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WOMEN AND SOCIETY IN ANCIENT CYPRUS

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WOMEN AND SOCIETY IN ANCIENT CYPRUS

Edited by

DIANE BOLGER AND NANCY SERWINT

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ENGENDERING APHRODITE WOMEN AND SOCIETY IN ANCIENT CYPRUS

edited by

Diane Bolger and Nancy Serwint

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GENDER AND MORTUARY RITUAL IN CHALCOLITHIC CYPRUS

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The adoption of new mortuary practices in Cyprus during the Late Chalcolithic period in Cyprus furnishes important evidence for changes in social relations during the course of the 3rd millennium B.C. In particular, the introduction of chamber tombs and the advent of group burials signal the emergence of new kinship structures that brought about fundamental changes in the relationships between men, women and children. These developments, which continued into the Bronze Age, took place against a backdrop of advancing social complexity that included the intensification of agriculture, the growth of trade and metallurgy, and the introduction of new technologies from the Anatolian mainland. In this paper I will consider the means by which new social definitions of gender were visibly underscored through transformations in the symbolic system associated with life-cycle rituals of birth and death, as well as the degree to which the social construction of gender during the Late Chalcolithic period, as perceived through the evidence of mortuary ritual, formed the basis for new gender constructs during the Early Bronze Age.

To judge from the evidence of prehistoric sites on the island, early sedentary society in Cyprus comprised relatively small, egalitarian groups of village-based subsistence-level cultivators. During the Chalcolithic period (ca. 3900–2500/2300 B.C.), however, social and economic factors such as population growth, surplus storage, intensive exploitation of copper resources, and the acquisition of foreign prestige items began to contribute to higher levels of social inequality. By the middle of the third millennium and continuing into the Bronze Age, Cyprus had begun to take part in a larger geographical and economic sphere, a development that can be inferred from new patterns of settlement, accelerated rates of craft specialization, trade in prestige items, and technological advances inspired and very likely introduced from abroad (Frankel, Webb and Eslick 1996). The latter include the introduction of plow agriculture, bronze working, and weaving. Increased production and greater levels of sedentism, developments that accompanied the intensification of agriculture, changed society in profound ways by fostering social divisions and creating a need for alliances. This, in turn, promoted the rise of interest groups and social hierarchies intent on exercising authority and maintaining control (Knapp 1993; Manning 1993). Although these attempts were not always successful (Peltenburg 1993), the overall long-term trend during the late 3rd and 2nd millennia was a shift from egalitarianism to hierarchy resulting ultimately in the rise of rich and powerful bureaucratic centers such as Kition and Enkomi.

It is against this backdrop of socio-economic change that I wish to investigate the evolution of funerary practices during the late 4th and 3rd millennia B.C. Grave goods of the Middle Chalcolithic, which include dentalium shell necklaces, cruciform pendants, figurines and painted pottery vessels, were replaced during the Late Chalcolithic by monochrome vessels of new morphological types, annular shell earrings, and beaded necklaces of faience and stone (Peltenburg 1991); and alongside the traditional Chalcolithic pit grave there appeared new mortuary structures, most notably the rock-cut chamber tomb, a type that continued on a larger, more elaborate scale during the Bronze Age. Such major changes in infrastructural and superstructural elements as have been outlined above must reflect equally significant changes in social relations and can be identified by patterns of mortuary differentiation (O'Shea 1984: 21).

Three Chalcolithic sites will be considered in detail: the settlement of Lemba-Lakkous, 4 km north of Paphos, which was occupied during the Middle and Late phases of the period, from roughly the mid-4th to mid-3rd millennium B.C.; the settlement of Kissonerga-Mosphilia, approximately 2 km north of Lemba, with a chronological range of nearly two millennia (from the Late Neolithic to the Philia phase of the Early Bronze Age); and the cemetery of Souskiou-Vathyrakakas near Palaepaphos (Kouklia), which falls entirely within the Middle Chalcolithic period (ca. 3500–3000 B.C.). The earliest phase of the Chalcolithic (ca. 3900–3500 B.C.), represented in the west of Cyprus at Kissonerga-Mylouthkia, Kissonerga-Mosphilia and Maa-Paleokastro, and at other sites around the island (e.g., Kalavassos-Ayios) will not be considered here due to the restricted nature of the early 4th millennium mortuary record. References to "Kissonerga" will henceforth refer only to Kissonerga-Mosphilia.

MORTUARY EVIDENCE AT LEMBA

With the exception of Souskiou (Christou 1989), graves excavated at Chalcolithic sites in Cyprus occur within the built environment and have not been found in separate cemeteries. Within the settlements, very few burials are to be found inside buildings (as was often the case during the Neolithic period), but the association between interments and buildings remains strong since interments are placed adjacent to exterior walls (fig. 1). This was certainly the case at Lemba-Lakkous, where 59 graves of Middle to Late Chalcolithic date were excavated during the 1970s and early 1980s by the Lemba Project under the direction of Edgar Peltenburg (Peltenburg and Project Members 1985). All graves uncovered at Lemba were pit graves, and the overwhelming majority comprised single inhumations of infants and children (fig. 2). Multiple inhumations are rare at Lemba, accounting for only three (roughly five percent) of the total graves excavated at the site (Table 1). Moreover, they occur only in certain combinations: either a single adult (male or female) is buried with a child or infant; or children are buried with other children. Adults, it seems, were never buried together and men, women and children were not interred in what might be interpreted as "family" groups.

Patterned behavior is also discernible in the construction techniques of some of the Lemba graves. In a recent reappraisal of the Lemba burials, Niklasson (1991) isolated "special features" in a small proportion of these graves (Table 2). Due to poor stratigraphical evidence and the lack of sufficient pottery, not all graves could be assigned to sub-periods within the Chalcolithic; those that could were attributable to Period 1 (Middle Chalcolithic, early phase) or to Period 3 (Late Chalcolithic). Special features include the construction of ridges in havora and pise around the rims of the pit graves (Graves 31, 32, 34); rings of stones around pit rims (Graves 29, 50); double pits (Graves 4, 5); a circular extension for a skull (Grave 45); linked networks of pit graves (Graves 12–15, 20); tubular apertures within graves, interpreted as possible libation holes (Graves 12, 13, 15); and capstones (Graves 48, 50). The pattern that emerges from the distribution of these unorthodox features is their exclusive association with infants and children during the Middle Chalcolithic period and their association with adults during the Late Chalcolithic.

