

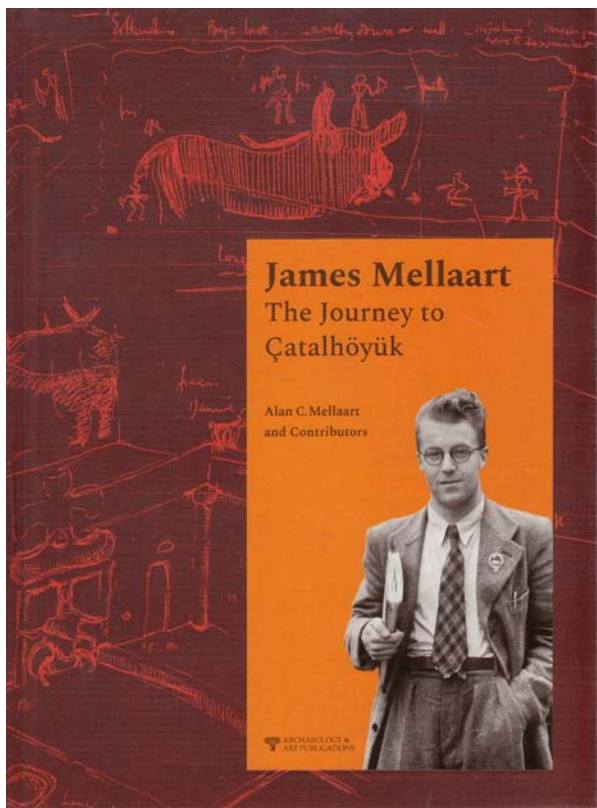
James Mellaart:

A review of a recent book, some personal memories, and archaeological deception

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62614/n0ay7179>

Abstract: Alan C. Mellaart's book about his father *James Mellaart: The Journey to Çatalhöyük* is reviewed. The memories of the author, who attended Mellaart's lectures at the Institute of Archaeology, London, are recounted and discussed in relation to the Dorak affair. The paper also includes the perspective of G.R.H. (Mick) Wright, who excavated with Mellaart in the 1950s. The discussion reflects on the context and consequences of the controversies surrounding Mellaart.



Alan C. Mellaart, *James Mellaart: The Journey to Çatalhöyük with contributions edited by Emma Baysal*, Istanbul: Nezih Basgelen Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, Archaeology and Art Publications, 2020, Hardback, 476pp, 239 illustrations (149 colour, 90 black and white), index, ISBN 978-6-0539-6523-7, USD 90.

Introduction

James Mellaart: The Journey to Çatalhöyük is a collaborative volume. About one quarter of the text is attributed directly to Alan Mellaart and he was clearly responsible for most of the illustrations, many of which were sourced from his father's collection. The remainder

of the text comes from many of James Mellaart's archaeological colleagues and Anatolian prehistorians, whose contributions were 'collated, edited and shaped' by Emma Baysal, Associate Professor of Prehistory at Ankara University (p. 12). The book is comparatively expensive and, at the time of writing, is only available by mail order, limiting its potential sales. Many people may, however, unknowingly view some of its content in Janina Ramirez's BBC documentary *Raiders of the Lost Past*, Series 2 Episode 3, which went to air in the UK in March 2021 and four months later in Australia.

The subject of the book is a remarkable archaeologist, James Mellaart (1925–2012), who was loved by many who knew him and loathed by some who did not. His legacy leaves many people confused; how can someone who 'crossed the line' as Janina Ramirez put it, be taken seriously? Yet he cannot be ignored because of the significant contribution he made to the archaeology of the Neolithic period in Anatolia and the Ancient Near East more generally. The dilemma of Mellaart's 'complicated' life is acknowledged in the first paragraph of the book (p. 9) setting up the challenge: is there an explanation for his behaviour and where does it leave archaeology?

From September 1974 to June 1977, I was a student at the Institute of Archaeology, University of London, (*the Institute* in this review article). While I was enrolled in Levantine and Mesopotamian Archaeology, I attended lectures on many other subjects, including Mellaart's two-year series Anatolian Archaeology in 1974/5 and 1976/7. My subject notes and personal memories of Mellaart reflect the respect with which he was held. I was not part of his inner circle and, although I was one of less than half a dozen students who regularly attended his class, I suspect he did not know my name. I still find it uncomfortable to refer to him as 'Jimmy,' as everyone else has done since the 1950s. Mellaart was absent from the Institute in 1975/6, during which time his wife's family home near Istanbul was destroyed by fire. The building is deemed significant for Mellaart by Alan Mellaart (p. 11), but it was not something that I was aware of at the time.

The Australian Institute of Archaeology (the AIA in this review article) has been often deemed to be interested only in biblically-related archaeology and the acquisition of antiquities. However, between 1961 and 1965 it contributed nearly half of its excavation budget to Mellaart's excavations at Çatalhöyük. It has received little recognition for this commitment, and it obtained no objects from the site or reports about it.

A further connection with the Mellaart legacy was made when the AIA received the papers belonging to G.R.H. (Mick) Wright (1924–2014). Wright excavated with Mellaart in the 1950s. Included in his papers was a handwritten note that gives Wright's explanation for the Dorak affair based on his recollections of Mellaart. This is quoted and discussed below.

James Mellaart: *The Journey to Çatalhöyük*

The book begins with a description of Mellaart's life by Alan Mellaart (pp. 17–102). This includes a family history tracing Mellaart's activities, domestic matters, and friendships. Alan draws on his own memories, including stories told by his father, and he quotes biographical material written by his father and some family friends. The Dorak affair, for example, is described in a passage written by Mellaart himself (pp. 60–2). Much of this information was unknown to me and, I suspect, to most other students at the Institute in the 1970s.

The volume describes Mellaart's early family life. He was born in 1925 in London to Dutch citizens, Jacob Herman Jan (Jaap) Mellaart, an art dealer, and Appolonia Dingena (Van der Beek), known as Linn. After the 1929 stock-market crash, the family returned to Holland: first to Amsterdam, then to other places, and finally to a castle near Maastricht, where they lived during the War. Linn died in 1933, and thereafter James was brought up by a nanny, whom his father married. His great-aunt on his father's side, Nelly Mctaggart, alerted James to the family's possible Scottish heritage, prompting him to purchase a McDonald kilt. Mellaart was proud of this tenuous ancestry and was later sometimes to be seen ostentatiously bustling around London in the kilt.

Mellaart studied European languages, including ancient Greek and Latin, at the gymnasium in the Hague finishing in 1944. There he developed an interest in geology and contemplated a career as a geologist. To evade his call-up for German labour service he went 'underground' at the Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, in a position arranged by his father, where he gained a grounding in Egyptology and Hieroglyphs (pp. 41–52). After Liberation he read Egyptology and Near Eastern History at the University College London (1947–1951). During this time, he frequented the Institute, then in Regent's Park. The text only refers to his contact with Kathleen Kenyon (later Dame) and his participation in her excavations at Sutton Walls and Jericho, where he is said to have learnt his field skills (p. 56). This aspect of the book lacks the detail that

historians of archaeology would appreciate. Mellaart also dug at Myrtou Pigadhes, Cyprus, with Joan du Plat Taylor, and at numerous other excavations, and must have been influenced by the various digging, recording techniques and theoretical perspectives he encountered.

