

4 Semiotics in Action: Neolithic Imagery on the Move

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Introduction

In this paper, I explore the significance of aspects of semiotics in the study of Neolithic imagery. Semiotics is a very broad term that refers to the study of signs, and as a discipline it is of great heuristic potential for investigating prehistoric imagery. I here employ the semiotics of the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914) to interpret transformations in Central Anatolian Neolithic imagery (e.g. Peirce and Welby 1977).

In the Early Neolithic (EN) sites of Anatolia, and in particular at *Çatalhöyük*, a wide range of images and motifs was elaborated, forming a well-defined canon. These arguably originated from a range of different beliefs or myths, rituals, and narratives (Hodder 2006:186), and their persistence, longevity, and presence across different media are indicative of their continuous importance. The end of the Neolithic did not mark the demise of the Neolithic imagery, which continued to appear in different parts of Central Anatolia, such as the Konya Plain, Cappadocia, and the Lake District; the later Chalcolithic imagery, however, seems to have been neglected in contrast to the spectacular and attractive Neolithic art, which remains a subject of endless interpretations. Although the similarity between *Çatalhöyük* imagery and imagery of the Chalcolithic sites has been noticed (Bıçakçı *et al.* 2012:104; Öztan 2012:40), there has been no further investigation of this relationship. This paper discusses why and how some of the Neolithic imagery survived in the Chalcolithic period, using some examples to illustrate the process.¹

The chapter starts by presenting selected concepts in Peircean semiotics, in particular focusing on notions of replica and abduction. It is then shown how those concepts can provide a heuristically viable tool for approaching the Neolithic imagery. After presenting the *Çatalhöyük* imagery in relation to changes in architectural and funeral practices, I then turn to the neighboring areas, to situate the site in a broader context. Finally, I assess the relevance of Peircean semiotics to archaeology in general and to studies of prehistoric imagery in particular.

Peirce's Semiotics and Its Significance for Archaeology

The theory of signs developed by Charles S. Peirce is not dyadic, as in structuralism, but is rather based on a triadic relation between the material form of the sign (representamen), its object (referent), and its interpretant (the sense made of the sign) (Cobley 2001:28). The 'interpretant' is based on the idea that signs can only be recognized as they are being interpreted, and that meaning is created through relations, the engagement of people with objects.

The concept of an interpretant is thus strictly connected to the dynamics of meaning. Meaning is not fixed and stable over time, but changes from one context to another: the same thing can mean something different in different contexts, and when different interpretants are engaging with the sign. This can be illustrated with the example of a fire: it is not a message when forest is burning, but in the context of arson for a political reason it might be a sign used to attract someone's attention (Knappett 2005:9). Further, objects do not have only one meaning, fixed just once by their makers: they can escape from the intentions of their creators, as they are open to further manipulation, reuse, and reinterpretation.

Peirce developed a complicated typology of signs. He divided them in different ways, but all his divisions are threefold. For the purpose of this paper, I will focus only on two types of signs, namely legisigns and sinsigns. A legisign is a general type of sign or law or class of object, whereas a sinsign refers to a specific reality or existence of a sign, an actual existent thing (after Preucel 2006:56). Legisigns are 'templates', types that cannot act until they are embodied in a concrete instance that can be termed a replica/token; the replica is therefore an actual manifestation of a legisign or a type. A replica, as defined by Peirce, is not a pure copy of an actual, existing thing. It is rather the manifestation of an ideal: there exists an ideal concept (this is the legisign) that is given physical form in different places and times (the sinsigns).

Another important concept introduced by Peirce is abduction, used to identify a type of reasoning. The term describes the unconscious level at which we make immediate and general hypotheses based on our habitual experience of the world; as such, abduction is pre-discursive in character. However, it is important to understand that Peircean semiotics, along with its discursive and pre-discursive aspects, also comprises the affectual and emotional. All human actions involve affective and energetic interpretive responses, as much as reflection and conscious evaluation of the signs and events.

The last decade has seen emerging interest within archaeology in Peirce's works. At a time when traditional, symbolically oriented approaches were in crisis, with their failure to address meaning and its dynamics, a lesson was learnt from anthropology that Peirce's semiotics can overcome the limitations of symbolic, structuralist, and cognitive approaches (Parmentier 1994; Keane 2003; Mertz 2007). In particular, Preucel (2006) developed arguments for a pragmatic archaeology based on Peirce's ideas. His book inspired many applications of semiotics to a range of archaeological material (e.g. Coben 2006; Jones 2007; Joyce 2007; Cipolla 2008; Diaz-Guardamino 2008; Crossland 2009); these applications showed, however, that although semiotics was theoretically promising, it is very difficult to build a proper model that could be useful in archaeological analyses. Knappett combined Peirce with network analysis (Knappett 2005), and most recently coined the term 'semiotic network' and an entire model of situated semiotics (Knappett 2011).