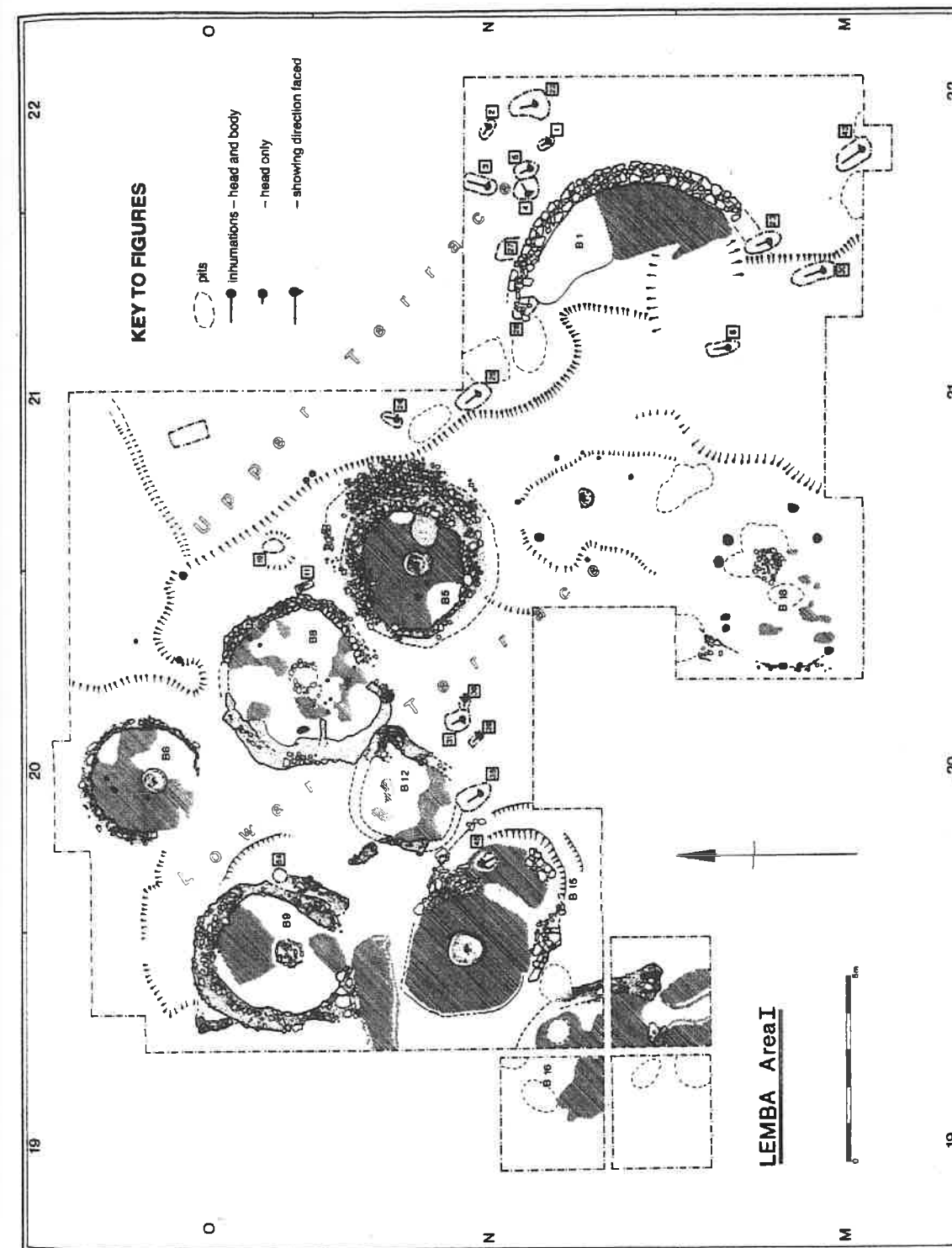


Figure 1. Plan of Lemba Area I showing buildings and adjacent graves.

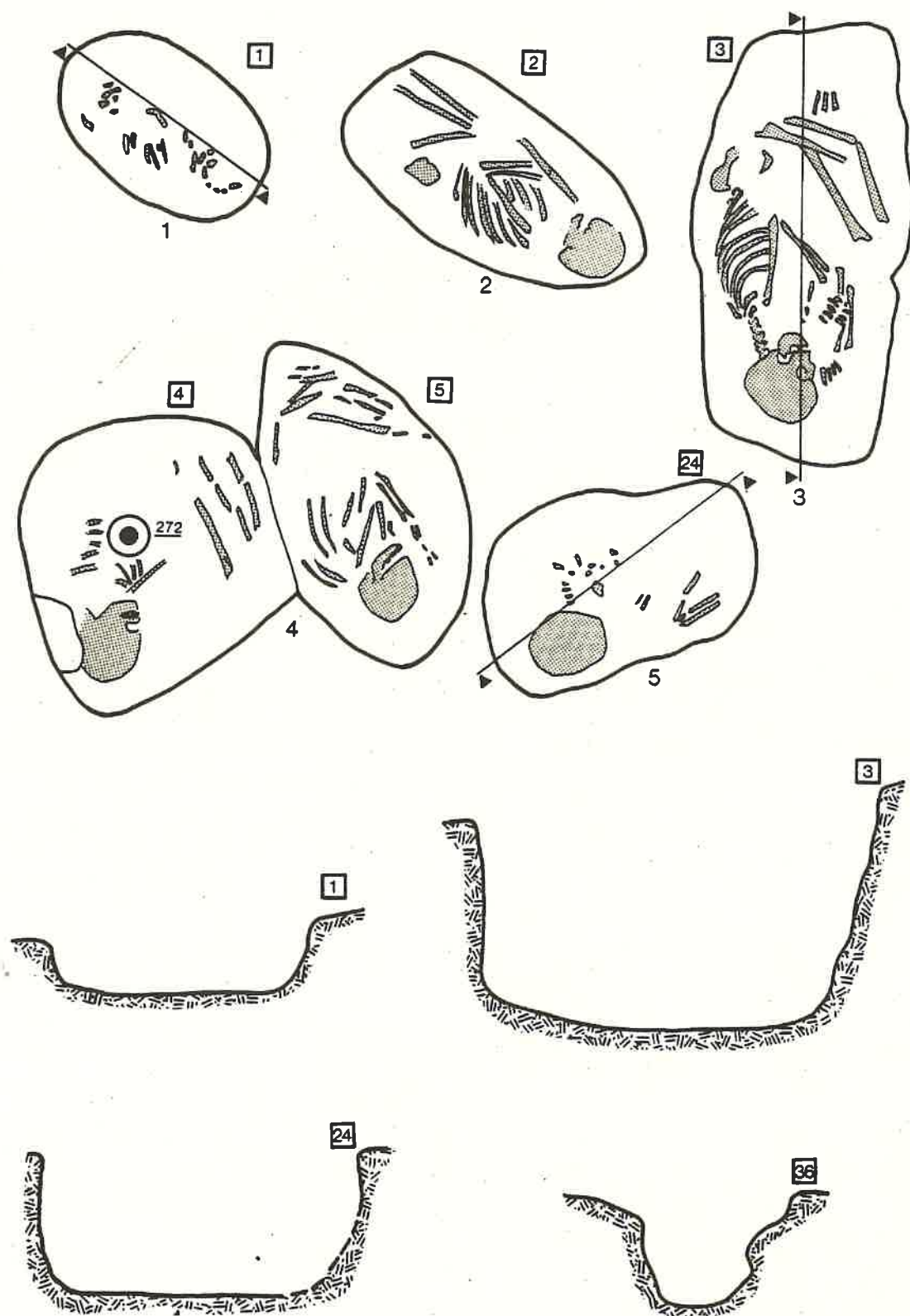


Figure 2. Plans and sections of pit graves from Lemba Area I.

Table 1. Mortuary Data from Lemba and Kissonerga.

BURIAL RECORD	LEMBA	KISSONERGA
Total Graves & Tombs	59	73
Total with Human Bone Analyzed	48	60
Total Graves with Single Inhumations	55	51
Total with Human Bone Analyzed	45	51
A) Single Adult	19	19
B) Single Child	26	32
Total Graves with Multiple Inhumations	3	9
Total with Human Bone Analyzed	3	9
A) Adult Males	--	1
B) Adult Females	--	2
C) Multiple Children	1	2
D) Adult Male + Adult Female	--	--
E) Adult Male + Infant/Child	1	--
F) Adult Female + Infant/Child	1	2
G) Adult Male + Adult Female + Infant/Child	--	2
Total Chamber Tombs		13
Chamber Tombs with Multiple Inhumations		7

Table 2. Special Features of Lemba Graves.