A quote from Mellaart's half-brother (p. 55) describes Mellaart explaining dendrochronology to him. This would indicate that he may have also attended Institute lectures by Professors Frederick Zeuner and V. Gordon Childe, the contents of which are known from notes taken by a contemporary of Mellaart, George Dixon (Davey 2016). Childe, who was an Australian and at the time was the Director of the Institute, taught in Prehistory and in 1947 had worked with John Garstang at the Neolithic site of Mersin in southern Turkey (Garstang 1953: 4). The book's silence on the origins of Mellaart's understanding of the Neolithic period may imply that Mellaart did not often talk about these scholars, possibly because they were not known to many of his friends and family. It is a significant omission from the book and leaves one wondering if Mellaart's 'casual' introduction to prehistoric archaeology may have influenced his later behaviour.

Mellaart's archaeological field experience from 1951 until the end of his excavations at Çatalhöyük in 1965, is dealt with in more detail with the inclusion of his own biographical notes (pp. 57–68). Çatalhöyük became significant as a primary source of archaeological data for the Neolithic period, and will always be associated with Mellaart's name. However, the controversy associated with the publication of the Dorak 'treasure' in 1959 and questions about the flow of objects from Hacilar and Çatalhöyük on to the antiquities market, led the Turkish Department of Antiquities to withhold approval for him to excavate Çatalhöyük from 1964. Permission was given for the excavation to proceed in 1965 under the direction of Oliver Gurney, with Mellaart as Assistant Director. That was the last time Mellaart excavated in Turkey and his excavations of Çatalhöyük remained unpublished, except in popular form. In 1964 Mellaart became a lecturer in Anatolian Archaeology at the Institute, a position he held until his retirement in 1991.

The next sixty-five pages (pp. 123–188) are devoted to Arlette, Mellaart's wife, and her background. Mellaart met Arlette Coppelovici (1924–2013) in 1952 when he lectured for Professor Kurt Bittel at the University of Istanbul and participated in Bittel's excavation at Fikirtepe where she was a student and excavator. They married in 1954. Alan Mellaart describes how his mother's organisational skills complemented his father's administrative shortcomings (p. 117). Both were committed field archaeologists. Arlette's Turkish relations meant that Mellaart spent much time in Turkey with her.

Arlette's mother, Marie Ulviye Rosenthal, had Jewish heritage and was an accomplished classical pianist and artist. In 1939, she divorced Arlette's father, Beno, and married Kadri Cenani, a sophisticated Turkish gentleman



Figure 2: Myrtou Pigadhes 1951, Team photo, front row from the left, James Mellaart, Hector Catling, Lord William Taylour, Joan du Plat Taylor; Veronica Seton Williams, Linda Melton (Benson), Second row, Elizabeth Catling and the host and hostesses, Photographer: Basil Hennessy, Absent: Margaret Munn-Rankin, John Waechter and Mick Wright. Photo: courtesy of Linda Hennessy from the archives of Basil Hennessy.

whose family had been senior officials in the Ottoman Empire. There are chapters on Safvet Pasha, an ancestor of Kadri Cenani, and Kadri Bey himself, but nothing further about Arlette's biological parents. Alan Mellaart (1955–) has lived much of his life in Turkey, and this may help to explain this focus of the book.

Arlette pens a chapter (pp. 123–42) reflecting on her life in her stepfather's family home where her mother lived, Safvet Paşa Yalısı, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus near Istanbul. It was large enough for Mellaart and Arlette to base themselves there when in Turkey, and to be part of the relaxed social life that it supported. The Yalı (a waterfront house) was destroyed by fire in 1976 together with many of Mellaart's excavation records. Thereafter, Mellaart and Arlette spent much of their summers in London.

The second part of the book focusses on Mellaart's archaeological activity, and begins with a chapter written by Mehmet Özdoğan, Emeritus Professor of Prehistory, University of Istanbul (1994–2010). Drawing on a nine-page bibliography he traces the development of Neolithic archaeology in the Near East and Europe and assesses Mellaart's contribution to it. For archaeologists, this chapter is the core of the book (pp. 189–240).

During the 1950s Mellaart excavated on Cyprus, in Palestine and in Turkey. While he was the Assistant Director of the British Institute of Archaeology in Ankara (BIAA) he undertook several surveys in Turkey,

discovering many potential Neolithic sites. Özdoğan considers Mellaart's early 1950s field surveys to be an innovation in Turkey and expresses some astonishment (p. 212) that the dates Mellaart and his colleague, David French, then assigned to their discoveries compare favourably with those currently accepted. These surveys led to the excavations at Bronze Age Beycesultan, and Hacilar and Çatalhöyük where there was a vibrant Neolithic culture in Anatolia. As a result of this work, Özdoğan argues that Mellaart joined the 'greats' of prehistoric archaeology, even though he did not advance theories and instead relied on interpretations of tangible evidence (pp. 190, 208).

Özdoğan offers assessments of Mellaart's controversies: the *kilim* picture reconstructions of Çatalhöyük, the Painted Pebbles, the Dorak 'treasure', and the Luvian inscription of Afyonkarahisar Beyköy. He notes that the *kilim* pictures were published in support of a non-academic debate with J. Powell about the origins of *kilims*. They were products of his memory, not the records that were lost in the 1976 fire. Özdoğan's explanation for the painted pebbles is less convincing. 'It is more correct to think of this not as fakery but as an indication of the somewhat complex integration of Mellaart's emotional and intellectual world with subjects relating to culture history' (p. 215).

The Dorak affair, according to Özdoğan, was not related to 'the antiquities trade, smuggling or collecting'.

It comprised drawings of artefacts that combine Mesopotamian and Egyptian cultures as antecedents to Troy and artefacts that should never, as Professor Machteld Mellink stated, be mentioned in scholarly publications (p. 218). Suggestions as to why Mellaart prepared such imaginary constructs and published them are left to other authors to discuss later in the volume.

The Luvian inscription is more straightforward. In June 2017 Eberhard Zangger, a business consultant with an interest in Luvian studies, received unpublished documents including a drawing of a Luvian inscription from Alan Mellaart who was sorting out his father's papers. Without checking the possible origins of the drawing and the meaning of the text, Zangger went ahead and published it as the 'lost' 1878 Beyköy inscription. When Luvian experts deemed the inscription a work of imagination, Zangger turned on Mellaart accusing him of fraud, which in Özdoğan's view was 'pitiful' (p. 219). One of my Hebrew teachers at Cambridge used to practise calligraphy by writing humorous texts in classical Hebrew. No-one thought it anything more than a clever amusement. Özdoğan quotes Donald Easton, an Anatolian scholar, a fellow-contributor to the book, and a student and colleague of Mellaart, that he did indeed have similar pastimes.

