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human remains in antiquity

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Chapter 3

Inscribing bodies in Bronze Age Cyprus

Louise Steel

The human body is increasingly the focus of intellectual enquiry within archaeology. This chapter draws upon the understanding that the body is ‘as much a cultural phenomenon as it is a biological entity’. It also recognises the materiality of the body and how it interacts with other materials to co-produce material and social worlds, enabling us to examine how the body becomes entangled within a web of connections. Drawing upon representations of the human form and associated material assemblages, it explores how the body was shaped, moulded and inscribed in Bronze Age Cyprus, creating what Csordas describes as ‘a performing self of appearance, display, and impression management’. These diverse interactions with the human body included altering the actual surface of the body by tattooing, scarification and piercings, as well as less permanent practices, such as cosmetics, adornment, clothing, hairstyles. These practices created a social skin: ‘the surface of the body... becomes the symbolic stage upon which the drama of socialization is enacted’. This paper considers how such bodily practices were incorporated within Early–Middle Cypriot society.

Introduction

Decorating, covering, uncovering or otherwise altering the human form in accordance with social notions of everyday propriety or sacred dress, beauty or solemnity, status or changes in status, or on occasion of the violation and inversion of such notions, seems to have been a concern of every human society of which we have knowledge.

(Turner 2012, 486)

The human body is increasingly the focus of intellectual enquiry in archaeology (cf. Knapp and Meskell 1997; Rautman 2000; Hamilakis *et al.* 2002; Joyce 2005; Borič and Robb 2008; Robb and Harris 2013; Attala and Steel 2019). This chapter draws upon the understanding that the body is ‘as much a cultural phenomenon as it is a biological entity’ (Csordas 1994, 4, my emphasis). The external body is shaped, marked, clothed and adorned in various ways – phenomena that archaeologists have traditionally interpreted as a culturally informed means of communicating identity, status and personhood. The focus of this chapter accordingly is the myriad ways in which the Early–Middle Cypriot (EC–MC) body was manipulated, in effect viewing ‘the body as the scene of display’ (Joyce 2005, 139). To do so it draws explicitly upon notions of social skin (Turner 2012), layering (Knappett 2006) and performativity (Butler 1986; 1988).

This chapter also recognizes the materiality of the body (Joyce 2005, 140; Sofaer 2006, 64–69). It explores how the body interacts with other materials to co-produce material and social worlds, enabling us to examine how the body becomes entangled within a web of connections (cf. Attala and Steel 2019). In so doing, it examines how bodies matter within the material world, recognizing how peoples' lived, embodied experiences entail physical, tactile engagement with the material world – objects and substances (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1945/2014). As Tilley comments, 'the human body provides the fundamental mediation point between thought and the world' (1994, 14). This nuance allows us to move beyond a notion of the body simply as an item of material culture waiting to be inscribed (Schildkrout 2004) or 'a passive lump of clay or *tabula rasa*' (Csordas 1999, 178–179), but instead allows us to think about how different materials interacted with the body, the sensory experiences involved in marking or ornamenting the body (cf. Fayers-Kerr 2019; Steel 2019) and how matter shaped peoples' bodily experiences, thereby creating personhood (cf. Fowler 2004).

It is increasingly recognized that study of ancient bones allows us to engage with ancient people's embodied experiences (cf. Joyce 2005, 148–149; Zvelebil and Weber 2013). Bioarchaeology however, gives us only a fleeting glimpse into the physical shaping and performance of the body in the Early–Middle Cypriot periods, hampered not only by the fragmentary state of skeletal material but also the mixing and co-mingling of bones inherent in secondary burial practices (Harper and Fox 2008), and is further exacerbated by limited study of this material in earlier excavations (Keswani 2004, 26). Instead, our primary source of evidence for staging the body is the rich repertoire of representations of the human body in the Red Polished ware: plank figures and images of humans on pots. These issues will be further explored with reference to the physical evidence for personal adornment and body marking.

The social skin: preforming the body

Archaeologists have variously explored social messages encoded by body markings, ornamentation and dress through the examination of figurative material and items of personal adornment (see discussion in Joyce 2005, 142–144; see also Mina 2016 for EC–MC Cyprus). Moving beyond simply documenting the marking of the body's surface, this chapter aims to explore this materialization as evidence for past embodied experiences. Drawing upon Butler's discussion of performativity (1986; 1988) it aims to examine how social identities and personhood are experienced and mediated through the body, especially through manipulation of material symbols such as clothing and personal adornment. People's identities are continually produced through repeated bodily actions and material engagements which are situated within accepted cultural rules (Butler 1986, 39). Performativity emphasizes not only embodied experience, but equally the *agency* of doing and thus *becoming* a socially-constructed person.

