

# ***Ritual in Prehistory; Definition and Identification.***

## ***Religious Insights in Early Prehistoric Cyprus.***

### **Volume I**

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Archaeology

School of History, Classics, and Archaeology

University of Edinburgh

**Vasiliki G. Koutrafour**

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Supervisors: Prof. Edgar J. Peltenburg  
Dr. Ulf-Diedrich Schoop

## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not, whether in the same or a different form, been presented to this or any other university in support of an application for any other degree than that for which I am now a candidate.

Date..... Signature.....

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### **Appendix I**

The Kissonerga-Mylouthkia Project, Excavation report publication in 2002, Annual report 20 Oct.2000-31 Oct.2001 Department of Archaeology. University of Edinburgh.

### **Appendix II**

Do pillars travel along with the obsidian? ... or is it vice versa?

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## List of Abbreviations.

BCH	Bulletin de Correspondence Hellenic
CB	Circular Building
CBRP	Circular Building with Radial Partitions
C-EPPN	Cypriot Early Pre-Pottery Neolithic
C-LPPN	Cypriot Late Pre-Pottery Neolithic
C-MPPN	Cypriot Middle Pre-Pottery Neolithic
CPB	Circular Pillar Building
C-PPPN	Cypriot Pre-Pottery Neolithic
CRB	Circular Radial Building
CTRB	Circular Tri-Radial Building
E	East
N	North
NE	Northeast
NW	Northwest
RDAC	Report of the department of Antiquities of Cyprus
PPN	Pre-Pottery Neolithic
S	South
S followed by number	Structure number
SE	Southeast
Th.	Tholos / Tholoi
SW	Southwest
W	West

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## Abstract

Prehistoric archaeology has had major difficulties in identifying ritual practices. The history of archaeological approaches ranges from a total repudiation of the capability of the discipline to recognise and analyse ritual activities in the past, to absolute acceptance of all identified prehistoric patterns as ritual. Even within a postmodern apprehension of the world, where deconstruction of all established perceptions seems to have reached an end point, prehistoric archaeology has never successfully constructed a notion of ritual in prehistory. Acknowledging that ritual definition and identification is a problem of the modern western archaeologist, this thesis identifies the root of the problem in methods of thinking deeply rooted in western civilization, in our cultural schemata, and in approaches to archaeology that only superficially observe the problem rather than confront and resolve it. In seeking a resolution, this work proposes a structural dismantling of the problem and its re-composition from its basics. The thesis proposes a middle-range theory based on structuralism and pragmatics and a method of meticulous contextual and relational analysis for the identification and interpretation of ritual practices in prehistory.

As a starting point, death is identified as the quintessential category for the exploration of a mytho-logic system and its subsequent definition. The treatment of the dead is recognised as the ideal starting point for an examination of the archaeological record in quest for ritual. Ritual structural elements identified in the context of burial are used subsequently for the identification of non-death ritual practices. The identification of religious practices in Early Prehistoric Cyprus reveals a vibrant ritual-practicing culture contrary to previous commonly accepted observations. Structured depositions in ritually empowered containers; ritual transport; hoarding; symbolic abandonment; ritual sealing; ritual burning; ritual use of burials for the creation of liminality; construction of highly symbolic structures and subsequent attribution of

agency to them, all constitute religious practices attested by this thesis for the Cypriot PPNB and Aceramic Neolithic.

This identification of ritual in Early Prehistoric Cyprus enables the exploration of this culture's mytho-logic. The thesis demonstrates how early Cypriots viewed their world and their position in it. Finally, this research offers new perspectives in recognising past socio-cultural realities through the examination of ritual practices.

## Introduction to the thesis.

*All God's children can dance.*<sup>1</sup>

Modern neuropsychology, cognitive and evolutionary research in linguistics, psychology and anthropology demonstrate that, in its complexity, the modern human mind has the unique capability of creativity and imagination (Lewis-Williams 2002a,b:191, Watkins 2002: 42). Steven Mithen (1996), in his work *The Prehistory of the mind*, has examined a series of works by genetic biologists, cognitive psychologists and anthropologists (Gould 1977, Fodor 1983, Gardner 1983a,b, Atran 1990, Boden 1990, Cosmides and Tooby 1992) that all reach the same conclusion: the unique ability of the modern human mind to form ideas that relate to things beyond the spectrum of the five senses; things that do not exist in the natural world. The human mind then can mentally associate these ideas to tangible objects created from materials that exist in the natural world, but depict or stand for those created by imagination. Imagination, creation, use of *external symbolic storage* (Donald 1991) and *cognitive fluidity* between these domains (Mithen 1996:76-78, 173) is a capability exclusive to the modern human mind and universal to all human beings. After a series of evolutionary adventures, the modern human mind took form between 60.000 and 30.000 BC (Mithen 1996: 222). The fact that humans at that point of their evolution were capable of creating, using and recognising symbols signifies for many (social) scientists, including archaeologists, (Cauvin 1994, Mithen 1996, Renfrew 1985, 1993, 2004, Watkins 2001, 2004, 2005) the beginning of religion;

*[...] Upper Palaeolithic people were the first to have beliefs in supernatural beings and possibly an afterlife. We are indeed seeing here the first appearance of religious ideologies.*  
(Mithen 1996:198).

The variability of these ideologies is unlimited, but their existence is universal. *The anthropologist Pascal Boyer tells us that people in every society encountered by anthropologists have religious ideas (Boyer 1994). We are the odd ones out*, as Trevor Watkins (2001:5) adds. By having religious ideas and by transforming them into materials that symbolise those ideas, by performing this act repeatedly and by passing this information to their descendants, thus perpetuating this process and creating tradition, those people, in fact, practiced “ritual” (Mithen 1996:181-202, Insoll 2004:23-32). Being aware in archaeology that prehistoric people not only had the capability of forming religious ideas, but also expressed them through painting, sculpting and other actions or through sets of combinations of actions (Renfrew 2001:137), it remained for archaeologists to identify the residues of those actions, describe them and reconstruct the sociocultural systems from which these actions derived. *Technical actions* (Leach 1976:9), such as painting, sculpting, hoarding, depositing, alter the physical world and should be expected to leave indications and evidence traceable by archaeology. By parallel association to current societies that conduct their life in a hunter-gatherer or sedentary agro-pastoral way, analogous prehistoric societies likely enhanced their “ritual” practices with songs, dance, words, and movements; *expressive actions* (Leach 1976:9), which do not alter the physical world and to which prehistoric archaeology has access only via the physical representations of these actions and cognitive research (Renfrew 1985:15).

The quest for identifying ritual actions in dead or living societies traditionally begins with the necessity of ascribing a meaning to the word “ritual” itself. There is no anthropological or archaeological work on “ritual” practices, so far, that does not have to start with a long introduction explaining what “ritual” is, or to turn to the explanation of this term at a crucial point within the work (Bell 1992, 1997, Bloch 1989, Bradley 2003, Brück 1999, Brück and Goodman M. 1999, Garwood et al 1989, Goody 1959, Kuijt 1996, 2000, Parker Pearson 1999, Renfrew 1985, Verhoeven 2002a, b, 2004). Although the problem of the lack of a definition of “ritual” in archaeology has been

demonstrated many times (Childe 1957, Clarke 1968, Hawkes 1954:161-2) and attempts for its resolution have started within the framework of our discipline since 1985 (Renfrew 1985:2, Verhoeven 2002a:5, 25), commonly accepted definitions of "ritual" remain unseen. Some works (Brück 1999, Bradley 2003, Renfrew 1985, Verhoeven 2002a) examined methods that would convincingly identify "ritual", despite both the lack of a widely accepted definition in prehistoric archaeology and the repudiation of ritual by traditional functionalists. In contrast, it is not necessary for researchers who examine economical or architectural traits in prehistory to include long introductions in their papers defining "economy" or "architecture" (Verhoeven 2002:5). Why do the words "economy" or "architecture" signify messages more widely accepted whereas the word "ritual" does not? According to Verhoeven (2002:25), quoting Bazelmans (1999):

*The use of a concept such as ritual is "at the same time a condition/ prerequisite and an impediment" for analysing and understanding prehistoric behaviour.*

Prehistorians know that if we want to explore the economic system of a past society we should look for evidence that has been produced by actions related to subsistence and exchange. Our evidence is clear: animal bones and how they have been processed, tools, chipped stone, seals, seeds, evidence for storage and exotic materials. However, when the question concerns "ritual", as prehistorians, we are unable to pinpoint what evidence we should be examining; what it is exactly that should constitute the focus of our analysis. Brief metadata definitions have been provided by most archaeologists having to analyse what they believe constitutes "ritual" practices at the sites on which their research focuses. Verhoeven (2002a) has assembled a collection of such definitions: "ritual" is what seems to archaeologists as *odd, curious, impractical, irrational* after Brück (1999); what attracts *our attention when we realise that there is something wrong [...]* with the evidence, after Tilley (1999:264); what signifies *structured*

*deposition* after Richards and Thomas (1984); or in their criticism the specific way in which the structured deposition was made, after Hill (1996). In addition, Hodder (1982:164) admitted that the reasons for which archaeologists use the term “ritual” are because *what is observed is non-functional and is not understood*. Barrett (2004:397) stated that *Archaeologists regularly equate “ritual” with deposits which they regard symbolic*, and Renfrew (1985:19-20, 25-26) created a list of strict metadata criteria of what constitutes “ritual”. Bradley (2003: 6, 11-12) claimed that *it is the very existence of rituals in the past that makes much of the prehistoric archaeology possible*. He considered “ritual” more specifically as *something set apart from daily life combining formality and separation* while linked with *religious belief and the supernatural*. Parker Pearson (1993) observed “ritual” linked in many ways with the *powerful dead*.

Arguably, all researchers more or less agree on the whole, yet disagree upon significant details. Evidently, their definitions are descriptive and qualitative rather than intrinsic. Differences in their descriptive definitions possibly derive from the diversity of their evidence. Different evidence has evoked different descriptive terminology. Prehistorians coming across “ritual” resemble the three wise men of the Platonic myth, who by touching different parts of an elephant that they cannot see, identify their findings as completely different species (butterfly by touching only the ears, snake by touching only the trunk and tree by touching the leg). All could be correct in their perceptions and descriptions, but are missing fundamentally the whole. Is it the nature of “ritual” as a *signifier* (Saussure 1916) that makes the endeavour of defining ritual difficult or are there other parameters that prohibit us from reaching an uncontroversial definition? And if so, which are they? There is a double set of questions here that need to be addressed prior to an attempt of identifying ritual activities in early prehistoric Cyprus. Simplifying them would reform them to: What is ritual and Why has prehistoric archaeology been unable to provide a straightforward answer to this question, but has restrained itself in incomplete metadata definitions, correct only in part?

In addition to “what” and “why”, the major question that has mostly troubled archaeological research concerned with ritual practices is “where” (Renfrew 1985: 2, 14-15). Where can ritual be detected during archaeological fieldwork? Where can it be seen in the archaeological record? The answer to this question is uncomplicated in our modern western society where “ritual” and mundane are arguably strictly separated. There are specific buildings: churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, where ritual is practiced. Similar places were constructed and have been identified as such in proto-historic and classical eras. Archaeology has been helped to identify them as places for the practice of “ritual” as indicated by surviving written sources. In early prehistory though, archaeology seems to be lacking such specific places with similar attributes. Is prehistoric archaeology indeed lacking such evidence of “where” or is the evidence simply absent? May the absence of evidence signify absence of the practice of “ritual” as well? Since ritual was practiced in prehistoric societies, and practices leave traces, the cause of our inability to identify the evidence for ritual practices must lie elsewhere. The only possibility that is left, then, is that the evidence is there, but we cannot distinguish it, because we do not know what we are looking for. Consequently, the lack of a definition of “ritual” has hindered the archaeological visibility of “ritual” in prehistory.

*How for instance does one recognise the archaeological evidence of religious behaviour, of cult practice, for what it is? On what grounds for instance, is one pit, with animal bones and a few artefacts, dismissed as domestic refuse, while another is seen as ritual deposit with evidence of sacrifice?*

(Renfrew 1985:2).

The question of “where” is a question regarding archaeological visibility and possession of theoretical and methodological tools for the identification of “ritual” in the archaeological record. It also involves archaeological context: the place where visibly meaningful archaeological remains of human actions signify “ritual”.



Consequently, we reach the question of what *context* is in archaeology (Binford 1962, 1965, Binford et al. 1968, Hodder 1981, 1995:234, 1999, Hodder and Hutson 1995, Schiffer 1995:25-34, Papaconstantinou 2006a:32-33). The discipline has considered the answer to this question extensively and has constructed and deconstructed (Papaconstantinou 2006b) *context* to the extent that a definition here is redundant. Therefore, the question that then remains is: what is "ritual" context? Or phrased differently with maybe more meaningful results of a potential answer: what constitutes context of "ritual" practices in prehistoric archaeology?

To these three main questions of "what", "why", "where", and to the three deriving archaeological problems, definition, visibility and context, linguists, philosophers, social scientists and anthropologists have been employed to help with the construction of a theoretical framework that we so lack in prehistoric archaeology in order to define, detect, identify and finally, maybe interpret "ritual" actions (chapter 1). Yet, the possibilities for the resolution of an archaeological problem outside of the discipline of archaeology seem minor, despite the abundance of material provided by sister disciplines (Hodder 1999:22). The particular parameters that characterise our discipline, such as:

- reconstructing activities that took place in the past from fragmentary and only sample remains (evidence)
- trying to specify the human actions and natural processes that led to the survival of remains and objects (taphonomy)
- destroying in an organised way in order to understand these formation processes (excavation)
- constructing fragmentary records and then researching them in order to produce meaningful results (data processing and research)
- trying to "make stories" as close as possible to a supposed truth from fragmentary evidence in order to be able to access and understand these societies of the past (reconstruction)

- dealing with the unpredictability and diversity of humans and the particularity of the distant past,

all these, are facts and factors that none of the other mentioned social scientists have to face in order for them to be able to explain and discuss the notion in question. So, even though archaeological thought can be inspired and helped by these neighbouring disciplines, an archaeological problem can with great difficulty be resolved outside archaeological constraints with the sought solution being meaningful and useful for archaeology.

Bearing in mind the specific parameters of archaeology, this work proposes answers to the three major questions in chapter 1. In this chapter our perceptions of "ritual" as members of our societies and cultures are reviewed and challenged. Archaeological works that have examined possibilities of research of "ritual" in prehistory are critically considered. The theoretical resolution to the archaeological problem of a definition for "ritual" is approached with the use of specific anthropological works, which promote exploration of the term within archaeological constraints. Then a practical archaeological consideration for the retrieval of physical remnants of actions that have derived from religious beliefs is constructed and proposed. Following a review of the evidence from Early Prehistoric Cyprus, the proposed theoretical and practical resolutions to the archaeological problem of the identification of "ritual" are tested on early prehistoric Cypriot evidence (chapters 3 and 4). The latter is viewed through scrupulous contextual analysis.

A review (chapter 2) of the archaeological research on the prehistory of Cyprus has been judged to be essential. Literature on prehistoric Cyprus lacks identification of a system of "ritual" practices to the extent that this results in a misconception of Cypriot prehistoric societies as being almost entirely "aritual". This does not only contrast with current cognitive research (Mithen 1996), but also with archaeological research in the neighbouring mainland (Beile-Bohn, Gerber, Morsch and Schmidt 1998, Campbell and Croucher 2006, Kozlowski and Kempisty 1989-1990, Kuijt I. 2000,

Strodeur 2003, Strodeur and Abbès 2003, Strodeur, Brenet, Der Aprahamian and Roux 2000, Watkins 2001, 2004a, 2005). The archaeology of the Neolithic Near East, where Cyprus seems to belong culturally during that period of time (McCartney 2003a, b, McCartney and Gratuze 2003, McCartney and Todd 2005, Peltenburg 1985b, 2003a, b, 2004, McCartney, Swiny 2001, Todd 2005, Watkins 2004b), is overwhelmed with identification and exploration of evidence of "ritual" practices (Cauvin 1994, Hodder 1987, Kuijt 1996, Mellaart 1967, Verhoeven 2000, 2002b, 2004, Watkins 2002, 2005). Clearly this lack of systematic identification of "ritual" practices for the early prehistory of Cyprus is apprehensively conspicuous. Therefore, this literature review shortly develops into a double critique both of the methods of excavation and presentation of the material for the purposes of contextual analysis, and of the methods of ascription of the term "ritual" to material where this has been done. It is demonstrated that a system in the way research on "ritual" is performed for early prehistoric Cyprus was lacking and needed.

The application of the proposed theory and methodology of this thesis in the identification and exploration of prehistoric ritual systems proves fruitful in the case-study of early prehistoric Cyprus. In chapter 3, the contexts of the Kissonerga-Mylouthkia Wells and Shillourokambos *Fosse 23* are viewed through the prism of pragmatics theory in search of structural elements of sociocultural categories in such combinations and patterns, which would signify actions deriving from religious beliefs. In chapter 4, those sociocultural categories can be seen to discontinue or continue and develop in the contexts of Kalavassos-Tenta, Khirokitia-Vouni and Cape Andreas-Kastros. The cosmological and social orders are seen to express, mirror and challenge each other in theatres of highly symbolic structures expressive of archetypal ideas and concerns. Ritual systems are identified within these sites, their functionality is explored and interpretations for their meaning are offered.

The resolution of the definitional and methodological problem of "ritual" and its applicability in contexts of Early Prehistoric Cyprus is finally tested through other

contemporary archaeological models in chapter 5. This thesis demonstrates that “ritual” systems existed in Early Prehistoric Cyprus. The exploration of those ritual systems assists the further understanding of the functionality of socioeconomic systems within the same culture. In chapter 5, it is also shown that no complete understanding of a past socio-cultural system can be achieved without a full consideration of “ritual” practices.

## Chapter 1.

### ***Ritual***

#### Definition and identification in prehistory.

*Watch out for Art, [...] as soon as they start doing art we are in trouble.  
Symbolic thinking of any kind would signal downfall, [...].  
Next they would be inventing idols, and funerals, and grave-goods, and the afterlife,  
and sin, and Linear B, and kings, and then slavery and war.<sup>2</sup>*

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Many social sciences have confronted the definitional problem of "ritual". Theoretical advancements in linguistics, philosophy and anthropology have been used as pools of human knowledge from archaeology and have influenced theory and practice within our discipline. Additionally, theoretical developments within these disciplines have shaped modern western thought in profound ways from which archaeology could not have escaped. Applications from the discipline of linguistics and lexical-cultural examples will be employed here to help with the understanding of what we, as modern western archaeologists, mean in our language and culture when we use the word *ritual*. They also provide a solid basis upon which *ritual* will be used in this work. A brief history of philosophy, as what it is that shapes the way organised thought is constructed and shared, will be examined for an understanding of how our modern western thought functions, constructs ideas and has been trained to resolve problems. From this general examination, the discussion shifts to the *Philosophy of Religion* and whether or how the latter can be useful within the parameters of prehistoric archaeology. Major philosophers who have positively or negatively influenced research

on ritual in prehistoric archaeology are also examined. On the same basis, theories from the realm of archaeology's sister discipline of anthropology are used subsequently to assist in a better understanding of "ritual". Certainly, a detailed view of "ritual" in philosophy and anthropology is not within the aims of this work. *Theories of Religion*, by Seth Kunin (2006), *Anthropology of Religion*, by Michael Lambek, *The Anthropology of Religion*, by Fiona Bowie (2000) comprise excellent complete collections of theories and conceptual milestones of the western civilization in reference to *religion* and *ritual*. Additionally Verhoeven's (2002a:5-24) introduction in *Ritual and its Investigation in Prehistory*, provides an extensive bibliography on philosophy and anthropology of ritual and religion, with additional evaluation of the majority of theories on the basis of their usefulness in prehistoric archaeology. From the immense available literature, both on philosophy and anthropology, only a few works have been selected here. Three criteria have shaped the basis upon which this selection has occurred: a) the aim of this work; b) the impact of these theories on archaeological thought and their influence in current discourse on "ritual" in prehistoric archaeology; and c) whether these theories have been judged essential in reference to a resolution of the archaeological problem of "ritual" definition and identification. Importantly, each one of these works, selected from Linguistics, Philosophy and Anthropology, is explored from an archaeological perspective; archaeologists' opinions and archaeological information intersect in this discussion of theories from these sister disciplines. Concurrently all theoretical works are seen through the prism of a heavy overhanging question: "what *ritual* is" for archaeology.

After this review of contributions from linguistics, philosophy and anthropology, the discussion moves to archaeology. Two major works have been selected on the basis that they have provided a thesis on the definitional problem of "ritual" and have proposed a complete methodology for "ritual" identification in prehistoric archaeology. Then this work assumes a similar endeavour: confronts the

definitional problem of "ritual", claims its resolution and proposes a methodology for the interpretation and identification of ritual in the archaeological record.