The next chapter (pp. 241-70) comprises extracts from Seton Lloyd's autobiography, *The Interval: A Life in Near Eastern Archaeology* (1986). Seton Lloyd (1902–1996) was Director of the BIAA during the 1950s and was associated with Mellaart's Anatolian expeditions. He was also Professor of Western Asiatic Archaeology at the Institute when Mellaart secured a teaching position there. He was a senior British archaeologist and his assessment of Mellaart as promising 'to become the most brilliant field archaeologist in our circle' cannot be ignored (p. 267). Even so, it is clear from his comments that there were other British archaeologists who did not like Mellaart. Lloyd makes a significant comment that in his view the Dorak publication became a catalyst for raising funds for the excavation of Hacilar, which was not financed by the BIAA (p. 268).

David Stronach (1931–2020) was Emeritus Professor in Near Eastern Archaeology at the University of California, Berkeley, worked with Mellaart at Beycesultan and Hacilar, and accompanied him on some of his 1950s field surveys. Mellaart never learned to drive, so his extensive surveys were carried out using local transport and walking. Stronach's description of Mellaart's surveying practices is fascinating as it tells of his incredible stamina and significant powers of observation (pp. 271-76).

Maxime N. Bрами (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Palaeogenetics Group) provides a scholarly review of the Hacilar excavation (pp. 277-92). He confirms that Gordon Childe was open to the possibility of Neolithic activity on the Anatolian plateau, which the rest of the scholarly world, including Seton Lloyd,

thought was a 'backwater' at that time. 'Hacılar provided a bridge between Southwest Asian and European Neolithic traditions' (p. 281). The site was one of the first in Turkey to be dated with radiocarbon technology, but its occupation was not a continuous sequence; and this led Mellaart to seek another site: Çatalhöyük.

Professor Refik Duru, head of the Protohistory and Near Eastern Archaeology Department, Istanbul University (1978–1999), also discusses the archaeology of Hacilar and reflects on his experience excavating with Mellaart at Çatalhöyük (pp. 293–302). The Hacilar villagers became quite knowledgeable and, after Mellaart's work was concluded, they began digging for objects to sell on the antiquities market until they discovered that making replicas-fakes was less work and more lucrative. Although Mellaart had no part in this, it was one of the reasons why he was later denied excavation permits by Turkish authorities. Duru has published a more comprehensive assessment of the significance of Hacilar (2010). There are three contributions discussing Hacilar referencing many scholarly papers but not a paper by E. Rosenstock (2010) who reorders the stratigraphic sequence at Hacilar. Her arguments are complex and there may not have been space available to adequately discuss them.

There is a series of Çatalhöyük excavation recollections by Ian Todd, Grace Huxtable, Emma Baysal, Peder Mortensen and John Ingham, that conclude with an evaluation of Mellaart's work at Çatalhöyük (pp. 303–412). Reminiscences from the excavations often allude to the laborious work of cleaning mudbrick supported wall-paintings.

Huxtable mentions illustrations she prepared for 'Australia'. The AIA was one of the key sources of funds for the Çatalhöyük excavation, and it was corresponding with Mellaart at the time; but there is no reference to illustrations in the letters, and no record of any illustrations being received. Ingham comments that the 1965 season was difficult for Mellaart because he was using a significant number of workers from Hacilar, whom he had trained. When they were accused of antiquities smuggling from Hacilar, their ongoing relationship with Mellaart led the Turkish media to implicate him in their activities (p. 410).

This section of the book displays numerous pages from field books. Initially, Mellaart followed the Kenyon system of using a 'science notebook' (alternate line and graph/blank pages) and he used biro; but unlike Kenyon, rather than writing pages of notes, Mellaart annotated sketches, of which there are many (pp. 231-39). There are almost no dimensions, but his writing is more legible than Kenyon's. Seton Lloyd's notebooks for Beycesultan and Mellaart's for Çatalhöyük follow, and are worth reading. For example, the first season at Çatalhöyük in 1961 is recorded to have begun excavation on 17 May, and on 19 May he wrote, 'found wall paintings 20cm below the surface' (p. 373). These were the world's first

wall paintings from the Neolithic period. Mudbrick-based, multi-layered wall paintings present one of the most challenging excavation situations for archaeologists; they were the most time-consuming aspect of the Çatalhöyük excavations.

The evaluation of Mellaart and Çatalhöyük by Ian Hodder is another crucial contribution for archaeologists (pp. 413-30). Hodder's excavation at Çatalhöyük began in 1993 with Mellaart's blessing and contrasted starkly with the earlier excavations in scale, technology, duration, funding, and publication. Although Hodder states that 'the new findings have by and large corroborated Mellaart's claims of the 1960s' (p. 415), readers may conclude that the last twenty-five years of excavation have left little of Mellaart's interpretations:

- the original thirteen strata have given way to continuous phasing with local gaps in occupation;
- many houses were accessed from the roof, but others opened on to courtyards;
- 'streets' are no longer evident;
- some dwellings were two-storey;
- the distinction between 'house' and 'shrine' is less clear, as are gender differentiations,
- rather than hierarchical, Çatalhöyük seems to be egalitarian;
- burials in houses were sometimes articulated, although vulture pecking of corpses is still under consideration; and
- Mellaart's emphasis on the mother goddess seems to have been misplaced.

New techniques have led to conclusions that Çatalhöyük was dependent on sheep, not cattle; new forms of wheat have been identified; obsidian came from Göllü Dağ and Nenezi Dağ, not Hasan Dağ.

Hodder describes how Mellaart did not dispute the changes in interpretation and 'was always keen to know the latest discoveries' (p. 428). This should not be a surprise. For Mellaart, Çatalhöyük was work in progress, his excavations were unfinished and to keep the interest of the potential donors he continued to propose 'enthusiastic' interpretations. This is not an environment that many tenured academics today with institutional excavation funding would understand or appreciate. Hodder concludes, 'given the circumstances, what is remarkable is that he got so much right' (p. 428). Later in the book (pp. 451-54), Hodder records his memories of Mellaart's lectures in the 1960s, and the Çatalhöyük 'handover' when he sought Mellaart's blessing for his own excavations at the site.

There is a section devoted to the Dorak affair (pp. 431-44). The circumstances are described with excerpts from Seton Lloyd's autobiography (1986: 163-4) and

Kenneth Pearson and Patricia Connor's investigation (1967: 34-7). Stronach was present at the BIAA in 1958 when Mellaart announced the Dorak 'finds' and has not previously written about his memories (p. 437). David Stronach discusses the various explanations. He doubts the traditional reasons for the affair, and instead suggests that Mellaart 'created' the Dorak 'treasure' in the wake of the Beycesultan excavation's lack of significant Anatolian Early Bronze Age material. He concludes,

In my own estimation, then, Jimmy appears to have been aiming to insert a 'corrective' body of evidence into the existing archaeological record for no other purpose than to restore a proper appreciation of the significance of west Anatolian culture in the Early Bronze Age (p. 442).

Stronach's comments suggest that Mellaart's original intention was to influence scholarly attitudes, not popular opinion. He also warns that 'the 1959 Dorak article represents a precedent for the appearance of certain further contributions of a speculative nature within the bounds of his total output' (p. 443); that is, all of Mellaart's work must be treated with suspicion. This contribution by Stronach is the most convincing and best-informed comment about the Dorak affair to date.

