvement, other than perhaps a lack of evidence of comparable events at the site, although this may change with further excavation. As well as speculating about the identity of the deceased, we can also think about those processing the remains. What was their role? Was their position one of status (as debated for the role of the deceased)? Were there particular members of the community who were responsible, and were these the same people that butchered animals? Or were these events that were open to participation? What about those consuming? Clearly this did not take place out of hunger, given the animal remains that were also processed. Was it an honour? A punishment? Or more of a communal event? Such questions contribute to a fuller and livelier narrative of past events, even if many will remain unanswered. Whatever the case, clearly the integral, whole, body was not intended for this mortuary practice. Rather, we see evidence for the interaction and processing of the dead by, and with, the living, with potential further contact through the retention and later deposition of various body parts and bones. We can additionally consider the animals interred here; in particular, dogs were treated in a comparable

way to humans, with the overrepresentation of skulls and long bones, and comparable parts missing from their skulls. This is in contrast to cattle remains, which were interred without their skulls, perhaps retained for other purposes. Selection for interment in the Death Pit for humans was apparently not dependant on age or gender. In contrast, the cattle chosen were predominantly female, of prime rearing age, suggesting that the most valuable cattle, in terms of resource and future production, were selected (Kansa, Campbell 2004; Kansa 2009).

In addition to the fragmentation of human and animal remains, we see fragmentation of material culture, and it appears that the way in which bodies related to objects was significant. Evidence includes the deliberate fragmentation of pottery, one piece being sliced prior to firing (Irving, Heywood 2005). There was deposition in the Death Pit of stones and pottery sherds whose shape resembled cranial pieces. These had been placed to nest amongst skulls, resembling them, an action which seems far from arbitrary, and is potentially indicative of some perceived association of these stone and pottery pieces with the human body and the deceased (Campbell, Croucher in prep.).

Bringing together the various strands of evidence from Domuztepe, we can begin to build up a picture of engagement between bodies, both living and dead, and with objects and animals. This suggests an understanding and perception of bodies whereby the whole, integral body is not intended for the mortuary domain.

Relating these observations back to Çayönü, whilst there are comparable practices taking place, they are likely to have held differing meanings, enacted within entirely different settings, both architecturally and spatially, and with varying actions practiced, notably consumption at Domuztepe. Whilst two sites have been singled out there are other sites with comparable material. For example, the 'Halaf' burials at Yarim Tepe I are broadly contemporary with Domuztepe, where fragmentation is also evidenced in the mortuary domain, with one particular burial (Burial 60). It contained a fragmentary human burial, accompanied by 200 gazelle astragali (ankle bones) and the 70cm-long skull of an aurochs. In addition, broken vessels (one alabaster and several ceramic), pieces of charcoal, a haematite pin and stone mace had also been deposited (Merpert, Munchaev 1971:17, 1993:221). Again we see the mixing and fragmenting of human and animal remains; traditionally interpreted as relating to hunting (Merpert, Munchaev 1971:17). This is perhaps more fruitfully related to comparable human/animal relationships, of which shamanism is a fashionable, although problematic, interpretation (see for example interpretations of the Natufian Hilazon cave [Grosman et al. 2008]), although clearly the term itself is laden with assumptions and problems (Dowson 2007). Concepts of alternative human/animal relationships are well-known from ethnographic sources (Ingold 1988; Howell 1996; Willis 1994; Midgley 1983; Arhem 1996), and discussed in archaeological contexts (Jones, Richards 2002; Levy 1995; Ray, Thomas 2002; Jones 2009; Boyd in prep.). Such engagements between humans and animals appear to be a repeated theme, seen at Yarim Tepe, Domuztepe and the much earlier Skull Building at Çayönü, a topic that will be returned to below. Actions at these sites involved haptic sensations and experiences, and suggest that animals and humans may have been connected in some way other than through owner/hunter relationships.