## 1.2 Linguistic complications.

*well here again that don't apply  
But I've gotta use words when I talk to you*<sup>3</sup>

In the literature of "ritual" theory, the notions of "ceremony", "sacred", "sacral", "ideology", "religion", "symbolism" have been in one way or another linked with "ritual". Not only in archaeology but also in philosophy, sociology, anthropology and theology, these are all notions that have provoked long discussions and debates. The controversy of the meaning of the notion of "ritual" and the words associated with it require an explanation of how this terminology has been used throughout this research and a very clear understanding of the meaning of these concepts in the language in which this text is written. As Richard Bradley (2003:6) explains:

*Ritual is one of those words which have survived from an older archaeology and continue to haunt the discipline today. [...] Without a clearer notion of what they mean by ritual it will be difficult for field archaeologists to interpret their observations.*

Archaeologists should have a very clear archaeological understanding of what they mean by "ritual" in order to interpret their results. However, these archaeologists are not only members of an archaeological / intellectual community; they are also members of their own culture and society, in which particular notions carry specific meanings and by which their perception and work is constantly and inevitably influenced. *Everything about us -what we say, how we say it, what we do, how we think, and so on- is heavily conditioned by language and our mental map of reality* (Park 1994:25). According to Yule (1996:3), words are multidimensional: they not only express a meaning, but they also carry specific cargo: images, sounds, smells, connotations and situations, particular

to the individual or a specific culture. These are *cultural schemata*. They are *our background knowledge structures [...] for making sense of the world* (Yule 1996:87). Thus the use of a specific word is always culturally determined. Yule (1996:4) explains that,

*Semantics is the study of the relationships between linguistic forms and entities, in the world, that is how words literally connect to things. Pragmatics is the study of relationships between linguistic forms and users of those forms.*

In pragmatics the combination of the study of *forms, entities and users* allows humans into the analysis. This approach has derived from the Peircian (1905, 1857-1890) understanding of a triadic dimension of a sign (e.g. word): *sign - object - interpretant*, with emphasis on the relationships between *forms - entities - users*, which are not arbitrary in contrast to Saussure's (1916) arbitrary sign (signified-signifier) (Preucel 2005:69). In modern sociolinguistics the Peircian approach to semiotics, supports a pragmatic perspective on language and culture and has found applicability in socio-cultural anthropology (Preucel 2006:67). This approach encompasses and relates material culture, social practice and language, without excluding one of the three, and emphasises their *in-between relationships* (Preucel 2005:89-90). Humans use language / words in order to organise and distinguish meaningfully objects and roles in their world (Leach 1976:33). The language system they use naturalizes and reproduces categories of social action (Hill and Mannheim 1992:389). The meaning culturally ascribed to words affect the surrounding world physically, as the perception that humans have of the world regulates their actions in it and upon it (Barrett 2004:396-397). *This is because material culture is tightly interwoven with language and shares some of its semiotic properties* (Preucel 2006:13).

Regarding "ritual", it is worth comparing a lexical and a cultural example from two modern western societies, the British and the Greek, which differ culturally. It will become obvious that the difference of the cultural perception of the word "ritual" expresses difference in the relationship constructed between human agents and



material culture. These examples have been chosen on the basis of a comparison between the culture of origin of the author of this work and the culture in which the author lived, while producing this research and writing this text. This could be regarded as an example of *interlanguage pragmatics*, as could this whole thesis, where a non-native “speaker” communicates in a second language (Yule 1996:88). It will be shown that even the translation of the word “ritual” to another language and therefore to a different cultural system creates controversy and confusion. Similarly that the perception and the material expression of related “ritual” notions are managed differently by these different culturally, modern western populations, in a way which is consistent with their own perceptions, although this may not be the cause for this differentiation. For example, although all the major bilingual dictionaries (Oxford Greek-English Learner’s Dictionary, Cambridge, Longman) translate the Greek word “τελετουργία” into “ritual” as first choice and then “ceremony”, and vice versa, both words are entirely different in the context of English language. In addition, the Greek word “τελετουργία” derives from two others that frame its meaning in a more absolute way: “τελετή” which translates into “ceremony” and “ιερολογία” which derives from the words “ιερό” and “έργο” and are translated retrospectively into: “sacred” and “practice” or “work” (Centre of Lexicology 1998). Therefore, the word “τελετουργία” bears within it the notion of sacred practice in a formal setting. This restricts the use of this word in reference to secular practice, and although it may sometimes be used exceptionally in modern colloquial Greek as such, this does not constitute correct use of the formal language because of the etymology of the specific word (Centre of Lexicology 1998). Additionally, even if it is used in this way in colloquial Greek it could never be combined with the adjective “sacred”, as for example: “sacred ritual”. The equivalent “ιερή τελετουργία” is a grammatical pleonasm, exactly because of the meaning of “ιερή” (sacred) been expressed clearly within the noun of “τελετουργία”. In contrast, the English words into which “τελετουργία” is translated, “ritual” and “ceremony”, may refer to secular or non formal practices as well as to “sacred” and

formal, correctly, both in colloquial and in formal English language. These differences in the meaning and use of these words portray differences in the perception of the world and in the construction of meaning within the two different cultural systems. By applying the Peircian (1905, 1857-1890) model of *sign-object-interpretant* to an example from these two different culturally, modern western societies, it is possible to see an even deeper contrast in the perception of the meaning of “ritual” versus “τελετουργία”. Where the sign (/form) is the word or notion of “ritual space”, the object (/entity) is the actual “ritual space” e.g. a church, and the interpretants (/users) are the people, who construct and manage both notion and material, the following can be noticed. In modern Edinburgh, Victorian Catholic Churches are used as theatrical stages, especially during the busy festival of the city every August, while theatrical performances are interrupted for the Sunday Mass. Churches, which are no longer in use, have also been transformed into night-clubs and theatres, for permanent use as such. In modern Greece, any other use of a church, “of the house of God”, beyond worship, prayer and ritual, would be beyond any comprehension of an Orthodox Greek. Such a use of a sacred space, even if the space is no longer used for sacred ceremonies, would be considered disrespectful to God, a sheer vandalism, a barbarian act. For an Orthodox Greek, the place, where an Orthodox “τελετουργία” (sacred ceremony) takes place or used to take place, could never be used for any other purpose. In modern Britain, the practice of different kinds of “ritual” in a church, or former church, does not seem to be insulting to the ethics of the Catholic Christian community. It is not to be implied that this is a fact caused by the difference in the meaning of the word “ritual” and its lexical or cultural translations. Certainly though, this example aims to show that different cultural perceptions of a “sacred space”, where “ritual” takes place or used to take place, affect the management of the space in question, by different culturally populations. Investigation of how the notion of “ritual” is perceived and used in other current cultural systems would constitute interesting research in

sociolinguistics and anthropology, as differences, subtle or not, may pervade other languages and therefore cultures, too.

Lacking the language itself, but having other signs or by viewing material culture itself as a system of signs (Hodder and Hutson 1986, Shanks and Tilley 1987) archaeology has been influenced in the way it views and interprets "ritual". In this framework Bradley's (2003:6) appeal for a clear understanding of what is meant by ritual becomes even more important as archaeologists ultimately seek a meaningful "translation" of a notion from a past society to a present western society. Regarding "religion", Bowie (2000:22) explains:

*When we come to look at various definitions [...], we need to remember that we are constructing a category (religion) based upon European languages and cultures, and that the term has no necessary equivalent in other parts of the world. At best therefore we are looking at a clumsy process of translation - translation of other people's languages and cultures into categories that Westerners can understand and interpret in terms of their own experience.*

Certainly, here, Bowie does not mean only a lexical translation, but mostly a cultural one. The particularity with which current and culturally different populations may view this aspect of life ("ritual") via their own language becomes even more important, when we think that in our western societies, one of the effects of globalisation is the use of the same language by populations that do not share the same culture. In multicultural societies, the same word may have different connotations for individuals using the same language but not sharing the same culture: *And cultures, so anthropologists tell us, are not just lists of facts about the world, but specific ways of thinking and understanding [...].*" (Mithen 1996: 32). Therefore, it is essential to understand fully and clarify these notions in the context of the language in which this text is written and in the wider modern, western socio-cultural context in which this research has been conducted. Since, when trying to approach the understanding of notions in other cultures, [...] *we must (and can only) use our own frame of reference, [...]* (Verhoeven 2002a:

25), using a modern dictionary seems the only solution in view of setting agreement upon which notions in question signify a specific widely accepted meaning.

Quoting the Oxford Dictionary of English language (OED), the following should be born in mind (examples of use have been omitted):

*Ritual:*

(noun:)

- a religious or solemn ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order.
- a prescribed order of performing such a ceremony, especially one characteristic of a particular religion or Church.
- a series of actions or type of behaviour regularly and invariably followed by someone

(adjective:)

- relating to or done as a religious or solemn rite
- (of an action) arising from convention or habit

In the end of the entry "ritual", OED suggests "see: rite" and as the word "ceremony" has been used to explain the word "ritual", a concrete meaning of this term should also be sought:

*Rite:*

- a religious or other solemn ceremony or act.
- a body of customary observances characteristic of a church or a part of it
- a social custom, practice, or conventional act.

*Ceremony:*

- a formal religious or public occasion, especially one celebrating a particular event, achievement or anniversary.

- an act or a series of acts performed according to a traditional or prescribed form
- the ritual observances and procedures required or performed at grand and formal occasions
- formal polite behaviour

It is evident that the words "ritual" and "rite" express identical notions. The word "ceremony" seems to express occasional part of what "rite" and "ritual" signify. So, a ceremony can be part of a "rite" or "ritual". The primary use of the words "rite" and "ritual" is related to practices in religious settings; however both of them can also be used in formal, but non-religious settings. They also express *regularity* and *invariability* in the way in which a *body* or *series* of actions are performed. Performance, repetition and pattern are central attributes of the meaning these words express.

Although it is repeatedly practiced activities which archaeologists are able to identify by finding patterns of past behaviour, not all repeated actions bear within them the element of formality and performance; and certainly not all of them are religious. This research focuses on identifying actions that express the primary set of notions that constitute the concepts of "ritual" and "rite". These are: religious, regularly repeated actions with a sense of performance and formality. It should be clear that here and after the words "ritual" and "rite" are only used in reference to this particular concept. They will be placed in quotation marks only when their possible ambiguity needs to be highlighted. When the word "ceremony" is used it refers to *an occasion* which is part of a ritual or rite that exhibits the elements just demonstrated. In his recent PhD work, Jeffrey Sanders (2006:84), intelligently avoiding the two distinctly different connotations that the use of the word "ritual" implicates, has preferred and uses the word "sacral" in order to specify identical activities. "Sacral", in early use in archaeology by Sir Arthur Evans (1901) and then Pierre Bourdieu (1972, 1980) as Sanders (2006:84-85) explains, is a preferable word in view of avoidance of the confusion that the word "ritual" bears. And indeed, this is a successful choice as in the

OED “sacred” and “sacral” have a more concise meaning, which can successfully be used in archaeology where religious activities are concerned:

*Sacral:*

- (anatomy) relating to the sacrum
- relating to sacred rites or symbols

*Sacred:*

(adjective)

- connected with God or a god or dedicated to a religious purpose and so deserving veneration

However, the controversy of the concept of “ritual” is perceptual and this research chooses to use this fact as a tool, considering it only partially as an *impediment* (Verhoeven 2002:25), which it is high time we overcame. The properties that the word ritual encompasses should widen our perceptual horizons of what ritual may be in regards to a society geographically and chronologically distant to ours. For example, OED defines “ritual” as a *religious or solemn ceremony* [...], and a ceremony can be: a *religious or public occasion*. It is therefore implied by OED, that a solemn ceremony or a public occasion may not be religious. Of course this is absolutely correct in our modern western society. Is this the case though where Neolithic ritual is concerned? Did those people separate mentally and practically “solemn” or “public” from “religious”? Understanding fully the meaning of our words may actually be useful in raising important questions in regards to the meaning of concepts in other societies. Equally importantly, this research sees the controversy of the concept of ritual in language and archaeology, as an opportunity for clarification of the term and for termination of its abuse (Brück 1999: 315, 317, 323, Goody 1962:36, Renfrew 1985: 2-3), hopefully also contributing to ending the well-known archaeological joke of what archaeologists

interpret as ritual (Brück 1999:313, 317, Renfrew 1985:3, Verhoeven 2002a: 35). Moreover, although overuse and extensive analysis of a term render it heavy and difficult, simultaneously, they create tradition. Tradition may serve as a supportive body and be re-established, or as the basis of critique and be challenged. Lastly,

*Rather than eventually find that the disgraced presuppositions of the abandoned term have resurfaced in a newly deployed set of categories, it seems more responsible to hold on to our battered terminology, just as we hold on the artefacts of our own personal histories no matter how difficult they might become. They ensure that we do not forget where we come from. They curb our pretences.*

(Bell 1992:7)

The epicentre of the concepts of “sacral” and “sacred” is their association with religion. This is also the emphasis that this research places on ritual, being interested in its religious aspect. This is what is meant by *religion* in our modern western world:

*Religion:*

- the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power especially a personal God or gods
- a particular system of faith and worship.
- a pursuit of interest followed with great devotion

Neglecting the last meaning of the word *religion* which is metaphorical, it should be underlined that (in English) identified ritual practices should be expected to refer to belief and worship in something beyond the empirical world of the five senses. In our modern western society, we understand this “something” as *superhuman* and call it *God or gods*. It is also useful to emphasise the fact that according to the OED, *religion* is in fact a system. As a system, it’s should be expected to be constituted by internal elements that have specific meaning and specific qualities in the specific system, and

that function in an interrelation in a specific way or ways (Trigger 1989:303). It should also be expected that these attributes of these elements are different or even non-functional outside the given system or within other similar systems.

Linked with these notions and in association with them, “symbolism” and “ideology” have been used in archaeological literature on ritual (Renfrew 1985:7-13, Verhoeven 2002b:244, 248, 254) mostly as either interpretative tools or explanatory bases. The OED defines them as:

*Symbolism:*

- the use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities.
- symbolic meaning attributed to natural objects or facts.
- an artistic and poetic movement or style or style using symbolic images and indirect suggestion to express mystical ideas, emotions and states of mind. [...]

*Ideology:*

- a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy.
- the set of beliefs characteristic of a social group or individual
- (archaic) the science of ideas; the study of their origin and nature
- (archaic) visionary speculation of an unrealistic or idealistic nature.

“Symbolism” is a prerequisite for the existence of art, religion and the practice of ritual (Mithen 1996). It is a fundamental human capability, the identification of the use of which enables archaeologists to detect religious practices among others. Although both its recognition and interpretation may be complicated, its modern linguistic meaning seems straightforward (*the use of symbols [...]*). “Ideology”, on the other hand, is again one of these multi-purpose words, which, in addition, has been loaded with extra connotations by Marxist philosophy (Marx 1859, 1872, Carver 1987: 89-92, Hodder and



Hutson 2003:79). It is indicative that even the OED explains it as a *system of ideas and ideals* in the framework of *economic or political theory and policy*, excluding religion or other systems of ideas, ideals, symbolic knowledge or belief. Because of the current connotations of the word, Verhoeven (2002b: 254) needed to add a note in his article explaining that *ideology* in his text means *worldview*. Indeed, in ritual theory, an extra note seems to be needed, in order for a work to underline that the use of the word “ideology” is stripped out of political theory references and that it refers strictly to a system of ideas and ideals that shape the conceptual world of a specific culture. In this work “ideology” is understood exactly as such. It refers to *worldview* (Verhoeven 2002b:254) and to cosmology, thus accepting the archaic meaning of the term, not as a “science”, but as a system of ideas and ideals that are interlinked with ‘logic’ and describe or explain the “cosmos”; an ordered perception of the world, everything that surround us and include us, visible or invisible, constructions of imaginations or reality, but both strongly believed as real (Geertz 1973).

Having defined within our modern western society’s perceptual and linguistic constraints what is meant by words central to this research, the examination of the understanding of these notions in the realm of our cultural inheritance is essential. Philosophy and anthropology have practiced and produced work on religion and “ritual” for a longer time than archaeology. A considerable amount of theory, methodology and conclusions in archaeology have derived from intellectual achievements of neighbouring social sciences. In search of help for the archaeological problem of ritual definition and identification, and in search of an answer to “why” archaeology has so far failed to resolve it, this work turns to philosophy and social anthropology.

### 1.3 Philosophical problems and solutions (?)

*Archaeology is all about facts:  
if you want the truth, go next door to the philosophy department*<sup>4</sup>

#### 1.3.1 Archaeology's problem with rationality.

The controversy of "ritual" exceeds sociolinguistic barriers in the ways it affects archaeological thought. *As philosophy and social theory merge, the significance of philosophical issues in archaeology is perhaps more acute now than ever before* (Lucas 1997:37). Brück (1999) tried to explain the inability of archaeological thought to resolve the definitional problem of ritual by blaming modern western logic and its false use during examination of prehistoric societies that do not of course share it. Brück (1999:317) understood *Ritual as the product of Post-Enlightenment Rationalism*. She argued that the Cartesian model of the world, based on a series of constructed dualisms, and the European developments of epistemology thereafter have influenced modern western archaeological thought in seeking definitions of ritual via *objective functionality* (Brück:1999:318). She supported the view that the way modern western thought sees and explains the world, based on a rational "cause-effect" dialectic relation, is not applicable to prehistoric societies, simply because their rationality was different from ours. Brück (1999:328) following this line of argument concluded in replacing the notion of ritual with *odd* counteracting her arguments. Although Brück (1999) was rightfully criticised by Verhoeven (2002a:25), the base of her argument is valid. Indeed our modern western rationality has been formed by both Pre- and Post-Enlightenment epistemology. Indeed our rationality may have hindered our understanding of past societies. Yet, this may not be the reason why archaeology has been unable to define ritual. Ultimately, what Brück (1999) suggested is that the way we have been thinking derived from a time of a conceptual -and later as a consequence actual- separation of ritual from profane. Brück (1999) however, continued suggesting that this way of

thinking has been neither helpful nor useful for archaeology to be able to produce meaningful results on understanding and defining ritual. This is absolutely correct, though, only if we have been thinking simply as modern westerners and within our cultural schemata. In this way, Brück (1999) claimed that archaeologists have been unable to overcome their cultural way of thinking as modern westerners and therefore have been prohibited in reaching an uncontroversial definition of ritual. Is this really the reason why archaeology has been unable to define ritual adequately? To what extent has archaeology been influenced by western rationality regarding ritual? Are we using only *the Cartesian model of the world* (Brück 1999:318) or has our discipline been influenced by other models of thought regarding ritual, also?

### *1.3.2 Modern western thought and the Philosophy of Religion.*

By arguing about difference of rationality between modern westerners and prehistoric societies, Brück encourages her readers to re-examine their own way of thinking in relation to, and mostly in contrast to, those prehistoric societies. The only way for any modern discipline to check its rationality is in reference to philosophy and especially its branch of 'logic'. Many elements of Descartes' philosophy find their basis in dialectic Stoicism and Aristotelian epistemology and rationalism (Sorell 1987, Craig 2002, Osborne 2004). Aristotle laid the foundations upon which modern discussion on logic takes place (Barnes 2000:139, Allingham 2002:3). By the re-discovery of the classic philosophers in The Renaissance and their intellectual conquest of European thought, and via the Enlightenment Era philosophical developments, we have inherited specific methodologies of questioning, examining and regarding the world. Indeed, it has to be accepted that as members of the modern western society we have been trained to think in a specific way that has been influenced by our modern western culture, which has been shaped by philosophy and logic. However, the extent to which we have been

influenced and have used philosophical arguments in archaeology regarding ritual should be investigated. If the effects of epistemology are not so influentially negative or profound to the extent of prohibiting us from defining ritual archaeologically, other reasons for this inadequacy should be sought. Therefore, it is worth examining western approaches to ritual and whether the influences we have undergone as a discipline, because of our western way of thinking, our philosophy, have prevented us from reaching meaningful archaeological conclusions. As it will be demonstrated philosophy has not been interested directly in "ritual" per se. It has examined instead the concept of *religion* and indirectly religious practices. It has indeed influenced archaeological thought, but fundamentally, only at times, while this influence has also been positive enabling archaeological research on ritual.

Philosophy, as inherited from Plato, his student Aristotle and as developed by Hegel, is dedicated to the search of *truth* and *knowledge* (Annas 2003:25, 38, Barnes 2000:39, Singer 1983:97), although different methodologies were followed in order to approach it. According to Plato, philosophy seeks routes that would lead humans to "Ευδαιμονία", the kind of internal happiness that derives from the accomplishment of *virtue* (Annas 2003:57, Barnes 2000:123-127). Ultimately, philosophy seeks answers for the amelioration of human beings and human life, and inevitably *religion* has been examined and explained through this spectrum. The part of Philosophy that searches for answers in regards to religion has been classified by Aristotle as metaphysics and nowadays comprises a separate sector of philosophy called "Philosophy of Religion" (Honderich 2005:802).