Donald Easton, who was a fellow student with me in the 1970s at the Institute, describes Mellaart's presence there (pp. 445-50). Easton brought to my mind the fact that we never sat in the front row of Mellaart's classes as he tended to lecture directly to anyone who sat there. He recalls how, on one Monday, Mellaart presented the Dorak 'treasure' drawings in class. He recalls a 'fat file' with 'all types of paper,' which I do not remember, but he is right to say we were all 'curious' as to the 'authenticity' of the illustrations (p. 447). As a draughtsman, I was looking for drawings and rubbings that had been made directly from the objects, but instead we were shown the final drawings, many in ink and some with water-colour, on which the *Illustrated London News (ILN)* publication was based. My recollections of this lecture are discussed further below.

John Carswell, Professorial Research Associate, School of Oriental and African Studies, who excavated with Mellaart in the 1950s at Jericho and Beycesultan, pens a tribute to Mellaart (pp. 455-60). He has some interesting memories from both excavations. He also refers to a manuscript of the Dorak 'treasure', which has been kept secure at the BIAA. He says of it,

The few people who have seen it were astonished by the depth and detail of his record, which went way beyond the imagination of any scholar (p. 458).

Finally, Trevor Watkins, Emeritus Professor of Near Eastern Prehistory, University of Edinburgh, provides a tribute that was previously published at <http://journal.antiquity.ac.uk/tributes/mellaart/> (pp. 461-67).

THE ROYAL TREASURE OF DORAK—A FIRST AND EXCLUSIVE REPORT OF A CLANDESTINE EXCAVATION WHICH LED TO THE MOST IMPORTANT DISCOVERY SINCE THE ROYAL TOMBS OF UR.

By JAMES MELLAART, Assistant Director, The British Institute of Archaeology, Ankara.

Owing to the circumstances of this discovery, no photographs whatever are yet available and all our illustrations, both black-and-white and coloured, are from meticulous scale drawings made by Mr. Mellaart and they are now published for the first time anywhere in the world. It is emphasised that the colouring is not representational, but is designed to show the materials of which this unbelievably rich treasure was made. The site of the discovery was on an estate somewhat inland from the southern shore of the Sea of Marmora, that landlocked sea which lies between the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, between, that is, Troy and Byzantium.

A RICH collection of objects derived from an unpublished excavation of two Royal Tombs of the Yortan culture, undertaken at about the time of the Turco-Greek war, was rediscovered some years ago by the writer in private possession in Izmir. We are much obliged to the present owner for her permission to publish coloured reproductions of the objects and for the information from what remains of the original excavation records and from notes and old photographs, which has enabled us to reconstruct the approximate tomb lay-out.

A small cemetery consisting of two Royal cist graves and two *pitios* burials of servants was found high up on a hill slope near the village of Dorak, on the southern shore of Lake Apolyton (Vilayet of Bursa) in North-West Turkey, near the Sea of Marmora. A close investigation at the time showed that no other tombs were present in the immediate neighbourhood, and it appears, then, that this site was only used for the burial of a king in Tomb I, a king and queen in Tomb II and two servants of the Royal couple. The *pitios*-graves of the commoners are similar to those found at Yortan, Babaköy and Bayindir (the best-known cemeteries of the Yortan culture), and the pottery found in the two Royal Tombs is again of Yortan type. No other Royal Tombs are known in Western Anatolia and the present find is therefore of unique importance.

Tomb I, the smaller of the two, measured 6 ft. 1 in. (1.8 m.) x 2 ft. 8½ ins. (0.83 m.) and contained the body of an adult male stretched out on his back with his head to the east and feet to the west. He lay on a badly preserved woollen *kilim* (or woven rug), which did not survive the opening of the tomb (Fig. 13).

Around the king's body were placed his funerary gifts: ceremonial arms, weapons, drinking vessels in precious metals, pottery and stone vessels, which may have contained food, and most important of all, a piece of furniture, probably dismantled before being deposited in the tomb. The position of these objects, as far as still could be ascertained from the faded photographs, was reconstructed in a plan of the tomb.

On the king's right side lay a splendid sceptre with a pear-shaped fluted head of light-green stone and a diagonally fluted ivory handle with gold-capped ends, two black obsidian beakers, one smooth polished, the other vertically fluted, a vertically fluted *depas* (two-handed drinking cup) of gold (Fig. 14), and a one-handed cup with *repoussé* design.

Near his right hand lay a dagger (11½ ins. in length) with a carnelian pommel, silver blade and hilt covered with embossed gold sheet. Between the king and the south wall of the tomb lay a group of weapons: a lance with silver head and chased midrib, the long decayed wooden shaft being encased in alternate ribbed gold and plain silver tubular pieces of casing, a bronze (or

copper) battle-axe of shaft-hole type, with plain gold-encased wooden handle, a flat axe of the same material and a pile of nine swords and daggers. (Coloured drawings of five of these splendid weapons are shown in our third colour page as Figs. 15, 18a, 18b, 20 and 21. Of the remainder the most interesting is a bronze dagger with a hilt consisting of two plaques of *meerschbaum*, a material found only near Eskisehir, about 100 miles east of Dorak.)

Stone bowls, cups and goblets of white marble, pink-veined white marble, or light-green stone, and black or brown burnished pottery vessels of Yortan type were placed in the four corners of the tomb. The largest pottery vessel contained the crushed remains of a silver bird-vase with a gold spout and gold ribbing, indicating the bird's plumage. The two rivets on the cut-away spout have heads of lapis lazuli set in gold granulation. Vessels of this type are extremely common in Yortan pottery, and it is now clear that their prototypes were metal vessels.

The most remarkable object, however, in the tomb was a wooden chair or throne, probably dismantled when put in the tomb and unfortunately not restorable. It was plated with thick sheet gold; one of the surviving casings of the legs shows that it had animal feet. Strips of sheet gold bear in embossed Egyptian hieroglyphs the name and titles of the second king of the Fifth Dynasty, Sahure (2487-2473 B.C.) (Fig. 1). This piece of Egyptian furniture undoubtedly represents a Royal gift, and is the first piece of evidence of contact between the seafaring population of North-West Anatolia and Egypt of Third Millennium and also give, as it were, a written date for the tomb.



FIG. 1. EVIDENCE WHICH SECURELY DATES THE ROYAL TOMBS OF DORAK TO THE THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C.

These drawings are careful scale transcripts from fragments of gold sheet which originally adorned a wooden throne in the single tomb. They show the *cartouche* of the Pharaoh Sahure (2487-2473 B.C.) and indicate that the throne must have been a Royal gift, provide the first piece of evidence of contact between the seafaring population of North-West Anatolia and Egypt of Third Millennium and also give, as it were, a written date for the tomb.