Turner's concept of the social skin allows us to explore how the body was both physically staged and performed. The body's surface becomes what he describes as a 'symbolic stage' (2012, 486), effectively the scene of social reproduction and cultural

performance, where kinship, gender roles and political relations are enacted, all of which are articulated through a variety of bodily adornment – from apparel, head-dresses, and ornamentation to actual physical shaping of the body. Bodies might be temporarily inscribed through body painting and treatment of head and body hair, or more permanently marked through piercings, scarification and tattooing, all of which convey cultural meaning. Embodied experiences of the social skin shape individual identities and personhood, but equally situate the performed body within a wider social group, communicating not only group membership but also informing both wearer and viewer of their place within society. Turner's social skin elides neatly with the concept of layering the body, which recognizes that the boundaries of the body are not fixed at the skin but can be extended through the incorporation of material objects (Knappett 2006, 241–242); this might be achieved through body modification (tattooing, scarification, depilation), cosmetics, hairstyles, as well as material culture, such as clothing, personal adornment and equally objects that are regularly held and handled, extending indeed to the physical environment in which the body is located. Both approaches draw attention to the importance of material entanglements in the socialization of the body. The relationship between body, somatic experience and material culture is taken forward by Malafouris's discussion (2008) of embodied cognition. He discusses how objects (in his case the Mycenaean sword) are incorporated into the body schema and recognizes how being (or indeed *becoming*, see Butler 1986; 1988) a Mycenaean warrior depends on the repetitive embodied interplay between a person, a (layered) object (the sword) and the mind.

Turner argues that the social skin creates a 'social boundary between the individual actor and other actors' (2012, 503), that it in some way separates. As Joyce comments (2005, 142), the concept of the body surface as a boundary (physical or conceptual) is problematic. Indeed, there is increasing understanding of the fluidity and porosity of personhood, distinct from a western Enlightenment perspective of the bounded individual (cf. Fowler 2004). Thinking about bodies not as separate bounded entities but instead from an agential realist perspective (Barad 2003; 2007) encourages us to think of relationships between matter and the co-mingling of substances. Emphasizing the materiality of the body and recognizing it to be part of the matter of the world (cf. Attala and Steel 2019) draws attention to the porosity of the body and blurs the boundaries between flesh, skin, hair and other intra-acting materials. Pigments, tools used in scarification or depilation, textiles, leather, furs and other substances work with and co-produce the body. Certainly, numerous ethnographies inform us of how personhood is formed through the blending of person, substance and peoples' shared experiences involved in the material production of the body. Fayers-Kerr (2019) for example, discusses the generativity of earthy matter amongst the Mun of southwest Ethiopia and the importance of body painting and the tactile material engagement with mud and clays in mediating communities and kinship. Through these material interactions 'people are interlinked within complex networks of social ties, they are porous and become socialised through flows of substances' (Steel 2019, 102). Returning to Malafouris's extended body schema (2008), we can see how the body incorporates myriad other materials.

Representing the body in Early–Middle Bronze Age Cyprus

How then might we explore the ‘fleeting performativity of living bodies’ (Joyce 2005, 145) in Bronze Age Cyprus? There is a rich seam of representational material from Early–Middle Bronze Age Cyprus (ca. 2500–1650 BC, Table 3.1) depicting the human body, in particular in the Red Polished ware (Morris 1985, 135–162; Karageorghis 1991; a Campo 1994; Knox 2012; Serwint 2016, 404–407; Webb 2016). These include incised decorations on EC pottery, plank figures and three-dimensional scenes of humans engaged in communal activities modelled around Red Polished jugs and bowls. For the most part this decorative material is from the north coast, in particular the cemeteries of Lapithos, Bellapais Vounous and Deneia (Fig. 3.1). The following discussion focuses on how objects might open a window onto somatic experiences and the performed body on Bronze Age Cyprus, drawing equally on items of personal adornment or otherwise used to inscribe the body. The aim is to reveal the Cypriot *topical body* (Csordas 1994, 5), how the body was variously staged and experienced within a web of material and cultural connections.

Table 3.1. Approximate dates for the Early and Middle Bronze Ages on Cyprus

Phase	Abbreviation	Approx. dates cal BC
Philia facies/Early Cypriot	(Philia/EC)	2500/2450–2250/2200
Early Cypriot	(EC) I–III	2250/2200–2000/1950
Middle Cypriot	(MC) I–III	2000/1950–1680/1650

(after Webb 2018, table 1)