Treatment of the dead, both human and animal, involved the processing, disarticulating, cutting up, and often the moving around of both fresh and already decomposed parts of bodies. An understanding of these processes offers different insights into site interactions, and moves beyond subsistence, hierarchy, and economy, to examine experiences and perceptions of the body and identity. These were events which would have been sensory and creative of memory and identity. Whatever development and social change was taking place, there were comparable practices occurring throughout many different times and places within the Neolithic of Anatolia (and beyond), demonstrating the repeated entanglement of human and animal remains, and the 'de-constructing' of the body.

Broader context

Whilst the sites discussed here have revolved around comparable themes and practices, they have been selected for their similarities. When the broader evidence is examined, it becomes apparent that the evidence suggests a picture of complexity. For instance, if a broad survey of mortuary practices is investigated through time, the differences between sites, and within sites themselves, become apparent.

The burial of humans and animals together has been discussed with relation to the above sites of Domuztepe, Yarim Tepe and Çayönü Tepesi. It is tempting to see a theme running through the Natufian and Neolithic of human/animal relationships. Yet within such a broad 'theme' it is apparent that there are many different practices taking place. For example, mortuary treatment of animals is seen at other sites, but evidenced in very different ways. For instance, from the Natufian site of Eynan-Mallaha, the earliest find to date of a complete dog (a puppy) and human buried together (Davis 1989:Fig. 53) was excavated, with additional fragments from dogs' mandibles recovered from across the site (Davis 1989). At the LPPNB site of Tell el-Kerk, an infant burial had been placed alongside suid (pig/boar) bones of a c. 6 month old animal, a goat mandible and horn, along with remains from feasting (Tsuneki 2002). At PPNB Kfar HaHoresh in the Southern Levant there are multiple interments of humans and animals, usually aurochs, gazelle, and fox, interred in articulated, semi-articulated and disarticulated states together (Goring-Morris 2008). At neighbouring PPNB Yiftahel, an aurochs horn was found in a pit, and an articulated aurochs spine, pelvis and leg was recovered from another pit (Khalaily et al 2008:9). An almost complete set of red deer antlers recovered from the site, interpreted as tools (Khalaily et al. 2008:6), could also have been meaningful and significant beyond their function as a source of material for tool manufacture (see for example Conneller's [2004] discussion of Mesolithic Star Carr).

The role of cattle, or more precisely, the bull, has been the focus of 'bull cult', concepts which are often discussed as being in binary opposition to a 'mother goddess cult' (Mellaart 1989; Gimbutas 1991; Balter 2006). More recently, these concepts have been discussed by Meskell (2008) who focuses on concepts of the 'wild' and 'masculine' at Çatalhöyük. As well as installations of bull horns at Çatalhöyük, there are features recovered including a modified boar's skull (Twiss 2006).

Whilst there is a broadly common theme that can be applied to the material, there are differing practices taking place, varying temporally and geographically, and many of the practices are evidence of human/animal relationships which extend beyond the role of consumption and food production. A fuller discussion of animals during this period is the focus of current work by Brian Boyd (in prep.).

When mortuary practices are examined more broadly, comparable complexities can be seen, and it becomes even clearer that a neat picture and framework is problematic, even within our archaeological periods. As noted by Belfer-Cohen (1995) for the Natufian and Akkermans (1989) for the Halaf, and as evidenced in the chapters within *The Archaeology of Death in the Ancient Near East* (Campbell, Green 1995), mortuary practices are far from uniform. From the Natufian site of Mallaha/Eynan, a skull with attached mandible had been placed on a floor near a hearth, and another placed with longbones (Perrot 1966), as well as many primary interments at the site (Bocquentin 2007; see Boyd 1995 for a discussion on an area of the site addressing relationships between bodies, materials, architecture and other areas of life). From Erq el Ahmar, both primary and secondary deposits were recovered, including a complete skeleton and additional cranial and mandibles from six other people (Neuville 1951; Bienert 1991). Skull removal was seen at Nahal Oren and Hayonim (Belfer-Cohen 1988; Bocquentin 2007), in contrast to the complete primary burials from Shanidar Cave, two of which evidenced cranial modification (Meiklejohn et al 1992:84). Skull removal was also practiced at Abu Hureyra, in addition to the deposition of jumbled remains of skeletons and skulls (Moore 1975;

Moore et al. 2000). The PPNA site of Ganj Dareh has over 70 complete, primary burials, some with evidence of cranial modification (Smith 1983; Meiklejohn et al. 1992) and there are additional primary burials at PPNA Iraq ed-Dubb (de Vries 1992:507), contrasted with six skulls, two of which were accompanied by longbones, from PPNA Qermez Dere, placed on a house floor prior to its destruction (Watkins 1990).