Semiotics in Action: Neolithic Imagery on The Move

The departure point here for demonstrating how a semiotic perspective can be applied to studies of the Late Neolithic (LN) / Chalcolithic imagery is the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük, situated on the Konya Plain in central Turkey. It is a large (c. 13 ha) tell settlement made up of two mounds: the older East Mound, dating to the Neolithic period (c. 7100–5980 cal BC) and the younger West Mound, assigned to the Early Chalcolithic (c. 6000–5500 cal BC).

The site was discovered by James Mellaart in the late 1950s and excavated between 1961 and 1965. The site rapidly became famous, due to its large size and spectacular wall paintings inside its houses. Due to the richness of the finds, some houses were termed ‘shrines’ and the anthropomorphic figurines unearthed at the sites were interpreted as representations of the Mother Goddess (Mellaart 1967). This view has dominated the perception of the site for a long time. Since 1993, an international team led by Ian Hodder (Stanford University) has been carrying out the renewed excavation at the site. The project has shed new light on the settlement history, prompting some of the previous interpretations to be revised.

In 2001 the project’s Polish Team, led by Arkadiusz Marciniak (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznan) and Lech Czerniak (University of Gdansk) joined the project in order to investigate the upper levels of Çatalhöyük East, dating back to the late seventh millennium BCE—the last phases of the mound occupation. These levels are of crucial importance as they are later than those excavated by Mellaart, and therefore take us beyond the previous interpretation of the site. Recent excavations by the Polish Team have revealed a number of transformations, including changes in architecture and space organization, burial practices, and the character of imagery (Czerniak and Marciniak 2007a, 2007b).

Imagery of Çatalhöyük and its Transformations

Lasting for almost 1500 years, Neolithic Çatalhöyük was not a homogeneous unit. A major distinction can be made in the Çatalhöyük East sequence between the early Levels XII–VI, assigned to the Early Ceramic Neolithic (7100–6500 BCE), and the Late Ceramic Neolithic Levels V–I (6500–6000 BCE). These two periods differ from each other in terms of building and settlement form and material culture traditions.

The early phases of the settlement are characterized by three distinct elements: (1) agglunative architecture without open spaces and streets, with houses lacking doors, entered via the roof, and characterized by a strict division of interior and a great degree of building continuity; (2) intramural burials under the floors, and the practice of retrieving and circulating skulls; and (3) wall paintings, reliefs, and installations placed inside the houses. These wall paintings can be divided into three categories:

1. *Zoomorphic motifs*, mostly depictions of wild or dangerous animals. These are typically large mammals like cattle, leopards, and equids, and birds such as cranes or vultures. The vultures are often depicted with spread wings and in association with headless human figures;
2. *Anthropomorphic motifs*: human figures, mostly male, often shown in relation or interaction with animals. Sometimes they are depicted with a cloth of leopard skin around the waist. Several figures hold weapons such as nets and bows. Females are

less often depicted and are characterized by a more obese shape with pronounced breasts;

3. *Geometric motifs*, including spirals, triangles, crosses, lozenges, concentric circles, hand-prints, or painted panels.

Reliefs include molded and sometimes painted zoomorphic features on houses walls, often in the form of so-called ‘splayed figures’, with upraised legs and arms, probably depictions of a bear. Another common representation is a pair of felines (leopards) with heads turned towards each other and bodies painted with geometric patterns. Sometimes, parts of animals such as claws or beaks are embedded in those reliefs. With the abandonment of a house the head and paws of a relief were often destroyed.

‘Installations’ refers to elements of animal bodies embedded in architecture. The most popular, and found in large quantities, were bucrania—horn cores of wild bulls made for display. They have been found *in situ* or dismantled from the installations (Russell and Meece 2006). They take different forms: clay heads with cattle horns, horns set into the wall benches with multiple horns, horns on platforms. Apart from these installations, cattle horns unearthed at the site also include feasting and commemorative deposits. Whereas installations are deliberately placed to be visible, commemorative deposits are invisible to the occupants, concealed under floors, in a building’s foundation fill or in the walls (Russell *et al.* 2009).