A very brief summary examining the history of "Philosophy of Religion" would start with Pre-Socratic research. Pre-Socratic philosophers *proposed mechanical or physical causes for events earlier attributed more directly to divine intention or design* (Honderich 2005:802), seeking reasonable explanations behind natural phenomena and thus setting the foundations for a "cause-effect" way of thinking. Socrates, with his dialectic method for the research of *truth*, appears to encourage respect to the divine (Honderich: 2005:

802), although revolutionary for his time as he spoke about God in the singular (Annas 2003: 79). Regarding metaphysics, Plato and Aristotle, despite their disagreements, engaged themselves in ontological and existential questions (Barnes 2000:37), which do not cease to preoccupy even modern research in philosophy (Kunin and Watson 2006). Since the fourth century AD and during the medieval ages until the Enlightenment Era, philosophy is dedicated to religious philosophy and Christianity. Honderich (2005:803) explains that during the Medieval Ages and until the 17th century, *it becomes difficult to speak in any sense of "Philosophy of Religion", because it becomes difficult to talk of philosophy apart from religion*. Descartes (1596-1650) argued for the existence of God in terms of rationality: the possibility of him thinking of God could not have been possible without His existence and His creation of everything that exists (Byrne 1996:53-74, Sorell 1987).

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Locke and Berkeley argued for and against the justification of belief in God using metaphysics as the foreground, as Hume did in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Taliaferro 2003:458, Phillips 1970). During the same century, Kant and Hegel returned to the examination of religious practices from a point of view outside the Christian tradition. Kant rejected the possibility of examining the sublime through categories of the empirical world as self contradictory and saw God as a transcendental being that *cannot be thought through concepts* (Scruton 1982:96, 111, Byrne 1996). For Hegel philosophy was *at least a study of the ways in which God is represented in religious consciousness* (Honderich 2005:802). He examined religious traditions in other parts of the world beyond Europe and viewed *the exposition of knowledge as a phenomenon* (Singer 1983:13-31, 64). He engaged himself in questions on metaphysics believing that *the physical world never lives up to the perfection of its spiritual source, the absolute idea or mind* (Pals 1996:132), thus following platonic idealism, with emphasis on rationality (Singer 1983:64, 56). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Wittgenstein and other empiricists of the Vienna Circle, completely rejected religion as a category that could be examined (Bunin 2003: 457-458). At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginnings of the 20<sup>th</sup>, Weber following Hegel's example examined different *world religions* (Gerth and Mills 1948: 267), accepted them

as historically and socially bounded and explored their functions in the political, economic, aesthetic and intellectual sphere, by using rationality and accepting their psychological cause of existence after Freud and Nietzsche (Gerth and Mills 1948:270, 323-385).

Currently, *Philosophy of Religion* focuses on monotheistic religions and mainly Christianity. It *explores philosophical issues that arise from reflection on the nature and truth of religious belief and the meaning of religious practices as grown substantially since the '70s'* (Taliaferro 2003:453). Modern *Philosophy of Religion* is preoccupied with questions about divine attributes, the ineffability, omnipotence, omniscience and the goodness of God, via ontological, existential, cosmological, and theological arguments (Taliaferro 2003:471, 474-480). Taliaferro (2003:457) underlined that modern western philosophy may be seen to have followed Descartes in championing epistemology. However, he demonstrated that modern philosophy avoids the definitional problem of *religion*. He explained that modern Philosophy of Religion recognises that *belief to God* is not enough as a definition since there are recognised religions, which are atheistic such as: Theravada Buddhism. Philosophy of Religion bypasses the definitional problem *by noting major traditions recognised today as religions and [...] the traditions and practices resembling them* (Taliaferro 2003:457). Within current western philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, according to Taliaferro, does not seek to define religion, but avoids the definitional problem and focuses on the analysis of the already recognised matter. Kunin (2006) disagreed completely with Taliaferro on these two last points: firstly, his conclusion that *Philosophy of Religion* follows Descartes' epistemology and secondly, the resolution of the definitional problem by avoidance. Kunin (2006:1) assembled approaches and analyses on *religion* by several theorists and philosophers, after a recent meeting of the British Association for the Study of Religion and he emphasised the fact that the definitional problem of religion *has provided an ongoing challenge to scholars [...]*. Therefore it may be considered far from resolved and definitely not avoided. Also, he acknowledged that within the modern debate there are even opinions, which, following

the empirical thought of epistemology, question *religion* not only as a separate category of analysis, but also as a category per se that can be examined within the academic grounds of *either modern or post-modern discourse* (Kunin 2006:1). Kunin (2006: 7-21) was able to identify dual sets of approaches, arguments and counterarguments that he classified as: transcendent versus human approach, essentialism versus reductionism, insider versus outsider (emic - etic), unilinear evolutionist versus multilinear or relativist, the category *religion* as one object of examination versus the examination of *religions*, and the individual versus society approach. He therefore covered a wide spectrum of older and modern western thought on religion and showed approaches that do not always derive from epistemology of empiricism, but indeed may use logic and rationality in order to examine religion(s) as an analytical category.

### *1.3.3 The Philosophy of Religion within Archaeological constraints.*

As explained by Taliaferro (2003), in general, *Philosophy of Religion* focuses on monotheistic current religions (Honderich 2005:802) and therefore it cannot be useful to archaeological research of the distant past, where it is generally impossible to determine whether the sort of religion those people practiced was monotheistic, polytheistic or atheistic. In the way Kunin (2006:7-21) has described the current debate, there seems to be some conceptual mechanisms that have already been used from archaeology and other disciplines and may have been dismissed as unhelpful, exactly because of the particular parameters that archaeology faces. For example: the idea of a transcendental source of religion does not interest archaeology, but theology. Reductionist approaches have been used excessively in human sciences including archaeology, seeing religion and ritual as social, psychological or fulfilling other functions (Kunin 2006:8). Only recently have essentialist arguments taken place within the archaeological discourse, viewing ritual as a unique category dissimilar to other social phenomena and which cannot be discussed in the same terms (Verhoeven

2002a:33, "Ritual Dynamics 2008"). However, reductionism has shaped our way of thinking in epistemology as, while following this approach, the search for knowledge happens from the whole to the part (Barnes 2000:47). In this sense even essentialist approaches use in fact reductionist arguments in order to prove the uniqueness of the phenomenon of religion (Kunin 2006:9). Similarly, the emic -etic approaches, although not central in the archaeological discourse, have inspired theoretical discussion in archaeology regarding phenomenology and discovery or creation of patterns on the basis of the limits of archaeological evidence (Hayden 1984, Dunnell 1984). Unilinear evolutionist approaches were in the centre of attention of archaeology for almost a century, since antiquarianism and colonialism, until and including cultural historical and diffusion approaches (Childe 1935, 1956, 1957, Trigger 1989:102, 153, 251, 354-355). Such approaches, although elements of which are still used in processual archaeology, essentially belong to the past as with New Archaeology, processual and systems approaches, and contextual archaeology, multilinear and relativist understandings of sociocultural phenomena have been established (Trigger 1989:348-357, Hodder and Hutson 2003:20-44, 75). The opposition between one object of analysis: *religion*, and multiple or different ones: *religions*, does not interest archaeology as an opposition, but as a synthesis. In this sense, theoretical archaeology may focus on ritual as one object of analysis, but cultural and contextual constraints necessitate the move of the discussion from the general to the particular, from *the idealised to the actualised* (Kunin 2006:17). In the end, the opposed set of *individual versus society* approach, the first part of which was formed by Freudian (1913, 1930) thought, has divided prehistoric archaeology: for some it is a non-question within the limits of processual archaeology (Insoll 2004:16), whereas it has found fruitful ground within *agency theory* (Dorbes and Robb 2000). Consensus appears in classical archaeology, as from the Geometric era we are able to differentiate between workshops. In regards to the classical era, we are able to account for individual action, although this is partially possible thanks to script.



#### 1.3.4 Marx, Durkheim and Levi-Strauss; the impact and the potential of their thought within archaeology.

The undeniable effect of the ideas and approaches of three major thinkers has been purposefully excluded from this brief account on the history of Philosophy of Religion and the short critique that followed it, in terms of archaeological use and applicability. Marx, Durkheim and Levis-Strauss: seem to have motivated the most profound effect on archaeological thought concerning ritual and are worth examining separately.

Carl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883), although lived and wrote in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the impact of his works and views was tremendous during the past century, influencing politics and life, directly or indirectly, on the whole planet. Arguably, he is one of the most influential thinkers of the past century (Pals 1996:125-126, 144). Marx was influenced both by the German philosophical tradition and by French Sociological thought and especially Rousseau, being particularly interested in the French Revolution (Rotenstreich 1949:717, Trigger 1989:221). In the circle of "Young Hegelians", he criticised Hegel's idealistic views by giving primacy to matter instead of the mind, considering that the realm of concepts and ideas is in fact a reflection (Marx 1859, 1872, Pals 1996:127). He believed that the solution for a "happier" human life would come through revolution that would signify the end of the class inequality and struggle, which, in his views, was the fundamental force of social change (Pals 1996:132). He saw the economic factors as the base of a *society* whereas he realised morality, art and literature as the *superstructure* (Carver 1987: 43-45). According to Marx *the endeavours of artists, politicians, and theologians all amount to ideology* (Marx 1859, 1872, Pals 1996: 138). He considered religion the most extreme example of ideology and therefore dismissed it as pure illusion (Niebuhr 1964, Pals 1996: 138).

Although our inheritance of Marx's views on religion is fragmentary, as he never addressed the subject of religion systematically and he never engaged himself in

discourse about matters and contents of religious beliefs, his functionalist and aggressively reductionist approach to the matter was extremely influential (Pals 1996:125, 145, Kunin 2006:68). He recognised that religion has a function in society, but he considered it not only redundant and unnecessary, but actually harmful. In Marx's views, *religion* allows the perpetuation of human misery and exploitation by promising a better after life. Being influenced by Freudian views (Freud 1913, 1930), he saw religion as a social neurosis that needs to be cured, and supported the view that people would be able to find the path to happiness by liberating themselves from it. The impact of Marx's influence in anthropology and archaeology was profound: functionalism, materialism, social evolution and diffusion were all products of this stimulus (Bloch 1983, Childe 1956, 1957, Hawkes 1954, Hodder and Hutson 2003:75-89, Trigger 2000:218-223, 271). By viewing human societies as systems of production and reproduction with the economic base playing the most powerful role, material evolution and technological change was to be understood within the social system, in terms of social evolution and because of politico-economic causative and determinative factors. In this framework, it was meaningless to research ritual practices and even burial customs were understood only in terms of territorial rights and property (Trigger 2000: 224-225). Consequently, religion and ritual was seen as peripheral. In the '60's' and '70's' Marxist archaeology saw ritual as epiphenomenal and the paleoeconomists dismissed it by claiming that *ritual was not important in the past and not worth studying in the present* (Bradley 2003:6). Even current discourse on ritual often takes place within the debate of the primacy of economic over ritual developments or vice versa (Cauvin 2000:71, Fuller and Grandjean 2001:393). In this context, this is where Brück (1999) is correct. It is evident that causative thought within the framework of Marxist functionalism had an acute negative effect on archaeological thought regarding research on ritual. Current research, without dismissing anymore the validity of research on ritual, also returns to the debate of primacy of specific social actions in regards to ritual (Fuller and Grandjean 2001).

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) in his *Elementary forms of Religious Life* (Durkheim 1912) followed Aristotelian epistemology collecting data, comparing it and classifying it (Johnson 2003:33). Being also influenced by French sociology, he saw religion as a phenomenon. By constructing a reductionist approach, he observed it as nothing more than a social function with an additional property of being expressive of the *mood of the society* via ritual practices (Pals 1996:110). Following Cartesian causality and dualisms he explained its very existence on the basis of the society, which was his primary analytical unit. He viewed religion and ritual as a social function, meaningless outside a given *social environment* with specific *social realities* and needs (Durkheim 1912, Pals 1996: 99-107). In addition, he emphasised the duality of sacred from profane in contrast to his predecessor's understanding of supernatural as opposed to natural (Durkheim 1912:36-40). He argued that *primitive* societies did not recognise supernatural from natural, but understood dual opposing sets of *sacred* and *social* in contrast to *profane* and *personal* (Durkheim 1912:42, 76, 121-122). Emphasising this dualism, he proceeded even further, explaining that the only purpose of ritual practices is the distinct and clear separation of the sacred from the profane in the consciousness of a social group (Pals 1996:99-100, Kunin 2006:28-31). Durkheim's sociological approach to religion and ritual in fact gave ground for archaeology to be able to examine ritual practices. By viewing societies as systems made of interdependent parts and by seeing these parts as perfectly capable of forming and regulating inter-relations within the social system on their own, without needing economical pre-conditions in order to function or change, he offered an alternative view to Marxist historical evolutionism for archaeologists who were interested in the functionality of social systems and not in how they change (Trigger 2000:245-247).

Although Durkheim (1912) reduced the importance of ritual to only its social function, he enabled archaeology to examine this category as part of a social system. Since all parts of the system were perceived equally important, ritual did not need to be perceived as *superstructure* (Marx 1859, 1872), meaningless and peripheral, but was

rendered a valid category of study: a) as a phenomenon and b) as a social phenomenon. In addition, his argument about the mental and practical separation of sacred from profane in *primitive* societies and their use of ritual exactly for this specific purpose was until recently a very useful theoretical tool in archaeology. This concept can be found in Renfrew's work (1985:20) who has created a list of criteria for identifying ritual practices, precisely on the basis of such an axiom -in the Aristotelian understanding of the term (Barnes 2000:46): *One defining criterion of the sacred is that it is not profane* (Renfrew 1985:20). However, recently excavated evidence and recent approaches have shown that ritual practices may be *incorporated into all aspects of daily life* (Brück 1999:325).

Hence, the clear-cut distinction of sacred from profane, according to Brück (1999) cannot be a valid analytical tool. This is exactly one of the reasons why Brück is wrong. In addition to the fact that this analytical tool has actually produced results, as in the case of Phylakopi (Renfrew 1985), she annuls her own argument that this is our modern western society's analytical tool in order to explain practices of the past, and as long as this is not applied in past societies, archaeological approaches should be safe. Somehow though we have to explain and analyse these practices in our own linguistic and sociocultural framework, which by *odd*, does not and cannot refer to ritual and sacred. We already have a word, a *cultural schema*, and an understanding, a philosophy, in our own worldview for this kind of practices. They are called ritual or sacred practices. As long as we know *clearly* how our own cosmological framework works, and as long as it is understood that this is different from other and past societies, archaeology should be able to approach the *knowledge* and the *truth* of past societies (Annas 2003:25, 38, Barnes 2000:39, Singer 1983:97), without imposing modern western referential framework on them. Archaeologists need to use this framework in order to communicate between us - in clear and understandable terms - and in order to be able to explain to each other the *knowledge* we discover that past societies had (Verhoeven 2002a:25).

Claude Levi-Strauss (1908-), “the father” of a “new” theoretical tool in anthropology: structuralism, dedicated his years of study to the research of the structural components of mythological thought. He applied Saussure’s (1916) methodology in linguistics, exploring the underlying structural system of social *intellectual* realities. His contribution to the realm of thought, philosophy and epistemology remove him from the narrower constraints of anthropology and place him rather closer to philosophical research and approaches. In his work [...] *there is the power and the range of a theoretical contribution, of which France had not seen the like since Durkheim*” (Johnson 2003:180). As a theoretical tool structuralism could be understood as reverse to reductionism. Aristotelian logic understands analytical categories by defining the whole and directing examination towards the parts, thus “reducing” the parts into subjects in terms of the whole (Barnes 2000:47). This has shaped the whole of western epistemology. In contrast, structuralism uses the same logic in reverse. By understanding and defining the part, structuralism enables the identification of underlying patterns that convey similar parts, leading to the understanding of the whole (Levi-Strauss 1978:7). As reductionist approaches have been criticised for excluding other properties of “the part” and resulting to functionalism, structuralism has equally been criticised of resulting to generalisations (Trigger 1989:374-375, Bowie 2000:20, Johnson 2003:75, 97, 136).

Especially in regards to myth and ritual, Levi-Strauss has been seen as suffering from *epistemological anxiety*, trying to define the boundaries of his subject of study, to locate its relational position to associated objects and to explain its primacy as an analytical unit in his studies (Levi-Strauss 1969, 1971, Johnson 2003: 86).

*For Levi-Strauss the programme of structuralism and the human sciences represented a break with metaphysics, a rejection of the traditional problems of philosophy in order to pursue a truly scientific investigation of human behaviour* (Johnson 2003:107).

Levi-Strauss (1978) considered existentialism biased and unable to provide us with answers on anything essential as it is based on phenomenology. He took a positivist stand and explored his primary analytical unit, the myth, as an autonomous system regarding its nature (Levi-Strauss 1973, 1978). He defined its function in the superstructure of the social system and described its relation to other similar objects in the system. In fact, he applied central notions of cybernetics, being influenced by Norbert Wiener (1961) (Johnson 2003:95-102). He saw the human mind as an operational system, the operations and performances of which are determined by the nature of the program. Levi-Strauss (1978) understood the myth as a working model of specific processes of human thinking, as an autonomous program. Equally he saw the communication between the operational system and the program in the computer-system, as the communication between human mind and myth in the society (Levi-Strauss 1978:5). This communication should be formalised since it is dependant on two standard parameters. Therefore, the exploration of this communication could lead to the formulation of universal laws as in positive sciences, especially in the case of linguistics, where the specific structural parameters are indeed standard. In this 'framework' ritual was perceived as the output, the effect of the communication between human mind and myth. Ritual, for Levi-Strauss (1971), is a derived phenomenon, *dependant on the mediation of myth* and therefore of secondary importance (Johnson 2003:85). Levi-Strauss insisted that ritual has distinctive characteristics, the essence of which is the unsuccessful re-establishment of the lived experience, which has been schematised by the myth (Levi-Strauss 1971: 675). He thought of the relation between myth and ritual as *transformational* and *oppositional* and equated it to the relation between *living and thinking* (Levi-Strauss 1971:675)

The application of structuralism in archaeology has proved rather successful. Hodder (1981, 1982b, c) promoted the exploration of symbolic systems in archaeology with the starting point of individual cultures, then discovery of the regularities that govern human behaviour within these cultures and finally, creation of expanded

models in cross-cultural studies. Contextual archaeology, by patterning material culture, trying to identify symbolic structures behind cultural phenomena and by researching for symbolic meaning in material remains in order to comprehend human behaviour has been influenced strongly by Levi-Strauss (Trigger 1989:350-353). However, prehistoric archaeology could never reach structuralism's positivist stance as at the point of interpretation it is difficult for prehistoric archaeology to proceed beyond informed speculation. Furthermore, predictions of cultural change are impossible, although detailed contextual accounts increase the possibility of confident conclusions (Hodder and Hutson 1986, Trigger 1989:351-355, 365). Regarding ritual, prehistoric archaeology of course misses the ultimate analytical category for Levi-Strauss: the myth.

Conversely, Levi-Strauss' anthropological accounts describing ritual have been used extensively, along with structuralism, on ritual practices in the framework of contextual archaeology (Hodder 1982b, c, Last 1995, Criado 1995, Insoll 2004:119-128, Preucel and Hodder 1996:297-412, Beaudry and Yentsch 2001, Nakamura 2005). Contextual archaeology produces successful results regarding ritual, by trying to identify the underlying socio-cultural symbolic structures and exploring them within the ritual practice, while accepting that strong structural points that can be universally generalised, could not be found in ritual, as it has been demonstrated in language (by Saussure 1916) and myth (by Levi-Strauss 1971, 1978). Also, prehistoric archaeology cannot be interested in the construction of an analytical philosophical unit beyond phenomenology, because of the particular constraints of the discipline. The pragmatic manifestation of the actual phenomenon constitutes the basis of archaeological data, without the aspiration for any positivist results. In this framework, and by accepting that ritual is the *living* and myth is the *thinking* part of a socio-cultural system, ritual could be for archaeology what myth is for anthropology. In theory, this dichotomy may be proving problematic for the definition of ritual, as Bell (1992:23-25) has noted. The endeavour of understanding ritual as the primary analytical unit has currently started

to appear via the use of structuralism in prehistoric “archaeology of ritual” (Verhoeven 2004). Seeing ritual as an autonomous unit of a social system, defining its boundaries and its relations to other manifestations of other autonomous systems is the enterprise of current research in multidisciplinary studies as well, which acknowledge ritual as a separate category of analysis and view it through *the science of ritual* (Kyriakidis 2008, “Ritual Dynamics 2008”). The deepest syntax of ritual itself, its unique structure and parameters have also been used as the explanatory basis of other socio-cultural phenomena within a given socio-cultural system, clarifying even economical and architectural socio-cultural choices (§ 5.3, Appendix II, Bell 1992, 1997, Verhoeven 2004).