During the PPNA and MPPNB (c. 9,500-7,600 BC), skull treatment 'evolves' into what is often termed the 'Skull Cult' (Kenyon 1957; Wright 1988; Bienert 1991; Cauvin 1994). Yet it is apparent that rather than a unified practice, the material suggests very different events and practices, with skulls treated in a variety of ways; painted, plastered (or both), or left undecorated, circulated, displayed, deliberately placed with care, or disposed of in trash contexts, as can be seen in varying examples from Jericho (Kurth, Röhrer-Ertl 1981:436; Kenyon 1981:77, Plates 50-59; Moorey 2001:3), Tell Aswad (Stordeur et al. 2006; Stordeur, Khawam 2007), Kfar HaHoresh (Goring-Morris 2008), 'Ain Ghazal (Rollefson 2000) and Nahal Hemar (Arensburg, Hershkovitz 1988; Bar-Yosef, Alon 1988) (see also Benz, this volume). There are also much later plastered skulls from the Halaf site Köşk Höyük (c. 5,500 BC), where 13 of the 19 recovered skulls have been treated with clay and plastered (Özbek 2009), as well as skull selection at Domuztepe, Yarim Tepe and Arpachiyah.

At PPNB Aşıklı Höyük, a skull had been placed in a storage bin, along with charred animal bones, in addition to other contexts of secondary burials at the site (Özbek 1998; Esin, Harmankaya 1999). Complete skeletons, skulls, and fragments of skulls have been found at Nemrik 9 (Kozlowski 1989:27). These contrast with Sabi Abyad's PPNB levels, with primary infant interments (Verhoeven, Akkermans 2000; Verhoeven 2004), and the 'house of the dead' from Tell Dja-de al-Mughara, which contained the burials of over 38 people, including groups of multiple burials, some primary interments, other isolated crania, and a crania buried with an adult who was cradling a child (Coqueugniot 1999). At PPNB Yiftahel in the southern Levant, over 30 burials have been recovered, some with, others without, their skulls, as well as three plastered skulls. The primary inhumations include two adults and a child "interred in a mutual embrace" (Khalaily et al. 2008:8). At PPNB Tell Halula, over 107 primary burials were associated with buildings (most commonly beneath house floors, except for level 14, where burial pits were outside houses), although due to poor preservation conditions further details are unavailable (Estebarabz et al. 2007; Guerrero 2009).

Mortuary practices vary across 'Halaf' sites. At Kharabeh Shattani (Baird et al. 1995), Kurban Hoyuk (Alpagut 1986:150), Tell Arpachiyah (Mallowan, Rose 1935:42-43), Kutan (Matthews 2000), Ras Shamra (Akkermans 1989:81) and Sabi Abyad (Akkermans, Verhoeven 1995:71-72; Aten 1996), primary inhumation of 'whole' bodies was practiced. Several headless burials were recovered from Tell Azzo (Killick, Roaf 1983:206; Hole 1989), and skull or crania burials were excavated from Yarim Tepe II (in the same area of the site as cremation deposits and primary burials [Merpert, Munchaev 1993:217; Campbell 2007/2008]). At Tell Arpachiyah, isolated skulls had been placed in pottery bowls (Hijara 1978:125). Different practices can be seen, both within sites (such as Arpachiyah), and between sites which are grouped together under cultural entities (such as 'Halaf').