A great number of figurines has also been found. Despite earlier claims that female figurines predominate and should be seen as sacred representations of the Goddess, new research has shown that female examples are only a small part of the assemblage, and that male representations predominate. In addition, in EN levels figurines are mostly found in middens, suggesting they were devices designated for use and later discard, rather than religious statues made for display. Zoomorphic figurines, including representations of cattle and numerous fragments of horns, significantly prevail (Meskell *et al.* 2008:143).

In summary, EN Çatalhöyük imagery is concentrated around wild animals. Bulls seem to have had a special position, as evidenced by wall paintings, figurines, and, foremost, installations and feasting deposits. Other important animals forming part of the defined canon comprise bears, leopards, and vultures. They are part of a symbolic world rather than objects of consumption, as supported by faunal assemblages dominated by sheep, which are absent in the imagery—sheep appear to be less important symbolically than economically, in contrast to cattle (Russell and Meece 2006:223).

As revealed by installations and reliefs, the focus on animal heads is important. Headness and/or headlessness repeat across the different categories of images and media: in making installations of animal heads and embedding them into walls, but also in the anthropomorphic figurines, on the wall paintings representing headless people, and finally in how the dead are treated—i.e. the common practice of circulating skulls. Finally, another feature of the imagery of this phase is maleness of representations, both animals and humans, manifested in wall paintings and figurine assemblages.

The imagery at Çatalhöyük was not static and homogeneous, but changed through time. After almost a millennium of holding on to the tradition of the wall paintings and the reproduction of ‘canonical’ images, starting from Level VI onwards a major shift is observed. Recent research by the Polish Team in particular has challenged

the existing picture of the site as fairly homogeneous. The LN phase, as emerging from the research, is characterized by (1) the appearance of larger open spaces—courtyards, streets, and doorways—while interior space divisions are no longer strict and a degree of continuity is abandoned; (2) the disappearance of sub-floor burials and the appearance of structures built purposely for burial, as exemplified by two burial chambers unearthed by the Polish Team (Spaces 248 and 327); and (3) a decrease in the number of wall paintings, reliefs, and installations. Installations of animal parts cease to occur through time or occur in a completely new context. This is exemplified by a plastered installation of bucranium in combination with the female skeleton placed deliberately in a burial chamber, Space 248 (Czerniak and Marciniak 2007a:121).

Similarly, figurines start to appear in the new context, namely burial, and an increase in female figurines is evident, characterized by obese, fleshy bodies and exaggerated bellies and buttocks. A characteristic feature is that the figurines now lack heads; the heads were most probably made of organic material and did not survive. The iconic example is a seated figure of a woman flanked by two felines (the so-called Seated Goddess of Çatalhöyük). A new category of enigmatic finds dating back to this period are stamp seals: small clay objects with bases decorated with geometric motifs or shaped in the form of animals, e.g. a bear (Türkcan 2007: fig. 4). The appearance of stamp seals can be seen as a prelude to the shift of motifs from Neolithic wall paintings to the Chalcolithic painted pottery that appears in enormous quantities in the neighboring Chalcolithic Çatalhöyük West Mound, to where the community of the East Mound gradually moved. When elaborated painted pottery appears, it seems that imagery becomes more mobile and less restricted to the house. In other words, it seems that in this period art went outside the houses: motifs moved from static to portable objects (Last and Gibson 2006). An interesting example of combining the old and new tradition comes from the chamber Space 327, where a fragment of wall painting with a human figure, painted red and with an upraised arm, most probably cut out from the wall, was put deliberately inside the burial chamber (Czerniak and Marciniak 2008:74).

The Polish Team's research has established that activity on the mound finally ended around 5980–5880 cal. BC (Marciniak *et al.* 2015). The abandonment of the settlement did not, however, mean the demise of the Neolithic imagery.

The Chalcolithic Imagery of Central Anatolia

Within the new Çatalhöyük Research Project, the site for many years was treated in isolation. However, in the past few years a new trend in the Project has attempted to situate the site in a broader regional context. In particular, scholars have recently begun to search for parallels between Çatalhöyük and Göbekli Tepe in southeast Turkey, dated to the ninth millennium BCE, and with comparable concentration of imagery (Hodder and Meskell 2011). The two sites are different in terms of architecture and economy, but despite great temporal and spatial distance the similarities of imagery are striking. The imagery of Göbekli Tepe, as in EN Çatalhöyük, concentrates on wild, dangerous animals, and humans in relation to the animal world, including images of bulls, bucrania, and birds of prey in associations with skulls. It seems that bulls in particular have played a prominent role in Near Eastern Neolithic imagery, as indicated by bucrania and bull images across different sites in southeast Turkey and the northern Levant (Cauvin 2000). It is clear that the Çatalhöyük imagery was deeply rooted in the older tradition, with certain images probably being elements of various

myths circulating in the Near East that were retold and passed down over millennia (Hodder 2006:183).