#### *1.3.5 Logic, modern western rationality and Philosophy of Religion within an Archaeology of Ritual.*

Pre-Socratic research laid the foundations of epistemology by searching for rational causes of natural phenomena. Aristotle invented logic upon which such exploration could take place, and Descartes organised the way of this exploration in oppositional and/or causal dualities. Durkheim, by seeing religion as a social phenomenon and by separating *sacred* from *profane* used a conceptual duality as an interpretative tool to explain ritual and religion within social phenomenological rationality. Truly, not only as modern westerners, but also as a discipline, we have been influenced by Pre- and Post-Enlightenment developments from the field of philosophy and epistemology, but not to the extent of becoming unable to research and define ritual practices. On the contrary, at times (by Durkheim 1912) we have been enabled and encouraged to do so. In reality, thanks to phenomenology and modern rationality, we have been enabled to explore the phenomenon, which empirical epistemology considers unapproachable, by avoiding defining its essence.



Consequently, modern western rationality does not prohibit us from accessing an analytical category such as ritual, in archaeology. What is important however is how we use rationality as an analytical tool in order to determine and examine an analytical category such as ritual. By explaining the archaeological inability to define ritual, because of our rationality, Brück rejects all tools and mechanisms that we have inherited in order to approach and interpret it; most importantly, without even replacing them. Certainly, our rationality does not prevent us from constructing tools in order to define ritual archaeologically. Moreover, prehistoric archaeology has not exhausted the use of the available and newly constructed tools, regarding ritual. Therefore it is questionable whether we should have the right to blame our inability to define it on modern western rationality, especially since until the '70's', we had been denying it as a separate, meaningful and researchable category of the archaeological record (Hawkes 1954:161-162, Renfrew 1985:1). Structuralism may be in fact an improved version of the same old tool, but so far, it seems promising in producing meaningful archaeological results. Within the framework of structuralism, it is essential though for pre-historians to accept that within the grounds of prehistoric archaeology, our analytical research unit cannot be *religion* or *myth* or *language*, but the material expression of these, in symbols and ritual, even if these may be expressions of the former.

The point of human history, when Aristotelian logic was formed, was an exceptionally turning point, upon which our modern western thought has been based. At that point, the world started to be different, because it started to be viewed differently. Before that point, prehistoric societies did not use Aristotelian logic or *post-enlightenment rationality* to view and function in the world. These are our tools for understanding the past in the present. We have invented no other tools in order to be able to approach these societies. Until the point when we invent new tools, these are the ones available for us to be able to think and approach past societies without written sources. Therefore, it is essential for pre-historians to keep in mind that separate and

distinct analytical categories, logically and dialectically arranged, comprise Our tools to view and explain the world. Prehistoric societies used different tools, ways of thinking, in order to explain and understand Their world. Our tools may not be sufficient in order to decode Their world and interpret it beyond doubt. They are sufficient enough though to enable exploration of Their cognitive and cultural environments, and search for many possible ways of investigating the tools They had in order to interpret Their world. Within our world of modernity and post-modernity, while deconstructing sometimes without constructing,

*the chasm between our understanding and the world existed in positivist philosophy, and which gave rise to all their problems is no longer of any relevance. Because we are already in the world, situated, the problems are not how to decide the truth or falseness of different views [...] but how to decide our reaction to different views.*

(Lucas 1997:41).

Using the theoretical tools we already possess, Verhoeven (2002a:31) set the agenda on theoretical archaeological discourse on ritual by taking the extreme opposite stand-point from Brück: instead of rejecting ritual as a category of the modern-western world, he accepted every modern western approach to it. He created a table of approaches, which are marked positively or negatively depending on whether they can be useful to “the archaeology of ritual”, producing results of potential analysis or not (**Fig. 4**). The ones that have been judged productive of potential results are: functionalism, symbolism, structuralism, Marxism (in terms of “ideology” and analysis of social hierarchy), performative and practice approaches. Intellectualism, emotionalism, cognitive and relational approaches may be valuable for the construction of hypotheses on ritual, but *lack clear material correlates* (Verhoeven 2002a:31). Verhoeven (2002a) emphasised the use of all the productive theoretical approaches during ritual analysis. He suggested that the use of only one theoretical tool should be avoided, as this may result in biased conclusions. More importantly, as maintained by Verhoeven,

the examination of ritual, via all available theoretical productive approaches, results in the exploration and exposition of different dimensions of ritual. For example, a structuralist approach will reveal the underlying structural system of ritual, but a functionalist will show the function of ritual in the social system. Both are valid approaches of the *knowledge* (Annas 2003:25, 38, Barnes 2000:39, Singer 1983:97) we sought, according to Verhoeven (2002a). Thus, he proposed a middle course approach with elements of holism, using theoretical tools of western thought to result in an arguably oriental understanding of a multidimensional phenomenon (**Fig. 2**, Verhoeven 2002a:34, 2004:216). This is different from a systems theory deriving from Cybernetics (Weiner 1961), supporting and examining interrelations and inter-influences of systems within a system (Trigger 1989:303, Clarke 1968:43-357). In Verhoeven's understanding, the parts of the whole and the whole function together and they should be understood as such. They are not interconnected, but inter-belonging. Notwithstanding the fact that Verhoeven (2002a, b, 2004), by using all the available theoretical tools, reached successful results in ritual identification and analysis, an uncontroversial definition of ritual has not been reached. Verhoeven provided ways of analysing ritual practices, but as it will be demonstrated (§ 1.5), he did not contribute on how we should identify them, in the first place, perpetuating the difficulty of the problem of the definition of ritual.

Evidently, the resolution of the archaeological definitional problem can neither be achieved with the attitude of nihilism and complete rejection of our rationality, nor with a combination of all available western *knowledge* (Annas 2003:25, 38, Barnes 2000:39, Singer 1983:97) within an oriental framework of holism. It is very probable that the definitional problem of ritual and its potential resolution lies elsewhere.

#### 1.4 The anthropological help.

[...] *archaeology is anthropology or is nothing*.<sup>5</sup>

Long before 1985, when Renfrew made the first systematic archaeological attempt to define *cult* by determining the parameters that should be identifiable in the archaeological record in order to attest and explain ritual practices, anthropologists had already been facing the challenge of ritual definition and analysis for already a century (Frazer 1887, 1911-1915, 1923, Tylor 1871). Since the '60's' (Goody 1961), they were able to set the debate and identify particular problematics within the notion of ritual in relevance to their discipline. Since then they have produced methods that have enabled them to confront definitional and methodological problems, recently reaching degrees of agreement (Bell 1992, 1997). The earliest research although would not be considered professionally conducted within a modern anthropological framework, *it enabled [...] theorists to compare the activities of their own neighbours with those of the most remote and "primitive" societies -and find them to have fundamental similarities* (Bell 1997:21). E. B. Tylor and J.G. Frazer could not be considered professional anthropologists by today's standards; however they have been seen as the first modern anthropologists especially in relation to ritual practices.

E.B. Tylor based his work, *Religion in Primitive Culture* (1871) on two doctrines: *the principle of psychic unity, or uniformity, within the human race and the pattern of intellectual evolution, or improvement, over time* (Pals 1996:20). Advocating evolutionary and colonial views he saw a scale of development of religions from animism to monotheism, depending on the extent to which a society was perceived to have evolved (Bell 1997:4, Pals 1996:27-28, Insoll 2004 :44-45). He supported the importance of the study of world mythology, considering myths to elucidate religious beliefs and practices. Importantly though he recognised that not all religions were God-centred, monotheistic or polytheistic, but that there were religions based on *animism*, the belief that living or lifeless beings or things are capable of acting upon the physical world and

affecting human life, without them being human (Tylor 1871). He had defined religion as the *belief in spiritual beings* and had identified its origin in the need of humans to explain the natural causes while lacking science (Kunin and Watson 2006:99-107).

J. G. Frazer in his legendary work, *The Golden Bough* (1911-1915), agreed with Tylor on this explanation of the origin of religion by adding that the human desire to explain the world was motivated by the human need to control nature. According to Frazer, the need to control natural manifestations was the cause of the practice of ritual. The need to control the physical world caused the need to act upon it, using ritual practices in view to affect the natural phenomena that influenced human life (Pals 1996:43). Frazer, being also an intellectual evolutionist, saw the first/ *primitive* attempts of these practices as *magic* which gradually evolved into religion (Kunin and Watson 2006:44-52). However, one of his major contributions to the research on ritual, which in the way it has been developed, has occupied current archaeological research, are his ideas about *totemism* and *shamanism* (Frazer 1887, 1911-1915, Insoll 2004:30, 43). Frazer (1887, 1911-1915) recognised that *primitive* societies used the symbol of the spirit of an animal or plant as an emblem related to their clan or group identity. His idea about the performance of magic, as a form of *primitive* religion, led him to the equivalent idea of a primitive "priest": agent or actor of *magic*. He identified this agent as the *shaman*, who used magic in order to cure illnesses or affect natural phenomena for the welfare of their tribe (Frazer 1911-1915:11-48, Insoll 2004:30, Pals 1996:31, 34-35.). Both works, *Religion in Primitive Culture* and *The Golden Bough*, were based on the idea of social evolution and determinism; however they were especially important, as it was the first time that "*primitive*" societies were studied, while the diversity of human practices was discussed through the spectrum of a common basis: as religion-related human practices.

Starting with these historical works in the anthropological research on ritual, Catherine Bell (1992, 1997) provided a full account of current approaches to ritual within the discipline of anthropology. Arguably, archaeology has used and has been

influenced by the majority of anthropological approaches to ritual, by using the analysis of ritual practices actually observed by anthropologists in analogy (Verhoeven 2002a:8). Usually what can be noticed is that new ideas and theories coming from the realm of philosophy and science are soon adopted by anthropology. In the framework of the discipline of anthropology these ideas and theories acquire a more anthropocentric perspective and are tested on data collected by anthropologists: an obvious example of this practice is the application of systems theory deriving from cybernetics and computer science in structural anthropology, influencing subsequently archaeology majorly (Wiener 1961, Levi-Strauss 1969, 1973, 1978, Clarke 1968:43-184, Hodder 1981, 1982b, c 1986, Trigger 1989: 291, 339, 351, 364-365). When theories prove successful in anthropology, there is little that restricts their use in archaeology as their application on archaeological data is usually productive of results. Multiple examples of this practice could be found in the discipline of archaeology ever since Binford and New Archaeology (Binford 1962, 1965, Clarke 1968, Trigger 1989:289-400, Hodder 1986, 1995). Evidently, this relation has been influential to the archaeology of ritual also (Verhoeven 2002:8).

Bell (1997:1-89) identified three major schools of thought in the anthropology of ritual. The first one is concerned with the essence of ritual and its origins in reference to religion. Approaches that are seen to belong to this group are concerned with the phenomenology of religion, the relation of ritual to myth, and the primacy of psychoanalytic explanations in the practice of ritual. The second school of thought according to Bell (1997) focuses on ritual function either through functional determinism or via structural analysis of social and logic systems (e.g. language) that encompass ritual. The third school of anthropological approaches to the study of ritual is the most modern one and is concerned with the *cultural meaning and the interpretation* of ritual. Approaches in this group recognise ritual as an autonomous category of analysis and focus on symbolic systems and ritual actions, on the syntax of ritual, its deeper grammar, and on performance and practice theories.

Approaches concerning phenomenology, functionalism and structuralism and their influence on the archaeology of ritual have been examined in this research via the philosophy of religion. The focus now will shift to the examination of symbolism and cultural perspectives. The following exploration is dedicated to the examination of works that prove constructive for the archaeological definitional problem and may or may not have already left their mark on current archaeological research. On this basis conceptual milestones from the realm of anthropology have been judged the following: the concept of the multidimensional structure of ritual by Mircea Eliade (1949, 1957), *liminality* by Edmund Leach (1976), the cultural perspective of religion and ritual by Clifford Geertz (1973), the contextual emphasis on ritual analysis by Jack Goody (1961), the concept of ritual fluidity by Maurice Bloch (1974) and *ritualization* as introduced by Catherine Bell (1992, 1997).

#### 1.4.1 *The sacred and liminality.*

Mircea Eliade rejected reductionist approaches and accepted religion as a separate analytical category that had to be studied *on its own terms* considering that any reductionist approach misses the fundamental element of religious phenomena: that of the *sacred* (Eliade 1949a, Allen 1972:172-175, Pals 1996:159, 161). Eliade also emphasised the differentiation between the *sacred* and *profane* like Durkheim, with the crucial difference though that religious beliefs and practices were actually seen as the causal factors of social realities and not as results (Allen 1972:181-182). Secondly, he identified the role of religious practices in promoting encounters with the *sacred*, since he had explained the existence of religion on the basis of *hierophany*, the Godly appearance in the world and the human experience of the *sacred*, which can be attested in numerous cultures and their myths (Eliade 1957, Kunin and Watson 2006: 129). In his understanding of the human experience of the sacred, Eliade has been seen to share

Rudolf Otto's theory of the *holy* (Otto 1923, Pals 1996:164-165, Bell 1997:10-11, Kunin and Watson 2006: 78, 81, 129-130). Eliade's understanding of the role of ritual to be the act that brings the believer closer to the *sacred* can be found developed in Leach's (1976) pragmatic explanation of ritual. Most importantly, though, Eliade saw ritual as the re-enactment of the myth. Although, like Levi-Strauss he supported the secondary importance of ritual in comparison to the myth, he opposed the separation of the *living* from the *thinking* arguing that the myth could not exist without the ritual as it would turn into literature or art (Bell 1997:11). Eliade argued that the structure of religion is comprised of *archetypes*, patterns of symbols and symbolic actions that function in a system of logic by which *archaic* people made sense of their world and in this way they understood order to have been created out of chaos (Eliade 1949a: 148-149, Pals 1996:166-181, Bell 1997:11). He also emphasised ritual related to creation and destruction, birth and death, in a cyclic pattern that he explained to be expressive of the human attraction to mysteries and on their need to find purpose and meaning in their existence (Eliade 1949b:35-89).

Eliade's approach to myth and ritual is a step in a slightly different direction from the one Levi-Strauss followed, which proves useful to the archaeological identification of ritual practices. This dual understanding of ritual as the re-enactment of myth and as symbolic action expressive of archetypes has inspired interpretative archaeology both on the basis of performance theories and on the basis of Jungian archetypes (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994, Pearson and Thomas 1994, Shanks and Hodder 1995:7, Nash 1997, Insoll 2004:53, 95). Importantly, the idea of ritual as *expression of [...] beliefs, symbols and ideas* (Bell 1997:11) that quite often and in patterns are related to the most important mysteries of human experience is of fundamental significance for the archaeology of ritual. It offers a very general, but tangible basis upon which the identification of ritual practices can be realised in the archaeological record of prehistory (§ 1.7).



Edmund Leach (1966) criticised Eliade's explanation of religion and ritual on the basis of archetypes considering it biased as based on his own religious archetypes and thus limiting. However, the idea of the practice of ritual in order for the believer to experience the sacred has formed the basis of Leach's understanding of ritual, too, with some essential differences. In contrast to Eliade, Leach does not accept ritual simply as the system of actions that bring the believer closer to the sacred, but he emphasises that it is by these very actions that the sacred is created mentally and spatially in the empirical world (Leach 1976, Bell 1997:64-65). Ritual does not serve to re-enact the sacred, but it becomes sacred itself exactly through its practice. In 1976, Leach produced a model for ritual definition, where he introduced a schema (**Fig. 1**), which allows the mental location of ritual activities and the explanation of how they take place. According to Leach (1976:33-36) apart from the known world, the one that humans can perceive with their five senses, there is the *Other* one in which they believe. Explicitly, there is another world besides and apart from the *world of temporal experience*. These two overlap within an area, where human belief is expressed by actions. This is the *liminal* zone between two worlds that does not separate them, but connects them. It partakes of the two, so it is *sacred*. The actions that take place in this area express belief in this *Other World* and they become sacred themselves, in this particular zone. Hence they are ritual actions. These actions may or may not change the natural world (Leach 1976: 9). But when they do, they may be archaeologically detectable.

Leach's understanding of ritual inspired both Renfrew (1985) and Verhoeven (2004). Renfrew (1985:17) based his model for identifying ritual in the archaeological record exactly on Leach's idea of liminality. He explicitly supported the idea that the archaeological identification of ritual practices in prehistory should start by and be based on the identification of liminal zones as these should be expected to be physically evident in the archaeological record, at least that part of those which have physically altered the temporal world. Verhoeven (**Fig. 2**, 2004:217) altered Leach's schematic representation of ritual in a way that on the one hand places ritual in the centre of all

other aspects of human life, while supporting the primacy and importance of ritual, and on the other hand, shows it partaking of the whole of human experience, hence fitting Verhoven's (2004) holistic approach.

Moreover, influenced by Levi-Strauss, Leach explained ritual as a *non-verbal communication* system, which like language uses signs and symbols, explaining the difference between them on the grounds of metonymical and metaphorical relations (Leach 1976:43-49, Bell 1997:44, 51, 65). These symbols are rationally ordered and are meaningful not by logic, namely Aristotelian logic, which we use in order to make sense of the physical world, but by *mytho-logic*, which is used to make sense of the metaphysical reality and is not governed by Aristotelian logical relations (Leach 1976:69-70). This communication, which takes place via the use of such ordered symbols, according to Leach, is transformative within the liminal zone where the natural becomes cultural and the profane sacred. Although Leach emphasised these dual distinctions, he argued that these are culturally bounded as ritual is. He rejected Levi-Strauss's universal laws on the basis of structure, insisting that ritual communication transmits cultural messages that are only culturally recognisable and meaningful (Bell 1997:64).

#### *1.4.2 The sacred, culture and context, and the way they communicate.*

On the basis of cultural significance, but from a semiotic point of view, in contrast to Leach's syntactical (Bell 1997:69), Clifford Geertz interpreted religion and ritual. First, he defined culture as follows:

*It denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life*  
(Geertz 1973:89).

Geertz (1973:144) explained that *culture* differs from *social system* in the sense that social interaction is an interaction of society with itself, which takes place in terms of symbolic and meaning systems which are ordered by culture (1973:144). The fact that Geertz viewed religion and ritual within such a framework is of major theoretical value for archaeology, because it explicitly takes into account both social and cultural parameters, which not only are approachable by archaeology, but have essentially been the focal point of archaeological research since Gordon Childe (1935:3, 1956:16). In this framework of cultural meaning and social interaction, Geertz (1973:90) provided arguably the first concise, *brief, clear and simple* (Pals 1996:244), widely quoted (Kunin and Watson 2006:208), theoretical definition of religion: Religion is:

*a system of symbols which acts to establish pervasive, and long lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.*

Geertz (1973: 91-125) and other theorists (Pals 1996:244-245, 257-263, Kunin and Watson 2006:208-228, Bell 1997:68-79) analysed and commented further on this definition. Geertz (1973:88-90) himself although admitted to have been reluctant to offer this definition, he explained its necessity in the *useful virtue of explicitness* that definitions offer. Still he proceeded to the analysis and explanation of each word of this brief text considering their clarification and theoretical limitation essential in view of avoidance of misunderstandings. His definition seems to have sprung from a similar -to the archaeological- frustration, regarding the definition of ritual in anthropology. It has left him perplexed that his discipline has not advanced in this subject greatly after the Second World War, but only with small contributions as additions to what already great minds of the previous century had produced (Geertz 1973:87). He also expressed his disappointment for the extremely limited amount of work done on symbolism, in

contrast to psychological and social functionalistic research (Geertz 1973:125), while he saw so much potential in such an approach.

Geertz explained religion on the basis of his evidence for ritual, taking a pragmatic approach to the concept. By defining religion, in fact, he defined the essence of ritual practices. *Religious belief and ritual confront and mutually confirm each other* (Geertz 1973:127). With this definition Geertz (1973:93, 95) accepted both social and psychological functionalist approaches to religion considering them essential for the explanation of ritual while emphasising the fact that ritual shapes social and cultural realities and is shaped through them. He viewed the whole of human reality as essentially symbolic, explaining however, that not all cultural performances are religious and differentiated the latter from artistic and political. Existentially, he explicated religion and ritual on the human need to explain phenomena and on the fact that when science is not at hand, belief takes its place. He demonstrated that a modern western scientist like Einstein and Geertz's *more animistically inclined informants*, both shared a fundamentally human concern (Geertz 1973:100-101). They both tried to explain phenomena and in cases of failure they could abandon their hypotheses and try for a different one that would fit their case better. *What they were not ready to do was abandon it for no other hypothesis at all; to leave facts to themselves* (Geertz 1973:101, 111). Geertz emphasised the performative and controlling dimension of ritual explaining its difference from art and politics respectively on the basis of the different motivation and intention that lies behind each practice (1973:109-118). Most emphatically, Geertz explained that ritual provides a *model of* and a *model for* beliefs and realities, transforming them both to the absolutely and undoubtedly real; thus giving meaning to, and ordering the world. Through this symbolism of and symbolism for reality, people's ethos: *tone, character and quality of their life* and people's worldview: [...] *their concept of nature, of self, of society* are expressed, represented, reconfirmed and accepted (Geertz 1973:126-127).