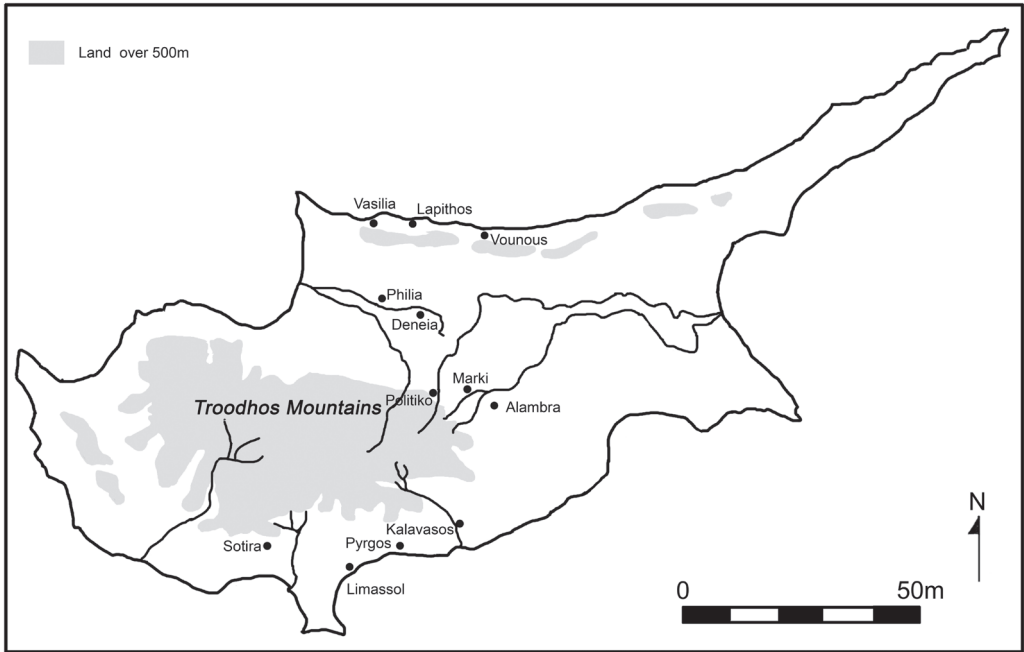


Figure 3.1. Map of EC-MC Cyprus (drawing: L. Steel).

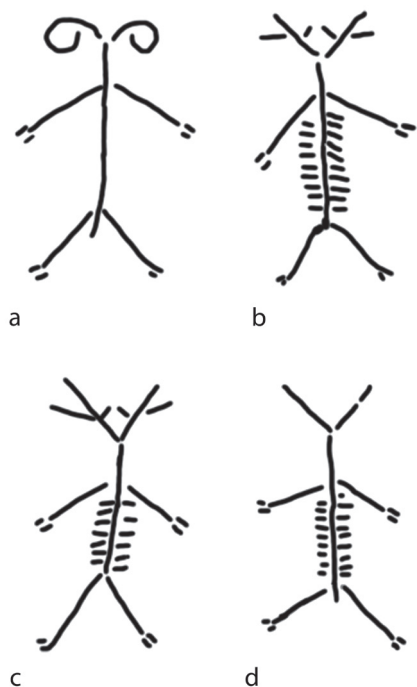


Figure 3.2. Therianthrope figures incised on two Red Polished pots from Bellapais Vounous: a–c: Tomb 91.14; d: Tomb 160A.16 (after Stewart and Stewart 1950, pl. xciii–d).

Early Cypriot I ceramics from Bellapais Vounous A

Elaborate ceramics recovered in the EC I tombs at Bellapais Vounous site A include a number of ceremonial vessels seemingly made for use in mortuary ritual; on two of these there are incised therianthrope figures (Fig. 3.2; Stewart and Stewart 1950, 97, 208, pl. xciii–d; Averett 2015, 4) which Webb and Frankel (2010, 200, figs 14a, 15) suggest might illustrate individuals involved in the practice of ritual performances. These schematic stick figures are depicted standing, facing forward, the body defined by an incised vertical line, arms and legs akimbo, and hands and feet defined by two strokes, described as cloven (Webb and Frankel 2010, 200; Averett 2015, 4). While a human head is not depicted, incised linear markings suggest mouflon horns, deer antler and upright bull's horns. A row of short horizontal incisions on either side of the vertical body line on three of the figures is suggestive of a fleece, skin or fur, while the body of the figure wearing mouflon horns was seemingly naked but not explicitly

gendered. These are seemingly mimetic human figures dressed in animal skins and skull masks, in a stance which suggests movement, dance and performance, leading Webb and Frankel to describe funerary ritual at Vounous as a spectacle of 'feasting, dancing and other performances focused on horned animals' (2010, 200). Although our information is sparse, this is a tantalizing glimpse into the staging of the EC body within a specific ritualized (namely funerary) context. Intriguingly, there is some tangible support for ritual use of masks during the EC period from the settlement of Sotira Kaminoudhia, in the south of the island. This comprises a worked cattle skull and horn cores found in Unit 10, a space apparently used for specialized activities such as feasting and gaming (Swiny 2003, 46–47, pl. 6.4d), and the excavator notes how the facial bones of the skull had been cut away to allow the skull to be attached to a person's head.