However, in this paper, instead of looking at the preceding period, I instead turn to the period that followed EN and ‘classical’ Çatalhöyük, starting from 6500 BCE and continuing until after the settlement was abandoned. In particular, I turn to the various areas of Central Anatolia: the Konya Plain, Cappadocia, and the Lake District.

Starting from 6500 BCE, the large, aggregate community inhabiting Çatalhöyük gradually disintegrated and was replaced by dispersed, smaller settlements. At the same time, the Neolithic way of life expanded out of Central Anatolia and appeared in other regions, in particular the Lake District (major sites for the region are Hacilar, Kuruçay, Höyücek, and Bademağacı—Duru 2012). Around 6000 BCE, which is conventionally taken to mark the rise of the Early Chalcolithic, the number of sites in Central Anatolia increased (Baird 1997). This period is marked by the shift from Çatalhöyük East to Çatalhöyük West and the emergence of such sites as Can Hasan I (French 1998), Köşk Höyük (Öztan 2012), and Tepecik-Çiftlik (Bıçakçı *et al.* 2012). Perhaps some of those smaller settlements could be considered to be descendants of Çatalhöyük, as they came into being when Çatalhöyük started to disintegrate. Most of these sites were abandoned around 5500 BCE, marking the end of the Early Chalcolithic. A general reassessment of the Chalcolithic imagery from the Central Anatolian sites reveals an almost complete absence of wall paintings (with a few exceptions), reliefs, and in-house installations. Instead, a large number of diverse mobile decorated objects is present.

In particular, this period is marked by a sudden introduction and subsequent rapid increase of ceramics painted with geometric motifs.² The red-on-cream painted pottery is limited to the Lake District and Konya Plain with the sites of Çatalhöyük West and Can Hasan I; it was not widely adopted everywhere (e.g., it was not adopted in western or northwest Turkey, or Cappadocia), and it seems to have been a matter of conscious choice. In regions in which the painted pottery is lacking, we observe monochrome pottery with incised or relief decorations. Zoomorphic, anthropomorphic, ‘unusual shape’ vessels, and so called ‘cult tables’ also appear. There are also stamp seals decorated with geometric patterns, which are almost identical across different regions. The repertoire of shapes is more standardized than at Çatalhöyük, and the imagery is present on a large number of small clay and stone decorated objects (ladles and ‘cult tables’ decorated often with animal heads).

Another important category of images for this period is figurines. In contrast to the preceding period, the anthropomorphic female figurines heavily predominate (Voigt 2007), which is clearly following the trend that appeared at LN Çatalhöyük. Figurines can be both naturalistic and schematic, sometimes painted or incised. A great corpus of female figurines comes from Hacilar, with examples of both sitting and reclining females, sometimes depicted with felines climbing over their bodies (Mellaart 1970:166–75). Likewise in Çatalhöyük, the emphasis is on fleshy-bodied figurines.

The crucial feature of the LN and Chalcolithic imagery is the fact that the images employed often resemble those known from Çatalhöyük wall paintings. Perhaps there was even a strategic, deliberate choice from the range of available images that ‘were taken up and retold and reset’ (Hodder 2006:186). Those include zoomorphic, anthropomorphic, and geometric images that are present across different media, either on painted or relief pottery (Fig. 4.1).



Figure 4.1 Relief spiral images: (1) Space 327, TP area, Çatalhöyük East; (2) Gelveri bowl, Cappadocia (after Franz 2008: fig. 8.2.2).

The most striking example of Çatalhöyük images that survived into later periods are bucrania, frequently reproduced as painted, naturalistic, or more stylized images on pottery or applied on monochrome vessels. In particular, there are painted vessels from the Lake District decorated with a bucranium image, often highly abstract, consisting of geometric shapes such as triangles or rhombs (Mellaart 1970:139). However, the naturalistic image of a whole bull appears on vessels from Köşk Höyük (Öztan 2012: figs 32, 35) and Tepecik Çiftlik (Bıçakçı *et al.* 2012: fig. 34). A focus on animal heads is a common theme, evidenced by painted and relief images on pottery and small artifacts, like ladles or spoons decorated with animal heads. Splayed figure images also appear as a relief on pottery.

