In Life and in Death: a study of human-animal relationships in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic

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Contents

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List of Abbreviations

PPN: Pre-Pottery Neolithic

PPNA: Pre-Pottery Neolithic A

PPNB: Pre-Pottery B

EPPNB: Early Pre-Pottery Neolithic B

MPPNB: Middle Pre-Pottery Neolithic B

LPPNB: Late Pre-Pottery Neolithic B

PPNC: Pre-Pottery C

PN: Pottery Neolithic

Abstract

This thesis examines the role that animals played in the lives of people in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Levant (including Turkey). It investigates how the ways in which humans and animals interacted can provide insights into their changing relationships, and into how the people viewed and interacted with their perceived worlds, both natural and constructed. By looking at the place of animals in society, and then more specifically at their role within artistic and mortuary practices, we can come to a better understanding of how animals may have been used to both express and reflect changing roles and worldviews for the people. We can also gain insights into the societal changes of the time, and what it meant to be animal or human.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"…the manner in which the peoples of the ancient Near East used animals to animate their language, mirror their world, and ultimately define themselves, is a subject that scholarship has for the most part overlooked." (Collins 2002: xix)

Over the millennia, our relationships with other animals have come to be one of our defining characteristics. This is true to such an extent that we even sometimes identify groups of people by their relationship to – or with – them; pastoralists, hunters, dairy or fur farmers, pet owners, breeders, etc. The roots of our relationships with other animals go far beyond mere food-based interactions, and they remain deeply rooted to this day. No one now, looking at our complex range of interactions with other species, could claim that they are relationships based purely on mere convenience or dominance. Anyone who has felt the grief of losing a much-loved pet or companion animal – a relationship in which we provide food, shelter, medical care and love, and receive mainly intangible benefits in return – can clearly put the case for interspecies interactions that go far beyond the practical. I would further argue that these more intangible elements have existed since the beginning; that these relationships may never have been ones based solely in the material world.

Representations of animals can be found throughout history – and prehistory – in a wide variety of places. Sometimes, indeed, it seems that animals – or depictions of them, at least – can be found nearly everywhere, and every-when, from almost our earliest days as a species to modern times. Our fascination with the world around us, and perhaps especially with animals, is both deep and enduring. Even today we can see that animals have a hold on our imaginations and our emotions; we may feel a connection with particular species, or have a deep and visceral fear of another. We paint them, photograph them, film them, have them tattooed upon our bodies, use them for spiritual purposes. Now that most of us have lives with considerably less exposure to 'wild' animals than in our distant past, we find ourselves drawn to go and look at them in zoos and safari parks, or to go on special holidays to see them in their natural habitat. And the reasons for doing these things are manifold; we like the way they look, or the way they behave, or perhaps we feel a spiritual connection with that particular species, or any number of any other possible reasons – but it is a fact that the animals that provoke these reactions in us are often not the ones with which we can have regular, normal

interaction. But our perceptions of these animals are also varied, and what may be an inspiring or beautiful animal for one person may be a food source or a potential threat for others. They may be one or many of these things at the same time. And the fact is that just as our perceptions of animals is variable, and our reasons for depicting them equally so, the same is true for the people of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Near East. Their ideas and feelings about the animals around them would have been just as varied, and their experiences of and with those animals would have helped to shape them on an individual and collective level.

This thesis looks at the role of animals within the lives of people in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Levant (including Turkey and Cyprus). It examines how the ways in which humans and non-humans interacted can provide insights into their changing relationships, and into how the people viewed and interacted with their perceived worlds, both natural and constructed. By looking at the place of animals within society, and then more specifically at their roles within representational and mortuary practices, we can come to a better understanding of how animals may have been involved in both expressing and reflecting changing roles and worldviews for the human population. This information can also provide insights into the societal changes of the time and the roles animals may have played within that, and what it meant to be animal or human.

The possibilities for research within the field of human-animal relations and within Near Eastern archaeology are vast, and perhaps are not much reduced by combining the two. The focus here is on the period known as the Pre-Pottery Neolithic as it is now recognised to be a period of great social development and change, particularly when considering human-animal relations; the beginnings of animal management and domestication are key components of the way our civilisations have developed, and how we see animals today. Equally, the geographical area selected – the Levant, including Cyprus and southern Turkey – was an area of great significance during this period, being the so-called 'cradle of civilisation'. Agriculture and domestication are thought to have first started in this region, and the archaeological record is rich in material upon which to draw.

There are, of course, limitations to what can be achieved within the space of a thesis, and choices have to be made. For my case studies I have chosen sites which are especially notable for their finds and discoveries in particular areas, to provide more focus in the detail of particular aspects; Kfar HaHoresh is well-known as a

mortuary site and for the variety of the mortuary practices on display there, while Göbekli Tepe is noted for the vast quantity and wide variety of animal iconography which appears at the site. 'Ain Ghazal is selected as a case study because it is a good example of a site for which the archaeological evidence appears to indicate no specialised purpose. Neither Göbekli Tepe nor Kfar HaHoresh are considered by the excavators to have been settlements, while 'Ain Ghazal displays evidence for a variety of behaviours. As such, it is able to provide an impression of everyday life in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic (although naturally only for one site; there is no suggestion that life at other settlements would have been exactly the same). The process of selecting case studies upon which to focus comes at the cost of including more material, but allows for a greater depth of study than would otherwise be possible. In order to select the areas of research, the study began with an overall survey of the sites and material from the region and then focused in more closely upon the themes which began to emerge. There are many more areas in which a study of human-animal relations may prove valuable. However, given the constraints of this work, selected themes have been developed in significant depth rather than providing a broader but necessarily less detailed overview of the material. These themes are those that have the potential to display behaviour and ideology, thus providing insights into the society of the time.

All sources used are secondary. Where possible published site and excavation reports have been used to get as close as possible to the original material. However, I also acknowledge the biases which are inherent in any written document. There are a large number of secondary sources which have been under-utilised and under-studied, and these provide more than sufficient material for this research without requiring the production of primary data.

Research questions

When I started the research for this thesis, my intention was to look at the involvement of animals within all levels and parts of human society, and the interactions between animals and humans which this created, with specific reference to artistic and mortuary practices. My plan was to demonstrate (using reports and papers from excavated sites) that changes to the human ways of life, and the attendant alterations in their interactions with the world around them, led

to a fundamental shift in perceptions of personhood and the degree to which personhood could be ascribed to animals, both wild and managed or domesticated.

These goals have not changed, but as research progressed it became clear that new lines of research were opening into areas such as the nature of deposition, and how that relates to and reflects human-animal relationships. This is perhaps particularly visible around the role of animals in ritual practice. Through exploring notions of personhood and understanding animal agency, I also began to move towards exploring post-human perspectives and how they are applicable to the study of human-animal interactions in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic.

Within this thesis the following questions will be considered:

- To what extent were human and animal identities perceived as differing during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, including potential variation in the symbolic significance of different species?
- How did these perceptions change over the course of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic and in the context of developing domestication?
- How were human-animal relations and questions of identity expressed in the material culture?
- Can an approach informed by theories of personhood help us to answer these questions?

The work undertaken in the following chapters will demonstrate that notions of personhood and inclusive realities changed as domestication progressed, causing alteration in social and ritual behaviours, and ultimately in human social development. While extensive work has been done in the field of human-animal relations regarding notions of personhood (e.g., Conneller 2004; Russell 2011, 2016; Hill 2013), much of it has been applied to material from outside of the Levant, and there is little in the literature applying these theories to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic material from the Levantine region. My contribution is to apply these notions to this material, covering a wider range of sites than has previously been the case, but also focussing in more detail on areas which may not previously have been considered in the light of these theories. I also look at notions of structured deposition and how they might be applicable to this material, as well as how they might be able to add to our understanding of the ways in which human-animal relations were expressed.

Literature Review

Theory in Near Eastern archaeology

The archaeological data from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Levant is still being explored and documented, and there is always room for new approaches and new thinking within the field, especially as discoveries continue to be made. The theoretical paradigms that have traditionally dominated archaeological work within the region do not always allow for more socially informed interpretations of the available data.

The theories and approaches of New Archaeology, or processualism, when it developed in the 1960s had a great impact on Near Eastern archaeology. The change from culture historical approaches that simply analysed and classified past cultures to those which attempted to understand social change resulted in a new understanding of the processes of 'Neolithization'. Research became focused on understanding cultural changes in the context of a long-term evolution of change, alongside environmental and climatic conditions, and systems of economies, subsistence, and trade. Such systems were seen as providing the conditions for the Neolithic. Mortuary practices were seen as a component of these changes, helping to illuminate social complexity.

Excavations at Jericho during the 1950s, directed by Kathleen Kenyon (1979), revealed caches of skulls. These were viewed as indicators of growing complexity and increasing social status, evidenced through their selective treatment and reburial. This treatment of skulls often forms the basis of interpretations around ancestor cults (e.g., Cauvin 2002; Bienert 1991). A belief in the direct relationship between mortuary practices and social stratification is still held by many researchers. For instance, Rollefson (2000) argued that the different types of ritual practice at PPNB Ain Ghazal were a reflection of hierarchical social status, ascending from figurines to burials, plastered skulls and plastered statues, reflecting different levels of social standing according to the frequency with which they appear in the archaeological record.

The development of post-processualism or interpretative archaeology in the 1980s was a reaction to critiques of processualism, which asserted that the New

Archaeology was, essentially, too impersonal; that it failed to engage meaningfully with symbolism and agency, amongst other things (e.g., Hodder 1982; Shanks and Tilley 1987). Following anthropologists such as Bourdieu (1977) and Sahlins (1976), as well as Giddens the sociologist (1991), post-processualists argued that everything had symbolism, and also that humans were not passive occupants of the world, but instead were active agents in the creation of change. This theoretical approach brought together ways to think about and explore previously unconsidered areas of the past, such as personhood, gender, ritual, and agency, and has also encouraged new understandings of mortuary practices, all of which have helped to create a deeper and fuller understanding within the archaeology of the Levant.

Within Near Eastern archaeology at the end of the 1990s, some archaeologists were pushing for a move away from the cultural-historical approach in favour of paying more attention to such things as symbolism, ideology and religion, following the various theoretical paradigms covered by 'post-processualism'. However, this was still being carried out in a very processual and structuralist manner, looking for systems and structures based on environmental and macro-focused interpretations (e.g., Levy 1998; Flannery 1998). Post-processual or interpretative ways of thinking have continued to gain ground in Near Eastern archaeology however, and publications that consider more person-centred narratives of the past are increasingly common (e.g., Jones 2008; Tsuneki 2011; Croucher and Campbell 2009).

Until comparatively recently, archaeology in the Levant has still been limited by the processual reluctance to discuss and fully investigate areas such as "ritual" and religion. According to Insoll (2004), in archaeology the concept of ritual has been an area traditionally avoided, used simply as a "catch-all category for 'odd' or otherwise not understood behaviour" (*ibid*:1-2). Verhoeven's (2002a) famous paper on recognising ritual behaviour suggests five basic 'analytical concepts' for the study and identification of prehistoric ritual; that is, framing, syntax, symbols, dimensions and analogy. He goes on to suggest an entire structuralist system with which to identify and catalogue 'ritual' behaviour, where the type of ritual can be placed into the correct category. Such a tidy structural framework for ritual behaviour possibly reflects our own desire for order and categorisation, and our own assumptions of dichotomous frameworks as being universal even in the past, rather than a way of investigating past behaviours. These approaches, however,

have been a necessary development, allowing for further in-depth analysis of material as well as an examination of differences in addition to similarities.

There is a continuing movement within Near Eastern archaeology away from approaches dominated by culture historic and processual methodologies and towards a more interpretative approach. This often takes the form of a consideration of events and practices at individual sites (or even individual features on sites) through a small-scale approach, examining alternative areas of evidence and additionally using current archaeological theory and debate, demonstrating its applicability in offering alternative interpretations of the evidence. This is not to say that larger or more data-driven interpretations are lacking in value, as regional methods and influences can be highly significant, but evidence should be considered from a basis of individual sites as well, rather than just trying to fit them into regional and temporal frameworks.

Ethnographic research can be extremely valuable as it can offer information about entirely different ways of viewing the world, thus providing alternatives to our innate biases and beliefs about the way things are: everything from understanding of the world around them, to what it is to be human. Ethnography provides insights into the 'diversity of human experience' (Thomas 2000a: 658). However, it is essential that it is used carefully and with consideration, avoiding too heavy a use of or reliance on anthropological analogy (Ucko 1969; Wylie 1985). Ethnography can and does provide alternative understandings and insights, however, which can develop and deepen our interpretations as well as help us to question our assumptions.

Human-animal relations

The literature on human-animal relations is extensive, and has encompassed a number of theoretical approaches and viewpoints over the years since it became a reasonably mainstream area of research; Boyd (2017) provides an excellent overview as part of a paper discussing anthropocentrism within the field. A number of books and collected volumes have also been published which fulfil an important role as handbooks for studying human-animal relations; Russell (2011) is probably one of the best known for looking at these relationships within archaeology, covering as it does a wide variety of inter-species relationships in prehistory,

including an extensive section on animals in ritual. As a general handbook on studying human-animal relations, DeMello (2012) is an excellent introduction to the subject, especially in the earlier chapters when looking at animal domestication. Other useful sources are Marciniak (2005) and Albarella and Trentacoste (2011); Marciniak's volume focuses on material from Central Europe, while the edited volume from Albarella and Trentacoste has a heavy emphasis on the use of ethnographic material to provide analogies for the archaeology, which although interesting may, perhaps, be of limited use; I feel it can be too easy (and therefore possibly unhelpful) to rely too heavily on the use of ethnographic material when looking at prehistoric archaeological evidence; it can help to provide possible theories and ideas, but (when relied on or used too greatly) can also perhaps blinker us towards other possibilities, as well as encouraging us to impose potentially false ideas and perspectives on the material we are studying.

More specific works have come from anthropologists such as Ingold (1994), where he talks about the use of language and changing definitions with relation to humans and non-humans, as well as discussing varying worldviews in relation to perceptions of animals and domestication. Theories around personhood within the field of human-animal relations have been discussed by a number of researchers, although I have probably been most influenced by papers such as Hill (2013), discussing notions of personhood and animals as persons in prehistory, and Conneller (2004) in her paper on red deer remains at Star Carr, who discusses relational ontologies, bringing in ideas of animal agency and essences, and the construction of new beings from merging essences. Conneller also discusses (following Viveiros de Castro 1998) ideas of 'perspectivism'; how species see other species, depending on the relationship they have, and the idea that this perspective must be located in the body rather than the soul, so taking on an animal shape would be done to harness that animal's abilities or way of seeing the world. Fowler's work (2004, 2016) also encompasses similar ideas, as well as providing a guide to the archaeology of personhood, looking at interpretations of personhood and anthropological literature and theories upon the subject and arguing that the attribution of personhood is an essential part of archaeological studies (Fowler 2004: 27), and asserting that personhood is always relational and multi-dimensional in nature (Fowler 2016). Interesting work has also come from Brittain and Overton (2013), who argue for a social and integrated approach to

zooarchaeology, and Overton and Hamilakis (2013), who suggest a new framework for a social zooarchaeology, using alternative zoontologies.

The works of Thomas (2001a), Fowler (2001, 2004), Chapman (2001a), and Brück (2001), amongst others, have shown that alternative personhoods and identities can be suggested and considered in relation to archaeological data. It is these alternative understandings of the body which should be borne in mind when considering archaeological data, as has been ably shown in British and European prehistoric studies (including Chapman (2000a), Fowler (2001) and Thomas (2000a)) where views of the idea of the individual in contexts other than our own have been debated.

The dictionary definition of personhood relates to 'the quality or condition of being an individual person' (OED 2005). However, this definition is too limited for archaeological and anthropological purposes, especially as regards the concept of the 'individual'. Fowler (2004: 7) expands on the meaning of personhood, describing it as the processes of constituting, de-constituting, maintaining, and altering the person through social practices during life and after death. He also distinguishes between various types of personhood, ranging from individual to relational identities. Whilst these identities are culturally constructed, they do nevertheless offer a framework for thinking about bodies in a different way. Individual identity is the concept we are most familiar with in the West, and it is an identity that we often assume to be a universal default.

Within our concept of individuality, we may still consider or be aware of different areas of identity within the person such as mind and spirit, or body and soul. Different notions of the mind–body relationship can affect our understanding of the importance of such things as a dead body. However, while these ideas or categories might be useful for thinking about different mind–body relationships it is important to remember that there is not necessarily a direct relationship between these and treatment of the dead, although one may influence the other.

Relational identities can be seen to be equated more closely with animistic perspectives. Animism is defined as 'the attribution of a living soul to plants, inanimate objects, and natural phenomena' (OED 2005). In animistic societies, the world and everything in it are interconnected. People, animals, plants, rocks, and the landscape are all related and attributed with a spirit, life, feelings, and intentions. In such belief systems, everything within the environment is intimately

connected; there is not a separation between nature and culture, as the natural and cultural worlds are parts of the same cosmos; people are entangled and interconnected with the world around them (see Bird-David 1999). Relational identities can include individuality as one aspect of identity, but may also see the person as multiply authored, consisting of components that take their meaning from relationships with others. Fowler uses the term 'dividual relationships' to describe this concept, a category which is itself broken down into examples of partibility and permeability. With partible identities, parts of a dividual person can be separated and given to others. This includes objects as well as substances, with each person composed of parts, objects, and actions of others in the community. Permeability differs slightly from partibility, in that parts of a dividual person can be permeated by and can absorb the parts of others, so no parts are removed, but the body contains differing proportions of aspects of the person. Flows of substances and food compose a person, who contains differing proportions of substances, inherited from other people (parents, partners, and kin). As substances are exchanged, the proportions within a person alter. Partability and permeability are defined by Fowler:

> "Partibility operates through isolating and extracting parts of the person, and permeability circulates qualities of substance between discrete yet pervious people. Both exhibit features different from the indivisibility that characterizes the western individual" (2004: 32).

So, what does this mean for archaeological studies? There are impacts on interpretations of bodies, objects, and human–animal relationships. For instance, different meanings are placed on objects if they are considered to be components of a person. Chapman (2000) discusses enchainment and fragmentation, arguing that a fragment of an item can be used in place of the whole item, as representative of the object and of the relationships behind the exchange. Furthermore, just as objects can be broken and exchanged, so too can bodies (Thomas 2000a). Such thinking about breaking and fragmentation of objects offers new avenues of interpretation, which have led to an investigation into practices of fragmentation in the archaeological record, primarily within studies of British and European prehistory.

Studies of personhood have also been incorporated into interpretations of other areas of prehistory, including Mesolithic Scandinavia (Fowler 2004) and

prehistoric Malta (Stoddart and Malone 2008). Aspects of personhood are seen as constantly changing, particularly through life stages (Joyce 2005).

Human-animal relations in Near Eastern Neolithic archaeology

The association of animals with human burials, both adult and juvenile, is one area of research where these limitations have been especially noticeable. While these associations have been covered in excavation reports, and similar works, little work seems to have been done on them specifically which has not been carried out in terms of factual analysis. This is, however, not always the case, and new theoretical ground has been (and is still being) opened up (e.g., Boyd 2004; Jones 2009; Croucher 2005, 2012). The association of animals with humans within the domestic arena is also interesting and worthy of research, both in terms of how they related when they were alive, and of what happened subsequent to their death, and this is another area in which research has been sadly neglected.

Theoretical approaches to these associations have generally been along what could be considered as traditional lines. The majority of interpretations would seem to be divisible between those tending towards the 'ritualistic', with the animal-human relations seen as a manifestation of (often otherwise inexplicable) ritual activities (e.g., Grosman et al. 2008; Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004), and those that see them as a result of the beginnings of domestication (the 'economic' interpretation) (e.g., Davis 2005). While these theories and interpretations are fine as far as they go, they are often too limited in their outlook, rarely going beyond the surface of the possible interpretations, while also sometimes failing to take into account more recent theoretical trends.

There is (or has been) also a paucity of attention in the human-animal literature regarding the Levant, and especially in regard to the Neolithic in the Levant. In the 2010 volume from Campana et al., out of 28 papers only two or three related to the Levantine region, and none of those dealt with Neolithic or Pre-Pottery Neolithic material. Likewise, volumes edited by Pluskowski in 2005 and 2012 both contain a variety of papers relating to animals and their interaction with humans, but both volumes exclusively deal with European and British material, and the 2005 volume is focused on historical contexts. Equally, two other edited volumes (Crabtree et al. 1989, and Ryan and Crabtree 1995) both contained excellent and interesting

papers; the 1989 volume however, being about early animal domestication, was largely focused on the scientific and technical aspects of identifying domestication, continuing the traditionally processual approach to Near Eastern archaeology, and very little (if any) attention was given to the ritual or symbolic aspects around that. The 1995 volume was all about the symbolic role of animals in archaeology, but unfortunately only one of the nine papers in the volume was on material from the Levant, and that was from a considerably later period. So it seems that this particular period, in this particular region, has previously been somewhat neglected in the literature for human-animal relations, despite the rich variety of material to be found in the area, although movement towards a more theoretically rich approach to the Near Eastern material can clearly been seen in such work as Croucher (2012), and much of Russell's work, which especially relates to her work at Çatalhöyuk (2011, 2016), although she is not always considering theories of personhood.

Methodology

With a subject like that of this thesis, there is a vast body of literature upon which to draw. Where possible, excavation reports and papers published by the excavators have been used to the greatest possible extent, to get the most accurate information regarding finds. However, at the same time the variability in available information and in excavated material from sites is so great that it can be difficult finding sites with sufficient material to allow for the thorough development of approaches. As a result, I made the decision to employ case studies for each section, pairing each main thematic chapter with a specific case study. This meant that an overview of material can be provided for each section, providing a range of examples from various sites (Figs. 1.1, 2.1, 4.1, 6.1), before then looking in much more detail at one site which had enough material to be explored in more depth.

The case studies were chosen with a view to the richness and quantity of their material evidence, as each site needed to have sufficient material to make a detailed discussion possible. Kfar HaHoresh and Göbekli Tepe are both sites which could be considered as 'specialised', in that they do not appear to have been settlement sites but instead were used for mortuary or ceremonial purposes, and therefore the material evidence from each could largely be placed in a single category. 'Ain Ghazal was chosen for the case study of how animals were integrated

into all aspects of society because of its position as a large settlement site, spanning the entirety of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period, with material evidence relating to all categories.

As a result, this thesis has been structured into three main sections which are book-ended by the introduction and discussion chapters. The main sections are divided into pairs of chapters, allowing for the overview and the more detailed case study in each section. This begins with placing human-animal relationships into a broader context, looking at the development and variety of interactions, while also demonstrating that animals were (and are) integrated into every aspect of human society, in one way or another. Following that, the sections on animals as they appear in artistic representations, and as they appear in mortuary practices. This reflects my belief that animals have always been as much a part of our spiritual and aesthetic lives as of our physical ones. Representations of animals, whatever the medium, are key to understanding how the society felt about animals and about themselves in relation to animals. They are a way for humans to express concepts that would not or could not otherwise be physically manifested – except perhaps through the manipulation of mortuary remains, itself a type of representation. Human and non-human interactions did not end with death and mortuary practices can offer new perspectives on those interactions, both in how the dead (human and non-human) were treated initially, and also the ways in which their remains were manipulated in secondary mortuary practices. In other ways, secondary mortuary practices such as the rearranging of bones (see Chapter 6) were another way of expressing or manifesting internalised belief systems.

Each section is based on a systematic survey of the primary information from excavation reports and reports on current research on sites that are Pre-Pottery Neolithic in date (see Fig. 1.1 for locations). This was assembled in a reference table of sites with data that included burials with animal inclusions which the excavators considered to be intentional or significant; deposits of animal remains in contexts outside of rubbish dumps (e.g. bucrania in buildings, skulls under house floors); and images or representations of animals (such as figurines or carvings). While efforts were made to be thorough, the number of sites for this period and region makes this challenging, and many are only known from preliminary and partial reports. In contrast, the information for each case study seeks to be comprehensive, collating all the published information to produce an integrated overview of the material. This was especially necessary for Kfar

HaHoresh, as details about burials and inclusions were occasionally unclear from paper to paper. While extensive research was obviously also done on interpretative and secondary publications, this was cross-referenced to the primary published record wherever possible and, where details were contradictory, preference has always been given to authors with primary knowledge from a particular site. This reference data table underpinned the selection of examples within each section of the thesis, as well as informing the choice of case studies.

Human-animal interactions in a wider context, and the place of animals within society are approached in Chapter 2, using three broad themes – ways of life, relationships, and symbolic and ritual uses. This draws on historical and some ethnographical sources as well as archaeological material, to show how animals were (and are) fully integrated into all aspects of human life and society. Following on from this, Chapter 3 explores a case study of 'Ain Ghazal, where detailed examples show how animals were integrated into human society in both life and death, and in a variety of settings. While information about the animal figurines at 'Ain Ghazal was particularly relevant, related data on burials with animal inclusions deemed to be intentional by the excavators and the burial of a gazelle, provides other key material.

The next section (Chapters 4 and 5) looks in more detail at depictions of animals in archaeological contexts, examining the appearance and use of animals within the representational record. For the Pre-Pottery Neolithic this particularly includes zoomorphic figurines, carvings, engravings, and similar. This information is broken down within the chapter by looking at the use of different mediums. Attention is also given to, amongst other things, the contexts in which the images and representations are found, and the represented species, as well as human-animal hybrid images, using theoretical approaches such as that from Bailey (1994; 1996). This leads into a case study of Göbekli Tepe (Chapter 5) and an examination of the carvings and images found there, looking at the variety of species represented and the ways in which they are arranged.

The third section (Chapters 6 and 7) is an examination of the use and appearance of animals within mortuary contexts, both within human burials and separately, and looking at the mingling of human and animal remains using approaches such as personhood and perspectivism. Relevant material was drawn from the survey of published data, particularly from sites which had burials of animals or animal

parts, animal remains included with human burials, display of post-mortem animal remains, and any other examples of animal remains occurring outside or the standard faunal record and middens. This is followed by a case study of Kfar HaHoresh (Chapter 7), which examines the appearance of animals within specific mortuary contexts at the site, as well as the species which are found within those contexts, and the application of mortuary treatments to humans and animals, as well as what this may mean for ideas of individuality and personhood.

The final main section is the discussion (Chapter 8), in which I draw out and highlight points of particular interest, and look at overall themes of animal usage. This section draws ideas and themes together to form an overall picture of human-animal interactions and how notions of personhood may have been applied within the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Near East.

The data surveyed for this thesis covers the whole span of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic (approximately 12,000-8,300 BP), although the case studies are a little more limited in their coverage of the period. The PPNB as a whole is covered by all three case study sites, but there is less material for the PPNA and PPNC. The occupation of 'Ain Ghazal continued throughout the PPNC and into the Yarmoukian, and Göbekli Tepe has some structures which are believed to date to the PPNA, but Kfar HaHoresh covers only the PPNB period. However, the evidence from across the region appears to indicate a significant increase in ritual and symbolic behaviour in the PPNB, which then decreased or changed towards the PPNC, so this may also correspond with changes in the archaeological record. It is important to note that two of the case study sites – Göbekli Tepe and Kfar HaHoresh – are not sites which can necessarily be considered as generally representative of Pre-Pottery Neolithic sites as a whole but represent specific contexts of behaviour. Their excavators believe(d) them to be specialised in their purpose, as a ritual centre and as a mortuary centre respectively. However, this is exactly why these sites are most relevant to this research. The unusual nature of the archaeological material discovered at them (when compared to other sites, such as 'Ain Ghazal or Jericho) provides a rich data set of imagery and burials in an explicitly ritual setting and it can inform our understanding of more mundane contexts. While this can skew the data from which this thesis is drawn, this is counter-balanced in the more general chapters, which contain data from a wider range of sites that are more generally representative of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic as a whole. This process demonstrates that, while Göbekli Tepe and Kfar HaHoresh are unusual mainly (for the purposes

of this thesis) for the concentration of particular data sets they contain, aspects of the individual features (the types of burials and the variety of images) can all be found at other sites across the region during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. The combination and density of data makes them unique, but the ways in which they reflect the world of Pre-Pottery Neolithic is shared.

As a note, throughout the thesis dates have been given as BP; this is a personal choice based on the acknowledgement that BC or BCE are Western- and Christian-centric terms. BP is more culturally neutral, and is therefore used by preference.
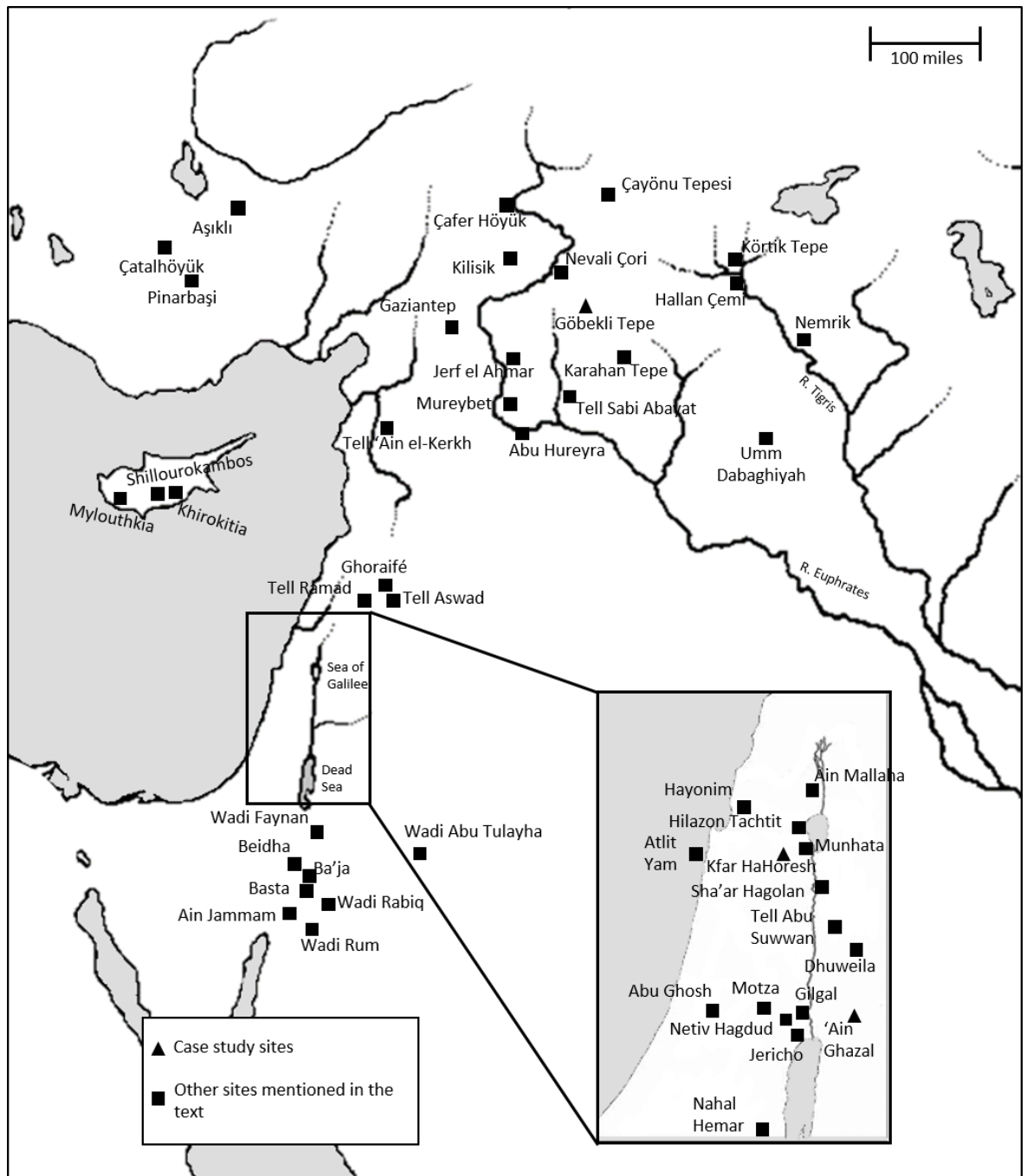
Figure 1.1: Map of sites mentioned in thesis (T. Jones)

Chapter 2: Animals in Society

"Animals exist in the myths, legends, and folktales of people around the world. The religions of all societies incorporate animals (negatively and positively) into their cosmologies, beliefs, practices, and symbolism. Animals are worshipped, made the object of taboos, sacrificed, and associated with gods, spirits, and other supernatural beings."
(DeMello 2012: 11)

The relationship between modern humans and animals seems to remain as complex today as it has always been, if not more so. Far from being a simple relationship of domination or avoidance (or live and let live), there are many facets to the way in which we interact with the creatures around us. This has always been true, but modern sensibilities have added even more layers to our perspective on animals today. In the West we have increasingly moved more towards a lifestyle in which our main interaction with animals is as pets or livestock. However, there are still groups of people elsewhere in the world who rely on hunting for meat. There are also people who continue to hunt purely for pleasure, with no intention of eating their quarry. The tradition of having animal horns and skulls displayed within buildings (for ritualistic or other reasons) is still maintained; today we can see antlers, skulls, stuffed animal heads, or entire animals displayed within residences as trophies of successful hunts, or even as purely decorative items, as well as in museums for educational and scientific purposes.

We can see that even today, our relationships and interactions with animals encompass a wide range of activities and emotions. Beyond the physical, a lot of people seem to feel an emotional or spiritual connection with animals as well. Modern pagans, for example, often have animal spirit guides or totems, and many people choose to have tattoos of animals that they particularly admire or feel a special connection to, or that they consider to carry some particular symbolism.

Animals really do appear everywhere in our lives, and in the world around us. They live in our homes, have a place in our spiritual practices (pagan or otherwise; many animal images or references arise in religious texts), feed us, clothe us, and permeate our language. Although we may believe we have moved far from the time when our lives were heavily influenced and maybe even dominated by our interactions with the animals around us, we have not moved on as much as we might think. We still live side by side with animals, although the context may have changed for many of us, and the presence of animals still affects our lives in a

multitude of ways, whether that presence is physical, spiritual or emotional. The ways in which we interact with them have expanded in number and in meaning, but the feeling of connection to animals remains, whether it is in the form of a much-loved pet or companion animal, or whether it is when we visit zoos or safari parks, wanting that feeling of connecting with the wild which so many of us lack in our day-to-day lives.

Because animals are so all-pervasive in our societies and our thinking, it has seemed best to divide this chapter into themes, which broadly cover the ways in which animals enter into human lives, or are used or viewed by humans. These categories are, inevitably, very broad; I have tried to differentiate a little further within each theme, according to the interests and themes of this text, but the subject is still so large that generalisation is regrettably unavoidable.
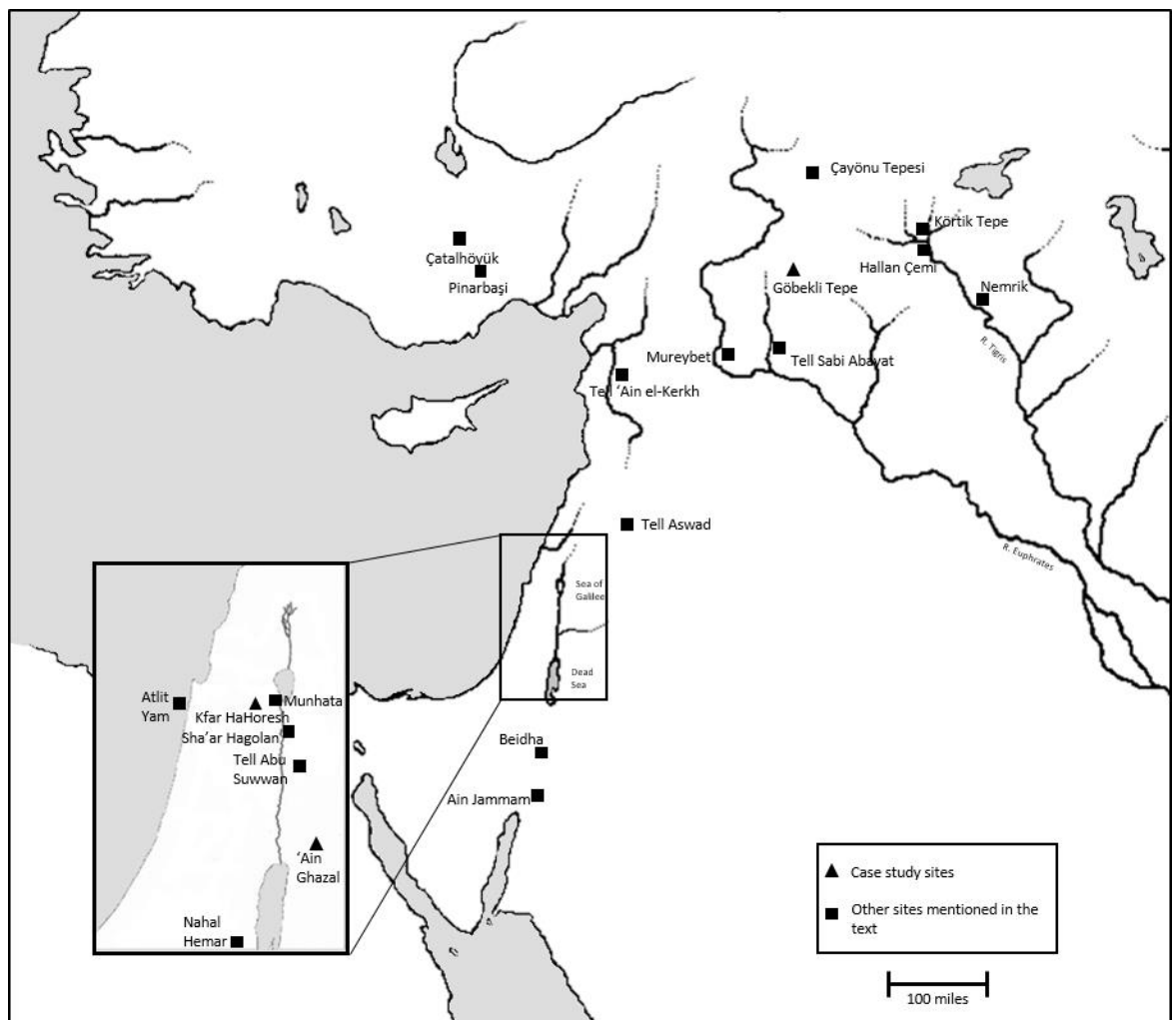
Figure 2.1: Map of sites mentioned in chapter (T. Jones)

Zooarchaeological perspectives on hunting, management and domestication

The Near East has been the focus of extensive research concerning domestication, both of plants and of animals – to such an extent that the focus on the evidence for and processes of domestication has, at times, obscured the need to understand the impact of domestication on social practices and beliefs. Obviously, in the present context, animal domestication is particularly relevant as the progression of domestication inevitably had a major influence on the relationships between humans and animals. However, as Peters et al. (2005) notes, domestication itself is only a stage in the lengthy process leading from hunter-gather populations beginning to exert cultural control over animal populations to full animal control and husbandry by established agropastoralists (Peters et al. 2005: 110). Zooarchaeologists have been able to establish a rough timeline for the process (and progress) of domestication in the region for each of the four main species – sheep, goat, cattle and pigs – which the faunal records across the region show to have been domesticated and to have been main food sources. This is summarised for each species below.

Currently, the zooarchaeological evidence indicates that the earliest domesticated food animals were caprines – sheep and goat. The earliest current evidence for the management of caprines comes from Central Anatolia, between 10,400 and 9,400 BP (Zeder 2008). Domesticated sheep are not known from the Levant until later, first appearing in the northern Levant from around the end of the 11th millennium BP, and from the southern Levant in the 10th millennium (Davis 2005). It is not clear whether the sheep in the southern Levant were domesticated there, or were introduced to the region as pre-domesticated stock, but the gap of 500-1000 years between the appearance of identifiably domesticated sheep in the northern and southern Levant - an area of maybe 500-600km (Martins and Edwards 2013) – would suggest that they may have been domesticated separately in the two regions. It has been suggested by Arbuckle (2014) that caprines may have been the first species to come under human control because they were of little social 'value' for hunting (judging by their minimal representation in Neolithic symbolism), but of high economic value for herding, as opposed to species such as wild boar (Arbuckle 2014: 232).

Goats, once domesticated, spread through Anatolia more quickly than did the domesticated sheep (Zeder 2008). There is evidence for human management of

goats in Zagros from the 11th millennium, and the first domesticated goats are known in the northern Levant from around end of the 11th millennium BP, at the same time as domestic sheep (Daly et al. 2021; Davis 2005). By the MPPNB, caprines accounted for c. 35-60% of ungulates in the faunal record in the north Jordan valley and 70% in the Jordan Highlands, and the majority of them were probably domesticated (Martins and Edwards 2013: 76). Genome evidence suggests multiple divergent goat domestication events across the region (Daly et al. 2018), which may explain how domesticated goat appears to have spread through the region more quickly than the sheep.

It is thought that pigs were first domesticated in south-eastern Anatolia by 10,500-10,000 BP (Zeder 2008), although pigs which show the morphological alterations consistent with domestication have not been discovered any earlier than 8,500 BP (*ibid.*). Morphologically altered cattle first appeared in Anatolia around the same time as the pigs – around 8,500 BP (Zeder 2008), and spread into the northern Levant around the same time as the domesticated caprines (Davis 2005).

 The picture is somewhat different when we look at Cyprus. There is archaeological evidence for wild boar living there and being managed by humans from at least 11,746-11,396 BP, with a suggestion that it may have been part of an extensive programme of wild boar management across eastern Anatolia (Vigne et al. 2011). It is likely that the earliest goats on Cyprus were already domesticated, as the remains show them to be smaller than wild goat, but this could also have been the result of the introduction of managed goat (Vigne et al. 2011). Cyprus also has evidence for fallow deer management, which is unique to Cyprus in its importance to the local economy (Vigne et al. 2011). This may indicate the persistence of wild ungulate control even after domestication and domesticated species were well established, and may also indicate the existence of long-distance exchanges of goods and animals (Vigne et al. 2011).

The range and complexity of human-animal relationships is extremely varied, and often not directly or immediately represented by morphological change. It is clear that there is no simple definition for domestication, and no decisive line to be drawn between domesticated and not; it often appears to depend upon the ideas of the individual researcher (Zeder 2006a). It has even been argued that "domestication" should be rejected as a term, in favour of considering it as a continuum of human-animal relationships (Higgs and Jarman 1972; Jarman

1977; Jarman and Wilkinson 1972), although Russell (2002) disagrees with this and argues that the idea or category of 'domestic' still has use. Domestication is a key process in human history, marking the transition from animals as a shared resource to animals as property; this was a major shift in society, in ways of thinking and of behaving (Russell 2002). Russell also argues that changing the way of thinking about it, from the wild/domestic dichotomy to a continuum, is not much of an improvement, and suggests that thinking of it as a spectrum of behaviour would be more accurate (*ibid*.). However, the creation of the dichotomy, or at least the idea of it, was extremely important to human society and its development. The creation of the Domestic meant the existence of the Wild, and that separation had major consequences for human thought (Russell 2002).

We need to consider a range of behaviours around domestication, and the variety of ways in which human management of animals can manifest without them being fully domesticated (Zeder 2006b), as well as the evidence for a wide variety of practices, such as penning, foddering and control over mobility (Arbuckle and Atici 2013). Mutualism between species, for example, could have existed thousands of years before a more active type of management developed (Zeder 2006a), without leaving much (if any) archaeological trace. It is also important to remember that animals are not passive bystanders in human-animal relationships, but are active participants (Russell 2002) to a greater or lesser degree. Domestication is set apart from other mutualistic relationships by the element of intentionality on the part of humans (Zeder 2006b), and it is very much a process, rather than an event (Bogaard et al. 2018). As a result, documenting that process requires a variety of different (and reliable) markers (Zeder 2006a). Verhoeven (2004) believed that a holistic approach to the subject should be taken; he saw domestication as a "longterm, multidimensional and multirelational" phenomenon (Verhoeven 2004: 179). This makes sense; taking an approach based on economic *or* social *or* biological factors and definitions is too limiting and fails to take into account the subtleties and complexities that surround the subject of domestication.