The key aspect of the therianthrope figures from Vounous is not the physical, gendered human body nor the face; instead these are covered and concealed, indeed altered by a social skin that is intrinsically associated with human–animal interactions. The human form was materially layered (cf. Knappett 2006) by masks from animals (mouflon, deer and cattle) that are demonstrably culturally significant in the EC–MC

period; these were embedded in social and ritual practices as the main foodstuffs for feasting in funerary contexts (Herscher 1997, 31–32) and similarly within the iconographic repertoire (e.g. Morris 1985; Keswani 2005, 353, 383, n. 187). While one body was apparently naked, three were layered with animal hides or furs. The staging and performing of the human body within certain ceremonial contexts entailed material engagements with animal skulls, horns, skin and flesh; these practices effectively blur the boundaries between living human and dead animal bodies. These images suggest practices in which the human body was deliberately transformed into something that to our modern perspective appears non-human and thus perhaps supernatural (Webb and Frankel 2010, 200) or shamanistic. We might even consider, as Morris and Peatfield (2004) have done with Minoan figurines, that these images depict dance and performance of repetitive rhythmic movements intended to induce an altered state of consciousness. The blurring of human–animal form effectively used the body to communicate with a supernatural or non-human world (see discussion in Morris and Peatfield 2004, 40–1). While certain individuals performed these dance movements seemingly disguised as animals, meat from sheep/goat and cattle (and more rarely deer) was ingested in associated feasting events, as is documented by the presence of animal bones in the tombs (Herscher 1997; Keswani 2005, 383, n. 187); the human body of participants becoming-with the consumed flesh (cf. Attala 2019) and the matter of human and animal becoming consubstantial. The *Vounous* incised figures therefore might inform us of very specific forms of ‘theatrically charged’ (Webb and Frankel 2010, 200) corporeal performativity and material interactions, which undoubtedly shaped the lived, embodied experiences of the participants in these rituals.

Plank figures

Red Polished plank figures (Fig. 3.3) are largely restricted to the north coast and copper producing region around the northern foothills of the Troodos mountains; the largest concentration of these objects is at Lapithos (Webb 2015, 245; 2016, fig. 5), where some 14 figures were found in nine of the tombs excavated by the Swedish Cyprus expedition. Where they have a context, these objects are usually found in tombs, but occasional fragmentary examples have been found in settlements, most recently at Politiko *Troullia* (Falconer and Fall 2013, 108, fig. 11). There are also a small number of White Painted (Karageorghis 1991, pls 136–137) and stone figures, which are not included in this discussion.

The Red Polished plank figures are typically 20–35.5 cm in height (Webb 2016, 8). They were cut from a slab of light coloured, well levigated clay (Webb 2015, 243) with a narrower rectangular slab at the top for the head. These were covered with a lustrous red slip and decorated for the most part with finely executed incised lines (on the front, back and side edges), which were originally filled with a white paste (Webb 2016, 7). The eyes and mouth are indicated by incised concentric circles or dotted circles around a central dot. There are some modelled features, such as noses, ears (which have one or more holes, from which earrings, made of clay or possibly