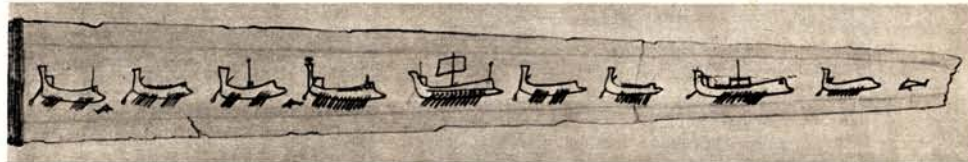


FIG. 2. CERTAINLY THE EARLIEST DETAILED REPRESENTATION OF OCEAN-GOING SHIPS YET KNOWN OUTSIDE EGYPT: A CLOSE-UP OF THE ENGRAVING ON THE BLADE OF THE SILVER SWORD OF STATE FROM THE SINGLE TOMB.

The silver-bladed sword from which this detail is taken is illustrated on the third colour page and appears as Fig. 18B. Nothing like as early a picture of ships as this has ever been discovered in Asia or, in fact, anywhere else but in Egypt; and indeed it is in vessels like these that we can imagine the legendary Argonauts sailing through the Sea of Marmora, past Dorak, on their way to Colchis.

importance for dating the tomb to c. 2500 B.C. or a little later.

The second and larger tomb, measuring 10 ft. 2 ins. x 6 ft. 6½ ins. (3.10 x 2 m.), contained two burials: a king in the southern half of the tomb and his queen in the northern half, each accompanied by funerary gifts. Both burials were flexed, with their heads oriented towards the east. Both lay on their right side facing the lake. At the king's feet lay the skeleton of a dog, lovingly provided with its own stone bowl. Both burials lay on mats which covered the floor of the tomb, and in the case of the queen, remains of tombs were around and below the skeleton when the tomb was opened, but these have not survived.

THE KING'S GRAVE GOODS fall into the same categories as those found in the other tomb, and are on the same lavish scale, but the queen is provided with jewellery and toilet articles, objects naturally not occurring among the paraphernalia which accompanied the king's. The king was provided with a sceptre, the spherical head of which was made of pink-veined white marble. Its wooden handle was cased in gold sheet, ribbed and ornamented with gold granulation (Fig. 12). Near it in front of the king lay a drinking cup of gold with a spirally-fluted body and granulated patterns on the neck (Fig. 9). (Under, beside and behind the king's body lay some eleven swords and daggers; and nine of these are illustrated on the third colour page as Figs. 16, 17, 18c, 18d, 18e and 19.)

A silver lance-head, like that in Tomb I, lay along the south wall of the tomb, its shaft decorated with alternate gold and silver tubular casings. Behind the king's head there lay four ceremonial battle-axes like those found at Troy (Fig. 11). Other vessels of precious metal buried with the king included a gold jug with cut-away spout and embossed decoration (Fig. 10) and a small silver, half-corroded, two-handed *depas* (Fig. 9), with horizontal ribbing. Two silver pins with double spiral heads were found near the king's shoulder. A shallow white marble bowl and four burnished pots of Yortan type, one of them a bird vase, lay in the corners of the tomb nearest to the king.

THE QUEEN'S FUNERARY OFFERINGS: In the north-western corner, in the queen's half of the tomb, there stood two wooden tables or trays supporting several pottery vessels, one of which contained a necklace of about twenty gold beads in the form of double-spirals, such as have been found at Ur, Troy, Poliochni and Brak. Near the neck of the skeleton were found other necklaces, consisting of carnelian, rock-crystal and gold beads, or of white marble and gold, or striped onyx, or of gold-capped obsidian, and of rock-crystal beads. Below the queen's hips strips of silver and gold sheet were found, with holes along the edges for sewing on to garments, no longer preserved. Around the skull and partly slipped off, lay a badly corroded silver diadem with pendants, and behind the head were found four elaborate ear-pendants of Trojan type, made of silver. Around the wrist were found two silver bracelets (Fig. 6), one piped with gold decorated with silver, and gold double-spirals and rosettes. Near them was found a bracelet made of silver wire with electrum rosettes and a gold bracelet, made of five wire loops, the outer ones plain, the inner ones twisted. In front of the queen lay a small sceptre with a peculiar knobbed amber head and silver-cased wooden handle (Fig. 12), decorated like the king's sceptre, but in a bad state of preservation.

The metal vessels and toilet articles all lay either in front of the queen against the north wall or in the north-eastern corner of the tomb. The metal vessels are all of small size, and consist of two small silver bowls, a small reddish gold cup, a small high-handled silver cup, an electrum beaker of Trojan type (Fig. 9), a silver-fluted juglet (Fig. 9), and a fluted miniature bird vase with granulation on neck and handle of characteristic Yortan type.

A set of stone vessels included a small ointment vessel of white marble, inlaid with small pieces of obsidian and lapis lazuli. It had a gold lid with a granulated handle and stood on a small pedestal made separately in pink-veined white marble. The type is familiar in Yortan pottery. The same

applies to a pedestal bowl in white marble, inlaid along the rim with black obsidian triangles. This contained a mass of silver pins of about a dozen types. A small white marble jar with lid is likewise inlaid with obsidian and lapis lazuli, and the small carinated saucer in a yellow-veined green stone has a strong Egyptian look.

A small toilet set in silver included three silver tubes with caps, decorated with ribs and hatched designs. They are said to have been found filled with a red, green and black substance, of which nothing now remains. This is reminiscent of the Ancient Egyptian use of rouge and black (*kohl*) and green eye-paint. With it were found a spatula, a toilet spoon and a pair of tweezers, all in silver, and fragments of a corroded silver mirror. The finest object deposited with the queen was, however, an ivory comb, worn in the hair, with a centre roundel framed by an open-work band, depicting two finely-carved wild goats or ibexes and two dolphins, the whole picked out in red and blue colour, and provided with a gold edge, carved rosettes and a carnelian rivet head surrounded by gold granulation.

With the exception of the piece of furniture from the Egyptian Old Kingdom none of the objects appear to be of foreign make, and the excellence of local craftsmen working for the ruler's court is nowhere more clearly shown than in a group of five statuettes, said to have been found in these tombs. (See colour page opposite.)

Illustrations from colour photographs of the original drawings, by courtesy of Thames and Hudson, from their forthcoming publication "Founders of Civilization."

Figure 3: The Illustrated London News publication of the fake 'Treasure of Dorak', 28 November 1959: 754. Image: from Australian Institute of Archaeology Archive, courtesy Illustrated London News Group.

GOLD, SILVER, LAPIS AND OBSIDIAN IN THE SPLENDID SWORDS OF THE KINGS.

