
Social memory through the mortuary and architectural use of pigments at Neolithic Çatalhöyük (7100 cal BC to 5950 cal BC)

Commémoration par l'utilisation des pigments dans des contextes mortuaires et architecturaux sur le site néolithique de Çatalhöyük (7100 - 5950 cal BC)

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**Electronic version**

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/bmsap/7182>
ISSN: 1777-5469

Publisher

Société d'Anthropologie de Paris

Electronic reference

Eline M. J. Schotsmans, Gesualdo Busacca, Christopher J. Knüsel and Marco Milella, "Social memory through the mortuary and architectural use of pigments at Neolithic Çatalhöyük (7100 cal BC to 5950 cal BC)", *Bulletins et mémoires de la Société d'Anthropologie de Paris* [Online], 33 Supplément | 2021, 2021 Annual meeting abstracts, Online since 01 December 2020, connection on 12 May 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/bmsap/7182>

This text was automatically generated on 12 May 2021.

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- ¹ Pigments are frequently associated with symbolic use and ritual performance, contributing to the creation of social memories in past and present societies. The Neolithic settlement of Çatalhöyük, central Anatolia, Turkey, features a roughly millennium-long occupation - from 7100 cal BC to 5950 cal BC - with an unusually large dataset of elaborate symbolic assemblages and subfloor burials, often associated with pigments. These elements make Çatalhöyük a good candidate for the study of diachronic patterns of occurrence of pigments within a large Neolithic village, shedding light on the contexts of use, symbolic meanings and social significance of pigments for the community inhabiting the site. Patterns in pigment use, from architectural and funerary contexts, by type, application, anthropological and archaeological associations, are analysed and discussed from a social perspective. The results indicate a correlation between pigment use in domestic decoration and funerary contexts. This suggests that pigments and paintings, in conjunction with domestic burials and secondary mortuary practices, including cranial retrieval, circulation and redeposition, were integral parts of the relationship between the living and the dead at Çatalhöyük. This study contributes new insights into the importance of symbolic pigment use to encode commemoration and social memories in an early farming community.

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