Period	Grave No.	Special Feature(s)	Interment(s)
1	31	havara ridge	infant
1	32	havara/pise ridge	child
1?	34	havara ridge/capstone	infant
1	45	niche for skull	child
1-2	4 & 5	double pit	infant, child
1-early3	12	aperture to upper pit	child
1-early3	13	aperture to upper pit	child
1-early3	14	joined upper pit	child
1-early3	15	aperture to upper pit	child
1-early3	20	joined upper pit	child
3	29	stones around pit rim	adult
3	48	capstones	adolescent
3	50	stones / capstones	adult

Table 3. Grave Goods from Lemba Burials.

Grave No.	Grave Goods	Probable Date	Interment
18	quern	?	adolescent
41	quern	?	child
38	RMP bowl	Middle Chalcolithic	infant
47	dentalium necklace	Middle Chalcolithic	infant
21	picrolite pendant	Middle Chalcolithic	child
44	picrolite pendant	Middle Chalcolithic	child
46	picrolite pendant	Middle Chalcolithic	child
20	picrolite figurine	M Chal/early L Chal	none

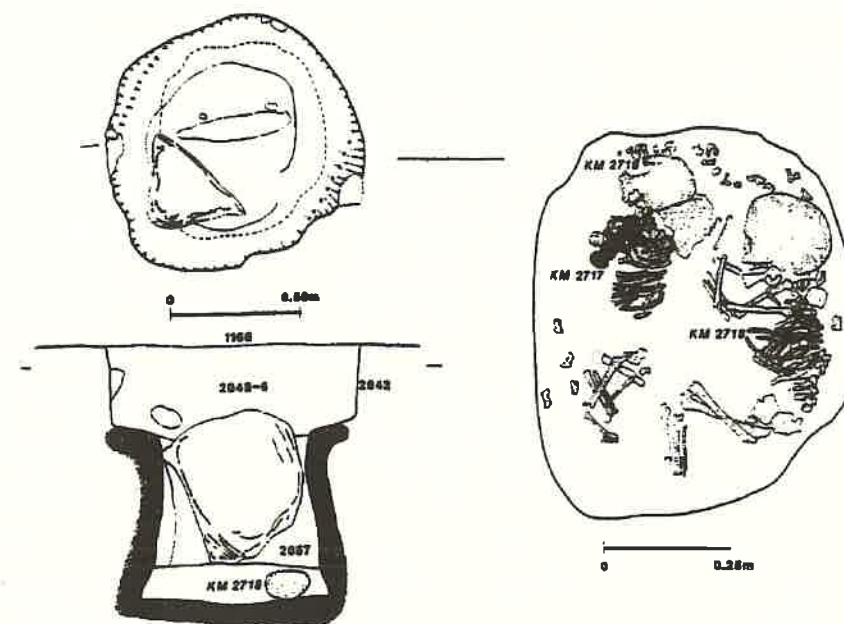
Grave goods, though limited in number, occur in similar patterns to those just mentioned. Infants and children were sometimes accompanied by querns, pottery, necklaces and pendants (Table 3). Querns were discovered in adolescent Grave 18 and over the head of a child in Grave 41. A pottery vessel was found in infant Grave 38. A dentalium shell necklace was found in Grave 47, which contained an infant burial. Picrolite pendants were unearthed in Graves 21, 44, and 46, all of which were child burials. In addition, one grave at Lemba contained a picrolite figurine. This was a cruciform figure from Grave 20, a rectangular pit cut into bedrock (similar in design but much smaller than the large shaft burials at Souskiou) and part of the children's burial complex under Building 2 (pictured in Peltenburg and Project Members 1985: fig. 41).

Although the dating of these graves with grave goods is not certain (Table 3 includes possible dates), the monochrome bowl in Grave 38 is a Middle Chalcolithic type, and Grave 20 (part of the burial complex under Building 2), according to stratigraphic evidence, cannot be later than the early part of the Late Chalcolithic. Moreover, at Kissonerga, where relative dating is clearer, dentalium shell necklaces and cruciform pendants occur in graves of Middle Chalcolithic, rather than Late Chalcolithic, date. In sum, mortuary evidence at Lemba strongly suggests that only children were buried with grave goods, and that those burials fall early on within the Chalcolithic sequence. Deceased adults do not appear to have been furnished with grave goods during either phase of the period.

FROM PIT GRAVE TO CHAMBER TOMB: MORTUARY EVIDENCE AT KISSONERGA

Seventy-three graves and tombs have been recorded at Kissonerga; these date to the Middle and Late Chalcolithic periods and collectively span more than half a millennium. Although most burials were incorporated into simple pit graves like those at Lemba, there is a greater variety of structural types (see chapter 4 in Peltenburg and Project Members 1998 for a full discussion of the types). Chief among them is the chamber tomb, which makes its initial appearance at Kissonerga during Period 4 (Late Chalcolithic period). There are a total of 13 chamber tombs, of which seven contained multiple inhumations. Two of the tombs (Tombs 505 and 515) comprised group burials consisting of an adult male, an adult female and one or more children. From their closely intertwined positions (e.g., Tomb 505, fig. 4) it would appear that the deceased were buried at the same time and do not represent separate, successive interments. The burial of adults and children together in a single tomb represents a marked departure from customs of the Middle Chalcolithic period.

Differential treatment of adults and children, witnessed at Lemba, occurs at Kissonerga as well, although it manifests itself in a somewhat different manner. According to Peltenburg, the low proportion of adult burials at the site constitutes one of the most remarkable features of the Kissonerga mor-

**Figure 3.** Plan and section of Kissonerga-Mosphilia Grave 563.

tuary population (see fig. 4.5 in Peltenburg and Project Members 1998). He further proposes that adults were buried extramurally in remote cemeteries such as Souskiou-Vathyrkakas. By the Late Chalcolithic, however, this trend had reversed itself, and mortuary data signal the return to a complete age structure in the burial population (chapter 4 in Peltenburg and Project Members 1998). Peltenburg regards this change as a "major ideological shift" between Middle and late Chalcolithic Kissonerga. The inclusion of adult burials within the built environment at Late Chalcolithic Kissonerga is in keeping with the evidence at Lemba Period 3 (Late Chalcolithic) where special structural features previously reserved for children were transferred to adults. These and other related phenomena adumbrate a fundamental shift in attitudes toward adults and children within society as a whole.

RITUALS OF BIRTH AND DEATH : THE CEMETERY AT SOUSKIOU

The cemetery of Souskiou-Vathyrkakas near Kouklia village is situated on the edge of a plateau overlooking the Dhiarizos River and is comprised of deep rectangular shafts cut into the bedrock. Due to the richness of their associated burial goods, the Souskiou tombs have been targets of repeated illicit digging, but excavations by Iliffe and Mitford in 1951, Maier in 1972, and the Department of Antiquities (directed by Demos Christou) in 1972 and from 1991-97 (fig. 5), have yielded a great deal of information on this important cemetery site of the Middle Chalcolithic period (for a preliminary report, see Christou 1989). Multiple burials of adults in deep shaft-like tombs represent a significant departure from funerary traditions elsewhere on the island. Moreover, the unusually rich and unorthodox character of grave goods in a distinct and remote cemetery distinguishes the site as something extraordinary. A particularly spectacular example from the most recent campaign by the Department of Antiquities was the discovery of an anthropomorphic pottery vessel in the form of a pregnant female, now on display in Room 1 of the Cyprus Museum in Nicosia. It was found in a multiple burial of an adult together with three small children and a possible adolescent (unfortunately, the sex of the adult could not be determined due to its poorly preserved state). The final report of the Department of Antiquities