According to a social evolutionary framework, we would expect to see a picture of 'development', yet varying practices are apparently recurring over several millennia, from the Natufian to the Late Neolithic, across vast geographical regions. The practices detailed above are not intended to be comprehensive, rather they are intended to demonstrate the variety and diversity of such practices. Unfortunately, in reality, there is not a clear cut pattern in relation to mortuary practices. However, many of the practices occur and recur, across geographical and temporal locations.

Discussion

Whether or not things are changing economically, environmentally and socially over the Neolithic of SW Asia, the evidence suggests that the same strands of practices were being repeated through time. This may fall into line with what Foucault (1971) would have termed 'genealogies of practice' (Croucher et al. 2008), an approach which examines eddies and flows of practices and discourses, without the search for origins. Traces of practices can therefore be examined, without tying them into a linear development structure.

Within the material discussed above, there are several strands of bodily experience which reappear repeatedly; the treatment of skulls, the fragmentation, de-construction, and potentially circulation, of human remains, the association of humans and animals, and links between bodies and material culture. Through examining the practices, it becomes apparent that information can be gained, without the need to focus on either a search for origins, or on the development of social stratification.

We can also think about the concept of change and development. Traditionally, the process of 'Neolithization' suggests large changes, intentionality, and 'progress'. Yet we know that changes took place over a long time span – over thousands of years, and with variable regional emphases (Hole 2000:191), with changes such as the cultivation of plants taking place over a long period of time and independently in different regions (Willcox 2004:64). Surely as each generation adapted to gradual developments the impact of what looks from our vantage point to be a considerable change, was, in reality, more likely to be viewed as a gradual shift, especially as old practices (such as gathering and hunting) worked alongside, rather than in opposition to, agriculture. Surely the change happened so slowly so as to be absorbed into daily practice. As Belfer-Cohen and Bar-Yosef (2000:20) state in relation to the journey to sedentism, it was "a bumpy ride along a course that obviously was not planned, and its consequences were unforeseen". It appears that a comparable argument should stand for the development of 'the Neolithic'.

When we talk about social change, the impression given is of a 'big picture', and the concept of social change is almost perceived of as its own kind of entity, often without considering the people that would have been involved, and the roles of intentionality, mishap, coincidence, luck or serendipity; the decisions involved behind change – or even a lack of decision making. There are roles played by a lack of action, a lack of intentionality, simply generations adapting to, or causing, small changes, without seeing the broader picture, or perceiving of the long-term cause and effect. In reality, with such time spans, we are seeing the accumulations of lots of small changes – most of which were undoubtedly not conscious changes – that become repeated behaviour. The people we are talking about did not wake up one morning and decide to become 'Neolithic'. The picture is one of ripples rather than waves, with potentially very little change on a day-to-day, or even year-to-year, basis, as is beginning to be recognised (such as by Guerrero et al. [2008] with relation to demographic change in the Levant). Yet how much of this can be seen through the archaeological record? Investigating the evidence through the body, and through examining the small-scale, we can gain insights into this picture, as the above examples illustrate.

As well as asking about developments, we can equally ask why things stop happening. Why did the Skull Building go out of use, the closure of one of its phases marked by the deliberate smashing of an early clay plate, which unusually had bone as its temper, and the final, deliberate burning and burial of the building (Özdoğan 1999:50-51). The Death Pit had a deliberate closure, covering the area with a thick layer of ash, following which the area remained clear for several generations. Sabi Abyad's burnt village represents another act of deliberate, and very visual, closure (Verhoeven 2000; Campbell 2000). We are fortunate with these events archaeologically as they leave evidence of deliberate choice and action to take these settings out of use, or at least to visually and dramatically

mark their change of use. But there are also more subtle actions and changes that are less visible to us. At what point do people stop disarticulating their dead, stop eating them, stop using communal architecture for mortuary practices, or divert focus onto or away from the household or the community? Why does the 'skull cult' stop?