Ways of life

Hunting (or hunting and gathering) as a way of life is one of our most ancient behaviours, and although there are considerably fewer societies now for whom this is still a primary (or sole) way of living, they do still exist. Our society in the West

has moved far away from this, to a point where some people (sometimes thought of as an elite group, owing to the associated costs and perceived snobbery) can now hunt as a pastime, while societies who still have to hunt for food have come to be perceived as 'primal' or 'primitive', or – at best – 'traditional' (Ingold 1994).

Hunting, in the context of pre-industrial societies, often seems to be seen as engaging with animals on a more equal level; mutual trust and reciprocal understanding between the hunters and the hunted are discussed (e.g., Ingold 1994; Nadasdy 2007). Ullah (2005) suggests that hunters use a system of trust and autonomy, whereby if they trust and respect the animal they are hunting, it will in return offer itself as prey to them. This is a relationship of balance and respect, not one that can be forced:

> "Traditional hunters typically view the animals they hunt as their equals. They exercise no power over them, although they may hope to persuade the animal to be more easily captured by means of certain magical or religious practices." (Serpell 1996: 5).

Not all the literature agrees with this perspective on the hunter/hunted relationship, however. Armstrong Oma (2010) suggests that a problem with this is that we can only know hunted animals as a species, rather than as individual entities that we could get to know, as with domesticated or managed animals. While this would undoubtedly result in a very different relationship, I do not necessarily agree that this precludes one based on respect and mutual recognition and understanding; predator and prey will always recognise each other as such, regardless of whether they have seen that particular specimen before, and their mutual interactions are likely to proceed along much the same lines. The intimacy and perceptions engendered by the hunt may be different, but still equal, to those created by more peaceful proximity and interactions. However, Armstrong Oma's view (in direct contrast to that expressed by Ingold) is that the move from hunting to husbandry was actually a move *from* domination *to* trust, as domestic relations are more likely to be characterised by intimacy and confidence (Armstrong Oma 2010).

The advent of domestication had a profound and permanent impact on virtually everything in human society, and changed our relationships with many (perhaps with all) animals forever. Ingold (1994) encapsulates his view of this change with his statement that while hunters see animals and nature through a lens of trust

and reciprocity, domesticated animals are 'slaves', who are controlled and dominated by humans. Ullah (2005; following Smith, 1992) mentions the total incorporation of animals by pastoralists, comparing it to the 'looser' relationship that hunters have with the animals they encounter; a similar sentiment to that expressed by Ingold, although possibly less emotive in its language. Serpell (1996) and DeMello (2012) also agree with this view; Serpell states that any egalitarian relationship between humans and animals vanished when domestication began and animals essentially became subservient, while DeMello says that domesticated animals are both owned and controlled by humans, within human environments; their relationship, therefore, is far removed from those seen in nonagricultural societies, where there was no concept of 'owning' an animal (DeMello 2012).

The overall impression received from the literature is that hunters are perceived as having (or having had) a more equal relationship with animals, while domestication essentially removed that balance and equality, putting all (or nearly all) the power into the hands of humans. However, as Boyd (2018) notes, domestication actually involve types of mutualism and symbiosis, with relationships and engagement changing on all sides. While the prevailing attitudes and narratives are focused on domestication being a process that was driven by humans for their own requirements and that domestication was something that humans 'did' to animals, it means that our attention is then centred on the effects upon and consequences for humans and human society (Boyd 2018). The mutualism of human-animal (and human-plant-animal) relations may be briefly acknowledged, but it does not become the focus of research (*ibid.*).

Theories about why domestication occurred and what triggered it are multitudinous, including socio-cultural factors (e.g., Sana Segui et al. 1999), environmental changes (Davis 2005) and population pressure (e.g., Bar Yosef 2002a). DeMello suggests that domestication was in itself the result of evolution, both natural and cultural (DeMello 2012), while Davis (2005) theorises that domestication was due to environmental pressures caused by an increasing population, as many regions in the Levant show evidence for an expansion of their resource bases shortly before the advent of domestication. However, Arbuckle's (2014) research suggests that the process and pace of domestication was not driven by a reduction in numbers or availability of large game, which would mean that theories which consider the transition from hunting to herding in an economic light are problematic. Instead, he theorises that human society may have simply

reached a 'tipping point', where the economic benefits of herding began to outweigh any social benefits gained from hunting (Arbuckle 2014).

This change in relations with the animals around them also heralded greater changes in human society as a whole, as their ways of living and of interacting with the world around them altered and shifted. The beginnings of the move from hunting to herding – or at least to management of the animals – and the resulting attitudes towards animals would have directly created some of these changes, as well as being a catalyst for others. Both hunters and herders might see animals as being sentient and (at least to some extent) self-determining, but the differences arise in how each lifestyle deals with the animals' abilities (Ullah 2005). Hunters might treat an animal with respect, while pastoralists come to think that an animal needs to be overcome by strength and possession. This also brings the idea of ownership and property, and that in turn brings social change (*ibid.*). Even if the new relationships were not based on domination but were instead the beginnings of a social contract which had trust and reciprocity at its core (Armstrong Oma 2010), this still engenders necessary social change, for human beings needed to change themselves as much as the animals had change, in order for the process to work and for domestication to be successful (Lewinsohn 1954). Domestication, in fact, was as much a cultural as a biological process (Clutton-Brock 1989).

While animals would have changed physically (and temperamentally as well, as docility would have been a highly desirable trait (DeMello 2012)), humans would, as Lewinsohn suggests, have had to change their own behaviours in order to adapt to this new way of living. This would have required the gradual incorporation of animals into human structures, both economic and social, as well as the later manipulation of the animals themselves to achieve the desired physical and behavioural characteristics (Clutton-Brock 1989). It is beyond doubt that all parties involved in domestication were altered in a variety of ways; animals had to be integrated into the social structure of human society and human had to adjust their ways of living, their ways of interacting with each other and their ways of looking at the world. This change was permanent, and this reinforces the idea that it was not entirely a one-way street. The idea of a social contract, as suggested by Armstrong Oma (2010), acknowledges that both sides were affected and altered by the new ways of interacting, and that there are multiple layers to the relationship; far more than can be covered by simple ideas of domination or possession. The development of domestication would inevitably have led to considerable changes

within society at that time; not only within the individual groups, but also within the larger social structure of the region. As animals became more reliant on humans to provide food and other necessities, so the relationships between individuals and groups must have altered, to allow for negotiation of grazing rights, access to water, and access to pasture, amongst other things.

However, the idea of a contract also suggests that all parties benefit, if not necessarily equally, and while it might seem to us that animals did benefit in some ways from their increasingly intimate association with humans, it would seem that there can be little doubt that in the majority of cases humans have gained far more, although this may be debateable when we consider companion animals. Animals may have gained advantages from humans however, not least among which would have been protection from other predators, and it may well be that another perspective would suggest that human communities are essentially 'sedentary providers' for animals (Matthews 2003). There can be little doubt, though, that we have reached a position where

> "Human civilization would not be what it is today if it were not for animal domestication. Without the assistance of working animals that pull ploughs, carts, sleds, and carriages, carry goods or people, assist humans with hunting, and herd other animals, and without the use of animals as food and fiber, it is difficult to imagine where human societies would be today." (DeMello 2012: 92).

The benefits to animals from our ongoing relationships could be considered to be neither quite so undoubtedly beneficial nor so long-lasting; many animal species have now changed so much as a result of their connection with humans that they could not survive without us, while thanks to scientific and technological advances humans are reaching a point where animals may no longer be essential, at least in the Western world. From an animal's perspective, domestication may have been a two-edged sword at best. In Ingold's (1994) opinion,

> "They become a form of property which can be owned, inherited and exchanged. Property, however, is conceived here as a relation between persons (subjects) in respect of things (objects), or more generally, as a social appropriation of nature. Human beings, as social persons, can

own; animals, as natural objects, are only ownable. Thus the concept of appropriation, just as the concept of intervention, sets humanity, the world of persons, on a pedestal above the natural world of things." (Ingold 1994: 6)

while Clutton-Brock (1994) believes that only humans benefit from domestication; animals may have spread more widely in geographical terms than would have possible if they were on their own, but at the cost of genetic diversity and evolutionary autonomy. However, animals have also gained in terms of security and protection, from predators and disease.

Categorisation

Within modern Western society, we generally consider animals to be separate from us; an 'other' associated with nature and the wild. However, this is not necessarily the case in non-Western societies, where nature and animals are not always viewed as being opposed to civilisation, culture, or humans (Ortner 1974; Howell 1996). However, even in societies which do not always impose an animal/human or nature/civilisation dichotomy upon the world around them, it is possible to see that human culture, especially as time has gone on, has been built on the belief that we are *not* like animals – while we may often anthropomorphise non-human animals, attributing human thoughts and behaviours to them, we still believe that humans are unique and somehow set apart from the rest of the animal world (DeMello 2012). DeMello considers that this divide, and differential valuing, came about with the beginnings of domestication. This is when the nature of the relationships between animals and humans began to change, especially with the advent of agriculture. This in turn created new concepts of what it meant to be animal or human, as well as new understandings of the world and of nature. Humans could now control animals, and therefore nature, and this created a remove between animals and humans. They had, in effect, moved to different levels of existence; animals were part of nature and humans had moved beyond that, towards 'civilisation' (DeMello 2012).

Once animals became something 'other' than humans, they could then be split into categories – 'wild' and 'domestic' (essentially, out of or under human control), but also into categories according to what sort of animal they were. DeMello

suggests that some were thought of as being 'higher' than others – carnivores such as lions or eagles being higher than vegetarians, and domesticates being the lowest (DeMello 2012). These divides, however, are purely social constructs; they are culturally and historically dependent, as well as contextually specific (Harris and Hamilakis 2014), and as such can be both misleading and mutable. Harris and Hamilakis, in a study regarding the multi-species colonisation of Crete in the early Neolithic, discuss the animals that were brought to the island by the human settlers; these included both domestic and 'wild' species (Harris and Hamilakis 2014). However, the question is raised as to whether animals can be considered truly 'wild' when they have lived in close proximity to humans for long periods of time, and it is clear that the constructed wild/domestic dichotomy is far too simplistic; the extent of human-animal relationships and interactions is too diverse and complex to fit into any binary proposition.

Relationships

These relationships are wide-ranging, encompassing a number of ways of perceiving and interacting with animals. Durkheim saw human-animal relationships as being fundamentally positive and affective, with animals being seen as intimates, kin or protectors (Bleakley 2000). Many cultures, for example, see (or saw) animals as possible clan members or ancestors, or as separate nations, or as intermediaries between the worlds of the sacred and the profane (DeMello 2012). (Many of these societies also have animistic beliefs - which we will return to shortly). When humans and animals come together and have a shared existence, they each acquire roles and responsibilities that would not exist in their separate lives. As a result, this shared existence creates a reciprocal and dynamic relationship, where both sides have the ability to manipulate and affect the other; in the words of Armstrong Oma (2010)

> "The *encounter* between humans and animals is a discursive process that forms the relationship, and a field of intra-action is created by mutual action, becoming and performing. Such encounters are found in spatial locations where humans and animals meet, arenas where mutual becomings are generated." (Armstrong Oma 2010: 180).

Nor does this shared existence completely cease with death, on either side.

During the British Neolithic, it is believed that cattle may have been seen as kin to people, both literally and metaphorically, and would have created kinship links between families and groups, in life and in death (discussed further in chapter 6). Equally, cattle which were owned by the community may have been a source of prestige and wealth for that group, and may have been used for payments on ceremonial occasions (Ray and Thomas 2003). Ray and Thomas have argued that archaeology has a tendency to see animals emblematically – as either objects or food (*ibid*), and to counter this have suggested that "The social relationships of the human communities were so deeply interwoven with the dynamics of their herds that the latter could have provided both metaphor and mnemonic for the very social constitution of those human groups" (Ray and Thomas 2003: 41). However, they may only be partly correct regarding the tendency to see animals in this light. In recent years this has changed significantly as we acknowledge that while we may view in that light ourselves, the archaeological record suggests that at the time, this mental or social division into two clear, separate categories simply did not exist. Jones and Richards (2003) suggest that the interlinking of humans and animals, and the incorporation of each into the other, is created by human consumption of animal flesh and other products on a daily basis. Animals do not divide simply into being ancestral or economic beings. Instead, they are just people of different kinds, and their lives had a significant impact upon humans during the Neolithic period (*ibid.*). This accords with notions of personhood; by consuming parts of the animal, humans could be seen as taking in some of the essence of that animal.

In modern times, and in the West, we sometimes have a mental or emotional disconnect between being fond of an animal, and being willing to eat or make use of it. This is not always the case, of course; people may be very attached to their working dogs, for example. However, for the most part there is a dichotomy, in which some animals are seen as companions or as creatures to nurture and care for (such as dogs, cats, horses), and some are animals which we would consider to be generally functional (such as cows, pigs, sheep); there can be some blurring of these lines, with the existence of pet pigs, for example. This is not always the case in other parts of the world, where there is less of a line drawn between affection and utility. Nigerians, for example, are very fond of dogs and appreciate them for being useful in hunting and guarding, but will still eat them, or use portions of them for potions (Olowo Ojoade 1994). Some (such as the Zuru or Efik peoples)

will also sacrifice dogs in order to appease their gods (Olowo Ojoade 1994). This is a clear indication that dogs are valued by them; if you wish to propitiate your god(s), you do not sacrifice something which is culturally considered to be of no value. In New Guinea, pigs are herded and looked after by the women – not for food, as they are rarely eaten except on ceremonial occasions – but to be used as exchange goods for things like mortuary occasions and bridewealth (which are generally carried out by the men) (Sillitoe 2003). However, in trading or giving away the pig, the man is seen as giving part of himself, as the pig was part of him just as he was part of the group that made the pig; this reflects the perception of relational identities (Fowler 2004).

Symbolic and ritual uses

There are a number of belief systems which are either focused on or heavily involve other species. These are often discussed in theories regarding any archaeological evidence for behaviour which in some way relates to animals. This can include the mortuary record, images or objects representing other species, or any number of other ways in which a connection with animals may have made itself felt.

One such worldview is *animism*, which is "the attribution of a living soul to plants, inanimate objects, and natural phenomena" (OED 2005). It is a belief system that is not directly animal-based, but it does occur in the literature regarding human-animal relations. Halbmayer states that

> "Animist theories generally assume that animals are considered to be humans or that animals consider themselves to be humans. Humans and animals form part of a shared relational frame of interaction. Thus in animic ontologies relations and interactions with these persons are maintained through communication, mutual understanding and the possibility of transforming into and becoming the Other." (Halbmayer 2012: 12).

Animism is traditionally strongly linked with religious beliefs, and so is placed in opposition to the mundane. It is also increasingly seen as being a relational epistemology, as it recognises that the animating forces in non-humans come about through our relationships and on-going engagement with the world we inhabit (Groleau 2009; Bird-David 1999). Relational ontologies relating to animism

are also discussed by Conneller (2004), although the perspectivism which she applies to the material is not directly part of animism (Halbmayer 2012).

Shamanism is another belief system which gets frequent mention when human-animal relations are being considered (Aldhouse-Green 2005; Price 2001), and it is often suggested in connection with evidence from many of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic sites. It is a religion based on the belief that the world is controlled by both good and evil spirits, and that these spirits can be directed by people with special powers (Collins Dictionary). Shamans have to learn to face savagery in order to claim it for themselves, which then allows them to visit the otherworld of animal spirits; this need for savagery may explain a general association of shamans with carnivorous animals (Bleakley 2000). Dowson and Porr (2002) believe that

> "Shamanism is wide-spread among so-called hunting and gathering societies, where visions acquired in altered states of consciousness often constitute the central metaphors and images used in belief systems and religion. In these cases shamanistic elements appear in close association with a world-view and a perception of the environment which is fundamentally different from a Western one. Among hunting and gathering people the environment is perceived as being populated by creatures who have consciousness, history, personality and spiritual power, just like humans." (Dowson and Porr 2002: 172).

Totemism, which is the belief in the kinship of groups or individuals having a common totem (and also the rituals and other practices associated with that belief), is based around the idea that an object, species of animal or plant, or a natural phenomenon can symbolise a family or clan (or other type of group) (Collins Dictionary). Totems often have ritual associations, and can even be the representation of such an object rather than the object itself (*ibid.*). This is especially relevant when we consider some of the theories around sites such as Göbekli Tepe, where the carvings depict many different varieties of animals (discussed in chapter 5). It is possible that individuals may have their own totems as well, but

> "Whether or not an animal totem refers to a group emblem or an individual familiar is then secondary to the issue of the basis upon which a relationship is made to a totem. For example, is the animal essentially emblematic, signifying a nominal relationship only? Is there a functional

or economic relationship (the animal as provider of sustenance)? Is there an aesthetic dimension involved, based for example on an emotional experience (the animal is feared, is treated with awe, is admired, and so forth); and is there a consequent 'religiosity' (Mundkur, 1994) involved – a sacred experience that moves beyond economic necessities?" (Bleakley 2000: 131)

Totemism also covers a "…wider religious sense of the presence of animals to humans, …. where biological, psychological and conceptual animals come to overlap, or fuse." (Bleakley 2000: xvi). It signifies both a sacred and an aesthetic attitude towards human-animal relations, and towards animals in their own right, rather than the completely secular and largely functional outlook which is typical of our own attitudes towards animals, where we consider them as a walking larder and as experimental objects (Bleakley 2000). Totemism, in fact, is another example of a system within which animals can be classified; a totem animal is considered to not only symbolise but to be spiritually related to a clan or a tribe, and generally thought to be ancestral to those peoples (DeMello 2012). It appears often in theories regarding human-animal relations, and perhaps especially in relation to prehistoric archaeological evidence. In this context, it can be considered as providing an understandable explanation for some of the mortuary and artistic behaviours we find in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Near East, for example. Indeed, the term has been used for many years, since academics have been trying to link the domestication of animals with totemism as part of the romanticisation of "primitive people" (Lewinsohn 1954: 65-66).

	ANIMISM	TOTEMISM
THE NATURE OF IDENTITY	The status of beings is negotiable; the relations between people, animals and things is dialogic	Animals, people and things are essentially 'what they are', but can communicate with one another
LIFE ENERGIES	There is no fixed source of life energy; instead, energy is generated and circulated through relationships	Ancestors are the source of energy, and they shaped the form of the world. Living beings gain their energy from the land
THE TRANSMISSION OF FORM	The transformation of forms is essential to interaction between beings; each takes on a form appropriate to the relationship in which they are currently engaged	The maintenance of forms through the faithful reproduction of traditional practices, and the custodianship of the land, is vital to ensuring the transmission of energies to living things
SENSE OF COMMUNITY	Non-human beings are part of the human social world; nature is society, and different species form different social groups. However, species may appear in forms other than their own	Human and non-human beings live together in the land, which is the trace of ancestral presence. Human society draws on natural forms to make to make social distinctions
THE ATTAINMENT OF PERSONHOOD	Animals, objects, places and plants all have the potential to be persons and part of persons	Animals, objects, places and plants are *like* persons, and share ancestral energies *with* persons through a shared connection to place, and descent from the ancestral being of that place
BASED ON	Viveiros de Castro 1996, Descola 1996 and Ingold 2000	Ingold 2000

Table 2.1: Differences between animism and totemism (Source: Fowler 2004: 68)

One belief that may be associated with both shamanism and totemism, and which also has relevance in a discussion of human-animal relations, is that of metempsychosis; the migration of a soul from one body to another, where a soul after death will enter upon a new cycle of existence in a new body, which can be of either human or animal form (Collins Dictionary). Like both shamanism and totemism, this belief is centred around a combining of elements; in this case, soul with body, and human with animal. Shamanism also features a mingling of identities, along with realities and worlds, while totemism is centred around the idea of human and animal identities being intertwined and merged, to such an extent that the one may stand for the other. As this thesis will show, the evidence suggests that this idea of mingling, of combining identities and realities and of

merging worlds together in one way or another, is central to much of the human-animal interactions in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic.

One example of this is the finds at Çayönü Tepesi (such as the stone basin, knife and slabs), which show traces of blood (human, animal, and sometimes both together) (Wood 1998). While this has sometimes been considered as being evidence of sacrificial rites being carried out at the site (Ozdogan 1999; Cauvin 2002), this is not necessarily an indicator of 'sacrifice', in the usual sense. Even the apparent mingling of human and animal blood is not a sufficient indicator for full sacrifice having taken place. It is equally possible that the evidence suggests blood-letting rather than 'sacrifice', although the letting of blood could also be seen as a form of sacrifice, albeit of a relatively minor kind. Blood itself could have been used for many purposes – drinking, or use in food, and decoration come to mind immediately. It is possible that areas or people could have been painted with blood as part of ceremonies, or it could have been used in cooking or for libations. The mingling of human blood with that of aurochs and sheep could have been a way of merging humans with both the tamed and the wild around them, to join all aspects of their world together, or as a way of taking control of all the different elements. Equally, it was a mingling of essences from human and animal, from wild and domestic, and from predator and prey; a merging or aligning of their perceived realities.

However, if sacrifice was occurring at some of these sites, as has been suggested, then we have to consider what the purpose of such activities may have been. The significance behind a sacrifice may have varied according to the arena in which it occurred; in 'temples' or ritual buildings, the purpose may have been as much about public display and impressions as about the sacrifice itself. Ritual slaughter is also a consideration in these circumstances, although it may be open to discussion (although not immediately relevant here) as to whether sacrifice and ritual slaughter can or should be considered as separate things. However, the purpose of sacrifice may vary in itself, and the act of sacrifice could serve multiple purposes at the same time. There may be a desire to impress observers with a display of conspicuous wealth, by killing food animals which may not end up being eaten; or possibly even to scare or intimidate other members of society. However, there is also the consideration of the power of life over death, or the power of the living over the dead (or the about-to-be dead); the power of humans over animals, or the power of (human) order over the entropy of nature.

In addition to this, there is also the consideration of what the death of the animal is meant to achieve, beyond the immediate physical or emotional responses. In general, it would seem that the intention of sacrifice is to bring something about; the offering of a life in the hope or expectation of achieving a desired result, an exchange or bargain. This could be a death to bring about more death (hunting magic, for example), or possibly death to bring about life (such as fertility rituals for the land). Another reason might be for appeasement, if it is believed that the gods are or might be angry. One consistent thing appears to be the idea of the needs of the many outweighing the needs of the few; individuals being sacrificed for the good of society as a whole (or what society is told is their good); the individual being sacrificed to the collective. Or, in the case of human-animal interactions, animals being sacrificed for the good of humans. However, this also leads to the conclusion that it is not just the power of the living over the dead which needs to be considered, but also the power of the dead over the living. It could be considered that the sacrificed has power relating to whether or not the desired result is achieved; whether directly or by intervention with any supernatural powers being petitioned or impressed.

The evidence suggests that in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic the dead were considered to have power, of some kind; they certainly still had a presence in society, as can be seen from the many finds of plastered skulls and burials under the floors of living spaces. It would seem that the dead may not have been present as we would understand it, but were far from being gone or forgotten. In cases where animals or parts of animals were also buried, with human remains or as deposits on their own, possibly these were also thought to have some sort of power; foundation deposits, for example, would appear to be based on this belief, where the death or sacrifice provides the main source of (for example) protection, which is then maintained by the presence of the dead within the walls or under the floor (this is discussed in greater detail in chapter 6).

Display and use of animals

This keeping and displaying of the dead during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic was not limited to human remains. Animal remains were also extensively curated and displayed, as well as sometimes being cached and buried. The display of skulls, horns and other portions of animals was a behaviour which does not seem to have

been geographically limited; while it was not universal, there is evidence for this behaviour having occurred at sites across the Near East. Nor was this a new behaviour; there is evidence for similar collecting and displaying of parts of animals from much earlier periods as well, and from regions outside of the Levant. Evidence from Switzerland, for example, suggests that in the Palaeolithic people were collecting the skulls of cave bears; at Drachenloch, stone chests were found containing the skulls of seven bears, with the muzzles facing towards the exit of the cave. Another cist contained more bear skulls, with a single skull placed on top (Burl 1981). It has been suggested that this was the activity of hunters and that some ceremonial or other significance was attached to these remains (*ibid.*), although Insoll (2004) doubts whether these finds were the result of human interaction, and further doubts the existence of any religious practices involving bears at that time.

This apparent need to collect the skulls of particular animals is a phenomenon which continued at least into the Neolithic, and was a wide-spread practice in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Near East. The human dead were being buried, disinterred, disarticulated and reburied – often after the skulls were removed – and similar treatment was being given to deceased animals as well, although with animals it was not limited to skull removal as other bones were often kept as well. Many sites, such as 'Ain Jammam and Hallan Çemi, had animal skulls (and other bones or extremities) prominently displayed (Rollefson 1998), while other sites had remains which were less obtrusively exhibited but which were nonetheless still noticeable in their location (for example, at Tell Aswad), and yet other animal bones and skulls were stashed in sub-floor contexts (*ibid.*). The variety of ways in which the animal remains were kept would seem to indicate that it was the parts of the animal which were deemed to be significant, rather than displaying them, but it is also clear that display was a large part of the ritual process.

At 'Ain Jammam there was a room which contained a free-standing pillar and a walled-in human burial, and which also had a niche at eye level containing a gazelle skull. This had been arranged to stare out into the room, and on the floor below it there was also a single gazelle horn core (Rollefson 1998). In this instance, while the gazelle skull (and horn core) were presumably the significant parts of the installation, the way in which it was arranged suggests that significance may also have been attached to it being seen, or to having it watching over the room. However, at sites such as Tell Abu Suwwan, where several sheep/goat horn cores

were found in structures, they were generally located near floors and usually next to walls (al-Nahar 2010). This would have made them less immediately visible, and presumably lessened the immediate impact upon entering the space. If so, it is possible that their display was not an important part of their purpose.

At Hallan Çemi in Anatolia, there is evidence for the structured use and display of wild animal skulls (Rosenberg 1999, 2002). Arrangements of animal crania were found (Rosenburg 2002), including an auroch skull which had probably been attached to the wall of a structure, and a row of three wild sheep crania placed in a central activity area (Matthews et al. 2013). In fact, the skulls and horn cores of wild cattle or aurochs have repeatedly been found associated with houses in the PPNA (Verhoeven 2011), while animal horns in 'special' contexts have been found at various sites including 'Ain Jamman, Atlit Yam, Beidha, Munhata and Ramad (Verhoeven 2002a). At Jerf el Ahmar, building EA 47 contained parts of three auroch skulls and horns, as well as a complete auroch skull with a clay bead necklace and limestone pendant (Stordeur 2000). However, at other sites the curated remains were kept and presented in less noticeable ways; at Tell Aswad, half of a goat bucrania was enclosed in a small plaster mound against a wall (which is similar to the treatment of human remains at the site), and Pınarbaşı also had examples of animal bones which had been encased in plaster (Baird et al. 2011), while at Mureybet there were multiple examples of animal parts which had been sunk into the walls of buildings (Croucher 2012).

Çayönü Tepesi is a site which has many examples of animal remains which were kept and then used or displayed in a variety of contexts. The Cell Building, for example, had a deposition of four large wild pig mandibles in a sub-floor context, while the Skull Building contained the skulls (amongst other bones) of multiple aurochs, and at least one burial at the site included animal remains (Croucher 2011). This appearance of animals in multiple arenas is also found at sites such as Körtik Tepe and 'Ain Ghazal, but possibly the best-known (or at least best documented) site is Çatalhöyük. Mellaart, the original excavator, believed it to show evidence for extensive cultic or ritual behaviour, and (writing in 1967) thought that at least forty rooms at the site were either cult rooms or shrines, which could be identified through a number of factors. These included extensive and elaborate wall-paintings (which often included depictions of animals) and plaster reliefs (often showing animals or animal heads), as well as arrangements of cattle horns stuck into benches, and rows of cattle bucrania (Mellaart 1967).

Excavations have continued since then and more is known about the site, but it is still considered as a major source of information regarding Neolithic ritual or religious practices in the region. Mellaart believed that no 'normal' houses contained these special elements, but the results of more recent excavations suggest that no building at the site was completely empty of all ritual elaboration, with most having sub-floor burials, parts of animals, and other ritualistic elements in one form or another (Hodder 2017). In one area, for example, the left wing of a crane was associated with a cattle horn core, while two horn cores from wild goats, a dog's head and a stone mace head were also nearby (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005).

This overlap of the domestic and mortuary arenas – burials in houses, animal parts lying around the place – might seem strange to us today; our dead are physically separated from the living, placed in cemeteries rather than kept close by, and the idea of having a family member (or anyone else) buried under our floor would probably leave most of us rather uneasy. But the fact is that this separation is not total; even in the modern world, the world of the dead overlaps with the world of the living, and we still keep the dead in our homes. Those people who keep the ashes of a cremated loved one in an urn in the house are maintaining the tradition, although they may not recognise it as such. And people still have animals or parts of animals displayed in their homes – usually heads or skulls, mounted and hung on their walls, but occasionally even entire taxidermied animals. It is even known for people to keep the fur of a loved companion animal and have it spun and made into something, so they can be kept close after their death (New York Times: 13.01.2020).

Nowadays we tend to try and remove death from the public sphere, whether it be of humans or animals. Animals are still killed for their meat, but it takes place away from the majority of the people who might consume it; the death is kept at a safe distance. This was not the case in the past; animals would have been killed in person, if hunted, and within the environs of the settlement once they were domesticated, whether that was for food or ritual purposes (or both; ritual slaughter or sacrifice does not preclude the animal(s) from being eaten afterwards). In the case of the latter there may even have been large public displays or ceremonies for the killing, bringing death right into the everyday lives of the people as both a symbolic and functional part of existence. In the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, mortuary practices included skull removal and skull caching, for humans and

animals alike, so the dead (or at least those which received such treatments) may have remained as much a part of the society after their death as they were before.

There are also indications that in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic it was not only the skulls of animals which were being used in ceremonial or ritualistic ways. There is considerable evidence for a variety of animal body parts being included within mortuary contexts (this is discussed further in chapter 6), and there are suggestions that skins and feathers may have been used for personal ornamentation or ceremonial costumes. Wall paintings at Çatalhöyük show human figures, depicted in a fashion that led Mellaart to theorise that they represented priests dressed in leopard skins as part of their cultic activities (Mellaart 1967). At Körtik Tepe, finds have included large quantities of bird remains, which may indicate the use of feathers as decoration or ornamentation rather than just as food remains (Arbuckle and Ozkaya 2006). Of course, it is entirely conceivable that they may have fulfilled both purposes. Excavations at Çatalhöyük have also uncovered bird remains, including crane wing bones which, it has been suggested, came from a spread wing kept for use in ritual costumes (Russell and McGowan 2003). Discoveries such as this might encourage the development of theories about the religious beliefs of the populations at that time; Collins (2002) suggests that when humans take on the guise of animals with the intention of invoking the symbolic aspects of those animals, whether it is through the use of costumes or mimicking behaviour, ideas of totemism and shamanism will occur. Shepard believes, similarly, that

> "Early humans would graft onto their own poorly differentiated bodies and groups paraphrases of these displays of other species…. Particular calls and animal skins could be appropriated to identify human sub-groups denoted by age, sex and marital status. Fragments of animals became insignia, ritually assigned in ceremony, that established or heralded human membership by translations from the zoological realm." (Shepard 1996: 102).

Collins (2002) believes that this connection of animals with the ritual sphere, and the use of animals or animal remains within associated ceremonies and structures, is explicable when we consider that humanity's animality becomes most apparent through ritual. Through this, animals then provide a way to the spirit or divine world, symbolizing both the complicated (and often ambivalent) relationships that

we as humans negotiate with natural phenomena, and forces in the realm of the supernatural (Collins 2002).

Discussion and conclusions

The importance of cattle in the British Neolithic is reflected in the Near East, especially during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. While the cattle there were not domesticated, there are indications that significance was attached to bulls or aurochs. At Kfar HaHoresh, for example, aurochs are prominent amongst the animal species represented there, and quantities of cattle figurines were found at 'Ain Ghazal. Bull remains were also found inside walls and 'benches' in the Khiamian period (Cauvin 2000), suggesting that any significance attached to the species was of long standing. During the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, parts of wild cattle or aurochs were often found within structures; shoulder blades were discovered in a house interior at Çafer Höyük (Cauvin 2000), and skulls and horn cores were found repeatedly associated with houses in the PPNA (Verhoeven 2011). It has been suggested that bulls and aurochs (especially the liminal elements such as their blood or their horns) could be a metaphor for male dominance, power and vitality (Verhoeven 2002a); he further notes that in depictions of animals it is often males that are shown, and asks

> "Could it be then that PPNB human-animal linkages were an expression of the wild, dangerous, aggressive dimensions of the domain of nature, where it was the men who hunted, as opposed to the domestic and more peaceful domain of culture, where women were symbolized as giving life and bringing fecundity." (Verhoeven 2002a: 252).

The evidence suggests that the connections we have with animals have never been simple and straightforward, nor that it was ever as simplistic as purely whether they were good to eat, or likely to eat us; whether they would be useful in terms of meat or milk or hide. And we can see from a multitude of sites across the world, from prehistory onwards, that there *was* more to it than that; that we were thinking about animals in ways which went beyond whether they were good to eat, or useful to keep around. Animals occur in so many contexts which cannot be explained purely by hunting or herding or domestication that it becomes clear they played a significant role (or several roles) in the lives of the people of that time.

While we may never be able to be completely certain exactly what those roles were, we can be sure that animals were not only good to eat, but were also, in the words of Levi-Strauss (1966), "good to think".

Indeed, some of the animals found in these contexts appear to have been both. They were good food animals, but also played a role which went far beyond that. It becomes clear that we cannot consider these animals to be solely one or the other, used either for food or ritual. Instead, we have to accept that there were layers of significance attached to these animals, and that a simple dichotomatic approach is not going to provide us with all (or even many) of the answers. Hill (2013) highlights the fact that Levi-Strauss's thinking actually denies animals any agency, "fostering instead the view that animal bodies and behaviors are simply raw material with which to symbol, sacrifice, bury, represent and conceptualize." (Hill 2013: 119). Nadasdy (2007) goes further, stating that the literature overall tends to ignore the possibility of animals being intelligent and having agency of their own, as well as the possibility of them being active participants in their relationships with humans.

The evidence we have of ritual behaviour from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, as well as material evidence from the archaeological record, shows that animals played a major role in many of the religious or ritualistic behaviours of that time, as well as in the life of the people in general. Caches and arrangements of animal parts are located within houses or buried in pits (e.g., at Çatalhöyük, or Jerf el Ahmar), images are carved or painted or otherwise created (such as at Nemrik, or Sha'ar Hagolan), animals are found within mortuary contexts (e.g., Kfar HaHoresh, and Beidha) and there are suggestions of animals being used for foundation deposits (such as at 'Ain Ghazal or Tell 'Ain el'Kerkh). Many sites show evidence of animals occurring in more than one of these special contexts, demonstrating a range of ritual behaviours occurring across the region; some have evidence for most, if not all, of them, indicating the total incorporation of animals into the everyday existence of the society. One such site is 'Ain Ghazal in Jordan, which is discussed in depth in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: 'Ain Ghazal

I have chosen to employ 'Ain Ghazal as a case study in this thesis as it is a site with some unique properties, which make it particularly suited to a study of the place and role of animals within society. As a site known to have had significant growth of population during its occupation, and known to have been occupied continuously for a considerable period of time, it provides a valuable data set for information regarding a flourishing human settlement over a period of several millennia. This enables us to look at the role of animals within that society over time, both during and post-domestication, and also to then consider that information as it correlates with other behaviour at the site in terms of ritual, mortuary practices and representations and how animals were integrated into those areas. This, in turn, allows us to consider the questions of whether human and animal identities were perceived as being different in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, how those perceptions changed over the course of the PPN, and how those identities were expressed through material culture.
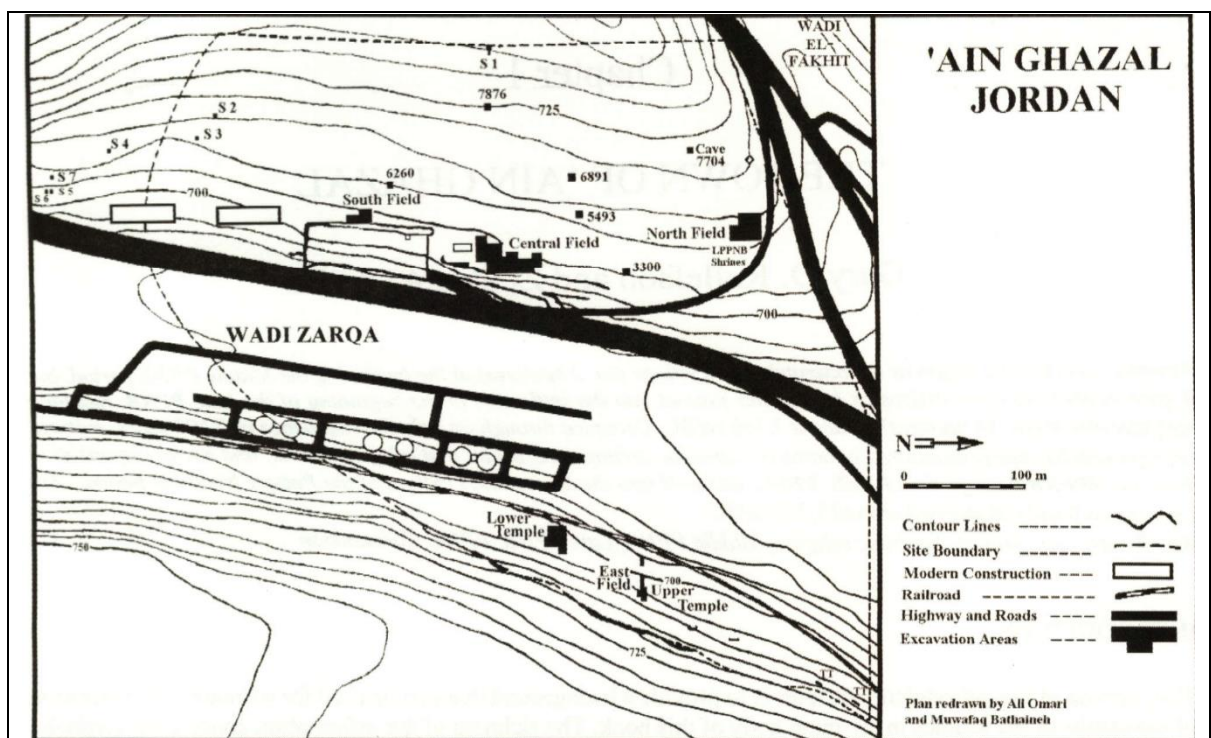

Figure 3.1: Plan of excavated areas (Source: Rollefson and Kafafi 2013: Fig. 1.1)

Site background

Located on the south-eastern edge of modern Amman, near the edge of the Jordan valley, the site of 'Ain Ghazal (Fig 3.1) is known to be one of the largest Early Neolithic settlements. It is believed that at one point around the earlier 9th millennium BP it may have extended over *c.* 20 hectares (Bienkowski and Millard 2000), with a population which may have been considerably larger than that of contemporary Jericho. The archaeological evidence does suggest a long (and unbroken) period of occupation of over 2000 years, spanning a period from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (beginning *c.* 9250 BP) through the Pre-Pottery Neolithic C to the Yarmoukian and Ceramic Neolithic periods) (Rollefson 1986, 1989; Rollefson et al.1992). Over that time, it seems likely that the population reached high levels and it is considered to be one of the 'mega-sites' of the Levant at that time, as well as giving us one of the first opportunities of studying a permanent farming settlement from the Neolithic period (Rollefson 1989; Kafafi et al. 2009; Rollefson et al. 1992). This makes 'Ain Ghazal uniquely suited to the study of the changing and developing relationships between animals and humans during a period of considerable social and cultural upheaval.

As well as the size and duration of the site, 'Ain Ghazal is also of major significance due to the large and varied array of material culture and mortuary evidence found there. This includes a large number of burials, reflecting a variety of mortuary treatments, and a quantity of plaster statuary, as well as smaller scale figurines. The plaster statues are spectacular in and of themselves, and have garnered a lot of attention and generated much interest and discussion. However, they are only part (albeit a large part) of the body of data from the site, and the rest of it is equally worthy of attention. The site is also especially rich in smaller figurines, mostly made from clay, and representing both animals and humans. Their purpose is unclear, but various theories have been put forward, as will be discussed later. The burials are numerous, and seem to cover almost the full range of known PPNB mortuary practices, from 'trash' burials to plastered skulls, as well as having some interesting variations seemingly unique to 'Ain Ghazal. The site also has other features of interest, from painted floors to animal remains, as well as being the first site to reveal a PPNC period (Rollefson et al.1992; Rollefson 2014); it is little wonder, therefore, that the site as a whole features so heavily in discussions of change and ritual in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Levant. Attention is focused on the

animal figurines and the burials for the most part, although other material from the site is also considered, to provide some context.

The faunal record

It is important to also consider the faunal record at 'Ain Ghazal, as the examination of that material evidence can provide valuable insights into what was happening at and around the site during its occupation, both in terms of the behaviour of the inhabitants and regarding the environment around them. These insights can in turn throw light on some of the less material aspects of the society and behaviours with which we are concerned. However, one thing to note is that many of the samples from the faunal record were quite small, especially those from the LPPNB, and the faunal samples from the initial excavations for the MPPNB were not sorted below the small carnivore level, inevitably leading to a false representation of the relative importance or scarcity of some species (Kohler-Rollefson et al. 1993).

The faunal records from the MPPNB period show that the residents of 'Ain Ghazal had access to a variety of species of animal, with over 50 species being represented in the assemblages from that period (Kohler-Rollefson et al. 1993). The spectrum of species discovered indicates that, during the MPPNB, 'Ain Ghazal was located at or near an intersection of ecozones, including woodland, riverine gallery, steppe and desert (Kohler-Rollefson et al. 1993). Despite the variety of species available, however, around half of the faunal sample taken in the early excavations comprised ovicaprids, and this was dominated by goat (Table 3.1). There is no direct morphological evidence for goat being a domesticate at the site, but some factors (including size and pathologies) seem to indicate that goats may at least have been under some sort of control at that period (*ibid.*). The importance of ovicaprids at the site increased over time, shown by their overwhelming domination of the faunal record from the LPPNB layers onwards (although from the LPPNB samples onwards they were not subdivided into sheep and goats), and this indicates a significant shift in subsistence economy when compared with the MPPNB (Kohler-Rollefson et al. 1993).

The relative importance of species in the LPPNB at 'Ain Ghazal as indicated by the faunal record is not very different from that at the contemporaneous site of Basta. The spectrum of species represented had narrowed considerably from that found

in the MPPNB samples (although this is also likely to have been affected by the small sample sizes), and there is a significant reduction in the small carnivore category, possibly indicating a reduction in or elimination of some of the local ecosystems by the middle of the 7th millennium (Kohler-Rollefson et al. 1993; Rollefson et al. 1992). Additionally, the relative occurrence of gazelle in the faunal record dropped by over half from the MPPNB to the LPPNB (Kohler-Rollefson et al. 1993), which could further indicate a change in subsistence strategies relating to the increased frequency of ovicaprids as well as to changes in the availability of other species following alterations in the local ecosystems. This loss of habitat for a number of wild species during the LPPNB also coincided with a period of large growth for the human population at 'Ain Ghazal (*ibid.*).