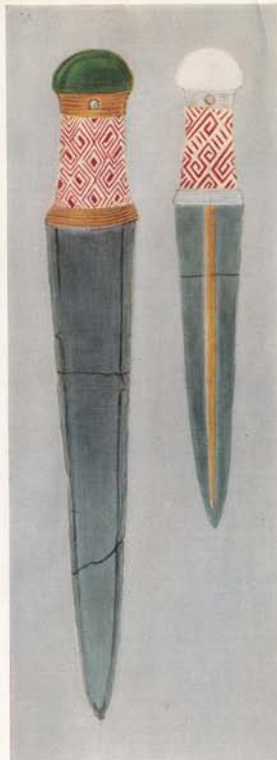


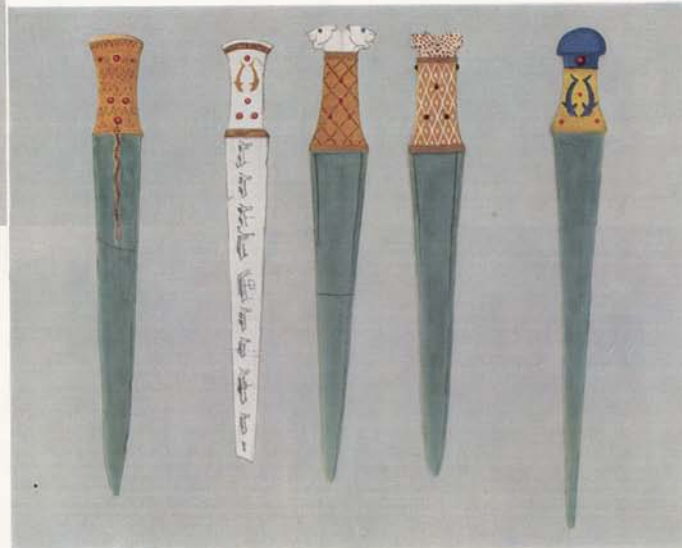
FIG. 15. A SWORD (18 INS.) AND DAGGER (12 INS.) IN BRONZE—A PAIR. The hilts are ivory with red-filled meander patterns, the pommels respectively greenstone and rock crystal.



FIGS. 16A-E. A GROUP OF DAGGERS ALL FROM THE DOUBLE TOMB EXCEPT 16E (11 INS. LONG). 16B is bronze, with a blue-stained ivory hilt covered with gold sheet and rock crystal pommel. 16C-D gives two views of a silver dagger with silver spirals on a red-stained hilt and amber pommel. 16A, a bronze dagger with a limestone pommel, has a wooden hilt sheathed in gold between silver bands and a lapis rivet.



FIG. 17. A SPLENDID BRONZE DAGGER (NEARLY 14 INS. LONG). The hilt is ivory, with carnelian studs and four gold double-spirals in the form of a cross.



FIGS. 18A-E. A GROUP OF SWORDS FROM BOTH TOMBS. 18A, bronze with a gold snake on the midrib, hilt gold with carnelian rivets; 18B, silver engraved with ships (see Fig. 2), hilt silver with gold dolphins; 18C, bronze, rock crystal lions with lapis eyes; 18D (a reconstruction) bronze, ivory leopard heads with red inlay, obsidian rivets; 18E, bronze with lapis pommel, and lapis dolphins on a gold hilt.

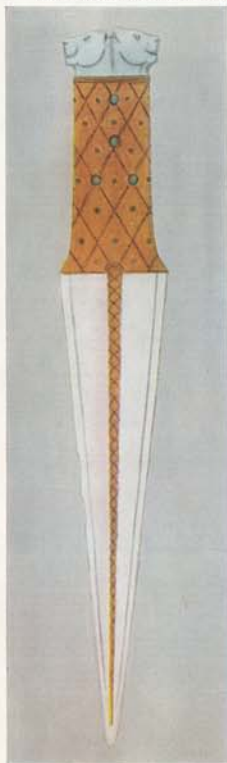


FIG. 19. A FINE SILVER DAGGER WITH A GOLD MIDRIB. THE LION'S-HEAD POMMEL IS OF A PALE BLUE STONE AND NEPHRITE RIVETS PICK OUT A GOLD SHEET AND GRANULATION HILT.



Continued. case of the obsidian-hilted sword, of iron—which is fantastic when we bear in mind the third millennium B.C. date of the tombs. All of the weapons are of great beauty and richness; but outstanding among them are the silver sword with its frieze of ocean-going ships; the iron sword—its hilt carved from, of all difficult materials, obsidian; and the magnificent bronze sword with the lapis pommel and the pair of lapis dolphins, sporting on a gold ground between carnelian studs. Fig. 17 is especially curious, with its arrangement of double spirals giving it a quite obviously fallacious Christian look.

(Left and right.) FIGS. 20 AND 21. THIS SPLENDID IRON SWORD (ABOUT 2½ FT. LONG) WAS IN A BAD STATE OF PRESERVATION, BUT ITS GLORY IS THE HILT, CARVED FROM A PIECE OF BLACK OBSIDIAN IN THE FORM OF TWO LEOPARDS AND INLAIN WITH GOLD AND AMBER SPOTS.

Figure 4: Some of the enhanced drawings of the fake Dorak Treasure (ILN, 28/11/1959: Supplement Plate III. Image: from Australian Institute of Archaeology Archive, courtesy Illustrated London News Group.



*Figure 5: Çatalhöyük excavations under the direction of Professor Ian Hodder.
Image: Scott Haddow 2017, used with permission.*

It gives a neat summary of Mellaart's life, personality, and contribution. The volume concludes with a list of Mellaart's publications and an index.

Alan Mellaart and Emily Baysal have compiled a significant tribute to James Mellaart. The standing of the contributors gives the volume authority, and their familiarity with Mellaart provides authenticity. Much of the volume is primary material. Missing is contextual information about archaeology in the 1950s, and a detailed description of the origins of Mellaart's archaeological technique and perspectives. Potentially, this may have offered some explanation for Mellaart's behaviour. Stronach provides some background; but when reading the volume today, few people will be able to read between the lines and appreciate the uncertainties and challenges faced by Mellaart and his colleagues. However, Stronach bluntly states that the motive for the Dorak affair was Mellaart's desire to deceive the scholarly world into thinking that Bronze Age western Anatolia was more significant than the archaeological data at the time would suggest. Further, he says that the Dorak 'treasure' may not be the only such deception. This book does not rehabilitate Mellaart, and it does not appear to set out to do so. Alan Mellaart is to be commended for preparing such an attractive and balanced volume.

Personal memories

I was a contemporary of Donald Easton at the Institute and attended Mellaart's two-year Anatolian Archaeology subject with him (1975-77). Another person in the small group was Turhan Kiamil, a Cypriot Turk from Famagusta. Donald and Turhan went on to undertake research supervised by Mellaart.

My lecture notes indicate that on 2 May 1977 in the last month of the subject, Mellaart came to the lecture in an agitated state. His credibility had been queried in the media, and he was at pains to 'put the record straight' in our eyes, at least. The objects in the Dorak 'treasure' had not been mentioned in the previous two years of lectures, but that was about to change. Mellaart had an armful of rolled up drawings, many on A1 size linen paper, of the objects purporting to be from tombs near Dorak that had previously been published in the *ILN* in 1959. As Easton describes (p. 447), we relocated to a table at the front to the room and passed the drawings around for examination. There were no primary pencil drawings that I, as a draughtsman, could identify to have been made from the objects themselves. My notes record no comment about the matter, but I remember that the lack of any original pencil drawings and rubbings left me feeling that no evidence of authenticity had been presented.