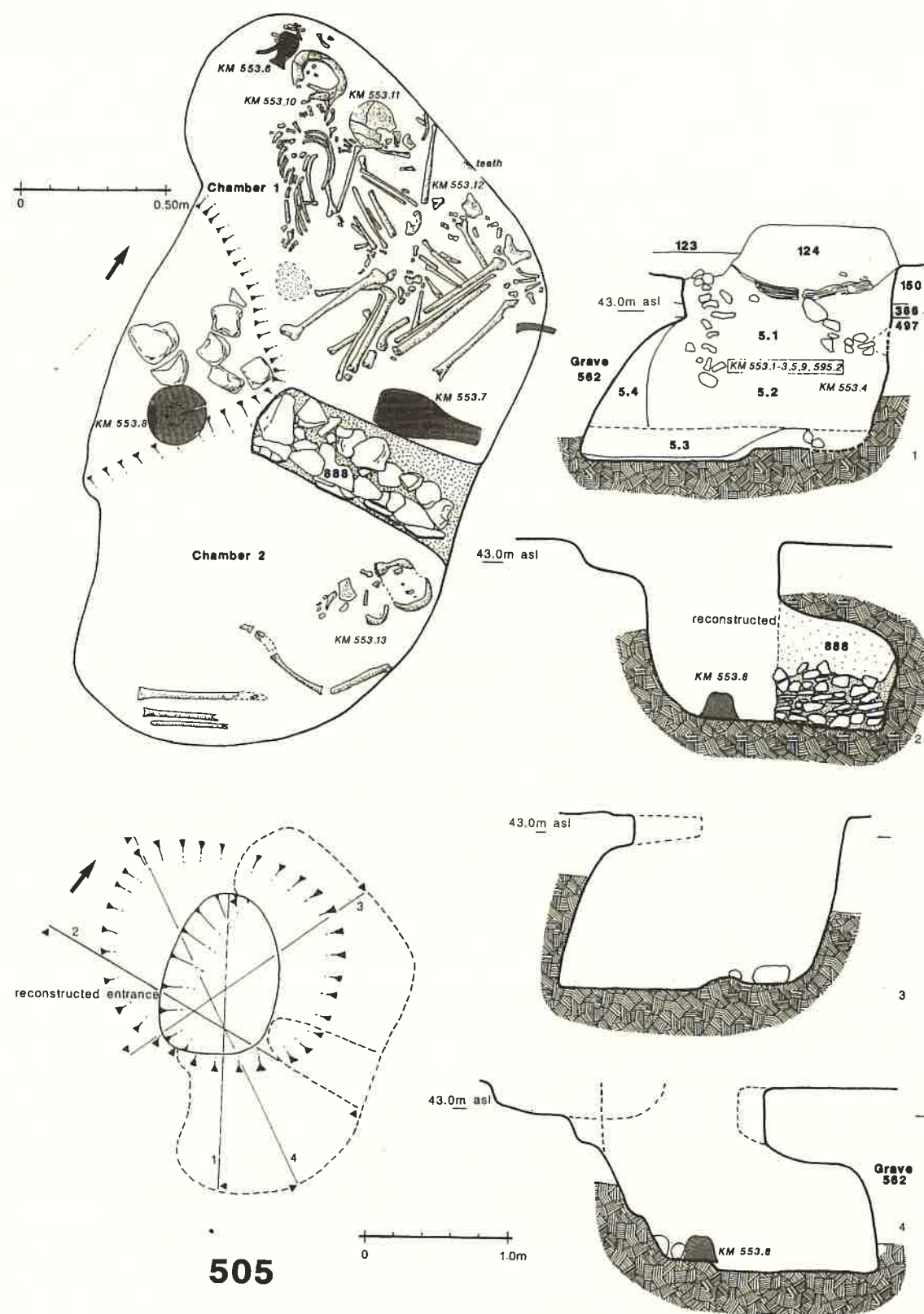


Figure 4. Plan and section of Kissonerga-Mosphilia Tomb 505.

excavations at Souskiou is currently in preparation, and not all of the human skeletal material has been fully analyzed, but preliminary examination suggests much higher proportions of adult inhumations than we have seen at Lemba and Kissonerga. Many of these appear to be adult females, with or without accompanying children.

BIRTHING RITUALS AT KISSONERGA AND LEMBA

Figurines of similar design to the Souskiou anthropomorphic vessel are known from other contemporary sites in Cyprus, but they have usually been recovered in disturbed contexts or as the unprovenanced spoils of illicit digging. The exception to this rule is the site of Kissonerga, where 19 figurines of stone and pottery were found in a ceremonial pit together with pottery vessels, stone tools, a triton shell and a ceramic building model (Peltenburg and Project Members 1991). One of the most important finds, a Red-on-White ware pottery figurine seated on a stool in the act of labor, clearly demonstrates that these objects were connected to birthing rituals (fig. 6, KM 1451; the child, painted in red, emerges between her legs). A second figurine in Red-on-White ware was hollow and may actually have been an anthropomorphic vessel like the one from Souskiou (fig. 6, KM 1475). Variations in attributes of form and wear suggest that the stone figurines were held or clutched in the hand, while the ceramic examples were free-standing and had restricted areas of wear indicating their possible use as didactic models in puberty rituals (chapter 4 in Peltenburg and Project Members 1991).

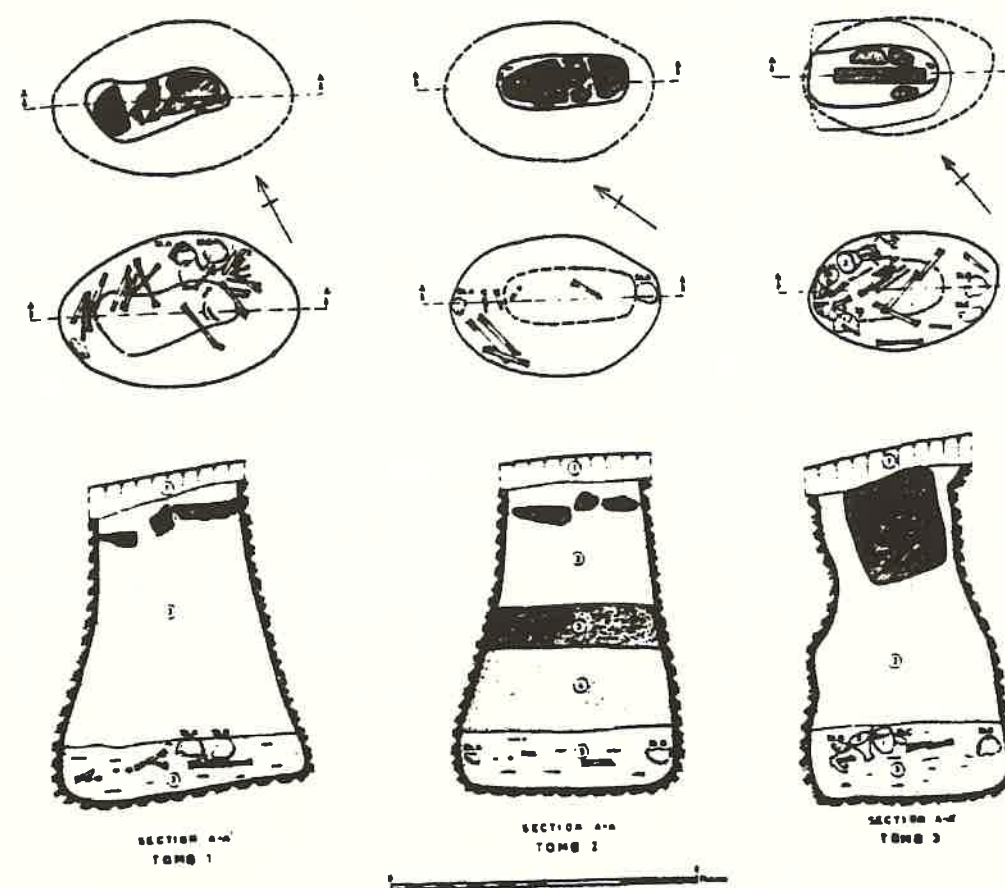


Figure 5. Plans and sections of Tombs 1-3 at Souskiou-Vathykakas. After Christou (1989).

