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36 RITUAL AS THE SETTING FOR CONTENTIOUS INTERACTION: FROM SOCIAL NEGOTIATION TO INSTITUTIONALISED AUTHORITY IN BRONZE AGE CYPRUS

JENNIFER M. WEBB

Abstract

This chapter traces the emergence of ritual authority in Bronze Age Cyprus against a background of increasing sectional interests and growing economic and political interaction with the wider Mediterranean world. The institutionalisation of ritual and the development of related ideologies and iconographies may be seen to have emerged in part from earlier, more socially integrative practices and in part as a response to 'urbanisation' and economic intensification during the Late Bronze Age.

Introduction

Recent years have seen a burgeoning literature on the archaeology of ritual, with a strong focus on context and performative practices (e.g. Insoll 2004; Bradley 2005; Barrowclough and Malone 2007; Kyriakidis 2007). Definitional issues have been at the forefront, with ritual now widely understood as a set of formalised behaviours through which religious constructs are generated and reproduced or, even more broadly, as 'the physical expression of symbolic relationships and spiritual beliefs through formal behavioural routines' (Muir and Driver 2004: 128).

Recognising ritual contexts is often problematic, and much research in this area has been inadequate or extreme, with scholars either rejecting the possibility of accessing ritual and religious belief or overplaying the interpretation of isolated elements (Malone *et al.* 2007: 3). Recent work on 'ritualisation' is particularly important in this context (Bradley 2003; 2005). If basic activities such as making tools and building houses can be ritualised, then rituals and symbols permeate everyday life. Ritualised activities, themselves meaningful repeated actions, may be routinely performed in both domestic and funerary settings and need not involve special places, people and objects. This allows for a more flexible conception of ritual as a historical phenomenon and raises the possibility of tracing the emergence of institutionalised ritual authority in the archaeological record.

This chapter offers an opportunity to review the available data from Bronze Age Cyprus. For much of the

period, we have little evidence for discrete cult places. Relatively few settlements of the Early and Middle Bronze Age (hereafter the Early and Middle Cypriot or EC and MC periods, ca. 2400–1650 BC), however, have been investigated. Attention has instead focused on the funerary domain as an arena of social and ideological negotiation. In the Late Bronze Age (LBA, or Late Cypriot [LC] period, ca. 1650–1050 BC), the focus shifts dramatically. During the course of the LC period, earlier village communities became integrated into urban societies. This was accompanied by the construction of special buildings that focused attention on controlling elites and the development of a socially coercive ritual iconography, largely adapted from external sources, which served to legitimise increasingly institutionalised inequality.

The following discussion considers the contexts in which rituals were created and performed in Bronze Age Cyprus, and attempts to identify those aspects of life that were given added emphasis through an investment in ritual action. It traces the emergence of ritual authority against a background of shifting regional trajectories, increasing sectional interests and growing economic and political interaction with the wider Mediterranean world. The institutionalisation of ritual performance and the development of related ideologies and iconographies may be seen as emerging in part from earlier, more fluid and socially integrative practices and in part as a response to the processes of 'urbanisation', economic intensification and possibly secondary state formation that took place on the island in the early years of the LBA.

The Early and Middle Bronze Age (ca. 2400–1650 BC)

EC and MC ritual is likely to have been adaptive, dynamic and flexible. At present, the most visible practices are those associated with death and burial. In the EC period, north coast funerary ceremonial provides a particularly complex picture. Here, tomb elaboration, feasting and other forms of patterned behaviour are readily apparent. In small-scale societies, burial is likely to have been among the most evident forms of symbolic behaviour,



FIGURE 36.1. Map of Cyprus showing sites mentioned in the text (prepared by Jennifer M. Webb).

offering a useful starting point for exploring ritualised performance and tracing the transmission of ritual iconography over time.

Death and Burial: A Ritualised Setting for Social Negotiation

EC and MC burial grounds at Vounous, Lapithos and Karmi on the central north coast provide an extensive body of data from a bounded geographic region (Figure 36.1). The associated settlements are likely to have belonged to an ancient social territory, with the dominant centre located for most of this period at Vounous. Rock-cut tombs were used for multiple burials, often over several hundred years, serving as tangible connections with ancestral spaces, events and beliefs.

Prominent among EC tombs that show architectural elaboration is Karmi *Palealona* Tomb 6 (Figure 36.2) (Webb *et al.* 2009: 129–35). A shallow buttress on the rear wall of the chamber is carved with a pilaster topped by a pair of horns. On the right wall of the entrance shaft, which is unusually large and deep, an anthropomorphic, probably female figure is carved in relief, flanked by rectangular panels. On the façade that gives access to the chamber, three carved pilasters are topped with V-shaped incisions, possibly intended as schematic representations of horned animal heads. These exceptional features suggest that *Palealona* Tomb 6 was a mortuary shrine – making it the earliest Bronze Age ritual facility to be identified on the island (Webb *et al.* 2009: 242–45). As one of the oldest tombs in the cemetery, it perhaps belonged to the founders of the settlement. The role of burial in legitimatising rights to land and resources is likely to have resulted in

particular status being accorded to founder tombs, which may also have been linked with origin narratives and foundation rituals.

Palealona Tomb 6 may be compared with two terracotta models (Figure 36.3), probably from Marki, which show a female figure standing before three vertical panels topped by horned animal heads (Karageorghis 1991: 142–44). A further association between the models and burial is suggested by the presence of a jar before the horned uprights. Jars were found before the chamber entrance in three tombs at Vounous and in recesses in a number of chambers at Lapithos, suggesting that they played a significant role in mortuary ceremonies (Webb *et al.* 2009: 243–44). Horned panels appear also on a fragmentary model from Kalopsidha (Åström 1966: 14–15, fig. 5) and an amphora from Psematismenos (Flourentzos 1993), suggesting that key aspects of ritual practice developed in the north had spread across much of the island by the early second millennium BC.

