

ZOOARCHAEOLOGY AT ÇATALHÖYÜK

[July 26, 2013](#) [Matt Law](#) [Day of Archaeology 2013](#), [Environmental Archaeology](#), [Finds](#), [Osteology](#), [Prehistory archaeologist on tour](#), [lab work](#), [Neolithic](#), [Zooarchaeology](#)

From Jennifer Jones, Cardiff University, Zooarchaeologist, Bioarchaeologist.

I'm part of the faunal team at the Neolithic World Heritage site of Çatalhöyük this year, and have been residing here for the past 4 and a half weeks (two more to go!). Çatalhöyük is a Neolithic town in the Konya Plane in Turkey, and for three months every year is home to 120+ archaeologists all studying and researching at the site, allowing for great interaction between specialists, excavators, and theorists.

Today is actually a bit of an unusual day for us here as it is our day off, and we have made the mammoth 8 hour long journey to Gobekli Tepe, which answers the question "what do archaeologists do on their day off?"- go and visit more archaeology of course! Gobekli Tepe is an amazing site with many weird and wonderful stone sculptures, which have been suggested as having ritual significance so we are very lucky to have this opportunity to go and see it for ourselves and see how it compares to the archaeology we've been finding at Çatalhöyük.

Typically I've been spending my days analysing large quantities of bone. I'm working on a postdoctoral project looking human: animal relations in the early co-mingled human and animal bone deposits. I've been working with Chris Knüsel in the human remains team, which has been a great opportunity to share knowledge and information. I've been looking in detail at processing of bones, looking at butchery patterns, and fragmentation, and other features that can give hints as to what has happened to the bones before they made it to my lab. So far I've identified over 2000 specimens to species, and measured/examined fragmentation of 11,400 pieces of bone. I've been finding a nice range of Auroch, Boar, deer, and sheep/goat (a particular favourite of the former inhabitants of Çatalhöyük), and lots of dog bones. The deposit I'm looking at is unusual as it is from an offsite area of the mound, and has much higher proportions of wild species than assemblages from the mains settlement, so I have to try and think about why there are differences in the species represented.

Working here has been a great opportunity to make connections with other specialists from all around the world, and we work long hours (7am-7pm!) because we love what we do. We've had a lot of fun in the process too, attending 1920's themed costume parties, participating in pub quizzes (with beer as a prize-a major incentive to win!), and playing in table tennis tournaments, and socialising within the multi-national team.

It's been a productive field season so far, with huge numbers of burials, animal bone installations being found, and who knows what the next few weeks will bring?