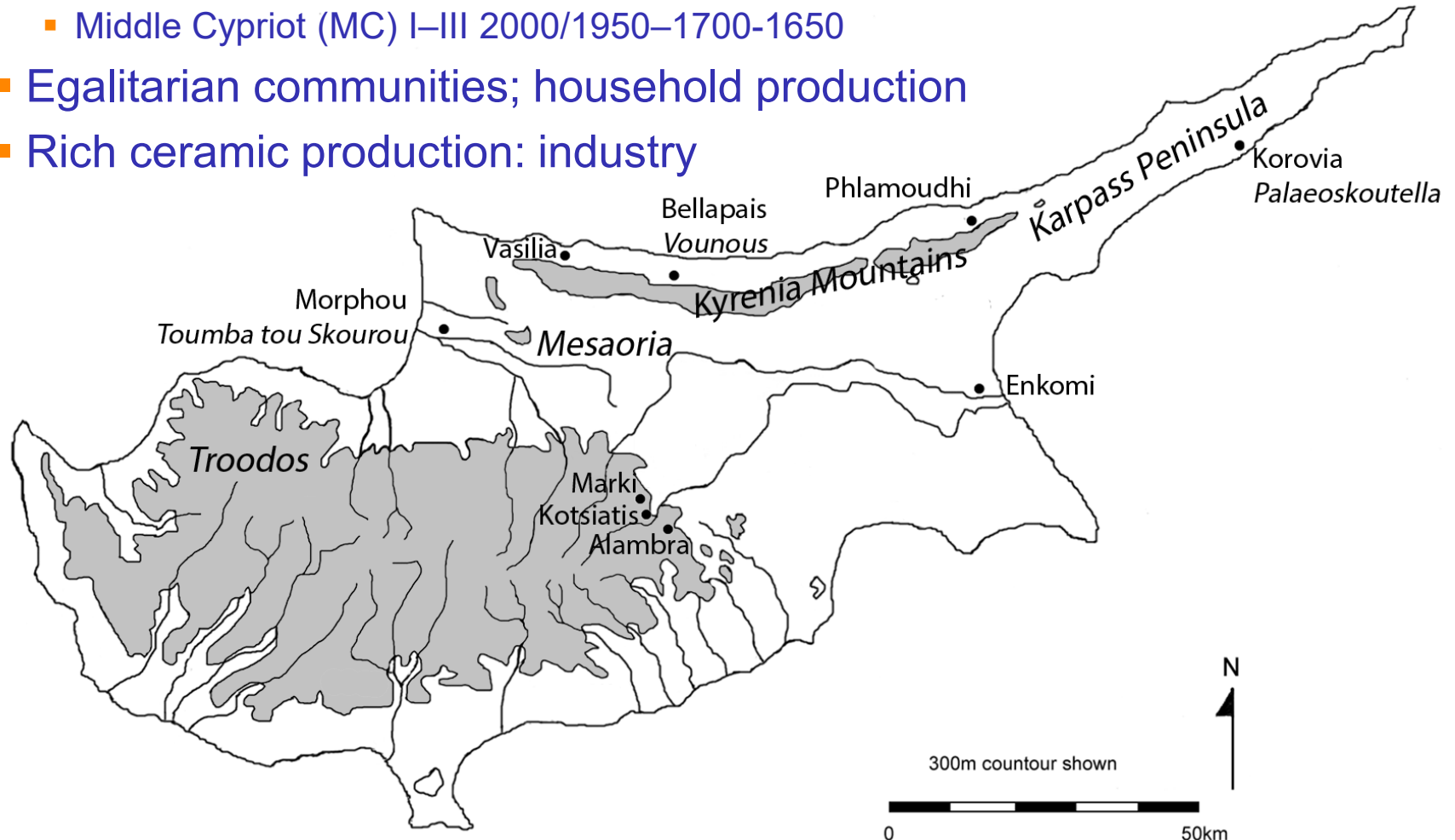


**Transforming Landscapes, Creating
Religion in Bronze Age Cyprus**

HPAH7014

Archaeological Background

- Prehistoric Bronze Age
 - Early Cypriot (EC) I–III 2250/2200–2000/1950
 - Middle Cypriot (MC) I–III 2000/1950–1700–1650
- Egalitarian communities; household production
- Rich ceramic production: industry



