

Feasting, deposition and abandonment in the Sanctuary of the Horned God at Enkomi

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Introduction*

The excavations of Porphyrios Dikaios at Enkomi between 1948 and 1958 were one of the most beneficial things to ever happen in Cypriot archaeology. It is thanks to Dikaios' laborious work at the site and subsequent meticulous publication that we can sense the importance of this town and reconstruct parts of the history of the entire island in the Late Bronze Age. In particular, Dikaios' excavations at Enkomi were responsible for stimulating research on ritual practices, as he uncovered one of the most important cult sites of Cyprus, the Sanctuary of the Horned God, which formed part of the so-called Ashlar Building. Although some of his conclusions regarding this sanctuary will be questioned here, the following discussion is only possible because of his painstaking presentation of the structure and associated finds.

The Ashlar Building

Dikaios provides a full account of the architectural history of the Ashlar Building, located in sector 4W in Area I, on the main north–south street of the town. According to Dikaios, it was destroyed and rebuilt twice before its final abandonment in late Late Cypriot (LC) IIIA or at the beginning of LC IIIB. More specifically, it was erected in Level IIIA (LC IIIA), destroyed ca. 1190 BC and immediately after reconstructed in Level IIIB (end of LC IIIA/beginning of LC IIIB). This reconstructed building was destroyed again during the last quarter of the C12th BC, and partially rebuilt in Level IIIC (early LC IIIB), to

remain in use until the town was abandoned in the early C11th BC (Dikaios 1969–1971: 171–220, 487–496, 514–516, 523–524, 527–530; see also Webb 1999: 91). Dikaios' chronological divisions have to be lowered at least for the initial phases of the building, since the date for the inception of LC IIIA is no longer placed ca. 1220 BC, but about 30 years later (Webb 1999: 101). There is considerable debate also on the latest phases of this structure and their correlation with the dates proposed by the French for their finds at the same site (see below and Courtois 1971; Iacovou 1988: 8–11; 1991: 203; Kling 1989: 36–37, 82–83, 87; Webb 1999: 91; 2001).

In the LC IIC period, an edifice incorporating earlier structures was established in Area I. The building suffered a severe destruction, which resulted in a massive layer of debris, occasionally reaching the height of 1m. This catastrophe was attributed to people fleeing destructions observed in the same period in the Aegean (Dikaios 1969–1971: 168–170, 509–514; Ionas 1984: 51–54). According to Dikaios (1969–1971: 171–173, 175, 513), after a short gap in occupation the Ashlar Building was erected on the levelled debris of the previous structure. Its erection, assigned to Level IIIA and associated with Mycenaean IIIC:1b pottery (Dikaios 1969–1971: 260–261, 270–273, 324–325), broke with earlier architectural traditions at the site, as it not only involved a novel architectural plan, but also a major innovation in masonry technique, that is the use of dressed ashlar blocks for the lower parts of the walls. The floors of this new building sealed several earlier tombs, 'and with them, a chapter in Cypriot history' (Dikaios 1969–1971: 170).

The Ashlar Building was a large, rectangular structure, measuring 32.5 x 28.5m (Dikaios 1969–1971: 171–172, 174–177, pls 273–275; Fisher 2007–2008: 91–95) (Figs 1–2). It was erected in two successive stages and had at its core a large, rectangular, pillared hall, composed of Rooms 10+13+14, referred to by Dikaios as a 'megaron', on the basis of some unconvincing analogies with Mycenaean halls. This large hall, measuring 15.80m from north to south and 4.50m from east to west, was supplemented by smaller rooms and associated on either side with a courtyard.

* This paper pays tribute to David Frankel, whose work on Cyprus has done much to elucidate various issues in Cypriot archaeology. It is a great benefit to have David's opinion on any matter, as you know that it is the result of hard work, a profound knowledge of the material, much original thinking and a sound methodology and interpretation. The topic of abandonment, briefly touched upon here, is highly suited to this volume, as David has paid close attention to such processes in his excavations at Marki.



Figure 1. Ground plan of the Ashlar Building, Level IIIA (Dikaios 1969–1971: pl. 273)

It was divided into three parts on the longitudinal axis, by means of two substantial pillars of dressed stone, which functioned as partition walls with openings on either side (Dikaios 1969–1971: 172, 514). The building underwent some modifications a short time after its erection, the most important of which was the construction of a central, rectangular hearth in the 'megaron', on the corners of which three, or more probably four, pillars were set (Dikaios 1969–1971: 175–176, 179–180, 183, 187–188). These alterations were attributed to successive waves of Mycenaeans fleeing the destroyed centres of the Greek mainland, on the grounds of the megaron-like hall and the Mycenaean IIIC:1b pottery that is predominant both immediately under and above the concrete floors of the building (Dikaios 1969–1971: 315–323, 515, 519–521, 528–529). The monumentality of the Ashlar Building was also attributed to a Mycenaean presence.

The building of Level IIIA came to an abrupt end brought about by a catastrophe (Dikaios 1969–1971: 188–190). The damage was extensive, especially in the

northern and central parts of the building, and was also evident in Area III of Dikaios' excavations and in sectors of the town excavated by the French (Schaeffer (ed) 1971). Both Dikaios and Schaeffer attributed this destruction to the raids of the Sea Peoples and dated it to around 1190 BC (Dikaios 1969–1971: 488, 522–523, 529). The town was rebuilt, however, with no signs of new, intrusive elements (Dikaios 1969–1971: 527, 530).

The Ashlar Building was reconstructed and occupation was resumed, inaugurating Level IIIB, which was represented by two floors, Floors III and II. The debris of the destruction was cleared out and dumped in the streets bordering the building, resulting in a sudden rise of the street level by 1.60m (Dikaios 1969–1971: 189, 191–212). The general plan of the building was completely altered (Dikaios 1969–1971: 210–211, pls 276–277; Ionas 1984: 56–57; Webb 1999: 93, fig. 36) (Fig. 3). The main entrance was transferred from the northern to the southern façade, where a new doorway with a staircase was opened. In addition, the central hall of the original plan was divided into three



Figure 2. The Ashlar Building, view from the northwest. Reproduced with the permission of the Department of Antiquities

