An account of a Day-trip
Bonded narratives of space

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Based on a day-trip and drawing experiments by one of the authors to an archaeological site, Aşağıpinar Höyük, we engage in a discussion on the unfixedness of the knowledge of a place of archaeological significance, challenging the traditional rigid perception of it as a past to be unearthed. Considering the rare case of bonding with dogs, this research incorporates non-human approaches through which space, time, and matter acquire entangled meanings and understandings. We argue that the site-specific bonding with the dogs gives access to interconnected narratives of the site, challenging the human-centred value of time in relation to matter. The drawn research project "An Account of a Day-Trip" is an attempt to make sense of the archaeological site Aşağıpinar Höyük through non-hierarchical configurations of space, time, and matter. Evolving through a series of drawing experiments, this project operates with corporeal and material temporalities, breaking the logic of simultaneity, linearity, and chronology. Through constant re-configurations of space, time, and matter, we suggest constructing and exploring bonded narratives.
1. INTRODUCTION:
A RARE EVENT OF BONDING WITH DOGS AT AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

One of the authors of this paper visited the archaeological site Aşağıpınar Höyük in Kırklareli, Turkey, as a day-trip during an off-season period in 2021. The site uncovers remains of Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods (Url-1). The research done on the site shows large excavations unearthing traces of domestic life periods (Url-1). The research done on the site shows large excavations unearthing traces of domestic life.

The site is located outside the city centre, by an empty road. It is surrounded by fences, with concrete housing units in the background. As soon as we walk onto the site, a pack of dogs welcomes us. The grass is half-wet, and there are packs of flies around. Against a backdrop of contemporary concrete housing units in Kırklareli, the ancient settlement would operate as a whole, with each person claiming responsibility for a daily chore.

Looking at these wax models against a backdrop of contemporary concrete housing units in Kırklareli, the fixedness of these wax models gives an estranged experience: One finds oneself wandering alone at this site with no visitors but life-sized figures trapped forever in doing chores at a fixed location.

There are wandering figures in this picture of the site that subvert the above-suggested estrangement: the stray dogs. Their hairy paws in touch with the earth and the grass, these dogs happen to be in sincere closeness to their surroundings.

While looking into the excavation, visitors notice the presence of these dogs. The dogs seem comfortable with people petting them; we stroke their heads. Their fur feels soft and rough at the same time. They also get distracted at times by something further at the site and stroll further into the site. Their indifference to the excavations of authentic artefacts and the waxed models, and their passionate enthusiasm in engaging with grass, earth, and the sun, suggest a space providing flexibility in living with one's surroundings out of desire, letting time run its own course at this site (Fig. 2).

A specific kind of relating - that this research defines as "bonding" with the dogs - offers a way of learning from the dogs about how to approach space. Bonding, in this context, refers to the process of making sense of a space through forming closeness with another. The practices of bonding suggest a path to get closer to the pack of flies in the air, the crispy and half-wet grass, the softness of the soil, the sun, and the piece of bone left on the ground.

The practices of bonding suggest, in the meantime, getting closer to one's own body in the rediscovery of these relations with space. It gives way to making sense of a place through an ongoing state of reconfiguring togetherness with others. This state displays a concealed story of the site that was revealed through the bonding with the dogs.

Through bonding with the dogs, one may join the wandering dogs in a particular spatio-temporal place of being in touch with their surroundings and become part of the concealed history of this forgotten site (Fig. 3).

This paper presents and opens a discussion of a drawn research project titled ‘An Account of a Day-Trip.’ This paper endeavours to pursue a strategic navigation in this particular site-specific spatio-temporal experience of bonding and attempts to explore concealed stories of this site through a drawing project. Playing with the notions of simultaneity, chronology, and linearity, the drawing research project aims to step into a field of non-hierarchical configurations of space, time, and matter.

In this paper, we aim to discuss a critical understanding of the notion of place in tracing different accounts of time, each running its own course. The notion of a so-called bonded presence allows us to argue for a connectedness of these simultaneous temporalities.