Community Effervescence

- Communal experience of place & shared embodied performances
- “...if collective life awakens religious thought on reaching a certain degree of intensity, it is because it brings out a state of effervescence which changes the conditions of psychic activity. Vital energies are over-extended, passions more active, sensations stronger; there are even some which are produced only at this moment. A man does not recognize himself; he feels himself transformed & consequently he transforms the environment”
- (Durkheim [1912] 1995, 424)

Communitas

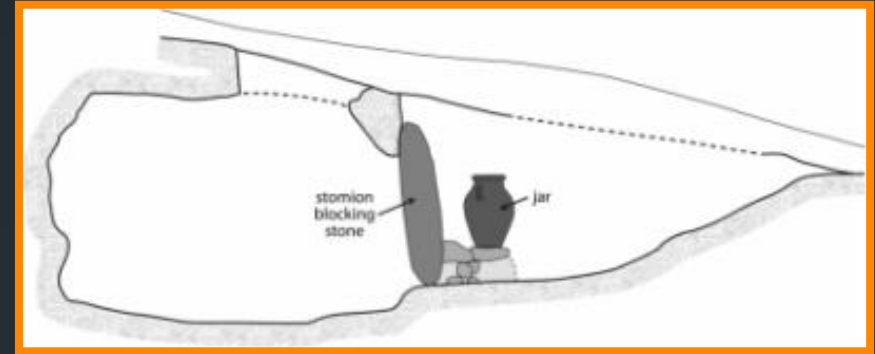
- Shared embodied & spiritual encounters & lived experiences **outside** of normal social practices
- An achieved emotional & spiritual state, rooted in turmoil in which the natural order is upturned & through which identities are mediated & tradition is reinforced
- Transformative communal ritual experience is particularly important during periods of tumultuous social events:
 - Changes within a ritual landscape might reflect significant changes in a community's *habitus* & communal ritual action.
 - Abandonment of traditional places = a conscious strategy to create a deliberate break with the past
 - Creation of new ritual spaces facilitates the establishment of new traditions to be used in the mediation of changing social relations

Heterotopia

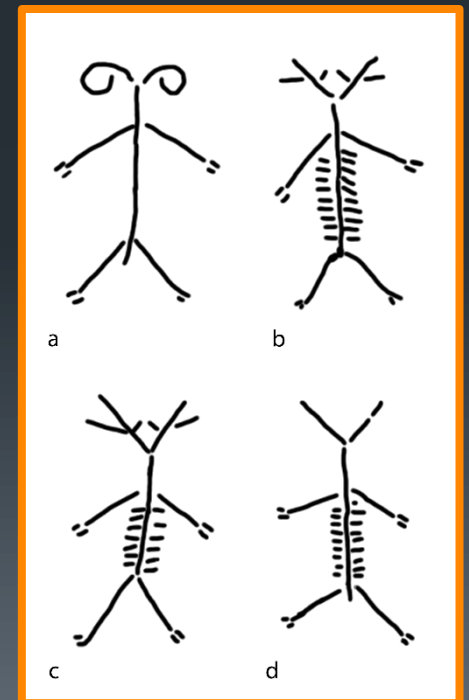
- “A place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there – to the sights, sounds and indeed smells that constitute its specific ambience. And these, in turn, depend on the kinds of activities in which its inhabitants engage” (Ingold 1993, 154)
- Heterotopia (Foucault 1986): literally an “other space”
- Lies outside (separate from) repeated, habitual rhythms of daily life
- A space/place that inverts social norms & throws up a mirror to normal spaces
 - It “reflects & contests simultaneously” (Johnson 2007, 76)
- Liminal space: space for communitas / community effervescence?