Although Geertz provided a concise definition of ritual in the framework of a sister discipline, his influence on archaeological research has paradoxically been minimal, so far. In contrast, Jack Goody's work, which has not been included in Bell's (1997) work as an important contribution to the anthropological research of ritual, has been especially influential to archaeology. Goody (1959, 1961), just a decade before Geertz's contribution, had rejected the definitional problem of ritual by showing that in fact it is a methodological one. This encouraged archaeological research, which being unable to produce an answer to the question of "what?", accepted as of greater importance the producible answer to the question of "how?", shifting thus the problematic from definitional questions to questions of visibility, identification and methodology. The editors of "Sacred and Profane" (Garwood, Jennings, Skeates, Toms: 1989), which comprises the proceedings of one of the first conferences organised on the basis of recognising a *theoretical lacuna* (Garwood et al 1989:v) in the study of ritual, accepted and underlined exactly the same: that the definitional problem of ritual is actually a methodological one (Garwood et al 1989:vii). A further analysis of Renfrew's (1985:17) list of prerequisites for the archaeological identification of ritual exhibits exactly the same perception (**Fig. 3**). It is in fact a list made with emphasis on methodological solutions to the problem of archaeological identification, while accepting as adequate the definitional basis of the idea of liminality.

Goody's (1961) paper, *Religion and Ritual: The Definitional Problem*, comprised a full summary of contemporaneous approaches and interpretations by social scientists and social anthropologists with further clarifications of the concepts of ritual and religion, providing a valuable testimony that generalisations could not provide useful information, applicable to different contexts. Ritual activities and ritual itself embodies different meanings in different contexts and societies. Approaches of these terms in dual opposites seem more successful. For example, the word *ritual* embodies a different meaning when associated with the word *ceremonial* and a different one, when opposed to the word *secular* (Goody 1961:152). Then, its meaning can differ when an extra

concept is ascribed to it by an adjective; as *domestic rituals* opposed to *communal* or *religious rituals*. Definitions that apply only in certain social contexts are generally preferable. Goody (1959:36-41) had used the same arguments in his previous work on LoDagaba ritual, where he had emphatically refused a general definition for ritual, had underlined the importance of a construction of dictionary meanings and had viewed ritual only contextually. Obviously, his emphasis on context must have been the key to his influence to archaeology, which returned to the examination of ritual with Renfrew in 1985 at a time when New Archaeology had been well established and Contextual Archaeology was at its rise (Hodder 1981). Nevertheless, such a debate between a generally applicable definition of ritual in contrast to a contextual one is contradictory on its own merit. As already seen with Geertz's definition, the construction of a successful definition, which would emphasise the social, cultural and therefore contextual meaning of ritual, while it remains generally applicable, is not impossible.

This opposition, as just described, ceases being self-contradictory in the way Maurice Bloch has seen and explained it. Bloch (1977:284) has demonstrated that the exploration of different contexts within the same society and culture, both in social and cultural terms but in contextual as well, is essential, as concepts and practices *sometimes* differ in different contexts within the same sociocultural system. At first, this may seem to complicate even more the definitional problem of ritual. On the contrary though, as it will be demonstrated (§1.6, § 4) this understanding of differentiation in the practice of even the same ritual at times, within the same sociocultural system, but in different contexts, explains ritual variation while no substantial change in the principal of the ritual can be noticed. Bloch has seen ritual as a special type of communication system that takes place depending on time and context in various ways. *There is [...] no hidden code to crack*, he argued, *Ritual does what it does* (Bell 1997:70). According to Bloch (1977:279, 285), the semantics and syntax of this special communication system, namely ritual, can be comprehended in contrast to *the non-ritual communication* system. Furthermore, Bloch supported the idea that, although in this *mundane* communication

system, cognitive universals can be identified, the *Other, the ritual communication system* can only be understood contextually in reference with sociocultural realities. Bloch (1977:289) maintained that the presence of two cognitive systems

*which organise two kinds of communication, occurring at different moments in [...] long conversation, solves the theoretical difficulties [...] which make use of notions of superstructure and infrastructure.*

Bloch (1974, 1977, 1986, 1989) showed that the acceptance of two cognitive systems of communication is actually needed in the study of ritual. It is only through the realisation that ritual communication uses special "language", which expresses conceptualisation of the world as seen only in ritual, that the conceptualisation of the world as really experienced can be viewed in the mundane communication. Neglecting one of the two cognitive systems, according to Bloch (1977:290) does not produce a complete account of the worldview of a society. Although Bloch (1974, 1989:38-45) accepted two different types of communication, he understood communication operationally as one, in an imagined linear continuum. At the one end of this continuum communication is repetitive and formalized; thus this is where ritual communication takes place, while generative and everyday, and therefore mundane communication happens in the opposite end of this continuum. The semantics at either end of the continuum differ in nature, but the *conversation* between ends flows from the one end to the other at *clearly distinct moments*. In this way the separation and the distinction of the sacred from the secular is not actual and precise somewhere in the middle of the continuum for example, but depends on agents, time, space, circumstances, cultural perceptions and context, and most probably takes place at either end of the continuum as negotiation (Bloch 1974).

Consequently, ritual conversation in such a communication system is not strict in form, structure and quality, but is fluid, variant and variable. The concept of ritual fluidity has occupied anthropological research in several ways. First, Nadel (1954:101)

discussed the fluid nature of ritual practices in terms of form -how strict or not the prescribed order of the ritual may be, whereas Turner (1970:35, 262) saw ritual fluidity in circumstantial and spatial terms. With Bloch, ritual fluidity became more complete as a notion for the study of ritual: it covers time, space and agents contextually and obtains theoretical foundation as an explanatory approach for social and cultural changes both synchronically and historically (Bloch 1989).

### 1.4.3 Ritualization

The data-flow from the one end of the communication system to the other lacks the explanation of how this communication transforms its semantics from signifying *sacred* to signifying *mundane* and vice versa within the continuum. This problem has found its resolution by Bell (1992, 1997). Bell has suggested that this happens through a process: the process of ritualization. Everything is mundane until it may become ritual, or reversed, as I would like to add: everything may be ritual until it may become mundane. This is actually possible exactly because of the presence of two different cognitive systems that within context make possible the realisation and distinction of what is what. Bell (1992:197-223) offered multiple examples of this process; one refers to an action that happens repeatedly, most probably in prescribed order and at specific times, but remains extremely mundane out of the context of ritual communication: the washing of our hands. Usually it happens by the use of water, in a bathroom after using the facilities or after returning home from outside, or before proceeding to our meal: a "ritual" more mundane there could not be. However, when a Christian Catholic washes their hands with water prior to their entrance to the temple of a Catholic Church, the whole meaning of this ritual is entirely different from the one previously described, although it uses the same exact action: the washing of one's hands. So, the recognition of the different context where the action takes place transforms the action into a ritual



one. Additionally, the action is recognisable as ritual, in the specific context because of its specifically different intentionality. In this case, the intention is not to wash the hands from germs, but it aims to communicate something entirely different. Most importantly, what it communicates, its meaning and reason, is understood only by those who share the same worldview and can understand the symbolism of this communication when it is practiced.

Bell (1992) constructed ritualization as an autonomous analytical category and examines the roles of this construction in religion, society and culture without attributing primacy to the one or the other category, but by viewing them as inter-relating. She defined ritualization and not ritual as:

*a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities*  
(Bell 1992:74).

In her later work, however, she argued against universal definitions of ritual explaining that they obscure the ways of and the reasons for the production of ritualized actions (Bell 1997). In contrast, she suggested that

*Ritual or ritualization, may be best defined in culturally specific ways since cultures, and even sub-subcultures, differentiate among their actions in distinctive ways*  
(Bell 1997:82).

Bell (1992, 1997) explained ritualization as a *synchronic* process: as a process that takes place at a given time in a given socio-cultural system.

The idea of *ritualization* has found fruitful ground within the framework of prehistoric archaeology. Some of the parameters that Renfrew (1985:18-19) proposed for the identification of ritual contexts, especially the ones associated with the symbolism of a *deity*, or the *wealth* and luxury that ritual paraphernalia may be expected to exhibit,

do not fit the reality of the majority of ritual evidence in prehistory. Ritual paraphernalia may be of the most mundane nature and references to *the presence of the transcendent* [...] (Renfrew 1985:18) may be totally absent. The majority of ritual evidence that has survived from prehistoric sites either lacks such connotations, or we have been unable to demonstrate them. The idea of the process of *ritualization*, in archaeology, has been used to explain how what seems to us as the most trivial/ mundane object (the non elaborate axe, pebbles, shells)/structure or action becomes ritual, via this process, when found associated with specific other and maybe equally “unimportant” objects/ structures/ remains of actions, in specific contexts. The notion of *ritualization* has been used recently especially by Bradley (2003, 2005) exactly in this *synchronic* sense, although he has also stressed its potential as a historical tool, too, since it is a process (Bradley 2003:12). Using the notion of *synchronic ritualization*, Bradley has explained how categories of objects or structures may denote production of ritual activities, when they form specific contexts, because of the way they are combined, structurally deposited, or spatially located, while they may be also found to be evidently associated with domestic/ mundane activities, forming other and different contextual groupings. Hence the explanation of how a particular object, seemingly mundane, becomes ritual in specific contexts within the same site, in the same chronological period, can be found in the notion of *synchronic ritualization*.

#### 1.4.4 Diachronic Ritualization and De-Ritualization.

I have added the adjective *synchronic* as an additional attribute to Bell’s (1992, 1997) concept of *ritualization*, so that I can contrast it with the term diachronic ritualization. Agreeing with Bradley (2003:12), I am proposing here that *ritualization* can also be viewed *diachronically* in archaeology. An object, symbol, structure, or action may be used mostly for secular purposes, but gradually, over time, it may obtain ritual

significance, because of its gradually increased use in ritual practices. An example of gradual / diachronic *ritualization* of an object could be the case of the triton shell. The triton shell has been identified in the ritual iconology of Aegean Bronze Age including Cyprus (Evans 1901) and has also been found as a ritual object in ritual contexts of the same period. The seemingly sudden appearance of the triton shell as a ritual symbol in the Bronze Age is inexplicable in social and cultural terms. The process of gradual / diachronic *ritualization* may be the key to the explanation of how the triton shell came to be a well established ritual object in Bronze Age. Going back in history, in Cyprus, the triton shell was found in one undoubtedly ritual context dating to the Chalcolithic Era (Kissonerga-Mosphilia hoard, Peltenburg 1991) and in two different sites in the Ceramic Neolithic (Ayios Epiktitos-Vrysi and Kalavassos-Kokkinoyia), in ambiguous but ritually suspicious contexts (§ 5.4). Further in the past, the triton shell was found alongside burial remains (Mylouthkia, Khirokitia). Its presence in the Bronze Age could no longer be considered sudden, since it seems that there actually had been a long and only gradually established tradition of its symbolic and ritual use through diachronic ritualization.

Similarly applicable could be the notion of de-ritualization, synchronic or gradual. Synchronically, de-ritualization is easily understood as the exact reverse process of *ritualization* in the *continuum* of a ritual-secular and secular-ritual communication system (Bloch 1974, Bell 1992). It is the way by which we realize that the Christian Catholic who has washed their hands in the space of the church, then washes them in their bathroom with different significance. The notion of gradual de-ritualization explains how something, which is considered a ritual object, symbol, structure or action, gradually transforms into something that ceases to signify ritual and becomes secular. For example, one of the predominant symbols of the early Christians in catacombs is the symbol of the fish (Ιχθύς), because of the acrostic the letters of this word form in Greek: "ΙΧΘΥΣ": Ιησούς Χριστός Θεού Υιός meaning: Jesus Christ Son of God. The symbol of the fish is predominant in very early Christian

temples, too. Gradually, though it becomes completely absent from the Byzantine iconography, and in modern days it is doubtful if any Christian would recognise the image of a fish as a Christian symbol. It is also worth noting that the specific ritual symbol served also as a form of identification from one Christian to the other, during the persecutions of the early Christians by the idolaters, exactly because it could not be recognised as a Christian symbol from someone outside of the continuum of the symbolic communication. However, gradually it ceased being ritually related and recognisable as such, either because the role it was serving in Christian communication was no longer necessary, or because gradually other symbols gained significance in the Christian tradition and became predominant in Christian iconography.

These examples demonstrate how the idea of *ritualization* and importantly, gradual- diachronic *ritualization* and de-ritualization, can be useful for the discipline of archaeology and especially of prehistoric archaeology, which inevitably explores a culture in the time-span of centuries or millennia, where changes in symbolism and ritual communication have been attested and can now be explained via this process. Additionally, although the process of *synchronic ritualization* is useful for the purposes of anthropology and applicable in specific cases in archaeology, the process of diachronic *ritualization* and de-ritualization may be more constructive and meaningful for our discipline. In archaeology, we are aware that we excavate only a percentage of a site and what we excavate is only a percentage of the material that used to exist and has survived. Therefore our data is limited and the identification of the process of *synchronic ritualization* may be more difficult, even though it is a very important notion for archaeologists to understand the inter-functionality of ritual-secular transformation. In contrast, the process of diachronic *ritualization* and de-ritualization not only permits an overview of a longer period, but it can also accommodate small or representational quantity of data examined contextually over a long period of time.

#### 1.4.5 Anthropology of Religion-Archaeology of Ritual: a fruitful relationship.

It has been demonstrated that the exploration of ritual from an anthropological perspective has been fruitful in the archaeological research of ritual: (1) as *expression of [...] beliefs, symbols and ideas* (Eliade 1949a, b, 1957) that brings the believer closer to the sacred; (2) within the concept of *liminality* where ritual partakes the two worlds of human understanding (Leach 1976); (3) in a cultural, contextual and symbolic perspective (Geertz 1973, Goody 1959, 1961); (4) acknowledging the fluid texture of its communication (Bloch 1974, 1977, 1989) and (5) seeing its actualization within the process of *ritualization* by which this communication happens and ritual actions are practiced (Bell 1992, 1997). Prehistorians have tended to use one of the theories mentioned or a combination of a couple of them, without exploring in full the potential of a combination of more, or of all of them, in a synthetic arrangement of their non-conflicting elements as they have been considered and linked in this work. More importantly, it has been stressed in this section that these perspectives are particularly helpful for prehistoric archaeology in regards to the problem of definition and identification. Now, what remains to be explored in depth, is whether and how this problem has been confronted systematically within the discipline of archaeology, and finally answers as to “why” a resolution has not been reached should be provided. “What” ritual is in prehistoric archaeology, what it should mean to Prehistorians, and “where” (context) and “how” (method/visibility) it can be identified need also to be examined.

## 1.5 The archaeological paradox

[...] *archaeology is archaeology, is archaeology.*<sup>6</sup>

In prehistoric archaeology, the definitional problem of ritual has been seen as an impediment that has not been overcome. Somehow, though, prehistorians have managed to identify ritual practices. Some of them have been identified with undoubted certainty. For example, nobody so far has challenged the shrine of Phylakopi as a shrine, or Gobekli Tepe as a ritual centre. Without a consensus of what we define as ritual and what we generally identify as such, paradoxically, we have reached complete agreement on some identified ritual sites. I argue that what has actually been accomplished is that we understand ritual in a chosen way, we apply a chosen theory that fits best each fragmentary record we unearth and we finally simply describe the prehistoric practice we have identified trying to convince our colleagues that it is of ritual nature. We have understood ritual on the basis of our common human nature as expression of *beliefs, symbols and ideas* after Eliade (1957). We have conveniently seen Leach's (1976) *liminal zone* contextually, spatially, literally on the ground, because it fits the nature of our data, and finally we have explored derivative dimensions of ritual, namely as results deriving from the kind of examination we have followed on the basis of our incomplete definition and understanding. This is how we have been able to discover new ritual dimensions in prehistory: function / performance / practice / symbolism / structure. What we do with them does not necessarily depend on our data; it is a matter of methodology of the approach that we have decided to follow. Functionalist approaches will find data to support the idea that ritual had some psychological, social, political or economical function within a specific sociocultural system. Performance approaches will stress the connection of ritual and theatre and will emphasise cultural emotional management. Symbolic and structural approaches will highlight the meaning that is culturally communicated via the practice of ritual. Evidently, the list can be endless.

*The theorist who believes in ancestor worship as a key to all creeds will see in Jehovah a developed ancestral ghost... The exclusive admirer of the hypothesis of Totemism will find evidence for his belief in worship of the golden calf and the bulls. The partisan of nature-worship will insist on Jehovah's connection with storm, thunder and the fire of Sinai.*  
(Lang 1898).

Bell (1997:21) who cited this exact quote added:

*Lang's concern is still a real one. We focus on explaining those things that constitute a problem of some sort for us. Hence, we are highly motivated to use our own assumptions and experiences to explain that problem in such a way as to make our world more coherent, ordered and meaningful. The study of ritual arose in an age of unbounded confidence in its ability to explain everything fully and scientifically, and the construction of ritual as a category is part of this worldview.*

Certainly, every researcher will identify a problem to which they will try to provide answers. Every researcher will try to order our world on the basis of their concern and make it more meaningful. However, if your modern western concern is to identify prehistoric ritual practices in an archaeological record, where they are seemingly non-existent (§ 2.4), which possible theory could show you the path? How can you allow yourself to have predetermined ideas and expect that you will be able to apply them to the evidence and produce results, when you do not know what the evidence might be or how to distinguish it? Also, how will archaeological data and theory show you the way, when your concern is to try to construct a category, which cannot be known in advance, whether it existed as such, in the 'logic' of the prehistoric society you study?

Precisely because this seems impossible, research on prehistoric ritual practices have been a-systematic in the majority in regards to the definition of ritual (Bradley 2003, Barrett 2004:397, Brück 1999, Brück and Goodman M. 1999, Garwood et al 1989, Hill 1996, Hodder 1982:164, Kuijt 1996, 2000, Parker Pearson 1993, 1999, Richards and Thomas 1984, Tilley 1999:264). Where system and order has been tried (Renfrew 1985,

Verhoeven 2002a) for the confrontation of the definitional problem of ritual, attempts for its resolution have been realised within the framework of methodology and identification. This is how archaeological endeavour regarding ritual has resulted in methodologies for its identification in the archaeological record and in descriptions of ritual practices. All this is not entirely wrong or completely unacceptable. In fact, this would be fully acceptable, if we, as prehistorians, agreed that prehistoric ritual cannot be defined because prehistoric societies and cultures of course did not use Aristotelian logic to view and function in the world (Brück 1999); it can only be described and assigned as such to a category that prehistorians, as modern westerners, call ritual (Appendix II - § 1.2). Then, it would be acceptable to explain it via the use of all or some of our available theoretical tools. However, this would presuppose that we accept that our theoretical inheritance has not helped us to approach people with a different 'logic'. We would need then to accept that as a discipline, we have failed to decode prehistoric people's 'logic'.

If we could ever be ready to accept that, then, we could continue simply describing what we think prehistoric ritual is and to explain its dimensions via constructed theories that make sense to us. Yet, this would render archaeology meaningless. The *quest for lucidity and the rush of metaphysical anxiety that occurs when empirical phenomena threaten to remain intransigently opaque [...]* (Geertz 1973:101) would not let us 'settle' without struggling for meaning. We would never *abandon* the enterprise to define ritual archaeologically *for no [...] hypothesis at all; we would never [...] leave facts to themselves* (Geertz 1973:101). This would not only be against our nature, which constantly seeks for explanations to the unexplained, as described by Geertz (1973:101), it would also be against our cultural "DNA", which for two and a half millennia now, tries to define, understand and explain things, beings and phenomena logically (§ 1.3). We may have added to this list: communications, behaviours, actions, performances and systems (§ 1.4), but the essence of our culturally western endeavour remains the same: seeking to define.