Birthing symbols may also be represented in the picrolite anthropomorphic pendants that occasionally formed part of dentalium shell necklaces in Middle Chalcolithic graves (Peltenburg 1992). These necklaces are associated with women, as indicated around the neck of the Kissonerga birthing figurine (fig. 6, KM1451) and children, as in Grave 563 at Kissonerga (fig. 3). From the relative scarcity of these ornaments in graves, we can infer that they were regarded as luxury items. Of the 73 graves excavated at Kissonerga, for example, only a handful contained picrolites. Similar ratios have been recorded at other sites as well: Lemba yielded picrolites in only five of its 59 graves, and at Souskiou only one of the five tombs excavated by the Department of Antiquities in the 1970s contained picrolites (that ratio has not increased significantly as the result of the most recent excavations at the site). The tomb in question, Tomb 3 (fig. 5), yielded 20 picrolite pendants, 16 of which were the anthropomorphic cruciform variety; they were found in association with the burials of three adult females and an eight year old child. Similar patterns recur at Kissonerga and Lemba. To date, no picrolite pendant has been found in the burial of an adult male, and the repeated association of picrolites with certain women and children suggests restricted, differential access to the procurement of raw picrolite and the possession of picrolite ornaments among the Middle Chalcolithic populations of Cyprus. Moreover, it suggests that women at this time were centrally involved in their production and exchange and thus played important economic roles.

The deliberate breakage of several of the Kissonerga figurines and the careful placement of all the objects into a ceremonial pit together with burnt debris are ritual acts that signify the end of a long tradition of birthing ritual. Anthropomorphic figurines are not found in Late Chalcolithic contexts at Lemba or Kissonerga, nor are the birth pendants and cruciform picrolite figurines with bent knees that Peltenburg has argued constitute a continuation of the same symbol set and should likewise be regarded as seated birthing figures (Peltenburg 1992). The end of birthing symbolism, as we have seen, coincides with changes in mortuary ritual that involved a reduction of grave goods and special architectural features in child and infant burials, and with a shift from single inhumations to group burials of men, women and children. Prior to the Chalcolithic period, such as the well-known intra-mural burials at the Aceramic Neolithic site of Khirokitia, the deceased were normally buried under the floors of buildings. As only a single burial was usually allocated to each structure, it appears unlikely that burials took place during the Neolithic according to family groups (Niklasson 1991: 167). As we have already seen, the change to group burials appears to have taken place much later, i.e., sometime around the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C.

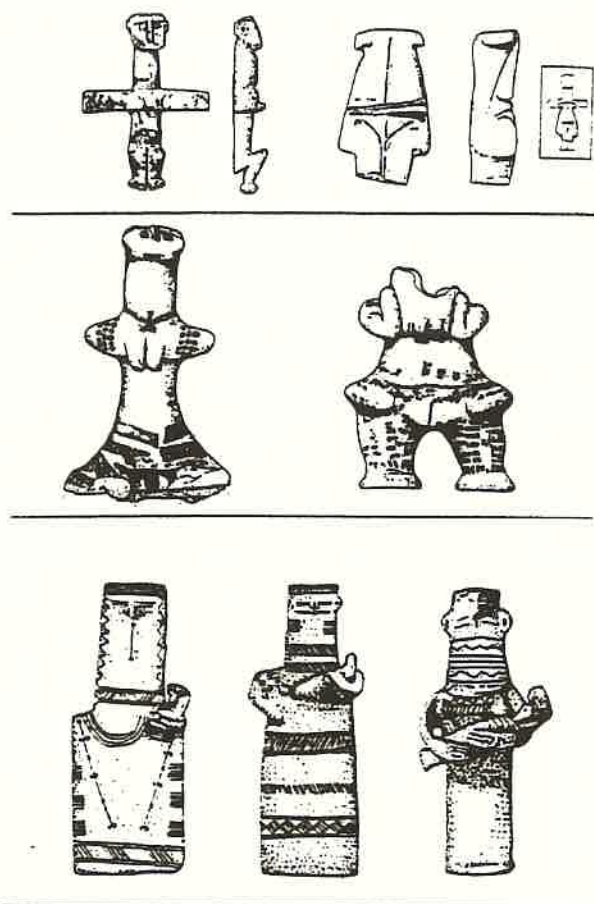


Figure 6. Anthropomorphic figurines from Chalcolithic and Bronze Age Cyprus. Top row: picrolite (LL 300, left; LL 152, right). Center row: Red-on-White figurines (KM 1451, left; KM 1475, right). Bottom row: Early Bronze Age Figurines (Lapithos, left; unprovenanced, center and right). After Morris (1985).

In attempting to sum up what we have seen so far regarding the development of mortuary ritual during the Middle Chalcolithic period, the following patterns emerge: the high proportions of children and infants in intra-settlement burials; the segregation of children from adults in intra-site burials; the predominance of single inhumations in pit graves; and the possibility of separate, remote cemeteries for adults; the segregation of male and female adults; the linking of "special" architectural features and grave goods with children; and the association of women and children with fertility and birthing symbolism, in general, and picrolite figurines and pendants, in particular. These practices changed dramatically during the Late Chalcolithic with the introduction of chamber tombs, the increased incidence of multiple inhumation, the decline of birthing symbols, and the first recorded instances of group burials comprising women, men and children. The joint burial of adults and children during the Late Chalcolithic signifies a dramatic ideological shift that can be understood only within the larger perspective of changing socio-economic conditions.

PATTERNS OF KINSHIP AND DESCENT

Perhaps the most significant social development suggested by the changes in funerary practices outlined above is the emergence of new kinship structures, since kinship, in addition to organizing the relations of production, constitutes the basis for ideologies and other elements of superstructure (Peletz 1995: 353). In ethnographic accounts of pre-industrial societies, a major distinction is drawn between kindreds and lineages, with the former characteristic of nomadic or semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers and horticulturalists and the latter ascribed to infrastructural changes associated with increasing sedentism, agricultural intensification, and social complexity.