Lastly, the drawn research project suggests a narrative approach that critically engages with drawing practices to question and challenge the pre-set relations with space and the fixedness of the knowledge of a place.
2. ACCOUNTS OF TIME AT AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

Visiting an archaeological site embraces manifold encounters. Studying the unearthened remains of an ancient tool used for cooking, an architectural construction, or the remains of a fire as a layer of ashes brings forth an encounter with traces of former times. This encounter can be explained by references—historically and on the ways people used to live thousands of years ago—their technology, the food they ate, how they used to organize space in a domestic unit, among other rituals.

With the articulation of this information made by the presentation of the authentic artefacts excavated on site, the experience becomes sensual. The ceramic objects and earthy floor that were once touched by someone else sit in a thousand years ago—now stand within arm's reach to be (potentially) touched by us.

The sensuality of this encounter is conceived as an authentic quality of matter. Matter oscillates between preserving the traces of time and disintegrating into soil. Matter, thus, narrates stories of livings in hints. This entails an acknowledgment of the ephemeral status of corporeal presence, a transience of livings and disintegrating into soil. Matter, thus, presents its own account of time we are witnessing in the story of a site.

Similarly, a hierarchical mode of value between different accounts of time at an archaeological site is suggested. With all the attention drawn to the artefactual ruins, the quotidian may go undetected, being condemned at an archaeological site.

Bonding with dogs at the archaeological site Ağbapat an Höyük, Kırklareli, becomes a pivotal encounter that overturns the hierarchical mode between different accounts of time at an archaeological site. We argue that the pivotal encounter with the dogs brings together different accounts of time into ‘bonded narratives,’ departing from a time of linear history. It presents a personal account of the time of a visitor who is bonding with dogs and drifts into the account of time of the dogs strolling on the archaeological grounds, flies in the moisture of the grass, soil drying under the sun, and the wax models shining in daylight.

Oscillating between fact and fiction, the notion of a bonded narrative is a speculation that we explore further in the drawn research project in their articulation to bonding practices, explained in the following sections.

3. ON THE NOTION OF BONDING PRACTICES

The practice of bonding bears associations with theoretical contexts that concern the corporeal receptivity of otherness. The Feminist philosopher of science, Donna Haraway (2003), discusses how to live together loving each other less violently, through the case of dogs as the ‘significant other.’ Her discussion concerns problematizing oppressive relationships, through which one party occupies the centre of attention, repressing the other’s interests, creative abilities, and ultimately, the account of time. Offering the term ‘companionship species,’ Haraway (2003) draws attention to the togetherness of human beings and (in this case) dogs as they meet each other in a state of mutual dependency and sharing, problematizing power relations between them. Haraway discusses how not to ignore inequities between human and animal, and at the same time how to depart from a human-centred approach.

To understand the interdependent relations in the above-mentioned meetings, we find the concept of ‘companionship species’ helpful. The dog, referred to as a companion species rather than a companion animal, is historically situated with regard to the relationship of human beings (Haraway, 2003). The following excerpt on training dogs is explicated in terms of narrating how to become significant others to one another:

“First, these two youngsters had to learn to notice each other. They had to be in the same game. It is my belief that Marco began to emerge as a dog trainer over the six weeks. It is my belief that as he learned to show her the corpo-real posture of cross-species respect, she and he become significant others to each other.”

Haraway 2003, p.41-42.

The phrases included in this excerpt, such as ‘learning to notice each other,’ ‘being in the same game,’ and ‘corpo-real posture of cross-species respect,’ guide us to understand this becoming from respecting each other’s boundaries within the spatio-temporality of meeting with the other. This is how we understand the pivotal encounter with dogs that a kind of ‘bonding practices’ suggest.

Bonding offers an embodied knowledge of the archaeological site. This knowledge, conveyed by bonding, puts forth a different space and time relation than what conventional archaeological studies present through chronological time. Rather than looking for a past time of human beings through material artefacts, bonding practices pursue the interconnected relations between dogs, flies, visitors, soil, leftover bone, and artefactual remnants, among others. This interconnectedness offers subjective configurations of space, time, and matter.