EC-MC Precursors

- Primary focus for social gathering & ritual performance in extramural cemeteries
- Ancestor cult?
- Elaborate ceremonies:
 - “theatrically charged events involving feasting, dancing”, (Webb & Frankel 2010, 200, 203)
 - Costumes of animal hides, horns & antlers
 - Animal sacrifice & libations
 - Prestige display



Bellapais *Vounous* T. 87



Therianthrope
figures

Red Polished Figurines

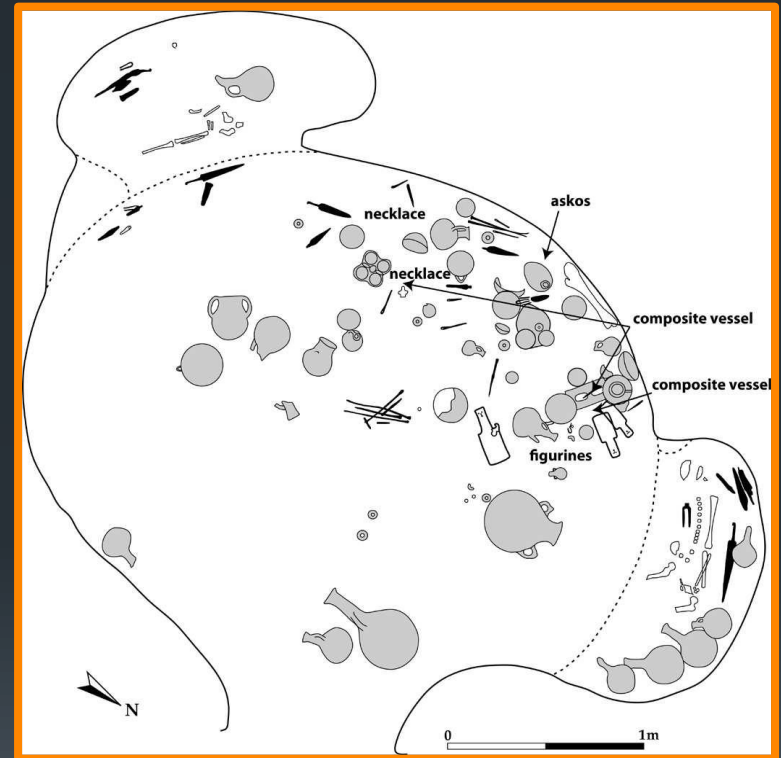
- EC-MC transition
 - Between 20 - 35.5 cm high
 - Broken base: intended to be set up in ground
- “a focus on the face & on value-added attributes of jewellery & clothing; on the beautification & *social presentation* of the body” (Webb 2016, 15)



Red Polished figures from Lapithos

Red Polished Figurines

- Lapithos tombs: repeated placement of figures in metal rich burials
 - Placed near skulls
 - Associated with beaded faience necklaces, & ritual vases
 - Attention focusing device in funerary ceremony?



Lapithos Tomb 313B

Sacred Places?

- Vounous bowl: evidence for circular sacred enclosures?
- Any physical evidence for sacred places in the landscape?
- Only focus for repeated ritual performance in tombs



Vounous bowl



Sacred Places?

- How is space demarcated as special?
 - Liminal, heterotopia
- Marked physically:
 - Pilasters & bucrania (?)
 - Benches & throne
- Marked conceptually:
 - Inclusion, exclusion
 - Revealed knowledge
 - Gendered spaces?
- Performance: gesture, posture etc.



Detail of “shrine motif”



Detail: excluded person

Sacred Spaces in the Settlement?

- Any evidence for marking of special spaces in settlements?
- Evidence from Marki:
 - Plaster installation compared to tomb facades & Kotsiatis shrine model
 - Symbolic importance of the hearth indicated by the form & decoration of clay hearth surrounds, recalling figurine facial features
 - Attachment of antlers to central roof posts



Kotsiatis shrine model

Extra-Household Feasting

- RP models: shared production, preparation for communal events?
- Settlement evidence:
 - Marki: large cooking pots (capacity of 16+ litres)
 - Sotira Unit 12: courtyard installation for communal grinding, decorative stone basin & restricted group of pottery (juglets, bowls, dippers)
 - Sotira Unit 10: open space with large number of small bowls & ox skull
 - Alambra, Building IV, Room 8: large hearth, quantities of animal bone, unusually large number of juglets & small bowls from paired drinking set