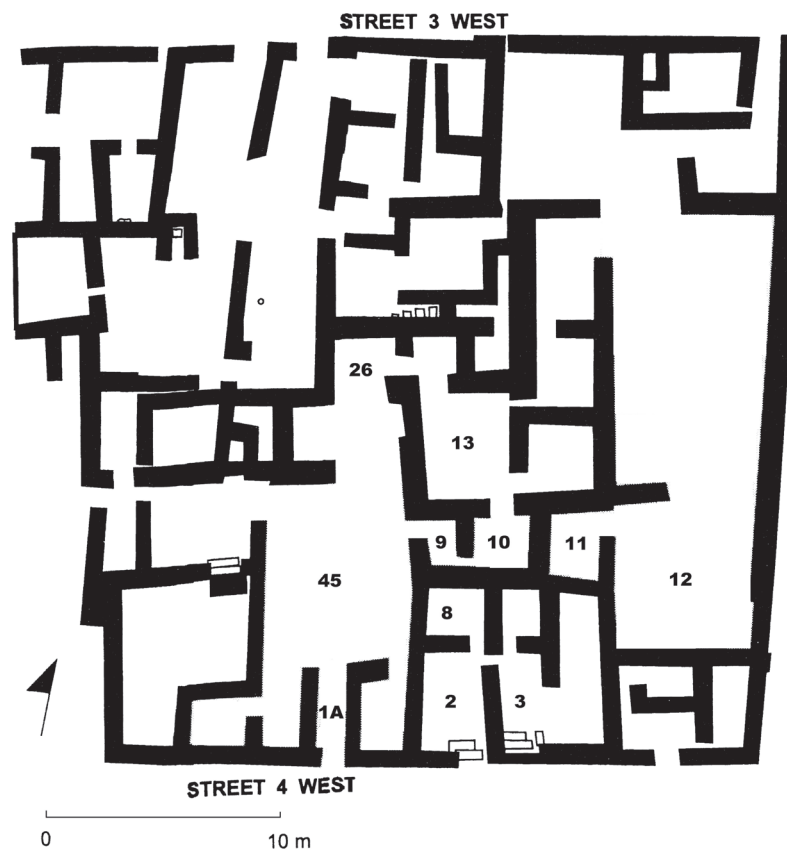


Figure 3. Ground plan of the Ashlar Building, Level IIIB (Webb 1999: fig. 36). Reproduced with the permission of Jennifer Webb

parts and deprived of its dominant character within the structure (Dikaios 1969–1971: 181, 191, 523). The courses of ashlar blocks that survived the destruction were reused, but most new walls were built of rubble with a mudbrick superstructure.

The whole building was thus thoroughly rearranged and the emphasis shifted to its southern part, which was from this time reserved for cult purposes, while its other sectors continued to serve domestic needs (Webb 1999: 92). Several rooms were erected within the borders of the large courtyard (Room 64) in the northwest corner of the building, while a court was created in the east sector. An upper storey and corresponding staircases were also erected, and, more importantly, two large halls (Rooms 12 and 45) on either side of the south sector (Dikaios 1969–1971: 191–192). Room 12 was furnished with a central hearth (Dikaios 1969–1971: 200), while Room 45, which measures 8.75m north–south by 6.75m east–west, acquired a row of three wooden columns on its longitudinal axis, recalling the central hall of the Level IIIA building (Dikaios 1969–1971: 194; Webb 1999: 92). The pottery from this level comprises a small number of traditional Cypriot wares, such as Base Ring and White Slip, and large numbers of Close Style vessels (already present in Level IIIA), as well as Mycenaean IIIC:1b types and some examples of the Mycenaean IIIC:1c Granary class, that came to predominate at the end of Level IIIB (Dikaios 1969–1971: 281–283, 288–289, 297, 326–327, 464–465, 525–529).

According to Dikaios, the most significant feature of the reconstructed Ashlar Building, and one of the most important developments at Enkomi, was the introduction in Level IIIB of the cult associated with the famous statuette of the Horned God (Dikaios 1969–1971: 177, 191–211, 524). This was installed in Room 10, in the southern part of the edifice, at a point once part of the ‘megaron’ which formed the core of the original Ashlar Building and served perhaps as the focus of social events. This sanctuary, then, was not a free-standing structure, but incorporated within a larger building, which otherwise seems to have served as a residence (Webb 1999: 101). The principal architectural elements of the sanctuary were a large pillared hall, Room 45, that gave access to two successive, small rooms to the east, Rooms 9 and 10 (Dikaios 1969–1971: 195; Webb 1999: 92) (Fig. 2). The latter seems to have communicated with Room 13 to the north, which, according to Dikaios, played an important role in the following level (Webb 1999: 92; *contra* Burdajewisz 1985).

The Sanctuary of the Horned God

Remnants of a ritual, which can reasonably be associated with the cult of the Horned God, were recovered in Room 10 and surrounding rooms (for an account of the finds see Webb 1999: 92–96). In Room

45, near the doorway to Room 9, ox skulls and antlers were found near the hearth on Floors III and II, along with a small bronze statuette of a bull and two models of horns in gold leaf. Unspecified quantities of animal bones of unidentified species lay in several areas on both floors (Dikaios 1969–1971: 194–197, 216, 295–296). In the northeast corner of Room 9 a stone trough, measuring 0.70 x 0.32m, was found upside down on Floor III. It was provided with a channel along one of its narrow sides, which continued on the bottom and was connected with a hole through the centre of the base (Dikaios 1969–1971: 197). Under the trough a few animal and bird bones were found. On the same floor, a model of an ox horn in gold leaf and a rosette of lead covered in gold leaf were associated by Dikaios, rather unconvincingly, with a bull-headed rhyton (Dikaios 1969–1971: 195).

On Floor III of Room 10, by the western wall and the northwest corner and diagonally opposite the spot where the statuette of the Horned God was found, Dikaios excavated three impressive deposits (deposit A just to the east of deposit B, which is located by the northwest corner of the room, and C by the entrance from Room 9 to Room 10), one close to the other, consisting of 276 bowls, almost exclusively of Plain White wheel-made ware (Figs 4–6). The vessels imitate a Base Ring shape (Fig. 7), but not the hand-made technique of this ware (Dikaios 1969–1971: 196–197, pls 35, 35A, 36.1–3, 95.4). They were placed in three piles in an inverted position in layers, one on top of the other, with their outlines occasionally overlapping. When these deposits were covered by the destruction debris of Level IIIB, the pressure of the upper layers and the overlying debris caused deposits A and B to merge into one another, forming an impressive mass of 190 bowls (Dikaios 1969–1971: pl. 36.1–2). Deposit C contained another 86 bowls (Dikaios 1969–1971: pl. 36.3). Among these were a bowl of Mycenaean IIIC:1b shape and a few sherds of White Slip II, Mycenaean IIIB, Mycenaean IIIC:1b and IIIC:1c. Under the bowl deposits was a round pit, ca. 0.42m across and 0.14m deep. Within deposits A–B there was also an alabaster jug and its limestone lid (Dikaios 1969–1971: 292, 722, pls 138.49, 148.1, 170.14; Webb 1999: 94, 96, fig. 37.3) (Fig. 8). A few animal bones were found between the bowls in deposits A and B ca. 0.20m above the floor. At approximately the centre of the room was a pit, 0.64m across, its lower part and east end destroyed by tomb looters (Dikaios 1969–1971: 197).