Questions still remain over the domesticate status of a number of species from the site, especially during the MPPNB and LPPNB periods. Cattle and pigs may have been domesticated by the end of the LPPNB, but it is unclear (Kohler-Rollefson et al. 1993). However, both species were most likely domesticated by the PPNC (*ibid.*). Goats, however, are thought to have been domesticated considerably earlier, by the end of the MPPNB, when they provided around half of all the meat consumed at the site (Rollefson et al. 1992). Sheep are known to have been present at sites to the north and south of 'Ain Ghazal in the LPPNB, so it is likely that they also occur from the LPPNB onwards at 'Ain Ghazal as well (Kohler-Rollefson et al. 1993; Wasse 2002). By the PPNC, it is thought that domesticated species comprised around 80% of the meat protein consumed at the site, including goat, cattle, pig and possibly sheep (Rollefson et al.1992).

However, there is still some disagreement in academic circles over whether cattle and pigs were indeed being domesticated at 'Ain Ghazal, although Rollefson himself seems to believe they were (Rollefson 2014). The question of their exact status at the site is perhaps more one of academic interest than practical, however, as domestication is a long and slow process rather than a singular event. Animals may be under some form of cultural control long before their remains show the changes in pathology and morphology which we now consider to show a domesticated status. As soon as animals are being kept in one place by humans, or are being encouraged to depend on humans for food, then the relationship has changed and the status of the animals has also changed. They may not be 'domesticated' in the sense that we would use it, but they are controlled (to a greater or lesser extent) and their behaviour and interactions are no longer those

of a fully wild species. This in turn would make them easier prey, and so the change in the faunal records would begin to reflect that easier access to those particular species.

	MPPNB	LPPNB	PPNC
Goat	64.3	38.4	22
Sheep	0.4	31.5	48.3
Gazelle	27.2	13.2	11.8
Cattle	4.5	3.8	3.9
Pig	3.4	10.7	11
Equid	0.2	2.4	3.1

Table 3.1: % of taxa in faunal record by period (data from Wasse 2002)

The Figurines

The material culture from 'Ain Ghazal is especially rich in certain areas, and figurines make up a large part of the non-mortuary data from the site. Although both anthropomorphic and zoo- or theriomorphic figurines were found, I will be concentrating on the animal figurines exclusively. Over 150 of these have been found (Schmandt-Besserat 2013), all manufactured from clay (Rollefson 1998a, 2008), although the evidence seems inconclusive (and sources undecided) as to whether or not the figurines were fired during the manufacturing process. The majority of the animal figurines come from the PPNB phase of the site, although some were also found in the later contexts, from the Late PPNB (LPPNB), PPNC and even a few from the Yarmoukian period (Rollefson 2008). However, the bulk of the figurines come from the Middle PPNB (MPPNB), and it is thought that the production of animal figurines may have decreased by the LPPNB, both at this site specifically, and in the Southern Levant generally (Rollefson 2008). Certainly the numbers of figurines from the respective periods found at 'Ain Ghazal seem to bear that out, although it seems that it was not only the animal figurines which were affected; there were 194 figurines (combined human and animal) found from the MPPNB, and only 19 in total from the LPPNB (Rollefson 2008). It is interesting to note, however, that although out of the 194 figurines from the MPPNB only 61 were zoomorphic, of the 19 figurines from the LPPNB contexts, 14 were of animals (Rollefson 2008). Possibly the move away from figurines (at least at 'Ain Ghazal) began with the human representations. However, the small number of animal figurines found from the PPNC contexts would appear to indicate that they had

moved to a minor role within the daily lives of the inhabitants (Kohler-Rollefson and Rollefson 1993).

Period	Total figurines	Anthropomorphic	Zoomorphic
MPPNB	194	133	61
LPPNB	19	5	14

Table 3.2: Figurines from 'Ain Ghazal during the Middle and Late PPNB

Although not all of the animal figurines can be clearly identified in terms of the species they represent or depict, it is clear that – of those that can be identified – the dominant species appears to be cattle, with at least 50% of those that can be identified representing bovines (Rollefson 1983, 2008). Nonetheless, there are numerous examples of other species, and although identification is often difficult due to damage or the size of the figurines the other animals that can be identified include sheep and/or goats, equids, pigs, possible reptiles, and possibly fox and cat (Rollefson 2008). However, many of the figurines are too small to allow for definite identification; Rollefson (1983) has argued that these could possibly represent juvenile animals, and therefore indicate a tamed state, or a level of domestication being present; although he also mentions in the same paper that no domestic species seem to be represented amongst the figurines, going so far as to suggest that the figurines "seem to represent charms for hunting magic, since no domestic species appear to be represented" (Rollefson 1983: 37). However, it is equally possible that some were simply not as well made as others – maybe with less care and attention, or maybe by less experienced hands, or possibly even by children. One seated specimen – quite unusual in appearance, amongst the other figurines at the site – might possibly represent a canid (a fox, perhaps), although it has also been suggested that it could be a bear cub (Rollefson 1983; Rollefson and Simmons 1985). These difficulties with species identification can make it hard to attempt any meaningful analysis of the significance of particular species at a given site, although in the case of 'Ain Ghazal it is generally accepted that the majority of the animal figurines do represent *Bos*.

There are clear differences in appearance and style between some of the figurines, and it would appear as though the cattle figurines were made in one artistic style, while other species were depicted quite differently. The occasional portrayals of goats, equids or pig (and any other species) "might be taken to be casual, spontaneous expressions of artistic prowess or humor in view of the relaxed postures of the animals and the infrequent incidence of such species." (Rollefson 1986: 47). In marked contrast to this, the cattle figurines are not only greatly numerically superior but are also represented very differently; the figurines tend to be far more rigidly stanced, and they are (to our eyes) all made in the same style and way (Schmandt-Besserat 1997). This concentration on cattle, and the apparent importance of having them all the same, is considered to be more likely a result of a widespread cattle cult, found throughout the Near East in the early Neolithic (Rollefson 1986; Rollefson and Simmons 1987). The differences in style are such that while some might appear to be "whimsical effigies" made for or by children, others give the impression of having almost certainly been involved in rites of magic (Rollefson 1998a).

Figure 3.2: Cattle and female figurines (Source: Rollefson and Kafafi 2013: Fig. 1.12)

That cattle were symbolically important at 'Ain Ghazal seems to be undeniable; not only do they dominate the corpus of figurines, and stand out from the rest in the way in which they were made, but they are also set apart by the places in which they were found, and the ways in which they were deposited. One cache of 24 cattle figurines seems to have been discarded in a trash deposit (along with a lump of clay) in a courtyard at the site (Rollefson 2008); no other species represented have been found clustered in such groups, which clearly argues for the significance of the cattle figurines at the site; an interpretation which would be consistent with

the idea, suggested by a number of archaeologists including Goring-Morris and Horwitz (2007) and Cauvin (2000, 2002), of a regional cattle cult (Rollefson 1986). This is further supported by the evidence which suggests that all of the 24 figurines were produced at the same time, and used in a single ceremonial episode, before being discarded together (Rollefson 2008). The lump of clay found apparently discarded with the figurines may have been intended for use in creating more of them (or possibly was the remains of figurines which had been made but then deemed below standard or otherwise unacceptable), and may therefore have been set aside as being special, or unsuitable for other purposes.

The style of the figurines does not appear to change much, if at all, despite the length of time during which they appear. Over the roughly 2000 years of occupation at the site, the same animals were made over and over again, in the same style and with the same materials (Schmandt-Besserat 1997, 2013). Although the appearance of cattle figurines was decreasing by the PPNC (Rollefson et al. 1991), they were still present, and still looking much the same as they did in the MPPNB. Quadrupeds are always represented standing still, with no other activities being portrayed (Schmandt-Besserat 1997, 2013), although this may have as much to do with the comparative ease of depicting stationary, standing animals (rather than them engaging in any other activity) as it does with any ritual significance of the pose. In addition to the posture always being the same, the stylistic treatment of the figurines is also consistent over time; particular features or sets of features continue to be either emphasised, reduced or left out altogether (Schmandt-Besserat 1997). Facial features (eyes, nostrils and mouths) tend not to be depicted, and the skin or coat and the sex organs are also generally excluded from the representations, while the heads, horns, necks and shoulders all tend to be exaggerated (Schmandt-Besserat 1997). Interestingly, while most features seem fairly generic across the figurines and do not seem to lend themselves to clear differentiation between the species, the same is not true of the horns on the figurines. These seem to have been carefully made to reflect specific species, and were carefully modelled to show the characteristic identifiers of each (Schmandt-Besserat 1997). This, however, cannot be said of the tails on the figurines, which seem to be random in appearance (*ibid.*). Clearly a completely naturalistic appearance was not of particular importance in the creation of the figurines; presumably the significance either came from the creation itself (although the care taken with horns would seem to indicate that some details were needed), or it was

simply understood that everyone would know what was being represented without needing to put in every feature. The care taken with the horns on the figurines, unusual in the detail and attention given to them, I suggest was due to a desire to emphasise a defining characteristic of the animal. This may have been purely to ensure recognition of the species, but may also have stemmed from a wish to lay stress on the wild or dangerous nature of the animals.

The legs of the figurines are also not carefully crafted, and tend to be rough and out of proportion in comparison to the bodies (Schmandt-Besserat 1997, 2013). Although the legs tend to be both stumpy and asymmetric, the figurines nevertheless stand up. This may indicate that 'standing' was necessary for their function (Schmandt-Besserat 1997), whatever that function may have been. Some of the figurines also show some signs of blackening or burning, especially on the rumps (Rollefson 2008), and although there are no definite signs of intentional baking, this does seem to indicate that they were exposed to a fire (Schmandt-Besserat 1997). It has been suggested that they may have been arranged around a hearth, facing outwards (Rollefson 2008); if this was the case, then it was presumably necessary for them to be able to stand of their own accord. However, it has also been suggested that the figurines may have been disposed of in fireplaces (Schmandt-Besserat 1997), which might also explain the partial blackening on some of the figures. The figurines are often found mixed with ashes in trash deposits, so it has been suggested that the figurines may have been disposed of by burial, storage, or burning and discarding, after their function was fulfilled (Schmandt-Besserat 1997). At any rate, it would seem that the importance of the figurines may have lain primarily in their creation, rather than in their maintenance (Rollefson 2008), although it is possible that their disposal was the primary object, rather than their creation, and possibly they were made simply to be destroyed. The lack of clear detail in the figurines may support this idea; if they were being made in order to be discarded or destroyed then great attention to detail is unlikely to have been a requirement.

However, the figurines were not necessarily disposed of via burning, and then tossed out with the ashes. Possibly they were placed near the hearth while they were in use, and were then placed in the trash pit once they had reached the end of their life (whether in terms of 'usefulness' or in terms of being a usable item, given that none of the figures were complete when found (Schmandt-Besserat 1997)). As ashes are often very fine and would tend to filter down through trash

deposits – much as sand would in a different environment – it is hard to pronounce on the likelihood of that as a disposal method. Additionally, placing the figurines in the fire as a method of disposal is likely to have resulted in a more uniform appearance of blackening, rather than it being limited to the rear end of the figurines, as seems to have been the case. As a result, we have no real way of knowing whether fire was part of the disposal process, although there is some evidence for fire being used in other areas of the site, possibly in ritual contexts.

Other cattle figurines also demonstrate clearly that they were subject to special treatment, whether in their deposition, or the way in which they were treated at or after creation. One deposit contained only two figurines, but they had been buried side by side in a pit, which had been cut through a plastered floor in a house (Rollefson 1986, 2008; Rollefson and Simmons 1986). Both figurines had been pierced with flint bladelets, in the sides (where the ribs would be) and through the front of the chest (Fig. 3.2), and one had also been pierced through the eye (Rollefson 1986, 2008; Rollefson and Simmons 1986, 1987). As clay figurines from sites throughout the Levant are usually found in trash deposits (where context information is available), the careful burial of these two figurines may be an indicator of their significance and importance (Rollefson 2008). The general theory put forward for these figurines is that they represent charms for hunting magic, or luck, in the hunting of wild cattle (Rollefson 1983, 1986), as they appear to have been symbolically 'killed', before being buried in the pit. Other figurines also seem to have had pieces of flint or pebbles in or on them, sometimes under the tail (Schmandt-Besserat 2013: 26), although the purpose of these bits is unknown. However, Schmandt-Besserat does consider that the assemblage found at 'Ain Ghazal supports the idea that Neolithic zoomorphic figurines could be related to magic practices (Schmandt-Besserat 1997).

These two figurines seem to have been the only ones pierced in this manner, and they are also the only known example of this sort of "ritual killing" from the PPNB (Rollefson and Simmons 1986). However, two figurines also appear to have been deliberately truncated during the creation process (Fig. 3.3), while the clay was still moist (Schmandt-Besserat 1997, 2013). What purpose this would have served is unclear – whether the appearance of the truncation was important in the finished figurine, or whether the act of truncating during creation was the necessary part – we do not know, although it is presumably significant that these two figures were still able to remain upright, despite their truncation (Schmandt-

Besserat 1997) – in one case the maker had gone to some trouble to ensure this, extending the neck to such an extent that it could form a tripod type arrangement with the legs (Schmandt-Besserat 1997, 2013). These figurines were clearly not part of the 'normal' ritual repertoire at the site, as there were only two of them, and with such a limited sample size it is almost impossible to draw any conclusions about their significance – although it is highly significant that they, in effect, mirror the human busts that also appear at the site.
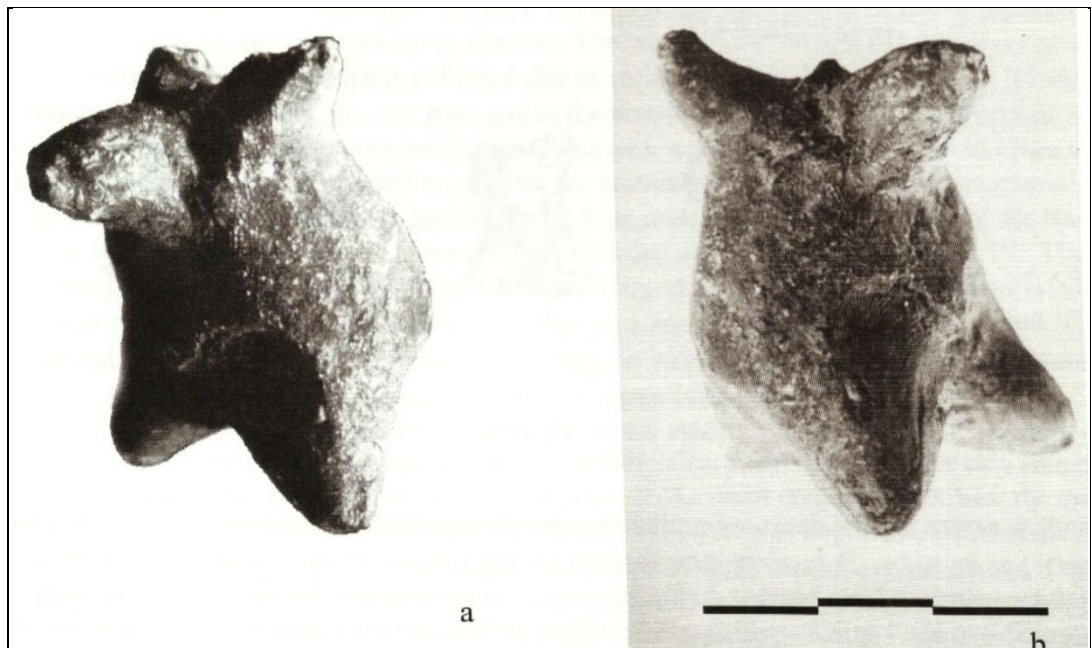
Figure 3.3: Truncated figurine, front and back (Source: Schmandt-Besserat 2013: Fig. 3.13)

The pit containing the two pierced figurines was also covered by a limestone slab (Schmandt-Besserat 1997), and this is also of interest; we can see from other sites in the Levant (with especial reference to Kfar HaHoresh) that there may have been an association between limestone, and the dead, so to find two animal figurines 'killed' and 'buried' in this manner would indicate a strong symbolic or ritualistic significance, mirroring as it does a mortuary treatment given to humans (and some animals). The building in which they were found appears to have fulfilled a domestic function, although we do not know if it was occupied at the time of the deposit. However, the previous phases of the building also had unusual burials – five funerary pits around a hearth, an infant buried under a doorway, a cache of three skulls, and the treated skull of a child (Schmandt-Besserat 1997), so there

seems to be a tradition of that building being associated with the dead, and with ritual behaviour, and this seems to be continued with the burial of the *Bos* figurines.

Several of the cattle figurines at the site appeared to have markings on them, showing signs of surface treatments at the time of their creation; these included possible signs of haltering, and maybe slashing (Rollefson 2008); one figure had 4 parallel lines incised along its side (Schmandt-Besserat 1997, 2013), although the reasons for this are not clear. Some of the figurines, when examined closely, appear to have the impressions of twisted fibres around their necks, which is considered to be suggestive of a halter (Rollefson 1986). This has led people to infer that some form of control over cattle may have existed, even if they were not fully domesticated at that time (Rollefson 1986). This seems to contradict opinions that Rollefson has expressed elsewhere, where he has theorised that the figurines must represent some form of hunting magic, as no domestic species are represented amongst the body of figurines (Rollefson 1983). On the other hand, he has also speculated that smaller figures may represent juvenile animals, which could also be an indicator for domestication (Rollefson 1983).

However, if one accepts the theory that some of the figurines could have been used for hunting magic) those figurines with signs of rope marls around their necks may have been another form of magic – a way, perhaps, of trying to gain or increase human control over the animals. Assuming that the population at 'Ain Ghazal was still hunting, even with the beginnings of domestication around them, the figures could have been an attempt to impose or strengthen their control over the natural world, as symbolised by the *Bos* figurines. Whatever their use was, however, it seems clear that "these figurines played a ceremonial role in human-animal relationships", and it also seems to be generally accepted that this role was "…probably associated with magic and luck in wild cattle hunting." (Rollefson and Simmons 1986: 152).

The Burials

The burials at 'Ain Ghazal occurred in a variety of contexts, and seem to come from throughout the PPNB, although the incidence of burials seems to have decreased by the LPPNB. By the end of the excavations at the site, the MPPNB contexts at

the site had produced 81 human burials, while the LPPNB contexts had only produced 7 burials (Rollefson 2000). This decrease seems to have continued into the PPNC stages at 'Ain Ghazal, as there are few mentions of burials within those contexts. Overall, however, it is clear that the number of burials found at the site is far too low to represent the general pattern of post-mortem treatment (Rollefson 2000), which therefore leads us to the conclusion that the majority of the population were probably buried elsewhere, and were possibly subject to other treatments (it is worth noting that Kfar HaHoresh is over 100km from 'Ain Ghazal; probably too far to be considered as a possible burial location). However, unless a confirmed burial site for this population is found we are unlikely to be able to discuss this with any certainty. We do know that the bone preservation at the site is quite good, so is unlikely to be a negative factor in burial statistics (Rollefson 1983). This does mean that whenever we consider the mortuary evidence at the site, the question of preferential (or at least differential) treatment comes into play, even before any other factors are considered.

Burials in the PPNB period were generally individual, or an adult with an infant, often in a flexed position and decapitated (Rollefson 1986). The positioning and decapitation were the same for both the subfloor categories and the 'courtyard' burials (Rollefson and Simmons 1985), although there were some exceptions, such as subfloor burials with skulls intact. Burials also exist where the individuals appear to have been placed in pits and the fill includes material that has been interpreted as rubbish. With these 'trash' burials, the skulls are generally intact (Rollefson 1986). It has been suggested that there is a division in the burials at the site with the "herders" being buried in the South Field area of the site, and the "permanent farmers" being buried around the Central Field area (Rollefson 1998a). Whether this would simply reflect different phases of occupation with the accompanying differences in use of the site, or whether there may have been some overlap in these stages and therefore the possibility of a genuine divide between the sections, is indeterminable.

There does not seem to be much evidence of grave offerings at 'Ain Ghazal, based upon the season reports. However, it would seem that while the figurines indicate the considerable symbolic significance of bovines at the site, the burials demonstrate that pigs were also of importance to the residents, being found in LPPNB contexts onwards (Goring-Morris 2005). One burial had a necklace of bone beads included with it, and some had pig bones associated with them (Rollefson

1986, 1998a). Two adult burial pits included pig skulls in the graves, from immature animals, and three burials included other kinds of pig bones (Kohler-Rollefson and Rollefson 1993). This does not appear to have been a normal or regular inclusion during the PPNB phases of the site, but by the PPNC grave offerings of pig bones had become a "common element" (Rollefson 1998a; Fig. 3.4). It is difficult to ascertain – or even theorise – whether the different bones had any real significance in and of themselves. This is because a wide range of bones was used, including skulls and postcranial bones. Two secondary burials (in Structure C-2 in the South Field) were associated with a pig's tusk pendant, as well as some other pig bones (Kohler-Rollefson and Rollefson 1993). In light of this, it was simply the fact that they *were* pig bones that was the significant factor, rather than the particular bones used; it was the species of animal that was important, rather than the section. They may rather be an indicator of developing social differences or change, as pig bones start to become more common in burials around the time that the number of animal figurines at the site begins to decrease, suggesting a change in focus and beliefs.
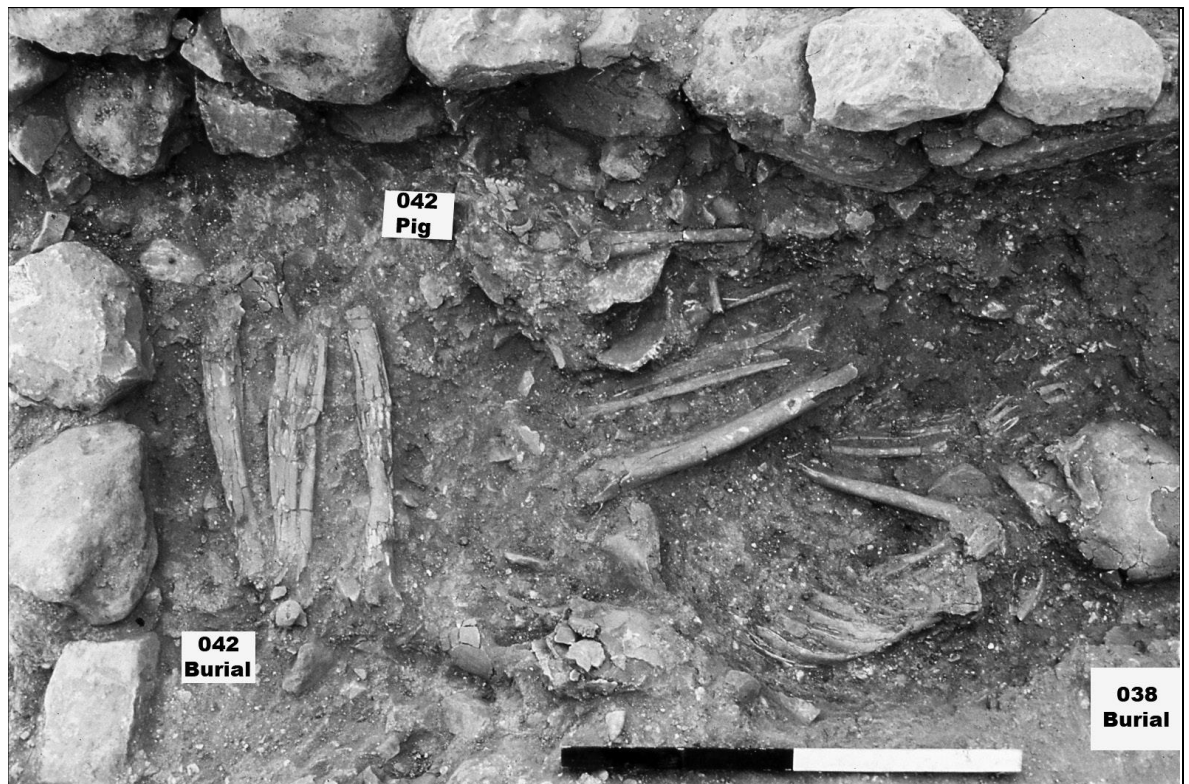

Figure 3.4: Double PPNC burial, with immature pig cranium (Source: Rollefson and Kafafi 2013: Fig. 1.17)

It has been suggested that the pig bones may represent clan-based totemism, given the restricted distribution of them within the burials (Rollefson 1998a). Little else seems to have existed in the way of grave goods, so it is more difficult to infer differential treatment based purely upon mortuary offerings. Because of this, it is hard to tell what the criteria for exclusion would have been, if any existed at all – although we can presume that there *were* criteria, based on the limited number of burials at the site. However, it can be seen from the PPNC phases at the site that pig bones were included in some burials, although by no means in all. The inclusions mostly seem to occur in the corridor building complex in the South Field area of the site, although some also occurred in the 'permanent village' area in the Central Field (Rollefson 1998a). It therefore seems that the distribution of pig bones across the site was not even. Certainly not all burials contain them, and they appear more frequently in some areas than in others. This lead Rollefson to conclude that "If the distribution of pig bone grave offerings is already restricted in both the "herder" (South Field) and "permanent farmer" (Central Field) sectors at 'Ain Ghazal, we may have the earliest solid evidence of clan-based totemism in the Levant." (Rollefson 1998a: 118). As the burials themselves were already restricted (and even more so by the PPNC), to then differentiate further by including pig bones with some and not with others would surely indicate that these burials were being singled out. Possibly they indicate significant figures within the community (or within the 'clan', if Rollefson is correct). Alternatively, perhaps it was meant to mark an individual with a strong association with the (by now domesticated) pigs during life.

However, later investigations of some caves in the East Field at 'Ain Ghazal revealed a number of human burials in Cave 5 (Rollefson and Kafafi 2000). The six burials also contained significant quantities of animal bones, which may have been included as intentional deposits meant for grave goods. A variety of animal species were represented in the deposits, including equids, ovicaprids and other large fauna (*ibid.*). This may argue against 'totemic' associations or against a special status for pigs, but as little has been published regarding the Cave 5 burials it is difficult to theorise further.

Other features

'Ain Ghazal, unlike Kfar HaHoresh, generally lacks the wide variety of animals appearing in burials (either by themselves or as inclusion in human interments). However, it is interesting to note that one feature from the LPPNB contexts was a burial pit in the courtyard behind a two-storey building in North Field. This contained the articulated remains of a juvenile gazelle, lying with its head turned back on its shoulder (Rollefson 1998a). There is no evidence that this behaviour was repeated at the site, and it is hard to theorise as to the purpose of the burial, although it is worth noting that the feet of the gazelle had been charred before it was buried (Rollefson 1998a; Twiss 2008), possibly reflecting the partial burning/scorching of the figurines. Unlike such burials at Kfar HaHoresh, the gazelle was not decapitated, so it was not mirroring the usual human mortuary treatments at that time (although decapitation was by no means universal). However, gazelle may have been another species of significance at the site, along with *Bos* and pigs (although possibly to a lesser degree); as well as the singular gazelle burial (with its charred feet), gazelle horns have also been found at the site. A two-storey house in the North Field had five pairs of gazelle horns, still articulated with skull fragments (Rollefson 1998b). It is thought that their presence there may indicate that the upper floor of that building may have played a special role in ritual observances (Rollefson 1998b), and it has been suggested that there may have been a gazelle cult at the site in the PPNC (Rollefson 1998). The gazelle horns were also charred (Rollefson 1998b), which would appear to reinforce the theory that fire was a component of some ritual behaviours at the site (although not necessarily a frequent or common element). However, as the building had suffered a fire at some point, it is difficult to determine whether the charring of the gazelle horns was intentional, or simply a by-product of the fire. Of course, if fire was an important ritual element at the site, it is entirely possible that the building was burnt on purpose, possibly to mark the end of a phase of occupation or ritual behaviour.

Also found at the site were some bone 'tools'; these were only found in LPPNB contexts (Rollefson et al. 1991). These were made from polished animal ribs, with small incised notches at regular intervals, which occur on one or both lateral edges (Rollefson et al. 1991). What these 'tools' were used for is unclear, and remains speculative at best. It is possible that they actually had no functional purpose at all, and were intended or used purely as decorative or ritual items, rather than as tools. Of course, there is also the possibility that they may have been both

functional and ritualistic or decorative; there is no clear-cut division between the two, and the categories often overlap to a large degree. This is also seen from some of the floors found in the PPNB phases at the site, which show signs of having been finger-painted with red pigment. Patches of two floors are covered with strokes which intersect at points, and are suggestive of stylised feather or wings (Rollefson and Simmons 1987; Schmandt-Besserat 2013). This may have been an intentional, ritualised form of decoration, or simply a pleasing pattern for the residents, or may well have fulfilled both purposes simultaneously.

Another feature at the site was the discovery of a plaster-lined storage pit in a house, which contained three *Bos* metacarpals, overlying a *Bos* figurine (Fig 3.5) (Rollefson and Simmons 1986; 1987). The metacarpals were all marked – scratched, or otherwise modified in some fashion, while one had clear incisions and crosshatching (Rollefson and Simmons 1986, 1987; Rollefson 1986). The relationship between the marked bones and the figurine is considered to be "indicative of some ceremonial correlation" (Rollefson and Simmons 1986: 152). There is no mention of these bones or figurine having been charred, so there would appear to be a difference between this figurine and many of the others, but the depositional context would certainly argue for this having some importance and significance. Figurines clearly played a large role in the life of the 'Ain Ghazal inhabitants, and the ways in which they were used and then disposed of seem to me to argue for that role being multi-faceted. The deposition of this figurine leaves no room for doubt that it was considered to be of importance; significance was undoubtedly attached to it, as it was to the cache of figurines and the two 'killed' ones. However, all of them seem to have been treated differently during their 'lifespan', and all were treated differently at the time of deposition. This leads to the conclusion that they may have fulfilled different functions during their periods of active use.

Figure 3.5: *Bos* metacarpals and figurine (Source: Schmandt-Besserat 2013: Fig. 3.14)

Discussion and Conclusion

One of the problems with much of the literature regarding sites such as 'Ain Ghazal is that many of the interpretations applied to the evidence are overly generalised. They also make a lot of assumptions about the nature of the evidence – infant burials are "probably" sacrificial and the small animal figurines were "probably" charms for hunting magic, for example. The theory that the figurines were part of some hunting magic is based upon uncertain evidence, and is not always well argued. It appeared initially to be mainly based upon the fact that no domestic species seemed to be represented among the animals (Rollefson 1983). However, at an earlier point in the same paper, Rollefson said that species identification for the figurines was difficult, due to their small size. He then relates this miniaturism to the possibility of them representing juvenile animals. This, in turn, could potentially indicate the existence of domestication (Rollefson 1983). However, Bailey (2005) notes that with the production of miniature items accuracy of representation is not the aim; miniatures are cultural creations and reflect human efforts at experimenting with the natural world. While Bailey is referring to things such as bonsai, he also notes that the same principles can be applied to Neolithic

figurines (which is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 4). Miniatures are not only small but often abstract, to a greater or lesser extent, and this abstraction forces a form of interaction and engagement with the object (Bailey 2005). In the case of the 'Ain Ghazal zoomorphic figurines this may have resulted in the people handling them more frequently to examine them more closely, or the abstraction may have been intentional in an attempt to get at the intrinsic nature and spirit of the animal.

Rollefson has also mentioned that several of the figurines bear markings which appear to represent halters, and this, too, is taken as evidence of the presence of domesticates, or semi-domesticates, at the site. If this was the case then the argument for the figurines being charms for hunting magic seems considerably weakened. If, however, we consider the possibility that the markings may have been part of the 'magic', to strengthen or gain control over the animals, perhaps, then it holds together a little better. However, it is possible that both are correct; there would undoubtedly have been a long period during which hunting would have co-existed with incipient domestication, so they are by no means mutually incompatible. It is conceivable that the figurines may have reflected this, and may have been attempts to reinforce human control in both spheres.

One particular feature of interest at this site is the distribution of species, both in terms of domesticates and non-domesticates, and in terms of the faunal record and the use of animals across the site. By the LPPNB and PPNC, the majority of the faunal remains are from domesticated species (Rollefson et al. 1991). In the Central Field, there is a broad range of species represented – both mammalian and non-mammalian – but goats are the only definite domesticate present. In the South Field, the domesticated species include goat, pig, dog and cattle, and there is a marked decrease in the number of wild species represented – although this information may come from a later stage of development (Rollefson and Simmons 1986). However, for a long time at the site, goats were the predominant faunal species at the site (Rollefson 1983). It is of interest, therefore, to note that the number of goat figurines found does not in any way reflect the level of their economic significance at the site (Rollefson and Simmons 1987). Cattle, on the other hand, do not appear to have been domesticated until the Late PPNB at least, but are predominant in the figurines. This would seem to argue for the perceived importance of the 'wild' over the 'tame'. However, this changes later on, when pigs (by then a domesticate at the site) begin to be included in human burials, clearly

signifying their increased importance to the residents, and possibly the switch from the dominance of the wild to the importance of the domestic. This switch is further reflected in the decreasing numbers of animal figurines at this time, which may indicate a change in focus for the community and its ceremonies.

There can be no doubt that symbolic ritual played a very large part in the lives – possibly even the normal, day-to-day lives – of the inhabitants of 'Ain Ghazal. The material evidence from the site is such as to leave no room for dissent on that score, and it seemed clear from the earliest stages of excavation that the statuary and the figurines "project a strong picture of intensive attention to politico-religious ceremony and ritual" (Rollefson 1983: 30). However, the evidence seems to indicate that ritual and ceremony occurred on more than one level. While the massive plaster statues argue for ceremony on a grand scale, the smaller human and animal figurines might have played a part in smaller, perhaps more domestic rituals. Perhaps they "indicate a less public and more private religious level that dealt with the rites and concerns of a family or larger kin group on a day-to-day basis." (Rollefson 1986: 51). On the other hand, Schmandt-Besserat theorises that the figurines may have played a larger role than this in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic society at the site, suggesting that

> "The clay animals were metaphors of the forces of nature that fostered consciousness of the place of humans in the universe. By expressing the numinous, they facilitated the elaboration of a cosmology that bonded individuals of the same culture." (Schmandt-Besserat 1997: 57).

These are not mutually incompatible ideas; often it is the small, daily details that bond people and groups together. It is important to remember that ritual does not consist entirely of the spectacular event and the grand occasion; the little things that people do daily or weekly and as habit are as much a ritual as the big ceremony that occurs once a season or once a year. The figurines may well have played a part in small domestic rituals and in the daily lives of the households in the community. They might also have been used in the larger-scale ceremonies during which the whole community may have come together. This communal use may have aided bonding as much as the ceremony itself, by giving individuals the sense that they have all contributed something towards it. Harvest Festivals come to mind as a modern-day analogy, as an example.

I would further postulate a possible correlation between the burials and the figurines at the site. It seems from the literature as though the burials tail off towards the LPPNB and the PPNC, a trend which is reflected in the figurine record as well. Perhaps, when taken as a whole, we could see this as evidence for a change in the society of the time; the focus would seem to have moved away from items and behaviour which had presumably previously been of considerable importance. However, if this correlation did exist, then it may go further; when we consider the human 'trash' burials at the site, they are generally considered to be the remains of people who were probably not very important, or were poorly thought of – they were disposed of in what we think to be rubbish pits, presumably indicating a low status. However, given the low number of burials at the site overall, even these burials may hold significance; the deceased were still considered worth keeping at the site, which the majority of people were not. Animal figurines were sometimes also found in these rubbish pits, but the context is considered to be different; for figurines, it is thought to have been part of a ritual deposition. But if the figurines were deliberately and ritually deposited there – not indicative of a low opinion of them, given their apparent importance at the site – then why should we assume that it is different for the human burials? Clearly it is another form of mortuary treatment, but it is not necessarily the result of low status or poor opinion; that is, perhaps, an association created by our more modern sensibilities and notions.

It is obvious that fire played an important part in the ritual behaviour at the site, occurring in a number of contexts. Figurines were clearly exposed to fire at some point in their existence (and maybe at more than one point), while the gazelle horns and the buried gazelle both showed signs of burning as well. A building was also burned, although it is possible that this latter event was not intentional. If the burning of the building was unrelated to ritual activities, then it would cast a doubt on whether the charred gazelle horns were intentionally scorched; however, given the known exposure to fire of the figurines, and the charred feet (but no other parts) of the interred gazelle, it is reasonable to think the gazelle horns were also intentionally exposed to fire at some point. The building is likely to have been intentionally burned, based on an apparent lack of burned buildings in general, which would seem to indicate that they did not tend to catch fire accidentally. Additionally, the fact that it had burned and had presumably been left in that condition strengthens the theory, as there is no clear evidence of clearing and rebuilding in that location. There is no way of knowing what purpose fire was

thought to fulfil; it can be viewed as a dangerous, transformative and potentially cleansing element, any or all of which qualities may have been of significance to the inhabitants.

There must also have been a strong element of display at the site, although considerably less than at some other sites. Consider the figurines with the scorched rear ends (possibly arranged around a hearth), the numerous statues and busts at the site, and the five pairs of gazelle horns found in a building – as well as the skull caches, plastered masks, and other bits of symbolic or ritual paraphernalia. There can be no doubt that much of this was intended for at least a limited period of public display.

'Ain Ghazal is a site where we can see that animals were integrated into every aspect of human society; from their food and subsistence, to their mortuary practices, to the less material aspects of their lives – there seems to have been no part where animals did not have a role to play. The inclusion of pig bones with human burials from the Late PPNB onwards could be seen as a statement, as can the burial of the gazelle on its own, and the inclusion of animal figurines and human burials in the same 'trash' contexts; animals were to be treated in a very similar fashion to humans. This is reflected in some of the treatment of the figurines and statues; the truncated animal figurines, which were effectively left with nothing but their 'torsos' but which were still able to be placed in an upright position, resemble in their treatment the human busts, reinforcing the idea that perhaps there was no conceptual separation between them. The pierced figurines were also buried in a sub-floor pit, in a similar manner to many human burials from this period, and in a building containing a number of other (human) mortuary deposits. The pigmented and plastered skulls found at the site probably had to be defleshed prior to being coated in the plaster, which would then have 'refleshed' them (Bonogofsky 2001). While there is no direct correlation for this at 'Ain Ghazal, it does call to mind the use of lime plaster at Kfar HaHoresh, including over the composite image comprised of human and animal bones; possibly this was also a form of refleshing.

The deposit of the *Bos* figurine with the *Bos* metacarpal bones probably represents another form of mingling; not of human with animal, but of realities. The created and the hunted, placed together and merging the figurative with the actual. This is similar to the mingling of bloods found at Çayönü Tepesi and the combined

burials at Kfar HaHoresh (discussed in Chapters 6 and 7), as well as the instances of hybrid images (discussed in Chapter 4); a fusing of different worlds together. It is a theme which appears again and again when looking at human-animal interactions, as we will see throughout this thesis.

Although much has been written about 'Ain Ghazal, both as a site in general and on particular aspects of the archaeological evidence, there are still many aspects of the site and the archaeological evidence which would bear further examination. Although the statues, busts and figurines from 'Ain Ghazal are both interesting and significant, it is wrong to concentrate upon them to the detriment of other aspects of the site, which is what the literature often appears to do. As mentioned above, it is possible that some of the statuary or figurines could provide insights into the burials. This proves that it is important not to study each aspect of the archaeological evidence in isolation, but instead to look at all aspects of a site in conjunction with each other. When we do this with the case study of 'Ain Ghazal, we begin to see patterns emerging in the ways in which humans and non-humans were co-existing and interacting. The mirroring of practices between humans and animals, in mortuary treatments and in the treatment of representations, is a clear example of this, and also begins to demonstrate the breaking down (or removal) of boundaries between human and non-human identities which is explored further in the rest of this thesis.

Chapter 4: Representations and Depictions

When the flush of a new-born sun fell first on Eden's green and gold,

Our father Adam sat under the Tree and scratched with a stick in the mould;

And the first rude sketch that the world had seen was joy to his mighty heart,

Till the Devil whispered behind the leaves, "It's pretty, but is it Art?"

Kipling: "The Conundrum of the Workshops"

Representations of animals can be found throughout history – and prehistory – almost everywhere where humans are or have been found. It is one of the many ways in which the position of animals within and their relations to human society has manifested and been made explicit, along with the treatment of animals in death (which is discussed in Chapter 6). As a result, a study of these representations can help to explain how human and non-human identities were perceived and expressed, as well as how they changed.

Our fascination with the world around us, and perhaps especially with animals, is both deep and enduring. Even today we can see that animals have a hold on our imaginations and our emotions; we may feel a connection with particular species, or have a deep and visceral fear of another. We paint animals, photograph them, film them, have them tattooed upon our bodies, use them for spiritual purposes. Now that the majority of us have lives involving considerably less exposure to 'wild' animals than in our distant past, we go to look at them in zoos and safari parks, as well as watch nature programmes about them on TV. And the reasons for doing these things are manifold; we might like the way they look, or the way they behave, or perhaps we feel a spiritual connection with that particular species, or any number of any other possible reasons. But our perceptions of them are also varied, and what may be an inspiring or beautiful animal for one person may be a food source or a potential predator for others. They may be one or many of these things at the same time, and the same is true for depictions of animals; an image of a fearsome predator may serve as both a record of something to be wary of or to fear, and as a representation of its beauty and grace.