Anthropomorphic imagery is not limited to female figurines: female images also occur as reliefs on vessels, e.g. at Köşk Höyük (Öztan 2012: fig. 37). A depiction of a male figure with a skin around his waist and holding a bow, in association with a bull image, from another Köşk Höyük pot displays similarity with Çatalhöyük wall paintings (Öztan 2012: fig. 35).

Along with zoomorphic and anthropomorphic images, Chalcolithic imagery also draws on the ‘classical’ Çatalhöyük geometric motifs such as hand-prints reproduced on painted vessels, or spirals, concentric circles, and crosses as popular motifs for decorating stamp seals. An interesting example is the so-called ‘fantastic style’, present across the Lake District sites, characterized by stylized images of bucrania and other forms executed in curvilinear shapes (Mellaart 1970:128). It is a local phenomenon of the Lake District region; however, it probably originated at Çatalhöyük, where wall paintings executed in an identical manner were uncovered.

To sum up, as judged from the reassessment of the imagery presented above, the imagery that we label ‘Chalcolithic’, although it appears to be of a new quality, is deeply rooted in the Neolithic tradition. It is clear that sites younger than Çatalhöyük used some of its elements in the period 6500–5500 BCE, a dynamic stage of the Neolithic dispersal, expansion, and relocation of settlements, which was characterized by profound and multidimensional changes (Czerniak and Marciniak 2007a). Perhaps this dispersal can be regarded as evidence of a diminishing importance for relations within a settlement, and the emergence of broader regional networks of relations. Interregional relationships could have been maintained with the aid of different

categories of mobile objects that could be circulated and exchanged and, additionally, that used shared imagery referencing the common past.

Peircean Semiotics in Action

Here I return to Peirce's semiotics, and in particular to the concept of replica and replication discussed above, in order to explain the persistence of old, traditional images in the Anatolian Chalcolithic. In semiotic terms, the EN imagery of Çatalhöyük can be defined as a coherent system of signs (to use Carl Knappett's [2011] term, a 'semiotic network') consisting of individual images that were probably embedded in some sort of common narratives or myths and beliefs.

During the disintegration and later the abandonment of Çatalhöyük, some elements of its imagery had been taken up and subjected to *replication*, being incorporated in other networks (i.e. regions or individual sites). The replication of images might have been additionally facilitated by the mobility of objects that could be circulated and exchanged over vast areas. This replication was a selective process: some images were copied, some others were not, some were replicated more often than others, and some new elements appeared. This post-EN Çatalhöyük imagery can be therefore described as *replicas* (sinsigns) of the original imagery, which in this perspective can be regarded as a system of legisigns.

As Peircean replica is not a pure copy of an actual existing thing, but rather the manifestation of an 'ideal', I would argue that what was replicated was not the actual Çatalhöyük imagery, but the picture of Çatalhöyük existing in the minds and memories of people: the interpretants trying to give sense to the imagery and to embody the images existing in their minds in concrete objects. The interpretants should be considered to be a community of people related to, and probably 'descendants' of, Çatalhöyük.

It can be assumed that shortly after the abandonment of Çatalhöyük, interpretants had some sort of a close, intimate relationship with their past and their homeland, and remembered its rich and well-defined tradition and imagery. There is no doubt that it was not easily erased from the memory of the people who had inhabited it. People were passing down the memory and told stories about it to the following generations, replicating its imagery and trying to relate themselves to the 'Lost World' that was gone now: the ideal reality of Çatalhöyük.

Relating to the past through replicating imagery included not only conscious, deliberate effort but also undoubtedly engaged emotions and feelings of nostalgia. Peircean semiotics identifies both discursive meanings—a world of articulated concepts and codes—and non-discursive meanings that relate to sensual experience and emotion. It is important to note that images have always had a surplus of meaning; they synthesize emotions and beliefs. The Peircean term 'abduction' could refer to where an image is intuitively recognized as belonging to the Lost World of the Çatalhöyük universe. Its presence across wide areas indicates that it must have been familiar to interpretants, at either the more discursive or the more emotional level. The replication of images created a binding force and emphasized the shared, common past and identities of the dispersed groups.