Overlying the floor where it was not occupied by the bowl deposits was a layer of sand, 0.15m thick, thought by Dikaios to mark the end of the first phase of Level IIIB. A similar layer was observed in the adjacent Room 9, and Dikaios concluded that it was the result of an inundation caused by the rise in the level of the street to the south of the building following the destruction of Level IIIA (Dikaios 1969–1971: 197). It was on this layer of sand in Room 10 that the catastrophe that brought about the demise



Figure 4. Chrysostomos Paraskeva excavating the bowl deposits in Room 10 of the Ashlar Building, 1949. Reproduced with the permission of the Department of Antiquities



Figure 5. Northwest corner of Room 10. Reproduced with the permission of the Department of Antiquities



Figure 6. Room 10 (foreground) and Room 9 (background) during excavation, view from the east. Reproduced with the permission of the Department of Antiquities



Figure 7. Plain White wheel-made bowl from deposit B, Room 10. Reproduced with the permission of the Department of Antiquities



Figure 8. Alabaster jug from deposit A, Room 10. Photo and drawing reproduced with the permission of the Department of Antiquities

of Level IIIB occurred, filling the room, along with many others, with a 0.80m thick fill of decomposed pisé (Dikaïos 1969–1971: 197–198, 211–212, pl. 42.5–6; Ionas 1984: 58–59).

Room 10 was also furnished in the southwest corner with two sandstone slabs, the largest 0.56 x 0.42 x 0.22m, with their edges partly carved to form a semicircular niche, corresponding to a shallow depression in the floor (Fig. 6). Dikaïos believed that

this niche originally accommodated the statuette of the Horned God in Level IIIB (Dikaïos 1969–1971: 196–199; Webb 1999: 99).

Some other rooms produced signs of a ritual that could be associated with Rooms 9 and 10. Room 13, to the north of Room 10 (Fig. 3), produced an iron knife, an antler and fish bones, together with, among other vessels, a fragmentary pithos, two Canaanite jars, a jug and a ladle and a piece of gold leaf, while

another ox skull was found in the well in Room 1A, which provided access to Room 45. A terracotta bull figurine was found in Room 26 to the north, which communicated with Room 45 (Dikaios 1969–1971: 199, 207). The east hall, Room 12, also created during the reconstruction of the Ashlar Building, did not communicate with the rooms just described, but also possessed a central hearth and opened into Room 11, immediately to the east of Room 10, where a very small bronze female figurine was found. This was interpreted as a sign of the veneration of a female deity, in parallel with the worship of the male deity in Room 10 (Dikaios 1969–1971: 200, 295; Webb 1999: 99–101).

In view of the connections between Rooms 9, 10, 13 and 45, implied both by the architectural plan and the finds, it is reasonable to suggest that they formed a unit (Webb 1999: 92). Dikaios reconstructed a ritual for Level IIIB, focused on the statuette of the Horned God, in which 15 skulls of oxen recovered in Rooms 9, 10, 13 and 45 (Webb 1999: 96, 99), the miniature ox horns in gold leaf from Rooms 45 and 9, the bull statuette from Room 45 and the numerous bowls from Room 10 were all involved. Even the stone trough from Room 9 and a second one from Room 10, found lying in the debris of the destruction of Level IIIB, were thought to be associated with cult (Dikaios 1969–1971: 199; Webb 1999: 96, 99; note a stone trough found full of bowls at Ugarit, see Yon 2006: 57, 59, fig. 32).

Alongside this evidence for cult and ritual, the remaining parts of the building yielded clear evidence of daily life, such as hearths, bathrooms, querns and other utilitarian objects (Dikaios 1969–1971: 211). The rearrangement of the structure, and especially the division of large spaces into smaller rooms, hints at a need to house more people, also evident in the construction of an upper storey (Dikaios 1969–1971: 524). The gold and ivory finds in the sanctuary complex (Dikaios 1969–1971: 293, 296), while they cannot be compared with earlier finds from Enkomi, are signs of relative wealth and imply that the management of cult was still in the hands of a well-established elite.

Like its predecessor, the Level IIIB reconstructed building ended in a severe destruction (Dikaios 1969–1971: 211–212, 530–531). In Area I mudbrick walls collapsed, forming a destruction layer some 0.80m thick. Room 10 was buried under masses of debris. A bronze knife (Webb 1999: 95–96, fig. 38.1) was found under the northeast wall, and a stone trough, similar to the one from Room 9, in an upturned position in the destruction debris. Dikaios also associated with this destruction a hoard of fragmentary bronze objects, including a scale pan and the leg of a rod tripod, found on top of the lower ashlar course of the east wall of Room 10 (Catling 1964: 288–289, 463, pl. 54a; Dikaios 1969–1971: 295–296, 815, n. 641, pls 35.1, 36.4, 146.21, 172.2–11; Webb 1999: 96).

The doorjamb of Room 9 collapsed towards Room 45 to the west and remained in an inclined position in

the mass of mudbricks which covered the floor and the skulls of oxen (Dikaios 1969–1971: 211–212, 216, pls 37.5, 42.4). Similar effects were noted in Room 13 to the north of Room 10, where the destruction brought down a plastered mudbrick wall, which was hardened by the fire that followed (Dikaios 1969–1971: 200–201, 211, 216, pl. 42.6 and Section 4, pl. 280.2). A dramatic outcome of this catastrophe was the recovery of the skeleton of a child under the debris in Room 8 in the southern sector (Dikaios 1969–1971: pl. 39.1–4), while the remains of two more children were excavated in Room 2, having been dumped there, according to Dikaios (1969–1971: 194), after the catastrophe.