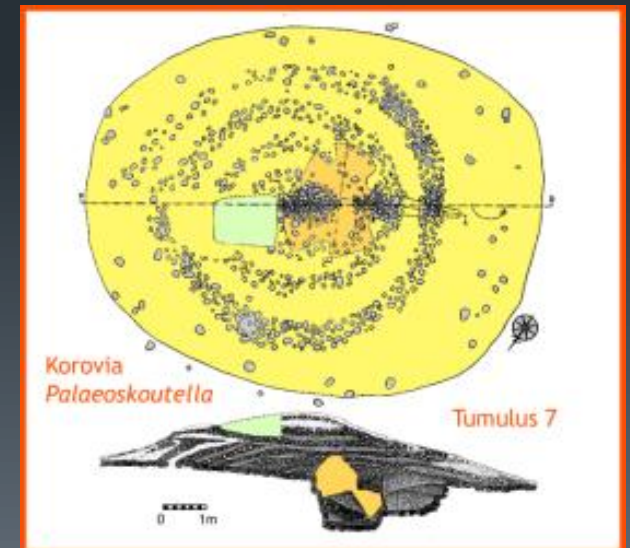
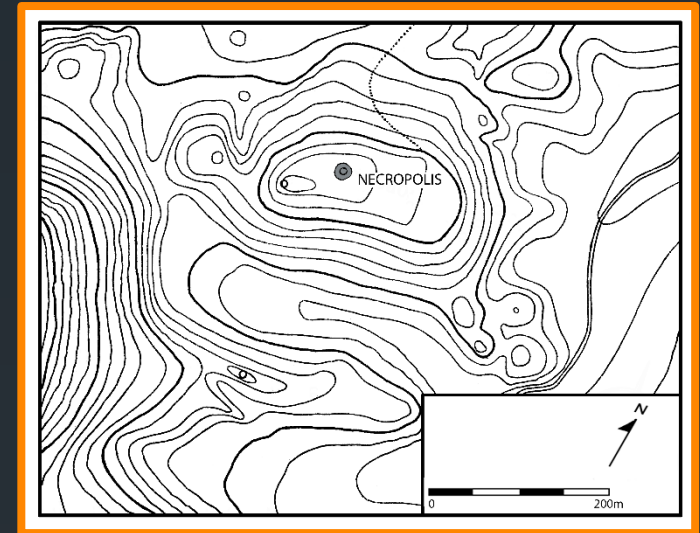
Red Polished model



Cooking pots,
Marki

Korovia *Palaeoskoutella*

- MC III: radical transformation of ritual landscape
- Prominent hill:
 - Massive tumulus area of c.17.5 x 22m & over 3m high
 - Encircled by an estimated twenty smaller tumuli
- Imposing location & **deliberate shaping** of landscape:
 - A “mighty outline on the central area of the top plateau” (Sjöqvist 1940, 119)

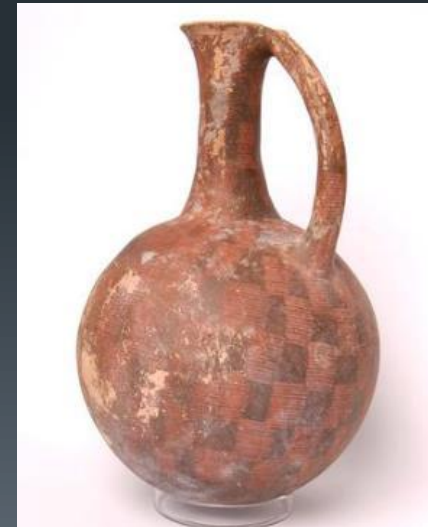


Korovia *Palaeoskoutella*

- Some mounds covered tombs with burials
 - Evidence for manipulation of bones
- Tumulus 5: tomb “ritually cleansed” & modified
- Some tumuli covered complexes of rock-cut basins filled with dark sticky soil, ash & splinters of animal bone:
 - Special features for libations & animal sacrifice
- Large quantities of Red on Black pottery: commensality



