

ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑ ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΩΝ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ



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BIRTH PENDANTS IN LIFE AND DEATH:
EVIDENCE FROM KISSONERGA GRAVE 563

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΑΙ ΣΠΟΥΔΑΙ

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ΑΦΙΕΡΩΜΑ ΣΤΟ ΒΑΣΟ ΚΑΡΑΓΙΩΡΓΗ
STUDIES IN HONOUR OF VASSOS KARAGEORGHIS

ΧΟΡΗΓΙΑ ΙΔΡΥΜΑΤΟΣ ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΟΣ Γ. ΛΕΒΕΝΤΗΣ
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BIRTH PENDANTS IN LIFE AND DEATH:
EVIDENCE FROM KISSONERGA GRAVE 563*

(PLATES I-III)

Edgar Peltenburg

In one of his earliest scholarly contributions, Vassos Karageorghis called attention to the importance of material from burials (Karageorghis 1940-48). He then went on to publish in exemplary fashion the findings from many Cypriot cemeteries, of the Early Bronze Age to the Classical period, culminating in the remarkable volumes of the results of his excavations at the royal tombs of Salamis (Karageorghis 1967-78). Thanks to his magnificent example and decisive encouragement, prompt publication has become a byword for Cypriot archaeology, much to the envy and admiration of archaeologists working in other areas (see Ridgway 1989). Not only has this led to a fuller appreciation of the role of Cyprus in human evolution, it has also fostered the most informed debate, and hence progress in archaeology, by virtue of the freshness and completeness of reports. As one who has benefited enormously from his advice and philosophy, I offer this token of appreciation, in the spirit of providing new data for continuing debates in Cypriot archaeology.

KISSONERGA GRAVE 563 (Pl. I, Fig. 1)

Type II (*LAP* I, 43-4) grave sealed below entrance of Building 1165. Roughly circular upper pit, Unit 2042, 1.0 x 0.95 x 0.30m. with silty fill 2045 overlying more compact, lighter brown fill 2046, looser around the edges. Triangular capstone fragment lying in northwest corner, partly on base of upper pit, partly over fill of lower pit. Roughly circular lower pit, 2057, with bell-shaped section, 0.56 x 0.65 (0.74 x 0.65 at base) x 0.64m. Loose, brown, organic fill with, just above the base and around two skeletons, cloddy lumps of yellow, compacted *havara*. Vertical slab in centre of 2057 joins triangular *in situ* part of capstone. Two intact inhumations on base of lower pit: against the south wall, burial KM 2718, a crouched *c.* 3 1/2 year-old child lying on right side facing north, arms raised to front of face; in the north half, burial KM 2719, a crouched *c.* 1 1/2 year-old child lying on right side facing north, arms missing. Teeth of two further children *c.* 4 years and 2 years old. One dentalium associated with burial KM 2718, a necklace and cruciform pendant with KM 2719. Pendants, dentalia, sherds and ground stone tools in Units 2042, 2046 and 2057.

* Much of the primary recording of data incorporated in this contribution is due to the solid efforts of *Lemba Archaeological Project* members: excavators Carole McCartney and Norman Newton, finds registrars Carolyn Elliott and Elizabeth Goring, and pottery registrar Diane Bolger. I am also grateful to Dorothy Lunt for information on dentitions and to Diane Bolger and Elizabeth Goring for comments. Gordon Thomas produced the drawing. Project support from the British Academy, Jennie S. Gordon Trust, National Museums of Scotland and University of Edinburgh is warmly acknowledged.