The principal structural feature of kindreds is the unrestricted span and depth of bilateral reckoning in which there is no uniform principle for limiting the extension of the kinship circle (fig. 7). Similarly, there is no possibility for large scale social segmentation, as only ego's siblings have the same relationship to kindred as ego. This kinship structure is normally found in societies that are not agriculturally based and where corporate ownership of or rights to land are not central to economic production. Egalitarian societies, in which there is little social hierarchy and minimal ownership of property or wealth, fall into this category. Divisions within the social structure of egalitarian groups normally occur along lines of age and/or gender such as age sets and the sexual division of labor. Also characteristic of kindreds are communal rites of passage such as those that

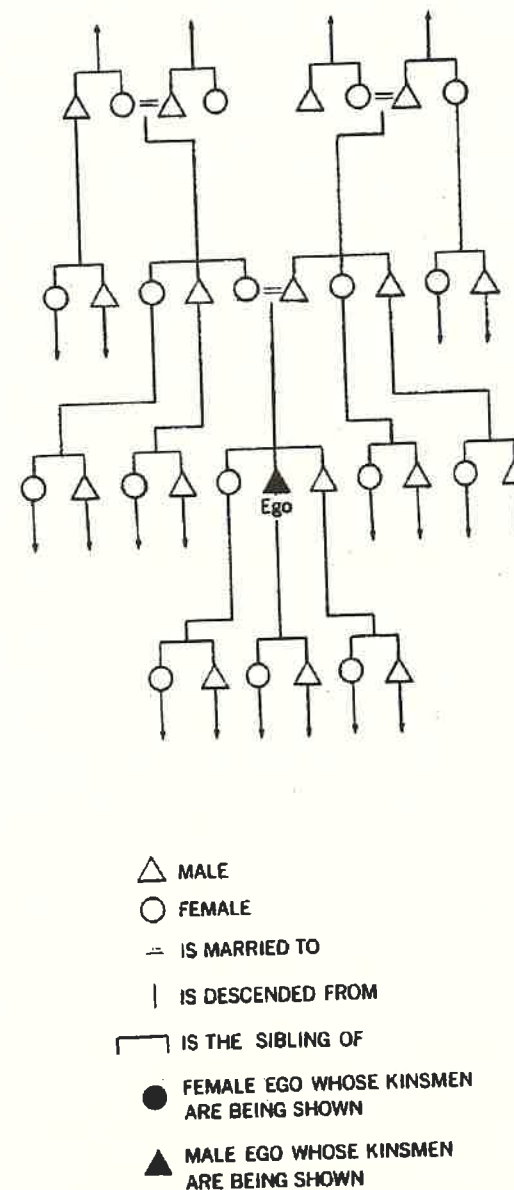


Figure 7. Diagram of Kinship Reckoned by Bilateral Descent. After Harris (1971).

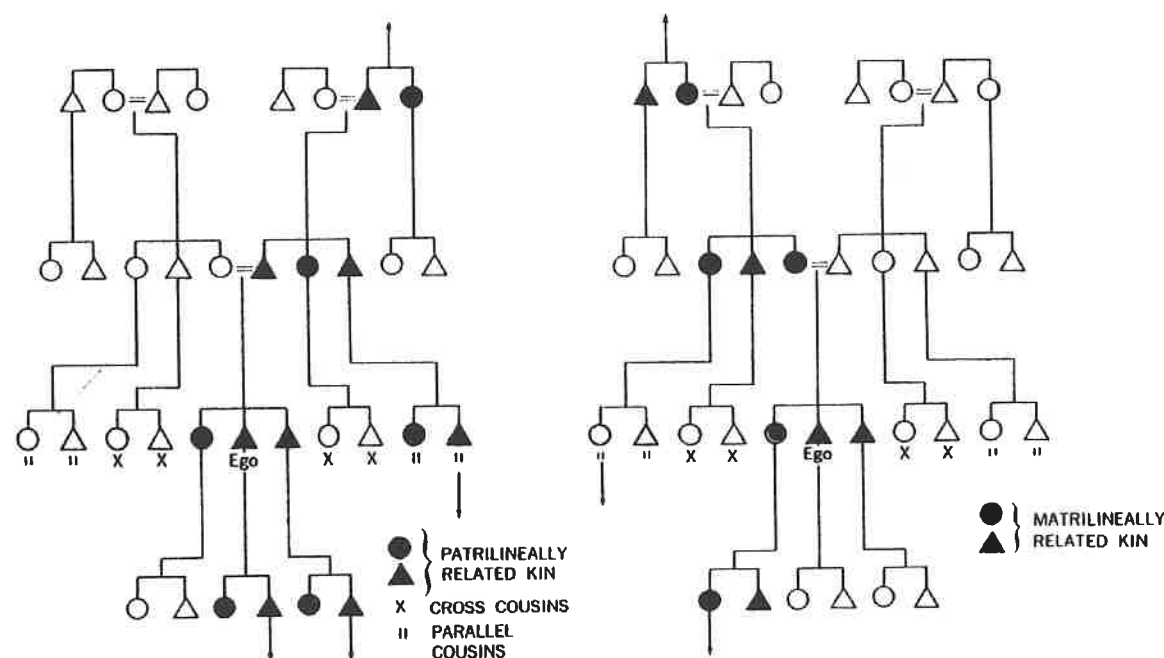


Figure 8. Diagram of Kinship Reckoned by Unilineal Descent. After Harris (1971).

accompany birth, marriage, and death—rituals that help to promote and maintain group identity and cohesion.

Lineages, in contrast, are groups related vertically by descent from a common ancestor. In patrilineages and matrilineages, membership in a kinship group is reckoned along a single line of descent, either paternal or maternal (fig. 8). Here, the cultural restrictions used to define "kin" lead to group segmentation (lineages and sub-lineages), which may pose threats to group integrity. Potential divisions within society are to some degree resolved by affinities, or marriage links, which are important for creating economic and social bonds and for maintaining group cohesion. Marriage thus takes on new functional importance as the far-ranging network of social relations characteristic of kindreds is replaced as an organizing principle by smaller, domestically differentiated groups or "families" consisting of husbands, wives and children.

The emergence of lineages in Cyprus is strongly suggested by the evolution of mortuary practices during the 3rd millennium: the gradual phasing out of single inhumations and burials according to age sets (e.g., multiple child burials), the appearance of chamber tombs, the advent of communal burials of mixed ages and sexes, the declining attention paid to children in mortuary rituals, and the transformations of birthing symbolism within life-cycle rituals (Bolger 1996). Further evidence of close vertical links in kinship structures is suggested by unprecedented mortuary features such as the tube-like apertures in the Late Chalcolithic children's burial complex below Building 2 at Lemba, which were apparently used to maintain contact between the living and the dead. Specifically, it has been proposed that these tubular shafts may have been used as libation holes as part of recurring funerary rituals (Niklasson in Peltenburg and Project Members 1985: 244). The reinforcement of social bonds between adults and children suggested by these acts, as well as by the joint burial of adults and children elsewhere during the Late Chalcolithic, strongly suggests that children as well as adults were affected by advances in social complexity and that changes in treatment and status of children were bound up with changing gender constructs that exercised an equally marked impact upon the relationships between women and men.

GENDER AND SOCIETY IN PREHISTORIC CYPRUS

Engendering the prehistoric past allows us to explore the dynamics of social relations and to chart some of the pathways to social complexity at the microscale level, rather than at a broader, systemic level. Analyses of complex society which address developments at the systemic level alone (whether emphasis be given to indigenous models such as Knapp 1993, Manning 1993, or to the transfer of technologies from abroad, as in Frankel, Webb and Eslick 1996) often fail to consider the importance of gender constructs, domestic organization and personal relations in proposed trajectories of social change. By correlating changes in mortuary practices and kinship structures to advances in socio-economic complexity, we are able to consider some of the ways in which the roles of men, women and children may have been fundamentally transformed.