Evidence for feasting is particularly strong at Vounous. Here, EC tombs contain large numbers of decorated bowls, jugs and flasks (Webb and Frankel 2008: 290–91). There is an emphasis on distinctive drinking vessels, which frequently involve the accumulation and redundancy of elements of form and decoration. Incised motifs are symbolically complex and occur in intricate configurations that focus attention on particular consumers. Tomb chambers also contain food presentation bowls and abundant remains of cattle, sheep and goats (Stubbings 1950: 374–80). The presence of articulated joints that were not fully de-fleshed or broken for the removal of marrow suggests processing practices likely to reflect the special nature of funerary consumption (Horwitz 2001).

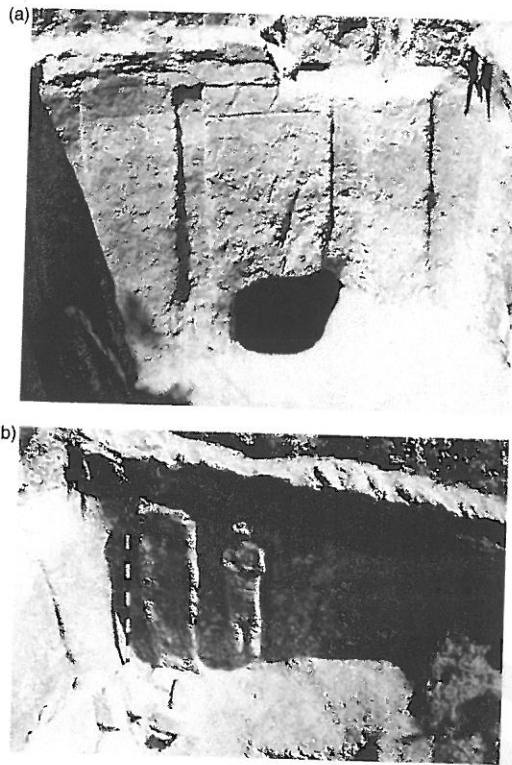


FIGURE 36.2. Karmi Palealona Tomb 6: (a) stomion façade; (b) dromos wall, after Webb *et al.* (2009: figs 4.36, 3.40).



FIGURE 36.3. Shrine model, probably from Marki. Cyprus Museum inventory no. 1970/V-28/1. Courtesy of the Director of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus.

The north coast cemeteries also provide a remarkable insight into an emerging ritual iconography. This is especially so for the earliest tombs at Vounous, which produced elaborate vessels possibly made for use in mortuary ceremonies. Their iconography is almost entirely concerned with horned quadrupeds, which appear as whole animals or animal heads on the rims of large pedestals bowls and deep bowls in conjunction with complex incised decoration (Figure 36.4a) (Karageorghis 1991: pls CXIII–CXVIII). Cattle appear most often, along with sheep, goats, deer, birds and moufflon (the wild sheep of Cyprus). On deep bowls, animal heads alternate with disks incised with concentric or rayed circles. Similar rayed circles appear on other vessels, along with swastikas, crosses, concentric rectangles and zigzags, herringbone, dotted and other motifs.

Of particular interest are antlered, bull- and ram- or moufflon-horned, cloven-hoofed figures which appear on two vessels from Vounous (Figure 36.4b) (Stewart and Stewart 1950: pl. XCIII). Depicted upright in an attitude of display, they may represent supernatural beings, humans in animal skins or the transformation of humans into animals. They suggest that funerals involved dancing and

other performances focused on horned animals. Such symbolism is widespread in pre-state societies, where animals serve variously as communication devices, metaphors, emblems, sacrifices, food in redistributive or competitive feasts or quantitative measures of sacredness, wealth or power (Huntingdon and Metcalf 1979; Willis 1994). The horned figures from Vounous appear with rayed disks and vertical zigzags, suggesting an association with the sky, sun and rain and by extension with fertility. A similar connection between death and regeneration can be found in many societies, in which metaphors of rebirth serve to transcend the finality of death (Bradley 2005: 204–207; Parker Pearson 1999: 143–44; Bloch and Parry 1982).

A cosmology based on cattle and other horned species and solar, lunar and other natural phenomena clearly reached a considerable degree of iconographic complexity at Vounous. There can be little doubt that burial was a key arena for the development of this iconography. While the nature and extent of formal status distinctions remain unclear, feasting and other practices related to death and burial are likely to have promoted new forms of social identity and authority. Complex ritual vessels, however,

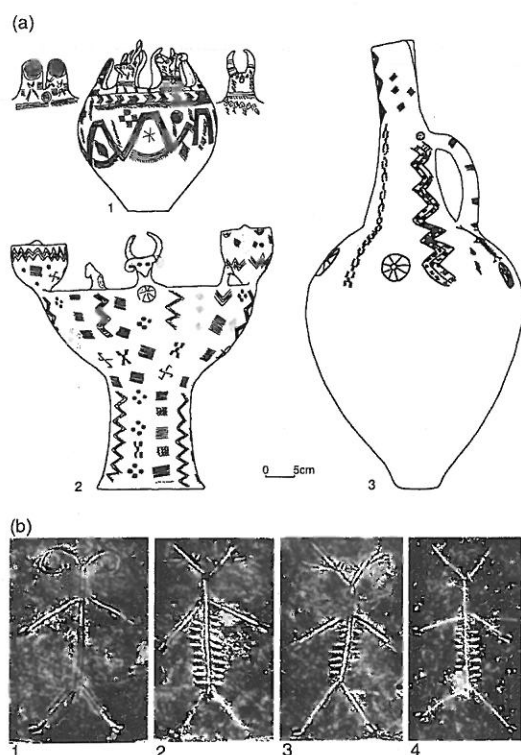


FIGURE 36.4. (a) EC ritual vessels from Vounous: 1. Tomb 155.1, after Åström and Merrillees (2003: fig. 3); prepared by Cathy Carigiet. 2. Tomb 160A.13, after Hennessy (1974: fig. 1.1); prepared by Cathy Carigiet. 3. Tomb 160A.16, after Hennessy (1974: fig. 1.2); prepared by Cathy Carigiet. (b) Animal-headed figures on Vounous Tomb 91.14 (1–3) and Tomb 160A.16 (4), after Stewart and Stewart (1950: pl. XCIIIa–d); prepared by Wei Ming.

were broadly dispersed, and the manipulation of material culture in the mortuary domain appears to have been widespread (Keswani 2004: 197–98). Emerging social identities may have sought expression in access to ritual knowledge and control of ancestral facilities rather than in disparate distributions of material wealth. Such attempts to naturalise authority make particular appeal to social memory (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983: 9), and may have focused on burial facilities as both tangible and symbolic reminders of connections with ancestors.