Dikaios placed much emphasis on these finds in his interpretation of the destruction and post-destruction events, reaching the conclusion that the former happened suddenly. He also refers to the recovery in Room 9 of an articulated animal bone with the joint still in position, suggesting that it was deposited just prior to the destruction before the flesh had decomposed. He concluded that the catastrophe was due to an earthquake (Dikaios 1969–1971: 197–198, 212; Kling 1989: 37). He also reported, however, that a synchronous destruction in Area III was accompanied by signs, such as repairs to the fortifications, accumulations of sea pebbles and sling bullets, suggesting that the residents of this sector were preparing to face a hostile attack (Dikaios 1969–1971: 531; Ionas 1984: 58–59; Mountjoy 2005).

In any case, Dikaios believed that the effects of this catastrophe were short-lived and that life resumed in the town. The Ashlar Building was once more reconstructed, although at a smaller scale (Dikaios 1969–1971: 530–531, pls 278–279). The buildings in both Areas I and III were partially repaired, without alterations to their existing plans, as the inhabitants adjusted to the damaged buildings and to the arrangement of open spaces surrounded by rooms (Dikaios 1969–1971: 213–218). Rooms 2 and 3 in the south sector of the Ashlar Building were turned into open spaces, in which masses of broken pottery mixed with debris were dumped. The upper surface of the debris was levelled to create a new, earthen floor (Floor I), associated with Level IIIC (Dikaios 1969–1971: 216), the last phase of habitation identified at Enkomi. This floor was just below the modern surface and had largely been obliterated by cultivation (Dikaios 1969–1971: 213).

According to the excavator, Level IIIC is an extension of Level IIIB from a cultural point of view. Apart from a small proportion of traditional wares, and much Decorated LC III ware, the most prevalent pottery belongs to the Mycenaean IIIC:1c Granary class, with wavy line decoration, which in some rooms reached as high as 54–83.6% of the total ceramic assemblage (Dikaios 1969–1971: 326–328, 457–459, 470–472). Dikaios fixed the end of this level around 1075 BC, which he believed was the end of Mycenaean IIIC:1, since no later pottery appeared (Ionas 1984: 59).

A significant find from this level (Room 13) is a jug that is very similar to an example from Karphi on Crete assigned by Desborough (in personal correspondence with Dikaios) to the early C11th BC (Dikaios 1969–1971: 316–317, 492–493; pl. 95.26, 106.5; Webb 1999: 99).

It was in a pit, 0.45 x 0.24m and 0.50–0.60m deep, dug in the debris from Level IIIB and through its levelled surface in the southeast corner of Room 10, that the Horned God was found, facing the doorway in a standing position with his feet touching Floor II (Dikaios 1969–1971: 197, 215–216, pl. 280.8; Webb 1999: 99). On the basis of stratigraphic observations and associated finds, Dikaios argued that the statuette of the Horned God had been buried in the destruction debris in Room 10 and subsequently unearthed and installed in the pit (Dikaios 1969–1971: 199, 212, 215–219). Since the fill of the pit corresponds to the general post-abandonment fill overlying Floor I, the pit itself appears to have remained open during Floor I (Webb 2001: 76–77). Unearthing a statuette only to place it in an open pit is a somewhat unorthodox way of doing things. Dikaios, however, interpreted it as a sign of the insecurity felt by the inhabitants of Enkomi following a series of disasters (Dikaios 1969–1971: 198).

For Dikaios, the treatment of the Horned God statuette was a clear sign of an effort to reinstate the cult associated with this image before the destruction (Dikaios 1969–1971: 198–199, 212–220). He conjectured that Rooms 9 and 10 continued to be the focus of the ritual, this time for Floor I. He based this on the evidence of pits dug through the debris, which he thought were caused by the search for the statuette, and, more importantly, on observations relating to Rooms 45, 13 and 10. Thus, he reported the construction in Room 45 of two stone hearths with traces of fire on Floor I (Dikaios 1969–1971: 216, pl. 37.5) and the recovery of ox skulls in Room 13, which he linked to similar finds in Rooms 45 and 9 in Level IIIB. He argued that after the Level IIIB destruction the ritual use of Room 45 was discontinued and moved to Room 13 (Dikaios 1969–1971: 197–198, 213, 216, 218–219). The latter was part of the central tripartite hall of the original Ashlar Building, but became a separate room in Level IIIB, when screen walls were built on each side of the pillars (Dikaios 1969–1971: 200–201, 216). The doorway from Room 10 to Room 13 was blocked (see, however, Burdajewicz 1985) and a new opening was created from Room 9. Room 13 was also accessed through Room 26, in which four wheel-made Base Ring ware bowls and three of Plain White wheel-made ware, imitating the ubiquitous Base Ring II bowl type, were found, recalling the vessels found in the bowl deposits in Room 10, Level IIIB.

On the levelled surface of the debris in Room 13, which he associated with Level IIIC and described as Floor I, Dikaios found eight ox skulls and at least one antler, together with two Canaanite jars. He thought that these finds, which recalled those on Floors III–II

in Room 45, provided proof of the resumption of the same ritual (Dikaios 1969–1971: 216–219, pl. 43.4). In fact, however, Room 13 was already part of the cult complex, as an antler was found there in Level IIIB (Dikaios 1969–1971: 201). Level IIIC in Room 9 also contained faunal remains, particularly bucrania and antlers. In Dikaios' view, the cult complex was still accessible through the south entrance and remained secluded from the rest of the building (Webb 1999: 99). The east hall (Rooms 11 and 12), where the female statuette was found, was completely destroyed at the end of Level IIIB and not reconstructed, placing all the emphasis on the veneration of the Horned God (Dikaios 1969–1971: 198; Webb 1999: 99).

Enkomi came to an end with the close of Level IIIC. The last inhabitants left without retrieving the statue, possibly in the face of a new danger (Dikaios 1969–1971: 219–220, 534). Webb (2001: 77, 79), however, stresses that the site shows no evidence for catastrophic events at this time. In both Areas I and III Dikaios (1969–1971: 536) collected sherds and terracottas of the Cypro-Geometric period, which he attributed to a re-habitation of the site after about a quarter of a century. A cemetery of the Cypro-Geometric III and Cypro-Archaic periods was also investigated in the vicinity and it is possible that a humble settlement existed here at this time (Dikaios 1969–1971: 220, 302).