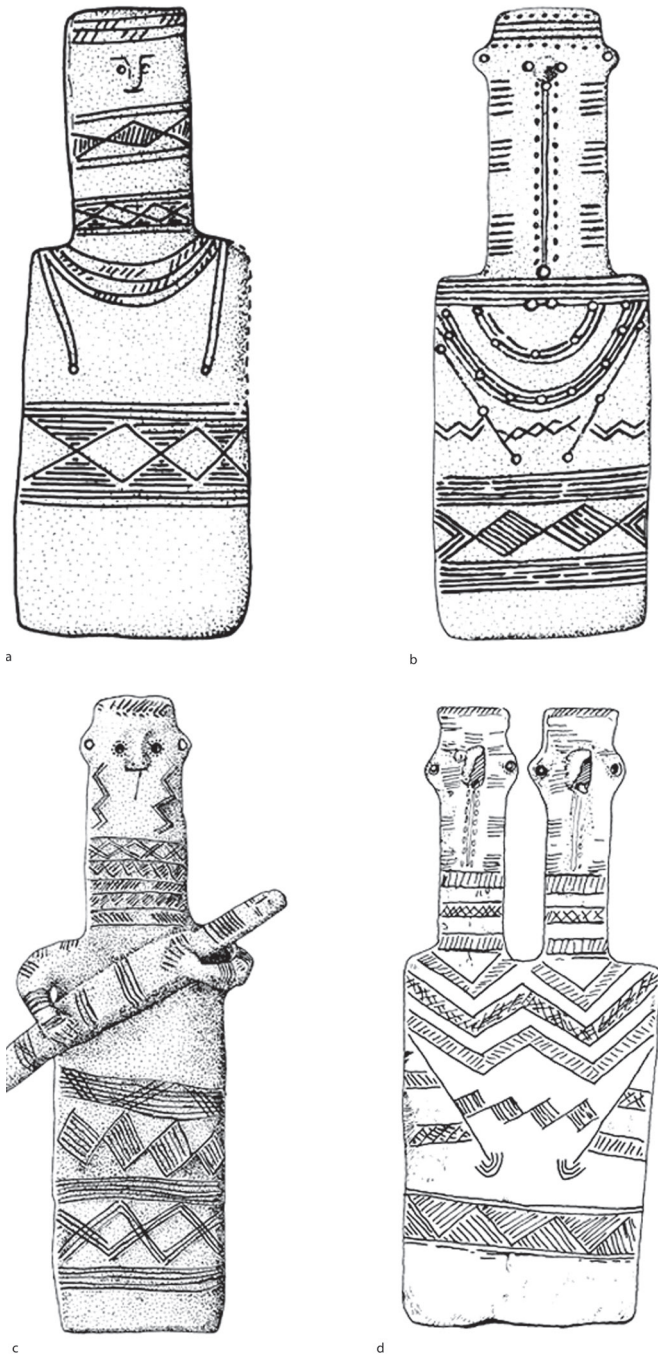


Figure 3.3. a-c: Plank figures (after Webb 2015, fig. 1); d: double headed plank figure from Deneia (after Knapp and Meskell 1997, fig. 7).

even metal, might have hung), and occasionally arms; sexual characteristics are rare, but a small number of figures have modelled breasts. Given their weight the figures were not designed to be portable, hand-held objects, and at first view they do not appear to be intended to be free-standing without support. Knox (2012, 150, fig. 49) however, has noted a consistent pattern of wear on the base of the figures, which might be missing or otherwise fragmented; this she suggests results from placing the object in the ground for some time. These objects therefore were intended to be displayed and viewed (Webb 2016, 8, 18), perhaps as attention focusing devices (*cf.* Renfrew 1985, 18–19) within some form of ritual performance in the tomb.

Three main types have been identified (Webb 2016) all apparently standing and facing forward: a) a single-headed figure (Fig. 3.3, a–b), b) a single-headed figure holding an infant in a cradleboard against the left shoulder (Fig. 3.3, c) and c) a figure with double or triple necks, and between one or two heads (Fig. 3.3, d; Webb 2015; 2016, 7). There are also examples of plank figures attached to Red Polished pottery (Knox 2012, 146, fig. 44 centre). In addition, there are models of an infant in a cradleboard (Knox 2012, fig. 45), a motif which is also picked up on the Red Polished scenic compositions. Several archaeologists have made an explicit link between this child imagery and the practice of cranial modification, namely occipital flattening, in which pressure was applied to the rear of skull by the cradleboard, resulting in a shorter, wider cranium (Bolger 2003; Lorentz 2003; 2005, 46; Budin 2016). This practice was first attested in the Philia phase and continued into the Middle Cypriot period (Budin 2016, 367). Unlike post-bregmatic head-shaping identified in Late Cypriot mortuary populations, which is viewed as an intentional shaping of the skull as part of a cultural tradition (perhaps as an aesthetic or advertising group membership) creating ‘culturally significant, altered child and adult bodies’ (Lorentz 2003, 10; 2005, 46–7), the shaping of the EC–MC skull was not an intentional practice, but was simply a by-product of the custom of cradleboarding (Budin 2016, 367). The repeated iteration of this iconography indicates the importance of social reproduction and, specifically, the nurturing of infants, within EC–MC communities. In a similar vein, Bolger reasons that the double-headed figures plausibly represent pairing of personhood in a marriage alliance (2003, 115), something we will return to below in our discussion of the scenic compositions.

Intriguingly, for all that the plank figures seem to have been highly visual display objects, there is very little emphasis on the physicality of the body: the arms are not always modelled and there is no indication of the legs, suggesting a body that completely swathed in clothing, covering torso, legs and feet. Surprisingly, given the emphasis on gender in previous analyses of the figurines (Knapp and Meskell 1997; Talalay and Cullen 2002), this does not appear to be a primary concern of the coroplasts who modelled the figures; sex is not normally indicated, but as noted above some figures have modelled breasts, indicating a female form. Instead, the rectangular form of the body and head provided a canvas for elaborate incised geometric decoration, which have been interpreted as different modes of apparel (woven textiles) and body

ornamentation (a Campo 1994, 103–104, 166; Mina 2016, 65). I would argue that the primary concern was the performed body and how this was staged through costume within certain defined contexts, possibly funerary.