Towards the end of the EC period, there is an increased emphasis among north-coast communities on subgroup identity. Peltenburg (1994: 159) argues that this involved the appearance of weapon-bearing elites who attempted to legitimise this new hierarchical order through the use of more permanent forms of ritual authority, giving rise to more widely recognisable symbols of power and exclusion. The development of compartmentalised and multiple

vessels at Vounous and Lapithos may reflect such moves towards more formalised practice, perhaps involving prescribed rites of libation or offering rather than shared consumption. The appearance of standardised ceramic motifs at this time similarly suggests an increasingly formulaic kind of communication and a decrease in the role played by small bowls, in particular, in individualised social interaction.

Elsewhere on the island, EC tomb assemblages show far less evidence for the manipulation of material culture and the elaboration of mortuary rites. With some notable exceptions, the pottery repertoire is distinguished by a restricted range of shapes and by minimal decoration (Webb and Frankel 2008: 290). Tombs in the centre and south of Cyprus are also typically small chambers or pits with minimal entrance shafts. They contain few objects other than pottery vessels and show little evidence of multigenerational use. These communities thus appear to have been subject to lower levels of social pressure than those in the north. Here, social approval may have been won through conformity rather than competition, implying more egalitarian community structures, or else that status negotiation did not involve burial display or ceramic innovation. These differences in levels of stylistic investment suggest significant cross-island disparity in the intensity with which material culture and ancestral links were used to validate claims to social and ritual authority.

During the MC period (ca. 1900–1650 BC), the dynamic eating and drinking practices performed in connection with EC burials in north-coast communities spread across the rest of the island. At the same time, there is an increase in the size of tomb chambers and a move towards the long-term retention of skeletal remains and grave goods. This is best seen in the extensive MC cemeteries at Deneia, where the assertion of status and intergenerational rights through the construction of large family tombs appears to have been a significant element in the negotiation of social practice (Frankel and Webb 2007: 146–51). As these tombs could not have been constructed in response to a recent death (given their size and long-term use), there is a strong implication of tomb building as an assertive act with inherited rights and associations. This is likely to have been accompanied by a shift in the nature of funerary ceremonies from broadly shared expressions of community identity to restricted kin-based events, emphasising links to particular ancestors and foreshadowing the emergence of 'private' tombs in the town centres of the LC period.

Beyond Death and Burial

The few excavated EC and MC settlements provide some evidence for special-purpose locales directed by local belief

systems. Of most interest is Unit 12 at Sotira *Kaminoudhia* (Swiny 2008). It consists of a rectangular courtyard separated from three smaller spaces by parapet walls. The narrow space at the rear features three large boulders at the base of a 5–6 m high wall covered with white plaster. The courtyard contained a deep stone 'basin', surrounded by percussion tools, an axe and a copper chisel. The main feature in the room to the west was a waist-high grinding platform with two querns on its surface and room for two more. Near the platform stood a second, large, finely carved stone basin. The complex contained a restricted array of vessel types, mostly consisting of juglets, dippers and bowls.

The grinding platform is unique in the excavated record. Eight near-contemporary vessels with modelled decoration, however, show four women standing or kneeling before a similar platform working rubber/quern combinations identical to those found at Sotira (Karageorghis 1991: 117–26). These objects suggest that cereal processing was occasionally a communal task or that the people involved sometimes practiced a multiple grinding system, in which grain was sequentially treated on a series of querns in a process of gradual reduction (Storck and Teague 1952: 53, figs 28–29). On all eight vessels, the grinding platform is associated with a large mortar in which a substance is pounded by a figure with a long pestle. These resemble the 'basins' at Sotira, which may have been used to de-husk grain prior to grinding. In addition to cereal processing, the vessels show baking, winemaking and other activities. Usually identified as 'genre scenes', they may depict preparations for ritual or ceremonial events. At Marki *Alonia* and elsewhere, querns were found individually or associated with small mealing bins (Frankel and Webb 2006: 221). Multiple grinding was not routine domestic practice.

In this respect and others, the complex at Sotira is anomalous. It appears to have been used for the shared preparation of food, possibly using a technique of sequential grinding. These activities may have been linked with kin-based or more broadly communal feasting associated with major seasonal or life-cycle events. By the beginning of the MC period, if not before, such preparations had been incorporated into modelled scenes on large bowls, amphorae and jugs, examples of which have been found at Kalavassos and Marki (Karageorghis 1991: 117–26). Together with the evidence from Sotira, they suggest common symbolic practices beyond the level of the household across the south and centre of the island in the early second millennium BC.

Extra-household consumption events or subgroup feasting may also be indicated elsewhere in the settlement record. At Alambra *Mouttes*, communal, possibly ceremonial activity has been suggested for Room 8 of Building IV,

which contained a large hearth, quantities of animal bone and an unusually large number of juglets and small bowls, possibly representing paired drinking sets (Coleman *et al.* 1996: 77, 85–91). A similar function is proposed for Unit 10 at Sotira *Kaminoudhia*, an open space with a large number of small bowls and an ox skull (Swiny 2003: 46–47). While no such areas were identified at Marki, cooking pots with a capacity of more than 16 litres suggest occasional preparation of meals beyond normal domestic requirements (Webb and Frankel 2008: 292).