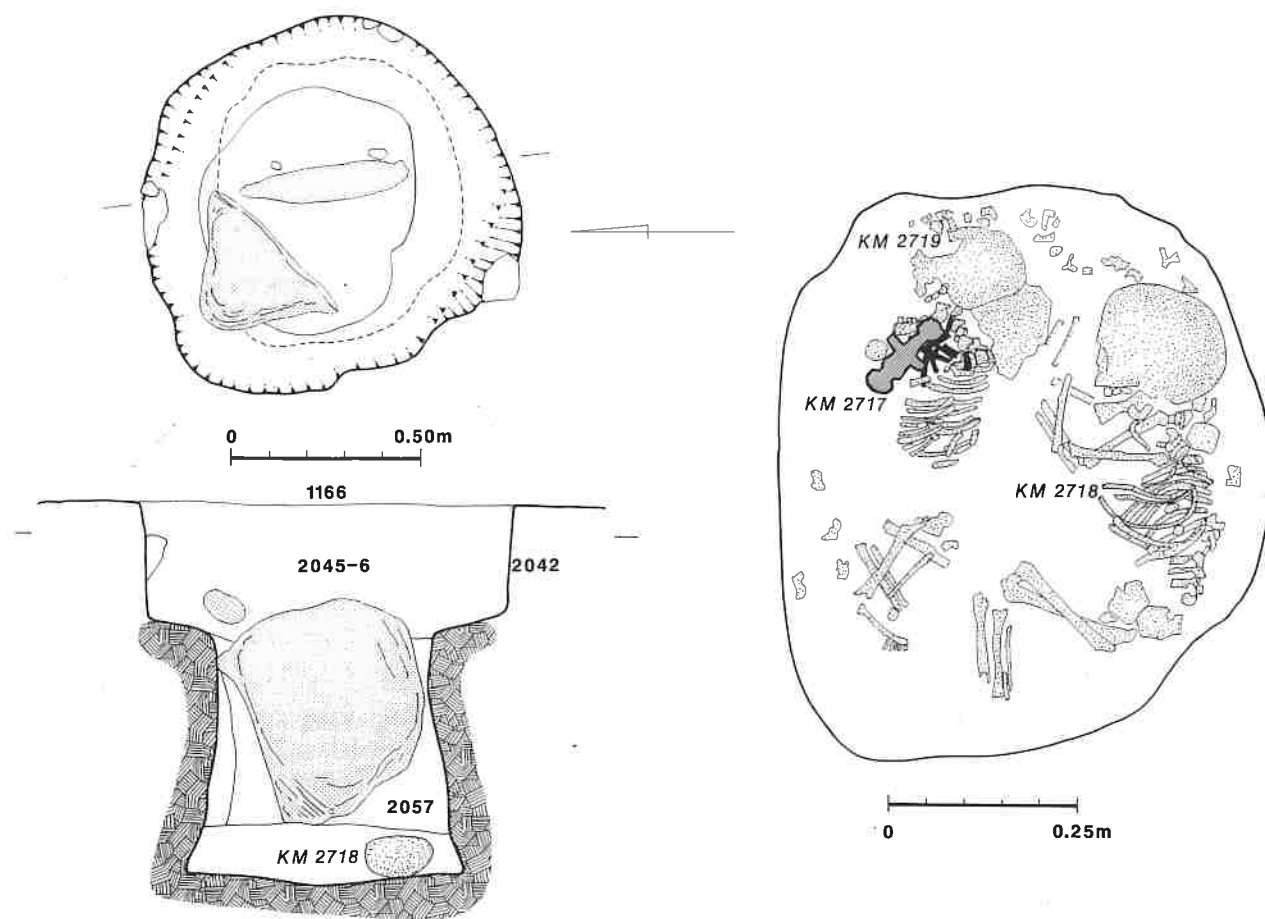


Fig. 1.

FINDS

Upper pit 2042 with fills 2045-6

KM 2619. Pendant. Cylindrical upper, triangular lower body with expanded terminals, the upper a perforated square, the lower a disc. Slight constriction between cylinder and square. Unworn hourglass perforation. Light blue-green picrolite with olive-green patina. Ht. 3, Diam. 0.9cm. Unit 2042. Pl. II:1 top right.

KM 2663-4. Dentalia. L. 1 - 1.2cm. Unit 2046. Pl. II:1.

KM 2665. Axe-shaped grinder frag. Blade end ground and chipped, faces hammered near transverse break. Diabase. L. (frag) 4.4, W. 5.2, Th. 3.1cm. Unit 2046. Pl. II:1.

KM 2666-8, 2670-5. Dentalia. Parasitic perforation (2667) and traces of red paint (? from RW sherds) (2672-5) affect some shells. One (2670) polished smooth. L. 1.3 - 3cm. Unit 2046.

KM 2685. Dentalium. Worn, with two parasite holes. L. 0.9cm. Unit 2046.

Lower pit fill 2057

KM 2684. Hammerstone. Oval, water worn pebble, traces of peck marks in centre of each face. Diabase. L. 5.6, W. 3.8, Th. 3cm.

KM 2687-9. Dentalia. L. 1.6 - 3.8cm. Pl. II:1.

KM 2716. Dentalium. Damaged. L. 2.7cm.

KM 2720. Anthropomorphic pendant. Flattened cylindrical body, legs projecting sharply to either side, feet turned out, squared and perforated schematic head, and legs, demarcated by grooves. Greenish picrolite. Ht. 2.2, W. 1.6cm. Pl. II:1 bottom right.

KM 2721. Anthropomorphic pendant. Flat rectangular body, projecting arms and legs, feet turned out, squared and perforated schematic head. Roughly channeled groove at base of head, V-shaped groove from shoulders to feet. Greenish picrolite. Ht. 2.4, W. 1.65cm. Pl. II:1 middle right.