Just as our modern-day perceptions of animals are variable, and our reasons for depicting them equally so, the same would have been true for our forebears, almost from the earliest times; it is limited to think of one straightforward interpretation for representations. Site after site would seem to support Lewinsohn's statement

that "All archaeological finds indicate that Homo sapiens, even in prehistoric days, was materialistic and highly practical. At the same time, his matter-of-factness did not prevent him from liking amusing and ornamental things nor from having great artistic gifts." (Lewinsohn 1954: 66). Their ideas and feelings about the animals around them would have been just as complex, as would their reasons for choosing which ones to paint or carve, and which ones to leave out. It is those variations that are of especial interest, as we can often gain as much (if not more) information from differences than we can from similarities. Which areas and groups of people chose which animals to depict, why, and how those choices related to the reality of their daily lives, is the core of this chapter.
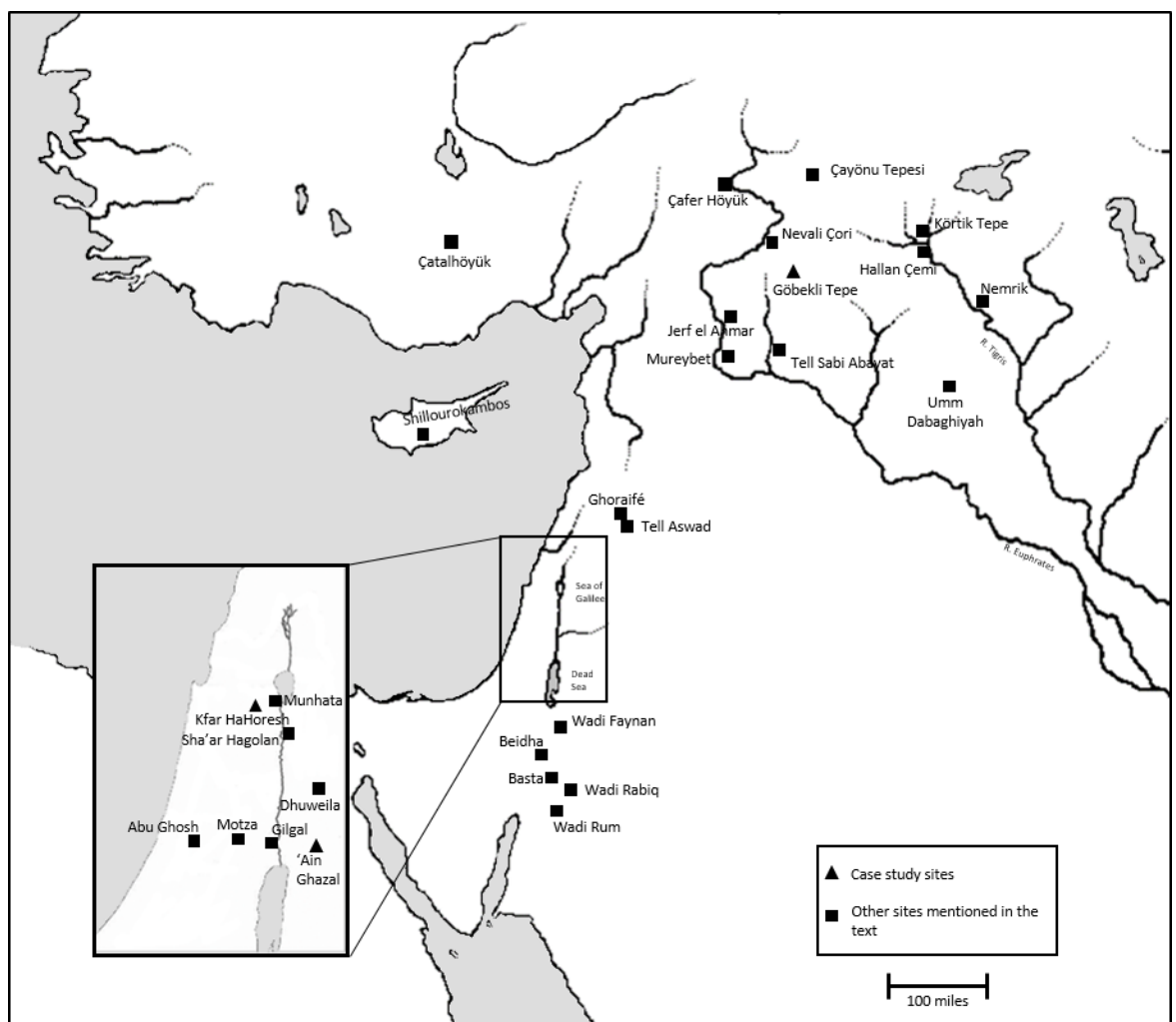

Figure 4.1: Map of sites mentioned in chapter (T. Jones)

The Pre-Pottery Neolithic is a period that was rich in art. I am, in this thesis, using the definition of 'art' as "…the process or product of deliberately arranging elements in a way that appeals to the senses or emotions", and which encompasses "…a diverse range of human activities, creations and ways of expression…"

(Smashing Magazine 2010). In the rather more prosaic definition of Collins Dictionary,

> "the creation of works of beauty or other special significance; the exercise of human skill (as distinguished from nature); imaginative skill as applied to representations of the natural world or figments of the imagination; the products of man's creative activities." (Collins Dictionary Online)

This is shown in many ways, from clay figurines to monumental carved pillars. Although placed in the context of the 'Neolithic Revolution' (e.g., Bar Yosef 1998; Simmons 2011; Cauvin 2002), such representations did not spring from an artistic void, but instead emerged from a long-standing tradition of artistic behaviour which can clearly be seen in earlier periods. The many examples of astounding prehistoric cave paintings, dating back as far as the Palaeolithic period (Hadenham 1980; Dowson and Porr 2002) and appearing in locations across the world, provide plentiful evidence of this – and many of these also depict animals, often in more detail than humans. In the Levant, evidence from the Natufian period suggests that their representational art was largely zoomorphic in nature, mostly comprising images of gazelle and deer carved on small, portable objects (Cauvin 2000). These were joined by representations of bulls in the Khiamian, as well as the appearance of humans in the (regional) artistic record (*ibid.*), and it is clear that these artistic preoccupations remained in place for at least the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A and B; the animal and human figurines from 'Ain Ghazal were essentially a new form of the small portable art of the Natufian.

Many theories have been put forward about why certain animals were chosen for depiction over others, and why some animals are pre-dominant at one site but almost totally absent from another. There has been much written about cults, shamanism, totemism, perspectivism and related concepts (e.g., Groleau 2009; Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005; Viveiros de Castro 1998). It is possible that some of these theories may be applicable to a greater or lesser degree. We do know that some animals appear to have had significance to local populations for far longer than just the Neolithic period. For example, a 'bear cult' (to use one terminology) may have had importance in the Neolithic Near East, as seen at Çatalhöyük with the bear seal stamps and depictions (Turkan 2007; Russell 2016). However, there is also some evidence of a bear cult having been in existence since the middle

Palaeolithic (Turkan 2007). We can see that, for whatever reasons, some animals clearly had a greater hold on the minds and emotions of the populace than others, and accordingly gained a greater level of significance in their representations.

However, even the ways in which the chosen animals were represented varied from site to site – and within sites as well. At Çatalhöyük, for example, although bears are shown in monumental reliefs at the site, there are no bear figurines (Turkan 2007), although there are stamp seal impressions depicting bears (Russell 2016; Fig. 4.6). Other sites may have many animal figurines, but few or no carvings or reliefs. This fluidity of expression and choice of subjects can tell us a lot about the society that produced them. Bears, for instance, are often seen as being important as symbols of death and resurrection (presumably relating to their annual hibernation) (Turkan 2007), so it may be that this is why the bear was significant for the people of Çatalhöyük. But death is a universal event – everything and everyone dies at some point, and yet the bear does not appear to have special significance at every site in the Near East at this time. So, were other societies less interested in these things, or did other animals signify this for them in place of the bear? Did the bear mean something (if anything) else to them? And what is it these variations mean?

Certainly, other sites seem to 'favour' different species, insofar as other species dominate at different sites, or at least seem to play a significant part in the life that went on at them, whether physically or spiritually. The fox is one animal that occurs again and again at sites in the Levant during this period. Perhaps the most famous examples are those from Kfar HaHoresh, where they play a significant part in the mortuary record (discussed in chapters 6 and 7). However, foxes also appear at Nevalı Çori and Göbekli Tepe as part of the rich iconography at those sites (Peters and Schmidt 2004; Schmidt 2010). It is often considered (e.g., Goring-Morris and Belfer-Cohen (2002); Sapir-Hen et al. (2009); Galili (2004)) that the evidence from Kfar HaHoresh, in conjunction with the pictorial and faunal evidence from other sites, is a strong indication that the fox may have "played a symbolic role in the belief system of Levantine communities at this time" (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004: 176). But, judging by the archaeological record, this is in fact not true for all Levantine communities, as foxes are often poorly represented. Some of these variations between sites can probably be ascribed to the differences in the local fauna; what was available to the local population, and what was more unusual in their area. However, this variation can also largely be ascribed to

differences in experience, outlook and attitude, and possibly to local beliefs, whether social or spiritual (insofar as those can be separated).

However, many sites also include representations of animals which do not, and have never, existed. These often take the form of animal-human hybrids, in one shape or another – some more human than others; some mostly animal with only a hint of human (Borić 2007). It has been suggested by Collins (2002) that when the animals that we encountered in reality were insufficient or inadequate to represent particular concepts or to evoke particular emotions, it became necessary for us to create creatures to fill those gaps. These images depict fantastic creatures, blending elements together to create a "terrifying manifestation of uncontrolled 'other'" (Collins 2002: xx), which may have provided some sort of psychological outlet for the people at the time. Nor is this limited to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic; images and figurines like this appear in multiple cultures and periods, to the point where

> "Culture teems with animals who have no exact equivalent in nature. A huge, make-believe fauna of monsters, prodigies, and wonders slithers and swarms through all of the arts, as though the natural world were somehow deficient." (Shepard 1996: 175).

Two earlier famous examples come from Palaeolithic Europe. The 'Sorcerer' from Les Trois Frères in France (Hadingham 1980), a part-animal (cervid ears and horns, a tail like a horse), part-human (facial features, genitals) carved image which was initially interpreted as a representation of a Palaeolithic sorcerer or possibly a magician clothed in a ritual costume (Hadingham 1980). This interpretation was later amended to suggest it was a representation of a spirit or deity, related to game and hunting. The other famous example is the lion-man from Hohlenstein-Stadel in south-west Germany; a figurine with a human body and a lion's head, carved from a mammoth tusk, which is believed to date to approximately 40,000 years ago during the last Ice Age (Dowson and Porr 2002). The lion-man is thought to be the earliest example of humans giving form to something that could never have existed, and it is certainly a very detailed carving; it has been estimated that it would have taken around 400 hours of work to produce it ("Living With the Gods": 23.10.17). Dowson and Porr (2002) believe that it represents an altered state of consciousness which is frequently associated with

shamanic practices; they argue that hybrid images are 3D representations of a shaman's bodily experience while in that altered consciousness.

These hybrid figures confirm, more strongly than any other representations, that we cannot simply assume a prehistoric aesthetic movement; that the activity is unlikely to have taken the form of a pure "art for art's sake". It would be wrong to assume that people never carved or painted or scratched or moulded something "just because" (indeed, it is very likely they did, much as we may idly doodle today). However, it is likely that in many – possibly in the majority of – cases, there would have been underlying motivations and impulses. For example, the figures of hybrids such as the Nevalı Çori 'totem pole' (Fig 4.7) and the Shillourokambos figurine, discussed below, would have required considerably more thought than 'simply' reproducing what they could see. As such they are more likely to have been the result of extrinsic rather than intrinsic motivations.

Figurines

Although we know that figurines were part of life in the Near East before the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, this period seems to have produced an explosion of artistic expression far beyond anything that came before, at least in this area, and the archaeological evidence shows that figurines played a large part in that. They occur at a wide variety of sites across the region, varying in both quantity and quality from site to site. Many sites have anthropomorphic figurines as well as zoomorphic ones, and some have figurines that show elements of both. From the subjects depicted and the numbers in which they appear, as well as the contexts in which they have been found, it is clear that these figures played an important part in the lives of the people living at and using these sites.

The Levantine mainland is not the only place where figurines of these kinds are found. Cyprus also has a strong tradition of figurines, including one from Shillourokambos (a Pre-Pottery Neolithic B site). This shows a carved human face, but also has pointed ears like a feline, and possibly whiskers as well. As such it potentially represents a cat/human hybrid (Jones 2009). Although cats (of the smaller kinds) are much more common on Cyprus during this period than they are on the mainland, hybrid figurines also occur there, although not depicting feline characteristics. One figurine from Gilgal 1 in the Jordan Valley shows a bird,

which is mainly naturalistic in style but which (on closer inspection) only has one leg (which may be of no significance) and has wingtips that resemble human hands (Noy 1989). These figurines are more subtle in their hybrid representations than is sometimes the case; the 'alien' elements are comparatively unobtrusive, or even only hinted at (as with the 'possible whiskers' and the wingtips on the bird). Whether the bird figurine represents a bird with the beginnings of human characteristics, or a human who has almost fully transformed into a bird, however, will probably never be known; unfortunately, with this uncertainty, we are missing information that could shed further light on the significance of the figurine. However, it is actually the ambiguity and subtlety of figurines like this that may well have provided the basis of their power. Their meanings were not self-evident, but could only be understood by oral explanation and local traditions. They were both embedded in and articulated through the social beliefs of the society.

The meaning and intention behind the creation of figurines (both zoo- and anthropomorphic) is something that has been heavily debated. For some people, it is generally accepted that the figurines (of both kinds) represent either deities, or were media in rituals which were performed for deities (Najjar 2002). However, for others, this is less evident. At some sites, the deposition of the figurines would seem to indicate a significance beyond that of the everyday, but even this is not always the case. At Dhuweila, for example, only one zoomorphic figurine was found, although the site has many examples of rock carvings (as will be discussed later). The figurine was carved from limestone and represents a resting animal, which is most likely a gazelle (Betts 1987). I would conjecture that, in this instance, given the comparative scarcity of the figurine in comparison to other forms of artistic expression at that site, the carved gazelle does not represent a deity or supernatural being in and of itself. It may simply be another way of depicting that particular animal. If it were intended to represent a deity, I would anticipate there being more figurines than there were, as it is unlikely that only one such representation would be made. At the site of Nemrik 9, two distinct groups of art objects were found. Some were formed of clay, and mostly represented Suidae heads. The others were carved from stone, and these comprised sixteen sculptures, depicting bird's heads, Felidae and humans (Fig 4.2) (Kozlowski 1989). These were considered to be signs of an original, local cult, and the subject matter is similar to that found at Mureybet in Syria, and Çafer Höyük in Turkey (Kozlowski 1989; Russell 2019).
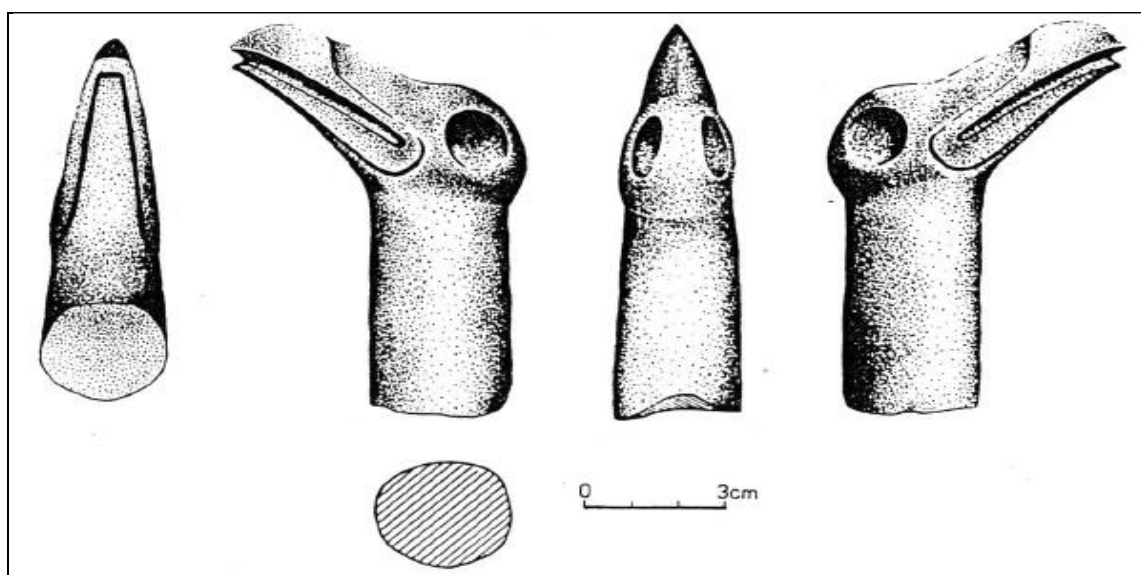
Figure 4.2: Bird sculptures, Nemrik 9 (Source: Kozlowski 1989: Fig. 9)

At Nevalı Çori the zoomorphic figurines are made from clay, although they do not form a large part of the material evidence at the site; according to Morsch (2002) there are fewer than 30 zoomorphic figurines, forming 4% of the total figurine record. However, at Nevalı Çori, they are not considered to represent divine beings, despite their quantity. Their quality, as well as their size, is inferior to that of the impressive stone sculptures found at the site, and the iconography is not the same (Morsch 2002). In addition, the figurines are not found in the houses or the 'cult' buildings at the site, but have instead mostly been found in open spaces and pits (Morsch 2002). It has been suggested that they could have been toys, or that they could perhaps have been figurines for using in magic, or as part of a bigger and more complex religious system, but it is unlikely that they were meant to be goddesses (Morsch 2002). Given that the quality of the figurines is lower than that of the stone sculptures found elsewhere at the site, it would seem that less attention was paid to the creation of the figurines. The fact that they were made in clay while the sculptures are in stone, and are therefore less durable, would also seem to support the conclusion that these figurines were not intended to directly represent the divine. However, they may possibly have been used in ceremonies or activities relating to the divine. In a similar fashion, although many animal figurines are found at Çatalhöyük, they are crude clay figures, lacking the detail and refinement of the wall-paintings and reliefs found elsewhere at the site, and

they are generally found stuck between bricks (Nakamura and Meskell 2009; Meskell et al. 2008; Martin and Meskell 2012).

However, the assertions of Morsch (2002) are somewhat contradicted by Schmidt (2007). He states that at Nevalı Çori there were hardly any clay figurines of animals, while the majority of the limestone figures are depictions of animals. This includes a number of individual objects, most notably the miniature T-pillars, some of which were only a few centimetres, but which recall those found at Göbekli Tepe (Schmidt 2007). Other notable objects were a bird, found in the same layer as a stone (presumed human) torso; the beak of the bird had been carved to form a human face; the 'bird-man' of Nevalı Çori. In another wall, a stone head – larger than lifesize – had been built into the structure with the face looking inwards, leaving the snake which had been carved on the back of the head still visible (Schmidt 2007).

The theory that figurines (specifically the zoomorphic ones) may have been used for magic or rituals is one that occurs and recurs across many sites. One reason for this is that animal figurines from many sites (including 'Ain Ghazal, Munhata and Sha'ar Hagolan) show signs of having been pierced, stabbed or cut (Freikman and Garfinkel 2009). This is often considered to be an indicator that they may have been used in rituals, or for some form of hunting magic, to ensure success, perhaps (Freikman and Garfinkel 2009). Many of the figurines which have been treated in this way seem to represent animals which may have been hunted. For example, at 'Ain Ghazal they mostly seemed to represent cattle, and at Sha'ar Hagolan most of the 38 zoomorphic figurines found at the site seem to represent horned quadrupeds. However, it is impossible to identify the exact species; they could be aurochs, sheep, goats, or any other similarly shaped species (Freikman and Garfinkel 2009). At Körtik Tepe, a carved stone figure of a wild goat was found, which was unusual for the site as most of the other figurines found there were of undefined creatures (Ozkaya and Coskun 2011). Stordeur (2010), however, believes that the clay zoomorphic figurines (especially from the MPPNB) are "almost always" domestic animals (Stordeur 2010: 126), in contradiction to most other sources. This seems unlikely, however; many animals (although possibly domesticated by the MPPNB) are unlikely to have changed morphologically sufficiently to make them identifiable as such in clay figurines, and there is also the problem that many figurines are insufficiently detailed to make a clear species

identification possible. When these are combined, it is hard to say that the figurines were representing domesticated species.

The figurines may also represent environmental differences between sites. The figures at 'Ain Ghazal and at Beidha, for example, are similar in style, but there are no ibex figurines at 'Ain Ghazal, so it may be that ibex were much more common at Beidha (Rollefson 1983). However, as there have been suggestions of cattle cults relating to the predominance of *Bos* in the figurines, perhaps the presence of ibex in the Beidha figurines reflects a comparable importance to the population there. On the other hand, other sites (including Basta, Tell Aswad and Ghoraife) also had zoomorphic figurines, similar in style, numbers and species, to those found at both Beidha and 'Ain Ghazal (Schmandt-Besserat 1997), and a study of these in relation to the faunal records for each site could provide further insight regarding this.

The site at Sha'ar Hagolan dates from the Yarmukian at the beginning of the Pottery Neolithic, but it is clear that the production of figurines was still occurring at that time, although it may have been becoming less common. The zoomorphic figurines from this site are of considerably lower quality than the anthropomorphic figurines (Freikman and Garfinkel 2009), with poorer material, a cruder style and no decoration. Again, we might conjecture from this that the significance or use of this particular type of figurine was, perhaps, on the wane by this period. Freikman and Garfinkel (2009) suggest that the decline in the numbers of zoomorphic figurines appears to coincide with the introduction of domestication. The use of the figurines may also have been changing at this time, or at least the manner of their deposition. There is little evidence at Sha'ar Hagolan of the animal figurines being ceremonially buried in pits, as was often the case at 'Ain Ghazal (Freikman and Garfinkel 2009). Although some figurines and plaster statues have been found buried in pits in a similar manner, which could argue for them being of some deeper significance, it has been suggested that as the zoomorphic figurines were generally of a lower quality, they were more likely to have been used as toys or as educational items, rather than them being objects of veneration (Freikman and Garfinkel 2009).

At Çatalhöyük, statuettes were found depicting women and leopards in association, which have been interpreted as showing a desire to control and also to be associated with powerful animals in unique ways (Lewis-Williams and Pearce

2005). Many animal representations from this period do seem to be more than simple depictions of animals as they actually appeared. Often they are shown with human parts (and depicted humans often have animal traits), such as in the bird/human sculptures from Nevalı Çori (Verhoeven 2002a; Fig. 4.2), and many of the carvings and sculptures found at Göbekli Tepe, where a wide range of animal-humans were portrayed, including animals with human heads, as well as animals and birds on human heads (Verhoeven 2002a). At Çatalhöyuk, there is a vessel showing a human face with bucrania forming the eyebrows (Meskell 2008).
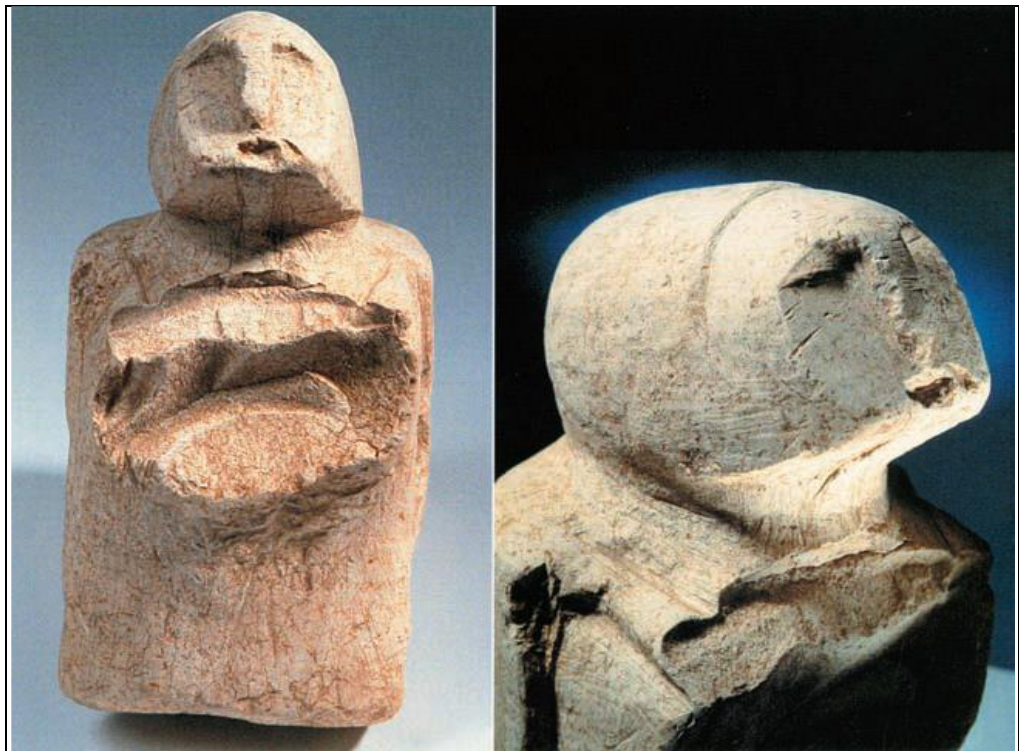
Figure 4.3: Nevalı Çori, sculpture of bird with a human face (Source: Schmidt 2010a: Fig. 12)

Reliefs and carvings

Relief and incised carvings are other forms of artistic expression which have also been used to depict animals, and which have been found at many sites across the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Near East, such as Nevalı Çori and Dhuweila (Schmidt 2010a; Betts 2002). These vary considerably in content and quality (at least to our eyes), from elaborate bas-reliefs to apparently basic rock carvings, and from the seemingly fantastical to simple representations of the animals known to the creators. However, the intent behind each image is unknown; they may vary as

much as the images themselves do, or they may have more in common than might (at first) be supposed.

Rock art is a form of art which can be problematic, especially as regards the dating of such material; rock carvings are often found in isolated locations, so there can be issues with a lack of datable material and context for them (Darvill 2003). Although this is starting to change with the use of uranium-thorium (U-Th) dating, which has been used in some areas to date layers of carbonate overlying rock art and cave paintings (Hoffman et al. 2018), this is not a technique which has been applied much – if at all – in the Near East as yet, so the difficulties of dating the rock art in the region remain. I am using the term 'rock art' to refer to both petroglyphs (where an image or mark has been made by carving, incising, engraving, pecking or grinding the rock surface), and to pictographs (where an image or mark has been made by painting organic or mineral pigments onto a rock surface), after Darvill (2003). However, he does also note that in making these identifications and applying our terminology, we are imposing a structure which may have been both unknown and irrelevant to the creators. We are also applying a series of assumptions from our own modern culture about the nature of the marks we are looking at (Darvill 2003). It can also be hard, in the case of apparently non-representational marks, to discern what has been deliberately made and what is accidental or natural. However, it is important to include these examples of human expression as, even when we allow for difficulties in dating and interpretation, the widespread nature of rock carvings (appearing as they do in locations and cultures around the world) and the repetition of similar themes is of interest in the context of this discussion.

Rock carvings in the Levantine region have largely been found in Jordan (although many of them remain undated) and are also known in Turkey. In Israel, however, the only known examples of rock art for a long time were from the Negev, until many examples were discovered at Wadi Faynan WF400 (Pinkett and Mithen 2007). The images in Jordan include wild animals and human figures, as well as abstract motifs (Pinkett and Mithen 2007), and the images at WF400 are similar to those found in northeastern Jordan, especially those from Dhuweila. The rock carvings from Dhuweila are associated only with the PPNB phase of the site, and the majority of them are of animals (Fig. 4.4). Given the faunal record from that site, it seems likely that they are mainly intended to represent gazelles (Betts 1987). The finds from Dhuweila also produced eight carved stones, some of which also

had carvings of animals on them (Betts 1987). However, these do not appear to have been assigned any special significance, at least after they were created, as they had all been reused in structures with no apparent concern for the designs carved upon them (Betts 1987). This would lead to the conclusion that if there was any special significance to these stones, it lay in the act of carving the images, rather than in the images themselves. This may also have been true of the rock art, which would explain why there are multiple images of (what appear to be) the same thing; if the importance lay in the act of carving, or the creation of the image, then it would need to be done repeatedly. Ross and Davidson (2006) notes that many studies infer that rock art *results* from ritual activity, without necessarily being produced either for or during it. Solomon (2007) notes that, among the San people, images are often painted over with others, which may indicate that durability may not have been a requirement for the pictures, or else that repainting images 'reactivated' them in some way. This could also apply to rock carvings, which may be another explanation for the repeated depiction of the same animals.
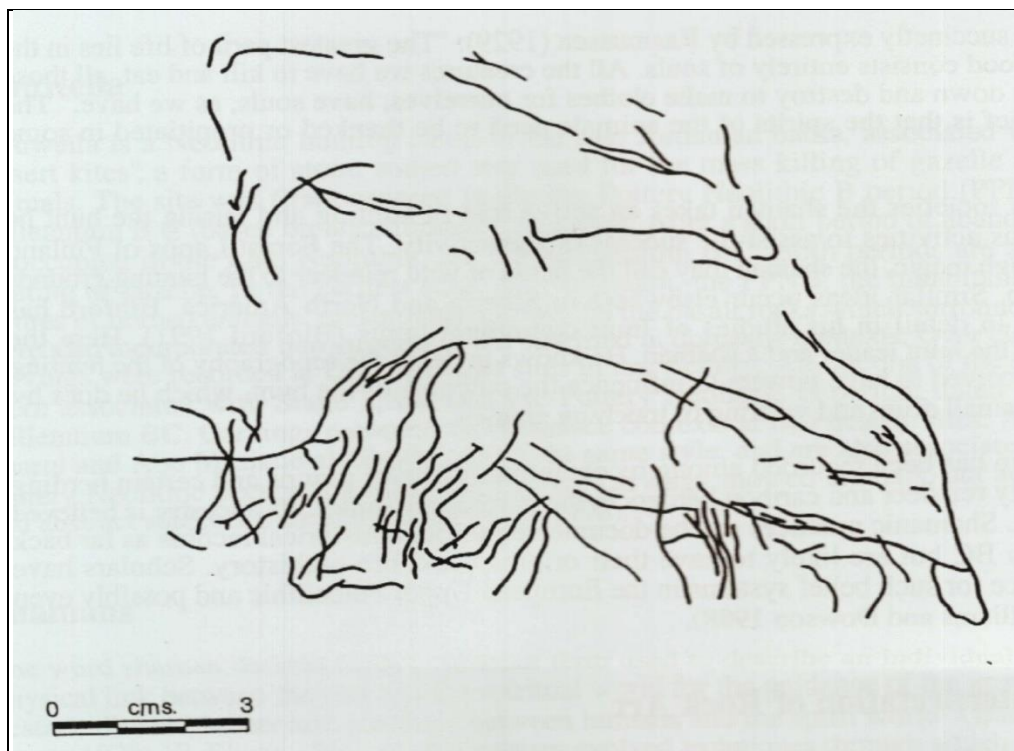

Figure 4.4: Rock carvings (probably gazelle), Dhuweila (Source: Betts 2002: 112)

The same may be true at WF400, where six boulders have been carved with images of animals. Many of the animals shown are four-legged, and have large curved

horns; this particular image recurs over all six boulders, although it is not the only creature that is depicted. Boulder 1 has twelve images (mostly the horned animals) carved on one face of the boulder, and although the dates are uncertain they are thought to date from the PPNA or PPNB (Pinkett and Mithen 2007). However, one image is situated away from the others, towards the back of the boulder, and does not have the same shape; it appears to be a camel, although this is the only depiction of a camel at WF400 (Pinkett and Mithen 2007). For the other images, although there are clear differences in style between the carvings, there is no overlap of the images, which may indicate that they were created in a single event (Pinkett and Mithen 2007). If it was indeed the carving of the images that was significant, then an event which included or required the carving of several images in one go could have been something of great importance – perhaps a major hunt. Not all of the boulders had so many images – Boulder 2 only had two carvings, one of which was the 'usual' horned animal, and one which lacked the horns and had a different body shape, and Boulder 6 also only had one or two carvings, although again they were the 'usual' (Pinkett and Mithen 2007). This repetition of images could in itself be a signifier of ritual behaviour, as Ross and Davidson have suggested that

> "Repetition has also been identified as an element commonly used within individual rituals as an aid to heighten awareness and stimulate the senses... Used in this way, we would expect to find repetition of individual motifs or groups of motifs on the same panel or face. The use of repetition in a number of other ways would also result in individual motifs clustering on a single panel or in a restricted area." (Ross and Davidson 2006: 319).

The other three boulders had more images each, but on some of them there has been some overlapping or later carvings, so not all the images are very clear. Boulder 3 has more of the horned animals, and it is possible that one of them was carved with a rider, but the image has been obscured by later inscriptions (Pinkett and Mithen 2007). Boulder 4 has twelve carvings, as well as some more modern additions, and most of them are the quadrupeds with large curved horns. One of them is shown with a rider, but it does not have the curved, oversized horns, so it may be a different animal (possibly a donkey) (Pinkett and Mithen 2007). Boulder 5 has several images and several layers of engravings, but they are overlapping so

there are only fifteen discrete images, nine of which were more images of the horned animal (Pinkett and Mithen 2007). It is uncertain what this animal is meant to be, but the large curved horns could suggest a goat, perhaps, or a creature like a gazelle. Again, the overlapping of images could in itself be an indication that these images were used or created for a particular purpose; possibly as a form of ritual activity, or possibly as a form of teaching or mnemonic device, as the Australian Aboriginals still use rock markings today (Layton 2001); it has been suggested that rock art motifs may have been produced as mnemonic devices

> "...in association with the teaching of aspects of ritual or ceremony so that similar motifs viewed at a later date would assist the person to recall the information accurately. If motifs were produced... each time a teaching session was repeated, panels with clustered motifs would result, or alternatively, existing motifs would have been re-emphasised by re-marking or rubbing." (Ross and Davidson 2006: 319).

Rock art is also known from other locations, such as the Jawa area, Jebel Hamra in southern Jordan, Wadi Rum and Wadi Rabiq, and Jebel Qara, some of which bear similiarities to the images found at WF400 (Pinkett and Smith 2007).

Whitley (2011) describes rock art as 'landscape art' (307), which could be understood in a number of ways. It is art that sits within the landscape, and which may draw upon the landscape and natural world around it for inspiration, but which also by its creation becomes part of the landscape itself. The nature and purpose of rock art can be debated, and the interpretation of it is possibly affected by what and where it is; carvings in more 'conventional' settings perhaps present themselves in a more clear-cut fashion, lending themselves to particular interpretations more easily. But rock art is often found in isolated places, on rough boulders, which may possibly lead to a dissonance between the perceived setting and possible interpretations, thereby potentially skewing our understanding. However, it has been suggested that while rock art may have been created as graffiti or for other non-religious reasons, the majority of it probably has religious origins (Whitley 2011). This theory is based on the restricted nature of the iconography common in rock art, as well as the fact that it is often located in unusual places and its association with other ceremonial objects, amongst other things (Whitley 2011). For Whitley, the isolation and separateness of the locations

where rock art has been found can be an indicator for religious behaviour, but this may not necessarily be the case; while it may be correct in some circumstances, there are some sites where there are few – if any – other indications of ceremonial or religious behaviour, and a few carvings on a rock are insufficient on their own to be decisively put into that category. However, according to Whitley, even those carvings which may have had religious origins can be (very) broadly categorised into two sections – art which is meant to portray visionary imagery, and 'other' – and these categories may roughly parallel the differences between shamanic and non-shamanic religions (Whitley 2011).

Other sites have monumental carvings and reliefs depicting animals and humans, and combinations of the two, often on stone pillars or stelae. Göbekli Tepe, for instance, has many examples of carvings of both animals and humans on stone sculptures (Schmidt 2012; Verhoeven 2002a), which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Nevalı Çori also has many carved stone pillars and sculptures with images of humans and birds on them (Hauptmann 1987; Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005), while Körtik Tepe has stone vessels, some of which have been carved or inscribed with animal figures, the most common of which are snakes, scorpions, wild goats, birds, and mixed creatures (Ozkaya and Coskun 2011). These are believed by some to be representative of the belief system at the time (Ozkaya and Coskun 2011). Most of the stone figures cannot be clearly identified, as they are not obviously one animal or another, but are very stylized; they are considered to represent imaginary creatures, rather than actual animals (Ozkaya and Coskun 2011). Jerf el Ahmar has finds of small carved stones, with images of wild creatures such as scorpions, foxes and vultures (Stordeur 2010). Abu Ghosh has produced a zoomorphic head, carved in limestone, which is of a horned animal considered likely to be from the *Ovis* genus. However, the head was found in contexts thought to date to the Pottery Neolithic, and there is no evidence for the domestication of sheep at the site before then, so it is possible that the head may be a Pottery Neolithic artefact (Matskevich and Milevski 2003); it is also possible that the head represents a wild creature from that genus, and so could be from an earlier period.

At Nevalı Çori, there are carved pillars and sculptures on which images of birds often feature, including one on which the carving combines human and avian features, and one which shows a human head on the body of a bird (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005). One pillar depicts a (apparently female) head being clutched in

bird talons, another shows two humans back-to-back, one of whom has a bird perched on their head, and yet another shows two birds facing each other, and also has a vulture-like bird sculpted in the round (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005). In addition to these, inside one of the 'cult buildings', a large sculpture of a bird was buried inside a podium on a stone bench (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005). These images, as well as demonstrating the apparent importance of birds to the people using the site, also appear to show birds in dominant or semi-dominant positions in relation to the humans – clutching their heads, or perched on top of them.

This is in direct contrast to many of the pillars and carvings at Göbekli Tepe, where

> "… scorpions, spiders, snakes, vultures, foxes, lions and bulls are shown on stele that are undoubtedly anthropomorphic, with hands and arms shown and in one case a belt. Many of these animals were never domesticated and yet they are shown in a context dominated by large human figures." (Hodder 2011: 118).

This may simply be due to changes in attitudes over time, especially as it seems that while animals were predominant in the images in the early layers at Nevalı Çori, images of humans became more numerous in the later layers until they became the dominant species represented (Verhoeven 2002a). There may have been a shift in attitude from an acceptance of the world and the creatures around them as they were, perhaps mingled with awe and fear, to a need to assert control over their surroundings, even if that control was only illusionary and 'on paper'.

Other

Although it can sometimes seem that the majority of artistic representations of animals in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic are figurines or carvings, we know from some sites that wall painting also frequently occurred. A painting at Umm Dabaghiyah shows onagers and (possibly) net hooks. This has been interpreted as evidence that the site was used as a base for hunting wild species (Kirkbride 1974; Matthews 2003). This may be further supported by the fact that 90% of the bone assemblage at the site is comprised of wild species (Bökönyi 1973). Çatalhöyük also has many wonderful painted scenes, depicting a variety of species, although it would seem that powerful animals (or animals perceived as powerful) were favoured at this site.

Bears and leopards both appear and it has been suggested (Turkan 2007) that there may have been bear and leopard cults at that time, although it has also been suggested that the depictions may have been of mythical creatures (presumably resembling real creatures) (Turkan 2007). Turkan has also suggested that splayed creatures (possibly bears) in pictures may represent animal deities (Turkan 2007). However, birds also appear in wall paintings at Çatalhöyük; there are images of vultures and cranes at the site, although the vultures seem more numerous. They are often depicted in images including small, headless human figures, and seem to suggest that the vultures are responsible for the mutilation of human corpses; it has been theorised that these images may represent the practice of excarnation (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005). The crane depiction is more peaceful, showing two cranes facing each other with their heads raised (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005). Jerf el Ahmar also had friezes, and possibly wall paintings, which included images of birds of prey (Verhoeven 2011), although there appears to be no suggestion of excarnation occurring there, as at Çatalhöyük.

However, it is also possible – and perhaps more likely – that the wall art at Çatalhöyük represented non-real relationships between humans and animals, as suggested by Lewis-Williams and Pearce (2005). Although there is evidence for manual excarnation occurring at the site, with cut marks appearing on bones as is also the case at Körtik Tepe (Knusel and Haddow 2017), there is no real evidence for excarnation involving vultures or other birds; it is conceivable it existed, but there is no way to prove or disprove it as we would, of course, be arguing from negative evidence. Perhaps, then, these were depictions and representations of desired relationships, or imagined interactions with powerful creatures, rather than images of real life at Çatalhöyük. Other art at the site included moulded images made from plaster, and images on columns and panels, many of which also depicted powerful animals such as bulls and large felines (Cauvin 2000; Mellaart 1967). Bull's heads were moulded out of plaster and set at the bottom of columns, or were set into them, while the panels between columns contained a diversity of animal imagery, as well as human figures (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005). Felines also appear in the panel images, although they are not represented on the columns (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005), which may indicate that there was a perceived connection between felines and females. The bull bucrania, on the other hand, may have had physical associations with liminality, as they were usually

positioned at the edges of platforms and on columns (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005).

As well as bull's heads, other moulded beasts have been found at the site, some of which contained parts from other animals, such as the beak from a vulture, fox teeth, and (on one occasion) the skull of a weasel (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005). In other areas, wild boar jaws have been found moulded into the walls (*ibid.*). Many of the 3D moulded mural images were replastered several times – some of the 6' long leopards, for example, had been plastered at least 40 times, and this may indicate that (in a similar way to the rock carvings) the process may have been more important that the end image (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005), or at least than the quality of the end image. Clearly the animals thus represented were of significance to the population, as they have been found only in the areas which we believe to have been special, and in the monolithic areas of the site, and never in the smaller, possibly domestic contexts (Turkan 2007). The appearance of animals in these contexts all too often seems to lead to the idea of a 'cult', based on whichever animal appears to be dominant in that area; this is generally assisted by the fact that domesticated animals (once they occurred) are less commonly depicted, and it is often the larger and scarcer creatures which are shown. Hodder has suggested that, in contrast to the tradition of Palaeolithic cave paintings, the images from sites such as Çatalhöyük and Göbekli Tepe may represent human domination over wild animals (Hodder 2001; Hodder and Meskell 2011).

In other cultures this may have been less the case. The Incan culture has left many artistic representations of llamas, for example, and they appeared in songs and poetry, but this has not been seen as evidence of a llama cult so much as evidence of a natural concern for, and interest in, an important resource (Murra 1965). Although we can argue that the llama was a well-established domesticated species during the time of the Inca Empire, there were also domesticated species during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic in the Near East, and yet it is very clear that they appear far less frequently in the artistic record than wild species do, although their importance may have been even greater at this time, when human control over the wild was still being established. Indeed, it seems to be a long-standing theme (also noted by Russell and Meece (2005) at Çatalhöyuk) that the animals represented in various forms are generally not the ones most represented in the faunal records of the sites, or in the diets of the people; the animals depicted during the Palaeolithic in Europe were largely unrelated to the economy of the hunters – there was little

resemblance to what they would actually have eaten (Hadingham 1980). As an example, at the time of Hadingham's publication, there were nineteen caves with paintings in western Europe which contained images of reindeer (around 150 beasts in total); at the time the images were created, reindeer were a major part of the diet in the area, in some estimates forming as much as 98% of the food intake (Hadingham 1980).

The 'mosaic' image (Locus 1155) at Kfar HaHoresh is possibly one of the most famous examples of art from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. This image, thought to show the outline of a bovine or a large carnivore (possibly an auroch, although there are no horns), was created entirely from a (presumably intentional) arrangement of human long bones and crania, both isolated and articulated, from at least four individuals (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004), and is discussed more fully in Chapter 7. It has been suggested that it may have been intended for public display (Goring-Morris 2000), and although it was placed under a lime-plaster cap, it is not certain that the cap was applied at the time of creation; it was, perhaps, displayed first, and later covered. If not intended for public viewing, its purpose and the reason behind its creation grow even more obscure. However, it has been remarked that the finds from Kfar HaHoresh, and possibly the figurines found at 'Ain Ghazal, seem to indicate a perceived link between supernatural beliefs and animals, including depicting them in sculpture of various forms (Betts 2002).

Not all of the displays of artistic endeavour are so startling in their appearance or impact, however. At Körtik Tepe, pestles have been found which were created from a soft stone, and which had had the ends carved into the forms of stylised birds of prey or (in some cases) wild goats (Ozkaya and Coskun 2011). When found, they had polished surfaces and showed no signs of use, and appeared to have been intended only as burial gifts, which may be an indication of their use in rituals. These pestles are similar in style and appearance to pestles found at other sites in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Near East, including Nemrik 9, Hallan Çemi and Çayönü Tepesi (Ozkaya and Coskun 2011; Arbuckle and Ozkaya 2006). However, as well as these grave objects, Körtik Tepe also produced bowls engraved with animal images (Fig. 4.5), and three bone objects from mortuary contexts. One was damaged, but appeared to be incised with an image of a scorpion, while another was incised with a snake, and the third with two wild goats (Ozkaya and Coskun 2011).

Figure 4.5: Stone vessel engraved with wild goats, Körtik Tepe (Source: Ozkaya and Coskun 2011: Fig. 20)

These also seemed to have been placed as grave goods, but were only found in two burials, out of the hundreds of burials at the site. This has led to a tentative interpretation of them as status markers for the deceased (Ozkaya and Coskun 2011). Not dissimilar in nature is a stone pendant discovered at Motza, in a locus from which human remains were also recovered. The pendant has clearly been made from a broken stone figurine, and consists of a human torso, with a clearly defined bird's beak on the head or face (Khalaily et al. 2007). The stone it was made from is of a kind not found in the region around the site, giving rise to the speculation that not only the material but the object itself may have been traded and therefore of high value (Khalaily et al. 2007).

Discussion

Unfortunately, when it comes to our understanding of artistic representations in the past, we are hampered by the limitations of the archaeological record; we see only what we find, and we find only what has survived. It is conceivable that some images may have been wrapped in skins or draped with furs, but we have no way of knowing. For example, the bone arrangement at Kfar HaHoresh could originally

have been covered with skins or furs, to give a more realistic representation of an animal, but no trace of that would survive. Equally, the pillars at Göbekli Tepe could have been draped in skins or furs, to clothe the images of animals; possibly figurines had bits of fur or hair attached, which could have been a form of sympathetic magic. Equally, we are looking at images as they appear today – worn, perhaps; possibly eroded, and generally in the harsh light of day. We have no way of knowing, or understanding, or reproducing the circumstances under which these images and figures may have been seen in the past. It is possible to imagine that the carvings at Nevalı Çori or Göbekli Tepe would have been even more impressive – perhaps terrifying – by flickering torch or firelight, especially when crisp and freshly carved, or that figurines may have been even more uncanny and eerie in the same light, but whether that was how they were seen and what effect that would have had on the people viewing them is (and is likely to remain) a matter of speculation. Thus we are limited to the bare bones of what we can see and touch today; an unfortunate starting place for a consideration of artistic representations and depictions, which tend to be as much about what they evoke as what they represent.