Pits & basins beneath tumuli



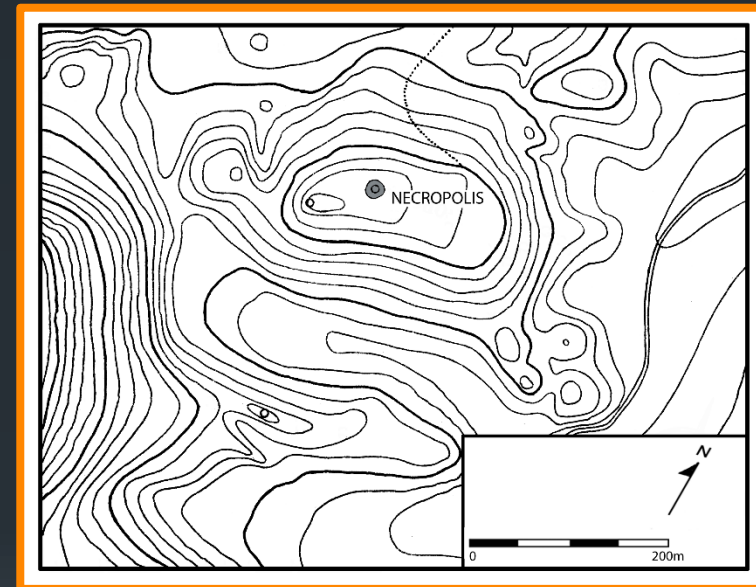
RoB jug

“Mounding”

- Ingold (2013) questions the assumption that mounds were deliberately designed as monuments to last in perpetuity
- Shifts emphasis from monumentality to **performance**:
 - Ongoing act(s) of making/*mounding* as part of ritual action
- Repeated gatherings & ceremonies performed at same place, possibly over generations
 - People's actions of adding to &/or removing earth/stones at specific points in the locale gradually but continually reshaped the physical space

What Happened at Korovia?

- Repeated rituals & embodied practices at imposing locale in newly constructed landscape
 - Sacrifice, feasting, libations
 - Practices with no archaeological trace?
 - Dancing, music, specialised costume(s), storytelling
- Embedded Korovia within the consciousness of the participants
- Communitas: mediation of new social relations at time of social upheaval



Location of cemetery in hilly landscape

Phlamoudhi Vounari

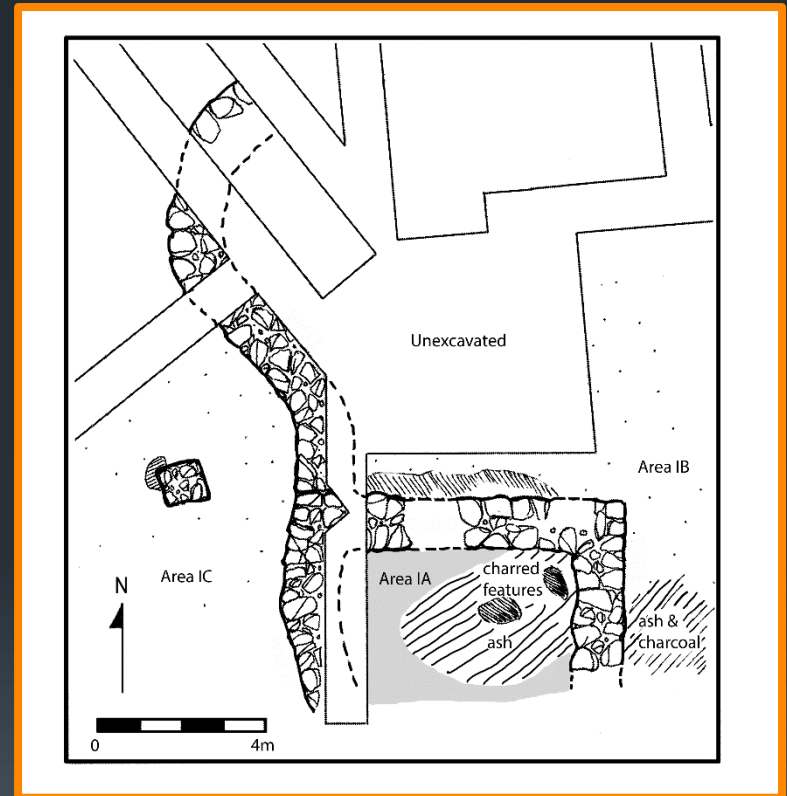
- Physical manipulation of place in MC III-LC I:
 - Creation of an artificial, conical hill of clay 10m high
 - Topped by a stone & plaster platform (various phases of modification)
 - Dominates surrounding landscape, visible from the neighbouring settlement & from the sea
- “...built to impress & to dominate the landscape” (Horowitz 2008, 80)



