"Why so many horns?"

One of the most intriguing aspects of the Neolithic tell site of Çatalhöyük is the overwhelming preoccupation with horns and horn-like objects. These objects are both figural, manifesting in the construction of clay figurines, and literal, by way of deposits of bucrania and sheep and goat horn cores, boar tusks, and deer antler. Using data for the real and figural horns from houses dating throughout the occupational sequence of the North area of the Neolithic mound, I present a new systematic analysis integrating the two artifact types. I then consider a range of possible interpretations for the role of horns in the daily life of the settlement. Were the clay figurines proxies for fauna with whom people would have interacted? Were they objects of ritual or apotropaic devices? Or were they part of a greater shift in relations between humans and animals over time? I argue that a consideration of the materialities and life histories of these objects is a useful gateway to gaining insights into their role in the prehistoric lived experience and relations between humans and non-humans.

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