### 1.5.1 *The first systematic attempt for the resolution of the definitional problem of ritual in archaeology.*

Renfrew (1985:1-26) is one of the first archaeologists who identified the problem of ritual definition. He provided the first testimony in an archaeological paper of what I have called “frustration” at the discipline because of the problem of ritual definition. He stressed the fact that in archaeology, the word “ritual” has been overused and abused (Renfrew 1985:1-3). He explained when and how the repudiation of ritual in our discipline took place. Renfrew (1985:1-3) also described the “adventures” of the discipline in accepting its capability for accounting for ritual practices of the past, referencing Hawkes’ (1954:161-2) reliability ladder of archaeological inference. Additionally, Renfrew emphasised the limitations of the archaeological data in contrast to those of anthropology. Renfrew (1985:12) supported the view that:

*The archaeologist [...] cannot observe beliefs: one can only work with material remains, the consequences of actions. In favourable cases, [...] these remains are the results of actions which we can plausibly interpret as arising from religious belief.*

In this framework, Renfrew rejected Geertz’s definition of religion, criticising it as *vague* and thus *risky* because, as Renfrew (1985:12) suggested, it would not be helpful in the distinction of *secular rituals* from *religious* ones. In contrast, he accepted and quoted Spiro’s (1966:96) definition of religion, where religion is seen as *an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings*, and Goody’s (1961) dictionary and contextual understanding of ritual. Renfrew (1985:15-17) also accepted Leach’s (1976) distinction of cultural actions into *expressive* and *technical* ones and his concept of religion and ritual as created zones of *liminality*. By understanding religious rituals as expressive actions that leave behind material traces, he created his well known model where he provided a checklist, which supposedly enables prehistorians following the process, to identify ritual in space and time (**Fig. 3**). He also

defined ways for recognition of domestic ritual in regards to creation of liminal zones within the domestic sphere and well defined spaces separated from secular activities. In the end, Renfrew (1985:25-26) concluded that *what we wish to know* as archaeologists, is *the practice of the cult* in descriptive terms, *the beliefs underlying the cult* generally in terms of symbolism, existence of deities, roles both of participants and symbols (male-female etc) and *the place of the cult and religion in Society* in historical, social and cultural terms. Overall, Renfrew's (1985:20) doctrine has been:

*One defining criterion of the sacred is that is not profane, and following Goody (1961:157) that: [...] it is the responsibility of the observer to [...] to make the distinction between symbolic and rational.*

Renfrew's list of correlates has been criticised as a convenient processual *checklist, too static and ethnocentric* (Verhoeven 2002a:27, 34). In a way, indeed it is. Hardly ever has it been useful to British Bronze Age archaeology, for example. Also, if somebody tried to identify these correlates in the archaeological record of Cypriot Early Prehistory, they would conclude that the only ritual practiced in the Aceramic Neolithic was the burial of their dead. Also, the minimal evidence for domestic ritual in the Cypriot Ceramic Neolithic (§ 5.4) does not fit Renfrew's criteria of a well defined and separated space. Even, regarding an era closer chronologically to the Aegean Bronze Age, the Cypriot Chalcolithic, Peltenburg has hardly (1991:85-108) used Renfrew's list of correlates in the identification of *cult* on the basis of the Kissonerga-Mosphilia hoard. Identification of deities, excessive wealth of offerings, special ritual paraphernalia, altars and shrines may fit well the Aegean Bronze Age, but they are completely absent from eras previous to the Cypriot Bronze Age, in the way Renfrew specified them. However, disregarding particularities, Renfrew's list, in its essence, advocates that archaeologically detectable ritual will have an essence of formality, will indicate worship via symbolism, may involve sacrifice, breakage, offering, feasting, burying and

will denote liminality. Viewed generally, Renfrew's list may actually be inspiring notwithstanding the fact that it remains limitedly applicable.

### *1.5.2. Symbolic, irrational, or processual?*

In terms of ritual definition, as a fundamental oversight, I consider Renfrew's acceptance and use of Goody's distinction between symbolic and rational as the responsibility of the observer, namely us, modern western archaeologists. First of all, the identification of ritual is not a matter of subjectivity; ritual is not like "beauty" to lie neither in the eyes of the beholder nor their society. The identification of ritual in archaeology is not and should not be a matter of aesthetics of the observer(s). Something either was practiced as ritual and we manage to demonstrate it was or it was not. It needs to be stressed here, that my objection with Goody's (1961:157) quote in Renfrew (1985:20) is not towards ritual aesthetics and the possibilities that may lie there. On the contrary, very interesting research (Pollard 2001, Renfrew 2003, Last 2005), has started appearing on the subject of the examination of ritual practices via an aesthetics point of view. Such research explores deposition, artefacts and practices in terms of the aesthetics that past cultures may have had. Of course their aesthetics would have been part of their worldview, consequently, such research proceeds in examining how people viewed and ordered their world via their aesthetics and in the end, it results in examining their "logic". Trying to use aesthetics to define ritual seems as the discovery of one more dimension of ritual, like its functionality or its performance. It may be valid and intriguing in the exploration of ritual practices as a new theoretical tool of describing and analysing it, but eventually it clouds the issue of ritual definition in archaeology, rather than resolving it. Furthermore the contrast between *symbolic* and *rational* is extremely dangerous. This implies that ritual is "irrational" thus perpetuating the archaeological joke of what we identify as ritual,

which actually Renfrew (1985:3) criticised. Moreover, symbolic cannot be contrasted to *rational* anyway. For something to be symbolic it needs to be part of a rational system, a "logical" system, which might not be in accordance with our rationality and Aristotelian logic, but it is held together with rational, *mytho-logical* thought in *metaphorical* relationships (Leach 1976:69, Levi-Strauss 1978). Lastly, such contrasts are confusing and cause refutation of our rationality in terms of our capability to identify ritual practices in the past, while still trying to make sense among ourselves. Moreover, they result to nihilistic approaches with the denial of the concept of ritual and with its replacement -just because it has to be called something- with *odd* (Brück 1999:328), for instance.

Additionally, *One defining criterion of the "sacred" is that is not "profane"* (Renfrew 1985:20) is a very attractive concept, but is also very risky. The fact that the *sacred* cannot be *profane* may be true only in modern western defining criteria. Even this is relevant and true only contextually, if we take into consideration Bell's (1992:197-223) examples. There is no guarantee that what we call *sacred* cannot be transformed into what we call *profane* and vice versa, in a past sociocultural system. On the contrary, as already mentioned, Brück (1999) provides evidence which is confusing exactly because of that, and Bradley (2003) explains this phenomenon of the sacred-profane transformation with the concept of *synchronic ritualization*. In this way Renfrew's defining criterion is indeed extremely *static* (Verhoeven 2002a:34) and could be valid only momentarily for any given sociocultural system. Theoretically, we are past the archaeology of snap-shots and the capturing of moments in time. In terms of processual archaeology, the only defining criterion of the "sacred" is the process by which it becomes "sacred".

### 1.5.3. *Secular Ritual; is this a concern of prehistoric archaeology?*

Renfrew has been misled to such a way of thinking by rejecting Geertz's definition of religion. He completely disregarded Geertz's (1973:127) almost equating religion to ritual and he proceeded in supporting the idea that archaeologists cannot observe beliefs. Renfrew (2007) did not even re-think how Geertz, came to conclude his definition, when Renfrew (1985:12) himself underlined that: *The archaeologist is not alone in the inability to observe beliefs directly: nor can the anthropologist, or indeed anybody else.* Obviously, Geertz has not claimed to have observed beliefs; it is ritual he has been observing and via this observation has formulated his definition of religion. Also, Renfrew's contrasting of Geertz's (1973:90) definition to Spiro's (1966:96) and characterising the former as *vague* is another paradox. Renfrew (1985:12, 2007:10) explained his judgement on the basis that Geertz's definition is *so vague that it could serve to define monetary economy as well as it does religion* (1985:12). Firstly, researchers who have commented on Geertz (Pals 1996, Bell 1997, Gellner 1999, Verhoeven 2002a, Kunin and Watson 2006), including Geertz himself, accentuate the fact that Geertz has based his definition on culture. He defined culture and society and then he defined religion culturally, precisely as something culturally postulated like Spiro, avoiding though calling that 'something' *super-human*. So, in terms of "culturally constrained", these two researchers agree. The disagreement would lie in the term *super-human* and on whether the *interaction* happens between the *institution* of religion and the *super-human beings*, after Spiro (1966:96), or among human agents referring to that 'something' they believe in, after Geertz (1973:90).

The first difference should have been seen in favour of Geertz, by Renfrew, because as an archaeologist he could not possibly know in advance whether the prehistoric society he has studied had culturally constructed this 'something' as superhuman or supernatural, transcendent or human, as Spiro (1966:96) must have known for the society he observed. Therefore Renfrew should have seen Geertz's

definition as preferable to Spiro's and not the opposite. As previously mentioned, the second difference between Geertz's and Spiro's definition is that Spiro understood religion as an institution and Geertz as a system of symbolic communication. But Renfrew has not taken a position on this matter. Additionally, it is completely unfair for Geertz's definition to be called *vague*, since Geertz (1973: 91-123) spent thirty-two subsequent pages explaining his definition word by word, limiting the interpretational possibilities.

Fundamentally though, what is worrying in the way Renfrew (1985, 2007) explained his opposition to Geertz's definition, is his certainty that we would commit an *error* following this definition in archaeology, because it could also *serve to define monetary economy* (due to its vagueness), and more importantly, it [...] *would not allow us to distinguish between religious beliefs and ritual and purely secular ones* (1985:12). In regards to the first, it should be stressed: The possibility that economy, not monetary, but based on exchange, could have been ruled by religious thoughts, ideas and ideals culturally constrained that determined values and exchange methods and routes of material, in prehistory, is an existent one based on evidence (Appendix II). Renfrew has not provided any argument against this possibility, supporting his certainty. Also, how can possibly monetary economy, therefore economy as it has been for about two and a half millennia (-a time-span that actually does not apply for every society in all these years-), be seen to *establish pervasive, and long lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic* (Geertz 1973: 90)? This has also not been explained by Renfrew (1985, 2007).

Moreover, Renfrew's estimation that Geertz's definition would not permit the archaeological distinction of religious ritual from secular ones is unsubstantiated for two reasons. Firstly, as previously mentioned (§ 1.4.2), Geertz (1973:127) almost equates religion to ritual: *Religious belief and ritual confront and mutually confirm each other*. It would not be implausible to argue that Geertz suggests that religion is a system of

rituals. Also, by replacing the word religion with ritual in his definition and after examining his analysis and explanations, nothing can be found that would conflict with or contradict his approach. Geertz provides an anthropological definition of religion based on anthropological data, which is of course religious practices, namely ritual. By defining religion, he defines religious ritual. His definition should be considered at least as a distinguishing criterion of sacred from profane "ritual".

The second part of my objection to Renfrew's opinion is not related to Geertz's definition, but lies at the heart of the matter of ritual definition in prehistoric archaeology. I argue that the contrast of secular "ritual" to religious ritual should not preoccupy the prehistoric studies of archaeology, because secular "ritual" is not an identifiable "ritual" subcategory in prehistory. No matter which definition we accept about "ritual", in archaeology, we aim for the identification of a pattern: we may name this pattern: a pattern composed by social actions in a social system, or a pattern composed by acts in a performance, or a pattern composed by symbols and symbolic practices in a communication system. However, in archaeology, we always identify patterns of actions on the basis of the patterns of material remains of these actions. This is on what we base our conclusions, regardless whether we analyse life in a settlement or burial customs: on identified patterns of actions and on percentages of types of these patterns. Basically, every pattern that we identify in prehistoric archaeology is in regards to secular actions, apart from the ones that have happened in regards to the sacred and we call ritual. All patterns or sets of patterns of secular/ mundane/ profane activities are retrievable because they were practiced routinely in specific ways. Diversities in the routine come up as the exception of the rule of identified patterns. These routines related to secular/ mundane/ profane activities should be called by what they denote within the framework of prehistoric archaeology. We do have names for these kinds of patterned actions that are not somehow/ anyhow linked with the sacred. We call them economy, production, technology, architectural traits. They are not ritual actions. If somehow they are ritually related, namely related with sacred activities, we

should be able to demonstrate their relation. They do not need though to be called "secular ritual" perpetuating the problem and confusing research.

More importantly, it should be clear, that what, in the modern west, we call secular "ritual" is a category, which prehistoric archaeology could definitely not manage to detect, identify, define and analyse as a category in the archaeological record. If the definition of secular ritual is: a habitual act that is practiced repeatedly in specific order, with formality and elaboration, but is not linked with the sacred (Moore and Myerhoff 1977:21), then a category has been constructed which basically includes every other detectable aspect of human life in the past apart from the religious one. Secular "ritual" cannot be traceable in prehistory as a separate category from all the other identifiable patterns of secular life. We would not find supportive evidence for the "ritual" of the afternoon tea neither for the Sunday one. We would be able to distinguish between the "everyday crockery" and "the good china". We would also be able to demonstrate how they were used, but we would not be able to construct a hypothesis which would exhibit a habitual use of the "crockery" on the basis of a "ritual" which would be secular. We would not find evidence for the "ritual" of the house-occupier's evening (?) bath. If we are lucky, all we will find will be all the fragments of the bath and depending on the surrounding evidence, the range of interpretation would vary from it being a container for storage or for washing something else apart from the occupier, to actually it being for the occupier's everyday (?) bath. Taking the latter possibility into account and provided there was supportive evidence, we would be able to demonstrate that the occupier of the house was taking baths. But it would not be possible to demonstrate, that they were taking baths as a habit at certain times of the day or week or that sometimes they were taking more elaborate baths in a secular "ritualistic" way. The discovery of the bath therefore, or of the "Sunday crockery" would be ascribed to the category of "house furnishing" or "household economy" or "everyday life at the settlement" and not to secular "ritual". Secular "ritual" is an analytical sub-category of "ritual", which concerns -as such-



anthropologists and certainly not the archaeologists of prehistory. Where ritual is concerned, prehistoric archaeology can contribute to the human knowledge of religious ritual. Secular "ritual", in the sense of secular habits, is the rest of what we find, exactly because of the parameters that shape our discipline.

Moreover, it should be clearly understandable by now, that our concern of distinguishing between religious ritual and secular is a concern that derives from the *cultural schema* that the word "ritual" carries in English, for modern westerners who use this word and try to explain practices in this language. The construction of the subcategory of secular "ritual" itself can be constructed as a subcategory only because the cultural schema of "ritual" permits this in this language. It is not an archaeological concern and it cannot be for prehistoric studies. In all the literature concerning "ritual" practices in prehistoric archaeology, there is no study dedicated to secular "ritual". Even Renfrew (1985), who expressed this worry regarding the potential of Geertz's definition, provided arguments on how to distinguish religious practices from secular ones in general, and how to distinguish communal/public religious ritual from domestic religious ritual. He did not provide any kind of "secular ritual" definition or method of identification. He distinguished between the "ritual" sub-categories, which he obviously recognised, on the basis of secular practices in general (-not secular "ritual"), and then, in contrast to religious ritual in general (whether domestic or public). Therefore, stating that secular "ritual" would not be possible to be distinguished from religious ritual in archaeology, if Geertz's (1973) theory is followed, is a statement fundamentally wrong on its basis. Statements like that have led the archaeology of the prehistory of ritual into confusion. They have enabled statements like Bradley's (2003:6): *it is the very existence of rituals in the past that makes much of the prehistoric archaeology possible*, which is equally confusing, contributing to the archaeological chaos of what "ritual" actually is. In regards to Bradley's statement, it may even be seen as causal of equally nihilistic approaches from the opposite point of view: that everything in the prehistoric record is patterns of secular activities. [...] *It is a*

*short step from the proposition that everything is ritual to the practical reality that nothing is ritual* (Bell 1992:73). We have to understand in prehistoric archaeology that we have to be very careful in the ways we use the word “ritual” and of course, as Bradley himself has emphasised that we have to be clear of *what we mean by “ritual”*. One step towards this direction is the acceptance of a terminology within the discipline, according to which “ritual” can only refer to ritual (sacred actions) and not to “ritual”, referring controversially to either secular or religious.

#### 1.5.4 *The importance of the first attempt.*

Lastly, a minimal comment is deserved by Renfrew’s statement regarding the fact that archaeologists cannot observe beliefs, but only *remains of actions* plausibly interpreted *as arising from religious belief*. In the first part of his statement, Renfrew is absolutely correct: archaeologists cannot and do not observe belief. Regarding the rest, I prefer to simply quote Childe (1956:1), believing that the shift of the emphasis in the quoted text demonstrates my point:

*The archaeological record is constituted of the fossilized results of human behaviour, and it is the archaeologist’s business to reconstitute that behaviour as far as he can and so to recapture the thoughts that behaviour expressed.*

If nothing else, this quote should be regarded at least as much more positive in regards to what archaeology wants and can potentially accomplish, in terms of reconstruction of ritual practices and belief systems. Of course it dates prior to the *loss of innocence* of archaeology (Clarke 1973). So, it may be regarded as overoptimistic. Yet, it opens a window towards an even more meaningful archaeology. *A window is a peep, not a vision*, but it permits the hope of the possibility that it may become one (Watkins 2002: 46)

Renfrew's (1985) work constitutes the first complete approach on ritual regarding prehistory where the definitional problem was addressed and solutions on the basis of methodology were provided. The literature on ritual in prehistory is now countless; however, Renfrew (1985) has been one of the few prehistorians, who actually offered a complete and analytical archaeological definition of ritual, even if this was done via the construction of a check-list. As the first archaeological work on ritual in prehistory, Renfrew made the first step for the study of ritual to develop, mature and advance. Facing the definitional problem of ritual is better than avoiding it. Providing a solution, even if it may prove wrong, is better than not providing one at all. Renfrew laid the foundations upon which sophisticated research on ritual in prehistory can take place. In terms of ritual theory, he introduced, Leach's *liminality* to the archaeological discourse on ritual, which has been a very productive idea in the framework of prehistory and which still seems promising in the way it currently develops within the archaeological parameters. Lastly, his bibliographical research and selection, regarding inter-disciplinary discourse on ritual, should comprise a starting point of every archaeological research on the subject.

#### *1.5.5 Towards the Archaeology of Ritual.*

Verhoeven (2002a, b, 2004) also confronted the problem of ritual definition in archaeology. He also commented on the repudiation of ritual as a category of study in archaeology, and also wondered why our discipline still considers as more problematic and difficult the analysis and interpretation of ritual than topics of subsistence and social structure (Verhoeven 2002a:6). He believes this to have been happening for four main reasons: a) because of the oddity and non-functionality that ritual objects and deposits exhibit, which our discipline cannot directly explain, b) because of the equation of ritual with belief and unseen supernatural beings to which our discipline

has no access, c) because of the complexity and variety that ritual seems to encompass and which archaeology self-doubts that it can approach, and d) because of the construction of non-clear criteria based on which the identification of ritual can take place. Verhoeven (2002a:7, 34) analysed all these reasons for which archaeology considers ritual difficult to approach and by using well selected archaeological and anthropological methods argued successfully against them, supporting the view that archaeology not only can, but has to study ritual, if a complete and coherent consideration of the past is its aim.

He also turned to “the anthropological help” in order to achieve this, explaining the reasons why prehistoric archaeology cannot do without anthropology, as *the most detailed description and interpretation of ritual* has come from this sister discipline. Verhoeven (2002a:8-24) organised the anthropological works he studied on the basis of approaches which he identified: intellectualism, emotionalism, phenomenology, functionalism, symbolism, structuralism, cognitive approaches, Marxist, relational, approaches of ritual as performance, and practice theory (**Fig. 4**). He exceptionally selected a wide spectrum of current anthropological approaches, quoting as many definitions of ritual as possible, and he briefly reviewed them from the point of view of archaeology (Verhoeven 2002:8-22). Verhoeven did not reject any of these approaches. On the contrary he demonstrated that all of them are useful for examining and analysing ritual because each one of them illuminates a different aspect of ritual seeing it from a different point of view and exhibiting this multidimensional phenomenon (**Fig. 4**, Verhoeven 2002a: 22-23, 31). For Verhoeven every approach shows a different dimension of ritual. Thus he accepted all approaches in the spirit of a post-modern holism.