These configurations offer corporeal temporality and materialities (the flies flying as a pack in the air meeting the moisture of the grass under sunlight, the dogs’ hair getting dusty and muddy by lying on the soil and the artefactual remnants, the leftover bone gradually cracking by drying under the sunlight).

Through bonding, the ‘condemned’ quiospan (dogs, flies, soil, etc.) are given space within the knowledge of the archaeological site, rather than centering the knowledge of the site on the disembodied space of human beings. In that sense, bonding practices resonate with embodied knowledges acting “in response to disembodiment models of power and subjectivity” (Ahmed & Stacey 2004, p.4).

Bonding practices offer an approach to place within its relations. Unveiling non-hierarchical configurations of space, time, and matter, bonding practices fabricate an interconnected and embodied story for the archaeological site, oscillating from conventional archaeology. The drawn research project looks into these non-hierarchical configurations of space, time, and matter through a drawing practice.

4. THE DRAWN RESEARCH PROJECT: AN ACCOUNT OF A DAY-TRIP

In conversation with theoretical contexts about material and corporeal temporalities, this research endeavours to problematize the way different accounts of time are taken into consideration in spatial making through a drawing practice.

The drawn research project, “An Account of a Day-Trip,” serves as the inquiry platform for this research to reflect on non-hierarchical spatio-temporal constructions in spatial making, based on bonding practices.

4.1. Moulding Subjective Textualities

Through a set of exploratory investigations, we first focus on drawing the site through subjective positions: the researcher experiences interrelated positions as a visitor bonding with the dogs, who, at the same time, is an architect drawing to make sense of a place while observing her relations with her surroundings. Bonding practices suggest ongoing renewing of relations between the self and the other (dogs, flies, soil, ruins, grass, etc.), proposing a constant re-configuration of space, time, and matter. Giving an account of subjective positions is a research instrument here, to approach the embodied knowledge of the ongoing renewal of relations with others.

This set of drawings proposes a kind of textual exploration, which aligns with similar concerns expressed by architect and theorist Jennifer Bloomer, who both refer to subjective knowledges that critically subvert established relations with space. Rather than documenting measured archaeological remains, these writing/drawing explorations are in search of multiple narratives fabricated from the site through corporeality and materiality (Figs. 2 and 4). By doing so, a lexicon is formed of actions and figures that put forth subjective bonding practices. Compiling a lexicon of a site stems from a curiosity to disarticulate the narratives of bonding at the site. Based on this site-specific case of bonding, we unfold a vocabulary and a narrative of the day-trip’s embodied knowledge.

Fig. 4 - Lexicographical drawings, by İpek Avanoğlu.
This project titled ‘Tabbles of Bower’ and meanings. Bloomer’s allegorical these interwoven understandings established knowledge through understanding of the work (Owens, 1993, p.3). In allegory, two meanings of a word in a text as a literary device to engage with this journey, a hand becomes a band. is not trespassing itself, it bears the relations of this venture, we know the neutralized voice of a (female) mythology, it follows that the female talents to himself. According to this mythology, it follows that the female body (and ultimately her creativity) is constrained within the male body (Bergren, 1994). According to Bergren (1994), however, when the female body re-swallows herself, she cuts loose from the male body and re-gains her female creativity. Indeed, Bloomer (1993) is critical of the neutralized voice of a (female) researcher in writings, considering the position of writing as a tool for knowledge-making: “The non-neutrality of language and history (and architecture) are my concerns. To suture this work in an epistemological arena that relies upon the maintenance of belief in their transparencies would be an error of logic. It cannot be written otherwise. It is, therefore, written other-wise.” Bloomer, 1993, p.3.

Moulding subjective textualities as a research instrument invites both the researcher and others to question established spatial relations embedded in language and history. In this research, moulding subjective textualities seeks to give space to embodied knowledges. Embodied knowledge defines a concealed (repressed) place within language and history, which pushes the limits of language. Based on bonding practices, this research seeks to open space for its embodied knowledge by acquiring an invented lexicon.