My notes list the object drawings we saw and Mellaart's comments. He described the circumstances of his inspection of the Dorak objects and said that at the time they deserved publication presumably by the BIAA, but it was 'not wanted'. This probably referred to the 60,000-word manuscript mentioned by John Carswell (p. 458) and prepared by Mellaart in 1959 (p. 62-3). Instead, Mellaart said, illustrations were 'cooked-up' for publication in the *ILN*. This may have been reference to Seton Lloyd's wife, Hydie, who prepared coloured illustrations for publication (p. 432), which were no doubt, the water-coloured drawings that we saw. Alternatively, he may have been referring to the published illustrations that were further enhanced by the *ILN*. Mellaart seemed to distance himself from the *ILN* publication, as he does to some extent in this book (p. 63).

A year earlier in 1976, at University College, London, a public lecture about archaeology and politics was given by Glyn Daniel, the recently appointed Disney Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge University. At one point Daniel digressed to express support for his respected colleague James Mellaart, whose integrity had been questioned in the media. The archaeological community appeared to be very supportive of Mellaart, he was a prolific author and a comparatively high-profile personality. The Dorak affair was not discussed by the students I knew in London before I left to return to Australia in mid-1977, although I suspect that those who were present at the 'Dorak' class had serious doubts about its authenticity. It was a situation we students lived with.

G.R.H. (Mick) Wright's comment on the Dorak affair

When Mellaart was the Assistant Director of the BIAA in the late 1950s, Mick Wright was the Architect-in-Residence. They had worked together in Cyprus at Myrtou Pigadhes in 1951, at Jericho in 1952, and later at Sultantepe and Beycesultan, and knew each other well. When researching Wright's life, I interviewed his colleagues, David Stronach and John Carswell (Davey 2013). Wright's archive held by the AIA has the following comment hand-written by him, and not completely legible, on the back of a computer print-out of *The Telegraph's* (UK) obituary of James Mellaart dated 5/08/2012.

The affair of the Dorak treasure was a straight-forward one. There never was a meeting with a girl who showed him antiquities and there never was any treasure from tombs near Dorak.

Jimmy had a very vivid imagination and was courageous or crack potted enough to perpetrate hoaxes deriving from it.

At a time in the late 50s he seemed to himself to be thwarted and without prospects in the archaeological world. Accordingly using his imagination he invented the story of the discovery of [...] antiquities and invented the objects

Jimmy's obituary
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There never was a meeting with a girl who showed him antiquities and there never was any treasure from tombs near Dorak
Jimmy had a very vivid imagination and was courageous or crack potted enough to perpetrate hoaxes deriving from it.
At a time in the late 50s he seemed to himself to be thwarted and without prospects in the archaeological world. Accordingly using his imagination he invented the story of the discovery of antiquities and invented the objects supposed to have been discovered. He could draw a bit and he was ...
If things had been a bit different he might have written a very good and successful novel like The Last Days of Pompeii in part an accurate and new history. Instead he gave freedom to his imaginings systematically [...] a whole collection of drawings of the imaginary objects which his scholarship suggested to him could have existed according to his archaeological learning.
It was a tour de force of imagination founded on scholarship. And it was very unwise that the director of British Archaeology permitted its publication.

Figure 6: Wright's hand written note.

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It was a tour de force of imagination founded on scholarship. And it was very unwise that the director of British Archaeology [BIAA] permitted its publication.

Wright's argument, that the invention of the Dorak 'treasure' stemmed from Mellaart's uncertain situation in 1958, has some context. His term as Assistant Director of the BIAA was coming to an end and he was unlikely to become the Director. He had identified sites to excavate but funding was unsure. While Stronach argued that Mellaart's actions were motivated purely by a concern for the importance of western Anatolian Bronze Age, the fact was that its lack of profile meant that scholars studying it also lacked public visibility. Mellaart needed a raised profile to secure funding, something that may also have been in Seton Lloyd's mind when he suggested the *Illustrated London News* publication.

Wright appears unaware of the precise role played by Seton Lloyd. Lloyd appears to have followed a common archaeological practice up to that time: to generate public interest and raise excavation funding, archaeologists sometimes made extravagant claims in popular publications and public lectures, about which their scholarly works were silent. In the US, this practice largely ceased after J.J. Finkelstein's savage review in the journal *Commentary* (1959) of Nelson Glueck's *Rivers in the Desert* (1959). A similar disdain for the practice developed in the United Kingdom after World War II.

Seton Lloyd later commented, 'With hindsight, however, in view of the totally unforeseeable consequences, one could wish that this step had not so rapidly been taken' (p. 432). In other words, if there had been a 'cooling off' period and efforts had been made to obtain more documentation and some photographs of the Dorak objects, the whole matter may have died. When in 1977 I excitedly passed my pot-bellows paper to Professor David Oates, Seton Lloyd's successor at the Institute, I was told 'put it away for six months'. It was disappointing but sound advice. One additional piece of evidence came to light during that time and the paper then proceeded to publication in an irrefutable form (Davey 1979; 2021). The lesson had been learnt.

Wright calls the Dorak 'treasure' a *tour de force of imagination founded on scholarship*; the object forms were convincing, as Carswell noted. Trevor Watkins draws attention to the progress of Early Bronze Age archaeology, pointing out that Mellaart's belief in the antiquity of the Anatolian Bronze Age has been borne out by recent publications of Troy II (p. 464). Mellaart's familiarity with Old Kingdom Egypt, Early Dynastic III Mesopotamia and the geography and chronology of Troy made his drawings credible to scholars. But Wright was correct to question the publication.

Discussion

Hodder did not confirm all of Mellaart's evidence at Çatalhöyük: he questions some of the conservation practices and he describes some of Mellaart's interpretations as 'over-enthusiastic' rather than deceitful (p. 424). The more recent excavations are being published

in over a dozen scholarly volumes so far, but public awareness, and much academic knowledge, of Çatalhöyük still derives from Mellaart's earlier, non-academic preliminary publications. There needs to be a balance between cautious scholarly monographs and eye-catching public presentations.

Readers of the *Illustrated London News* were accustomed to seeing images of genuine archaeological treasures and were justified to assume that the Dorak artefacts were real, especially when they read that this had the standing of the Royal Tombs of Ur and it was described with details such as the width of Tomb 1, '2 ft. 8½ in.' (Figure 3). It was not the place to publish the 'cooked up' Dorak drawings (Figure 4). As Wright suggested, Mellaart's manuscript on the Dorak 'treasure' may sit with historical novels such as *The Last Days of Pompeii*, or those by Lady Antonia Fraser and in Australia, Peter Carey's *The True History of the Kelly Gang* (2000), which bookshops correctly allocated to the fiction section. While it may be understood that authors such as these will offer speculative narratives to present historical perspectives, there is no literary genre that anticipates fabricated drawings of artefacts to expound a point of view, except as an April Fool's Day hoax. But this was never intended to be a light-hearted prank. Cinema, however, now commonly presents contrived scenes and fictional objects and characters to raise the interest level and to convey information and context, without arousing any public disquiet. Documentaries are another avenue for the publication of archaeological data, but most producers will not allow archaeological authorities to be present during filming. They do not want factual details and historical accuracy to spoil a good presentation and to prolong the costly schedule on location.