It is notable that from the beginnings of what we can recognise as definite representations of things (in whatever form), animals have played a large – and at times a dominant – part. Images and figurines seem to have been heavily inclined towards the zoomorphic from the beginning. Palaeolithic art, especially in Europe, seems to have been largely centred around representations of animals (Hadingham 1980) although humans did make occasional appearances. In the Near East, Natufian art continued to be essentially zoomorphic in nature; most of what has been discovered depicts gazelle and deer, often on small, portable objects (Cauvin 2000). Although by the Khiamian there was an increase in the amount of human depiction, images and representations of bulls were still very common (*ibid.*), and depictions of animals (or animal/human hybrids) continued well into the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, in a multitude of forms, remaining relatively common even in the Late PPNB (Cauvin 2000). There are, however, often difficulties with the identification of the species depicted, and even where definite identifications (or interpretations) have been put forward, there is often room for doubt and discussion. Unless exceptionally detailed, it can be extremely hard to distinguish exactly which species was intended to be shown; this may, in turn, lead to some

theories and interpretations potentially being based on less than certain ground, and this can be another major concern when dealing with this material.

Despite these difficulties, however, a number of theories and interpretations have been put forward in relation to representations of animals in the archaeological record. The existence of shamanic practices or totemic beliefs are two such interpretations which have been put forward as explanations both for the appearance and apparent dominance of different animals at different sites, and especially for the appearance of hybrid animal/human images and figurines. These human/animal composites have been suggested as the result of people entering a state of altered consciousness, often associated with shamanistic practices (ie Dowson and Porr 2002). Additionally, therianthropy – the combining of human and animal forms – is a common component of shamanistic and other beliefs (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005). Totemism, especially, is an often-proffered interpretation of finds of this nature, and

> "Totemism can be considered as a traditional universal system, recognized to exist independently over huge geographical distances, the common denominator being that it occurs primarily amongst hunter-gatherer societies.... Since both the Natufian and the PPN populations were probably still mostly hunter-gatherers (not withstanding varying degrees of reliance on domesticates), it is logical to assume the existence of major totemic components within their cosmological frameworks at that time." (Goring-Morris and Belfer-Cohen 2002: 70).

There could have been an element of metempsychosis; possibly a belief that souls or beings could migrate – or be migrated – between human and animal bodies; the hybrid figures could be representations of this mingling or switching in progress. Collins (2002) suggests that animals provide us with our greatest means of self-expression and also of self-reflection, and perhaps this is also reflected in the creation of human/animal hybrid images; we are them, and they are us. Conneller (2004) notes that Amerindian groups see humans, spirits and some animals as being essentially identical in their souls, but with mutable exteriors, so that when people take on aspects of animal bodies it is not done in order to disguise or conceal their own bodies, but because by taking on part of an animal's body it allows them to take on some of the animal's abilities and to adopt the animal's perspective, which they believe is located in its body. Therefore, "people take on the animal

habitus in order to enter into a particular set of relationships with the world."
(Conneller 2004: 43). The creation of hybrid images could, therefore, be a physical
representation of these new relationships, suggesting as they do an instability and
transformation of the body (Miracle and Boric 2008). For example, seal
impressions found at Çatalhöyük show bears, but bears which may be intended
as hybrid images (Russell 2016); they are clearly bears in shape, but have very
clearly defined navels, which is taken as a sign that they are also part human (Fig
4.5) (Russell 2016).

Figure 4.6: Seal impression depicting bear, from Çatalhöyük (Source: Russell 2016: Fig.
3)

Ross and Davidson are specifically discussing rock art when they say that
repetition is a central part of ritual behaviour. Ross and Davidson believe that
repetition can be found in a number of ways, including repetition of particular
motifs across a region, and repetition of motifs within a site complex (Ross and
Davidson 2006). However, the overall theme can be applied to representations and

depictions in general, and even their division of how this repetition can be recorded is applicable in other ways. Repetition is a clear indicator of the significance given to a particular motif. In the instances mentioned in this chapter, the motifs represent particular animals, and therefore significance can be assumed to also have been given to that animal. It is clear, on this basis, that some sites assign more significance to certain animals than to others; in some cases, perhaps only one or two animals seem to be so noticeably favoured above the rest, and these favoured species are not always the ones which might be expected from the context of the faunal record.

Another popular theory – especially for pierced figurines and rock carvings – is often that of some sort of hunting magic; possibly to attract game, or make them easier to hunt. This theory is one that was initially proposed in the early 1900s by Saloman Reinach, based on the apparent preference of prehistoric artists for depicting 'food animals' – at the time, no depictions of more 'dangerous' animals were known (Hadingham 1980). As a theory it became extremely popular, but it clearly struggled to accommodate new finds and new evidence as it arose, and so became increasingly vague and contradictory. For example, it was suggested that maybe the more docile and easier to catch animals were being portrayed, despite the appearance of lions, and other dangerous predators. I do not consider that, as a general theory, it is particularly useful, or even applicable in many cases. However, there is some evidence which suggests that some images and figures may have been used in this way, and may even have been created specifically for that purpose. While some cave paintings from the Palaeolithic had had images of spears and arrows added to them (Hadingham 1980), possibly suggesting a form of ritual connected with hunting, in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic we find animal figurines which have been pierced with bits of flint, possibly again indicating a similar type of ritual. In the case of the paintings, there is a clear possibility that they could have been altered or added to after a hunt, maybe as a record of events, rather than beforehand in an attempt to ensure good hunting; there is no way of being able to tell. However, the pierced figurines would have been considerably harder to stab or pierce after making, if they were baked to make them solid and durable, and so the likelihood is greatly increased that the flint pieces or bladelets were included as part of the process of making them – which would make it more likely that their creation could have been intended as a form of attempted influence over the hunt outcome, or as hunting 'magic'.

When figurines are found at a site in conjunction with bones – especially bones from the same animal that the figurines appear to be portraying, such as the cattle at 'Ain Ghazal – then we can see it as a mingling or merging of the figurative with the literal; the representation with the real animal. This could also be applied to images or figures carved on or from materials such as bone or ivory, where a natural material has been used to create an image of a figure at least partly from nature. This could have been a way of combining the spiritual world with the real one, or their perceived world with the reality around them. It seems likely that there was an element of control involved, an attempt to impose one upon the other, rather than simply asserting them side by side. This is particularly because other images and figures (such as the pierced ones) appear to imply a desire to control nature in one way or another. As their societies and communities and ways of living altered and developed, so would their beliefs and views about the world or worlds around them, and the desire to draw their changing realities together and connect them with each other would have been strong.

Figures and carvings connecting humans and animals, and even mixing them into one being as in the hybrid creations, could have been a natural development of this; a joining of the natural and constructed worlds, or of predator and prey. In the case of earlier examples such as the Aurignacian lion-man from Hohlenstein-Stadel in Germany (Dowson and Porr 2002), carved as it was from mammoth ivory, it could even have been a linking of predator and prey (as seen by humans), with man connecting them both. This need or desire to connect worlds together can be seen in other areas of activity, such as at Çayönü Tepesi with the mingling of human and animal blood on blades found there, and in the treatment of animals (and humans) in death (further discussed in Chapter 6), and represents the merging (or inseparability) of human and non-human identities.

Figure 4.7: Nevalı Çori 'totem pole' (Source: Schmidt 2010a: Fig. 16)

Chapter 5: Göbekli Tepe

The choice of Göbekli Tepe as a case study within this thesis has been based largely upon the iconography to be found at the site. This is not only outstanding in its richness and variety but is also unparalleled in the concentration of images within a single location. However, the site is also unique in its nature, being (as far as is currently thought) non-residential and entirely ceremonial in its usage. This provides a rich source of material with which to engage, looking at the use of animal iconography within purely religious or ceremonial contexts. In addition to this, other sites in the region (such as Körtik Tepe) display similar iconography and stylistic touches (including some sites with T-shaped pillars), thereby giving the opportunity to see how the same (or very similar) iconography appears within residential communities, and how it was used across the region. The imagery at Göbekli Tepe also includes a number of representations which appear to depict combinations of humans and non-humans, as well as several depictions of humans and animals in immediate proximity to each other. This enables us to consider the questions of how human and non-human identities were expressed through material culture, and whether an approach informed by theories of personhood can help us to understand these issues.

Site Background

Göbekli Tepe is generally considered to be a significant site within the context of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period in the Near East, and much is made of its location, architecture and archaeology (Schmidt 2012). When, in the 1990s, a local farmer hit something with his plough, an archaeologist was called to investigate and he found a 'slab', which turned out to be the top of a stone pillar. He also noted the proliferation of flints, which he recognised as being from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, and so the site of Göbekli Tepe was identified. It is still being excavated now, and is likely to continue for some years to come (funding and permissions allowing) as there is still much of the site to uncover and investigate. The information in this chapter is based on excavation reports as much as possible, with full acknowledgement that any conclusions drawn may be subject to change if new material is discovered.

Figure 5.1: Plan of excavated area (Source: Dietrich et al. 2014: Fig. 2)

The site (Fig. 5.1) was located on top of a hill or ridge – this was recognised by Schmidt as being a tell, or 'tepe' (Peters and Schmidt 2004; Schmidt 2000; Banning 2011). As a result, the site is in a commanding position; from its height it overlooks the springs of the Balikh to the east, the plains of Harran to the south, and the hills of Urfa to the north and west (Schmidt 2000; Banning 2011), so it would appear to have been well situated. It would probably have been a major feature of the landscape around it, and certainly Schmidt believed that it would have been a dominating landmark for more than 20km around the site (Schmidt 2000, 2010a). The overall size of the site would appear to have been around 9 hectares (Schmidt 2010, 2008), so it would have been an impressive size for those who saw it. Presumably the extent of the site reflects the monumental nature of the architecture that was erected there, and would have grown further as more structures were added. However, it is possible that the site was large to start with and the architecture was built to fill the space, rather than the space growing to encompass the structures. Considering the monumentality of the site, this is a possibility to bear in mind.

The architecture at the site is certainly distinctive in its appearance and nature. There is a mixture of styles, presumably reflecting the different periods in which they appear to have been constructed. The structures which are believed to date

to the PPNA are larger and curvilinear in nature, while those which are dated to the PPNB are smaller and more rectangular in shape. However, both types of structure contained megaliths in the form of T-shaped pillars (considered to be anthropomorphic in appearance) (Peters and Schmidt 2004), although the differences in the architecture are reflected in the megaliths they housed. The monoliths that were housed in the curvilinear structures were considerably larger – generally between 3-5 metres high, and weighing up to 10 tons. Those from the smaller PPNB structures were smaller themselves, averaging only around 1.5 meters in height, and correspondingly less heavy (Peters and Schmidt 2004). Both types were positioned in symmetrical arrangements within their structures (*ibid.*). The decrease in size of the pillars in the later periods may have been a reflection of changes in thinking and behaviour at that time. On the other hand, it may instead be due simply to the fact that they were overlying the earlier structures, and were therefore erected on ground that may have been less stable. The real reason is uncertain, and unless new evidence is uncovered, is likely to remain a matter of pure speculation.

These are the facts that seem to be well established about the site. We also know that the initial structures, at least, were erected, utilised (for whatever purpose), and were later filled in; the later structures were then erected over the top. The published sources appear to agree on these points, but beyond these established facts opinions regarding the site diverge significantly. Once the archaeology of the site is considered, then agreement is less unanimous; there is much that is open to debate and interpretation. Some of the evidence remains more or less beyond dispute; it is agreed that the site does date to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, although owing to certain peculiarities of usage at Göbekli Tepe, it is difficult to obtain precise dates for it, as the material has often been mixed. Although some definite dates have now been ascertained, the general acceptance seems to rely more on the similarities of other local sites with known dates. However, it is agreed that the megaliths are around 11000 years old (Schmidt 2008), and that makes a good starting point. They are the main feature of an already notable site; stone circles of pillars that were erected after being hewn from the local limestone, and were then buried again, and eventually replaced by another circle, either nearby or on top of the original one (Schmidt 2010b). It is considered to be certain that Layer III at the site – the layer containing the enclosures and the megalithic architecture – dates to the PPNA/EPPNB (Schmidt 2003; Dietrich et al. 2013), although it is also

noted that we cannot know how long the enclosures remained open for before they were filled in and buried (Schmidt 2002).

Faunal record

The faunal record at Göbekli Tepe is of interest not only for the information it can provide as to the activities likely to have been occurring at the site, but also for the chance to compare the physical fauna present at the site with the depicted species. There are difficulties with this, however, as the evidence suggests that material or debris from the site was often used to cover previous phases of activity, and this makes it harder to accurately assess the correlations (Peters and Schmidt 2004). Additionally, the available data on the faunal record from the site is not sufficiently cohesive to allow for the production of a comparative table.

The faunal record is composed exclusively of wild, hunted species (Pöllath et al. 2018). Gazelle was the most common taxa found, making up around half of the entire faunal record (Peters and Schmidt 2004; Peters et al. 2014), but wild cattle/aurochs also represented a significant source of food, being estimated to have provided over a third of all the animal protein consumed at the site (Pöllath et al. 2018). Wild ass and fox were also present in high numbers (Peters and Schmidt 2004), and fox may be the only species at the site which occurs with similar frequency in both the faunal record and the depictions (Peters and Schmidt 2004). The majority of the vertebrates appearing in depictions are also represented in the faunal record, although generally with a much lower frequency; wild boar, for example, is frequently depicted, but appears to have been of limited importance in the diet at the site (Peters and Schmidt 2004). The taxa which were depicted are, predominantly, not those that would have been hunted and consumed (Dietrich et al. 2017), suggesting a clear perceived distinction between the species chosen for each activity.

The avifaunal remains from the site are also of relevance in relation to the depictions – birds which were depicted were also found in the faunal record, including a snake-eating eagle (Clare et al. 2019). Additionally, over 50% of the bird remains in the assemblage belonged to members of the corvid family (Clare et al. 2019), which would be unusually high for a normal settlement and which suggests unusually favourable conditions for those particular birds. Corvids are

known to eat carrion when the opportunity arises, and this may suggest that the high concentration of corvid remains at Gobekli Tepe could relate to activities involving the dead – whether human or non-human.

The finds

It currently seems that the entire site was devoted to the construction of megalithic architecture (Schmidt 2000); few indications of other activities have been found or noted, although that may come in time. Certainly there are more enclosures to be excavated, and Schmidt estimated that there could be as many as 200 pillars in total (Schmidt 2003). This is not to say, though, that other discoveries will not be made. For example, fragments of human bone have been discovered in the fill material of the older enclosures; the majority of these are skull fragments (Gresky et al. 2017). Schmidt considered it possible that there may also be primary human burials somewhere at the site, maybe under the limestone floors of the enclosures (Schmidt 2010a). This would certainly be in keeping with the known practices of the period, but as yet no burials are known from the site. However, more recent excavations have found fragments of skulls showing evidence of intentional post-mortem modification. This is the first clear evidence for the processing of the dead at the site, and in this, too, the site is unique; the modifications are of a kind not known elsewhere (Gresky et al.2017).

It seems certain that the pillars were created at or close to the site. The limestone from which they were quarried is known to be local; there is evidence of tool use at the site, as stone hammers and blades have been found, and there is also a partially quarried pillar still *in situ* (Schmidt 2001; Banning 2011). It also seems unlikely that they would have been hauling them long distances when they had a local source of stone. However, there is no evidence of domestication or farming at the site. As a result, it is assumed to have been populated or used by hunter-gatherers (Banning 2011). There is some evidence of butchery and eating, but the only indication of the possible presence of domesticates is the jaw of a dog (Sana Segui 1999). It is therefore generally asserted that only wild species of both plants and animals were present (Schmidt 2000; Dietrich et al. 2012), although extensive cereal processing is apparent from analysis of ground stone remains (Dietrich et al. 2019). It is not my intention to go into an exhaustive list of each enclosure,

pillar and carving here, as it would take too much space, but I refer the reader to Schmidt's 2007 book, as well as the extensive publications about the site.

The pillars are generally the main focus of any speculation or publication about the site; they form the largest part of the findings there, and their positioning and style is such as to give rise to much curiosity and interest. The pillars that create the most interest are the ones that stand in pairs in the central part of each enclosure; these are always larger and of what we would deem to be superior workmanship and quality, and they are always decorated, often elaborately (Schmidt 2003). Although this decoration is a common occurrence at the site, it is by no means universal (Peters and Schmidt 2004). The most common theme for the decorations appears to be depictions of animals, although the T-shaped pillars also sometimes have bas-reliefs whose appearance suggests stylized anthropomorphic beings, possibly with clothing (Peters and Schmidt 2004). The majority of the decoration, though (as reflected in the stone figurines and sculptures also found at the site) are bas-reliefs of animals (Peters and Schmidt 2004). The animals depicted are varied, and there does not appear to be any common theme for the species that are represented. There does seem to be a high preponderance of predators and dangerous animals in the representations, but it also appears that the frequency or rarity of any species in the art does not necessarily correlate to their representation in the faunal record of the site (Peters and Schmidt 2004).

Figure 5.2: Pillar 16, Enclosure B (Source: Tepe Telegrams 2019)

It is not always easy to identify the animals that are represented; some of them have presumably eroded and weathered badly, leaving them hard to see properly, while others are unusual in appearance, and do not appear to depict any actual animal realistically. Most of the depictions, though, are fairly naturalistic in their appearance (Schmidt 2010a), and are often life-sized (Schmidt 2002). Some species feature more frequently than others – snakes appear often, although there is some debate over whether all the 'snakes' are actually such; opinions seem to change on whether various wavy lines in the art depict water, or snakes (Peters and Schmidt 2004). This may have been clarified later, when some of the wavy lines were shown to have heads, which were depicted on an inner side of the pillar (Schmidt 2003), but there is still room for debate over this. Foxes are also a common motif, either on their own or forming part of a group with other animals; this seems normal for the site, where species are often represented as groups, or as a mixture of animals and pictograms (Peters and Schmidt 2004). Foxes are highly represented in both, but other animals also appear. The faunal record, although not completely correlating to the art in frequency of appearances, does contain foxes, and some fox bones have cut marks on them, which would seem to show that they were occasionally eaten (Peters and Schmidt 2004). However, it is also possible that cut marks came from the removal of pelts.

It is clear that some enclosures have a strong association with a particular species, which is reflected in the names that have been given to them; Structure A, for example, is the Snake Pillar Building (Schmidt 2000, 2002), and snakes are considered to be one of the most common motifs in both Enclosure A and Enclosure B – although Enclosure B is known as the Fox Pillar Building (Schmidt 2002), indicating the predominance of a different species in that area. Enclosure C is also considered to have a strong association with a particular species – wild boar, in this case – and it is believed that Enclosure D may come to be known as the Crane Pillar Building (Schmidt 2002). Beyond these, however, other species are also found at the site; there are animals that are believed to be felines (possibly leopards), and possibly a brown bear as well (Peters and Schmidt 2004). There are birds among the representations, and these are generally considered to be cranes (Peters and Schmidt 2004), although vultures have also been mentioned as a possibility; there is little evidence of vultures at the site, however, so this seems less likely. Birds are also represented in the faunal record (*ibid.*), although whether they were merely a source of food or whether they had another role to play is uncertain. Not all of the representations are clear, and it is possible that the 'cranes' are only generally assumed to be such as they are known from other sites in the region.

The site is also noted for its anthropomorphic and human-animal hybrid representations. Many of the limestone sculptures at the site are human-animal hybrids (Schmidt 1998), and there are some depictions of anthropomorphic beings with animal heads (Schmidt 2010a). The T-shaped pillars are generally considered to be anthropomorphic figures; the cross-piece at the top of the pillar would be the head, and some of them have incised shapes which could be arms. Some of them also seem to show figures wearing loincloths which could be made from fox pelts, while one pillar seems to show a figure holding a fox in the crook of its elbow (*ibid.*). As both wild animals and human figures are central themes in Levantine and South-Eastern Anatolian Neolithic art (Erdoğu 2009), the fact that these occur at Göbekli Tepe as well as at sites throughout the area is not a surprise in and of itself, although the monumental scale of the art and architecture would have made it stand out. Animal reliefs were also found on a porthole stone (Figs. 5.3 and 5.4) – believed to represent a snake, a bull, a billy goat and some form of predator; no female animals are depicted (Schmidt 2010a) – and another porthole stone was found showing an upside-down boar, with its legs out flat, possibly dead, which

Schmidt suggested may indicate an association between porthole stones and death (Schmidt 2010a).

Figure 5.3: Porthole stone (Source: Tepe Telegrams 2019)

Figure 5.4: Porthole stone (Source: Tepe Telegrams 2019)

It is possible that the hole in the stone may have been viewed as being some sort of door or gateway to the underworld or the world of the dead, but there is no further evidence to support this idea at this time. There may have been similar reliefs on other portstones, although if this is the case then so far they have not been found, or they did not survive to be identifiable.
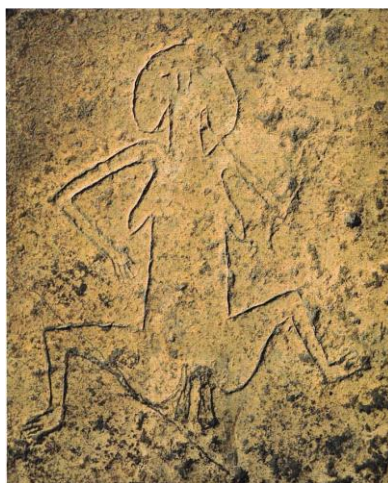

Figure 5.5: Female depiction (Source: Dietrich et al. 2012: 49)

While there are no obvious depictions of female animals, there is one image of a naked female human, engraved on a stone slab between a couple of pillars with lions (Schmidt 2010a) (Fig. 5.5). As this is the sole example of explicit female representation found at the site thus far, it has been suggested that it was a form of graffiti, rather than part of the original decoration (Schmidt 2010a; Notroff et al. 2015); this is also partly based on the difference in style of the image. While this may, of course, be the case (proving that the nature and common subjects of graffiti have changed little in the last several thousand years), we cannot say for certain that there are no other female representations at the site, only that there are no immediately obvious female representations – although Schmidt has also theorised that at least one of the carvings might represent someone giving birth (Schmidt 2010a), which would presuppose a female depiction. Some of the depicted animals may have been female; there is little correlation between physical sex and aggressiveness in the animal kingdom, and indeed female animals can be more dangerous, especially when they have young to protect. The argument that certain depicted animals are male because of the clear representation of penises would surely create the corollary that animals shown without obvious penises (where the sex organs are external and potentially visible) are therefore female. I would argue that the picture is more ambiguous. The anthropomorphic T-shaped pillars are also completely ambiguous in their presentation, and could be any (or no) gender, or gender-fluid. This, of course, does not play up to the common narrative of wildness and danger and aggressive masculinity at the site, but that is a narrative which needs rewriting.

It seems hasty to dismiss the one engraving with a clear female depiction as being 'graffiti', when it may simply have been the product of a later occupancy at the site, with changing values and beliefs. We need to consider whether the presumption of it being graffiti comes from a basis of fact, or whether it may be a projection of modern, androcentric ideas and values. There is an implied assumption that the creator(s) of the image were male, and by extension that all the depictions at the site were done by men. We have no way of knowing whether this was the case. The images could have been created by any person, regardless of gender, and when this is considered then we also have to reconsider many of the theories regarding those images. Hodder and Meskell (2011) note that the extreme openness of the figure, displaying the genitals, is highly unusual (Hodder and Meskell 2011: 239), but it is also possible to argue that this is an equivalent display to that of the many

ithyphallic images also found at the site. The female depiction *could* have been graffiti, or it equally could have been a deliberate assertion of a female presence at the site.

Additionally, there is more of the site to be uncovered, and we cannot know whether more obviously female images will be found. As well as this, it is known that some of the stones and possibly even sections of pillars were reused at different times (Clare et al. 2018; Clare et al. 2019), so there are questions over how much significance can be attached to the positions and locations of the art. It is also possible that some of the sculptures may have been reused in other places, so the same caution would need to be applied.

Aside from the pillars, another major find at the site to date has been one particular large limestone carving. The head of this sculpture was initially identified in the 2009 excavation season. It was then discovered that it was actually just part of a larger piece, which had been set in a stone wall (Schmidt 2010b). It was, in fact, in the wall of a room within one of the structures, and the wall had initially been covering the sculpture. It was found to have three main motifs on it, and it has been described as being similar to a totem pole in its style and arrangement (Schmidt 2010b) (Fig. 5.6). The motifs are arranged one above the other. The top image appears to be a predator – possibly a bear or a large feline – with a human-like shape to the body. The arms (or legs) of that figure are holding another head (possibly human). Below that again, there are some large snakes (*ibid.*). Naturally this sculpture has raised much interest, and (as with the rest of the site) a lot of theorising has taken place around what it is, and what it represents.

The totem pole (as it is referred to in the literature; the term is retained for ease of reference) has been considered as part of the phallocentric nature of the site, as discussed by Hodder and Meskell (2011), and shown by the many depictions of ithyphallic humans and non-humans at the site. While they suggest that even the T-shaped pillars at the site could be evoking the phallus, with their elongated shafts and exaggerated heads (Hodder and Meskell 2011: 237), the totem pole can certainly be considered as a phallic object. This would connect with their theory of the site as being dominated by maleness, demonstrated by the depictions of aggressive and dangerous wild animals (Hodder and Meskell 2011). However, Fagan (2017) instead sees the totem pole sculpture as a creation showing a

mingling and entanglement of human and animal bodies, shunning discrete forms and instead depicting a composite being (Fagan 2017: 327).

Figure 5.6: 'Totem pole' (Source: Tepe Telegrams 2019)

Interpretations and discussion

It seems that there is little about the site that does not incite curiosity and speculation, from its setting to the remains found there. Although some commentators may look at the location of the site and note that it seems to be within a reasonable distance of water, plains and good hunting ground, others

have deemed the location to be unusual; Schmidt believed that the "erratic" setting cannot be explained by reference to any subsistence strategies (Schmidt 1998: 1). This, of course, raises the question of how people at the site lived, if the location was not especially subsistence-friendly, and this leads on to the very large question of what the site was intended and used for. Schmidt believed the site was the location of the world's oldest temple; with no evidence of occupation at the site, it is generally concluded that it must have been a place of worship. In Schmidt's opinion, stated repeatedly in various ways throughout his publications on the site, "The function of these buildings can only be characterized as associated with ritual purposes, and no serious claim for domestic use is tenable" (Schmidt 2000: 46). The entire site was clearly meant to serve a mainly ritual function, for those who used it; it was a form of mountain sanctuary (Schmidt 2000).

This is a view that seems to be shared by many, if not most of the people who have studied or visited the site. As far as Schmidt was concerned, the location and the architecture at the site led to a safe assumption that Göbekli Tepe served as a place for the accomplishment of ritual activities (Peters and Schmidt 2004). This opinion is one that is repeated over and over again, both in Schmidt's publications and in his interviews. As far as he was concerned, the majority of the structures at the site cannot be classified as residential in nature (Schmidt 2005), although as Banning notes,

> "This is not only a matter of identifying evidence of ritual activity, but of identifying in what ways, if any, it can be distinguished from the "ordinary" activities of daily life that we associate with residential or "domestic" use." (Banning 2011: 619).

It was clearly a special location, for whatever reason, and if subsistence strategies were not the reason for the setting of the site, then non-profane reasons seem applicable; it seems that the site was a place devoted to very important and specific rituals, at least for a while (Schmidt 1998).

The archaeological evidence for this conclusion is "overwhelming", at least in Schmidt's opinion, and was "proved irrefutably" by the function of two partially-excavated pillar buildings (Schmidt 1998: 1). It is possible that the function of the site was to serve as a burial monument (Schmidt 2002), in the manner of Kfar

HaHoresh, but there is little evidence of this so far, as no burials have been found or excavated at the site (although it was believed that there may be burials contained at the site, in the as yet unexcavated areas (Schmidt 2010a)). Schmidt suggested, however, that the site could have been used for open air burials (Schmidt 2007), basing this on the high percentage of corvid remains in the faunal record (they comprise over 50% of the total), and vultures also being well represented (Schmidt 2007; Fagan 2017) in both the iconography and the faunal record, as these birds are necrophageous and so are drawn to exposed bodies. He compares the site to Stonehenge, stating that neither of them offers any reliable information as to their true function (Schmidt 2005a), but it is only obvious that both sites belong to quite similar enigmatic and mythical spheres (Schmidt 2005a).

Whatever the function was, it seems unequivocal to some that the site was a 'cult centre' or a 'central place', such as is known from other areas at that time. It seems to have been a rule that the Stone Age 'centres' all possessed a religious nature (Schmidt 2005), although this view raises questions around the nature of ritual versus secular, and whether that is even a distinction that can be made (Garwood et al. 1989). Schmidt is not the only archaeologist to believe Göbekli Tepe functioned as a ritual site; Erdoğu thinks there is clear evidence for public ritual, monumental buildings and sculptures at the site, and that it appears to be a non-domestic site with ritual buildings where ceremonies and celebrations took place (Erdoğu 2009). This seems to be in agreement with Schmidt's assertion that Göbekli Tepe cannot really be classified as anything other than a sacred site, given the nature of the architecture and sculptures (Schmidt 2005). This point of view is supported by Sana Segui's assertion that cult buildings are distinguishable from domestic structures not only by their monumental aspect, but also by different construction techniques (Sana Segui 1999). However, other archaeologists disagree, believing that the sheer size of the site would necessitate some sort of permanent population there, even if it was only a small group of residents (e.g., Banning 2011).

As Banning points out, the 'temple' interpretation is based on the monumentality, reliefs and sculpture present at the site, and the similarity to other 'cultic' buildings, as well as the apparent lack of normal domestic remains (Banning 2011). There is often disagreement on how to recognise and identify ritual spaces in the Neolithic, however, and there is room for dispute regarding the nature of the remains at Göbekli Tepe. Not all of the structures have to been considered as

temples, Banning believes, and the non-domestic interpretation is partly based upon the fact that the pillars are deemed to be non-structural, meaning that the architecture would have had no roofs and would therefore not have been habitable (Banning 2011); this is not something which was necessarily accurate. Hole (2005) believes that the location and the structures were designed to impress, but is uncertain as to the intended audience, whether humans or gods. This is an issue that is probably further confused by the fact that many of the sculptures were difficult to view, and the structures were filled in.

Banning also raises the point that there is plenty of evidence in the archaeological world to show that domestic structures were not inseparable from ritual activity and objects, although

> "Many archaeologists appear reluctant to entertain the possibility that Neolithic houses in southwest Asia were rich in cosmological or spiritual symbolism even when, as at Göbekli Tepe, the symbols are ubiquitous rather than focused on only one or two buildings" (Banning 2011: 625).

There is also plenty of ethnographic evidence for people investing heavily in the decoration of domestic structures and spaces. Many groups decorate their spaces (for example, by painting or carving) for a variety of reasons. These include the appeasement of spirits, or to invoke protection, or to demonstrate clan alignments (Banning 2011). It is possible (maybe even likely) that people were using forms of decoration that simply have not survived over time, such as paintings and wooden or clay sculptures, or fur hangings or covers. Not everything would have been made from stone, so it is possible that decoration of this kind may have been more common in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic than has previously been thought.

We do know that traces of paintings have been founds on house walls at sites such as Mureybet and 'Ain Ghazal (Banning 2011). Animal remains which could have been used for decoration or for rituals (or, indeed, both) have often been found in contexts that have been deemed to be 'domestic' in nature. In addition, stone sculptures have been found in buildings that were almost certainly domestic in nature and function at sites such as Nevalı Çori and Urfa (Banning 2011; Dietrich et al. 2012). It is likely that many sculptures and figurines were created from wood, which would have been easier to work with and so less labour-intensive, but which

would not have survived or left a trace in the material culture. Decoration of this kind may have also served a purpose for domestic rituals, although it is impossible to say for certain. We do know, though, that in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, skulls were often kept in houses (Bienert 1991; Kuijt 2008); another clear example of sacred or ritualistic objects being kept in domestic surroundings, where we believe they were also being used for ritual purposes. Therefore, even if we concede that decoration with paintings and animal skulls and horns differs both in scale and in effort from the elaborate (not to say extravagant) symbolism of some of the structures at Göbekli Tepe, it still seems clear that buildings considered to be 'domestic' were equally likely to play a role in ritual behaviours in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic (Banning 2011).

Clare (2020) uses more recent findings from the site to show that there may also have been domestic structures present, which would require a considerable reassessment regarding the nature of the site and how it was used. One reason for Schmidt's assertion of Göbekli Tepe being a ritual centre with no domestic or residential purpose was its location, with no source of water nearby (Schmidt 2000). However, more recent discoveries at the site include channels which have been interpreted as rainwater drainage pipes (Clare 2020), so it is possible that rainwater was being collected at the site for use as required. A number of round structures (thought to be houses, and possibly dating to the PPNA) have also been excavated, as well as some rectangular structures which are from the EPPNB phase of the site (Clare 2020). The number of these structures, and the apparent continuity of usage, suggest a period of dense domestic occupation at Göbekli Tepe in the PPNA and EPPNB (Clare 2020). The presence of rectangular structures has been known since the 1990s, early in the excavations, but little has been published about them (Clare 2020).

This inevitably causes speculation regarding Schmidt's theories regarding them; did he fit them into his theories about the ritual nature of the site, or did he choose to disregard them because they did not support his ideas of the site as a temple? Excavations have also uncovered evidence for a number of hearths and the production of stone and bone beads (Clare 2020), and the studied lithic assemblage from the site is composed largely of tools which are characteristic of assemblages from domestic contexts (Clare 2020). However, the excavations revealing the hearths and production areas have occurred since the death of

Schmidt in 2014, so it is impossible to know how he would have reacted to the discoveries. The evidence for domestic occupation and activities at Göbekli Tepe in no way invalidates the interpretation of the site as a ritual centre or temple; as Banning (2011) notes, the separation of domestic and ritual is entirely artificial. There is no reason why people could not have been living at the site as well as taking part in gatherings, feasts and ceremonies there.

Regardless of the function of the site, the effort required to create the monumental architecture at the site would have required a great number of people, whether they were resident there or not. It makes sense that Neolithic regional centres functioned not only as religious locations, but also as loci for exchanges of goods, ideas and people among various groups (Schmidt 2005). Schmidt believed that an extensive, coordinated effort would have been needed in order to build the monoliths, and this would have laid the groundwork for the development of complex societies; a point of view that is the reverse of the 'conventional' thinking on this subject. To Schmidt, though, "...it seems evident that ritual centres existed long before sedentary communities and are considerably older than villages." (Schmidt 2005: 14). The effort that was required, however, seems too complex for disparate and widely separated bands of hunter-gatherers; too much organization would have been required, and as a result Schmidt suggested that the very existence of such monumental structures as those at Göbekli Tepe provides proof that there must have existed a complex social system. In his opinion, this would have included powerful individuals who could use religious imperatives in order to motivate the community to the enormous efforts required to construct such structures (Schmidt 1998). This would mean that the efforts needed to organise and coordinate such monumental work could have been the beginning point for changes in society. The need to provide food for the large numbers of people who would have been needed to carry out the work at the site, as well as the numbers of people they believe came to use or worship at the site, may have led to sedentism and spurred the first steps towards agriculture.

Certainly the work required could not have come from one or two groups of people, even working together for long periods of time. This much is apparent from the scale of the architecture at the site, as well as from the extensive and elaborate nature of the reliefs and sculptures. Sana Segui believes that these reflect a

complex and stratified society, with considerable organisational skills (Sana Segui 1999). This provides grounds for Schmidt's belief that

> "It seems obvious that only organized meetings of several groups of hunter-gatherers from the territories around Göbekli Tepe would be able to provide the capabilities for such an undertaking, meetings rooted in a ritual background." (Schmidt 2000: 48).

Of course, not all of the work could have been done at once, even with large numbers gathering to work together, but Schmidt suggested that there would have been periodic gatherings of groups where they would have pooled their resources in order to build these monuments, for ritual purposes (Schmidt 2003).

Whatever the motivation behind such gatherings and organisation, the results are clear in the monumental architecture and the wide variety of reliefs, stelae and figures around the site. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the choice of subjects for depiction would have been of great importance to the people who were using the site; it seems unlikely that after all the effort of building such vast structures, they would have left all the artwork to whim or impulse. Therefore, the choice of animals as the main subjects for depiction would seem to be of significance, and the choice of the individual species represented is likely to have been of equal import. Schmidt noted that the pillar carvings are dominated by 'non-food' animals, such as lions, snakes, spiders and scorpions, rather than by species such as cattle or deer (Schmidt 2003, 2008). Naturally we do not know with absolute certainty that they were not eating any of these species, but logic would indicate that there is not much meat on a spider or a scorpion, and snakes and lions would be a risky meal at best; it would appear that the species generally represented are not those that we would consider to be traditional food species.

However, Schmidt also suggested that the location of the site could be related to the dead, and a desire to position them in such a way that they are in a 'hunter's paradise' (Schmidt 2012), which would not seem to fit especially well with the choice of non-consumable species for representation; another suggested alternative is that it could be a cemetery site or the centre of a death cult, where the dead were laid out among stylised gods and spirits of the afterlife (Schmidt 2012). As yet, no burials have been found at the site, although there is potential

for further discoveries in other parts of the site which may include interments; however, there is currently little or no evidence for the idea of the cemetery site. Many of the creatures represented would have been fearsome for the hunters to face, or may have been venomous, so it has also been hypothesised that the pillars represent the hunters of the people trying to master their fear. As with the theories behind the use, purpose and location of the site, the ideas about the meaning and purpose of the representations are numerous, but all agree that they represent the prominent role that animals played in the lives of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic people using the site, most likely in both the physical and the spiritual world.

Many of the questions around the animal representations at the site are centred around the choice of species. It seems likely that the species chosen were depicted due to the relationships that the people had with them, or to values and status ascribed to them by the people (Peters and Schmidt 2004). Not only the pillars but also the buildings – possibly cult buildings – were decorated with images of animals such as snakes, lions, foxes, wild cattle and possibly even cranes as well, and these monumental works of art illustrate the importance of animals in the spiritual world of the human groups (Sana Segui 1999). As far as Schmidt was concerned, they need not have played a special role in the everyday lives of the people, but may have been part of a mythological world for them (although no fabulous or mythical creatures seem to appear on the iconography) (Schmidt 2010a). Banning, in contrast, suggests that although it is often assumed that there was a strong distinction between the sacred and the profane, it could have been the case that the sacred infused everyday life. Although the images are generally interpreted as art and as religious symbols, we should consider that it is a lot harder to separate the sacred and the profane than is usually thought (Banning 2011). I would unhesitatingly agree with this; if you ask someone with any deep religious belief today, they would undoubtedly tell you that their faith permeates their lives, and is there all the time, influencing their actions and thoughts even when they are not consciously thinking about it; it is not something that is only for special occasions. At the outset of religious beliefs and the realisation of gods, it would be even less likely that there would be a dividing line between their beliefs and their everyday lives; the ability to partition comes with time and experience. The belief in, and awareness of, the numinous is more likely to have been a permanent and constant aspect of their lives. Their awareness of the world around them would have been coloured by it, and their actions would have been duly influenced.

It seems possible that the choice of animals may not have related solely to whatever spiritual significance they may have possessed. It may also have reflected the animals' own physical qualities and presence in the world; their relation to and with the humans, whether as predator and prey, or simply their role as part of the natural landscape around them. The fact that not all of the species that the people would have encountered are represented clearly shows that there was preferential selection, and the predominance of particular species within those represented is therefore also significant. Foxes, for example, are very dominant in the representations, and this clearly indicates that foxes had an important role in Pre-Pottery Neolithic symbolism (Peters and Schmidt 2004). Foxes are also heavily represented at Kfar HaHoresh in some of the unique burials at that site, so may have had a trans-regional significance (see chapters 6 and 7). There does not seem to be any evidence for them being a primary food source, but it is possible that they may have been equally prized for their pelts, which could have been used as decoration for the site (Peters and Schmidt 2004), or possibly for clothing. They have a high level of representation in both the faunal record and in the art, which could potentially be a sign of fox worship (Peters and Schmidt 2004). However, if this were the case then the evidence from Göbekli would seem to suggest a series (or variety) of cults based around different animals, as other species also have a high level of representation. Birds are also represented, although not so highly. There are some carvings that might be vultures, often believed to be associated with death and the dead, and therefore possibly significant. It has also been noted, however, that there is little evidence for vultures at the site. This could lead to the conclusion that it was not used for funerary customs and practices (Peters and Schmidt 2004). However, there are a number of birds in the iconography of Göbekli Tepe which have been thought to represent vultures or other carrion-eating birds (for example, on Pillar 43 in Enclosure D).

The use of animals as the primary focus of the art at the site has raised its own questions, which are often looked at side by side with the questions relating to the specific species used. There has been much discussion over the function of the space demarcated by the decorated pillars. It could have been used for funeral practices or spiritual encounters, or possibly for initiation rituals and rites of passage. Hunting rituals are also a possibility (Peters and Schmidt 2004). It is unclear, however, just how the represented creatures would have fit into any or all

of these scenarios. There is little in the way of clear, separate human representation at the site, which has been taken to be a significant fact in its own right. The apparent lack of female figurines and overt female imagery – things which are generally considered to be associated with fertility and life – has been suggested as another indicator for the site being used primarily for funerary purposes (Peters and Schmidt 2004). However, it is generally agreed that the T-shaped pillars around the site can be "safely assumed" to be anthropomorphic in nature, or to represent anthropomorphic beings (Peters and Schmidt 2004; Schmidt 2003, 2007, 2010a; Dietrich et al. 2012). Schmidt believed that there was an "overwhelming possibility" that these T-shaped pillars are the first known monumental depictions of gods (Schmidt 2010a: 254). This is an idea that has clearly evolved from his earlier theories that the pillars could represent ancestors, the ghosts of the dead, or possibly daemons (Schmidt 2008). Banning (2011) notes, though, that T-shaped pillars are turning out to have a fairly wide regional distribution, so they may simply be part of a distinctive regional architectural tradition. T-shaped pillars have been found at Karahan Tepe, with iconography including a rabbit, other mammals, and snakes (Celik 2000a, 2000b), indicating that there was regional usage of the architectural and iconographical style found at Göbekli Tepe.

These theories are not incompatible with others that have been put forward regarding the artwork at Göbekli Tepe. One of the main theories proposed is that totemism, or a form of it, was being practiced at the site. Therefore the animals depicted could have been attributes or 'guards', or could have been supra-natural beings who were protecting the site or the people supernaturally (Peters and Schmidt 2004). The apparent arrangement of pillars into separate 'buildings', each dominated by a particular species, could also be explained by this, as different social groups could have appropriated particular plant and animal images as their exclusive emblems; in that case, the animals would presumably be preferentially depicted at sites within a group's territory (Peters and Schmidt 2004). If this was the case then it would seem to indicate that a variety of groups may have been using the site as a communal gathering area – but still maintaining their own space, if each circle of pillars was for a different community group from another site, as suggested by Peters and Schmidt (2004). It has even been hypothesised that it could be possible to work out the geographic origins of the groups who were using the site, using the depicted animals as clues (Peters and Schmidt 2004).

However, this seems unlikely; it is possible that many groups were not even using the site concurrently, but may have followed on from each other, in which case it is hard to tell anything from the representations, as the geographical range of animals changes over time in much the same way as it does for humans. In addition to this, many animals would have been common across the region, and would therefore be of little use in identifying geographical origins.