If the household was itself a setting for ritual, this may have involved the use of items indistinct from those in everyday use. The symbolic importance of the hearth is suggested by the form and decoration of clay hearth surrounds, some of which recall the facial features of contemporary figurines (Frankel and Webb 2006: 18, figs 2.5–2.7). Other practices with a symbolic dimension in the domestic record at Marki *Alonia* may include the attachment of antlers to central roof posts, the occasional burial of women and children in disused hearth rooms, the repeated clearance of courtyards, the dismantling and inversion of querns, the frequent alignment of house walls at an offset from predecessor buildings and other aspects of house construction, renovation and replacement (Frankel and Webb 2006). Small terracotta zoomorphs, almost all depicting cattle, show exposure to fire and breakage patterns that suggest some form of structured behaviour in relation to their use (Frankel and Webb 2006: 157–58, fig. 5.4). Major events in the history of the household may have been marked regularly by the deposition of cultural material and other symbolic practices.

The beginnings of metallurgy in Cyprus are also likely to have been accompanied by specific beliefs and practices. These are not yet visible, although claims have been made for ritual facilities in MC copper workshops at Pyrgos *Mavrorachi* (Belgiorno 2000: 10–11). Food production, animal husbandry and domestic crafts are also likely to have been viewed as more than technical, economic or instrumental processes (Bradley 2005: 88). The hunting of deer and moufflon played an important role in earlier periods and may also have been ritualised in the Bronze Age, as suggested by the appearance of these species on elaborate vessels and drinking cups. More generally, the iconographic data link cattle in particular to communal ritual (Keswani 1994). At all excavated settlements, cattle provided the bulk of the meat supply, highlighting the economic as well as socio-ideological importance of this species.

Anthropomorphic figurines appeared towards the end of the EC period. They depict flat, stylised figures without overt sexual characteristics or with breasts (Karageorghis 1991: 49–102). Variants include figures holding infants, cradled infants and two- or three-headed figures. Their

depositional contexts tell us little about their social life, whether as agents in life-cycle rituals (Morris 1985: 161–62), emblems of status, identity or gender (Knapp and Meskell 1997: 189; Bolger 2003: 108) or generic ancestor figures (Talalay and Cullen 2002: 189). The concentration of figurines on the north coast suggests that they originated in this part of the island and are linked in some way with the relief figure in Karmi *Palealona* Tomb 6. This again highlights the role played by north-coast communities in the materialisation of symbolic ideas and concepts in the EC period.

Beyond these broad observations, EC and MC ritual practice remains elusive. There is a clear symbolic use of material culture, as well as evidence for the physical expression of symbolic relationships. Death and burial were major contexts in which rituals were created and performed. Other aspects of life given emphasis through investment in ritual action are likely to have included other life-cycle, seasonal and agricultural events, settlement and cemetery foundations and house replacements. The ritual use of animals, especially cattle, is evident in the funerary, settlement and iconographic record. Whether this involved the formal recognition of higher, unseen powers as having control over human destiny and the organised 'worship' of such powers, or less systematic, localised and fluid concepts involving tradition, performance and prescribed ways of behaving remains unclear. The extent to which ritual performance served as a basis of social power is also not yet visible beyond Vounous. Access to the supernatural and control of ritual knowledge, however, frequently provide a means of negotiating status in small-scale societies, and this is likely to have been the case with varying impacts on material culture and practice across the island prior to the LC period.

The Late Cypriot Period (ca. 1650–1050 BC)

Towards the end of the MC period, an increasing external demand for Cypriot copper and other commodities led to a widespread movement of people to coastal areas. The geopolitical configuration of the island during the earlier part of the LC period is the subject of considerable debate (see, most comprehensively, Knapp 2008: 324–41; 2013: 432–47), but there can be no doubt that Enkomi emerged during the sixteenth century BC as a paramount centre on the east coast. This fledgling polity may not have been able to establish island-wide authority, but it dominated foreign relations and established and maintained control over the mining, distribution and export of Cypriot copper. Some 22 forts or fortified sites built in strategic locations in the north, centre and east of the island at this time appear

to have been part of a strategy, initiated by Enkomi, of long-distance control of copper mining, as well as of a broader process of local elite behaviour, including the adoption of prestige Levantine symbolism (Peltenburg 1996; 2008; Crewe 2007: 158).

The principal catalyst for the relatively abrupt transition to greater social complexity and urbanisation in the LC period was undoubtedly long-distance trade and contact with existing polities outside the island on the part of people based primarily at Enkomi. This long-distance trade, principally in copper, had a critical disruptive impact on the local and regional political economy. Imported luxury items, architectural styles and aspects of mortuary treatment rapidly evolved into a new 'political currency' and were used to create and index status differences within and beyond Enkomi, and to motivate surplus production. Emerging elites also had rapidly to evolve, adapt or adopt new dominance mechanisms. These involved both direct physical coercion and ideological sanctions developed to ensure longer-term compliance among those engaged in the extraction, smelting and transport of copper.

During the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries, Enkomi appears to have maintained its position as head of a unified Cypriot polity, within a centrally organised system of regionally based administrative centres, the latter managed by local elites whose authority rested largely on the control of regional resources (Knapp 2008: 335–41). A series of destructions or abandonments at the close of the thirteenth century may have been brought about at least in part by a decrease in external demand for Cypriot copper. Extensive restructuring at this time did not, however, involve a radical break, and there is evidence for continuity and economic and industrial intensification in those towns that survived the disruptions, principally Kition, Enkomi and Kouklia (Sherratt 1998: 296–306; Voskos and Knapp 2008: 664–73). These key centres witnessed a return to, or stabilisation of, centralised authority in the twelfth century that allowed them to take advantage of new cultural and commercial links with the southern Levant, Syria, Cilicia and Egypt (Knapp 2008: 246–47).

Alongside these developments, the LC period saw a rapid institutionalisation of ritual practice and the emergence of a coercive ritual ideology. The mechanisms behind these developments are obscured by an absence of ritual structures from the period during which Enkomi was engaged in establishing authority on the east coast. Most identified LC cult sites belong to the later years of the regional centres and the period immediately following their devolution (Webb 1999: 21–113, table 1). Moreover, a disproportionate amount of data comes from the extensively excavated sites of Enkomi and Kition. There is as yet no evidence for cult places located on mountain peaks, beside caves

or springs, although these may well have existed. On the contrary, most structures appear to have been established to meet the needs of a complex urban and regional infrastructure and were explicitly linked with human exploitation of the landscape.