Associated with burial KM 2718

KM 2722. Dentalium L. 2.2cm. On ribs.

Associated with burial KM 2719

KM 2717. Cruciform figurine. Large, squared head set almost vertically on long, tapered neck, arms spread sideways, legs drawn up sharply beneath chest, large plain feet. Facial features comprise excised, flat, square eyes, incised hairline, central hair parting, and eyebrows

linked to long, wide, rectangular nose. Small, projecting ears. Lightly incised, cross-hatched areas on arms and chest. Legs and feet divided by vertical groove. Flat reverse is plain except for three, parallel oblique grooves on each arm. Plano-convex cross-section. Greenish picrolite. Ht. 10.1, W. 5.5, Th. 1.3cm. Pls II:1 centre, II:2 Beside neck of child.

KM 2751-67. Dentalia. Narrow ends trimmed flat. Two slotted together (2760-1), one parasitically holed (2766) and one frag (2755). L. 1.9 - 3.7cm. Pl. II. At neck of child.

Chipped stone fragments, mollusca and a little animal bone were found in addition to these registered finds (analysis pending). Sherd density varied markedly in discrete components of the grave (Table 1). In this context, it should be noted that the volume of low density Unit 2057 is as large as the remaining units of the grave.

Table 1. Distribution of sherds in Grave 563.

Ware	Units:	Upper pit 2042	Fill 2045	Fill 2046	Lower pit 2057	Total
Combed		-	-	2	-	2
Glossy Burnished		-	-	1	-	1
Red Monochrome Painted		23	10	25	-	58
Red-on-White		122	53	143	4	322
"X" ^a		39	-	86	1	126
Spalled		2	-	6	-	8
Coarse Painted		-	2	-	-	2
Coarse		3	2	7	-	12
?		26	10	36	4	76
Totals		215	77	306	9	607

^a Category established by Diane Bolger, Kissonerga pottery registrar, to account for undifferentiated Red Monochrome Painted and Red-on-White sherdage.

COMMENTS

The general date of this multiple inhumation is readily established by its stratigraphy and associated funerary furniture. The *stomion*, or upper pit, was cut from a level sealed by the entrance of Building 1165 which belongs to Kissonerga Period 4.¹ That period is entirely consonant with the LChal of Cyprus, and the building should be relatively early in the period since it is the first of two superimposed Period 4 structures. The underlying grave level is probably associated with adjacent Period 3 Building 855 and it was cut through a Period 3 wall. Since Period 3 belongs to MChal Cyprus, Grave 563 is MChal, perhaps late. An early LChal date is ruled out by the virtual absence of LChal sherdage (Table 1) and by associated funerary artifacts. According to the few available radiometric dates, MChal is late 4th - early 3rd millennium B.C. (Held 1989; LAP II.2, 94-7).

Burial KM 2719 had a dentalium necklace with a large cruciform figurine *in situ* at its neck (Pl. I). Virtually all the remaining dentalia and the two anthropomorphic pendants, KM 2720 and KM 2721, were found high up in the burial pit or above the level of the capstone. Together with bottle-shaped pendant KM 2619, they probably constituted two or more necklaces (see below). Such necklaces are proving typical of MChal Cyprus. The best known examples are two (but see below) reconstructed necklaces with multiple

1. For the location of this building see Peltenburg, 1991b, Fig. 4. Note that a number of chronological divisions are currently used for the chalcolithic period. For details of the present system (EChal, MChal and LChal: Early, Middle and Late Chalcolithic) see Peltenburg 1990.

cruciform pendants from Souskiou-Vathyrkakas Tomb 3 (Christou 1989, 89, fig. 12:6). Pottery from that tomb, as from others in the cemetery, is Fine Line Style Red-on-White, and although the morphology is more adventurous than normal, the painted style is wholly MChal (*Ibid.*, 86-7, fig. 12:4, 5). The style conforms to the later levels of Erimi, Lemba Period 2 and Kissonerga Period 3 (Bolger 1991). Bottle-shaped pendant KM 2619 (Pl. II:1, top right) also occurs in Souskiou-Vathyrkakas Tomb 3 in picrolite (as part of a reconstructed dentalium necklace) and bone, probably in other Souskiou tombs (Vagnetti 1980, pl. XVI:77-83; Karageorghis 1985, nos 14, 17), at Erimi (Dikaios 1936, pl. 29:4.324; Bolger 1988, pl. 20.341), Lemba (*LAP* I, pl. 46:2, 3) and survey sites of the chalcolithic period (e.g. Androlidou-Ayios Mamas, unpublished). The Erimi examples are not later than MChal.