If Göbekli Tepe was being used for these purposes, then it could be that the structures at the site were indeed residences, and they were built on a large enough scale to house large, co-residential groups (Banning 2011). Banning follows this by putting forward the theory that if the structures were houses, the imagery on the pillars could have been clan or house emblems (Banning 2011), which is an interesting variant on the totemism theory; presumably the pillars would still relate to particular groups and would have been related to group or family identity. He expands this theory, suggesting that there would have been house societies located at the site; the dominance of particular animal species and themes in some of the structures (such as the Snake Pillar Building, and the Fox Pillar Building) would suggest the possibility that they were the emblems of clans, or other social units. In support of this, he suggests that the imagery on Pillar 43 in Structure D at the site could be interpreted as houses on the ground, with thatched roofs, while the little animals depicted next to each building could be their house emblem, or totem (Banning 2011). Presumably, therefore, the pillars in the 'themed' structures would relate to these house emblems; the other pillars could memorialize people or events of a real or mythical history for the different houses. Banning admits that this is speculative, but it is not unknown from ethnographic cases (Banning 2011). If this was the case, then the animals that may have been used as house symbols or mascots could have been chosen for their attributes; perhaps particular aspects of their appearance, behaviour or nature that was especially admired. Foxes could have been chosen for their cunning and their stealth; lions for their fearlessness and ferocity, for example. Other characteristics may also have been assigned to them, in keeping with beliefs about which we can only hypothesise.

Totemism is not the only theory put forward for the choice of animals represented at the site. It has also been suggested that they could have been chosen as guards and/or attributes of anthropomorphic beings, or maybe as vehicles for spiritual encounters. They may also have been favoured game species for the people who

gathered there, or they may have been animals which were associated in some way with mortuary practices (Peters and Schmidt 2004). Of course, these theories need not be mutually exclusive; they may well have favoured some animals both as prey and for their attributes or their uses in ritualistic contexts. Birds of prey, for example, may have been hunted to be used in such contexts as well as (or possibly instead of) their meat (Peters and Schmidt 2004). Regrettably, feathers and other such ephemeral parts do not generally survive well in the archaeological record, so we have no way of knowing if these were also used, although it seems likely that they were; maybe for costumes or decorations. Schmidt also suggested that the venomous creatures which are depicted could have been chosen for their apotropaic significance, and that the artwork could have been part of a mythic narration (Schmidt 2003). This is an idea that he returned to later, suggesting that there are questions over whether the relief images were attributes of the pillars, or whether they were part of a mythological cycle, where they may have a protective aspect – possibly serving as guards – or could have been part of some "horrific scenario" (Schmidt 2010a: 245-46).

A lot of the theories regarding the significance and use of the site, and what may have occurred there, do seem to centre around the pillars – both the 'normal' ones, and the T-shaped 'anthropomorphic' pillars. There have been theories that the pillars could connect the underworld with the world of the living (Peters and Schmidt 2004). If that was the case, then the underworld was clearly heavily populated with animals, or animal-beings. However, it has been suggested that the finds at Göbekli Tepe also strongly indicate that the symbolic world of animal spirits was dominated by human figures (Erdoğu 2009). This is presumably based on the anthropomorphic nature of the T-shaped pillars, and has led to the theory that human forms probably take a central role in the spirit world (Erdoğu 2009), one way or another. However, this does not take into account the fact that the pillars are often surrounded by or partially covered in animals; this seems less like dominance and more like coexistence or a lack of distinct boundaries between human and non-human.

Erdoğu also believes that there are also clear links to sexuality in the imagery at the site, with ithyphallic animals and humans both common in the representations (2009). However, Schmidt believed that the lack of female symbology in the imagery largely rules out the likelihood of the site being used for fertility rites (Peters and

Schmidt 2004: 214); the emphasis appears to be on male sexuality and depictions, as far as most commentators are concerned. However, as there are few physical distinctions between male and female in the animal world for many species, this is not necessarily the case, although the idea of male-related cults is quite prevalent in the archaeology of the Near East. The T-shaped pillars are also ambiguous as regards gender, and as it is obvious that the people using the site were capable of creating detailed and naturalistic images it is probable that the lack of clear detail in these pillars is entirely intentional. Fagan (2017) argues that this representational ambiguity may indicate the ontological status of the pillars. The complete absence of any facial features on the pillars (reflected in some depictions of humans elsewhere at the site) removes any resemblance to normal humanity. The pillars also, in the way they were carved, almost seem to represent figures *made* of stone rather than carved from it, possibly suggesting gods or ancestors (Fagan 2017), and if this was the case then the inclusion of animals on the pillars suggests another way in which the mingling of human and non-human identities and persons was represented and made manifest.

This combining of human and animal in the art of the people is especially noticeable in the large stone sculpture mentioned previously, which was discovered in the 2009 excavation season. In keeping with the totem pole style that it seems to resemble, it has a variety of animal motifs in relief over it. One shows an animal holding a head in its front limbs; the motif of an animal holding a human head is well known, so it is assumed that the head being held is that of a human (Schmidt 2010b). Just below that, in a way that is reminiscent of the T-shaped pillars, there is also a set of human hands and arms, with a small person shown just below them. It is thought that this could represent someone giving birth (Schmidt 2010b), although whether it is meant to be a human or an animal seems uncertain. Although this is the only find of this nature at the site to date, it reinforces the importance of animals in the thinking and the lives of the occupants, and the unusual ways in which humans seem to have been seen in relation to them. It gives the impression that their lives were melded together to such an extent that they were almost inseparable, at least in some contexts. Schmidt also believed that there would have been wooden versions of the pole, although they would not have survived; if that were the case, the wooden ones may have been for each group using the site, while the stone one may have been for combined use. Miracle and Boric (2008) have theorised that in the case of the t-shaped pillars,

the carvings of animals could be seen as carvings on or in human bodies. If so, this could be interpreted as releasing these animals or hybrids onto the surface, representing an interface between different realities. Given the carvings present, this theory would be equally applicable to the pole.

Another notable aspect of the site is the abstract signs that are often marked on the pillars, alongside the animal representations (Schmidt 2005). There has been much discussion about the signs and what they represent, especially in conjunction with the depictions of animals. It has been suggested, for example, that in depictions of cranes the presence of wavy lines is 'no doubt' meant to indicate water (Schmidt 2002). However, it has also been put forward by Schmidt that they could be pictographs, and there may have been a readable system of pictographs in place (Schmidt 2002). If this was the case, then it may have been one of the first 'written' languages – although the meanings are far from clear; the wavy lines that were assumed to be a representation of water have also been interpreted as depicting snakes, at different times (although in some cases this is based on the discovery of snake heads being depicted on the next side). However, Schmidt seemed convinced that the background is obviously different from a simple, totemic context, and that they could well be a complex system of symbols, which correspond with iconographical objects from other early Neolithic sites in Upper Mesopotamia (Schmidt 2003). In line with this, and presumably taking into account the animal representations and the intermingling of animal and human in the reliefs, Schmidt also suggested that when it is all put together, it could represent a mythic narration (*ibid.*). As far as he was concerned, the reliefs could represent a new and unique pictorial language, previously unknown (Schmidt 2010a).

These hints of a possible language – or at least of a set of shared or mutually understood symbols – would appear to bolster Schmidt's claims for the site being a gathering place for groups throughout the region, and also for his ideas regarding the possibility of a regional culture. Believing that it would probably have been a centre for the exchange of ideas and foods, where people from the surrounding settlements would have come together for common projects (Schmidt 2005), the possibility of a shared frame of reference for that exchange certainly seems to make that more viable. Schmidt believed that people from communities within a possible 200km radius – which would include sites such as Çayönü Tepesi, Nevalı Çori, Tell

'Abr, Mureybet, and Jerf el-Ahmar, amongst others – may have congregated at Göbekli Tepe, using it as a convergence point (Schmidt 2005). This potential catchment area would appear to be confirmed – or at least supported – by the material culture from these sites, which includes common shapes and items, and the discovery of symbols (often in a miniature form) which are to be found on a monumental scale at Göbekli (Schmidt 2005). The symbolic and possibly spiritual aspects of the reliefs and carvings at the site could indicate that the central element which bound the groups together and focused their interactions was a common religion and a common shrine. The exchange created by this sort of interaction would not only promote but would also demand the use of a symbolic system (Schmidt 2005).

Schmidt also noted that several of the signs, and particular combinations of the signs, appear on a considerably smaller scale on objects such as shaft-straighteners, and small stone slabs (Schmidt 2005), although it is not clear what purpose or function these would have had in the context of a religious or ritualistic environment. However, it would appear that a series of objects show a succession of signs (referred to by Schmidt as "Neolithic hieroglyphs" or "sacred signs") that appear in a recurring manner and on a monumental scale (Schmidt 2005: 17), and so far the prevailing theory seems to be that of a symbolic, or pictographic, form of communication. However, although the theory is fairly compelling in places, and carries a certain amount of weight, it is not necessarily true; it would be very exciting to think that a site this early had a method of permanently recording things, and it would be easy to get carried away into believing it to be so. In some cases, though, it does seem as though the interpretation is stretching a little too far; some of the depictions or 'symbols' are fairly unclear, and it is hard to tell what they are, or what they were meant to show or represent. Schmidt was clearly very excited about the site. He strongly believed it to be the location of a temple, and of sacred and ritualistic activity. As such, it was natural for him to extend this belief to the engravings and reliefs found all around the site. Indeed, it is entirely possible that he is right in his hypotheses regarding the symbols.

However, symbols are like shapes and images; the same one, or similar ones, often arise at different locations, often in different countries and continents, with little or no evidence of contact between the sites, having developed completely independently. There are many symbols that seem to be common to a variety of

civilisations, before interaction would have been likely. It would appear that there are some symbols that humans just seem to naturally use, often influenced or drawn from the world around them. However, although they may have a given meaning to those using them, it might be pushing too far to suggest that they therefore indicate a unified regional culture and form of communication. Landscapes, although varying, are often similar in the essentials; animals are often similar shapes, if not the same species, and if these things are used as the basis for symbols and drawings then it is hardly surprising that they occur at different locations, and seem to suggest connections between sites, where the only actual connection might be that they live in similar surroundings.

There is also the possibility that some of them are simple geometric shapes – the wavy lines, for example. They have been interpreted variously as water, and then, following the discovery of heads carved 'round the corner', as snakes. However, it is possible that the lines were created first, and the heads could have been added at a later date. We have no way of knowing if some of these engravings accumulated over the course of time. Successive groups may have added their own carvings and amendments as time went on. It is more than likely; humans seem naturally inclined to want to make their own mark on their surroundings. The wavy lines may well have originated with water, but geometric patterns are a common theme in art from the earliest days, and at least some of the symbols from Göbekli Tepe could be examples of this. Geometric shapes also tend to be strongly associated with drug use and shamanic visions, so if the pillars do represent totems and shamanic activity at the site, then it would make sense to consider the possibility that the symbols found on the pillars are also part of that tradition.
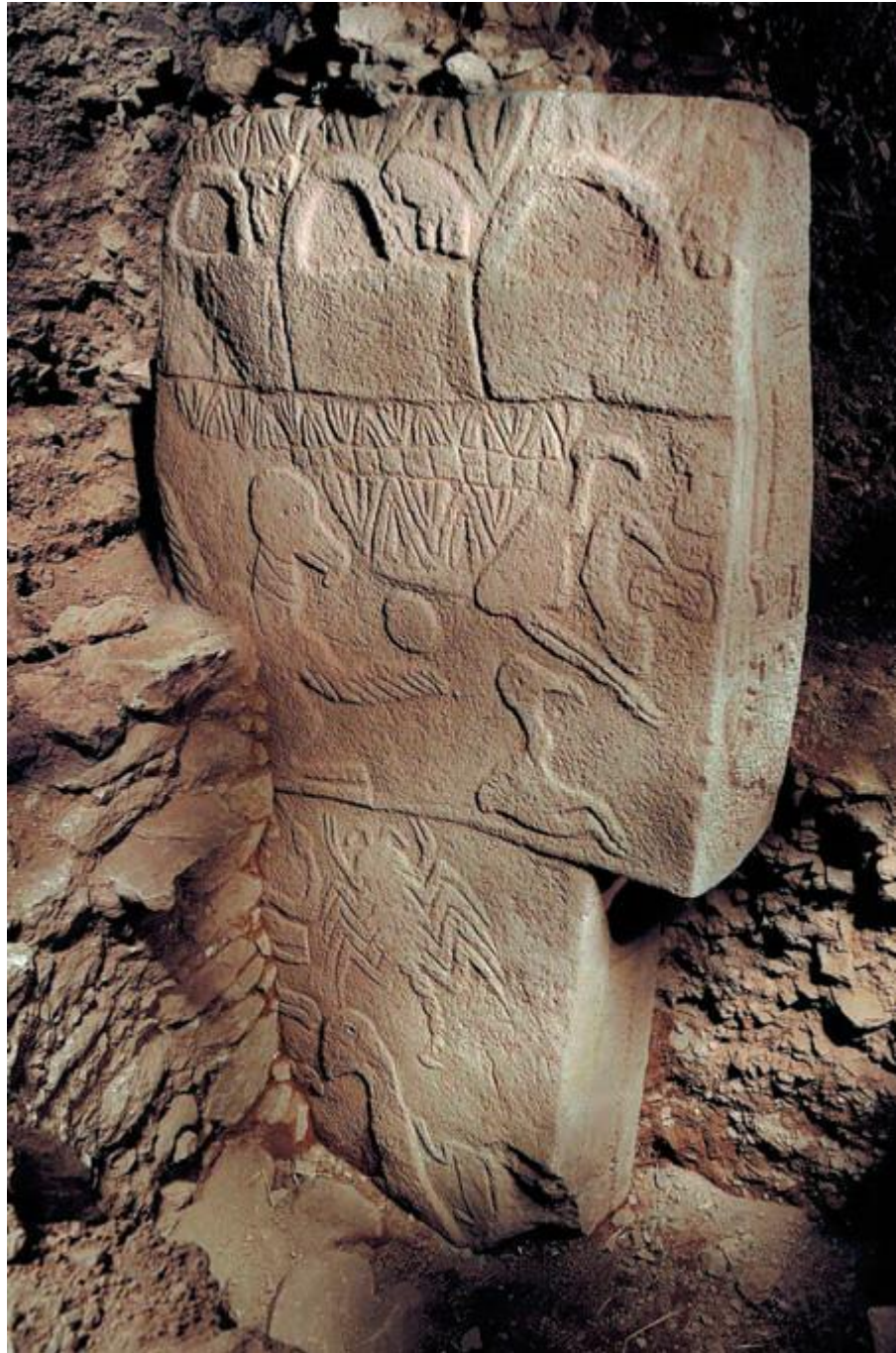
Figure 5.7: Pillar 43, Enclosure D (Source: Peters et al. 2014: Fig. 2)

However, another theory which has been put forward regarding the imagery at the site (and the purpose the site fulfilled) suggests that Göbekli Tepe was used to observe astronomical occurrences and movements, and also to record significant astronomical events (Sweatman and Tsikritsis 2017). This alternative explanation for some of the images focuses on pillar 43 in Enclosure D (Fig. 5.7); while this has often been interpreted as portraying raptors, and possibly a head and a decapitated

human (thereby possibly indicating the use of vultures as agents of ontological transformation at the site (Fagan 2017)), Sweatman and Tsikritsis argue that the carvings actually represent a careful record of and date stamp for the summer equinox. The animal depictions, they argue, are placed in the correct positions to represent zodiac signs or constellations, and the choice of animals aligns with the usual representation of those signs (Sweatman and Tsikritsis 2017). For example, the scorpion would represent Scorpius, and the raptor is in the correct position to represent what we now call Sagittarius (Sweatman and Tsikritsis 2017). With this as their basis, they suggest that the circle shape above the raptor's wing (usually interpreted as a head or skull) actually represents the position of the sun at the summer equinox. Developing the theory further, they believe that the pillar records the equinox shortly before the Younger Dryas event, which they believe is also recorded (as a cometary encounter) in the imagery at the site (Sweatman and Tsikritsis 2017).

There are many Neolithic monuments in Europe appear to have been built to align with the solstices and equinoxes, it is something which has rarely been argued in the Near East, and an examination of the extensive body of research regarding Göbekli Tepe shows that Sweatman and Tsikritsis's interpretation does not take into account the full body of data from the site and is thus seriously flawed. Their conclusions were specifically disputed by Notroff et al. (2017), based on the archaeological research. The theory put forward by Sweatman and Tsikritsis is based on only a very small proportion of the images present at the site, and there is no indication that the rest of the depictions would support their ideas. In addition to this, the excavations have made it clear that material was used and reused, including stones and pillars; they did not necessarily remain in the same positions and locations throughout the occupation of the site (Notroff et al. 2017), and this would present a significant obstacle to using them as the basis for a theory relying on the permanency of reference points.

Overall, the site presents an abundance of interesting and exciting material with which to work, and it is understandable that archaeologists have been duly enthusiastic about it. Some of the claims and theories are a little extravagant in their reach, but it is impossible to deny that this is a site that seems to create strong emotions in those that study and visit it. Although the evidence for it being a temple, with all that this entails, is not entirely convincing, it is interesting to

note that many other archaeologists seem to support that idea, especially once they have visited it. There are some places and sites that do inspire an awe and a sense of the numinous, for reasons that are beyond our ability to explain. It may well be that Göbekli Tepe is one of those places; it would explain the level of conviction that Schmidt (amongst others) had about the nature of the site. What it does overwhelmingly represent is the complicated and rich nature of our relationships with animals, even in this period. This is emphatically demonstrated throughout the site, through the reliefs, the engravings and the sculptures. These force us to acknowledge that the ways in which the people interacted with animals, and the ways in which they viewed them (and themselves), were anything but simple and well-defined. There is much material here that needs further study, and further excavations will probably add to the questions, rather than providing answers. However, when considering the original research questions, the iconography at Göbekli Tepe indicates that beliefs around identity and boundaries were important to the people who constructed and interacted with the site. It is difficult to judge whether these beliefs changed over the course of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic based on the data from Göbekli Tepe, as we know that material from the site was often reused over the course of the span of occupation; this does unfortunately make it harder to assess the changes (if any) in subjects and style over time.

Chapter 6: Mortuary Practices

"The recovery and study of animals buried together with humans or receiving formal burial on their own, going as far back as 14,000 years ago… has also foregrounded the affective bonds between human and nonhuman animals and has raised the issue of animal personhood in the prehistoric past." (Harris and Hamilakis 2014: 98)

Throughout the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, there are instances of animals (or parts of animals) appearing in a variety of contexts and having been subjected to a wide variety of mortuary treatments. For the purposes of this thesis, we are focussing upon those instances of animals being found in human burials and within human settlements, as well as examples of animals being given mortuary treatment which can be considered as 'special' (when considered against the overall picture of PPN mortuary practices), as best illustrating the position of animals within society and how they were viewed and related to. The use of animal remains in ritual depositions and installations shows how they were integrated into society and societal practices after death as much as they were in life, while the placing of animal remains with human is another expression of beliefs about identity.
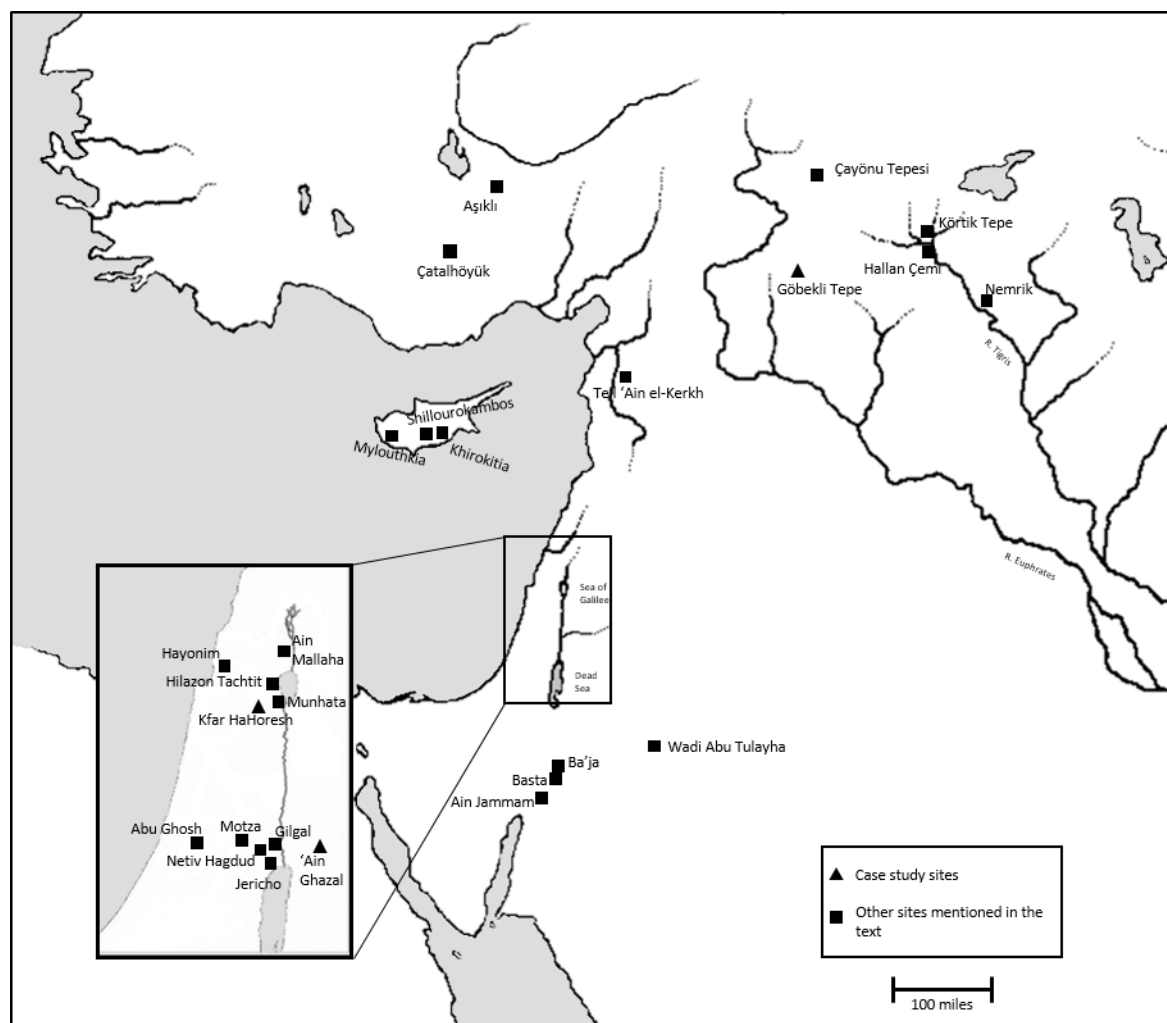
Figure 6.1: Map of sites mentioned in this chapter (T. Jones)

Although the burials at Kfar HaHoresh are probably the most spectacular examples of these, the recurrence of animals in (or in association with) mortuary contexts occurs across the Levant, and has antecedents going back well before the Pre-Pottery Neolithic; there is an ongoing trend of human and animal remains being deposited together in an intentional way throughout the Neolithic and Natufian periods in the Near East. For example, a burial at 'Ain Mallaha in the Natufian included a dog interred with a human burial, which is thought to be one of the earliest examples of a pet dog (Verhoeven 2004); another find at the same site had a fox mandible associated with a piece of cut and polished human skull (Croucher 2012). The site of Uyun al-Hammam also had a burial which included a dog skull, as well as a human/fox burial, and the placement of other animals remains (such as deer, gazelle and tortoise) inside human graves (Maher et al. 2011). Another site, at Hayonim, had a burial which contained three humans, two dogs and some tortoise shells (*ibid.*).

Still in the Natufian, at the cave site of Hilazon Tachtit in northern Israel, several burials have been discovered which included animal remains, one of which had been interpreted as the burial of a shaman owing to the variety of animal species directly associated with the human remains (Grosman and Munro 2007). It is clear, then, that although the association and inclusion of animals with mortuary contexts is a strong motif within the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, these practices were building on behaviours that had been in existence in the region for a very long time. They continued, or at least reoccurred, throughout the period (and beyond), and the long-standing nature of the behaviour as much as the widespread manifestations of it underscore the significance of these practices to the population at the time.

However, in looking at these particular associations, and in trying to present the information in some sort of order, there are some questions that almost raise themselves. The foremost of these is the question of just who is buried with whom. In some instances it seems clear enough that the human burial is the primary focus, and some isolated animal bones were included with that burial. And in some cases there is no association to be puzzled out; the burials are singular for reasons other than inclusions from other species. However, with some burials (although in some cases 'burials' may be too definite a word for what has been found), the implications are less clear. Although it would seem that our natural instinct is to read the situation as an animal being included in a human burial, or animals having been killed in order to honour a human, it is also possible that the animal could have been the primary concern, and the human included in order to show respect, or to provide care for the dead animal. Or, as is suggested by some of the treatment of animals after death, there was (at times) no real difference between humans and animals.

For example, the *Bos* pit at Kfar HaHoresh (L1005) contained numerous (over 200) auroch bones, from multiple animals (see Chapter 7). Overlying the pit was a decapitated, articulated human skeleton (Goring-Morris 1998). This has been suggested as being the remains of a communal hunt, with an entire herd having been killed (Goring-Morris 2005). It has also been suggested that it represents the remains of a feast to honour the person buried above the pit (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007). The assumption is generally that the animals were killed in order to honour (in some way) the human who was buried above them. However, if the animals were killed during a communal hunt as Goring-Morris has suggested, then

it is possible that the human burial may be that of someone killed during the hunt. If so, they may have been placed there to mark the occasion and manner of their death, or to honour the animals who were powerful enough to kill one of the hunting party. Alternatively, it is conceivable that the human was a sacrifice to ensure the success of the hunt, and was later buried with the remains of the animals their death helped to secure. How the evidence is interpreted can depend greatly upon how the question is framed.

In other cases, where human and animal bones are mingled together relatively equally, the question also applies. If the human is not the clear focus of the burial, then it can be difficult for us to determine other possible answers or scenarios that are not automatically anthropocentric. However, it is nonetheless important that we acknowledge this difficulty and at least attempt to counteract it in our thinking. To assume that the human is always the primary element or the main reason for the interment is not only egotistical, but also closes our minds to other options. In instances of deposits with mingled human and animal remains, one point to consider is that the humans at least are likely to have undergone previous mortuary treatment(s) and therefore we must consider the possibility that these deposits may not have been simplistically funerary in nature. Instead, they may have been intentional, carefully curated deposits laid down as part of a ritual process or structured deposition, where the remains of each were taken and combined to form something entirely new, and the act of deposition itself may have been the primary focus.

Animals, whether domesticated or not, would have been an immensely important part of the everyday lives of the people at that time, as sources of meat, furs, skins and possibly milk, and also as sources of wealth and maybe even as trading goods – and possibly (probably, even) as spiritual beings as well. With all this to consider, to automatically write them off as being of secondary importance in these contexts may be rather short-sighted. Additionally, with the evidence from a variety of other contexts demonstrating the relevance and significance of animals to the population, we cannot assume that their importance or significance diminishes after death, or in mortuary contexts. Instead, their significance, or any significance ascribed to them, may have continued, or in some cases actually increased after death. If so, in order to understand the ways in which their remains were treated we may also need to look at what we know, or can deduce, of how they were perceived whilst they were alive.

Another consideration is that of marginality in the mortuary record. There is much in the archaeological literature (e.g., Molleson 2003, Mays 1998) regarding the separation of infants and neonates from general burial areas and settlements in death. However, this does not seem to hold especially true in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic as far as can be seen from the majority of sites. Kuijt (2000), for example, notes that infants were usually buried as individuals, and although they were occasionally buried in intramural areas, they have also been found in fills and in courtyard contexts. He additionally states that infants at 'Ain Ghazal and Jericho have sometimes been discovered interred in what we interpret as ritual contexts, such as in subfloor pits or within the foundations or the walls of a building, presumably as offerings or dedications (Kuijt 2000). Indeed, it has been noted that at this time infants and juveniles were sometimes accorded the same burial rites and treatment as adults (such as at Kfar HaHoresh). Even at sites where their mortuary treatment was less specialised than that given to adults, the burials themselves are often in the same locations and areas as any other burials (for example, at Gilgal 1 (Noy 1989), and Ba'ja (Gebel et al. 2006)). On the other hand, some sites (such as 'Ain Ghazal) have 'trash burials', which appear to demonstrate no care or attention to the deceased, whether adult or infant, and other sites (such as Wadi Abu Tulayha (Fujii 2006)) have instances of burials which are separate or isolated. The question arises of whether these burials, juvenile or adult, are in what could be considered as liminal locations, and if this can be seen as reflecting a perceived spiritual marginality. If this is the case, then any animal remains associated with such burials must also be considered in relation to this; whether the parts of the animal or the species represented have a particular significance in that context. Would some animals have been perceived as being more marginal than others, or was their significance dependent upon the context in which they were placed, and therefore mutable?

Overview

The mixing of human and animal remains in mortuary contexts is a phenomenon which began in the Near East well before the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. Qafzeh Cave – a rockshelter in Lower Galilee – had burials dating to the Mousterian, and Qafzeh 11 was the burial of a juvenile, whose hands were clasping a large pair of deer antlers to the chest (Palmer 2000). We can see, then, that this form of mortuary

activity has precedents going far back into the past, and although it may not have been a common practice, it was well established as a form of behaviour. It was also relatively common in other countries and continents, including in the British Neolithic (e.g., Ray and Thomas 2003; Jones and Richards 2003). Indeed, Verhoeven (2002a) has stated that the evidence for human-animal linkages (in the Near East, at least) is found almost exclusively in clear ritual contexts such as burials. It seems clear, therefore, that as a form of mortuary or ritual behaviour, it was calling upon ideas and beliefs that went further (and were more 'universal') than mere place or status marking; whatever the reasons behind the mixing of humans and animals in burials, or the special treatment of animals on their own, in any period or region, they were a significant part (and reflection) of the belief systems at the time.

The significance of these mixtures and inclusions lies not only in the species chosen, but also in the particular parts which were chosen for burial. Sprague (2005: 162) states that "The selection of specific bones or bones from specific parts of the bodies of both the humans and the animals makes this practice even more specific." This means there are multiple things which can be considered when looking at human-animal linkages within mortuary contexts. This includes not only the human burial (position, gender, any grave goods, primary or secondary, articulated or not, etc), but (if not intact) which parts of the body were included. The species of animals chosen for inclusion may also be significant, as well as the parts of those animals which are present, and where they are placed within the burial. In contexts where there is more than one animal inclusion, it might also be necessary to look at which body parts are present from each species represented, as the differences may also be revealing. This is considered in more detail later in this chapter.

Cole (1972) mentions a study of animal skeletons associated with human burials in the Neolithic and later periods, which showed that out of 459 individual animals identified in the study, nearly half were dogs. These were followed in frequency by cattle, then sheep and goats. This does not appear to have been the case during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic in the Near East, as dogs are not a common inclusion in burials at this time, although they are known from burials in the Epipalaeolithic (Boyd 2018), and it has been suggested that the puppy burial from 'Ain Mallaha is the first known example of humans consciously respecting the integrity of a non-human body (Miracle and Boric 2008). Aurochs, gazelle, cattle and foxes are among

the more common species found in with human burials in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. This association between human burials and foxes and gazelles was already in existence prior to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic however, as both animals were associated with burials at 'Ain Mallaha in the Natufian (Tchernov and Valla 1997; Goring-Morris 2005). At Çayönü Tepesi, however, the Cult Building housed a pit which contained a number of human skeletons, as well as auroch skulls and horn (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2005; Verhoeven 2002a). So we can see even from a brief look at a few sites that a variety of animals appear to have been chosen for use in this way. At 'Ain Ghazal, some burials had inclusion of pig bones (discussed in Chapter 3); at Kfar HaHoresh, the burials revealed a number of different animals as apparently intentional inclusions in mortuary or ritual deposits, including foxes and auroch (discussed in more detail in Chapter 7). Animal remains also appear outside of human mortuary contexts, as deposits on their own (e.g., at 'Ain Ghazal (Rollefson 1998a) and Basta (Becker 2002)), and as installations (e.g., at Çatalhöyuk (Hodder 2010, 2011) and 'Ain Jammam (Miracle and Boric 2008)), to name but two examples of this. Even the most cursory examination of the archaeological record for the Pre-Pottery Neolithic gives clear indications of how important animals were, and how much they were a part of human lives and human society, even after their deaths.

The strong association which has been perceived between humans and cattle, in life and in death, extends far beyond the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Near East where it has been noted and suggested (e.g., Rollefson and Simmons 1985; Cauvin 2000). At sites such as Kfar HaHoresh, Hallan Cemi and Göbekli Tepe, large numbers of animal bones (including auroch) have been interpreted as evidence of large-scale feasting (e.g., Hayden 1996; Rosenberg and Redding 2002; Twiss 2008; Dietrich et al. 2012). As discussed in Chapter 2, the residents at 'Ain Ghazal also had a strong relationship with cattle, as evidenced through figurines and cattle remains, and this is a theme that seems to have recurred across the Near East (Cauvin 2000). One possible way of interpreting or understanding this relationship is suggested by similar depositions of cattle remains in Britain.

In the early British Neolithic, it is clear that there was a close association between human and cattle bones. The bones of cattle were often associated with human mortuary remains and long barrows, including (for example) entire calf skeletons found at Bown Hull and Notgrove, and many other sites contribute to the evidence for a long association between the two species throughout the 6th millennium BP

in southern Britain (Ray and Thomas 2003). The work done by Ray and Thomas, looking into this relationship, may provide some insights into those reflected in mortuary practices in the PPN Near East, although from a later time and geographically distant. Ray and Thomas believe that the Neolithic people may have created a fictive kinship with their cattle, both genealogical and metaphorical, due to the intimacy of their relationship with their herds (Ray and Thomas 2003). They suggest that "The creation of such 'kinship' enabled the dead of both communities to intercede on behalf of humans on the unseen world that influenced the destiny of both hearths and herds" (Ray and Thomas 2003: 38). Although domestication was still in the early stages in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, and so these relationships were not as developed or as deeply rooted as they would have become, the idea of the creation of a kinship with various animals may still have had resonance at that time. It is conceivable that, by ascribing special significance to or feeling a connection with particular animals in life, they sought to reinforce that in death by including them in burials, possibly in the belief that it would be beneficial to either the living or the dead. It is possible that, as may have been the case in the British Neolithic, sacrificing cattle or formally consuming their flesh could have been seen as a way of ensuring their intercession with the dead or with deities on behalf of the community or family (Ray and Thomas 2003: 11).

In some cases in the British Neolithic, it would seem that human and cattle remains were apparently interchangeable, for the purposes of burial – in the long barrow at Amesbury 42, or the Stonehenge Cursus, for example, no primary human burial deposits were found, but there were cattle remains (Ray and Thomas 2003). There is the possibility that animal bones could have been stored for years before being deposited for the final time, in a similar fashion to the secondary mortuary treatments of humans in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. However, although Ray and Thomas believe there was a kinship being created between the people and their cattle, it was not only domesticated cattle that have been found in mortuary contexts; the remains of wild cattle are also often present (Ray and Thomas 2003). It has been suggested that

> "…the bones of cattle 'tracked' the destinies of human remains: buried whole when people were buried whole, placed in selected bone groups together when selection of body parts for deposition was deemed appropriate. When heads (or skulls) were to be placed…cattle or people could be selected, apparently interchangeably… Where human remains

were cremated, cattle too have been burned on the pyre and were ready for placement. Such repeated associations are intimated and personal, as well as articulate about social relations; they reflect ties of emotion as well lineage." (Ray and Thomas 2003: 42).

This is reminiscent of some of the finds from the Near East, including those at Kfar HaHoresh where animal remains appear to be replacing (or amplifying) human body parts in some cases (see Chapter 7). Certainly the recurring association of humans and animals in mortuary contexts suggests the 'ties of emotion' mentioned by Ray and Thomas. Humans and animals in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, especially in the late PPNA and through the PPNB, were tied together by the closest of relationships; close enough that they moved in and out of each other's physical and possibly spiritual space, as shown by these burials.

Archaeological evidence from Neolithic Orkney also shows a range of interactions between the dead of the human population and animal remains. These interactions cover a number of species, including birds, whales, dogs, deer and sheep, as well as cattle (Jones and Richards 2003). All these species have been found in domestic or non-mortuary contexts as well as in mortuary settings; animal tooth necklaces, for example, were fairly common (Jones and Richards 2003). This engagement with animals, in the late Neolithic, involved animals being articulated, disarticulated and then re-articulated, which is not dissimilar to the treatment that human remains also received at that time, where they were buried whole, and were then removed from their burial place, disarticulated, moved around and deposited again (*ibid.*). This similarity of treatment between the dead of the human population and the dead fauna reflects the similarities in mortuary treatment sometimes found in the Near Eastern Pre-Pottery Neolithic contexts. There, both animals and humans were often disarticulated and reburied (at least in part), and decapitation was also another common practice for human burials that was reflected in the treatment of animal remains, although not as commonly.

Fowler (2004) highlights that mortuary practices deconstitute a body after death, sometimes over a very long period of time, and those components can then be reconfigured; personhood can also be achieved and maintained, or even deconstituted or reconfigured after death (Fowler 2004). This is as true for animals as for humans; animal bodies can also be broken down (and we know from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic that they were), and they can be reassembled with other

things or agents, including tools and beads (Conneller 2004). When animal bodies (or parts of them) are placed with human remains, it can be an extension of the human body, thereby creating ambiguity about where the humans end and the animals begin (Conneller 2004). They come together to form new assemblages which are made from bits of each, and so the boundaries and distinctions are broken down and removed; Deleuze theorises that identity derives from differences rather than difference arising from identity (Conneller 2004), and in the context of combined human-animal burials where the mingling has removed differences, then separate identities are not sustainable.

Jones and Richards believe that through the process of slaughter and dismemberment a particular relationship is established (Jones and Richards 2003), and that these practices embody a metaphorical unity between people and animals. Just as human remains represent previous generations, so animals are ancestors in precisely the same way; they also shared the world with people and, in the form of food, enabled humans to reproduce and expand. In this way, animals are ancestors of, and are ancestral to, the human population (Jones and Richards 2003). Again, while these ideas (if true) may not have been fully applicable in the PPN Near East, we can take something from them. The choosing of animals and the killing of them (as we can probably assume that the population were not simply using the nearest dead animal), and then the dismembering (where needed) prior to burial, would have been a special occurrence, most likely full of its own meanings and rituals, and would have deepened the significance ascribed to the chosen animal, as well as the relationship felt with it.

From sites in the Near East, we can see that some of these ideas, or versions of them, may also have been in place at that time. There are indications that animals may have been sacrificed before being buried; at Tell 'Ain el-Kerkh, for example, there was a deposit under structure 74 which contained a human infant in the south-west corner, suid remains near the centre, pig and cattle remains in the eastern part and goat remains (a mandible and a horn) in the north-west and south-west corners (Tsuneki 2002). The suid remains would seem to suggest that they were not used for food, as the remains indicated an infant animal, but the cattle remains did show signs of having been buried after being used as food (Tsuneki 2002). This has led to the suggestion that the suid could have been a sacrificial burial to accompany the human infant (or, alternatively, that both the infant and the suid were part of a sacrificial deposit related to the construction of

structure 74), while the other animal remains may have been food offerings from a ritual banquet (Tsuneki 2002). Whether the human and non-human infants were sacrificed in order to be used as a foundation deposit, or whether one or both of them died naturally and were used as a matter of convenience, this is still highly significant in terms of highlighting their social relations. It shows that animals were as important as humans, if both were needed in order to protect or bring fortune to the building and community. Alternatively, if the burial was not intended as a foundational deposit but simply as an interment, the presence of them both is still significant; it suggests that animals and humans were so closely connected, so tied together, that the infant of one species needed to be accompanied by an infant of the other in death – maybe for companionship, maybe to help complete a young spirit which had not had time to develop fully itself.

However, the evidence from Tell 'Ain el-Kerkh is not clear enough on its own to allow for elaboration on this theme. The Neolithic site of Shillourokambos on Cyprus also had some unusual finds in terms of human-animal connections, and it has been theorised that there may have been two separate populations at the site, each with their own way of doing things (Jones 2009). The site had evidence of wild pigs being exploited alongside domesticated ones, and the same was true for sheep and goats. However, one of the main finds (for the purposes of this discussion) was a human burial, with an entire cat buried in a pit only 40cm away (Fig 6.1). This is considered to have been the earliest pet cat found, as the remains show it was a young animal (Jones 2009). The human burial was also associated with grave goods, which may indicate it was the interment of a special person within the community; an indication reinforced by the fact that the cat associated with it is the only connected burial found in over a decade of excavation at the site (Le Mort et al. 2008). Cats are not a common find in the mainland Levant, and there are few (if any) other examples of cats being included in mortuary contexts on the mainland at this time. If cats had a particular significance to the society at Shillourokambos it was a local or regional significance, possibly limited to Cyprus.

However, other animals (such as cattle, foxes, and pigs) appear from their frequency and distribution in the archaeological record to have had particular significance more widely ascribed to them. Although the evidence for this extends beyond the mortuary record, as discussed in previous chapters, the presence of animals in mortuary contexts – with humans or on their own, whole or broken into their constituent parts – offers insights regarding the place of animals within

society. As Jones and Richards (2003) and Ray and Thomas (2003) discuss with regards to the British Neolithic, the treatment of dead animals in the way they were handled and moved and rearranged after death resembles closely the mortuary treatment of humans in that period. This is equally true of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Near East, where animals and humans both offer examples of decapitation, disarticulation and secondary burials. Even the plastered human skulls have equivalents in the treatment of animals after death, with discoveries such as the plastered bucrania at Çatalhöyuk (Hodder and Meskell 2012). With evidence such as this, we can conclude that the relationships between human and non-human had been created and understood in such a way that there was no real difference between them; animals were treated like humans, or humans were treated like animals. Additionally, it starts to become clear that this lack of clear boundaries between species not only caused them to be subject to the same (or similar) mortuary treatments, but to become apparently interchangeable and combinable in the process.
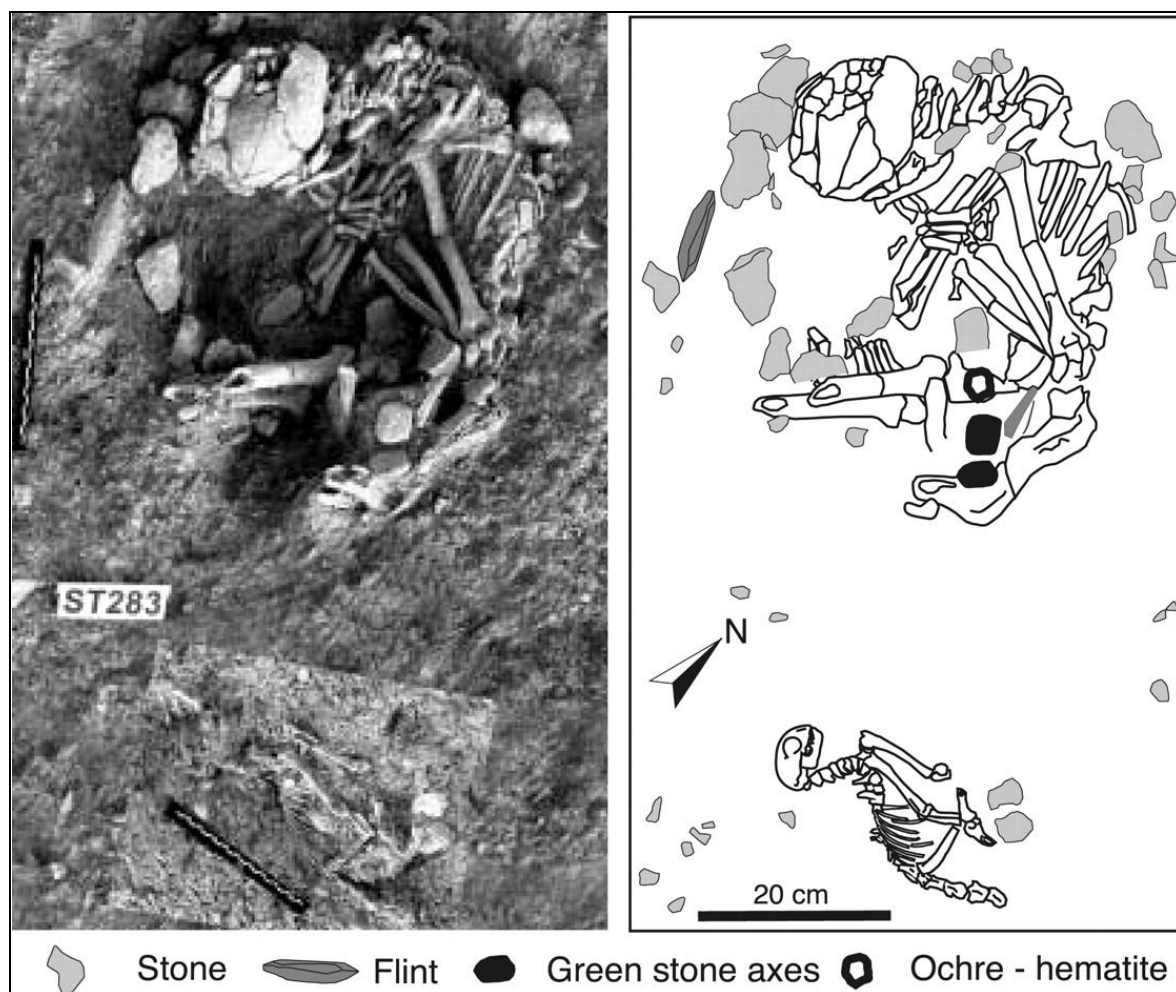
Figure 6.2: Burial of human and cat, Shillourokambos (Source: Vigne et al. 2004: Fig. 1)

It is crucial to bear in mind that there is more to animals than we might see in the archaeological or mortuary record; we focus on what we can see and identify, but we also have to acknowledge that there are many things that are missing from our information; things that have not survived but which may have been just as significant and useful as what remains. Skins, of course, are an excellent example of this; we can be reasonably confident that they would have been used – to provide warmth, or for trade, perhaps – but they survive only in very specialised environments and circumstances which do not apply to the majority of archaeological sites. This makes it hard to consider their functions and significance in prehistoric societies, without simply making assumptions. However, there can sometimes be traces that remain in the archaeological record which may indicate the presence and use of such things as pelts; at Göbekli Tepe, for example, fox remains have been discovered, including an unexpectedly high proportion of post-cranial remains, and it has been suggested that these could represent pelt usage at the site, possibly for decorative purposes (Peters and

Schmidt 2004). Another possible use for them could have been as items of clothing during ceremonies, given the general consensus regarding the ritual nature of the site and the appearance of loincloths on the anthropomorphic T-pillars (Dietrich et al. 2017; Benz and Bauer 2013).