The Early Years: Negotiating Authority and Ritual Compliance at Enkomi

Enkomi played a major role in the negotiation of authority and compliance on Cyprus in the early stages of the LBA. In the absence of structural evidence from this period, we need to turn to other areas of the material record to understand the processes through which ritual practice became embedded in constructs that provided a conceptual basis for elite control over wealth production and sociopolitical inequality.

The material correlates of high status at Enkomi, primarily visible in mortuary contexts, reflect foreign connections, either as imports or as bearers of imported iconographies (Keswani 1989; Webb 2005). Mostly objects of adornment or linked with consumption behaviours, they functioned as rank insignia and items of competitive display. Such strategies may be expected to have been particularly important during the early years of polity formation, when functionally similar elite groups were competing for control of long-distance networks and internal resources. Longer-term stability, however, required the compliance of the wider population and ideological and organisational mechanisms that would ensure their cooperation. Mythology and ritual are active factors in prescribing behaviour. Both serve to transform the natural into the supernatural, define identities and legitimise power and wealth differentials. They may, in turn, be exploited through control and manipulation of the symbolic information invested in material culture. Ideological messages requesting or enforcing non-elite compliance are embedded in many aspects of the archaeological record. In Cyprus, the richest surviving source of politico-ideological information is provided by the complex imagery on cylinder seals.

Imported cylinder seals first appear in Cyprus in the late seventeenth century BC; local manufacture began during the late sixteenth century BC. The great majority of imported and locally engraved seals come from Enkomi, which was a primary centre of glyptic production (Webb 2002). The finest, most complex engraving appears on seals of the so-called *Elaborate Style*. These show formal presentation scenes in which deities are attended by sphinxes or animal-headed ministrants (Figure 36.5a). They are likely to have been engraved by full-time specialists attached to centralised authorities. *Derivative Style* seals frequently



(a)



(b)



(c)

FIGURE 36.5. Elaborate Style (a), Derivative Style (b) and Common Style (c) seals (Dikaios 1969: pls 180/4, 182A/4b, reproduced with the permission of the Director of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus; and Porada 1976: fig. 77).

show a heroic or semi-divine female figure with a subject lion, griffin or caprid – or a kilted male figure in similar attitude (Figure 36.5b). Others depict ritual performances or adoration of a tree by griffins, lions or caprids. While these seals are unlikely to have been carved in the same workshops as those of the Elaborate Style, their restricted distribution suggests that they were also produced under elite sponsorship. A third seal group, those of the *Common Style*, are characterised by recurrent compositions depicting

schematic human figures, real world animals, symbols of cult observance and talismanic designs. Cylinders of this type are relatively widely dispersed throughout the settlement hierarchy (see Knapp 2008: 134–44).

Seals are likely to have played a significant role in the dissemination of ideological messages and ritual concepts. Elite control over their production, moreover, could easily be translated into control of the symbolism of power by direct reference to ritual authority. Ownership of Elaborate Style seals, in particular, may have served to legitimise claims to political power and promote a privileged relationship with the supernatural realm, giving expression to notions of a divine order based on the recognition of hierarchy. Similarly, Derivative Style iconography appears to draw on heroic narratives in which order and harmony are achieved through the defeat of dangerous forces. The sphinxes, lions and griffins used as status insignia on prestige objects appear on Elaborate and Derivative Style seals as subjects, ministrants or offerings. These points of articulation suggest that political elites appropriated the responsibility for mediating between the natural and supernatural worlds. This cosmological rhetoric is principally concerned with the reproduction of order through hierarchy, presenting a reified ideological model which both mirrors and displaces the real relations of power and control that emerged at Enkomi and perhaps elsewhere in the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries BC.

Common Style iconography is less dependent on external models but is also predominantly ideological. Common Style seals are concerned with the observance of ritual, subservience to human authority and motifs that appear to be operationally linked with the management of the copper industry. The most frequent of these shows a human figure, bucranium, ingots, circles and trees (Figure 36.5c). The repeated representation of these symbols may have been intended to promote ideological links between human labour, the copper industry and divine authority (Knapp 1986: 37–42; Webb 1999: 276–79). While this seal group is unlikely to pre-date the fourteenth century BC, the co-option of divine authority to promote elite management of the copper industry may long have been a key element in the ideological underpinning of urbanisation and polity formation in Cyprus.

Other evidence suggests considerable homogeneity in mortuary and domestic ceremonial across the island in the first half of the LC period (ca. 1650–1400 BC). Exclusively used for funerary purposes, more than 200 bull-shaped vessels have been found at widely dispersed sites (Webb 1999: 200–201). Similar numbers of largely identical female figurines are present in both habitation and burial contexts (Webb 1999: 209–11). The mechanisms by which these objects became standard items in the LC symbolic

repertoire and the timing of their spread across the island is uncertain. The earliest examples of both vessels and figurines, however, have been found at Enkomi or related eastern sites. The derivation of the earliest LC figures from north Syrian terracottas (Budin 2003: 143–44) also points to the east coast as the most likely point of origin. The standardised production and use of bull vessels and female figurines from the fifteenth century BC reflects a widely shared set of symbols across much of the island and an increasing frequency of small-scale ceremonial activity based on a common set of material components and obligations.

One of the earliest cult buildings in the LC record is located on a low hillock at Athienou *Bamboulari tis Koukouninas* in the hinterland of Enkomi (Webb 1999: 21–29). The poorly preserved remains comprise a rectangular court bordered by small rooms. Some 10,000 vessels, mostly miniature juglets and bowls, were found in pits and heaps, along with more than 300 kg of metallic waste. The presence of the latter led the excavators to propose that Athienou was established to meet the needs of a specialised cult related to the extraction and processing of copper ore located on a communication route from one or more ore bodies in the Troodos foothills, to refinery and transshipment points on the east coast. On-site metalworking, however, seems unlikely (Kassianidou 2005: 137–38), raising the possibility that this material was brought from elsewhere for ritual/symbolic reasons. A parallel assemblage of miniature vessels, metal waste and mould and crucible fragments at Kalopsidha, to the east, suggests a site of similar type (Webb 1999: 113–16). Both locales may have been set up by Enkomi as part of a direct procurement strategy in the early stages of the LBA. They suggest that large-scale communal participation in ritual performances played a significant role in attempts to build organisational structures in the hinterland.

