

Summary

This thesis offers a comprehensive re-evaluation of the ways in which archaeology can research architecture in prehistoric Cappadocia, the Konya plain and the Lake District. Based on a content analysis of 222 archaeological publications, it discusses at length the epistemology of recognising social organisation from the study of prehistoric architecture. Originally inspired by the wish to investigate the formation of socioeconomic status differences in southcentral Anatolia, this thesis demonstrates that archaeology can more successfully contribute towards answering such essential debates in Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean archaeology if it has an appropriately evaluated tool kit for reading social organisation from material culture; and therefore concentrates on the development of such a toolkit specifically for architecture, and for the cultural context of Cappadocia, the Konya plain and the Lake District (southcentral Anatolia). It focuses on the Late Neolithic and Early Chalcolithic (6500–5500 BC), which have recently come into research focus as featuring social transformations that could have started the development towards social stratification: increasing household autonomy, social competition, mobility and the appearance of warfare.

Drawing on contextual and reflexive archaeology, this thesis systematically maps the existing scholarly discourse via content analysis. Through this, it also reflects deeply on research practices within southcentral Anatolian prehistoric archaeology with the aim of improving them. This includes scrutinising the chronological and geographical frameworks established by previous research; identifying research biases inherited from the history of research; and reflecting on the specific challenges of architecture research in southcentral Anatolian prehistoric archaeology, for example the handling of legacy data. Alongside the epistemological discussion, this thesis researches the social use of architecture in Neolithic/ Chalcolithic southcentral Anatolia: it describes how communities deliberately shaped built environments in specific ways in order to produce the social interactions they sought to create.

A trial-run application of the ‘indicator package’ to the architectural record of 11

sites in Late Neolithic and Early Chalcolithic indicates that the architectural record does not clearly display developments towards social features that characterise the later Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age: it suggests an ongoing balance of household autonomy with strong community integration; only few cases of social competition, stratification or mobility; and no clear evidence for the existence of warfare. This application further reveals research biases, and demonstrates some strategies for overcoming these in the future.