Archaeology has attracted many eccentric and controversial personalities who invariably attract the attention of the media. Reliable and rigorous interpretations of archaeological data are often ignored, while simplistic and tendentious ideas dominate popular opinion. Early in my archaeological training I was informed that 'archaeology is part of the entertainment industry'. While archaeology at that time was not sure of its theoretical foundation, the fact remains that it will always need to have an output that intrigues the public's imagination.

Most Australian academic archaeologists appear to be processualists and would recoil at the idea of entertainment. But for most of its short history, archaeology has had to raise funds for excavation by cultivating public interest. One archaeologist whom I remember always returned from the field with a new theory that overturned the previous season's conclusions. While other scholars were sceptical about his theories, the fact was that public interest was cultivated, he always had funds for the next season, and ultimately it was the well-researched hypotheses and conclusions offered in the final excavation report that have had lasting influence.

The past is generally remembered by way of narrative, but archaeological artefacts themselves rarely articulate a story. With careful excavation context can be established, and scientific analysis can provide information about an object's manufacture and use; however, without interpretation there can be no story. The narratives of Çatalhöyük deriving from Mellaart's imagination have captured public interest, in a way the Dorak never did, and they have in turn often structured the way new evidence from the site is assessed.

Mellaart did not have the opportunity to bring the excavation of Çatalhöyük to a close. As it has turned out, one of his students, Professor Ian Hodder, has proved to be the perfect successor. After twenty-five years of intensive work at the site, his well-resourced and well-qualified excavation team has been able to refine Mellaart's evidence and interpretations to reach more reliable conclusions. Hodder indicates that Mellaart retained a deep interest in the restarted excavations and did not publicly oppose the revised interpretations (p. 428). Mellaart refused to prepare final excavation reports based on his pre-1966 results because he knew more data was required; and for at least twenty years he needed to keep himself in contention to be the person to re-start the fieldwork. His 1970s and 1980s writings need to be viewed in that light: they were preliminary. Hodder achieved what Mellaart would have wanted for Çatalhöyük and has defused Stronach's warning at least where that site is concerned.

Popular reading about Çatalhöyük

There have been several popular books about Çatalhöyük and it is worth commenting on them in relation to Alan Mellaart's book. James Mellaart's *Çatal Hüyük: a neolithic town in Anatolia* (1967) is still a classic as it has photographs of what was originally uncovered by Mellaart's team. The interpretations in it need to be checked with later publications, especially Ian Hodder's *Çatalhöyük: The Leopard's Tale* (2006), which describes the findings from the first decade of his own 1993 – 2017 excavations.

Michael Balter's *The Goddess and the Bull* (2005) is a well-researched book that tells the story of Çatalhöyük from its discovery to the time of Hodder's first publications. Balter is a rare author who can accurately reflect his research while writing in a clear and entertaining manner. He also describes the development of archaeological principles of interpretation from culture-history to processual and post-processual in an engaging and clear fashion. Hodder was at the epicentre of some of these developments. Archaeological people, personalities and places pass through its pages with memorable descriptions. Anyone wanting to understand archaeology more generally will also find Balter's book helpful. Readers will come to appreciate the nature of archaeological fieldwork over the last sixty years, the development of archaeological theory and the dynamics of scientific archaeological research.

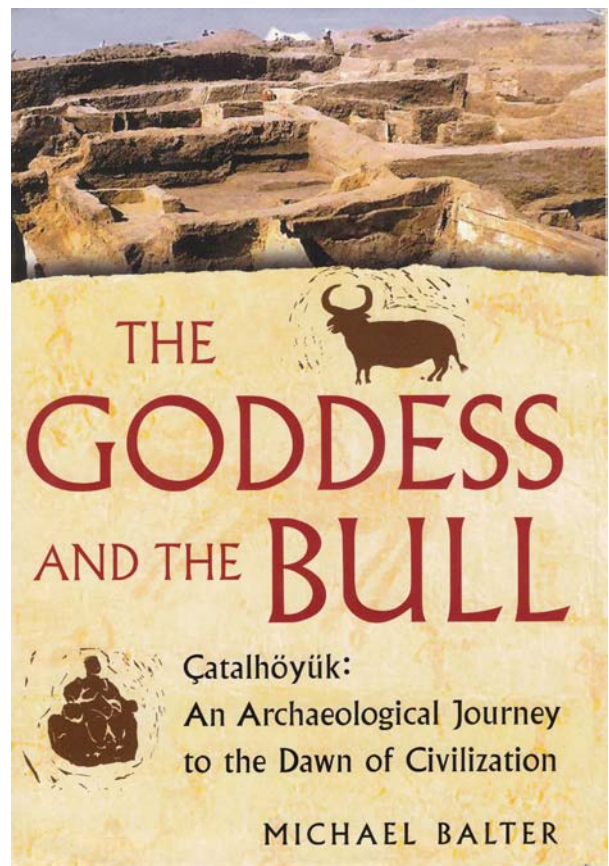


Figure 7: Cover of *The Goddess and the Bull*.

Concluding comments

Mellaart's 'creation' of evidence may shock some students of archaeology. He was operating in a world where peer review was limited: it was often handled 'in house' and there was only a small circle of scholars in any field of inquiry available to undertake reviews. A broad international system of review is the most effective way to assess the authenticity of evidence and the reliability of scholarship. Even now, archaeology in many countries, including Australia, is not always subject to external review raising the possibility of unreliable results and interpretations being published. A second level of scrutiny is for international archaeological teams to undertake excavation. However, many nations resist such activity often because they fear foreign influence in their political and cultural history. Australia is one country where there is limited external participation in archaeological excavation.

James Mellaart: The Journey to Çatalhöyük is a less than conclusive volume that does not address broad questions such as academic review. It does enable the reader to consider the character of one of archaeology's 'greats' and to ponder the dilemma faced by other archaeologists who suspected some of his practices. James Mellaart's life experiences, archaeological skills and contributions to the history of Anatolia are discussed, but the narrative of

his personal intellectual and archaeological journey and motivation is absent; ‘Jimmy’ remains an enigma. To what extent did he knowingly ‘crossed the line’ — whether, indeed, he knew there was a ‘line’ — we will never know.

Mellaart had a notorious dislike of Classical sites: ‘its all there, you just have to put it back together,’ he would say; he found no intellectual challenge in them. While Hacilar and Beycesultan were culturally limited, it was the architecture, decoration, and artefacts of Çatalhöyük that provided ample opportunity for his imagination, and many of us have been captivated by the cultural exploration that he embarked upon. It is yet to be seen if more recently discovered, potentially iconic Anatolian archaeological sites, such as Göbekli Tepe, can stimulate the public imagination in the way that Çatalhöyük has done. Therein is Jimmy’s legacy.

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Acknowledgements

The author is indebted to Professor Greg Horsley who oversaw this paper’s review, and to the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments. He also acknowledges Professor Ian Hodder for permission to use an image.

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