Phlamoudhi Vounari

Phlamoudhi Vounari

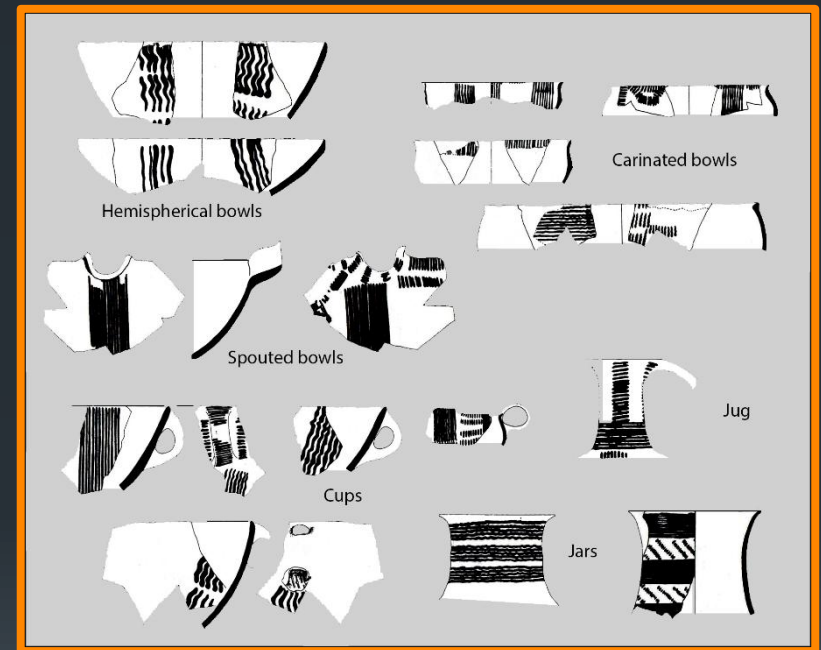
- Community investment in the creation & manipulation of place:
 - Initial construction of the hill
 - Ongoing embellishment of the platform structures
- Ceremonial action embedded in a modified landscape:
 - Deliberate break with ancient ritual practices
 - New type of monument suggests creation of new traditions & altered interactions with space



Plan of platform

Phlamoudhi *Vounari*

- Large quantities of Red on Black pottery on stone platform:
 - Deliberately broken at the place of consumption
 - Binding social actors to place
- Storage jars, grinding stones & small number of cooking pots: extra-household feasting
- Ceremonial performance within an imposing communal setting:
 - Elite sponsored feasting
- Vounari embedded within modified landscape as focus for repeated ritual performance over many generations



Red on Black drinking equipment

Kissonerga Skalia

- Ancient settlement: activity throughout EC-MC
- LCI: Room 954: 75m² with substantial walls
 - Original construction levels associated with animal bones, pottery & limpet shells
 - Bovine figurine
 - Quantities of miniature bowls, cups & juglets
- Pit (foundation deposit): 5 partial cattle skulls & goat horncore
- Area for gathering, conviviality & non-work activities?



Clay juglet



Summary

- EC-MC: ritual performance primarily in funerary domain (extramural centuries)
- EC-MC: some evidence for extra-household feasting, but not specialised sacred sites
- Transition from MC III – LC I: some evidence for modification of landscape & community ritualised action outside of settlements
- Some dramatic shaping & monumentalisation of place
- Embodied practices & commensality at special places outside of settlements: *communitas* or community effervescence?