It is worth looking more closely at the decoration inscribed on these objects, to see what information they might reveal about the extended body schema and how the EC–MC body was staged. Groups of horizontal lines symmetrically arranged on the face, and a group of three vertical lines on the ‘chin’ are usually viewed as tattoos or body painting (a Campo 1994, 103, 166); given that these are cut into the surface of the clay and filled with white paste tattooing seems more plausible, or we might also consider scarification. A vertical band of geometric motifs across the top of the head (face side) probably represents some form of headdress. The back of the head is marked with vertical multiple zigzag motifs which a Campo suggests represents hair (1994, 102). There are groups of horizontal bands and geometric motifs (zigzags, diamonds, triangles) at the base of the head rectangle (neck) at the front, apparently representing groups of neck rings. Beneath these on the front of the body are multiple lines and dots looped down in a curve from the shoulders or otherwise in a V shaped pattern (Washbourne, 2000, figs 3 and 4), representing strands of beaded necklaces. A comb or tassel motif hangs down the back, from the neck. Washbourne (1997) suggested that this was a counterweight for heavy necklaces, an argument which is rejected by Knox (2012, 141), who notes that no such object has been found in EC–MC tomb groups and, moreover, that the necklaces from these tombs were not sufficiently heavy to require such an object. Diagonal single or double lines ending in concentric half circles or dots were incised from the shoulder to the mid body. These a Campo identified as a shawl (1994, 103), but Washbourne’s (2000, 97–9) interpretation of these as toggle pins used to fasten garments is more attractive, especially because toggle pins (Fig. 3.4) are commonly found in tombs and frequently in pairs. The front of the body has horizontal bands filled with geometric motifs (zigzags, diamonds, hashed triangles) and various incised motifs over the back, apparently representing woven textiles, belts or waistbands. The wide geometric horizontal band across the lower body at the front, although several centimetres above the base of the figure, probably represents a woven decorative hem around the base of a long robe: as Knox notes (2012, 150), once the object had been stuck into the ground this band would in fact appear to be the base of the standing figure.

The incised lines therefore, reference ways of marking and layering the body (Knappett 2006), effectively creating a social skin (Turner 2012). The same visual



Figure 3.4. Middle Cypriot bronze toggle pin ca. 1900–1600 BC (Metropolitan Museum New York, Accession no. 74.51.5522).

message is reiterated in all the plank figures, which refer to specific ways in which the MC body was performed, perhaps within highly visual ceremonies in the mortuary arena (see Mina 2016, 66). The figures are always standing, facing forward and essentially static; they have wide staring eyes (formed by impressions or concentric circles), geometric markings on the face, and the bodies are fully covered (cloaked or robed) by elaborately woven textiles, headdresses and items of personal adornment (necklaces, pins, earrings). As Webb comments, ‘there is a focus on the face and on value-added attributes of jewellery and clothing; on the beautification and *social presentation* of the body’ (Webb 2016, 15, my emphasis). Other than the comb-counterweight suggested by Washbourne (1997), it is easy to relate the decorative motifs with actual items of material culture recovered from contemporary tombs (Mina 2016). There is evidence at Lapithos for greater emphasis on the adornment of the physical body (Keswani 2004, 69; Webb 2016, 16) with an abundance of objects that seemingly mimic the details of personal adornment identified on the plank figures. These include silver and copper rings, earrings and bracelets, diadems and pins, and faience beads from multiple strings of necklaces and gold ornaments. A similar range of materials and objects used to ornament the body are commonly deposited in tombs throughout the island (see for example the small beads from multiple strings of necklaces in tombs from Limassol and Kalavassos in the south; Karageorghis 1958, pl. xb–d). Although the textiles do not survive, numerous terracotta spindle whorls from EC–MC tombs and settlements (Crewe 1998) attest to their existence and the plank figures perhaps give us a tantalising glimpse into their appearance. Copper/bronze tweezers, razors and blades were also commonly placed in tombs. These highlight the importance of depilation, perhaps preparing the surface of the body for tattooing or scarification (see Papadatos 2016, 12). While the marks on the plank figures have frequently been attributed to practices such as tattooing, there has been little attempt to identify this archaeologically (either tools or pigments). The range of EC–MC copper/bronze tools includes needles and knives, which I tentatively suggest here might have been used for marking the body. This aspect of corporeal practice merits further research. The plank figures and grave goods undoubtedly give some insight into the extension of the EC–MC body schema. A varied range of personal adornment in multiple materials became incorporated within a perception of the bodily self, woollen textiles, metals (copper, silver, gold) and faience coming together to co-produce the human body. Moreover, the activities involved in crafting these objects and in marking and clothing the body were communal enterprises interlinking people in a complex network of social and material ties.