It is uncertain if dentalium necklaces with cruciforms existed earlier or later. At EChal Kalavassos-Ayios, Todd found dentalia, but no cruciform pendants (South 1985). The latter are already evident in miniature form in Erimi Level III or IV which may also be EChal (*SCE* IV:1A, 131, Pendant Type VI), so the potential for stringing them together existed by the mid-4th millennium B.C. The style of the cruciforms then, however, was not as developed as Pl. II:2 or those from Souskiou (Peltenburg 1982).

By LChal times, grave goods comprise monochrome pottery, necklaces of disc beads, and perhaps annular spurred earrings and spiral hairrings of metal (Peltenburg 1990, 16-19). Dentalia were still worked, but there is no clear evidence for their association with cruciforms, nor is it clear whether the latter were still in circulation. Where cruciforms are attributed to the LChal, they are always from general habitation levels and could easily have been brought up from earlier deposits. Crude re-working of some cruciforms from LChal Lemba suggests a breakdown of the style and transformation of earlier symbols (*LAP* I, 280-1).

That the grave was disturbed before the LChal is evident from its stratigraphy, split capstone, part of which was lodged vertically in the burial pit, funerary material in the upper fill of the burial pit and above the *in situ* capstone fragment, absence of LChal sherds (Table 1) and disarticulated remains of at least two further infants. Lunt notes that there was an additional maxillary right deciduous central incisor with burial KM 2718, "suggesting a slightly older child than skeleton A (KM 2718), perhaps c. 4 years." Also from the fill comes a canine. Since "all canines are already present in skeletons A and B (KM 2718-9).....this represents an additional child.....about 2 years old." Another canine from flotation is similar to the last "and could have come from the same 2 year-old child" (Lunt, pers comm; osteological report pending). Dislocated funerary elements are usually explained in terms of looting or water action in Cypriot archaeology. Neither explanation is satisfactory for Grave 563 and so the distribution and character of its "disturbed" components may provide insights into Cypriot mortuary rites.

Table 2. Dentalium lengths (cms) from discrete units in Grave 563. Fragments excluded.

Context	N	Average Length	Minimum Length	Maximum Length
Fill 2046	12	1.975	0.9	3.0
Lower pit 2057	4	2.7	1.6	3.8
Burial KM 2719	17	2.769	1.9	3.7

Most numerous among the finds are the dentalia. Seventeen at the neck of burial KM 2719 presumably formed a single strand necklace with cruciform pendant attached to the strand by its neck. One more dentalium was located on burial KM 2718, a further four at the top of the fill 2057 and 12 more above the dislodged capstone, in Unit 2046. In terms of bead lengths, those from burial KM 2719 and Unit 2046 form two clearly distinguishable groups, with the former comprising consistently larger beads than the latter (Table 2). On this basis, the beads from 2046 did not come from burial KM 2719 and they probably constituted a separate necklace, perhaps with the bottle-shaped pendant of Pl. II:1, top right, which was found in a marginally higher position in the upper pit. Dimensions of dentalia from the top of fill 2057 conform closely to those accompanying burial KM 2719, but as the skeleton of the child was articulated and undisturbed, they are un-

likely to be from it. Burial KM 2718 is also unlikely to have been a source as it too was undisturbed. We have dental evidence that at least two further interments existed. Leaving aside the possibility that the teeth were token insertions from excarnations, it is suggested that they are the remains of removed primary burials. If that was the case, then a sequence of funerary activities may be reconstructed as follows.

MORTUARY PRACTICES AND TAPHONOMY

A capstone was obtained at some distance from the settlement and a Type II grave was dug about 2m. beyond the northwest wall arc of Building 855 for deceased children, probably once occupants of the building. A c.4 and a 2 year-old were placed inside the grave, together with dentalium and picrolite necklace(s), and covered by the single capstone. Later, the capstone and burials (together or successively) were removed and in the process canines and incisors were dislodged and became mixed with the next interments, KM 2718-9. Grave goods belonging to the extracted bodies were left around the top ledge of the lower pit as part of the exhumation rites, somewhat in the manner of *in situ* funerary offerings in Kissonerga Grave 503 (Pl. III:1). In a similar case at Lemba, 53 dentalia were left in a slot at the "head" end of a bodiless grave (Pl. III:2; *LAP* I, 126, 287, pl. 22:4, 5). Since many were arranged in sets of three, they belonged to a multi-stranded necklace. Given the personal nature of necklaces, this explanation seems more likely than Stewart's interpretation of material in *dromoi* of Bronze Age tombs as separate offerings to the dead (cf. *SCE* IV:1A, 294-5). The new burials were covered by the capstone and the upper pit was partly filled with clean, brownish soil. In the course of time, drying *havara* lumps flaked from the walls of the burial pit, causing some damage to the skulls of burials KM 2718-9, and settling by water action to form a shallow compact level over and around the burials. This drying out phase accentuated the bell-shaped profile of the burial pit. After that process was complete, the capstone broke, perhaps during the construction or use of overlying Building 1165. Its heavier part pivoted into the vertical as shown in the section of Fig. 1. Along with much of the light brown soil that descended with the capstone into the burial pit void, came the anthropomorphic pendants of Pl. II:1 and some dentalia. All these were found high in the fill, c. 0.10m. below the rim of the burial pit. Mixed habitation debris then accumulated in the space left by the subsided contents of the upper pit. The contrast between mixed and funerary fills is highlighted by striking sherd density differences between high-yield Units 2042/2045/2046 and low-yield 2057 (Table 1).