Rituals in the Sanctuary of the Horned God

The exceptional nature of the Sanctuary of the Horned God and its location in a monumental residential building have fuelled many discussions related to religion and cult on ancient Cyprus. In all these the statuette of the Horned God plays an important role. With a height of ca. 55cm, it is the largest known Late Bronze Age metal statuette from the Eastern Mediterranean. It is a typical example of Cypriot eclecticism with stylistic and iconographic features from various Near Eastern and Aegean traditions. These have led to numerous suggestions for the identity of the deity depicted, including Baal, Reshef, Nergal, Kinyras and Apollo (Dikaios 1962; 1969–1971: 301, 527–529, pls 139–144; Catling 1964: 256; Carless Hulin 1989; Webb 1999: 227–228). The context, however, suggests that it is an image of an indigenous divinity and the horned headgear no doubt alludes to the importance of the bull in Cypriot cult, as particularly evident in this sanctuary (Webb 1999: 99). The presence of ox skulls and miniature horns of gold leaf in Rooms 45 and 9 in Level IIIB led Dikaios to conclude that the cult was introduced at this time, although he suggests that it may have originated in Level IIIA (Dikaios 1969–1971: 209–211, 527–530).

The date of the Horned God cannot be determined on the basis of its context, as this gives only a *terminus ante quem* for its manufacture. Such exceptional artefacts often have long histories, which can

transcend several centuries before final deposition (e.g. Ornan 2012). Iconographic comparisons are not very helpful either, since there are no close parallels (Carless Hulin 1989). As Dikaios noted (1969–1971: 529–530), the closest stylistic affinities are to be found on some LC IIC and IIIA ivories.

In fact, it is likely that the image of the Horned God was in use in the Ashlar Building before Level IIIB. As noted above, in the original plan of Level IIIA (**Fig. 1**), Room 10 was part of the central monumental, pillared hall, which seems to have structured movement and interaction within the edifice (Fisher 2006–2007: 92–96). It was the most elaborately built part of the Ashlar Building, with direct access via a vestibule to the north, which was in turn accessed from the main entrance. This would have been a suitable place for such an artefact, and it is possible, although conjectural, that the statuette was associated with the building from its beginning.

The three bowl deposits in Room 10 (**Figs 4–6**) are a remarkable and unparalleled find and need to be further contextualised and interpreted. They have certainly not attracted the attention they deserve. The spatial association of the statuette and these vessels has important repercussions for the reconstruction of cult practices and for our understanding of both the life history of the Ashlar Building (on the use of this term in an architectural setting, see LaMotta & Schiffer 1999; Peltenburg 2003: 100) and the last years of occupation at Enkomi.

Dikaios recognised the importance of these deposits and described them as ‘instruments of the ritual’ (Dikaios 1969–1971: 199), suggesting that they were placed together with offerings of portions of sacrificed animals. Such excessive quantities of meat as would be offered in 276 vessels do not, however, seem to be a reasonable explanation. Indeed, the fact that these bowls were found inverted speaks against their use as containers of food offerings. Since the form of the vessels is suitable for liquids and they are often found in sacred contexts, it has also been suggested that they were used for libations (e.g. Åström 1987: 12–13; Vaughan 1991: 124; Steel 1998: 291; 2004: 174–176, n. 188; 2010: 110–112).

Libation involves the pouring of a liquid (water, wine, milk, oil, honey etc.) from a vessel either onto the ground, into cavities in the ground, on altars or into other vessels etc. (Burkert 1985: 70–73; Heimpel 1987–1990; Patton 2009). Libation vessels include drinking vases, such as cups and bowls, and pouring vessels, such as jugs, of various materials. Libation is usually perceived as an act of offering or sacrifice performed to please the gods or venerate ancestors. There is abundant iconographic and literary evidence for libation rituals from Mesopotamia, the Hittite world and the Near East (Frantz–Szabó 1987–1990).

In Cyprus the performance of libations is not well documented. There is some iconographic evidence, including a Cypro-Aegean seal from Idalion depicting

three men standing among several vases (Karageorghis 1959; Webb 1999: 194–195, 197, fig. 72.1). One holds a cup over a conical rhyton, itself on top of a crater. This is a complex act, involving three different vessels in a way that might reflect real practice. Further evidence for the performance of libations on Cyprus is provided by the so-called Red Lustrous ware arm-vessels, which appear to have played a role in elite funerary ritual at Enkomi, Maroni, Kourion and elsewhere in LC IIA and B (e.g. Lagarce & Lagarce 1986: 163–164; Steel 1998: 295).

The fact, however, that the bowls in Room 10 belong to a type with a very long history of everyday use (Vaughan 1991), together with their large number, suggests that they relate to drinking, rather than to libation. Libation vases, further, are not found in such large numbers and in iconography libation is usually an individual rather than a collective act (Danmanville 1955; Homès-Fredericq 1987–1990; Rittig 1987–1990). If we assume that each bowl from Room 10 was used by one individual, it is difficult to imagine 276 people performing a libation in this small room within a short space of time. The animal bones found amidst the bowls also do not offer a good match for a libation ritual. Carinated bowls of this type were well suited to drinking and eating and may have served both purposes. It is thus possible that the Room 10 vessels were used during an event involving eating and drinking, that is in a feasting occasion. If so, their very large number suggests that this occasion was of an exceptional character.

Feasting typically involves the consumption of food and drink beyond immediate physical needs (see e.g. Hamilakis 2008 with bibliography). It acquires an exceptional character when it is socially motivated and related to notions of performativity and conspicuous consumption, and when it is tied to specific times, places and equipment, i.e. when it becomes ritualised. It is thus a social construct that can be symbolically exploited and linked either to the notion of exclusive participation or to a broader, collective identity, providing an opportunity for both guests and hosts to signal or reaffirm their social position (Wright 2004: 50). It occurs in a variety of contexts, domestic, funerary or sacred, and can deploy specific, repeated rituals which are important for social interaction (Hamilakis & Sherratt 2012: 187–189, 190–192). There is also much diversity in the scale of participation, which can vary from a select few to hundreds of participants (Hamilakis 2008: 7; Letteson & Driessen 2008). Such events are characterised by a distinctive diet or/and exceptional dining sets and are often manipulated by the elite for the display of power (Steel 2004: 164).