If we consider the evidence discussed in the preceding pages, there would appear to be at least four ways in which the emergence of lineages and the intensification of agriculture during the 3rd millennium may have altered gender constructs and parent-child relations by redefining the relations of production and reproduction:

- 1) Changes in modes of economic production would have had an impact upon gender-based divisions of labor by increasing women's input within the domestic environment. Ethnographic studies on present-day agricultural societies (e.g., Boserup 1970; Sanday 1973; Ember 1983) demonstrate a decline in women's contribution to primary economic production in societies where intensive agriculture is practiced. Ember (1983), citing time allocation data gathered by Minge-Klevana (1980) on simple and intensive agricultural societies around the world, concluded that adult women in intensive agricultural societies average 10.8 working hours per day, as opposed to 6.7 in simple agricultural societies; and that women in intensive agricultural societies spend more time working indoors than women in simple agricultural societies (5.9 vs. 2.9 hours per day). In both types of society, women spend an average 4.5 hours per day working outdoors, so outdoor work doesn't decrease—rather, indoor work markedly increases.
- 2) Changing means and strategies of attaining wealth, status and prestige, as well as reconfigurations within the overall structure of economic exchange, may have contributed to a decline in female status (Bolger 1994). This is suggested by the end of personal exchange networks such as the picrolite networks of the Middle Chalcolithic, which are likely to have been organized and controlled by women. As the relations of production began to be reorganized in terms of membership in corporate kinship groups, personal exchange networks were replaced by corporate control of resources, with the family, rather than individuals, as chief producers and beneficiaries. Moreover, as inheritance within lineages is transmitted vertically, through paternal or maternal lines, it restricts access to material wealth, and circumscribes other forms of economic and social privilege. If, on the basis of cross-cultural data, we may infer that patrilineages were operative in prehistoric Cyprus and, following Frankel, that residency was virilocal (Frankel 1978), men would have enjoyed greater access to social and economic prerogatives, and women would have been increasingly restricted in their ability to own or inherit property and other forms of wealth. It should be noted, however, that the emergence of a more highly stratified society during the later phases of the Bronze Age is associated with the rise to power of powerful and wealthy elites that included women as well as men.

- 3) Ethnographic research has shown that changes in modes of kinship and production can be correlated to changes in the relations of reproduction (Peletz 1995: 353–54 with references). These approaches emphasize the social context of reproduction by distinguishing its biological and cultural aspects (Holy 1996: 56). While only the mother-child relationship is needed for successful biological reproduction of the species once a woman has successfully been fertilized, the reproduction of individuals capable of full social life involves recognition by society at large. Cross-cultural analysis of modern pre-state societies has shown that in almost every society a person is eligible to become a fully fledged member of the community only if he or she has a socially recognized mother and father. In this way, the family becomes the only acceptable means by which the necessity for the replacement of mortal members of a social group is met.

The importance attached to the social context of reproduction can often be discerned in the archaeological record through iconographic portrayals of women and children. Olsen (1998), for example, has recently proposed a sharp distinction in gender constructs between Minoan and Mycenaean society, with Minoan iconography failing to associate women with children and Mycenaean iconography stressing mother-child relations. She concludes that "this represents, if not a fundamental difference in gender construction between Minoan and Mycenaean societies, at the very least a fundamentally different approach to a gendered social role (Olsen 1998: 390)." In third millennium Cyprus, women's reproductive roles were re-defined within the context of emerging family structures (Bolger 1996). Moreover, restrictions on female sexual behavior, which often accompany new social demands involving the restriction of kin and legitimization of heirs, probably became more stringent as society attained higher levels of sedentarization. These and other changing definitions of "appropriate" social behavior are linked to the intensification of agriculture and the corporate ownership of land, which require a means of passing on inheritance to socially recognized heirs.

- 4) The need to establish paternity and to recognize offspring socially has an impact upon the role of children as well. With the emergence of lineages and intensification of agriculture, reproductive strategies are likely to have evolved in accordance with newly emerging forces of economic production. In agricultural societies, children are valued as laborers and as future partners in marriage with members of other corporate groups. Yet there is a tendency at the same time to regard children as commodities, reducing their status in much the same way as that of women. In Cyprus, this impact can perhaps be measured by the end of birthing symbolism and the decline in numbers of grave goods associated with child burials during the Late Chalcolithic. Unwanted children may have been put to death, as infanticide in traditional societies lacking adequate methods of birth control usually occurs during conditions of economic exigency; infanticide can also result from unwanted pregnancies due to illegitimacy (Mays 1993). While infant burials, including neonates, form a substantial proportion of the Chalcolithic mortuary record, we have no way of knowing whether these deaths occurred naturally or deliberately nor do we have evidence on the sexes of the deceased infants that figure so largely in graves of Chalcolithic date. Outside Cyprus, several cases of infanticide have been identified in the archaeological record (Mays 1993; Smith and Kahila 1992), but they have thus far failed to establish sex-linked biases, owing largely to the difficulty of sexing infant skeletons. Ethnographic evidence has shown, however, that infanticide is more likely to be practiced on females in cultures where women's economic input is undervalued and female status is low (Smith and Smith 1994).

But children do more than simply reflect changing social constructs. As "learners and practitioners of gender" (Deverenski 1997) they are the repositories and transmitters of appropriate gender behavior. Through processes of enculturation, children learn to imitate and

assimilate the values of their elders; later, as adults, they will pass those values on to the next generation. Children and childhood, frequently marginalized in the archaeological literature, are fundamental to our understanding of changing gender constructs since they contribute actively to the transmission of gender ideologies. Engendering the prehistoric past, therefore, requires an appreciation of children as agents in cultural change and the "archaeology of children and childhood," long neglected by scholars, needs to be put at the forefront of future archaeological research (cf. Moore and Scott 1997).

GENDER AND MORTUARY RITUAL DURING THE BRONZE AGE

While group burials are first attested in the Late Chalcolithic period, it was only later, during the Early Bronze Age, that the practice of burying the deceased in large communal cemeteries separate from their associated settlements became standard mortuary practice (fig. 9). The appearance of larger burial populations within tombs is a trend that continues into the Middle and Late Cypriot periods and may indicate the expression of longer-term descent relations during the course of the later 3rd and 2nd millennia (Keswani 1989: 500). Unfortunately, there is very little evidence concerning the human populations buried in these tombs as most were excavated early in the last century prior to the adoption of modern excavation methods. These early campaigns did not, as a rule, gather information on sexes or ages of the deceased, nor did they focus on health issues such as stress, diet, and disease. On the other hand, there is good evidence for construction techniques and architecture of the tombs, as well as for the position and alignment of bodies and the range and quantities of associated grave goods. While such evidence has been used to support models of low or incipient socio-economic differentiation (Keswani 1989; Davies 1997), little scholarly attention has been focussed upon the kinship structures implied by the number, size, chronology and arrangement of tombs within these large mortuary complexes.

Cemeteries of the Early Bronze Age consisted of large networks of chamber tombs cut into bedrock and furnished with long rectangular *dromoi*, limestone slabs used as blocking stones, and single or multiple burial chambers (fig. 10). Although these tombs are larger and more elaborate than their earlier counterparts and were used over longer periods of time, they can be linked in a general sense to the earlier chamber tombs from Kissonerga. Ancestral links are ritually reinforced by the repeated use and re-use of tombs over many generations, presumably by members of the same kinship group. Grave goods, such as spiral earrings, annular shell pendants, and biconical spindle whorls, also recall those from burials at Kissonerga Periods 4–5 (Peltenburg 1991). Dikaïos, who excavated five tombs of the Philia culture at Philia-Vasiliko between 1942 and 1951, noted that some of the tombs had been reused and that previous occupants had been swept "unceremoniously" to the back of the chamber; the reuse of tombs gradually became a common custom, leading to multiple burials (Dikaïos 1962: 160–65).