Webb has highlighted certain associations of the clay figures at Lapithos, namely the placement of the figures near skulls or in proximity to beaded faience necklaces, in metal rich burials, and with ritual vases (Webb 2016, 13; 2017, 4, 6). An agential realist perspective (Barad 2003; 2007), which emphasises co-mingling of materials and blurs body boundaries, characterizes such combinations as relational becomings or phenomena. It is worth noting that the material engagements emerging around the

plank figures were not permanent (with the possible exception of the tattooing – even earrings might be removed) but refer to items that might be worn or discarded as needed. This perhaps suggests more restricted use of some elements in ceremonial funerary performances (see Webb 2016, 16) and associated embodied experiences that were distinct from those of daily corporeal encounters.

Scenic compositions

There is a small corpus of scenic compositions made in the Red Polished ware, primarily jugs and bowls, but also groups of figures around a trough, and single figures placed on flat slabs of clay. These are found throughout the island, from Kalavasos in the south and the central copper-producing region, to Vounous in the north. Most of the scenic compositions depict groups of people apparently engaged in various forms of communal production and daily household activities (a Campo 1994, 65–75; Knapp 2008, 89–92; 2013, 333–337). There are examples of couples, seemingly man and wife, as well as a pregnant woman and several examples of individuals holding a cradleboarded infant (Bolger 2003, 115–116). As with the cradleboard plank figures (see above), this imagery was embedded in social reproduction, community, family and life-cycle events (cf. Bolger 2003, 115–117; Knapp 2008, 89; Webb 2016, 8). A couple of pieces – the Kotsiatis model (Fig. 3.5) and the Vounous bowl – however, might reference more symbolically charged scenes (Frankel and Tamvaki 1973; Steel 2013). In contrast to the plank figures discussed above, the modelled figures are relatively plain and lack the detailed geometric incised adornment of the plank figures. This distinction between the plank figures and small modelled figures from the scenic compositions reiterates Webb’s observation (2016, 8) that the two types were conceptually and functionally distinct. Previous discussion has focused on interpreting the activities being enacted on the vessels (e.g. Morris 1985; Herscher 1997; Knapp 2008; 2013). Certainly, while the scenic compositions were placed in tombs, they appear to reference everyday life within MC communities and thus might help us explore peoples’ daily embodied experiences and MC perceptions of the body.

The figures are crudely modelled and some are very schematic, as on the Pierides

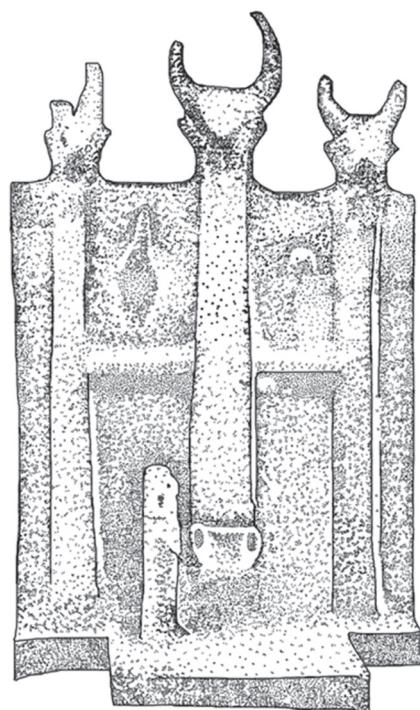


Figure 3.5. Kotsiatis model (after Steel 2013, fig. 8).

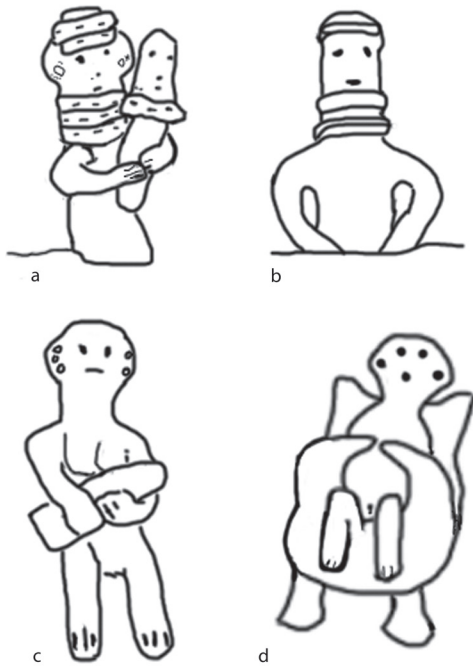


Figure 3.6. a: Detail of figure holding child from around a trough or basin (Louvre AM186); b: detail of figure from around a trough or basin (Louvre AM186); c: detail of figure holding a child from Pyrgos jug; d: detail of seated figure from Pyrgos jug (drawings: L. Steel).