4.2. Exploring Articulations of Material Narratives in Space

For if I had not noticed the flies flying as a pack in the air meeting the mouth of the dog, I might not have bonded with the dogs. If my hand had not met the dog’s hair, I might not have noticed the dog’s breath meeting my hands and the sunlight meeting the grass, and my eyes meeting the waxed models, the dog’s paws meeting the excavation, the grass, and the soil. My lips meeting the flies, my hands meeting the grass.

The second set of drawings is in search of specific articulations of material narratives in space, those that develop through relational encounters. In “Vibrant Matter,” theorist and philosopher Jane Bennett (2016) argues that by acknowledging the status of materiality in all livings and things, the difference between subject and object can be eliminated, no longer placing humans in an ontological centre. In Bennett’s (2016) writing, matter’s mythical narrative is unveiled in the notion of ‘thing-power’, in which matter acquires an active agency, departing from pre-set contexts and meanings. The acknowledgment of vibrancy in matters reforms the act of seeing.

This set of drawings operates as a series, paired with a selected set of photographs taken from the site (Fig. 5). Photographs help preserve the transcience of the spatial structures of this project. The cut-out parts allow us to focus on certain parts in the photographs and draw them. Freehand drawing suggests a particular engagement with space, fluctuating between observation and perception of space through one’s senses. Here, proportions get distorted, objects get misplaced, and some figures are unintentionally drawn more than once. The notion of measuring is lost. We notice that the dog is no longer distinguished as a dog in the drawing, nor the remains. While drawing, the aim is to articulate what is observed in the photographs as spatial content. In this regard, the dog and the remains are drawn in the same notational logic. In the drawings, the lines acquire other meanings: rather than perceiving the drawing as one whole thing, one wanders from one thing to the other in the drawing. This act of wandering in the drawing articulates a spatio-temporal engagement with materials, through which they narrate corporeal temporalities.

4.3. Witnessing Intervals of Spatio-Temporality

As we look at the wax models at the archaeological site, one imagines them silently working in a past time and witnesses the muteness of their stories: as in the act of cooking being not only about the act of cooking itself but also about what one might be thinking while pursuing this act. The visitor imagines time unfolding within their acts (shepherding, cutting, grinding, etc.). We meet their concealed histories in their muteness. Time unfolds within an act rather than an act unfolding in time.

This set of drawings is an experiment with the notion of time unfolding within an act, by means of drawing with an aim to explore its spatial constructions (Fig. 6). To work with a scanner brings a specific temporality to the drawing process; a laser light moves with a steady speed, recording a narrow interval of a physical area at each step while moving. This drawing experiment is not about the linearity of time but about the intervals of time, capturing the smallest moments in flow through recorded physicality, space.

For this experiment, two daily domestic objects are chosen: a sheep doll and a table spoon. The sheep doll, reminiscent of a childhood period, and the table spoon, a ritualistically used everyday object, bear a scale of time of their own. As the scanner laser light moves from right to left as a green vertical line, the doll is first turned around in circles in the same direction on top of the scanner screen; it is then moved in the opposite direction; later rolled along the length of the screen (Fig. 6). These movements allow changing intersections with the laser light of the scanner.

In the drawings, intervals of time are marked via two vertical lines (Fig. 6). The intervals act as samples to explore the physicality of possible spatio-temporalities (Fig. 7). With selective tracings, speculations on spatio-temporal constructions start. How does one notice an account of time, a time unfolding, running its own course? Within the framework of this speculative approach, some of the intervals come out larger than the others, and discontinuities from one interval to another are allowed. In Fig. 6, in the drawing second from top, the third string...
from the left displays a speculation happening around that specific vertical string, rather than within an interval between two vertical strings. This allows an engaged narrative of two sequential intervals of spatio-temporal constructions to unfold simultaneously.

Through the rhythmically reiterated vertical lines, these drawings evolve into a particular spatio-temporal structure. We suggest that this spatio-temporal structure has the ability to oscillate between fact and fiction, enabling it to jump, disappear, reappear, and, in the meantime, maintaining a continuity of space. Without constructing a chronology of events, it embeds simultaneity and linearity.

5. BRINGING THE DRAWINGS TOGETHER:

DISCUSSING ON DRAWING PRACTICE THROUGH BONDED NARRATIVES

The last drawing set aims to situate the site into bonded narratives by merging together the drawing experiments. Bonded narratives refer to constant configurations of space, time, and matter, triggered by bonding practices.