Following on from this, we can ask what replaces the skull cult and other manipulation of the dead body? Is this 'something else' already in place when the other stops? Often it is the new activity that leaves an archaeological trace, rather than cessation of old practices. The inhabitants of Çayönü, for example, presumably already had some method of dealing with the dead before they stopped using the Skull Building. In other cases, do things simply peter out? Were many of the burials or skulls intended to be returned to, but never were? Had the need for intervention ceased? Or the danger passed? Did memory die out? Does the question of why people stopped tell us more than asking why they carry out certain practices? How much of this is due to archaeological visibility? At what point do things decline enough in practice that we stop seeing them archaeologically, or do things continue, just less-regularly, or perhaps in more separate places, becoming less visible?

To conclude then (to perhaps state the obvious!), the picture is far from clear-cut, and there are more questions raised in this analysis than answers. Working from the evidence-up, rather than from the framework down, it becomes clear that structuring and talking about 'developmental' changes, whether social, cultural or economic, can be problematic. There is not a clear picture of continuity in the treatment of the dead in the Neolithic of SW Asia; even broadly comparable behaviour is expressed and practiced in very different ways. Neither is there a definite picture of development and progress; things do not just 'move along nicely', but are re-practiced and reinterpreted in many ways. Whilst on a broad scale there are patterns, there are also very many differences. The picture is, therefore, a muddy one!

Perhaps our situation is a result of lack of evidence; in reality, we only have a small amount of data with which to attempt to piece together how people lived within many millennia across vast geographical spans. Perhaps a greater number of excavated sites would demonstrate that what we are seeing are rarer, more isolated incidences, or would perhaps reinforce that there were similarities and reoccurrences of the comparable practices – suggesting social memory and communication, extending beyond individual generations and communities.

Maybe particular treatments of the dead were only relevant periodically, perhaps beyond the scope of individual lifetimes, with social memory dictating their occurrence, dependent on circumstance. Even today, not every member of society may have lived through an event such as a coronation, the end of a war, a massacre, or an untimely royal death, yet social memory is sufficient that society and its people know how to act when such events occur, even if they have not been practiced within the living memory of many individuals.

It seems conceivable then, that how people perceived of their bodies and concepts of personhood and 'being in the world' (as Heidegger [1962] would describe it), perhaps operated at different levels of communication, and were subject to much more limited aspects of change than is evidenced through other frameworks (of status and hierarchies, or subsistence and economy). We have all of these practices, the ebbs and flows, and discontinuities – is it right that we keep linking them back to the origins of the Neolithic and to the development of social stratification, and to continually attempt to track their trajectories? Or, should we be seeking to better understand the evidence in its own right? The one thing that is constant, through all of the other changes, are people and bodies. Using the body as a focus, we can begin to elucidate some of these factors, and can examine concepts such as relationships between the living and the dead, people and animals, and material culture.

Such an analysis (and this is just the beginning of further work so apologies that it raises more questions than it answers!), hopefully offers alternative perspectives, interpretations and insights into people's lives, experiences, and relationships with and within their worlds. Whilst sharing has not been directly discussed here, the notion of 'sharing' is dependent upon these relationships and connections. During the SIGN workshop, it became apparent that whilst anthropologists viewed 'sharing' as non-reciprocal obligation, most archaeologists maintained a different perspective, viewing sharing as potentially reciprocal, if occurring non-directly and involving different 'shared items'. None-the-less, the focus of 'sharing' in the workshop centred on its use as a subsistence strategy. Hopefully this paper has explored the role of the concept of sharing and circulation of bodies. Through sharing the dead, relationships between the living, among kin and group members, would have been created and maintained. These relationships were to an extent, constituted through the sharing of the dead (people, animals and material culture), bringing the dead into the lives of the living. It seems that perhaps this practice was moving at a different pace to agriculture, social complexity and the development of hierarchies. It was, however, no less significant in terms of the construction of identities, with understandings of the body and of identity being dependant on relationships and exchanges with others, including the dead, in what were often, very tactile engagements.

Karina Croucher

Archaeology, School of Arts, Histories and Cultures

Mansfield Cooper Building

University of Manchester

Oxford Road

GB-Manchester M13 9PL

karina.croucher@manchester.ac.uk

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