bowl (Knapp 2013, fig. 90). Typically, the figures comprise a column of clay (Fig. 3.5), while others are more realistically rendered with arms, legs and clearly demarcated head, as on the Pyrgos jug (Knapp 2013, fig. 89) and the Vounous bowl (Steel 2013, figs 1, 3, 7). Faces are typically shaped in relief with a prominent nose and jutting out ears (occasionally pierced), but the larger figures on the Pyrgos jug and the figures arranged around a trough or basin from the Louvre (AM 816; Fig. 3.6) have incised dots for eyes and might have an incised line or dot for the mouth (Fig. 3.6, c, d). In contrast to the plank figures the gender roles of these figures appears to have been important and primary sexual characteristics were clearly indicated on some figures: a penis modelled in relief for males, breasts and occasionally an incision at the groin for females. Nonetheless, the majority of figures on the scenes in fact are not sexed. Ribeiro (2002) suggests that the seemingly sexless figures belonged to a third gender group, perhaps pre-pubescent individuals not

yet fully admitted into MC gender roles. Bolger, however, notes (2003, 135) that these tiny anatomical additions might easily be worn, damaged or broken off during use or post-depositional wear. Alternatively, we might assume that gender roles were not important for these figures, or otherwise would be apparent to the viewers through other culturally encoded knowledge, such as activity, position in the scene, relative size, gesture and posture (Steel 2013, 65). There is a tendency to assume that figures holding infants are female (cf. Bolger 1996, 369) but unless they are clearly marked as such, as on the Pyrgos jug (Fig. 3.6, c), I would argue that this assumption is problematic (see Steel 2013, 65).

The figures can be grouped by their material engagements: most are standing but some are seated on a chair, stool or bench, some hold an infant, many figures work with each other in activities involving a trough or basin, others work with animals. As noted above, the bodies of the human figures in scenic compositions are not covered with geometric markings to indicate richly woven textiles, but the shape of the

body of those figures with no defined legs (Fig. 3.5) might suggest a long garment covering the whole body, legs and feet. Furthermore, there is some indication of the addition of a social skin or layering of the body of a small number of individuals, which serves to distinguish them from the wider depiction of people in the scenic compositions. Some figures have single or multiple ear piercings, although no earrings have survived (Fig. 3.6, c). Other permanent marking of the body is evident on the *Vounous* bowl; two seated figures on the bench to the left of the tripartite structure have groups of incised lines on the shoulder, which I have previously suggested might be scarification (Steel 2013, 65, fig. 3a). The enthroned figure from the *Vounous* bowl appears to be wearing some form of headdress or otherwise has an elaborate hairstyle (Steel 2013, fig. 2d); likewise, the couple (man and wife?) on the *Pierides* bowl wear what appear to be brimmed headdresses (Morris 1985, fig. 490). The most elaborately adorned figures are the group working around a trough or basin now housed in the Louvre (AM186). These each wear a headdress, possibly a filet or diadem represented by a strip of clay and have two or three strips of clay around the neck, perhaps to be identified with neck rings. Most intricate is the figure holding a child at the end of the trough, whose headband and neck rings are embellished by incisions. Certainly, this body ornamentation is analogous to that already identified on the plank figures (see above) suggesting a similar extended body schema.

The figures in the scenic compositions clearly illustrate the many material entanglements that, through repeated practice, shaped MC embodied experiences and were ‘internal to identity creation’ (Alberti 2014, 94). In particular, they shed light on the cultural significance of certain elements of apparel – headdresses, earrings, neck rings – that were used to layer the body. These evidence a MC ‘way of being in the world, a way of dressing, of using the body, of revealing, concealing, modifying, and presenting the physical self’ (Joyce 2000, 7), reflecting the notions of performativity, layering the body and the social skin outlined above. The scenic compositions are also important for highlighting community and group activities, which reveal how MC personhood was mediated communally as well as through interactions with diverse materials and things.

Conclusions

The very deliberate use of costume, personal adornment and body markings to inscribe the body exemplifies what Connerton, in his discussion of incorporated practices, describes as ‘the grammar of dress’ (1989, 12), namely the structuring of society through access to/exclusion from certain items of clothing, which might be used very specifically within certain ceremonial contexts. The headdresses and items of personal adornment could be layered onto the body as a second, social skin, thereby extending the body schema. The Red Polished repertoire provides us with a valuable source of visual information for exploring such practices in the EC-MC periods. While the emphasis is largely on staging the body in ceremonial or funerary contexts, each case study describes very different corporeal experiences. In the EC period at *Vounous*

we see human and animal bodies emerging together in what we might consider to be ecstatic dancing at the graveside. The more static plank figures of the EC–MC transition suggest the importance of visual display and the many ways in which the social skin might be produced from different materials. The MC scenic compositions seemingly draw attention to everyday embodied practices, drawing attention to the importance of community and shared somatic experiences. Even so, the very distinct treatment of certain bodies, which are given faces, adorned, and thus demarcated from the majority demonstrates how the social skin can be used to separate and exclude. These three case studies therefore illustrate very different ways in which the body might be performed and inscribed to *become* a socially-constructed person.

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