The Later Years: Multiple Elite Constructions of Ritual Practice

No urban cult buildings are known from the period during which the regional centres of the fourteenth century BC were being established. The construction of substantial administrative buildings at Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios*, Maroni *Vournes* and Alassa *Palaeotaverna* and elsewhere is, however, seen as a strategy of elite identity construction and place-making, and is cited as evidence for the exercise and manipulation of ritualised authority by competing power groups (Fisher 2009; this volume; Knapp 2009). Specifically, Manning (1998: 51) suggests that the construction of the 'Basin Building' at Maroni in an area previously used as a cemetery reflects the rise of a dominant lineage

FIGURE 36.6. The courtyard wall of Sanctuary I at Kouklia. Photograph by Jennifer M. Webb.



whose claim to authority was expressed by building over the tombs of other lineage groups. Intensive deposition of prestige goods in burials of the mid- and later fourteenth century BC may similarly reflect factional rivalry as this new order was negotiated. This suggests that the legitimisation of political power in regional centres was closely linked with ancestral authority and that domination and resistance were played out through the maintenance or destruction of ancestral burial plots, conspicuous funerary practice and the construction of monumental buildings. The role of formal cult observance in the establishment of such 'ritualised authority' is unclear.

The majority of excavated cult buildings date to the late thirteenth or early twelfth century BC. This is undoubtedly a construct of archaeological visibility. Sites occupied across this horizon have been intensely excavated, and monumental ritual architecture, introduced at the end of the thirteenth century BC, has a higher visibility than other building types. Nevertheless, the number, size and complexity of ritual structures increased markedly at this time. Ritual centres at Kouklia, Ayia Irini and Idalion were built or refurbished in the late thirteenth or early twelfth century BC. At Kition, two cult places established in the late thirteenth century were replaced in the early twelfth century by four buildings, each (with the exception of Temple 2) larger and more monumental than their predecessors. Greater complexity in the use and organisation of the sacred quarter at Kition is also indicated by the addition of formal access routes, walled courtyards and workshops for the production of metal goods and textiles. At Enkomi, several possible cult buildings of the

thirteenth century BC have been identified (Webb 1999: 116–19, 130–32). The Sanctuaries of the Horned God and Double Goddess were introduced to the Ashlar Building in the twelfth century BC and the Sanctuary of the Ingot God established in the twelfth century BC, probably over a thirteenth-century predecessor (Webb 1999: 91–113, 119–22).

Monumentality is a key feature of twelfth-century BC ritual architecture at Kition, Kouklia *Palaipaphos* and Myrtou *Pigadhes*. The use of ashlar masonry was accompanied by elements exclusively associated with cult, namely stepped capitals, high platforms and horns of consecration. In particular, Kition Temple 1 and Sanctuary I at Kouklia (Figure 36.6), both constructed of enormous ashlar blocks, show that local authorities were able to command substantial investments of labour. The reorganisation and intensification of copper production and other sectors of the economy following the demise of other regional centres is likely to have prompted considerable investment in ceremonial activity aimed at legitimising the initiatives of entrepreneurial elites. The elaboration of the Kition sacred quarter in the early twelfth century BC suggests that this occurred rapidly and on a significant scale. A similar authority structure and developmental sequence may be assumed at Kouklia and perhaps Myrtou. Control of sacred action appears to have been a major component of social power and monumental architecture, an overt strategy used by political elites to legitimise and extend their authority. At Kition, where the sacred quarter dates from the foundation of the town, cult practice appears to have complemented kin-based or other systems of control,

either creating or reflecting a socially integrated legitimate authority (for a different view, see Smith 2009: 244–54).

The situation may have been markedly different at Enkomi. Here, the construction of new cult places during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BC suggests that an earlier system of ritual authority gave way to more dispersed arrangements at this time. In a re-examination of the Fortress Building, Pickles and Peltenburg (1998) argue for a similar complex devolution from centralised to decentralised authority. From the sixteenth to the fourteenth centuries BC, copper-working appears to have been almost exclusively located in the Fortress, a large ashlar building that dominated the town. At the beginning of the thirteenth century BC, it was rearranged to form independent metalworking facilities in a process accompanied by a broad distribution of copper-working residues across the site. Pickles and Peltenburg suggest that the disintegration of the Fortress reflects a breakdown of centralised authority and the emergence of competing groups who established production and mortuary facilities in various quarters of the town.

The cult buildings at Enkomi postdate the breakdown of centralised authority. Their dispersed location suggests that factional or lineage groups utilised different cult sites and appealed to different deities in an attempt to assert ancestral authority in a destabilised environment. The installation of the Sanctuaries of the Horned God and Double Goddess in an elite residential building provides an additional argument for 'private' or restricted control. Similarly, a clustering of ashlar-built tombs in Quarters 4E and 5E suggests the presence of a residential elite in this part of the town. The construction of the Sanctuary of the Ingot God in Quarter 5E may also have been a manifestation of localised authority, perhaps in opposition to those responsible for the introduction of the Horned God and Double Goddess to the Ashlar Building. Notably, this increase in the intensity of ritual activity at Enkomi did not result in the architectural elaboration of ritual structures, suggesting that competing groups did not command the same resources as the locally centralised authorities at Kition and Kouklia.