Constructed with two layers, the longitudinal drawing consists of a re-composition of the site (Fig. 8). Selective tracings from the second set of drawings (matter, soil, dogs, flies, ruins, etc., from the site) and the third set of drawings (a personal domestic object) are collapsed over the vertical lines, each overlapping on a figure of a wax model on the base layer (Fig. 9).

The layered drawing merges the wax models, the matters of the site, and personal domestic objects (a sheep doll and a table spoon) together. All of these pieces constitute a different scale of time and space in the drawing. With regard to this, the sense of scale shifts in the drawing continuously and provokes a state of undecidability.

The scale change in the drawing becomes an investigative procedure in the longitudinal drawing operating as a montage. Both discontinuous and simultaneous, the stories are present without dominating the space of the drawing and constitute bonded narratives, by playing with scales of time and space. In his text entitled “Empathy: Material and Spatial,” architect and educator David Gersten (2007) discusses scale change in a drawing as a device for empathy:

“The scale presents a unique case as a tool of drawing; it hovers between us and the drawing like a prism, dividing a spectrum of mental distances. The possibility of scale change within the representation of a drawing points to the possibility of shifting the distance between one’s self and the paper while drawing.”


The quotation by Gersten draws attention to the articulation of space as a question of social matter. With regard to scale change, he includes the drafter/architect’s position to consider the relations between self and the other as part of space itself. We argue that the spatio-temporal structure of the longitudinal drawing becomes such a device that resides within these relations, by breaking the logic of simultaneity, linearity, and chronology.

Making a model with this drawing is a processual exploration of the articulation of space in the drawing. The models explore the lines having a double presence in the longitudinal drawing (Fig. 8). The lines do not only refer to forms but to traces of time in places; provoking also a state of undecidability. The models, therefore, do not end at a singular ultimate output but transfer speculations to each other (Fig. 8).

Provoking a state of undecidability in a drawing is strategic. The positional ground of the onlooker shifts along with the state of undecidability and becomes a device to notice and question the conditions of one’s own positional ground.

In “An Account of a Day-Trip,” the state of undecidability proceeds through scale changes that constantly reconfigure the spatial articulations of each line, moving between different narratives. In this project, the narratives are in the form of accounts of time putting forth their scales of time and space, worked in the material of drawings. In the longitudinal drawing, the drawing operates as woven material. It performs a spatial construction to make space possible for concealed accounts of time at the archaeological site Aşağıpınar Höyük. This project presents this construction as bonded narratives.

The so-called bonded narratives in the drawing are read through each other, and by doing so, they suggest a particular spatiality for the process of drawing through which the drawing becomes an epistemic artefact for the architect/drafter to make sense of a place. Following Gersten’s remark on scale change as a drawing device of empathy, we question whether the bonding practices proceed while drawing as well, re-configuring relations between space, time, and matter. Bonded narratives may, then, suggest a particular drawing practice pursuing bonding practices.
6. CONCLUSIONS: SEARCHING WITHIN BONDED NARRATIVES

The drawn research project “An Account of a Day-Trip” is an attempt to make sense of the archaeological site Asağıpınar Höyük through non-hierarchical configurations of space, time, and matter.

This project evolves through a series of drawing experiments, finally bringing them together to construct bonded narratives. Proceeding together with theoretical discussions on corporeal and material temporalities, this research questions and challenges the fixedness of the knowledge of a place of archaeological significance that puts forth a human-centred past time to be unearthed.

Based on the bonding with the dogs at the site, we incorporate non-human approaches through which space, time, and matter acquire entangled meanings and understandings. Following discussions, we assert that bonding practices offer an embodied knowledge of an archaeological site, providing interconnected narratives with quotidian and non-human material states, bearing different scales of time and space simultaneously.

This research seeks to present the process of exploring bonded narratives as a multi-narrative field of study that incorporates theory and practice. This approach allows us to embrace and make sense of the ongoing space, time, and matter re-configurations that bonding practices suggest, engaging in discussions through processual forms.

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