A number of points emerge from this interpretation of Grave 563 evidence. Multiple burials in graves used over a period of time were a feature of MChal mortuary customs in Cyprus (cf. Souskiou). Although it has not been possible to ascribe all recovered funerary goods to specific interments with certainty, individuals of Grave 563 were supplied with an unusually high proportion of dentalia and picrolites. The grave therefore was reserved for members of a special subgroup who repeatedly gained access to it.² Its intra-settlement location must have served as a property marker and ritual focus, probably for the inhabitants of adjacent Building 855. Funerary rites in this instance were at a domestic level. In some cases of multiple burial during the MChal period therefore, apparently custom required that earlier interments were entirely exhumed rather than arranged to one side as in later, more spacious chamber tombs. However, Early-Middle Bronze Age evidence pertains mainly to adults, and we have little information regarding attitudes at that time to deceased children.³ Since some of the teeth of the preceding burials presumably fell out in the process of exhumation, mortification of bodies must have been in an advanced state. Environmental conditions are good for the preservation of bone, so skeletal evidence has not disappeared through natural agencies. That burial goods should be re-buried in the same locality, or possibly left in a niche in one case at Lemba (Pl. III:2), and separated from their "owners" is indicative of the power attributed to the necklaces: they retained significance even beyond the removal of their associated bodies.

What then happened to the exhumed bodies is unknown. Secondary burial is not an obvious feature of

2. Repeated contact, if not access, between the living and the dead is also evident at Lemba where "libation" holes were an integral feature of a particular set of graves (*LAP* I, 116-8, fig. 41).

3. Their low frequency in chamber tombs, where some occur in or on pots (e.g. Vounous T. 121 [Stewart & Stewart 1950, 247]; Lapithos SwT. 311 [*SCE* I, 79]), suggests that intra-settlement burial of children was the norm, as here. This is not surprising. Greater visibility of children in the mortuary population of intra-settlement graves in common where settlement and cemetery burial customs co-exist (e.g. Hodder 1990, 73). The main question regarding chalcolithic settlement burial populations is the whereabouts of adults: there are too few, and one must presume the existence of elusive cemeteries.

the Cypriot burial record. Ossuaries, like those in prehistoric Palestine, are not recorded at chalcolithic Cypriot sites. On the other hand, human bones were left inside Building 3 at Lemba beside a re-used burial (LAP I, 120) and hence disarticulated bones may have entered general habitation deposits. The difficulty with this explanation is that preliminary analysis suggests only few human bones entered such deposits. While deceased children may have been treated more cavalierly than adults (see LAP I, 242), the "social ordering of dry bones" was a widespread custom, as shown in the plastered skulls of the Near East and re-arrangement of bones in European burial monuments (Hodder 1990, 295). It existed in Cyprus too. Goring (1989, 100-1) has described the re-positioning of the bones of a female in Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios Tomb 11. Kissonerga Grave 563 moreover is not the only grave with evidence for adjustment of burial individuals: Grave 505 provides further evidence for this custom. Exhumation and post-burial alteration of bodies at Kissonerga therefore are aspects of funerary practices in prehistoric Cyprus.

BIRTH PENDANTS

Grave 563 is unusually rich for MChal Kissonerga, but comparable funerary goods are evident at Souskiou. There too dentalium and picrolite necklaces occur with multiple burials (Maier & Karageorghis 1984, 24-34). However, most Souskiou graves were looted, so the detailed Kissonerga evidence provides a check on assumptions regarding Souskiou burial practices. It is often assumed that shafts at Souskiou were filled in after each burial (e.g. *Ibid.*, 25), but the evidence of Grave 563 and generally at Kissonerga and Lemba (LAP I, 117, fig. 4:2) is that shafts were left empty and not deliberately filled. The nature of Souskiou fills, therefore, merits reconsideration. Another comparison concerns the arrangement of the necklaces. *In situ* Kissonerga and Lemba (Pls III:2,3) examples indicate that Grave 563 necklaces are typical: one, two or three dentalium strands with one or two pendants. The frequently illustrated Souskiou Tomb 3 necklaces with their alternating pendants and bunches of dentalia are conjectural reconstructions made before discoveries at Lemba and Kissonerga. Further evidence is needed to support their elaborate design with so many pendants in view of more recent discoveries and the fact that at least six bodies existed in Tomb 3 (D. Lunt, pers comm).