At Vounous near Bellapais, excavations by Dikaïos, Schaeffer and Stewart during the 1930s revealed a total of 164 tombs of EC–MC date (Dikaïos 1940; Schaeffer 1936; Stewart and Stewart 1950). They are similar in architectural form to those of Philia but appear to have involved more complex mortuary rituals. According to Stewart, the dead at Vounous were laid out in orderly arrangements, with the first burials placed in the west of chamber, to the right of the entrance, and later in back, with respect maintained for previous dead. Finds in these tombs, including bronze spiral earrings, annular shell pendants and incised, biconical spindle whorls, once again link these tombs to the final phases of Kissonerga, but the size of this cemetery, the re-use of tombs over many generations, and the degree of reverence shown for ancestral dead, suggest the emergence of social groups with more sharply defined communal interests.

In some of the more elaborate tombs at Vounous, the deceased were accompanied by figurines and coroplastic scenes that reflect some of the emerging gender constructs discussed above. These include



Figure 9. Plan of the Early Bronze Age Cemetery at Bellapais-Vounous. After Stewart (1950).

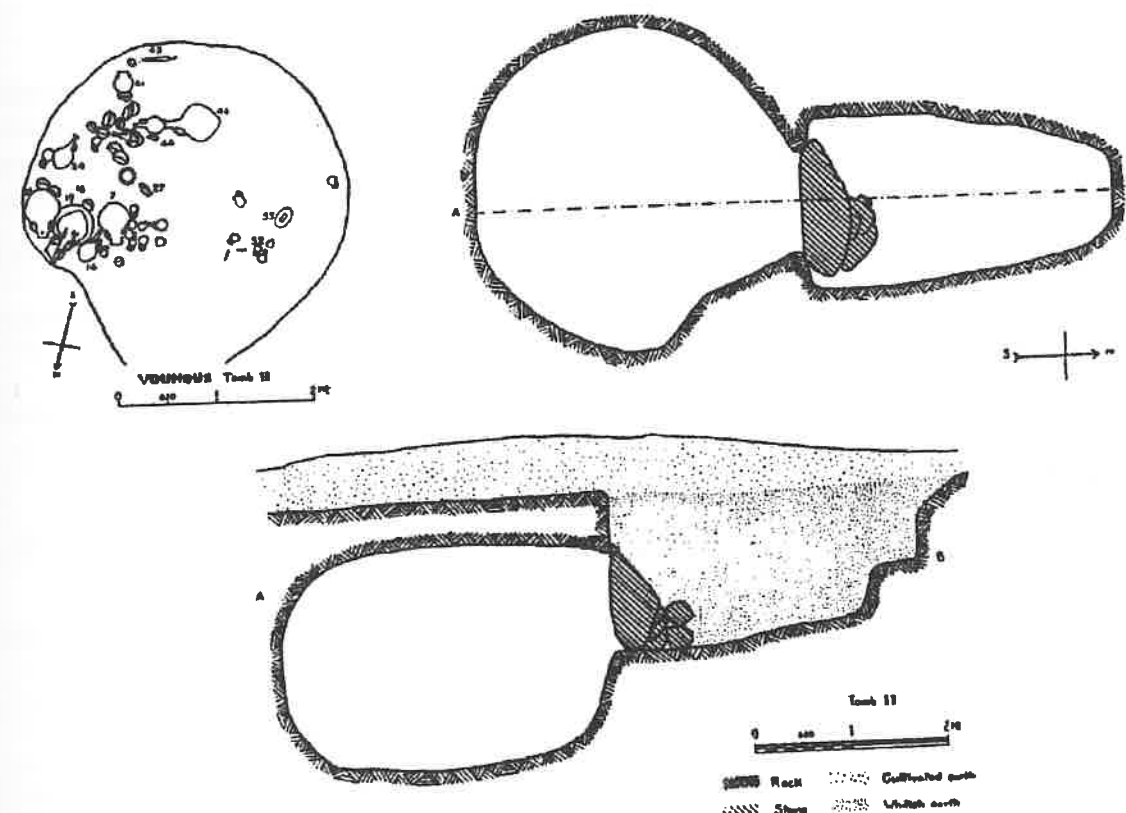


Figure 10. Plan and section of Early Bronze Age Tomb 11 at Bellapais-Vounous. After Dikaios (1940).

adult female figures holding or nursing children (fig. 6), men and women as husband-and-wife pairs, and complex scenes of everyday activities, with divisions of labor along gender lines sometimes in evidence (described in detail in Morris 1985: chapter 3 and Karageorghis 1991: chapter 3). While serving as indicators of increasing levels of social hierarchy and of sex-linked divisions within society, these compositions underscore the collective nature of productive labor and locate the processes of production and reproduction firmly within the context of family and household groups. Recent discoveries of figurines in settlement contexts at Marki-Alonia, dated to EC III, broaden the function and meaning of these objects by indicating their use among the living as well as their burial with the dead (Frankel and Webb 1996: 187–88).

As symbols of “ideal” social behavior, these images of women and men laboring harmoniously together may, in fact, have served to mask underlying tensions that had begun to surface as the result of changes in traditional social and economic roles. Even the concept of complementarity, which connotes a relative degree of equality between the sexes, embraces categories of difference and alterity. In this paper I have tried to show some of the ways in which the social reconstruction of gender, which becomes highly visible in material culture at the end of the Early Bronze Age, can be traced to indigenous social transformations that first began to manifest themselves during the Middle Chalcolithic period. Within an overall framework of advancing social complexity in Cyprus during the 3rd millennium B.C., it is significant that changes in gender constructs first emerged within a social milieu that was still in other respects relatively egalitarian, and that they appear to have anticipated the emergence of state-level society on the island by a millennium or more.

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ENGENDERING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT: HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNITY IN PREHISTORIC BRONZE AGE CYPRUS

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The household is a fundamental element of social organization and the domain in which behavioral relationships such as those of age and gender are established, maintained and reproduced. Household archaeology, if it is to be effective in the real world of the prehistoric Cypriot Bronze Age, needs to develop strategies to overcome problems of recognition arising from the density of occupation and the conjoined nature of the final architectural systems at many sites, high rates of artefact curation and the differential effects of discard and abandonment behavior. A relatively large exposure of Early Cypriot III/Middle Cypriot I domestic architecture is now available at Marki-Alonia. This allows us to take up the challenge of recognizing gender and other culturally determined codes of behavior in architectural remains and residual household assemblages. This paper examines methodological and other issues involved in understanding the organization and use of built space and the social relations of production in households and settlements from the remote past.

Microscale archaeology of the social relations of production in prehistory—the study of residential architecture and household organization and production—is an essential prerequisite for an engendered prehistory and, I would argue, any kind of social archaeology. (Tringham 1991a: 125)

Gender is a major concern of post-processual archaeology. Numerous studies have shown the cultural construction of gender to be a fundamental structuring principle in human behavior, a form of patterned asymmetry with visible material and ideological correlates in the archaeological record (Gero and Conkey 1991; Walde and Willows 1991; Claassen 1992; di Leonardo 1991). Feminist theory has also had a significant impact on archaeological theory and gender issues within the archaeological workplace (Yellen 1983; Gero 1983, 1985, 1988, 1993; Wylie 1991, 1993; Kramer and Stark 1988; Claassen 1994; Nixon 1994; Beck and Head 1990; du Cros and Smith 1993; Webb and Frankel 1995a, 1995b; Balme and Beck 1995; Hays-Gilpin and Whitley 1997; Moore and Scott 1997). Despite an exponential increase in the number of books and articles devoted to the subject, however, explicit recognition of gender relationships in the remote past has proved elusive.