He understood ritual itself, also, under the light of holism, as previously explained (§ 1.3.5). Verhoeven (2004) although seemingly used Leach’s understanding as the basis of his approach to ritual, he did not accept the distinction between culture and nature as a possible understanding of the world in prehistory. On the contrary, he

argued that every aspect of life was inter-belonging, inter-related and inter-influenced with the world of beliefs and ideas in a focal point, without them though being separated from the rest of the human practices. Quite the reverse, every decision, every action was completely dependant upon religious ideas and ideals. Verhoeven (2002a:26-27) stated that with emphasis on holism, he agrees with Brück's understanding of the archaeological evidence presenting more complexity than a definite distinction between sacred and profane. His difference, in addition to his rejection of Brück's replacement of "ritual" with "odd", lies within his thought that:

*within the trajectory of social life certain moments or points, are more ritual (or symbolic), than others. Life may be permeated with ritual, but things like special ceremonies, funerals, etc. do exist now and undoubtedly also in the past.*

#### 1.5.6. Whose holism anyway?

I consider two weaknesses so far in Verhoeven's archaeological understanding of ritual. Firstly though, it needs to be stressed that I agree with him in his suggestion of use of all approaches to ritual so that all probable dimensions of ritual can be examined and for ritual to be analysed as fully as possible (Verhoeven 2002a:22-23, 31). I do not consider though all approaches and deriving dimensions of ritual helpful to the problem of the definition of ritual. Undoubtedly, these theories and the dimensions of ritual they illuminate are precious tools for examining and analysing ritual, but not for defining it. Verhoeven did not realise that it is a different thing for archaeologists to be able to see as many as possible dimensions of ritual and to try to understand the practice as fully as possible via all the available theoretical approaches, and a completely different thing to accept that the practice of ritual was a holistic phenomenon in prehistory. This could indeed be demonstrated as Verhoeven (2004) very successfully accomplished in regional or case studies; but it is not necessarily a fact

for all prehistoric societies and it cannot constitute an apriori criterion for the definition and identification of ritual. Moreover, by this statement, Verhoeven contradicted his argument for contextual analysis of ritual on which he based the whole of his methodology for identification of ritual practices (Verhoeven 2002a: 27, 34). Holism is not an intrinsic element of ritual. It may be a dimension that via a holistic approach, we may be able to identify in the prehistoric practice of ritual within context. It also could potentially explain both the nature of specific ritual practices under study and other aspects of a given prehistoric sociocultural system. It is not however necessary that all prehistoric societies in the entire world had a holistic approach to ritual and life.

If this indeed is what Verhoeven has supported, this has been neither adequately nor convincingly argued. Conversely, it becomes obvious by his later work (Verhoeven 2004) that he must have had a very specific region and time-period in mind, while proposing holism as an identified attribute of ritual in general. Furthermore, accepting holism as a pre-condition for the identification of ritual practices in pre-history has led him in needing to distinguish between ritual practices and *more ritual* practices, while assuming that Brück (1999:328) used the term *odd* in order to avoid *having to choose between sacred and profane* (Verhoeven 2002a:26). In this way, Verhoeven has complicated the issue of ritual identification, committing a similar error to Brück's. Following his suggestion, not only would we need to distinguish prehistoric practices between sacred and profane, so that we can understand them within our cultural schemata, but we would also have to assume that in prehistory all practices were ritual; it is just that some of them were *more ritual (or symbolic)* than others. Basically, this is similar to Bradley's (2003:6) comment about prehistoric ritual and why prehistoric archaeology is possible. Consequently, it is equally confusing, controversial and provocative of the exact opposite views of refutation of ritual studies.

Secondly, there is obscurity in the way Verhoeven realized ritual dimensions, concepts (characteristics as he explained) and ritual intrinsic elements, as I call them (Verhoeven 2002:30, 8-32). I argue that in fact he does not separate them, but mixes and

confuses them, without successfully managing the consequences. This will become even clearer when his methodology for ritual identification will be explained and reviewed (§ 1.5.7). For now, it should be shown that within the part of his approach that has already been discussed, there are two intrinsic elements of ritual; symbolism and liminality, which Verhoeven (2002a) though has understood as dimensions deriving from equivalent theories. I argue that symbolism and liminality are not simply functions or dimensions of ritual, not even concepts related to ritual, that we, as archaeologists, may analyse via structuralism or hermeneutics as Verhoeven (2002a:22-23, 30-31) perceived them. Indeed the underlying structure of ritual may be explored via the syntax of its symbolism and its message may be decoded via the examination of the semantics of the symbolism of the practice. However, symbolism is a pre-requisite for the existence of ritual. It is a pre-condition. Without symbolism, there is no ritual. Symbolism is an intrinsic element of ritual, not an attributed value. It is essentially what ritual is made of, not what ritual does.

The same applies to liminality, which has basically been ignored by Verhoeven (2002a:30) as another, among twelve named, simple concepts of ritual. Verhoeven understood liminality as another dimension of ritual, which is possible to be highlighted by following an equivalent approach. With this opinion, he has placed *liminality* in the same group as *performance*, for example, among others. But performance may or may not be part of ritual. Sometimes, parts of ritual practices do need to happen by only one agent, hidden, away from an audience. Or sometimes ritual practices require a certain preparation by one or just a few agents. This preparation may be equally sacred, but separate and hidden from the main ritual, which may need many agents, audience / participants. So, performance is not entirely necessary to the ritual practice. However, *liminality* is. Without liminality, there is no ritual. Liminality may also be created by the practice of ritual, but without the mental and / or spatial pre-construction of liminality, ritual cannot be. The relation between ritual and liminality is a circular existential relation and not a causal / effective one.

In contrast, functionalism or emotionalism, for example, are ways of examining how ritual functions in a sociocultural system, in terms of social organisation or in regards to environmental and emotional management. No matter what the degree and the quality of the interrelation between ritual and social or emotional realities, the concern of these approaches is essentially the effect on ritual by the individual, social groups or the society. Within neo-functionalism, ritual may be perceived as the cause of production and reproduction of social relations and cultural interactions (Radcliffe-Brown 1945, 1964, Malinowski 1925, Rappaport 1968, Bell 1997:29-33). Within the framework of these approaches, it is explained why ritual is practiced and what ritual does. But, they are not what ritual is. They are not pre-requisites, pre-conditions or essential elements to the identity of ritual. They are only helpful approaches which reveal related dimensions.

Especially in regards to symbolism, Verhoeven (2002:28) stated: *Obviously rituals, almost by definition, are marked by extended material symbolism.* But then, he continued in explaining that unconsciously secular activity is also marked by symbolism, whereas ritual consciously uses symbols, which he characterized as dominant symbols after Turner (1970). Verhoeven would not need to construct his argument in this contradictive way, needing further explanations, if he was not confusing his holism, accepting all theoretical approaches to prehistoric ritual, with the possible holism of prehistoric ritual. By doing so, subsequently, he had to find a basis on which to distinguish the ritual he wanted to analyse in contrast to the ritual he did not; so, he had to juxtapose: ritual versus *more ritual*, symbolic versus *more symbolic* and then of course there was need for him to specify "how much more symbolic" or "in what way" more symbolic (dominant - non dominant). Also, he would not need to have engaged himself in this confusing and completely unnecessary argument, in regards to ritual definition and identification, if he had perceived very clearly, from the beginning of his approach, that symbolism is not a ritual dimension; ritual is, by definition, symbolic.



Notwithstanding the possibility that some symbols may be more dominant than others within a given sociocultural system, I argue that even if the whole reality of a prehistoric society has been attested to be permeated with symbolism (not ritual, as Verhoeven (2002:26) stated), how some symbols are engaged within ritual symbolism and others are not is explained via the notion of *ritualization*. By this process, some symbols become ritualized and some do not. On what basis these symbols have been chosen to become ritualized, namely to become ritual symbols, is explained by the worldview, ideology and 'logic' that the specific sociocultural system shares and which is evident, especially, in the way it practices ritual. This argument is seemingly circular, but in fact it is not. If we have accepted that the worldview, ideology and 'logic' of a people is evident in the ritual they practice, and ritual is intrinsically symbolic, then the symbols which have been chosen for ritualization, for the practice of ritual, are going to explain exactly that: the worldview, ideology and 'logic' of the people; subsequently, the base of their choice can be explained only via this route of thought.

*Ritualization* should also be considered as an intrinsic element of ritual along with symbolism and liminality. Without the process of ritualization, ritual cannot take place; without it, ritual cannot exist; it simply does not happen. By this process our world -and the world in prehistory- is not a schizophrenic one, between two realities, of which it is uncertain which is more real and secular, or which is *more ritual* and *symbolic*. By this process the two realities, our (and Their) everyday world, and the world we believe in (and the world They believed in) can be accepted (individually, emotionally, socially, culturally and contextually) via their alternating transformation within the process of ritualization and de-ritualization, synchronically and diachronically. This process is universal and breaks the barriers of time, exactly because it lies within the essence of ritual. Certainly the way it happens and the subject or object that it concerns is contextual.

### 1.5.7 Framing vs intrinsic elements.

Verhoeven (2002a:26) correctly recognised ritualization as a fundamental notion, on the basis of ritual definition. He emphatically accepted ritualization as introduced and explained by Bell (1992:74, 1997) as *a contextual way of dealing with ritual* and added for further explanation that the concept of *ritualization denotes production of differentiation from other activities*. To this fundamental ritual element, ritualization, Verhoeven (2002:26) added a concept that he considered useful for ritual definition in archaeology: the concept of *framing*. *Framing* as both Verhoeven (2002:26) and Bell (1997:74) explained was firstly used by Bateson (1936) indicating

*the way in which some activities or messages set up interpretative frameworks which are used to understand other actions and messages.*

Explicitly, *framing* clarifies why and how the same action can be perceived as quotidian in one instance and as special in another. This concept has been central in performance theory, where it explains how a specific act is not perceived as entertainment, but as ritual (Bell 1997: 74-76). Verhoeven (2002a:26) has defined *framing as the way, or performance, in which people and/or activities and/or objects are set off from others for ritual, non domestic, purposes*. Verhoeven (2002a:27) explained that *framing* is the mechanism behind *ritualization*, as it creates a special place and time for the ritual to be performed. He identified *framing* as a *contextual concept* related to *structured deposition* and he explained that: *Generally, framing refers to "non-domestic" objects*. He also noted that it is a *flexible concept referring to what may be termed "contextual oddness"*. Here, Verhoeven (2002:27) admitted that *a more critical reader might object that framing is another word for "odd", "special", or "irrational". In a way it is,*" he stated, but he thought that

*framing and ritualization are useful concepts for archaeologists working on ritual, as they provide a theoretical and methodological background for identifying ritual, which the above terms in brackets do not.*

On the basis of *framing, ritualization*, context and structured deposition, Verhoeven (2002:27-30) constructed a methodological model for ritual identification, which is comprised of five steps (**Fig. 5**):

*(1) ritualization and framing ("contextual oddness"), (2) ritual syntax (context, object, act, typology, agent), (3) various relevant aspects of symbolism (dominant symbols, punctuation, metaphor, positional meaning, contextual meaning), (4) ritual dimensions (intellectualism, emotionalism, functionalism, symbolism, structuralism, cognitive approaches, Marxist approaches, relational approaches, practice theory), (5) analogy*  
(Verhoeven 2002a:34)

Firstly, it should be noted that steps (3) and (4) in Verhoeven's model of ritual analysis have symbolism in common. So, this makes clearer that Verhoeven has mistakenly understood symbolism both as an element of ritual and as a dimension. Liminality has not been included in his model (Verhoeven 2002a:33), since it has been wrongly realized as just a concept within ritual identification (Verhoeven 2002a:30). *Analogy* has been explained by Verhoeven (2002a:31-32), as the way to make the prehistoric ritual more understandable to us. As previously mentioned, Verhoeven (2002a:8-9) supported the value of anthropological research in archaeological practice. Verhoeven (2002a:32) explained that a well founded analogy can be the means to *understand the ancient other, by a process of comparison*, while we acknowledge that *uniformitarianism* should be avoided and that analogy is not a way to prove anything, but an additional help in order to comprehend something. Verhoeven's model is a very good methodology, for analysing a given ritual practice, step by step. His model has been tested within this work (§ 5.2) and has proved successful. It is a successful methodology, which can serve as a pattern that can be followed in order to analyse and

explain a ritual practice in a well founded way. It has not however helped this research in the identification of ritual practices in Early Prehistoric Cyprus. This is because Verhoeven, with his model, does not actually provide an answer to what ritual is, but a very good guide on how to explain what has already been identified as ritual.

This becomes more explicit by reading step (1) in his model, in (Fig. 5). There, Verhoeven noted: *Framing: Q: which objects had a ritual function and meaning? A: ritualization*. It is not clear how a researcher could distinguish which objects had a ritual function and meaning, while this is exactly, what they try to find out. How would *ritualization* provide the answer, if somebody does not know which objects/ actions have been ritualized in the first place? It becomes even more explicit now why the element of *liminality* is so fundamental. Liminality incorporates the context where ritualization has happened, then ritualization explains how and why liminality has been created and can subsequently provide the answer to which objects have been ritualized within the liminal zone. Even *framing*, the way Verhoeven has explained it, does not make sense without *liminality*. Liminality is a prerequisite for objects/ depositions/ structures to be able to be *framed* as ritual. It could be argued that this is what Verhoeven must mean by *framing*. If this is the case, this has not become clear within his analysis of *framing* while the concept of liminality has been ignored.

*Framing*, for Verhoeven (2002a:27) seems to incorporate too many concepts in too many unclear ways: a) the *mechanism behind ritualization*, b) a *contextual concept*, c) related to *structured deposition*, d) a *flexible concept*, e) in a way, *another word for "odd", special, or irrational*, but more helpful since it provides a theoretical and methodological background, f) referring to *non-domestic" objects, [...] ritual, non domestic, purposes* and g) *contextual oddness*. Firstly, (a) why does *ritualization* need a mechanism in order for it to function? The explanation Verhoeven (2002a:27) provided is that *framing* creates a *special place, a special time [...] by the use of uncommon objects*. This seems exactly like what liminality and ritualization do together, in combination, within context -minus the "uncommon objects", because as we have seen they can be very common and they are

transformed into meaningful symbolic objects within ritual practice, by the process of ritualization. Additionally, Verhoeven's explanation, simply does not clarify why ritualization, which is a processual mechanism, within *liminality*, needs an extra mechanism for it to function, since it is a mechanism itself; (b) If *framing* is a contextual concept and this is what Verhoeven wants to stress within this concept, it is not understandable why it should be preferred as a term instead of *context*. Context is a very well framed concept both in archaeological theory and practice, with a very long history and bibliography (Hodder 1981, 1982, Greene 1983:173-174, Renfrew 1985:14-21, Hodder and Hutson 1986:156-205, Trigger 1989: 348-357, Renfrew & Bahn 1991:50-52, Papaconstantinou 2006) and with a very good functionality within archaeology. There is no reason for *context* to be replaced by any other term, which at the same time, aspires to mean a number of other things in an ambiguously combinational way. Then Verhoeven continued (c) that *framing* is related to *structured deposition*. Again, the emphasis is on the intentionality and construction of structure within context. Moreover, structured deposition also comprises a very well formed concept in theoretical archaeology and a very well attested practice within prehistory (Ritchards and Thomas 1985, Anderson and Boyle 1996, Chapman 2000a, b, Chapman and Bisslerka 2007). Again, there is no reason to hide it behind a blurred term. In the end (f), *framing* is a flexible concept. But of course it ends up being one! Evidently, it has been used by Verhoeven as a potpourri of several selected concepts in archaeology and identified practices in prehistory.

Several elements, central and already well framed, within separately identified theories and practices, seem to have been gathered together in order to form the concept of *framing*. It has ended up incorporating too many and distinctly different concepts and practices which have been recognised and attested by archaeology already. As such they have been well-framed within our discipline already providing the theoretical and methodological background needed. In contrast, bibliography and research on *framing* is not only much more restricted, but also has constituted already

specific terminology within the approach of performance theory (Bell 1997:74, Tambiah 1979). Consequently, if by *framing* Verhoeven meant a combination of *liminality*, *ritualization*, *context* and *structured deposition*, these are exactly the terms he should have used. As a discipline, we may not have a long history of researching ritual, but we do have a long history and created terminology on attesting practices of the past, some of which we are now gradually able to interpret as ritual. However, there is no reason for us to dismantle everything we have managed so far to build. Instead of making things simpler, Verhoeven has simply complicated them.

Secondly, (e), (g), Verhoeven (2002a) admitted himself, that with *framing*, in a way, he has simply provided another word for *odd*, *special*, or *irrational*. He argued that the difference of the term, he proposed from these ones, is its theoretical background. As previously demonstrated neither *odd* after Brück (1.3), nor *framing* after Verhoeven provide adequate theoretical background or exceptional help for the definition and identification of ritual in archaeology, especially in comparison to other terminology. Verhoeven has been contradicting himself by criticising Brück, who has preferred the term *odd* in order to avoid the modern western heaviness of the term "ritual". Referring to Brück's terminological preference, Verhoeven (2002a: 25) emphasised: [...] *we must (and can only) use our own frame of reference*. He referred here to our modern western frame of reference. Evidently though, he seems to have found problematic our already well formed archaeological frame of reference. At least, Brück explained why she found the term "ritual" problematic. Verhoeven has not argued why the term *framing* should be preferred instead of the terms *liminality*, *ritualization*, *structured deposition* and *context*. Furthermore, by explaining framing as "*contextual oddness*", he has simply justified Brück's failed choice of terminology and has committed the same error.

Moreover, (f) it should be noted that the choice of wording *non domestic objects* and [...] *for ritual, non domestic, purposes* as to what *framing* refers to, is also unsuccessful and contradictory to what Verhoeven has suggested about ritual both for reasons of logic and consistency, and for reasons of ritual theoretical discourse in archaeology. If

ritual is accepted (and it is by Verhoeven (2002a:26),) to have been permeating all aspects of life, and by understanding objects and situations as *ritual* and *symbolic* in contrast to *more ritual* and *more symbolic*, then it is not possible for a distinction to be occurring simultaneously between domestic and ritual/ *non-domestic*. Simply for consistency in logic, one has to accept things either as: sacred/ ritual/ non-domestic in contrast to profane/ mundane/ domestic, or as ritual/ symbolic in contrast to more ritual/ more symbolic. Both, in the same theoretical framework cannot be accepted simply because logically they belong to different and actually opposing theoretical frameworks. Additionally, the term, *non-domestic*, is problematic. Does "*non-domestic* objects" exclude domestic objects that have been ritualized and used in ritual? Does "*non-domestic* purposes" exclude the practice of domestic ritual? Presumably, domestic ritual in contrast to public or communal, is practiced within the domus where cleaning and cooking also take place (Brück and Goodman 1999) and presumably it is practiced for *domestic purposes* (Renfrew 1985:21-22). In the end, about what kind of ritual has Verhoeven been theorizing: religious, communal, public, domestic or all of them when they are *more ritual* than ritual? Verhoeven has certainly not taken a clear standpoint especially regarding the last question, while remaining ambiguous about the rest.

These problematic issues in Verhoeven's analysis seem to be related especially to the basis of his suggested ritual definition and method of identification. To be fair, Verhoeven did not claim to have defined ritual. Obviously, via his approach and methodology, it may be argued that Verhoeven has defined ritual via the concept of *framing*. However, Verhoeven (2002a:9) himself, has considered the practice of giving definitions for ritual problematic for two main reasons, as he has explained: firstly because of the clumsy cultural translation that we will basically manage to offer while attempting such a definition, following Bowie (2000:22), and secondly because: *definitions have the problem of having to be broad enough to include a wide variety of activities, but at the same time they have to preserve some explanatory value*. So, Verhoeven (2002a:26-27, 33, 34) preferred to define *framing* instead of ritual, and then to understand ritual

through this concept / guide. Verhoeven (2002a:33) has called his model: *A model for the analysis of ritual [...] and not a model for the definition or identification of ritual.* However, in a subsequent work, where Verhoeven (2002b:235-236) again used his definition of *framing* prior to discussing his case study, he explicitly noted: *Framing is [...] about isolating and recognising possible ritual practices [...].* Evidently, this is again conflicting. As the first step of a model of analysis, *framing* cannot serve to identify or recognise; it should serve to analyse. This ambiguity of *framing*, is not related to what *framing* means and incorporates; this is in regards to what framing is in terms of ritual theory; what kind of tool and how it can be useful, if it can.

As already touched upon, there seems to be uncertainty in Verhoeven's approach (2002a) between concepts, theories, approaches, dimensions and *intrinsic elements*, as I have added. Verhoeven (2002a:30) himself has noticed that there might be such a perception deriving from the organisation of his work and has noted: *I have made a difference between an approach (a theory and method e.g. structuralism), a dimension (a certain aspect, e.g. a ritual's social function) and a concept (a characteristic e.g. stereotypy).* However, it has not been clear whether *ritualization* and *framing* have been perceived as approaches, dimensions or concepts. Both of them have been referred to as concepts (Verhoeven 2002a:26). Neither though, has been included in the list of concepts (Verhoeven 2002a:30).

