

SITE VISIT

Vicarious Glimpse of Turkey's Treasures

One of the most closely watched digs these days is Çatalhöyük, a sprawling 9000-year-old village in central Turkey that's yielding surprising evidence that early settlers maintained primordial traditions of hunting and gathering (see p. 1442). The watching is made all the easier by the project's Web site, maintained at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom. Archaeologists say Çatalhöyük appears to be the first dig to

make its entire excavation database available on the Web, down to the exact location of each skeleton, clay pot, and stone ax. For those who don't need this much detail, extensive overviews are provided in the excavation reports of the 90-member team, as well as a newsletter that summarizes the latest findings. You can even get a sense of what it's like working at Çatalhöyük, thanks to electronic diaries: "At some point I think I will crack and start screaming at someone. ... " wrote one team archaeologist in September. Intrigued?

For a more high-tech view of Çatalhöyük, visit the Science Museum of Minnesota's "Mysteries of Çatalhöyük" Web site, designed for schoolchildren and the general public. Visitors can

take a virtual tour of the dig, view movies of ongoing excavations, or get answers to questions like "Why did they bury their dead under their houses?"

* catal.arch.cam.ac.uk/catal/catal.html † www.sci.mus.mn.us/catal/top.html

COOL IMAGES

Virtual Archaeology Worth the Trip

Forget the long plane rides to remote field sites and the grubby toilets and dearth of good coffee once you're there. Now you can fly through a prehistoric village, wander a museum's halls, and pick up and inspect an ancient vase all from your desktop computer. That's just a sampling of how computer visualization is transforming archaeology on the Web.



Popping up on many Web sites are panoramic views, 360-degree photographs that let visitors, with a few clicks and key strokes, zoom around a dig or see all sides of a tomb or artifact. The effect can be dizzying, as you may find at this tour of Peru's Machu Picchu site.* Archaeologists are

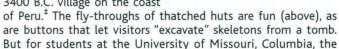
also teaming up with computer experts to reconstruct villages from maps, photos, and wire models. A prime example is a Web

NETWATCH edited by JOCELYN KAISER

site for Ceren, a village in El Salvador that was buried in ash around A.D. 600.† Web visitors find themselves strolling through virtual houses complete with cooking utensils (see

lower left). Adding to the multimedia experience are slide shows with maps, drawings, and text, notes project leader Payson Sheets, an archaeologist at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

For even deeper immersion, there's Paloma World, a project that has recreated a 3400 B.C. village on the coast



view's even better: In a special room where images are projected on a curved screen, they can don goggles and gloves that let them walk around and pick up virtual artifacts. "It has a remarkable effect" on engaging students' interest, says Missouri archaeologist Robert Benfer.

Many reconstructions can be seen only on CD-ROMs, on which archaeologists are increasingly cataloging their finds instead of packing them into pricey hardback books. For more exotic Web destinations, including a virtual Stonehenge, see this list.§

* www.thinker.org/deyoung/exhibitions/peru/ virtual/index-2.html

† ceren.colorado.edu/intropage/intropage.html

‡ gonk.atc.missouri.edu/paloma

§ www.ukans.edu/~hoopes/virtual.htm



HOT PICKS

ARCHAEOLOGY

This week NetWatch surveys

some of the Internet's archaeol-

ogy offerings to complement our

special News section on prehis-

toric transitions, beginning on p.

1441. Some Web sites here are

on topics covered by our News

stories, such as rock art and a

Neolithic Turkish settlement;

others stray further afield into

areas such as virtual archaeology.

Big picture. Net neophytes can find their bearings with this Web "field guide" from a special issue of *Antiquity* on electronic archaeology. The article reviews links to virtual libraries, mail lists, museums, society home pages, and more. intarch.ac.uk/antiquity/electronics/champion.html

Hominid trail. Part of a site that counters creationist claims, Fossil Hominids reviews the evidence on questions such as whether Peking Man was an ape and the significance of human brain size. The wealth of information here includes background on key fossils, drawings and photos, scientists' biographies, references, and lots of paleoanthropology links. www.talkorigins.org/faqs/fossil-hominids.html

Cave art cache. Although RockArtNet's design is confusing, the site's directory of links is worth exploring for everything from a site on Egyptian monuments to photos of petroglyphs from the U.S. Southwest. Check the popular Web Board for new rock art offerings. www.rupestre.net/rockart

Dig it? For the latest on digs around the world that are looking for workers—both volunteer and paid—take a peek at Archaeological Fieldwork Opportunities.

www.sscnet.ucla.edu/ioa/afs/testpit.html