The picture of Çatalhöyük in people's minds, however, was not fixed and static but changed over time, being connected to the minds of the interpretants and their temporality. Once the generations that remembered Çatalhöyük had passed away, images

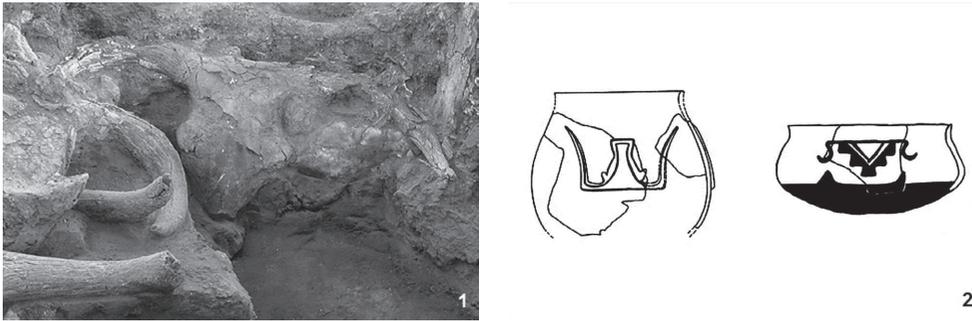


Figure 4.2 The bucranium in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic: (1) cattle horn installation, Building 52 Çatalhöyük East (Photo by Jason Quinlan, Çatalhöyük Research Project); (2) vessels from Hacilar (after Schoop 2005: figs. 69/6, 71/14).

took a life of their own, although they were replicated and most probably invested in different kinds of new meanings. In other words, the status of the image is not fixed, but dynamic: meanings can shift, as the interpretants shift. It is reasonable to assume that the meanings of replicas (sinsigns) fade away, as they continually move away from the original (legisign), becoming a replica of a replica and so on. This loss of meaning results in cliché.

The use of old images in a different context is another factor that can lead to the loss of explicit meanings. By taking the images away from their context, their original meaning was gradually lost. A striking example of this is the bucranium. In the Neolithic bucrania had some special significance, embedded in set of concepts and rituals, but in the Chalcolithic they almost lost their iconicity and resemblance to a bull's head, and became only an abstract ornament on pottery (Fig. 4.2).³

We might expect that other Chalcolithic images also increasingly departed from the Neolithic universe. In the course of the replication process, which should be regarded as constituting copying with pragmatic consequences, new identities of dispersed communities that we label 'Chalcolithic' were forged. Images are an inexhaustable resource that is open for further replication: it must be acknowledged that some Neolithic images survived into later periods, but this goes beyond the scope of this paper. However, the persistence of some of recurring images throughout the Neolithic and Chalcolithic attests to their unbroken power.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, Peircean semiotics offers a set of powerful concepts that should make it possible to look at the transformations of the Neolithic imagery in new ways. Images need not only be approached as pure symbols, which is a term that is often abused in archaeology. Symbols are just one type of sign, and other signs should not be ignored. Legisigns and sinsigns are valuable operative concepts, which can be employed to explain the reproduction of images (or different classes of objects in general). The concept of a replica and replication can provide a language for investigating the spread of images in space and time. Additionally, it acknowledges the dynamism of that

process: meaning differs according to different people and context, and as well as discourse comprises also emotions.

Peircean semiotics acknowledges the importance that imagery be understood as a practical part of reality, and not an abstract idea separate from daily life and practice. In archaeology, imagery is often treated as something immaterial, as a reflection of spiritual beliefs or artistic expression. However, 'images were not just looked at; they were elements in interactive relationships with their creators and users' (Aldhouse-Green 2004:240). Images have material life: they can be manipulated and used to manipulate people, to maintain identities, social orders, and ideologies; and they can trigger particular memories and emotions.

Material culture does not purely reflect society, but acts in society. This view of things as mediating social relations underpins semiotic archaeology. In a Peircean semiotic perspective, each simple and smallest act or object is important and embedded in a broader web in which everything is meaningful. In this case this means the imagery, which should not be excluded from this web.

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Notes

- 1 This paper is based on my PhD project, written under the supervision of Professor Arkadiusz Marciniak at the Institute of Prehistory, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. The departure point is the author's work at the Neolithic site of Çatalhöyük as a member of the Polish Team. The dissertation is a systematic investigation of the Neolithic and Chalcolithic imagery in the Lake District region.
- 2 This period roughly corresponds to the Halaf horizon in southeast Anatolia and northern Syria, marked by the sudden appearance of high-quality painted pottery. Nieuwenhuys (2007) termed this phenomenon the 'painted pottery revolution'.
- 3 Perhaps it was connected to the domestication of cattle in the late seventh millennium BCE. When in the EN the cattle was wild it was revered and held in esteem, but when it was domesticated it lost its symbolic significance.

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