Feasting in Cyprus

On Cyprus, there is evidence for ritual feasting, probably conducted at a communal level, already

in the Middle Chalcolithic period (Peltenburg 2001: 129–133; Steel 2004: 165–168; Webb & Frankel 2008). In the early years of the Bronze Age, feasting became increasingly formalised and was probably exploited as an instrument for articulating social hierarchy in funerary rituals (Manning 1993: 44–48; Webb & Frankel 2008, 2010). In the Late Bronze Age the Cypriots seem to have incorporated foreign customs within preexisting practices (Steel 2004: 174). LC drinking sets included craters, jugs, bowls and cups, found repeatedly in funerary contexts in which alcoholic beverages must have played an important role. In the absence of written sources, iconographic evidence and excavated areas used for feasting (Steel 2004: 172–173), we can only approach this phenomenon through the study of food remains and feasting equipment and, in particular, through vessels found in contexts, numbers and modes of deposition that suggest their use on special occasions involving the consumption of food and drink.

Of particular importance for the discussion of Cypriot feasting rituals is a LC IIC deposit from Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios* (Steel 2004: 170–171; South 2008). It consists of an accumulation of vessels found in a well-like shaft more than 3m deep, perhaps initially intended as a well. The shaft is located in Area 173 of the monumental Building X, which has revealed considerable evidence for administration and complex organization. The upper layers of the fill within the shaft contained post-abandonment building debris. Below this debris were significant quantities of animal bone and pottery, the latter including more than 100 vessels and some 600 non-joining sherds (South 2008: 309–310). This material is very unusual in that it consists primarily of imported Mycenaean vases and their local imitations and, in particular, fine tableware, mainly cups and bowls. Some have pictorial or abstract decoration (South 1988: fig. 2, pl. XXXV; 2008: 311–312). This contrasts with all other excavated contexts at the site, where, with the exception of several rich tombs, Mycenaean pottery is very rare. Traditional Cypriot fine wares, such as White Slip and Base Ring, are present in very small quantities and otherwise common utilitarian wares occur very rarely, if at all (South 2008: 310–311, 314).

The faunal material from the shaft came from a large number of sheep and goats, together with numerous game bird and fish bones. Lentils, figs, grapes, pears and olives were also plentiful (South 2008: 311–312). It is unclear where the lavish meal which these remains represent took place. One candidate, however, is the large courtyard (Area 157) of Building X, which forms the core of the building and occupies about 100m² and which was accessible through the main entrance in the south façade. It provides an impressive setting, its walls faced with ashlar blocks. Although no other features suggestive of feasting, such as hearths or

benches, were found in this courtyard, large numbers of cooking ware sherds, some fine wares and a fairly large quantity of animal bone were recovered on the floor (for additional suggestions see South 2008: 312–313).

Almost half the vessels found in the shaft are near complete, even if broken, suggesting rapid accumulation. According to the excavator, sherds were more densely clumped in patches, as if thrown into the shaft in basket loads (South 2008: 310). The pots must then have been carried here from elsewhere, even if not very far away, and the nearly complete state of many suggests that they had been carefully collected after breakage. In addition, the shaft was reserved exclusively for this purpose and does not contain any other intrusions of rubbish (South 2008: 310–312). Based on the relative position and dispersal of pots and sherds in the shaft, South concluded that, while perhaps not the result of just one dumping event, the vessels accumulated over a relatively short period.

The context, and in particular the fact that this imported ceramic assemblage was found within the most impressive building at Kalavassos, speak for an elite-sponsored event that was most probably charged with symbolic meaning. The removal from circulation of so many valuable vessels and the consumption of meat and fish in large quantities can be associated with the notion of conspicuous consumption (Croft 1989: 70; Steel 2004: 171–172; South 2008: 312; cf. Hamilakis 2008: 7–10). Kalavassos is also notable for the display of drinking vessels in elite funerary contexts, since several tombs at the site, especially those around Building X, have revealed much evidence for the provision of food and drink accompanied by a variety of Mycenaean and Cypriot tableware (Steel 2004; South 2008: 313).

Other evidence for feasting in Cyprus may include accumulations of fine tableware, bones and seeds in wells, for example at Hala Sultan Tekke, at Myrtou *Pighades* (Steel 2004: 177; Karageorghis 2007; South 2008: 314), where the faunal remains include a large number of deer antlers (Zeuner & Cornwall 1957: 99), and the extraordinary deposit of several thousands of miniature and other vases in Stratum III at Athienou (Webb 1999: 21–29; 2001: 78–79; Karageorghis 2011). The finds from two early LC IIIA wells at Kouklia *Evreti*, TE III and TE VIII, which contain large quantities of pottery and in particular drinking bowls might also represent the remnants of feasting activity (Maier 1969: 38–41; Steel 2004: 171–172, with bibliography). The range of animals deposited in well TE III in particular, with large quantities of deer and cattle, is not common for LC faunal assemblages, and there is some similarity with the Area 173 assemblage at Kalavassos, suggesting formalised patterns relating to the disposal of feasting remains on the island in the later years of the LC period.

Feasting and deposition in the Sanctuary of the Horned God

Let us now return to the Sanctuary of the Horned God and the bowls in Room 10. The three deposits consist almost exclusively of plain carinated bowls (Figs 4–6). The shape has a long pedigree in Cyprus in Base Ring ware as the preferred drinking vessel. As Russell (1986: 66) has observed, it is well-suited to the consumption of wine, as the sediment settles in the central cavity, leaving a clear liquid at the top (Steel 1998: 292; 2010: 110–112). The Room 10 bowls, however, may be differentiated from earlier, Base Ring carinated bowls in that they are not hand-made, as had been the norm for centuries, but turned on the wheel. In LC IIIA the Base Ring workshops could no longer meet the increased demand and potters experimented with the wheel, producing wheel-made imitations in a coarse fabric (Jones & Catling 1986: 595) (Fig. 7). The persistence of this form and its occurrence in sacred contexts can only be explained if we assume that it served a well-established function in cult performances (Iacovou 1988: 9). At Kition ten examples were found in Room 38C, a small storeroom associated with Temple 4 (Karageorghis 1985: 132, pl. CXCIII; Karageorghis & Demas 1985: 71). This seems to follow a long tradition, as large numbers of hand-made Base Ring bowls were found in likely ritual use at Myrtou *Pighades* (Catling 1957: 36–38; Steel 2004: 175–176; 2010: 110–112) and with the Ingot God in the Sanctuary of the Ingot God at Enkomi in the C11th BC (Courtois 1971: 254–256, figs 93, 94a–c, e–f, l–m, 95b–d).