Elite control and use of facilities are thus indicated for all urban cult sites of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BC (see also Fisher 2009; this volume). At Kition, Kouklia and Myrtou, a significant investment of wealth, energy and labour was expended in the formal differentiation of elite from non-elite observance. Open spaces, probably once the locus of community participation, became walled courtyards that screened ritual activities from general view. Even in the largest cult buildings, interior spaces could have accommodated only relatively small numbers of people. The scale of the innermost rooms

implies that these were the domains of ritual specialists. This manipulation of sacred space and the establishment of offering requirements involving objects and animals of considerable material value convey the increasingly elite dimension of ritual within urban centres and suggest that participation in observances at these sites was not shared across boundaries of rank and class. These settings, in turn, shaped social practice, marking activities as removed from the everyday, distinguishing performers from spectators, permitting and restricting access and limiting the potential for deviation. At Enkomi, despite the lack of monumentality, material residues also suggest conspicuous display and the manipulation of unique images. For other sectors of the community, these cult sites must have served as potent manifestations of ritual and political power.

Elite or restricted participation is not indicated at smaller, rural cult centres. At Idalion and Ayia Irini, simple two-room cult buildings, similar in layout but considerably smaller than their urban counterparts, were associated with open courtyards and minimally differentiated from surrounding structures (Webb 1999: 53–58, 84–91). Residual assemblages contain few exotics and limited evidence of animal sacrifice. The huge deposits of miniature vessels at Athienou and Kalopsidha likewise suggest large-scale participation. Within urban centres, non-elite ritual observance – if formally constructed – is not yet visible.

The Nature of Late Cypriot Cult

Forty years ago, Catling (1971: 30) proposed that the management of the copper industry in Cyprus was 'temple-based'. This thesis was significantly redefined by Knapp (1986; 1996), for whom those aspects of the material record that link ritual observance with metalworking were created by elites dependent on the domination of copper production and distribution, who secured and perpetuated that domination by manipulating ritual ideology and its accompanying insignia. Thus, culturally significant symbols served to legitimise those whose economic interests were promoted by associating copper production with divine favour. In a recent review, Kassianidou (2005) also argues against formal ritual control over copper production at any time during the Bronze Age.

A clear ideological link between cult and metallurgy, however, is apparent in the iconography of the 'Ingot God', recovered from the Sanctuary of the Ingot God, and the unprovenanced 'Bomford Goddess', both of which stand on ingot-shaped bases (Figure 36.7b–c). Other indicators of the importance of the copper industry include Common Style seal iconography, miniature copper ingots and ingot-bearers depicted in offering scenes on bronze

FIGURE 36.7. (a) The Horned God. Photo: Courtesy of the Director of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus. (b) The Ingot God. Courtesy of the Director of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus. (c) The Bomford Goddess. Courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK.



stands (Knapp 1986; Papasavvas 2009). Most of this evidence comes from Enkomi. Athienou and Kalopsidha, where ritual practice involved copper mining and processing residues, were similarly located in the Enkomi hinterland. The wealth of exotics in mortuary deposits, the evidence for large-scale copper production and the predominantly eastern character of Cypriot pottery exports leave no doubt that Enkomi was pre-eminent in both the production and export of copper for most if not all of the LC period. This site also appears to have been the source of much of the coercive iconography underpinning the copper industry.

Copper, however, was only one element within a broader cultural system. The economic base of both elites and non-elites involved the exploitation of an array of other goods, including timber, grain, olive oil, pottery, textiles and perhaps opium (Knapp 1991). If ritual systems are mechanisms by which socio-economic relations are established and reinforced, a greater diversity of ritual constructs and sites may be expected. These should

exhibit regional and chronological variation in response to localised and broader conditions. The focus on cult and metallurgy should not blind us to this diversity and may have been overstated. Small metal items are present in most assemblages. Material value, however, was a key consideration in the choice of ritual paraphernalia, and the presentation of metal along with faience, glass, ivory and imported pottery is likely to have been an expression of a wider social reality, as well as, or rather than, ideologically or ritually prescribed.

Considerable diversity is in fact visible within and between ritual sites in the urban centres of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BC. Residues reflect particular economic emphases and local strategies of ideological legitimisation. Most obvious is the use of more than 100 stone anchors in ritual construction *loci* and as a focus of ritual action at Kition (Webb 1999: 184–87). These include the largest anchors known from Cyprus and examples with markings, cupules and burning. A preoccupation with seafaring is also evident in the ship images carved on the

wall of 'Temple 1' and the recovery of 84 marine shells and pottery with marine motifs in 'Temple 2' (Basch and Artzy 1985; Reese 1985). This suggests a conceptual relationship between cult and maritime trade at Kition of at least equal importance to that between cult and metallurgy. Furthermore, the association of standing anchor, hearth, bucrania and casting facilities in Room 12 of the 'Northern Workshops' links some aspects of metallurgy with seafaring and cult, and may reflect the *raison d'être* for the establishment of the town and its role in the sea-borne metals trade.

The evidence from Kition suggests that long-distance trade was of paramount importance in the politico-ideological status of elite groups responsible for the wealth of this and other coastal sites in the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BC. As Helms (1988; 1993), followed by Knapp (1998; 2006), have argued, objects, knowledge and experiences obtained from distant lands are frequently imbued with latent power and have the capacity to increase the prestige of those who acquire them. At Kition, the number and quality of thirteenth-century BC Aegean imports suggests that such exotica were pivotal in the ritual legitimisation of authority. Long-distance trade is also represented in the assemblages of the twelfth century BC, suggesting that the acquisition and discard of foreign goods remained a successful strategy of ritual consumption. The physical connection between cult and metallurgical facilities at Kition is not evident prior to this time. Proximity to the city gate and harbour facilities is more likely to have been the main factor in the initial location of the 'sacred' area.

Further indications of localised patterns in cult practice include the dedication of miniature bronze tools and weapons in the Sanctuary of the Horned God at Enkomi, evidence for possible opium-related rituals in 'Temples' 4 and 5 at Kition and the importance of *Dama mesopotamica* at Myrtou Pigadhes where remains of at least 41 animals were found at the foot of a high stone platform. Other evidence suggests a degree of common practice between sites and possibly deity-specific equipment and performances. Incised ox scapulae, for example, perhaps used in divination practices, occur at Myrtou, Kition and Enkomi (Webb 1999: 249–50). At Enkomi, they were recovered in substantial numbers in the Sanctuary of the Ingot God but not in the Sanctuaries of the Horned God and Double Goddess. At Kition, they were associated only with 'Temples' 4 and 5. Terracotta masks, showing a young bearded male, were found in copper workshops at Enkomi and Kition and in 'Temple 5' at Kition (Webb 1999: 222), while ox-skulls, cleaned of projecting bones and possibly worn as masks, were mounted on poles or hung from walls at Kition and in the Sanctuary of the Ingot God at Enkomi.