The florescence of dentalium necklaces with cruciforms was in the MChal period, and Grave 563 supplies unequivocal evidence for their association with infants or children. Cruciform pendants are commonly regarded as adult female apparel, so this association broadens our understanding of the social role of such pendants. The *in situ* necklace with the 1 1/2-year-old does not look pristine and in any case was far too heavy to have been worn normally. It was therefore probably worn by someone else beforehand, most likely an adult to judge by the size of the cruciform pendant and the length of the necklace, 48cm. without the pendant. A number of figurines representing adult females are depicted with pendant cruciforms (Peltenburg & Goring 1991, 23) and Lunt's aging of Souskiou burials puts the adult association with this type of necklace beyond doubt. The cruciforms are to be interpreted as birth symbols in view of the posture of contemporary pottery figures shown in the act of birth (*Ibid.*, pl. Vb). They have similar outstretched arms and are seated vertically on birth stools, with their upper legs naturally drawn up. The seated posture explains the tucked attitude of the legs on all cruciforms, and, as Morris (1985, 122) and Goring (1991) point out, the outstretched arms symbolize the assisted position in birth, whereby a second person supports the mother under her arms (cf. Vandenabeele 1988, pl. IX:2, 3 for later explicit Cypriot representations of the custom).

While picrolite cruciforms are schematized versions of birth figures, their varied associations, including our example with a 1 1/2 year-old baby, suggest more complex uses of the symbol than merely to indicate "the desire on the part of the wearer to give birth herself" (Morris 1985, 122). Their recurrence with dentalia may relate to general ideas of fertility if, as Biggs (1963, 127) believed, dentalia represent male external genitals. Their attachment to deceased children also suggests that the symbol was more than a birth talisman. Yet a further extension of meaning is evident in the possible juxtaposition of such pendants with an animal figure in a Souskiou necklace (Christou 1989, 89, fig. 12:6 left). Birth/death and animal symbols may be linked with human control over wild nature (cf. Hodder 1990), but overt depictions are poorly developed in Cyprus.⁴ This range of associations suggests more than ideas of re-birth for the deceased children of

4. Bulls figure prominently in representations of human relationships between early Near Eastern sedentary societies and the wild (Hodder 1990). The absence of these awe-inspiring potential domesticates in pre-Bronze Age Cyprus means that the manner in which the relationships were played out were perform fundamentally different in Cyprus from the experiences of virtually all adjacent societies.

Grave 563; they imply a confirmation of a fixed social order beyond the transformation of death, and hence a taming or control of death itself.

One feature of that social organisation is the preferential treatment of selected children and adults who were supplied with these exotica. Behind the inclusion of dentalium and picrolite necklaces with certain burial individuals lies a network of alliances and inter-regional contacts that helped to define the role of women and children in society. Such a network is evident from the acquisition of picrolite from distant, specific sources and by its restricted use, primarily for birth figurines (Peltenburg 1991a). This exchange system, moreover, does not cut across numerous cultural boundaries, a feature that can distort so many studies of large-scale exchange networks. Geographical compactness of the picrolite distribution allows us to infer similar meanings throughout the system. Hodder makes the relevant point that "the meaning in an exchange act involves the symbolism attached to an object in a local context and the symbolic power held by an object in being transferred from one context to another. But this symbolism is manipulated as part of the social and economic relations and intentions of the participants. There is a need to move away from broad studies of total exchange distributions to more sensitive studies of the meaning of exchange acts in local contexts." (Hodder 1982, 202-3). As Vagnetti (1980, 47) has observed, even bottle-shaped pendants may be extremely schematized versions of what are referred to here as birth pendants. The more extensive pendant repertoire at Lemba confirms the existence of varied representations based on this central theme (LAP I, pl. 46:6, 9). Similarly, procurement of dentalia meant access to certain sources or suppliers. Stanley Price (1976) argued on the basis of large diameters that several dentalia from earlier Khirokitia were also imported, though he allowed they might be fossils. Diameters of the more numerous chalcolithic dentalia need investigation.