Human burials with animal inclusions

The most commonly found examples of burials are those that are generally considered to be primarily human, but with animal inclusions. Kfar HaHoresh, as discussed in the next chapter, has many examples of this amongst its extensive mortuary record. One of the most notable ones, relating back to possible perceived relationships with cattle, was in Locus 1003, where the skull of a human infant was found resting within the pelvis of a bovine. This assembly was resting over three articulated but decapitated human burials, which may have been in association with some articulated gazelle remains as well (Goring-Morris 1998). The arrangement gives the impression of the infant being birthed by the bovine; a human given life by an animal. That it was a child who was placed in this position may also be of significance; although at some other sites child remains are less common than would be expected from the apparent population demographics, and at yet other sites child remains have been found in what are termed 'trash burials', at Kfar HaHoresh this does not seem to have been the case. Goring-Morris has noted that the clear evidence for children receiving most, if not all, of the diverse array of funerary treatments, including skull removal and the presence of grave-goods, is highly significant (Goring-Morris 2005). As there is little indication - unlike with the bone arrangement possibly depicting an animal – that this mortuary arrangement was meant for public viewing, it would suggest that the lack of boundaries between humans and animals, or human and non-human identities, manifested itself in a number of different ways, all carefully curated and deposited. With the instances which would appear to have been hidden from public view, it suggests that the deposition was the important thing; possibly as a ritual act in and of itself after a series of other rituals processing the remains. The positioning of the child's skull with the cattle pelvis would also suggest notions of relationship and ancestry; the 'kinship' discussed by Ray and Thomas (2003).

At other sites the connection between human and animal remains are equally clear, although perhaps less evocative in their nature. Ray and Thomas, based on

their work regarding the British Neolithic, have suggested that where heads and hooves are found in human burials (found in British burials from the Neolithic through the Beaker period and up to Roman times) the deceased could have been clothed in animal skins (presumably with some of the animal parts still attached), possibly relating to shamanic ideas of transition (Ray and Thomas 2003). One burial at Çayönü Tepesi in the Skull Building (amongst the many) did include an auroch skull and horns (Wood 1998; Verhoeven 2002a), but on the whole this does not appear to be a common find in burials within the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. We cannot say that bodies were or were not wrapped or dressed in pelts, but so far there is little or no evidence of this occurring. While the idea of shamanic practices occurring in this period has often been mooted, especially in relation to depictions of humans and animals (e.g., Lewis-Williams 2001), and with the inclusion of animals remains within human burial contexts, the majority of mortuary evidence does not tend to bear this out, at least in the way suggested by Ray and Thomas (although of course they were not trying to extend the idea to the ancient Near East).

In the Near East, animal horns, horn cores and antlers seem to be more common inclusions in human interments, having been found at several sites in burials dating to this period. Burials at Çayönü Tepesi sometimes included the sawn-off tines of deer antlers, or teeth from large artiodactyls (Braidwood and Cambel 1982), and cattle horns were also found in the Skull Building at the site (Verhoeven 2002a). Atlit Yam, a PPNB site in Israel, also had pairings of human skulls and animal horns; to the northwest of structure 9, two burials – H13 and H29 – were associated with intact cattle horn cores; H13 was part of a skull with a horn core next to it, and H29 was a male burial in a pit, also with an adjacent horn core (Galili 1987; Galili et al. 2005). Motza also has an example of burned gazelle horns being included in a human grave (Meier et al.2016). Stordeur (2010) believes that there was an association between humans and horned animals, as finds of horn cores and bucrania are so common during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. Shepard (1996) suggests that when considered from the front, a cow's skull complete with its horns can resemble the human female reproductive system; the cranium as the uterus, the horns as its fallopian tubes. This could conjure up the idea of passageways of new life, with the horns as a gate to renewal (Shepard 1996). This could be one possible explanation for the appearance of skulls within mortuary contexts, but I would consider it unlikely; it is an observation based upon a

knowledge of and familiarity with human anatomy, which we have no reason to believe the people of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic possessed. However, Conneller (2004) notes that although red deer were clearly important to the population at Star Carr, the antlers of the deer seemed to be even more significant than the rest of the animal, and believes that they may have been more particularly associated with the 'animalness' of the deer. This is more likely as an explanation for the repeated presence of horn cores and skulls in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic.

Sites on Cyprus also reflect this; the excavations of Le Brun at Khirokitia-Vounoi uncovered several burials with animal inclusions, including antlers and horns. At least three of them were child or infant burials; burial Le Brun 84:207 was a secondary burial of a child, with sheep or goat horns built into the wall of the grave at one end (Niklasson 1991), while Le Brun 89:382 was an infant skeleton which had had the antler of a sheep or goat placed level with its feet, at its back (*ibid.*), and 538 was a child burial which had the shoulder blade of a deer placed on the skull (*ibid.*). Le Brun 97:380 was an adult burial, which had a fragment of a stag antler within the right part of the pelvis – the original excavator thinks that initially the entire antler would have been included in the burial, but only the fragment remained. Dikaios (the excavator of the site) thought that a few other burials might have also contained intentional animal inclusions, but it was hard to distinguish between intentional inclusions and inclusions that have come from the fill (Niklasson 1991). This is a problem that is bound to occur when we are looking at fragments of remains, as we so often are.

Sometimes, however, the placement of animal remains in human burials is sufficiently unusual or notable for us to be comparatively certain that it is an intentional inclusion, and to give us a chance to draw conclusions from that information. In the Earth Plaza at Çayönü Tepesi, a boar's lower jaw had been placed over two human burials (Verhoeven 2002a), and at Abu Ghosh Homo 9 in the PPNB layers was a very fragmentary burial which was found in a pit which also contained animal remains (Sklar-Parnes and Smith 2003). Both of these examples are instances which could potentially be accidental inclusions, but which have been taken to be deliberate, possibly because of the placement of the remains in question. Rather more conclusive are the finds from Körtik Tepe, a PPNA site in Turkey. The site had many burials, including 16 (all of adults, of varying ages) which had been marked out with tortoise shells either nearby, or covering the heads (Ozkaya and Coskun 2011). The high occurrence of this phenomenon, both

in terms of the species represented and the placement of the shells, makes it extremely unlikely that the tortoises were an accidental or casual inclusion, from the grave fill or from rubbish. At 'Ain Ghazal some of the burials from the later phases of the site, in the PPNC, have been found to have inclusions of pig bones (including immature pig skulls) (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004). These are clearly intentional inclusions within the burials, although it was also clearly not a universal practice at the site – which has led to the suggestion that these inclusions could signify a split in the population, into two groups (*ibid.*).

Kfar HaHoresh also has several burials which have isolated animal bones in them (Goring-Morris 2005), and it is possible that at least some of these do not represent deliberate activity on the part of the human population. However, the site has an unusually high occurrence of fox mandibles and half mandibles in with burials (Goring-Morris 2005; Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004), which also leads us to the conclusion that these were deliberately included as part of the burial or reburial of human remains. The burial in Locus 1352 had a fox mandible placed near the chest, and in Locus 1362 another fox mandible was placed directly adjacent to an isolated child's skull (Goring-Morris 2005). Kfar HaHoresh, as discussed in the next chapter, is a site known for the remarkable human-animal connections within the many burials. Goring-Morris believes these to be of a nature previously undocumented within PPNB contexts, considering them to be particularly interesting in terms of socio-cultural and ritual beliefs, and possibly even associated with a shift in the economy (Goring-Morris 1991).

Other sites also exhibit evidence of this form of mortuary behaviour. At Ba'ja, animal bones were found in with human burials in two burial chambers (Gebel et al. 2006), and at Aşıklı a burial was found of a human female with a deer shoulder blade positioned by her left shoulder (Croucher 2012). This association of comparable body parts is particularly interesting when considering notions of personhood and the construction of identity. Fowler says that

> "Just like other rites, those associated with the dead may not be aimed
> at removing them from society, as we might expect, but at *reintegrating*
> them into society as different kinds of entities, different orders of person.
> Mortuary actions refer back to everyday practices that mould bodies,
> and reflect on personhood through the medium of a body that now has

the potential to be *entirely* dismembered or dispersed." (Fowler 2004: 45).

This, combined with the ideas from Conneller's paper (2004) regarding the combining of human and animal remains in new assemblages and the resulting creation of new beings, helps to suggest that possibly the intention here was for the combining of the human and deer, with the deer being represented by the single shoulder blade.

There are also examples of burials which could be considered as animal-with-human, rather than the human automatically being the main focus. The gazelle burial at Kfar HaHoresh, from Locus 1004, could be one of these. This was an intentional interment of an animal which was decapitated, but otherwise complete, and with a plastered human skull in association with it (Goring-Morris 1998; Twiss 2008). Another possible example is that of the human and lamb at Çatalhöyük, where an adult male was interred in the same burial as a lamb (Russell and Düring 2006; Russell 2016). It is the only animal burial at the site (Russell and Düring 2006), which is significant given the number of human burials and the quantity of evidence for other ritual activity at the site. It is also unusual in that the lamb was domesticated, and had also been wrapped in some sort of material before being placed in the grave, possibly with the intention of keeping it from touching the human body (Russell 2016). It also appears as though the legs of the lamb were held directly upwards while the grave was being filled in (*ibid.*), which would strengthen the idea that the intention was to prevent touching between the bodies. Given that wild animals are generally the species chosen for inclusion within mortuary contexts, and the theories about the breaking down and mingling of bodies with the implications for the breaking down and reconstitution of identities, it is particularly significant that in this burial of a domestic animal, not only was care taken to prevent contact during the burial process, but the animal was also wrapped, which would presumably have prevented the bones from falling apart and mingling with the human bones after decomposition. To me, this suggests that ideas of animal or combined personhood were not being applied to domestic animals.

Solo animal burials

Equally intriguing are the (considerably less common) finds of solo animal burials dating from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. While most attention has been paid to the inclusion of animals and parts of animals within human burials, the incidences of animals being buried on their own – not simply dumped in trash pits, or abandoned, but properly interred – are sufficiently unusual to be of particular note; whether they were there as markers for something, or whether there was a special significance to their burial (either in location, or for that particular animal), the very infrequency of the burials in conjunction with the clear intentionality of them clearly shows their importance.

One example of this type of burial was found at 'Ain Ghazal, where a single, entire articulated gazelle was buried on its own (Rollefson 1998a; Twiss 2008). It was found in a burial pit, and its feet showed signs of charring, indicating that they had been burnt (or close to a source of heat) before burial (Twiss 2008); this is discussed more in chapter 3. Another example can be seen at Netiv Hagdud, where an animal was found interred in the wall of Locus 26 (Belfer-Cohen and Arensburg 1997), and at Körtik Tepe, a partial skeleton of a young sheep was found in context AVD; this is thought to represent the intentional interment of a complete animal, with some parts lost or moved as a result of later disturbances (Arbuckle and Ozkaya 2006). At Basta, a pregnant cow was buried; it had been defleshed before burial, but had then been arranged so as to be articulated and anatomically accurate, with the foetus still intact (Becker 2002). It was buried near a human burial (*ibid.*), but it is not clear that there was any association between the two.

The site of Khirokitia on Cyprus also has a number of examples of animals being buried in their own right. There are multiple burials of complete caprines, which are clearly intentional in nature. Tholos VII contains a single adult caprine, while Tholos X (IV) contains 4 young caprines in one grave; this latter burial is in the same floor as two human burials, but there is no evidence of association between them (Le Mort et al. 2008). Another grave (499) contains a perinatal caprine (*ibid.*). All the caprines are domestic, which is unusual compared to the dominance of wild animals in mortuary contexts on the mainland, although it is not unique; the pigs in the PPNC burials at 'Ain Ghazal were also domestic, or at least partially so. There is no discernible difference between the human and animal graves at Khirokitia; they had all clearly been deliberately dug, and were often placed within habitations, and until excavated there was nothing to distinguish between them (Le Mort et al. 2008). However, in other burials at the

site, caprines were also represented as parts included in human burials (*ibid.*), which has been suggested as indicating a decrease in the perceived significance of animals at the site.

Mingled burials/fragments

As well as the more clearly identifiable burials in the mortuary record, there are also instances of situations where human and animal remains are mingled or deposited together, in their entirety or in fragments, in such a way as to make it virtually impossible to conclude which would have been the primary focus. One major example of this is a well at Mylouthkia on Cyprus – Well 133 – where bones from a variety of animals form a deposit layer 4.25m deep (Jones 2009). The deposit included entire articulated caprid skeletons, forming the remains of 23 complete animals (sheep and goats), with no signs of butchery or burning on the bones. However, as well as the caprids, there were also owl and cat skeletons (the cats may have been semi-domesticated wild cats), and these were also complete (*ibid.*). In with these animal carcasses, there were some human bones as well, representing at least two adult males, an adult of indeterminate gender, an adolescent and a child. Above the deposit of caprid carcasses, the skull of an adult male may show signs of flattening, indicating possible modification (Jones 2009). Further human remains were discovered near the base of the well, under the layer of animal bones, but these were a collection of crania and long bones and some other disarticulated bones, which may indicate that the deposition in the well was a secondary burial (Jones 2009). However, one of the most striking things about Well 133 is that – with the exception of the caprids, and the owl – the majority of the remains in the well (faunal, human and material) were fragmented (*ibid.*). This would suggest that there was no special consideration being given to either humans or animals with this practice, as they seem to have been treated with no more respect (and no less) than the majority of the remains in the deposit. While we cannot know how they were viewed or treated in life, it is clear that in death at least they were equal.

Other wells at Kissonerga-Mylouthkia contained animal deposits, including pig heads and goat horn cores (Croucher 2012), and a similar discovery has been made at another Cypriot site, Shillourokambos; Cavity St 23, an old pit or well, contained a large deposition of human remains, which were mingled in places with animal

remains (Le Mort et al. 2008). The human depositions are considered to be intentional, but there is some question over the animal remains which were in the same context, as it is considered that at least some of them are likely to have come from the fill and from the pit/well being used as a rubbish dump for a long time (*ibid.*). Because of this, and because of the mingling of remains, it is hard to distinguish whether any of the animal remains were deposited 'intentionally' (in a mortuary sense, rather than being intentionally placed there because it was a rubbish pit). However, it is considered that some of them 'probably' were associated with the burial deposits, based on positioning within the fill. These included three piglet skulls, other pig remains, caprine bones and some deer antlers (Le Mort et al. 2008). This raises some interesting questions regarding the treatment of the dead, and how the dead were viewed. If the context had been used as a place to deposit 'rubbish', then what does this say about the use of it for disposing of the dead? It would seem from the excavation reports that the human remains were deposited at least partially above the (presumed) rubbish layers, but the deposit was so mingled that it is hard to be certain about the sequence of usage and depositions. We cannot be certain about whether the well or pit was still being used to dispose of rubbish when the human remains were placed in it. There is also the possibility that, although the pit has been considered as a rubbish dump by the excavators, there was still intentionality and deliberation around the use of it. The contents may have been carefully curated, and the pit itself a place of ritual deposition.

Another example of a mingled burial is Locus 1003 at Kfar HaHoresh, where the remains of over 21 disarticulated humans (including children) were found, as well as bones from a number of animals, including aurochs (Simmons et al. 2007). These bones appear to have been deliberately arranged in a circular design, around the edges of a pit (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004; Goring-Morris et al. 1998). The bones were almost exclusively postcranial, including 12 human mandibles, and some 'packages' of long bones (Goring-Morris et al. 1998). The animal bones may have come from aurochs or gazelle, although there does not seem to be any definite information regarding them. Whether there is or is not an intentional arrangement or design there can be debated, but certainly there was a deliberate deposition of human and animal remains together, with all the choices and deliberation that that implies. Burials with mixed remains are also found at Çayönü Tepesi, such

as a burial which contained a dog, a boar skull and a human male, all in together (Croucher 2011; Ozdogan 1999).

Conclusions

While it is clear that there were differences in the animals being distinguished between sites, and between Cyprus and the mainland, there are obvious similarities in the ways in which they were treated. As with human burials, it is clear that mortuary treatment (of a kind to be noticeable and recognisable in the archaeological record) was the exception rather than the rule. This very exceptionalism regarding the treatment of human bodies makes the treatment of animals more striking, further indicating the importance of their place and role in society. The time and effort which would have gone into each deposition, especially when they were secondary burials involving the curating and moving of remains, is equally strong evidence of how integrated animals were into human society.

The mingling of human and animal remains, whether entire or fragmentary on either side, is comparable to the mingling of human and animal attributes and body parts in artistic representations of the same period. Clear parallels can be drawn between figures with an animal head or limbs, and burials where body parts have been removed and replaced with bones from animals. This mingling, this merging of human and animal was clearly a huge part of Pre-Pottery Neolithic mortuary practices, indicating the importance that this held for the people. The apparent interchangeability of human and animal body parts, and the ways in which parts from each were placed together to create new forms and new beings, speaks to the concepts of personhood as understood by the people at that time. The care and attention given to both human and non-human remains further suggests that there was little or no conceptual difference between them; animals were people, and people were animals.

Chapter 7: Kfar HaHoresh

The choice of Kfar HaHoresh as a case study is based upon the unique nature of the site. When discussing the appearance of animal remains in mortuary contexts, and the variety of ways in which this manifests, Kfar HaHoresh is a site which provides a multitude of examples and provides a unique insight. In Chapter 3, 'Ain Ghazal was used to provide an excellent example of a settlement, and therefore the opportunity to observe how humans and animals interacted in a number of ways in the course of their lives and deaths. Kfar HaHoresh, on the other hand, was a more specialised site and thereby gives us the chance to focus in more closely on their interactions and relationships after death, and what this might tell us about the role animals played in society. The material from Kfar HaHoresh provides insights into all of my research questions, from questions of perceived identity and how they were expressed through material culture (in this instance, burials), and whether an approach informed by theories of personhood might be productive.

Site background

Kfar HaHoresh is a small secluded site, estimated to be around 1-2 hectares, situated in a small wadi in the Lower Galilee Nazareth Hills (Goring-Morris 1998) in modern-day Israel. It can be considered to be an unusual site for many reasons, although this perception has developed since the initial trial excavations at the site. When it was first investigated, Kfar HaHoresh was believed to be a small settlement site, although it was thought likely that it had probably only been occupied for a short period of time (Goring-Morris 1991). This would have made the site interesting but not outstanding; there are many small settlement sites in the region. However, later discoveries indicated that this was not the case and it has since been realised that as a site Kfar HaHoresh appears to be most unusual (possibly even unique) in its nature.

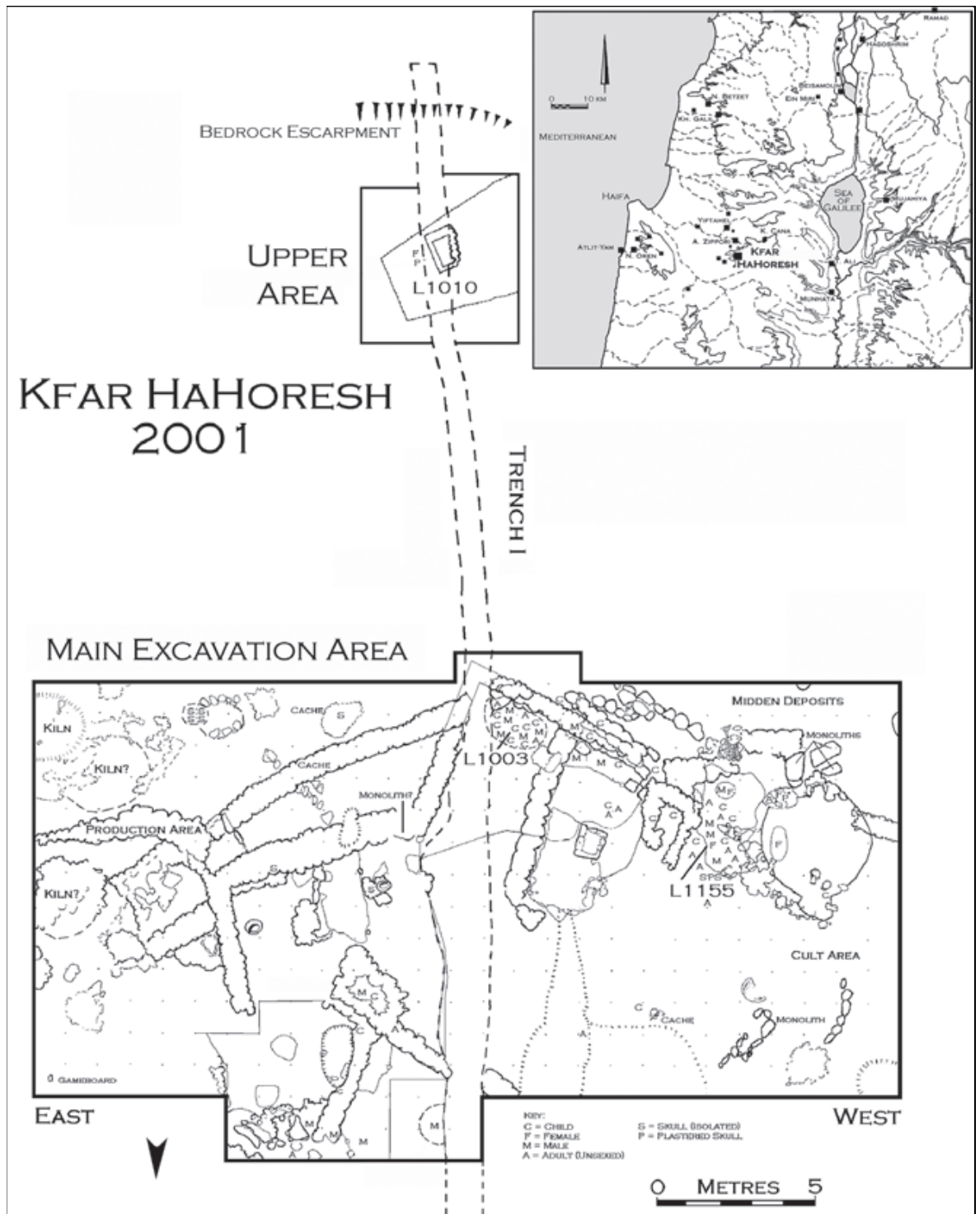*Figure 7.1*: Plan of excavated areas (Source: Birkenfeld and Goring-Morris 2011: Fig. 1)

The majority of the occupation at Kfar HaHoresh dates to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB); more specifically, to the Middle PPNB (MPPNB) period, between *c.* 9000-8500 BP (Goring-Morris 1991; Goring-Morris et al. 1998), although some areas of the site date to the EPPNB (Meier et al. 2017b). It is now generally accepted that

the site was specialised, as a centre for burials and funerary rites (Goring-Morris 2000). Excavations have made it clear that there were four main activity areas at the site when it was in use (Goring-Morris 2008) (Fig. 7.1), but these can be further grouped into two overarching areas. The first is the central funerary area, and the associated adjacent cult area (which would have been the 'main' areas, encompassing as they did the main purpose of the site). The other is the production and maintenance area, and the midden deposit. These form the industrial areas, which would also have been important, but more in the background, providing materials for the activities at the other areas, and presumably generally dealing with the day to day needs for the site). However, the features revealed through seasons of excavation suggest that, contrary to first impressions, the site was probably never a settlement; although many small walls have been found, they do not generally appear to be the remains of dwelling structures (Goring-Morris et al. 1998).

Additionally, the site is not located near any arable land or water sources, unlike known contemporary settlements (Birkenfeld and Goring-Morris 2015), and this strengthens the likelihood that the site was not intended as a settlement. Kfar HaHoresh, instead, appears to have functioned as a regional mortuary centre. This interpretation is certainly favoured by the primary excavator, Professor Goring-Morris, who has suggested that the location and nature of the site could indicate that it functioned primarily as a regional funerary centre for nearby communities (Goring-Morris 1998). As the site is located comparatively near to a variety of other sites, despite its seclusion, this seems not unlikely. Although it is almost hidden within the landscape and from other sites, which may have been an intentional choice relating to its use as a cult or funerary centre, it is also adjacent to the prominent landmark of Har Baharan (Birkenfeld and Goring-Morris 2015) and this may have served as a way for local populations to locate the site when needed. Possibly the location was deliberately and carefully chosen to provide a suitable surrounding for the dead, in contrast to the gentler and more favourable landscapes chosen for settlements for the living. It may also have been intentionally located in such a way to close it off from the 'land of the living'.

Although this site is unique in many respects, there are parallels known of sites considered to have been primarily funerary sites from the Natufian period onwards. These include Erq el-Ahmar and Shuqba (Goring-Morris 1998), and probably Hilazon Tachtit. When evidence from other sites is considered, it is not surprising

that a funerary centre should have existed; it is clear from the archaeological evidence that in some areas of the Levant burials within settlements were quite rare, especially in relation to the size and duration of some of the settlements (Beidha and 'Ain Ghazal being good examples) (Goring-Morris 1998). Although we cannot be sure how funerary centres would have worked, it seems likely that at least a portion of the individuals found at Kfar HaHoresh were initially buried elsewhere and were later reburied at the site, as many of the interments and depositions reflect secondary mortuary practices. Although there appears to be no evidence for there being an actual settlement, it has been suggested that there may have been a few permanent occupants who would have maintained the site, while it was probably also periodically revisited by the families and potentially the communities of the interred individuals (Goring-Morris 1998).

Kfar HaHoresh being a funerary centre is not, therefore, the fact of primary interest; the unusual nature of the burials and their contexts is what makes the site so significant. The unique nature and context of the burials revealed by the archaeological excavations means that Kfar HaHoresh has turned out to be unusual enough to force a re-evaluation of PPNB funerary traditions and ritual (Goring-Morris 2005), and it is certainly the mortuary evidence that makes the site as special as it is. It seems to represent not only the usual mortuary practices known from other PPNB sites (including 'Ain Ghazal), but also some elements which are unique to this site, at least in terms of their scope. This could have repercussions for discussions of social structure at that time; in the opinion of Goring-Morris, "It is precisely the contextual evidence of the various mortuary treatments afforded that provide intriguing and provocative evidence for the possible emergence of social ranking, both attained and ascribed." (Goring-Morris 2005: 92). In a previous paper, he also suggests that the evidence from Kfar HaHoresh is challenging in terms of socio-cultural beliefs, and could reflect changes in the economy at that time (Goring-Morris 1991).

Although the site of Kfar HaHoresh was primarily a mortuary centre, the actual site, as far as can be determined, was not large. As a result, although the number of burials was naturally higher than at residential sites, there were still not vast numbers of them. There are around 85 burials known from the site (Meier et al. 2017a). From these burials, it is possible to see that the mortuary treatments at Kfar HaHoresh seem to have covered all of the known mortuary treatments from other PPNB sites within the Levant. The site has both primary and secondary

burials, in contracted and extended positions, decapitated and intact, and also has some skull caches (Goring-Morris 2005). One feature of these burials which may be slightly less common is that some of the contracted burials are so tightly contracted as to suggest that the body may have been bound before being interred (Goring-Morris 2005). Given the nature of the articles available about the site (many written about the same material over several years), a brief overview of the mortuary evidence is necessary, before going into more detail for some instances of particular relevance here.

Faunal record

Much of the faunal information from Kfar HaHoresh comes from the numerous midden deposits at the site. The site had a high frequency of auroch and gazelle remains, both from the middens and from more discrete deposits of these species (Meier 2020; Meier et al. 2017a), which may indicate that these species had a symbolic significance ascribed to them beyond their value as food. Gazelle remains were also discovered in some of the burial contexts (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004), although auroch was largely (although not entirely) absent from the graves (Meier et al. 2017b), giving further indicating a symbolic significance associated with these species. Goat (an incipient domesticate in the region) was discovered only in the midden deposits, suggesting that it was a reliable source of food but may not have been otherwise valued at the site (Meier et al. 2017a; Meier et al. 2017b). Wild goat was the second most common taxa in the faunal record after gazelle (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007), but their relative distribution across the site, including in midden deposits and mortuary contexts, further demonstrates the division between those species.

Some of the faunal remains at the site, such as the carnivores (including red fox) and avian raptors, show indications of having received special or unusual treatment (Meier 2020). This may be a sign of the carcasses having been processed in order to extract parts for use in mortuary practices (Meier 2020); red fox was certainly present in some of the burial contexts, including L1352 and L1362 (Goring-Morris 2005; Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004). The auroch remains in L2268 also showed indications of having been processed to extract the marrow (Meier et al. 2017b).

	EPPNB	MPPNB	LPPNB
Gazelle	57%	65%	65%
Pig	23%	2%	5%
Caprids	15%	23%	21%
Cattle	25%	10%	9%

Table 7.1: Approximate percentages of faunal remains (based on Meier et al. 2016, Fig. 3)

Burials

Locus	Description/contents	Notes	References
L1001	Ashy pit with human and animal bones arranged around the edge.	Details below.	Goring-Morris *et al* 1998
L1003	Shallow ashy pit with over 21 disarticulated humans and multiple animal remains lining the edge of the pit	Full details below	Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004; Goring-Morris 1991; Goring-Morris 1995
L1004	Plaster-lined pit with human remains underlying articulated decapitated gazelle	Full details below. Underlying L1010.	Goring-Morris 1991; 1995; 2008
L1005	Total of 356 auroch bones, in association with articulated human remains	Full details below	Goring-Morris 1995; Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007; Goring-Morris 2005, 2007, 2008
L1010	Plaster surface with a plastered skull on it	Covering to L1004 (decapitated gazelle skeleton)	Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004
L1027	A circular patch with half a human mandible on it	On the capping to L1001, so above the depiction	Goring-Morris *et al* 1998
L1110	Isolated fox bone, and partially articulated burial.	Burial poorly preserved. Locus also overlies two further limeplaster capped	Goring-Morris *et al* 1998

		surfaces (L1008 and L1009)	
L1155	Large, ash-filled pit, with an arrangement of human and animal bones possibly in the shape of an animal	Full details below	Goring-Morris 2005; Goring-Morris *et al* 1998; Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004
L1162	Possible depiction	Poorly preserved, so hard to be sure if an intentional arrangement; to one side of L1155	Goring-Morris *et al* 1998
L1304	Cache of human crania	Artiodactyl horn cores nearby, but unclear if intentional association	Goring-Morris 2005
L1352	Decapitated but articulated child's skeleton with fox mandible near chest	In L1155. Also had bead grave goods. Child around 5-7 years old.	Goring-Morris 2005; Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004
L1353	Wild boar remains		
L1362	Fox mandible, adjacent to isolated child's skull; some wild boar remains		Goring-Morris 2005; Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004
L1373	Isolated fox bone		
L2268	Concentration of *Bos* remains	Associated with L1604; similar to L1005. Full details below.	Meier, Goring-Morris and Munro 2016; Meier, Goring-Morris and Munro 2017b

Table 7.2: Burials at Kfar HaHoresh

Locus 1005: Generally known as the *Bos* pit. This is located under the L1604 complex (a large plastered platform or podium). A large number of auroch bones were found, some articulated, and they were in association with articulated human remains (Goring-Morris 1995). There was a total of 356 auroch bones, forming at least 7 adults and 1 immature calf, with virtually no cranial elements. The layer of

auroch bones was capped by a decapitated, contracted human burial (Goring-Morris 2005, 2007, 2008; Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004). The stratigraphy indicates that when the pit was dug, a few artefacts (broken grindstones, a few flat stones, and a large core roughout) were placed in the bottom, then the auroch joints were placed in the pit (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007). It was then filled with soil and covered at the centre with an unworked limestone slab, before stones were piled on and around that and the mouth of the pit. A flexed primary burial of a young adult male was placed on top of slab, then scattered with crushed chalk and lime plaster to cover the body, before the whole thing was sealed with a limeplaster capping (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004; Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007). The skull of the human burial was removed later by cutting through the plaster, then the surface was covered again by fill and another plaster cap put on to seal the hole (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007).

Locus 1155 (Fig. 7.3): A multiple grave (Goring-Morris 2005). This contained an arrangement of animal and human bones in a large, ash-filled pit, which has been tentatively interpreted as a depiction of an animal (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004; Goring-Morris et al. 1998), and it overlaid several burials including a decapitated child. The arrangement of bones comprises an outline of an animal, made by the presumably intentional arrangement of articulated and isolated human long bones and cranial remains from at least 4 individuals. A lime plaster cap was then placed above the whole (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004).

> "The bones appear to have been set in the form of an animal in profile, outlining its face, body, right forelimb with a hoof, right hind limb and upturned tail. The face points to the south. Different bones of the skeleton appear to have been selected to represent different parts of the skeleton. For example, the mouth of the animal is indicated by an upturned human skull and mandible; the foot by an upturned mandible and the bushy tail by an articulated human lower leg and foot." (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004: 69).

The identity of the animal is difficult to ascertain but the large head and bushy tipped tail suggest a carnivore or auroch; as there are no horns, an auroch is less likely, although the forefoot has some resemblance to a hoof (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004). A later burial disturbed the bones forming the belly and hindlimbs so they have been dislodged and are no longer apparent (Horwitz and Goring-

Morris 2004). The depiction is further delineated by a line of seashells and a probable painted and plastered skull fragment on one side; a stone-lined posthole separated it on the other side from L1162.

L1003 (Fig. 7.2): This shallow, ashy pit contained over 21 disarticulated humans and numerous animal remains, which lined the edge of the pit (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004). At the bottom of the pit (under the combined human and animal remains) was a human burial; an extended, fully articulated, decapitated female, pregnant at the time of her death and holding a decapitated infant in her arms. The articulated remains of a human male were also found nearby, and the pit also contained a partially articulated human burial, apparently associated with the articulated remains of a gazelle (Goring-Morris 1991, 1995). The pit was dug into the underlying fill and sealed by a limeplaster floor, so it was originally thought that it either predated a structure or (more probably) was integral to construction of a building (Goring-Morris 1991, 1995), although this was revised later when it was realised that Kfar HaHoresh was unlikely to have been a settlement site. Human long bones had been placed in a circular arrangement around the outside of the pit (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004).

Figure 7.2: Locus 1003: circle of human long bones (Source: Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004: Fig. 3)

L1004: A plaster-lined pit containing human remains with - or underlying – an articulated but decapitated gazelle (the gazelle was lying on its left side, and one femora showed signs of being burnt) (Goring-Morris 1991, 1995, 2008). There was also a modelled, plastered and red-painted skull found higher about 15-20 cm higher in the pit (Goring-Morris 1991, 1995). The skull was the cranium only, and seems to have been an adult male about 25 years old, with the facial features modelled in plaster (Goring-Morris 1995). The plaster capping had a single posthole set into a small, stone-lined installation area (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007). This is the only example at Kfar HaHoresh of the intentional interment of an almost complete gazelle, despite it being the most common species there in terms of the faunal record and it also being found in nearly all excavation contexts (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004).

L1001: An ashy pit with human and animal bones arranged around the edge (Goring-Morris et al. 1998). The bones were almost exclusively postcranial – at least 12 human mandibles – and there were also packages of human long bones (Goring-Morris et al. 1998). The only complete articulated burial in the locus was

an infant, with its head resting immediately below the pelvis of a bovid (believed to be a cow); the burial may also have had grave goods (Goring-Morris et al. 1998).

L2268: This is an earlier feature from the north-west sector of the site, dating to the EPPNB and containing a number of animal remains, including at least 4 aurochs (Meier et al. 2017b). A number of other species were also represented, including gazelle, tortoises and wildcats (Meier et al. 2017b). The bones from L2268 showed few signs of processing for meat, with no cut marks and little evidence of burning, although one humerus fragment had the tip of a flint point stuck in it (Meier et al. 2017b). However, the way in which the bones were broken and fragmented suggests that they may have been processed to extract the bone marrow (Meier et al. 2017b).

Two other deposits were found in the vicinity of L2268, including a cache of flint blades (L2267) which were at the same level and in the same layer of sediment, and a headless human burial (L2266) which was a metre away from the deposit of animal remains (Meier et al. 2017b). There is no clear evidence, however, as to whether L2267 and L2266 were deposited in association with L2268.

Interpretations

The locus which has attracted the most attention is L1005 – the *Bos* pit. Large and spectacular in its contents, it has naturally also attracted much speculation about the material it contained, and the reasons behind it. The opinion seems be that it represents a unique variant of ritual activities involving *Bos* in the PPNB (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004; Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007). We know that *Bos* is a common iconographic image for this period, at times leading to theories about a Near East cattle cult (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004), and it is unlikely that their presence in such large numbers at the site is either accidental or insignificant. Whether a variant of otherwise familiar activity or not, the main theory about the Bos pit is that it is evidence of feasting (Twiss 2008). One of the main criteria for this is the discovery of dense deposits of food remains associated with ritual contexts (*ibid.*), which would certainly appear to be the case with the Bos pit at Kfar HaHoresh. Feasting is further indicated by minimal processing, and again this applies to the auroch bones found in this locus – there were no signs of modification on the bones, such as cutmarks, burning, or percussion fractures

(Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004; Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007). Postcranial remains dominate the bone collection, and the skeletal element representation is skewed heavily towards meat-rich body parts (Twiss 2008). It is possible that the cranial elements were deliberately not included, or were removed before burial.

This apparent wastage of food is further signified by the identification of at least 13 sets of articulated bones, including spinal segments and feet (Twiss 2008). The orientation of the bones indicates an intentional interment and this, plus the stratigraphic data, indicates a single ritualized depositional event (Twiss 2008; Horwitz and Goring Morris 2004). Twiss argues that the pit is clearly identifiable as a special single-use installation, with its contents being noticeably distinct from the fragmentary, scattered remains found around the site's midden deposits (Twiss 2008). If this theory is correct, then the *Bos* pit and the associated human interment can be inferred as signifying the remains of a mortuary feast. As such, it would be some of the earliest evidence for such an event in the Near East (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007). Although there may be other explanations for the contents of the pit, Goring-Morris has drawn on Hayden's (1996, 2001) guidelines for the recognition of communal feasting. This emphasises evidence for abundance such as large quantities of food, evidence of food waste (seen in articulated and unprocessed bones), presence of bone dumps and middens, and typical locations which include mortuary sites and remote localities. In this context, he believes that L1005 "most plausibly reflects the remains of a funerary feast rather than a simple votive offering." (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007: 913). The concentration of *Bos* remains at the site overall may then suggest that funerary feasts were a not uncommon part of the site usage (Meier et al.2017b).

It has been postulated that the animals in the *Bos* pit were hunted and killed within a circumscribed period of time, in which case it has been suggested that only a communal hunt could have carried out the killing and butchering of 8 animals and the transportation of the carcasses back to the site (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007; Goring-Morris 2005). The age and sex structure of the remains could possibly represent a small herd (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004), consisting of a bull, several cows, and a young calf (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007). This would have been an important occasion, because events such as this would have served as ways to coordinate labour both for carrying out rituals and for tasks on-site or elsewhere which required larger numbers of workers (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007). At the same time, events of this nature may also have

provided an opportunity for the exchange of goods and food between neighbouring communities (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007). If the sex estimate for the animals is correct, then it is estimated that the kill could have yielded over 2000kg of meat (Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007), which would have fed a considerable number of people and left a quantity of remains to inter. The concentration of *Bos* remains in this locus must therefore represent the intentional and formal depositions that retained symbolic meaning from their use in ritual activities, rather than simply constituting rubbish or leftovers (Meier et al.2017a). This act of burial might been intended to remove ritually significant, and perhaps dangerous, material from circulation or it may have been to create a new, composite set of meanings from the combination of human and animal remains.

L2268 (the deposit of animal remains) is a concentration of *Bos* and other animal remains which has been interpreted as representing (like L1005) the remains of a feast:

> "Aurochs remains in locus 2268 are more abundant, more heavily processed and located in a less structured deposit than locus 1005. Nevertheless, the remains of four aurochs in locus 2268 indicate the consumption of a substantial quantity of meat in a single episode and minimal evidence of bone processing and depositional movement, thereby suggesting a feasting deposit." (Meier et al.2017b: 1475)

This could have been a similar ritual deposition of rubbish or of feasting leftovers, which may have retained symbolic significance from their association with the feast (Meier et al.2017a). As the burial of these remains was not funerary in itself, it may represent a structured deposition where the deposition itself was both the ritual event and the end result.