There can be little doubt that the bowl deposits of Room 10 are the residue of ceremonial activity, involving large-scale consumption in the form of a ritual meal. This is inferred not only by the extremely large number of vessels, but also by the fact that they are all of exactly the same type. It is as if a workshop had been assigned the task of producing these vases. If this was the case, then the occasion they were used for must have been a very particular one, since at this time Mycenaean IIIC:1b and IIIC:1c pottery, typically used for the production of drinking cups, largely predominated (Steel 2004: 174). The decision to use an old-fashioned bowl type and the possibility that they were especially commissioned must have been meaningful, both to sponsors and participants. Significantly, such vessels were not found in such large numbers elsewhere at Enkomi, or, for that matter, anywhere on the island. Their presence in Room 10 suggests a formal, communal event which included the manufacture of the vessels, their distribution to participants, the provision and preparation of food and drink and, finally, the deposition of all bowls in the same spot in the same way (cf. Letteson & Driessen 2008).

Unfortunately, there is no record of the quantity of animal bones found with the bowls or of the species

represented and no attempt was made to recover botanical remains. The ox-skulls and deer antlers from Rooms 45, 9 and 13 may also, however, be parts of animals whose meat was consumed in feasts held within the Ashlar Building. The antlers indicate that at least some of the animals involved were acquired by hunting and suggest high status feasting events. The association of feasting with ritual in this case should not, however, be taken to imply that such events were exclusively associated with cult. This would deprive ritual feasting of its social function in human interaction. Even when linked with ritual performance, feasting remains a social act aimed at the construction and maintenance of human relations. The architectural setting of the Ashlar Building, in particular, and the large quantities of food and drink are likely to have made a strong impression, with additional notions of performativity and conspicuous hospitality (cf. Hamilakis 2008: 11).

Dikaïos presented compelling evidence that large parts of the Ashlar Building were used for domestic activities. We can, therefore, plausibly suggest that what happened within its confines was organised by an individual or group residing in this building. Although of large dimensions (ca. 926m² in Level IIIA), it could not possibly, however, have housed 276 people (the number of bowls in Room 10), or even half this number. It follows that the participants in the Room 10 ritual must have come from elsewhere. An important question, then, is where did this feasting event take place? Certainly not in Room 10 itself, which measures only 2.5 x 2.5m, while Room 9 is even smaller. Presumably the users of the bowls themselves transferred them to Room 10 at the end of a meal consumed elsewhere. The presence of the statuette in this room must of course have played a role in this decision. It is less probable that the vases were deposited there by others, since the deposition of vessels one on top of the other suggests individual placement rather than more general discard or maintenance activity. In addition, they were placed just to the left of the doorway, as if positioned by people immediately entering the room, and close to the walls in an orderly and careful manner. Still, the fact remains that the feast itself could not have taken place here and that Room 10 was only one spatial referent of this ritual.

There is, in fact, no room or open space in the reconstructed Ashlar Building that could have accommodated such a large number of people, unless more than one room or space was used for this purpose, in which case the communal character of the event would have been lost. We have, then, to search elsewhere for the gathering place, possibly outside the building and probably not far from it, if the diners had to return afterwards to Room 10. This might have been an open space in an unexcavated part of the town, similar to the paved yard to the southeast of the Ashlar Building and to the west of the Sanctuary of

the Ingot God, which occupied an area of about ca. 100m² (Webb 1999: 106).

In any case, the performance of ceremonial events involving large groups of people within the confines of a private residence has important implications for our understanding of Cypriot cult practices and the organisation of space, whether ritual or secular. It seems that in the case at least of the Ashlar Building the boundaries between private and public, or sacred and secular were blurred (see relevant discussions in Knapp 1996: 75–76, 86–87; Papantoniou 2012: 306). This suggests that the residents of such buildings, who, given the architectural elaboration of their living quarters appear to have belonged to a managerial class, were also responsible for the performance of cult. Such groups may have hosted such events in order to promote their political authority (Knapp 1986). Whoever these people were, whether cult personnel or elites who had assumed this role, they were clearly linked to the performance of rituals which were more than only a private concern (Webb 1999: 101).

Beginning in the C14th BC and continuing to the LC III period, a devolution from centralised to decentralised authority is evident at Enkomi (Pickles & Peltenburg 1998; Webb 2001: 79–80). Copper-working residues, once limited to spatially restricted workshops, become widely dispersed in the town. This economic decentralisation may reflect the establishment of competing factions and associated independent metalworking installations. In this light, it has been suggested that the sanctuaries of the Horned God and the Ingot God were managed by rival social groups, in an effort to maintain political authority (Webb 2001: 79–80). Those who managed the Sanctuary of the Ingot God transformed an older statuette of a ‘smiting god’ into the novel image of the Ingot God (Papasavvas 2011). Those hosting the image of the Horned God used a different strategy.

As discussed above, all vessels in the Room 10 deposits are of the same type and fabric. There are a few sherds of other wares (Dikaios 1969–1971: 196–197), but their small size and fragmentary state suggests that they are derived from post-abandonment debris. The only complete ceramic vessel of a different type is a Mycenaean IIIC:1b bowl (Dikaios 1969–1971: 196, inv. no. 388, pl. 95.4), which, however, is similar in size and form to the Plain White wheel-made bowls. We can, thus, infer that the participants in this feasting event were of equal rank or at least used pottery of the same status, and that this would not have escaped their notice. More typically, feasting events involve the use of a stylistic hierarchy of pottery (Borgna 2004: 265; Haggis 2007, 2008: 5–6; Hamilakis & Sherratt 2012: 193), that is, vessels differentiated by shape, fabric, decoration, technique, size and quality, mirroring social inequalities amongst their users. This is not the case with the vessels from Room 10, which appear intended instead to convey an egalitarian spirit or create an illusion of a corporate identity.

There is, however, one non-ceramic exception: amongst the carinated bowls in Room 10, one vase is different in every way from the others. This is a wide-mouthed alabaster jug with a hemispherical body, a wide cylindrical neck and a lid, possibly imported from Egypt (Dikaios 1969–1971: 292, pls 138.49, 148.1, 170.14) (Fig. 8). This tankard-like vessel, 17cm high with a rim diameter of 14cm and a loop handle at mid-body, could have been a drinking vessel. If so, its material, exotic provenance, uniqueness and painted decoration are likely to have enhanced the status of its user and perhaps to have identified him or her as a principal actor in the event. The exact position of this vase within the bowl deposits is not reported, apart from a comment that it was found in the mass formed by the deposits A–B, but inspection of the photographs published by Dikaios and those in the archives of the Cyprus Museum reveals that it was placed, perhaps not by chance, on top of deposit A, near the north wall of Room 10 (Dikaios 1969–1971, pls 35.1, 4, 35A.1–2) (Figs 4, the lid of the jug, bottom right, 5–6, on top of the bowl pile on the right [deposit A]).