Although sample size is seriously limited, EChal and MChal burial evidence suggests that only selected children and adults had access to dentalium and picrolite necklaces. Representations of adults with necklaces are all female. The association between picrolites and child burials is particularly strong (Peltenburg 1991a). Only one of the burials at the picrolite-rich settlement of Erimi (Dikaio 1936, 11-2), and only four or five of the 56 burials at Lemba contained funerary goods (LAP I, 243). Dating evidence for the latter is poor, but the 22 graves from Area I, at least, are likely to belong to this period. None contained grave goods. The only *in situ* dentalium and picrolite necklace from Lemba was with an infant of 1-2 years (Pl. III:3) and the size of the grave to which the niched dentalia of Pl. III:2 belong suggests a child. Preliminary analysis of about 70 Kissonerga graves also indicates considerable variability in the allocation of burial goods, and a link between picrolites and children. Since objects were not deposited with the deceased in Late Neolithic graves (Toumazou 1987), the individuality of the deceased became more clearly articulated in the EChal, and, from the outset, disparities are evident in the patterning of burial goods.⁵

We have no sex data for burials with dentalium and picrolite necklaces, but only females are depicted wearing birth pendants and so the presumption is that the burial distinction may be one of sex. Even assuming that females alone, whether preadult or adult, have necklaces does not overcome the problem of burial differentiation however, since only a very small proportion of all burials have dentalium and cruciform necklaces. It would seem that access to, or burial with, imported symbolic preciosities was a means and a feature of subgroup differentiation. Ascribed status and hereditary control over resources are often inferred from the inclusion of elaborate burial goods such as these with infants (e.g. Hayden *et al.*, 1985, 190). While the custom is not unexpected in small-scale societies, and is attested much earlier in the Near East for example (Wright 1978), it is the recurrence of such a well defined and tantalizingly explicit package with selected deceased that, once the slender data base is expanded, offers the potential of significant insights into chalcolithic ritual and social organisation.

The notion of hereditary property in chalcolithic Cyprus requires further examination. Communal societies resist status distinctions, and tokens of esteem, or communal redistribution, may be considered better explanations for the association of necklaces with children (cf. Trigger 1990). Yet redistribution here must be viewed in the context of small-scale societies. Prestated objects in kin-based communal societies remain

5. Funerary deposits, including dentalium necklaces, were of course made during the aceramic (Stanley Price 1976), but that period is so far removed in time and tradition from the chalcolithic that it is justifiable to refer to the onset of the custom in EChal times.

tied to their owners (Mauss 1954). In this case they link the dead to the living. But only selected dead, and in order to establish if specific groups achieved continued social preeminence we need a broader canvas than afforded by cemetery evidence. Correlation of rich burials with certain kinds of buildings for example may indicate the extent to which production and exchange were being manipulated to the advantage of sub-groups.

Intra-settlement burial patterns in chalcolithic Cyprus allow only very limited inferences about relations between graves and buildings. In this instance, the occupants of Grave 563 had probably dwelt in Building 855. It is a ridge structure of the type portrayed in the Building Model from Kissonerga (Peltenburg 1989, 114, fig. 15:3). Its status however is uncertain, and there were far more impressive buildings in terms of size, skilled labour and effort, than 855. Unfortunately, there are no graves certainly associated with the larger buildings, although more extensive excavation might reveal them.

Until detailed information from a far larger mortuary record is available, it would be dangerous to infer too many general conclusions from the archaeological evidence of Grave 563. If nothing else however, these preliminary comments serve to indicate some of the potentials of contextual and multi-disciplinary analysis of mortuary evidence from chalcolithic Cyprus.

Note: K. Niklasson's *Early Prehistoric Burials in Cyprus* (SIMA XCVI) Jonsered, 1991 was received too late for consideration here.

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1. Partly revealed burials KM 2718-9 with cruciform figurine KM 2717 *in situ* at the neck of burial KM 2719. Scale 10 cm.