In the case of L1155 (the depiction), initial excavation reports and papers were clear that the depiction was deliberate, saying that "Although it is unclear precisely what animal the 'painting' depicts (wild boar, wild cattle, lion?), there can be no doubt that this was an intentional arrangement..." (Goring-Morris et al. 1998; 2-3). Later papers, however, demonstrate less certainty on the subject, although Goring-Morris does highlight the fact that although it is conceivable that it is simply a fortuitous arrangement of some disturbed primary burials, depictions are known from other places and periods in the Levant, including the Natufian (Goring-Morris 2005). The locus does contain a complicated sequence of burials

which were tightly packed together, which seems to confirm the likelihood of the intentionality of the 'arrangement' (Goring-Morris 2005), and taphonomic studies of the faunal data from the site also support the idea of a deliberate depiction (Simmons et al.2006) (Fig. 7.3).
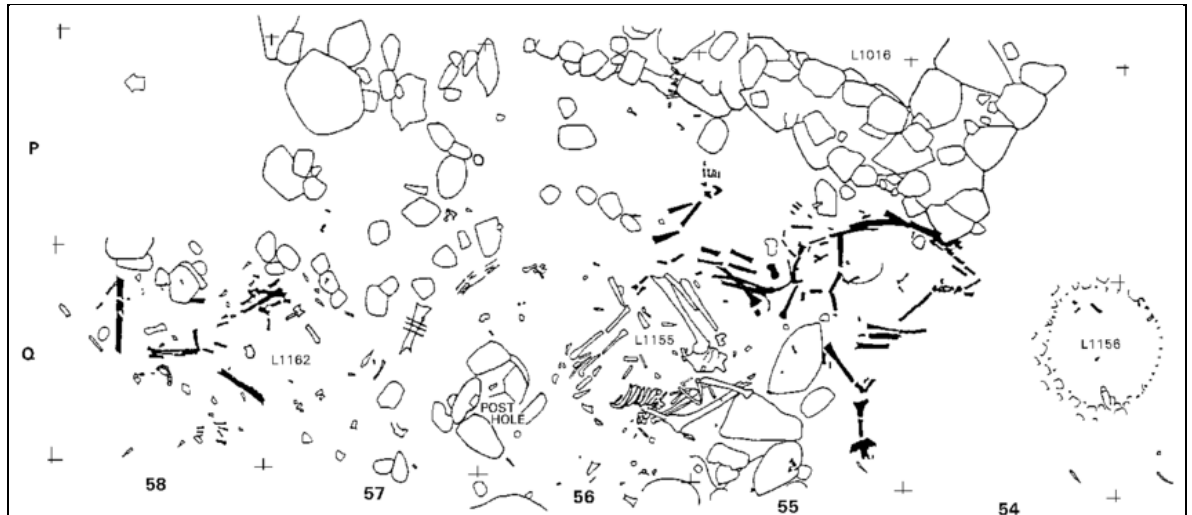

Figure 7.3: Bone depiction (L1155) (Source: Goring-Morris 2005: Fig. 12.4)

With the association of animal remains in burial L1304 (the skull cache), Goring-Morris has suggested that the artiodactyl horn cores near the cache could represent talismans, charms, or tokens, possibly related to social or ritual affiliations (Goring-Morris 2008).

Discussion

Many of the burials at the site are interesting in their own right. This can be because of the way in which they have been deposited, because of the items with which they are associated, or due to the association between individuals. For example, one burial (L1003) was that of a headless adult female, who was pregnant at the time of her death and who appears to have been buried with an infant (also headless) in her arms (Goring-Morris 2005). There is also an adult male buried nearby, which raises the possibility that this could be a 'family' (as modern thinking would consider it) grouping. Both the apparent association of these burials (with its, to us, sentimental overtones) and the subsequent treatment of the burial area are deserving of attention. Likewise the skull caches, and individual interments; it can sometimes seem as though there is not one burial at Kfar

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HaHoresh which is not unusual or significant in some way. In light of notions about the development of increasing hierarchy and status in society, as well as the scarcity of burials in the region in comparison to known settlements, this may well be of significance in itself and suggests that bodies and body parts might be combined in ways that create new associations or reflect existing ones.

However, it is the ways in which the presence of animals at Kfar HaHoresh are manifested that is especially intriguing. Many burials show a close association between animals and humans. Locus 1003, as well as having the three burials described above, contained over 21 disarticulated humans, including children, and gazelle. There is also an isolated child burial, above the three individuals at the bottom of the pit, which had a cow pelvis placed directly over the skull (Goring-Morris 1998). The animal associations are not always so direct; the bone depiction in L1155 from Kfar HaHoresh overlays several burials, but is not obviously associated with them. There are also times when there can be some confusion over whether inclusions in graves were intentional or not; as many of the burials were in unlined pits, there is a high likelihood of intrusive material, even if not in large quantities. In L1005, for example, there were two other bones amongst all the auroch remains - a fox proximal radius and a goat carpal – but it is thought that they could be from the fill rather than intentional inclusions (Twiss 2008; Goring-Morris and Horwitz 2007).

For the main part, though, the associations are far closer and also more certain, and seem to go in both directions; while there are human burials with animal inclusions, there are also what could be seen as animal burials with human inclusions, such as L1004. This may show a relationship, rather than exploitation of animals by humans; a relationship where both sides may have had a reciprocal social importance. While the unusual human-animal associations at Kfar HaHoresh may be close in time to the beginnings of domestication and the changes in lifestyle that it would have produced, it is important to remember that it was not just the human lives that were being changed, nor was it just the human social constructions that would undergo significant alteration, and some of the finds at the site reflect that ambiguity.

The faunal record for the site is quite detailed, and this provides further indications regarding the use of animals across the site and their role in different contexts. Three sub-assemblages of the faunal record have been identified; the midden area

bones, bones in the production and maintenance area, and bones in funerary contexts. The sub-assemblages show differences in the species represented, their frequency of appearance, the body parts represented, the degree of articulation and the taphonomy (Goring-Morris 2005). The faunal assemblage is dominated by hunted species, mainly mountain gazelle; however, auroch, deer, wild boar, small carnivores (especially red fox) and hare are also common (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004; Goring-Morris 2008), although there seems to be no distinct pattern for the age or sex of the animals at the site (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004). Out of 30 grave contexts which had been analysed by the end of the 1999 season, 23 of them contained animal remains, although the number of bones found and the range of species differed; however, it did seem that the frequency of species' appearance in mortuary contexts did not necessarily relate to their overall frequency at the site, and the taxa found in graves were also found at other locations across the site (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004). Goats are the second most common taxa at the site, after the gazelle, and were found in most (but not all) of the graves which had been analysed (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004). The goat remains are indistinguishable from wild animals, based on their morphometry. They were mainly adult animals, and it is possible that they represent animals in the process of being domesticated (incipient domesticates) (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004; Goring-Morris 1995, 2000, 2008).

Burnt animal bones were recovered from all of the studied graves, and burning was especially common on unidentified bone fragments. This seems to suggest that most, if not all, of the burnt bones form part of the site fill, and are not directly associated with mortuary contexts. This might be the case for the majority of the faunal remains recovered from the grave contexts, where there is no structured relationship; they might have been part of the fill, rather than being particularly significant. Interestingly, there were also no cut or marked bones in the analysed contexts, and butchery damage seems rare at the site overall (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004). Many of the burials at the site seem to indicate that importance was assigned to particular animals; although the faunal record shows that many species are represented across the site not all of them make it into the mortuary record as anything other than isolated bones here and there, and of those that do, there are certainly some which are far more heavily represented than others.

Gazelle were clearly of great importance at the site, both as a food source and in the mortuary process, with their presence in burials, and the burial of the

decapitated gazelle (L1004). The faunal record indicates a high proportion of gazelle at the site, which is significant in light of the evidence for early goat management in the region, which made goats both abundant and available. However, gazelle continued to be a favoured animal (and favoured meat) at Kfar HaHoresh throughout the PPNB, which goes against the regional trend for an increasing reliance on domesticated or managed species as the PPNB continued. This may perhaps be attributed to the symbolic importance ascribed to gazelle at the site (Meier et al.2016; Meier et al.2017a).

The main animal associated with child and infant burials at Kfar HaHoresh, however, is the fox. Many burials at the site, quite apart from those associated with the more spectacular collections of animal bones, have isolated animal bones placed in with the interred individuals. These often include the half-mandibles of foxes, especially in the graves of children (Goring-Morris 2005; Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004). Burial L1352 had two beads placed with the burial, and also had a fox mandible placed near its chest (Goring-Morris 2005). A similar arrangement could be seen with burial L1362, where a fox mandible had been positioned adjacent to an isolated child's skull (Goring-Morris 2005). It seems unlikely that these juxtapositions of remains are not significant in some way, and have some special meaning, but what that exact meaning is remains open to discussion. However, the act of deliberate deposition seems to be creating a link in death, or perhaps materialising a link that existed as a looser, less literal association in life.

It is notable that although many of the burials at Kfar HaHoresh contain something unusual or unique, only a few of them (the most spectacular) seem to have been analysed in any detail in the literature. Many of them have got the briefest of descriptions or details, and little or no attempt at interpretation has been made. The unique nature of many of the finds at the site in less prominent contexts deserves equal attention. In some ways, those loci which have been dealt with in detail have almost been removed from the context of mortuary behaviour at Kfar HaHoresh, losing the relationship to the rest of the site and the rest of the material around them.

Kfar HaHoresh is similar to Göbekli Tepe in the way they are both considered to be special or unique sites, used for purposes other than domestic occupation. However, just as at Göbekli Tepe features have been found which seem to strongly

indicate at least a period of occupation at the site, so it would be more accurate to say not that there is no evidence for domestic occupation at Kfar HaHoresh, but rather that there is a lack of clear, unambiguous evidence for it. The site seems to have had clear areas for different purposes, such as burials and production, and it is possible that there was also an area for occupation, or that there was less separation of the ritual from the domestic than has been previously considered. Whether this is accurate or not, it is worth noting that much of the published research (e.g. Meier 2020; Meier 2017a) takes the idea of Kfar HaHoresh as a specialised mortuary site for granted, and this preconception may have an effect on any theories developed. If we reconsider the site, remaining aware of the possibility that domestic occupation may have been part of the function of the site, then it would necessitate a complete re-evaluation of the evidence, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Conclusions

Because of the apparently unique nature of the site, Kfar HaHoresh has received considerable attention within the archaeological literature. As is the case for 'Ain Ghazal, many of the papers (when dealing with the burials) concentrate upon the potential to learn more about the development and mechanisms of status and hierarchy. Because nearly all of the material from Kfar HaHoresh is mortuary in nature, there is perhaps more scope for exploring these areas; a larger number of people are represented than would be found at a settlement site, and so there are more chances to try to understand social relationships as reflected in mortuary arrangements. This can be quite significant, as a detailed archaeological study of mortuary practices and spatial/conceptual relationships between dead and living is generally lacking (Goring-Morris 1998).

One of the many interesting aspects of the burials at Kfar HaHoresh is that women and children, if not equally represented at the site, appear to have received mortuary treatments on an equal footing with the adult males. The exception to this are the plastered skulls, among which no children are represented (Goring-Morris 1998). A study of the demographics of the burials at Kfar HaHoresh strongly suggests that there was selection of particular individuals; males appear more frequently in the burials at the site than in the normal population of the region, and there are no older people in the burials. This reinforces the idea of a local

cult/mortuary centre (Eshed et al.2008) – although if there was selection applied to the dead to be buried at residential sites, and further selection applied when the dead were taken to mortuary centres, then a large proportion of the population remains unaccounted for.

In the present context, the most symbolically significant aspect of this site are the animal burials and the animal associations with human burials. These appear to be unique for Pre-Pottery Neolithic sites in the Levant, and may therefore have much to tell us. Goring-Morris believes that one of the reasons why the animal associations are as significant as they are is because of the impending domestication of some species (Goring-Morris 1998). The species with the highest representation at the site, however, do not support this; foxes and gazelle did not become domesticated species. However, if their heavy presence at the site was not down to their imminent domestication, then there must have been some sort of symbolic significance ascribed to them. We do know that iconographic representations of foxes have been discovered at other sites (e.g., Nevalı Çori and Göbekli Tepe; see Chapters 4 and 5), so data from Kfar HaHoresh would seem to further indicate that the fox may have played a significant role in the symbology and belief system of the Near East at this time (Horwitz and Goring-Morris 2004).

It has been suggested (in a conference paper by Steven Kangas (2002), who has worked at the site) that there could be a gender link between the choice of animals and the humans they were placed with. If this was the case, then his argument was that the aurochs could be seen as being male, while the foxes could be seen as feminine, hence their association with child burials. I question some of the assumptions that Kangas made. There is no clear reason to associate foxes with females, except that Kangas appears to associate children with females. This link of woman-child is dubious, and evidence from other sites shows us that children were sometimes buried with adult males. At the site of Netiv Hagdud, for example, a child's skull was mixed in with the remains of an adult male (Belfer-Cohen and Arensburg 1997). This may indicate that children were not solely the domain of women – an assumption which was almost certainly based on more modern notions of gender roles.

One possibility, as the fox bones often turned up in child burials, could be that people thought of foxes as playful creatures, and perhaps wished that quality to be passed on to their children after death. Maybe, living in such close contact with

nature and wild animals, they saw some qualities in the fox as a whole that they wished their child to possess. If they had some sort of religious belief then it could be possible that they wanted the child to attain fox-like qualities (cunning, playful, caring, and independent) in a future life. Once looked at from that point of view, many potential interpretations are forthcoming.

Goring-Morris believes that the range of mortuary treatments at Kfar HaHoresh demonstrate both ascribed and attained status. Because of the general nature of the treatment, it is possible that it reflects ascribed status, with the result that everyone was treated more or less equally (Goring-Morris 1998). He argues that skull removal could be indicative of the presence of inherited status, but probably at a family or clan level, rather than in the wider community (Goring-Morris 1998). Looking at the evidence from this point of view, it seems likely that those individuals inhumed at the site had some sort of particular status; we know that the site contained only some of the individuals from the local settlements. To a certain extent, the data is rather skewed – the people buried at Kfar HaHoresh had clearly already gone through a selection process, and so had been placed into a particular category by those interring them.

Because Pre-Pottery Neolithic burials also occur at occupation sites, Kfar HaHoresh may have been reserved for sections of the population connected by kinship or other ties (Goring-Morris 1998). It is also possible that the funerary rites may have been exclusionary, with only some people or groups involved (Goring-Morris 1998). While these possibilities could all be indicators for the presence of ascribed status, the strongest indicator may be the infant and child burials. Goring-Morris states that the clear evidence for children receiving most of the array of funerary treatments common at the time, including skull removal and the presence of grave-goods, is clearly significant (Goring-Morris 2005). That is not to say, however, that ascribed status is the only possible interpretation.

It has also been suggested that the plastered skulls found at the site may demonstrate the existence of attained status as well, as they all seem to be young adult males (Goring-Morris 1998, 2000). However, there is insufficient evidence from this site to allow us to explore this possibility properly. The practice of skull removal is one of the defining characteristics of the PPNB in the Levant, but the other elements of mortuary ritual were just as important. It seems likely that the location and contexts of corpse disposal, architectural elements, and animal-

human associations were as much a part of the mortuary practices as skull removal (Goring-Morris 1998).

Overall, the literature on Kfar HaHoresh has tended to describe rather than to attempt interpretations, at least as far as the burials are concerned. However, material that should be considered in terms of ritual and religious context is "tested, analysed, and compared, between site and within site..." (Insoll 2004: 49). This is supported by Harke (1997), writing that "the context of burial data is *not* other burial data... the context of burial data is ritual" (Harke 1997: 23). This has been underemphasised with the Kfar HaHoresh burials, and particularly with interpretations of the significance of the animal symbolism. The symbolic and ritualistic aspects of the animals are not separate from but are part of the actual burials.

Kfar HaHoresh is rich in symbolic data and human-animal linkages, which manifest in a variety of ways. However, they all demonstrate a desire to combine species or persons together; to merge humans and animals in death, and so perhaps in an afterlife or in the world of the spirit. The positioning of animal remains within human burials (and of human remains within animal burials) seems intended to create these combined beings, while the depiction from Locus 1155 creates art from death, as well as mingling humans and animals together to create an entirely new and separate being, a physical manifestation of ideas of shared or mutual personhood. While, due to the small number and selective nature of the burials, it may be hard to draw conclusions about gender or status or other such variables, we can see that the mortuary practices demonstrated at the site reflect those found throughout the Levant during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. While the presence of animals in the mortuary contexts is more concentrated at Kfar HaHoresh, these inclusions are also present at other sites in this period, although in far smaller proportions. As such, it is possible to see this site as a representative microcosm of human-animal linkages as expressed through mortuary behaviour during this period.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

"The human-animal relationship is not simply a matter of food and domestication. In archaeology we tend to think of these aspects of the relationship first, but humans interact with animals on many levels. On the most fundamental level, there is the question of what an animal actually is.... What is obvious, however, is that this changeable boundary – in existence today as well as in the past – gives the archaeologist a better sense of why animals in the material record are represented in certain ways. These relationships have meaning, often involving the living (or dead) beings themselves, but also beyond this into the realm of material culture. It is both of these aspects which manifest themselves in the archaeological record." (Boulden and Musselwhite 2013: 9)

In this thesis, I have examined the role and appearance of animals within particular aspects of human society, with a view to analysing how their position in society changed during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic in the Levant, and how that may have affected notions of personhood and individuality. I have also considered theories of structured deposition, and how these may be applicable to some of the ways in which human and non-human interactions were made manifest. This chapter revisits the original research questions, drawing the other sections together to explore the topic in more detail, drawing out arguments about each area, as well as looking at how the research questions have been answered. It explores how ideas of personhood may have been applied and changed, and demonstrates how the aspects of society explored here were all interrelated, investigating what that means for ideas of human-animal relations in the region.

The research questions

To what extent were human and animal identities perceived as differing during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic? The evidence from 'Ain Ghazal gives us the initial indications of animals being treated in very similar ways to humans, or perhaps even in the same ways, from their inclusion in burials to the deposition of zoomorphic figurines in 'trash' burials with human remains. Or, to remove the assumption of primacy, perhaps the human remains were buried alongside animal remains or figurines. This is not the only way in which the treatment of the animal figurines reflects the treatment given to their human equivalents; the truncation of some of the figurines is reminiscent of the human busts which were sculpted without legs. Thus, we begin to see an association of animals and humans that goes beyond

simply living at close quarters to a relationship in which there seems little (if any) conceptual separation between human and non-human – indeed, this separation cam be seen as a modern Western construct, rather than one inherent to us. From this we can start to draw ideas about personhood and the combination of being into new realities by and for the inhabitants of 'Ain Ghazal, and – by extension – the peoples of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic.

Göbekli Tepe provides a microcosm for looking at animal images and examining the species chosen (as much as possible, given the inherent difficulties in identification) and the ways in which they were arranged, as well as possible interpretations. Across the site animals dominate the imagery almost entirely, with humans much more infrequent in overt or naturalistic appearance. When humans are depicted, they are often smaller than the animals surrounding them, suggesting that humans did not necessarily see themselves as the dominant species in their relationship. Given that Göbekli Tepe is often considered to be a specialised site, in that there is no clear evidence of it having been a settlement or having been used for anything outside of ritual or ceremonial purposes, the selection of animals to provide the dominant iconographic theme for naturalistic decoration at the site is a very clear indication of the immense importance of animals within human society (and possibly within the belief system) at that time. The relationship with the T-shaped pillars, and their anthropomorphic interpretation, is discussed further below.

Particular species of animal appear in contexts associated with the dead, as well as the different types of mortuary practices and the application of those practices to animals and humans (as discussed in Chapter 6, and particularly in the case study of Kfar HaHoresh in Chapter 7). It is clear that the mortuary treatment of humans and non-humans was very similar, in that animals seem to have been just as likely to receive special treatment as humans. In this context, 'special' simply means mortuary treatment which is noticeable in the archaeological record. The vast majority of both humans and non-humans did not receive such treatment, so the selection of either human or animal remains for inclusion in these contexts was a deliberate act. It is in relation to these contexts that theories of structured deposition are particularly applicable, leading to consideration of the selection process for the remains to be deposited, and also to discussion of whether the act of deposition itself might not have been a primary focus for some of the ritual behaviour. However, theories of structured deposition are also particularly

applicable when considering questions of personhood. Fowler (2004) describes personhood as the processes of constituting, deconstituting and reconstituting the person, and this is certainly something that was being done with the carefully curated and structured deposits of mingled human and animal remains. Perhaps the deposits at Kfar HaHoresh could best be described as structured personhood in the mortuary arena, as deposits of humans and animals were deliberately merged.

How did these perceptions of identity change over the course of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic and in the context of developing domestication? The focus of this thesis has been on understanding the relationship between humans and non-humans during a particular period – the duration of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic – rather than on looking for explanations and theories that place more of an emphasis on change through time. However, the Pre-Pottery Neolithic was in itself a time of change, economically, socially, culturally, and possibly ideologically. As discussed in Chapter 2, the process of domestication was ongoing through the Pre-Pottery Neolithic and this had a constant and changing impact on society in all ways.

Chapter 2 was divided into three sections, covering ways of life, relationships and symbolic or ritual uses. It drew lightly on historical and anthropological material as well as archaeological to provide a context for the place of animals in society. This section mainly examined the ways in which we have interacted and the ways in which animals have fit into our society, looking at how those interactions and their roles in our world have changed as time passed, while still making it clear that animals were fully integrated into all aspects of human life. The case study of 'Ain Ghazal (Chapter 3) demonstrated this in more depth showing that the role animals played at the site altered over the time of the site's occupation, from a strong emphasis on wild species in the PPNB (seen in the large numbers of zoomorphic figurines and the gazelle burial, for example) to an apparent decrease in the importance of wild and increased reliance on domesticated species in the PPNC, as shown by the decrease in zoomorphic figurines (believed to represent wild species) and the appearance of bones from domesticated pigs in human burials.

A study of representations of animals (as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5) shows that while humans seem to have always had a strong interest in and relationship

with animals, this fascination increased noticeably during the PPNB in the Levant. While images of animals are known prior to that, the PPNB saw a marked increase in the dominance of non-human imagery, as seen at Göbekli Tepe, for example. This would seem to coincide with the increase of domestication in the region, although the majority of images and representations of animals during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic appear to depict wild species. The PPNC saw a decrease in animal representations from the PPNB, and this in turn would seem to coincide with the increasing prevalence of domesticated species in the faunal record.

How were human-animal relations and questions of identity expressed in the material culture of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic? It is imperative that we think about animals in ways that go beyond food and subsistence. It is equally clear that we cannot place animals in simple, clear-cut categories; they – and our relationships with them – are considerably more complex than that. To try and categorise the ways in which humans interacted with animals into boxes such as 'hunting' and 'domesticating' is reductionist, and does us a disservice by hemming our thinking and understanding in as much as it imposes false boundaries on human-animal relationships. Additionally, this way of thinking runs the risk of reducing animals to mere pawns; creatures to whom things are done, rather than living, active beings with minds and agency of their own. We need to accept that animals were agents as much as humans, both living equally within the world around them and each having an impact on the other. Humans may have shaped the development of animals, but animals equally played a role in shaping the development of human society. Animals were clearly integrated into human society, in all areas, and this could not be the case without influence moving in both directions.

While 'Ain Ghazal has no direct correlation amongst the faunal evidence (literal and figurative) for the plastered human skulls which were found at the site, an equivalency may be found in the use of lime plaster caps to cover burials and depositions at Kfar HaHoresh, and in the use of plaster to cover cattle bucrania at Çatalhöyük. This again speaks to the desire to combine realities – the figurative and the real, humans and animals. The wider significance of the development and use of lime plaster has been discussed elsewhere (e.g., Clarke 2012), but it is clear that it was used in a number of contexts which would be considered as 'special', and was also used across multiple regions in the Near East.

This is further emphasised by the way in which the images of animals interact with the iconic T-shaped pillars at Göbekli Tepe. These pillars have the appearance of being anthropomorphic, with carved arms and appendages, but are also monumental in scale. It has been suggested that they may represent mythical beings, or possibly gods or even ancestors. If this is the case, then this raises questions regarding the presence of animal carvings and reliefs on these pillars. It is notable that the T-pillars are generally surrounded by or covered in images of animals, again suggesting a merging of human and non-human, and also a lack of clear boundaries between the two. If the pillars are intended to represent gods or ancestors to the human population then the inclusion of animals on those pillars articulates the importance of both humans and non-humans in the world. It suggests that either animals were perceived as part of a spiritual pantheon, or that they were thought of as being in some way ancestral (and therefore kin) to the human population. The contrast between naturalistic animal imagery applied to a very stylised human form is striking. It might be thought of as augmenting or adding a more explicit narrative onto an abstract or generalised notion. If the idea that the T-shaped pillars represent supernatural or ancestral beings is correct, it might be tempting to think of the animal imagery showing the way in which they manifest themselves in the world.

Can an approach informed by theories of personhood help us to answer these questions? In many Pre-Pottery Neolithic contexts that have been discussed, mingling of human and animal remains occurs. This raises issues around ideas of identity, for humans and non-humans alike. Using theories of personhood and perspectivism (e.g., Viveiros de Castro 1998; Fowler 2004), but also theories around structured deposition (e.g., Garrow 2012; Richards and Thomas 1984), Chapters 6 and 7 looked at mortuary practices and ways in which society may have interacted with the dead. It became clear that the mingling of remains and body parts was a recurring theme across the Near East in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, especially from the PPNB onwards. This creates discussion around whether the combining of human and non-human remains represents the combining of attributes from each, in a similar way to the combining of human and non-human images or body parts in images and carvings, as well as discussions around identity and the creation of identity; as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, this is exactly what may have been occurring at Göbekli Tepe, where animal images

augmented stylised human figures. Notions of identity in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic may have been flexible and identity itself mutable, and funerary contexts may have been viewed as creative opportunities to make these identities explicit, as much as the use of representations and depictions.

The ways in which human and animal remains were combined suggest the creation of new, merged beings, or possibly the physical representation of identities already believed to exist. The time taken to create depositions such as the depiction from Kfar HaHoresh reflects the importance placed upon these representations. The placing of animal and human remains together in mortuary contexts is another way of merging identities, and reinforces the idea that there was little or no conceptual difference between humans and animals. Kfar HaHoresh was a very specialised site, used primarily for mortuary practices and depositions. It is clear across the Near East that there must have been a definite selection process involved when candidates for (identifiable) mortuary treatments were chosen, as the number of burials discovered is a small fraction of what could be expected from the population numbers in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. Kfar HaHoresh, as a mortuary site thought to be used by a number of communities in the region around it, also clearly had a further selection process for those interred there. Therefore, the inclusion of animals within this selection process, and within the very limited numbers of those chosen for mortuary treatments, is a strong validation of their position in society and their identification with humans. Kfar HaHoresh can be viewed as a reasonably representative microcosm of Pre-Pottery Neolithic mortuary practices and of the ways in which human-animal relations were expressed through them, and as such the status of animals as equal with humans seems clear.

Discussion

Verhoeven (2011) states that

> "It is probably true to say that the PPNB was marked by a – material at least - preoccupation with the supernatural. The key features of this are: 1: special, ritual buildings; 2) various kinds of burials, including decapitated skeletons; 3) skull caches; 4) plastered skulls; 5) symbolic human-animal relations including therianthropic sculpture; 6) large

statuary; 7) human and animal figurines; and 8) the use of horn cores (especially of cattle) in domestic buildings, ritual buildings, and burials." (Verhoeven 2011: 798).

It is interesting that most of these key features either do relate to animals or can be related to animals; while Verhoeven may have meant human burials, and human skull caching, and human decapitation, for example, these are all practices which were at times also applied to animals. Most sites in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Near East exhibit at least one or two of these features, including before and after the PPNB, and sites such as Göbekli Tepe, Kfar HaHoresh and 'Ain Ghazal especially stand out in relation to them (see chapters 5, 7 and 3), as either having extraordinary finds relating to one of the features (as is the case with Kfar HaHoresh and Göbekli Tepe), or as having finds from all categories, as 'Ain Ghazal does. Even sites which lack those more spectacular finds, though, can have much to tell us about human-animal relationships in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic.

Studies of faunal remains from Near Eastern sites in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic shows that often the species which appear in 'special' contexts are not those that are most common at the site (e.g., Arbuckle and Ozkaya 2006), which would seem to indicate a divide between those animals which were considered mostly suitable for food, and those which were found acceptable for inclusion in other contexts. This is not always the case – at Kfar HaHoresh, it is clear that gazelle was both an important food source for use at the site, and also of great symbolic importance (Meier et al.2017; Simmons et al. 2007). However, Kfar HaHoresh may be a special case, in that we know there would have been an ample supply of managed or domesticated animals available, but the people using the site preferred to continue hunting wild gazelle (*ibid.*); other sites, such as Çatalhöyük or Körtik Tepe, seem to indicate that if domesticates form a large part of the faunal record (being associated with consumption), different species were generally preferred in (for example) mortuary and artistic contexts (Russell 2016; Ozkaya and Coskun 2011).

Arbuckle and Ozkaya (2006) demonstrate the varying animal exploitation patterns between sites by looking at the faunal records from three sites. At Hallan Çemi, sheep dominated the faunal remains, followed by red deer and pigs, while cattle were only a minor presence. At Çayönü Tepesi, though, pigs were dominant in the faunal record for at least part of the time the site was in use, with cattle being secondary and red deer and caprines being only minor contributors, and at Körtik

Tepe sheep were again the main species in the faunal record, followed by red deer and cattle, with pigs being rare (Arbuckle and Ozkaya 2006). These three sites are all in the same region and presumably would have had access to much the same resources and species, but each population had its preferred species. We also know that at Çayönü Tepesi, while pigs were apparently the preferred food animal, aurochs and wild boar played a large part in the symbolic life of the site (Croucher 2012), reflecting the discrepancy between faunal and symbolic records. This discrepancy is less noticeable at Körtik Tepe, however, where sheep were the main species found at the site (indicating that they were the primary source of meat), but an entire sheep was also interred in a manner thought to demonstrate ritual behaviour (Arbuckle and Ozkaya 2006).

There clearly were strong associations being made between humans and animals which manifested in a number of ways, many of which can be seen as linking the two together, or not really differentiating between them. However, this only seems to have been the case for wild species, at the majority of sites, and this raises the question of why these links were not being forged for and with domesticated animals. It is a question of whether domesticated animals were seen as being somehow less or 'other', in a way that wild species apparently were not. Possibly, as Russell (2016) has suggested, it may have been that "Domestic animals were perhaps too familiar, too rooted in the human world, to act as conduits to the divine." (Russell 2016: 24). It is clear, from the evidence from the mortuary and artistic records, that animals and humans were entangled, but also that they could be made to be entangled, and then broken apart and put back together again, apparently interchangeably. Within the mortuary record, the mingling and combining of human and animal remains, or the replacement of one part with another from a different species, can be compared with the creation of hybrid figures and images in the artistic record. The burials at Kfar HaHoresh show the combining of remains, especially with the gazelle and the plastered skull (Locus 1004) and the child with the fox skull (see Chapter 7), which are comparable with the human-feline hybrid from Shillourokambos or the bird-man from Nevalı Çori (see chapter 4).

It is a merging of human and animal together, and a removal of any boundaries between the two; animal becomes human, and human becomes animal, whether physically or not:

"Becoming animal is not about moving between different bodies. Though the animal is not literal, the transformation is. Parts of human bodies connect with parts of animal bodies to produce a new assemblage of bodily effects, one that is something else entirely, not human, not dog, that relates to the world in a new way. Just as the animal part transforms the human body, so the conjunction with human parts transforms the animal." (Conneller 2004: 50).

The practice of secondary burials and the moving around of remains suggests that individuals may have been less important than the 'whole' – and that animals may have been considered as a part of that whole. It is very clear from a number of sites, including 'Ain Ghazal and Kfar HaHoresh, that animals were being disarticulated and decapitated as well as humans, and the selection and processing or manipulating of their remains was also often the same between animals and humans. On Cyprus, too, there is evidence for animals being buried in ways that reflect the human burials at the same site, at Khirokitia. This mirroring of mortuary practices used on humans is a clear indicator that (at least in the PPNB) wild animals could be seen as people, to be treated in the same way.

Conneller (2004) makes the suggestion that different artefacts made from the same kind of animal might be deposited together, or in the same way, because they are seen as retaining their 'animalness'. They still incorporate the original agency and essence of the animal. One possible extension of this is the association of animal images and body parts, such as the burial of a *Bos* figurine with *Bos* metacarpals at 'Ain Ghazal. I have previously suggested that this was a merging of the figurative with the real, bringing realities together, and in this case there is the possibility that if the bones of the animal are thought to contain some of the animal essence then this may also have been an attempt to infuse some of that essence into the figurine. The inclusion of animal body parts with human burials may also have been related to this; the burial together of parts from two species, and so of the essences of two species, may also have been a combining of realities, as well as an expression of relationships and interpersonal connections.

The combining of humans and animals in artistic practices, as seen in the hybrid figures and images (and probably in the Göbekli Tepe pillars), is comparable to the mingling of animal and human remains in mortuary practices. This desire to merge animals and humans together can also be seen in the practice of placing animal

remains within and under houses, which brings them into the daily and domestic lives of humans. There are many ways in which this could be understood; possibly it was a combining of worlds, with an idea of bringing animals (wild and domestic) into the human arena, and therefore under human control. This is a view which would agree with notions of wild/domestic and nature/culture dichotomies, but there is more to it than that. The way in which this merging and mingling occurred across so many aspects of human society is a demonstration of the lack of perceived boundaries between humans and animals. It suggests that, at least for a while, there was no 'them' and 'us' in our relationships with and attitudes towards the animals we shared our world with; there were only people. Modern perceptions of the categorisation of humans and animals as distinct from each other may be another example of interpretations routed in modern Western concepts, rather than evident in the archaeological record.

Evidence from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Levant suggests that animals could be seen in the same way and treated in the same way as humans; that humans and animals were together in life and death; and that animals were integrated fully into the lives and society of humans. However, it is also clear that this attitude, if it did exist, began to change some time after the beginnings of domestication. Perhaps if animals were seen as people before, then (as suggested by Ingold (1994) and Russell (2011) amongst others) maybe the changes created by domestication and animal management meant that animals (or at least those species which were coming increasingly under human influence) began to be seen as property, thereby placing them at an emotional and mental remove from us.

It is worth noting that the practice of decapitation, which was a widespread mortuary behaviour during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic (especially the PPNB), was something which could apparently be applied to humans and animals alike. Many sites show evidence for humans having their skulls removed, and these skulls were often then hoarded and cached, decorated, or displayed. The same behaviour can be clearly noted in relation to animals; many sites have provided evidence for animal skulls being curated and displayed in a number of ways, such as Jerf el Ahmar and Wadi Faynan (Mithen et al. 2011). The Skull Building at Çayönü Tepesi, for example, contained a large number of human skulls, but also contained a number of auroch skulls. It is also known for skulls to be swapped between species, as in the instance of a child at Kfar HaHoresh having its skull replaced by that of a fox, or the decapitated gazelle deposited in association with a human

plastered skull. These practices appear to be reflected in artistic practices, with the hybrid figures and images, where it is often the head which most recognisably belongs to a different species, as in the bird-man figure from Nevalı Çori.

At Göbekli Tepe and Nevalı Çori, it has been suggested (e.g., Schmidt 2000, 2002) that the famous T-shaped pillars could represent humans; there is a suggestion of anthropomorphic shape, and some of the lines on them could suggest arms folded across the waist. If this is the case, and the pillars are intended to be humans (or human-shaped beings), then we must consider the implications of the multiple carvings that cover these pillars. They are all carved with representations of animals, giving the impression of a human with creatures crawling all over them. However, the question that raises itself (if we accept the idea of the pillars as representing humans or human-shaped beings) is one of perceptions; in these figures being presented to us, are we to see a human in control of animals (judging by comparative sizes of representation), where the animals are so subordinate that they can be allowed to crawl over the human figure without harm? Given that all of the animals represented at Göbekli Tepe are wild, and many are 'dangerous' in some way, this seems unlikely. Perhaps, then, we are to see them as animals being in control of humans; after all, the animals are more numerous, and are represented as being on top of (in both a physical and temporal sense, as regards the carving) the human figure, which therefore seems subdued. Or, rather than this being as issue of power and control, is this another instance of the creation of merged or merging persons and realities? While perhaps not as fully realised as the hybrid figurines, they can still be considered as representations of the same principle. The pillars themselves may represent humans or may represent human-shaped beings or deities, but ones which are covered in animals, and for whom the animals (wild animals) are an integral part of what makes them what they are. At the very least, as Russell states, the 'totem poles' from Göbekli Tepe and Nevalı Çori show an intense spiritual interaction across species, and maybe a similar blending (Russell 2016).

It seems possible that the choice of animals may have related not only to any spiritual significance that they possessed, but also to their own physical qualities and presence in the world; to their relations to and with the humans, whether as predator and prey, or simply as part of the natural landscape around them. The fact that not all of the species that the people would have encountered are represented clearly shows that there was preferential selection, and the

predominance of particular species within those represented is therefore also significant. Foxes, for example, are very dominant in the representations, and this, as well as their appearance at other sites, seems to indicate that foxes had an important role in Pre-Pottery Neolithic symbolism. There does not seem to be any evidence for them being a primary food source, but it is possible that they may have been equally prized for their pelts, which could have been used as decoration for the site (Peters and Schmidt 2004: 207), or possibly for clothing. They have a high level of representation in both the faunal record and in the art, which could potentially be a sign of fox worship (Peters and Schmidt 2004: 209), although if this were the case then the evidence from Göbekli Tepe would seem to suggest a series (or variety) of cults based around different animals, as other species also have a high level of representation. But it is worth noting again that, whether these images were meant to represent gods, spiritual beings, totems, or anything else – it was still overwhelmingly wild animals that were being picked out for depiction.

I believe we can see the hiding of the hybrid figures and sculptures as a form of burial; it appears that they have been hidden from general view, presumably after a period of being visible and accessible. In this respect, they partially resemble the treatment of the dead (both animal and human), where the bodies have been buried and then exhumed, before being processed and manipulated and eventually reburied. At Göbekli Tepe, there are indications that structures themselves were buried, while at Nevalı Çori sculptures were buried or hidden in the walls of buildings, and at Göbekli Tepe the pillars were sometimes buried; this could been seen as a symbolic burial of the hybrid figures, but with sculptures being placed within the walls of buildings it is also possible that this was a form of reuse, and maybe even a secondary burial. However, this may also be another form of structured deposition, with the burial or hiding of the sculptures being part of the ongoing ritual engagement with them.

While prehistory offers few certainties in interpretations, we can use detailed analyses of the evidence, including contexts and a 'bottom up' approach to ensure rigour in our interpretations. However, it is also valid to recognise the potential evidence we are missing, because it has not survived in the archaeological record. One example of this is skins and furs. They do not have the durability of other physical remains, and as a result, if they were been used as part of ceremonies or displays there is no way of identifying that particular behaviour. Mellaart (1967), for example, believed that leopard skins were worn at Çatalhöyük during

ceremonies, based on wall paintings at the site. Skins or furs could also have been used to add extra dimensions to the animal depiction at Kfar HaHoresh, or may have been draped over carvings or figures at other sites.

Unfortunately, along with the awareness that there are gaps in our understanding of the material record, there further evidence is also absent from the archaeological record. While we can examine the archaeological evidence from a site and make reasonable deductions around subsistence activities, we are missing information that would come from knowing how a place looked or smelled or sounded as people moved through and lived in it. However, burial practices and manipulation of human and animal remains in mortuary contexts would have been sensory experiences that would have shaped experiences. Other experiential components can also be discussed. For instance, the carvings at Göbekli Tepe and Nevalı Çori would have looked even more impressive by the light of fires or torches, where the flickering illumination may have added the illusion of movement to the images and enriched the experience. Modern visitors to Göbekli Tepe (or other sites which are perceived as having been special or sacred) may comment on feelings of awe, or of feeling that the site is 'special' (echoing a phenomenological approach (Tilley 1994)), but with no way of knowing how much of their experience of the site would have been shared by the people who created it (Brück 1998). Many of the photos of the site are taken at night with bright lighting, the flickering light and smoke that would come from torches or fires would have added further ambiance and animation to the experience.

The idea of special or sacred spaces or 'cult buildings' occurs repeatedly in the literature around Pre-Pottery Neolithic sites. Sites including 'Ain Ghazal, Çayönü Tepesi (Ozdogan and Ozdogan 1998), Nevalı Çori and (a little later) Çatalhöyük (Hodder and Pels 2010, Kay 2020) are all thought to have these special buildings. However, the concept of 'sacred space' is a purely arbitrary one, especially when assigned to this building or that; this space or that room. Sacred space is a matter of usage, rather than design; it is in how people think about the space and how they use it, rather than in the space itself. The space is simply there, existing, until such time as it is needed. Even the intent behind the design and creation of such a space is largely irrelevant; someone might build a church or a temple, but if it is not used for worship or other sacred acts, then it is not a sacred space. And this works equally in the opposite direction; a room in an ordinary building, used for

living and sleeping in, can be sacred, if it is used for sacred purposes - there is no necessity for places to be only one or the other.

A room in which one sleeps may also be the one in which prayers are said and the space will move seamlessly between the two uses, or exist as both at once. There is not always a strict divide between sacred and domestic space. We must always consider the actual use and function of a space, as well as those for which it was intended. Although at some sites it does seem clear that particular buildings were intended for ceremonial use (such as the Skull Building at Çayönü Tepesi), for the most part we find evidence for ritual behaviour in normal buildings and houses, including burials under floors and skulls (human and animal) in corners or in walls. It is likely that the people in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic did not have a dividing line between domestic and ritual, or possibly even between the living and the dead, but instead had lives where the two existed simultaneously and jointly, in much the same way that humans seem to have co-existed with animals.

In this thesis I have taken existing material and looked at it from the viewpoint of ideas and theories that have not previously been applied to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic in the Near East; I have also been able to apply them to a wider range of sites in the region than has previously been attempted. I have attempted to show how notions of personhood were demonstrated, created and changed through a variety of mediums during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, which in turn both affected and was affected by changes in social and ritual behaviours. Additionally, I have looked at perceptions of reality, and how these may have been expressed through our interactions with animals, as well as how the act of deposition can be a ritual in itself, creating linkages between different parts of the ritual process.

As with any research, inevitably more questions are raised through the research process which invite future investigation. Further to this thesis, I feel that a more dedicated study of human-animal hybrid figures and images could be of great interest, following up ideas about both human and animal identities and how they are formed. Another area of interest would be a study of Pre-Pottery Neolithic sites, to discover which sites (and possibly which areas) do not show evidence for any particular relationship with animals; at a time when animals were such a major part of human lives, if there were sites with an absence of finds such as those documented in this thesis then that may have a significance in and of itself.

Another avenue for further research could be to examine sites which are known to have had domesticated animals present, and checking those with the local species which would have been available to the populations, in order to investigate whether the species found at the site are those which would be expected from the local fauna, or whether there are indications of domesticates being traded between areas. There may be a question of whether populations were domesticating what was available to them (where possible), or whether they were importing domesticated animals which would otherwise not have been readily available in their area. This would have implications for the relationships with those animals, especially if they were bringing in domesticates, which could impact on any sense of familiarity and kinship with those animals.

Although this thesis investigates human-animal interactions and relationships in a number of contexts, and while the simplest way in which to examine this is to look at the presence of one within the domain of the other, it is vitally important not to lose sight of the instances of the absence of this connection. I would assert that it was impossible for any group of humans at that time to *not* have interactions (and therefore some sort of relationship) with animals, and so we must carefully consider the significance of the absence of any apparent particularity or significance being assigned to any animals, and their absence from the 'normal' ritual contexts. This is especially true for sites where ritual activity is otherwise well-documented and clearly present, and for the larger (and 'mega') sites where the absence of such evidence, when it occurs, is so striking that the possibility must be considered that is an intentional omission. In these cases, the absences may be as important as the presences, and the significance of them should be considered with equal attention, although this could probably be a separate study by itself.

What the evidence from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic overwhelmingly demonstrates is the complicated and rich nature of our relationships

with animals, even (or perhaps especially) at this period. It is strongly evident throughout the region. Reliefs, engravings and sculptures and mortuary evidence, all combine to indicate that the ways in which the people interacted with animals, and the ways in which they viewed them, was anything but simple and well-defined. We also need to view animals in more than a simple way, and acknowledge that animals are, and were, not without agency. A move towards a

more post-human engagement with the material would provide valuable new perspectives, which view human and non-humans as equal. Viewing animals in this light offers new interpretations which deconstruct the anthropocentric traditions (as seen in, for example, Watts 2013 and chapters within). Hodder suggests that human and animal paths were became entangled and inextricably mutually dependant during the Neolithic (2012, 2016). We can also view human and animal relationships as components of wider assemblages, which combine to make up more than the sum of the whole (DeLanda 2016, and discussed in burial contexts in Crellin 2017, Fowler 2017). Such approaches offer further potential explorations of human animal relationships which challenge hierarchical interpretations and offer more nuanced understandings of animal and human engagements within their wider material worlds.

Such future approaches will build on the results offered here, which highlight the merging and mingling of human/animal identities, and demonstrate the comparable treatment of animals and humans in a wide range of archaeological contexts, including in society, art and representations, and in the mortuary arena.

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