As already noted, the bowls in Room 10 were placed, without exception, in an inverted position. The ritual inversion of vases is well-known from the Near East to the Aegean (e.g. Privitera 2006; Caloi 2011; Hamilakis & Sherratt 2012: 193, n. 44). It is also known on Cyprus, where it finds an early occurrence in the imported Kamares cup from the so-called ‘Tomb of the Seafarer’ at Karmi, which was placed inverted by the skull of the dead (Stewart 1962; for other examples, Åström 1987).

This practice is often associated with funerary rituals, especially on Minoan Crete, where it is sometimes linked with food or liquid offerings for the dead, or for chthonic deities. Inversion is also commonly interpreted as a way of terminating the use of the upturned vases (Hamilakis 2008; Caloi 2011). In this respect, we may note that if the Room 10 bowls were specifically produced for a feasting event, this may have been with the intention that they would be deposited *en masse* and not retrieved to be used elsewhere. This fits well with a picture of ‘structured deposition’, involving the formal disposal or hoarding of the remnants of feasting. In such acts of structured deposition vessels are often placed in rows or/and in an inverted position, sometimes in ditches or pits that ensure their preservation (Borgna 2004: 263; Hamilakis & Sherratt 2012: 190–192; for earlier examples of structured deposition on Cyprus, see Peltenburg 2003: 113, n. 24, with bibliography).

The choice of wheel-made carinated bowls imitating a Base Ring form for the Room 10 deposits may also be relevant to this discussion. Elsewhere at this time drinking cups and skyphoi were predominantly made in Mycenaean IIIC:1b and IIIC:1c wares, yet the organisers and participants in this feasting event chose an older vessel type (Fig. 7). This insistence on a traditional bowl form, perhaps

commissioned for the occasion, hints at a deliberate evocation of the past and perhaps a conscious attempt to recreate past memories. Feasting events not only leave physical traces, but also produce a mnemonic record, which incorporates common knowledge and experiences and could be exploited to promote political goals (Hamilakis 1998, 2010: 189–195; Yoffee 2007; Hamilakis & Labanyi (eds) 2008; Hamilakis & Sherratt 2012: 193–194). In Room 10 of the Sanctuary of the Horned God, the bowl deposits may represent a mnemonic record symbolically linked to the past both through an association with the Horned God and the use of an obsolete vessel form.

The abandonment of Enkomi

This reconstruction of the events of Level IIIB in the Sanctuary of the Horned God has important implications for understanding the nature and processes of the abandonment of the entire town of Enkomi. The Sanctuary of the Ingot God remained in operation after the Sanctuary of the Horned God had been formally closed, implying that the residents of the reconstructed Ashlar Building had by this time abandoned the town, while other groups or factions stayed for a longer period (on the vexed question of the chronology and ceramic associations of the last phases of the town see, Dikaios 1969–1971: 464–465, 489–495; Courtois 1971; Ionas 1984; Iacovou 1988: 4–11; 1989; Kling 1989: 37–39, 81–83; Webb 2001). The abandonment of the Sanctuary of the Ingot God also involved extensive ritual performances (Webb 1999: 102–113). In both cases, these performances appear to have been related to the formal cessation of these cult sites and the ritual closure of cult installations, involving the abandonment *in situ* of the bronze statuettes around which each cult was centered (Webb 2001: 79–80; Papasavvas 2011).

The Ashlar Building and the sanctuary it housed were not, however, abruptly abandoned, as Dikaios believed, but subject to a well-organised, gradual process (Karageorghis 1990: 30; Webb 2001: 79). More generally, the abandonment of the town appears to have involved the progressive closure of houses and the termination of rituals performed within them, possibly starting at the end of LC IIIA and continuing in LC IIIB, with different parts of the town affected in different periods. Given the emphasis on the creation of a mnemonic record of feasting activity in Room 10 of the Sanctuary of the Horned God, it is possible to suggest not only that this event was part of a formal closure ceremony, but also perhaps a preparation for departure designed to reinforce group ties and to consolidate the corporate identity of the particular group or faction centered around the Ashlar Building. The magnificent Horned God statuette and the bowl deposits were left behind and never retrieved, not because the residents of the Ashlar Building were on

the run or under attack (Dikaios 1969–1971: 220), but because they had a primary symbolic connection with the town and its past. These objects and their formal deposition were meant to keep memory alive and with it the status of the residents of the building. This may also explain the large number of participants who took part in the feast. The move to a new settlement may have involved significant social and political changes, leading to the expansion of factional groupings and an increased need for inclusionary ritual events.

In this respect, the evidence from Area 173 at Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios* may signal similar behaviour. The Area 173 ceramic assemblage fits stylistically within a limited period, the last part of LC IIC, which immediately predates the abandonment of the settlement that had flourished for over two centuries (South 2008: 311–312). On the analogy of the closure ceremonies, including feasting, associated with abandonment at Enkomi, it is reasonable to suggest that something similar took place at Kalavassos at the time of its abandonment. The ceramics are more elaborate in the case of Kalavassos than at Enkomi—but the times were different. At Enkomi the emphasis was on a traditional ceramic type, perhaps to create a mnemonic record of particular relevance within a conservative ritual tradition.

Although separated from each other by more than a century, these two feasting events have much in common. Both took place in a grandiose ashlar building, both involved exceptional depositional behaviour and, more importantly, both were associated with events coinciding with the end of their respective settlements, although at Enkomi, unlike Kalavassos, these events were flavoured with an additional religious component. These similarities are too significant to be accidental. They would appear to reflect common ritual behaviour associated with the formal closure of specific buildings and sites. The decision by the residents of the Ashlar Building to host a feasting event on such a large scale is nevertheless a sign of dynamism, a dynamism from which the new settlement at Salamis was about to profit—if we assume that those who left Enkomi moved there, where, unsurprisingly, one of the first signs of occupation is a new sanctuary (Iacovou 1989: 55; Webb 2001: 79).

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