2. Detail of burial KM 2719 showing position of necklace dentalia. Scale 10 cm.

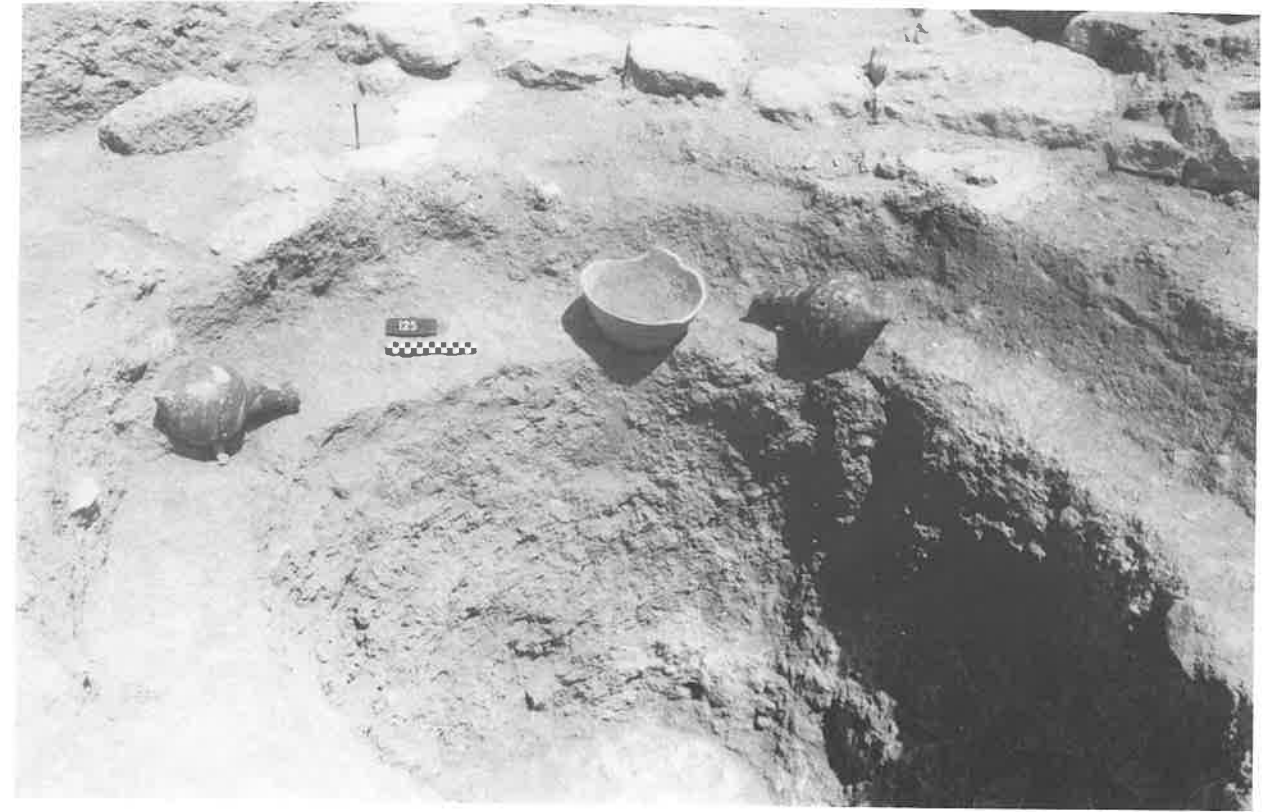
PLATE II



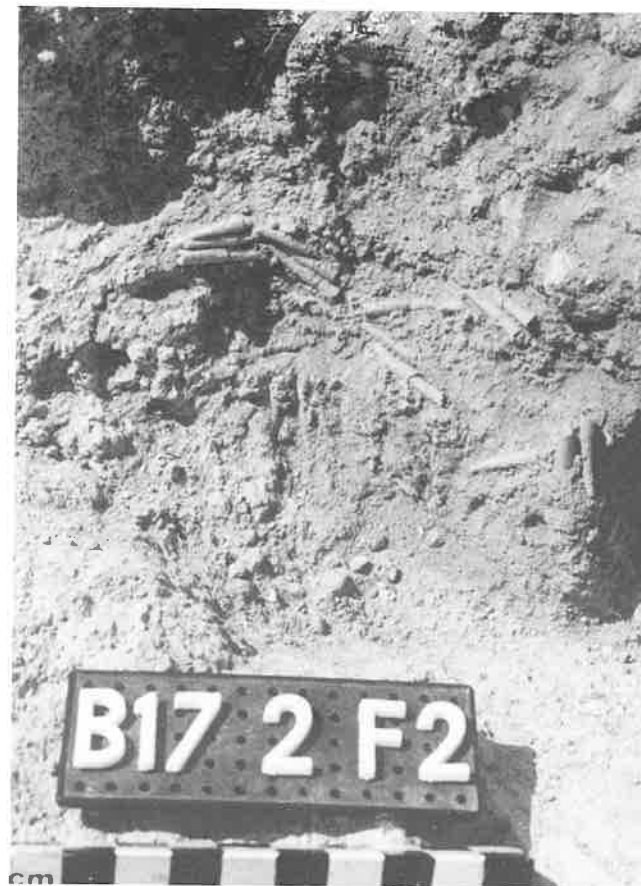
1. Selection of finds from Grave 563.



2. Cruciform figurine KM 2717, from Grave, 563. Ht. 10 cm.



1. Kissonerga Grave 503 with pottery and stone vessels *in situ* on rim of burial pit.



2. Part of multi-stranded *in situ* dentalium necklace in niche of probable grave under Building 17 at Lemba.



3. Lemba Grave 47 containing infant with its two-strand dentalium necklace.