While new economic imperatives are clearly reflected in ritual practice, older concepts were not forgotten. Horned animals, particularly cattle, continued to play a major role in iconography and performance. The robed figures who receive offerings on Elaborate Style seals (Figure 36.5a) and both the Horned God and Ingot God (Figure 36.7a–b) wear horned headgear, suggesting that horns served as generic attributes of divinity. Faunal remains associated with LC cult places are predominantly of juvenile or young adult cattle (Webb 1999: 250–52). Terracotta or bronze bull figures are present in most assemblages, although their number varies considerably. More than 30 terracotta bulls from Alassa Pano Mandilares include 10 or more from installations possibly associated with household ritual (Hadjisavvas 1989: 36–39). Multiple bull figurines were also recovered in rural cult buildings at Ayia Irini and Idalion. More recently, a ritual function has been suggested for a small room in a building used for processing and storing agricultural products at inland Arediou Vouppes, which contained several bull and one horse figurine (Steel 2009: 140–43). Images of animals, especially bulls, may have been associated in particular with domestic and rural cults, retaining their validity despite increasing regional control over agricultural production.

In sum, differing site histories and varied trajectories towards urbanisation appear to have led to differences in the number, size and location of cult buildings and differing sets of ritual insignia. While peer polity interaction may help to explain the broad overlay of architectural conventions and ritual paraphernalia in the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BC, distinctions in cult practice and iconography reflect regional or site-based economic orientations, differences in organisational structure and probably varying degrees of interaction with non-Cypriot belief systems. The ideological connection between cult and metallurgy was established early in the LC period at Enkomi and may always have been a distinguishing feature of ritual performance and iconography at this site. While visible elsewhere, greater diversity in ritual practice is evident in the regional centres of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BC. At the same time, while urban settlements moved towards monumentality, anthropomorphism and conspicuous display, small-scale domestic ritual and rural cult sites appear to have operated more inclusively and maintained a traditional focus on agriculture and animal husbandry.

It seems unlikely that island-wide uniformity in ritual practice existed at any time during the LBA. Enkomi's influence, however, extended over much of the island throughout this period and appears critically to have determined the nature of ritual iconography and action. The cross-regional use of similar ritual architecture and

symbols in the second half of the LC period is to be read against a background of locally variable systems of organisation and ideology and the adoption of new modes of symbolism by emerging regional centres in different parts of the island. The similarities may reflect the political and ideological predominance of Enkomi and common MC traditions, as well as familiarity, interaction and emulation. Beyond this, marked differences suggest localised practices and preferences and perhaps the emergence of local deities.

Conclusion

The evolutionary trajectory of ritual in Cyprus is part of a larger historical narrative. Archaeology is particularly well suited to looking at the relationship between ritual and socio-economic change and the role played by material culture in structuring ritual practice and organising its transmission. In the case of Cyprus, where literacy arrived late (compared to the rest of the eastern Mediterranean) and is likely to have been restricted, the dissemination of belief systems to other sectors of society must have taken place largely through objects and images, the architectural specification of ritual spaces, oral traditions and ritual performances.

Of particular interest are changes in the relationship between the ritual, economic and political domains. In small-scale societies, social action and ritual performance frequently act as motivations for economic change, as the demand for socially valued goods linked with ritualised behaviours results in the specialised production of 'extraordinary' material culture (Spielmann 2002). This is of particular relevance to the earlier periods of the Bronze Age and most especially to the mortuary evidence from Vounous. There, burial was a key setting for ritual discourse and related practices, including feasting, and led to a sustained demand for ritually charged objects produced in what Spielmann (2002) has characterised as a 'ritual mode of production'. This elaboration of material culture was related to the negotiation of social identity, and thus ritual was already a setting for contentious interaction. At Vounous, however, status negotiation appears to have been relatively fluid and widespread. Ceremonial events were probably used to develop, maintain and renegotiate social relationships, in which the success of individuals and groups waxed and waned while the ritual realm endured as a context for display, interaction and consumption (Spielmann 2002: 196). In this scenario, specialised craft production is a by-product of ritual participation, and ritual is a primary arena in which variation and change in economic practices are to be seen and understood.

With increasing political centralisation, social action and ritual performance became subservient to the political economy and the needs of aspiring elites, leading to corporate control of ritual and ideology. New modes of economic production impacted directly on ritual practice, and new beliefs about hierarchy and dominance were embedded in iconography and performance. Ritual became a primary locus of political authority, a source of power and legitimisation in a rapidly changing society. Usurpation of ritual knowledge by political actors was used to outdo competitors, impress followers and impose socially coercive sanctions. At Enkomi, existing deities appear to have been co-opted early into the metal industry, effectively aligning the ritual and political economy and providing ideological legitimacy for new systems of authority and administration. While regional centres of the latter half of the LC period continued to be reliant on the copper industry, this aspect of LC ritual may never have been as dominant as at Enkomi, allowing these urban settlements to develop their own modes of ritual expression.

The LC period witnessed a move away from concerns with the natural world and the agricultural cycle to a focus on economic wealth and political authority. In the coastal centres, this led to an increasingly complex and manipulated iconography of social power and probably to the emergence of religious specialists and new mythological narratives reflecting a more complex human world. While at all stages of the Bronze Age ritual was tied to identity, power and legitimacy, earlier fluid and dynamic associations gave way to structured, non-negotiable relationships. This institutionalisation of ritual authority and subversion of symbolic behaviour in the LC period demonstrates the critical role of ritual as an evolutionary force, particularly during the emergence of politically centralised societies.

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