Then *ritualization* has appeared in the "table of dimensions" as resulting from the approach of practice theory (**Fig. 4**, Verhoeven 2002a:31). *Framing* has not been seen as a dimension of ritual revealed by any specific approach and it is not in the list of approaches either. So, although it is vague where it has been categorized by Verhoeven (2002a), it should probably be considered as a basic concept, within Verhoeven's work (2002a). Leaving aside for a moment the perplexity of what *framing* is eventually meant to be, it is necessary to discuss Verhoeven's classification. My objection to his classification is based on two reasons that I consider important in ritual theory in archaeology: a) need for clarity of what is worded and meant, b) need for special care of



what is worded and meant especially because the subject has already suffered enough from uses and abuses (Renfrew 1985:1-4). Verhoeven and I understand *theory*, *approach* and *method* in the same way; no disagreement there. The same applies for the perception of *dimension* as *aspect*: e.g. an aspect of ritual, which is revealed and analysed via the specific methodology of a specific theory. *Concept* and *characteristic*, or intrinsic element, as I have preferred to call the latter, is not the same thing, though. According to OED: A *concept* is *an abstract idea*, but a *characteristic* is *a feature or quality belonging typically to a person, place, or thing, and serving to identify them*. When I support that *liminality* is an intrinsic element of ritual, or in other words, a characteristic of ritual, I have to simultaneously support that liminality serves ritual definition (in this language) and I do. Now, if I had accepted *liminality* as a concept of ritual, as an abstract idea, it would not be possible for me to show that it serves in ritual definition, because I would have accepted it as an abstract thought, simply related to the object I discuss. This is why it is so important for Verhoeven to have well classified elements/ characteristics, dimensions, approaches and concepts, especially since he has used such evaluating groupizations and categories. If *framing* is a theory or methodology it should serve for analysis; if it is a dimension, it should be expected to be revealed by a theory; lastly, if it is a *characteristic* / an intrinsic element of ritual, it should be helping definition and identification. But if it is a (basic) concept, it should not be expected to be helpful in recognising ritual practices (Verhoeven 2002b:236).

*If it was not clear at the beginning, it should be clear by now that "theories", "activities" and "contexts" can be only provisional frameworks. Theories and contexts affect what is seen as ritual and by whom, while those activities deemed to be ritual in turn have theoretical and contextual consequences.*  
(Bell 1997:267).

### 1.5.8 Deconstructing, constructing and advancing.

Despite Verhoeven's (2002a) contradictions and lack of a clear theoretical standpoint, he has accomplished taking the archaeological resolution of the definition of ritual a step further than Renfrew. Twenty years after Renfrew's (1985) approach, Verhoeven established again that ritual still constitutes a problem for prehistoric archaeology. He is the first one who has posed the straightforward "question of why": why prehistoric archaeology has been successful with definitional and identification problems and methodologies concerning other aspects of life in the past, but has failed in doing so, regarding ritual. Having constructed a methodological guide, he contributed enormously to prehistoric archaeology in advancing examination, analysis and understanding of ritual in the past. In terms of definition, if Renfrew's approach, proposing a definition, was at one end of current approaches to the ritual definitional problem, and Brück's nihilistic approach, avoiding the definitional problem by replacing "ritual" with another word was at the opposite end, Verhoeven's approach should be found somewhere in the middle. He rejected definitions, but he did not reject the definitional problem. He proposed a solution, but not a definitional one. Basically, Verhoeven (2002a) followed Goody (1959, 1961) and Garwood (et al 1989) in accepting and treating the definitional problem of ritual as a methodological one. He proposed a *middle-course approach* (Verhoeven 2002:34), which theoretically combines elements of processualism and neo-functionalism, and practically, emphasizes contextual and relational analysis. Importantly, Verhoeven accentuated the capability and the duty of prehistoric archaeology to offer an interpretation of identified ritual practices and suggested a successful way for doing so. Moreover, by his examination of all theoretical approaches to ritual and his critique of them on the basis of archaeological usefulness, Verhoeven managed to incorporate anthropology of ritual within the constraints of

prehistoric archaeology accepting fully the particularities of the latter in a constructive way. His bibliographical examination and critique on such a basis should constitute one of the first steps of archaeological theoretical research on ritual. In this framework, Verhoeven's work is also of great importance for the study of ritual in prehistoric archaeology.

## **1.6 Figuring it out <sup>7</sup>**

### *1.6.1 The problem.*

The demonstration of the recent and current management of the difficulties that archaeology faces in regards to ritual, in contrast with other aspects of the human life, does not explain why the problem of the definition of ritual remains. In order to resolve a problem, firstly, we need to define the problem itself and then, examine what causes it. Both Renfrew (1985:1-26) and Verhoeven (2002a:5-40) examined causes of the definitional problem of ritual in archaeology, but they have not isolated the problem. They have seen the problem of the definition of ritual as a phenomenon and they have provided answers to why this phenomenon appears. At first, this does not seem problematic, but it actually is. A metaphorical example will demonstrate better why. I will liken the archaeological definition of ritual with an empirical situation: for example, we are outside, it rains and we get wet. We have asked why this happens. We know that the answer is: because it is raining. Then we want to explain the rain, so we ask why it is raining. Recently we have realized that this happens whenever a big, heavy, dark cloud is over our heads. This kind of questions produces relevant answers, which seemingly explain the phenomenon why we get wet. I argue that we have been asking the wrong questions. After observing our wet state and the fact that this happens when a big, heavy, dark cloud is over our heads, it is high time we asked the

questions of: what this cloud is made of, how this cloud is formed and why it gathers over our heads; what its structure is and its consisting parts. We have a definitional problem. We know the problem is definitional (“wet state”), we know it is caused because of our cultural schemata, our modern western logic and the restrictive factors of our discipline (“big, dark, heavy cloud”). What is this problem made of, though? Instead of examining this, we have been inventing “umbrellas” (methodologies) expecting they will resolve the problem.

I argue that the definitional problem of ritual in archaeology is doubly dual. It consists of two parts which have two sides. One part of it is us, the prehistorians. The second part is the prehistoric people we study via the remains of their actions. Our part has two sides: Firstly, it is definitional and as such theoretical, conceptual and abstract. Secondly, it is practical, actual and empirical: a problem of practical identification, but essentially derivative from our theories: *On what grounds for instance, is one pit, with animal bones and a few artefacts, dismissed as domestic refuse, while another is seen as ritual deposit with evidence of sacrifice?* (Renfrew 1985:2). The prehistoric people’s part has also two sides: Firstly, it is conceptual. It is in regards to their ideas, ideals, beliefs and worldviews. Secondly, it is practical, but as well, derivative from their ideology. They knew, through their constructed tradition when and how they practiced and understood the killing of an animal and its bones deposition in a pit as a sacrifice, and when and how they practiced and understood the killing of an animal for the simple satisfaction of their hunger, and the discard of its bones in a pit as preventive of animal and insect attraction and infection. There are many possibilities of how the two parts of their dual part may have been related. They might have been well separated and apart as just described, they might have been close together and linked, or they may have been identical and inter-belonging, with no differentiation between the one pit and the other.

Now, our dual part, aims to approach, understand and explain Their dual part. Their part has no definitional problem; they knew what and how. Our part faces the

problem of definition and examination of an object, which is Their part. Their part is not frozen in time and space; their concepts, ideals, ideas, beliefs and practices were different in different parts of the world and in different periods of prehistory. Their part is fluid, variant and variable, and therefore difficult for us to “freeze” it and put it under the microscope for epistemological examination. Our part though may be considered as “frozen”, at this specific moment during which I type these words or at the specific moment during which you read them. This moment encompasses our recent past as modern western archaeologists, but not necessarily our future. Certainly, our part may as well be considered fluid and changeable, as in the future our questions and concerns, concepts and practicalities, may change, while we still remain modern western archaeologists. However, while I am typing these words and when you are reading them, we are not aware of this future. Our past research, theories and practices have “frozen” in their analysis in our minds. I studied them, examined and analysed them and my intention is to add a piece in what I have demonstrated as a jigsaw puzzle. In this framework, it seems that our “frozen” part should be considered easier to be put “under the microscope” and be examined. Also, it should be considered more practical, since it is Us, the modern western archaeologists who have the definitional problem, not the prehistoric people.

Importantly, though, while this examination has taken place, it has not been forgotten and it should not be forgotten that our dual part’s problem is concerned with Their dual part as an object of examination and understanding (Bloch 1988:15), not in search of law, but in search of meaning (Geertz 1973). Our conceptual part asks “what?” so that our modern western logic can comprehend in modern western cultural schemata what the category ritual could be for prehistoric people. Our empirical / actual / practical part: asks “where?”. It is one thing for us to understand and agree what we mean by ritual, when referring to prehistory, and another thing to spot it in the archaeological record. In this framework, only specific and contextual definitions

would seem functional. No matter what terminology we use, there will always be space for accusation of imposing modern western rationale to the evidence.

*In other words, our theories of ritual may do a lot to translate Confucian ancestor practices or Trobriand gardening practices into more abstract terms and models that make sense to us. But these analyses do not necessarily figure in the worldview of the Chinese or Trobrianders; they may even distort Chinese and Trobriand cultural experiences*  
(Bell 1997:265).

But the purpose of rendering Their dual part into an object of examination and analysis, is exactly because We are interested in it, in order for it to make sense to Us. To them, it had been making perfect sense. So, we need to use our logic and theoretical tools, in order to approach theirs. During this process we need to try to think rationally, in a completely different system of 'logic', which we could be able to approach as closely as possible, only by escaping our own logic while using its tools. In the end of this process, we will need to return to our logic in order to be able to explain what we understood. Otherwise their 'logic' will never make sense to us.

Consequently, not only do we need to, but we actually ought to define prehistoric ritual with our own sociocultural means and theoretical tools. Contextual particularities can and should be taken into account in this definition. A modern western definition can refer abstractly to context, while practically a context may be very specific.

*Western scholarship is very powerful. Its explanative power rests not only on tools of abstraction that make some things into concepts and other things in data, but also in many other social activities, simultaneously economic and political, that construct a plausibility system of global proportions.*  
(Bell 1997:265).

### 1.6.2 *The resolution.*

This definition will have to be abstract and general, but it will also have to be as accurate as possible and within the restrictions and potential of our discipline, so that we, modern western archaeologists, are able to refer to the 'logic' behind the actions that comprised the ritual of the past. This 'logic' will inform us of the beliefs and ideals that those people shared socially and culturally. It will also be informative of how and why they practiced what they did as (-what we mean they meant by-) ritual and how (-what we mean they meant- by) ritual, in Their lives, was related to other aspects of it.

When aiming towards a modern western archaeological definition in reference to ritual in prehistory and having stated that the word ritual in this work refers to religious ritual, a definition of religion is needed first. Religion should be understood as a system of beliefs and ritual. *A particular system of faith and worship*, reads the second definition provided by OED (§ 1.2) and has been chosen as the most appropriate regarding prehistoric societies, since it excludes metaphorical references and problematic terminology such as God(s) and the supernatural. Also, it is the most appropriate of the three definitions provided by OED (§ 1.2) in regards to all three of our identities: modern westerners communicating in English cultural schemata, while being archaeologists.

Agreeing with Verhoeven (2002a:8-9) about the value of anthropological research in prehistoric archaeology and supporting his practice of ordering information that reaches archaeology on the basis of archaeological applicability, the following anthropological definitions of religion should be stressed. Eliade's (1957) definition of the role of religion bringing the believer closer to the sacred, ties very well with the useful archaeologically idea of liminality (Leach 1976, Renfrew 1985:16-17). Also, if taken into consideration as a possibility for the role of religion in prehistory, Eliade's understanding does not need to be seen as opposing the possibility of religion as a method for the resolution of mysteries as supported by Geertz (1973). He would

probably argue that even if this wish of the agent to come closer to the sacred was to be accepted, it should be explained that this is formed on the basis of the intrinsic human curiosity which prompts the agent to wish to go closer to the sacred, precisely in order to explain it, and along it, all their world fully. The possibility of somebody wanting to come closer to the sacred in order to experience it and understand it does not need to be a contradiction with their need for mystery resolution. Theoretically and logically this can be a synthesis, and as such it should not be excluded from the possibilities of examination regarding prehistory. In this framework, I insist that Geertz's (1973:90) definition of religion along with his analysis and explanation (Geertz 1973:91-123) is so far the only one that could make sense in archaeological practice. Religion is:

*a system of symbols which acts to establish pervasive, and long lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic*

On this explanatory basis of what religion is, a formulation of an archaeological definition of ritual becomes approachable. For the modern western practice of prehistoric archaeology, written and subsequently explained in English cultural schemata,

Ritual is:

Culturally, socially, contextually and mytho-logically bounded communication system of ritualized actions, which were practiced by active and passive agents, repeatedly in prescribed, strict or fluid order, time and form, in created areas or instances of liminality and the results of which have intentionally altered the physical world with the motivation to express sacred beliefs, ideals and ideas, in order to communicate and re-establish them via symbolism among the practitioners, who have acted in view of dealing emotionally with situations of their reality, of understanding and explaining



themselves and their world, so that order, in the way they understand it, can be maintained and /or challenged and their society can prosper.

Culturally, socially [...] bounded ...

A synthetic view of society and culture is necessary for two reasons. Firstly, because ritual is understood as referent to religion, in the way the latter has been explained by Geertz (1973:90-123). Geertz's explanation of religion is based on a specific understanding of society and culture. According to Geertz (1973:144, 12), culture is:

*an ordered system of meaning and of symbols, in terms of which social interaction takes place.*

Secondly, this is necessary because in archaeology, we have our own perception of culture and society. We understand culture both historically after Childe (1935:3) and socially after Binford (1965:209). We initiate our study of artefacts and objects in an analytic cultural historic way (Clarke 1968): firstly organising our material in chronological order and typologies, but then, based on our data, we reconstruct social realities. Ritual in prehistory has to be seen in these perspectives, both culturally, as a part of an ordered meaningful system and as a social interaction, which obtains meaning within this system.

...contextually [...] bounded ...

Context is of major importance in archaeology both in field-work and as an interpretative value (Binford 1962, 1965, Schiffer 1995:25-34, Hodder 1981, Hodder et al. 1986:175-183, Trigger 1989:348-357, Papaconstantinou 2006a:32-33, 2006b:1-21).

Regarding ritual, context should be examined both perceptually and practically: both after Goody's (1959, 1961) metadata, modern western dictionary distinctions (domestic ritual, public ritual, communal ritual) and in Bloch's (1974, 1977, 1989) understanding of differentiation of contexts within the same sociocultural system. Importantly, 'context' should be taken into account as actual archaeological context, where not everything may be ritual and not everything may be mundane / secular / profane. Context is a determinative factor both in the practice of ritual and in its recognition and understanding. Ritual was practiced in variable ritual contexts where it could be understood as such, depending on social prescriptions, while it was ordered by cultural realities (Geertz 1973, Bell 1992, 1997, Renfrew 1985, Verhoeven 2002a, 2004). The combination of these three factors: culture, society, and context, along with the particular parameters of which an analysis follows, determine ritual context.

... mytho-logically bounded ...

'Logic' is a very specific deductive way of thinking founded by Aristotle (Allingham 2002:3). The term 'rational', could indeed be used here, instead. However, the latter, may bear connotations of phenomenological epistemological discourse linked with the Renaissance and the formation of our modern western rationale since the Enlightenment Era (Brück 1999). In contrast, 'logic' is used here in the sense it has, beyond such a rationale. It is used as the word and concept from which it derived: 'λογική' (OED). 'Λογική', is the continuum of 'λόγος', which in ancient and modern Greek means both ordered speech and reason, simultaneously or depending on the linguistic context. In this way, it is emphasised that ritual discourse / practice should be seen as happening via reasoning; a kind of reasoning particular to the social, cultural and contextual realities of the people we study in prehistoric archaeology via their material remains. These people had their own 'logic', by which they perceived the

world and functioned in and upon it. Leach (1976:69-70) stressed exactly this, by adding the prefix '*mytho-*' in front of the word 'logic', denoting that the 'logic' of these people will be different from ours and that their 'logic' is mirrored within their mythology, and can be retrieved and understood via the study of the latter.

This of course, exactly on this basis, has been accomplished by Levi-Strauss (1969, 1971, 1973, 1978, 1988, Johnson 2003). As prehistorians, we should be prepared that Their 'logic' was not in the slightest related to Aristotelian logic, which we use in order to explain Their world to us. So, although Their ritual may seem *odd* or *irrational* (Brück 1999, Tilley 1999) to us, it was perfectly 'logical' within the sociocultural systems we study, and we ought to demonstrate this, if we mean to make sense of Their world.

... communication system of ritualized actions ...

Ritual has been seen as a communication system by the majority of works in interpretative anthropology (Bell 1992, 1997, Bloch 1974, 1977, 1989, Geertz 1973, Leach 1976, Levi-Strauss 1971, 1978). Ritual determined socially, culturally, contextually and mytho-logically, does not happen on its own and with no reason. It happens within a communication; and communication presupposes that somebody "is speaking" and somebody "is listening" (Leach 1976:11). The latter will respond because they understand the syntax and the semantics of this communication. Without understanding and without responding, communication cannot be realised. It should be stressed here, that response may involve actually no acting; it may be a passive response, but it presupposes understanding, sociocultural and contextual. Also, any kind or form of communication cannot be realised in any way without the use of symbols. Communication uses symbols in order to function by definition (Leach 1976, Levi-Strauss 1978). Symbols, in contrast to signs, have meaning only within a system (Leach 1976:47-64). Systems theory has been used in both anthropology (Levi-Strauss

1969, Johnson 2003:95-103) and archaeology (Hodder and Hutson 1986:20-44, Clarke 1968, Trigger 1989:303-312) resolving and explaining many interrelation problems.

In ritual, this systemic communication happens by ritualized actions. Within the framework of prehistoric archaeology, speech, songs and sounds in general mean nothing (Renfrew 1985:12-13); they are lost in time. Only actions, which have physically altered the world matter. The archaeologically traceable prehistoric ritual was communicated by ritualized actions and communicated a socio-culturally and contextually mytho-logical meaning via actions. Those actions could be meaningful within this system of communication only if they were ritualized. Through the process of ritualization (Bell 1992, 1997, Verhoeven 2002a:26) actions became ritual actions; they could be practiced as such and could be understood as such. This is how this communication was actually realized. Ritualization, in all its forms emphasises how this communication system may have changed its message.

In this framework, ritual is systematic, systemic and belongs to a system while forming a system. It is an autonomous, not independent, but interdependent system on other attested systems: social, cultural, mytho-logical and communicational, which inter-functioned, inter-related and inter-influenced, having been processed by the mechanism of ritualization and de-ritualization.

... actions, which were practiced by active and passive agents, ...

These actions were practiced and / or performed and / or simply acted depending on the time, place and context. Practice (Bell 1997:76-83, Bourdieu 1972, 1980, Verhoeven 2002a:21-24) and performance theories (Bell 1997:72-76, Tambiah 1979, Verhoeven 2002:20-21) have developed very good methodologies to demonstrate either or / and both. These ritualized actions, which are communicated and communicate within a socio-cultural, contextual and mytho-logical system, are acted / practiced /

performed by active and passive agents. The agent(s) may be active and passive, or only active, or only passive. Ritual as a practice, or in analogy to an art performance, or as a communication within the communication system, needs at least one practitioner / actor (the one who acts) / a transmitter, and at least one who participates by their presence, as an attendant, as a re-actor, as a responder in the communication within the communication (Leach 1976:11).

The attendant / participant / responder by their presence, may be mute and physically quiet (without acting or moving). In this sense, they are attendants, an audience who understands and appreciates the performance and the messages it communicates. By their presence they validate the performance. Without their presence the performance would not be performed, the practice would not be practiced, because it would be meaningless. In this sense the agents may be passive, but their participation even as passive attendants is fundamentally necessary for the performance of ritual. This is one possibility. There could be at least two more. The first one is that all agents are active; in this case, the performance theory would not apply directly, but practice theory would be more functional. In this case, all present at the practice of ritual would have to literally do something at a specific time and in a specific way for the ritual to be practiced. This something may be a physical act (kneeling / standing or depositing or breaking or pouring something) or it may be singing / chanting / saying something or remaining quiet in alternating order, depending on the time, context and the prerequisites of the ritual. A third possibility could be a combination of the previous two: all agents participate, but at specific times / moments / instances only one or some of them does something for the beginning, at some point, or for the completion of the ritual. This act of one or some of the participants may happen further away in space and / or time: it may happen in a secluded space, hidden, and / or during an undetermined time, while the others may not be able or allowed to witness this, according to the prescription of the ritual or due to spatial or temporal necessary arrangements. Of course, hypothetically, a combination of these three possibilities or a combination of

combinations of these three possibilities could produce an unlimited number or possible types of participation of the agents and equally unlimited possibilities of ritualized actions.

...repeatedly in prescribed, strict or fluid order, time and form...

These ritualized actions, which are socio-culturally, contextually and mythologically bounded within a communication system, were repeated over time (in the month / in the year / the season / the lifetime / the generation time / the astronomical time). Their order and form may be prescribed in extremely strict, or in extremely fluid ways, or in all the in-between shades and variations. Repetition seems to be another intrinsic element of the ritual. In the OED *habit* and *order* are central to the definition of ritual (§ 1.2). Anthropologists (Bell 1992, 1997, Bloch 1971, 1989, Geertz 1973, Leach 1976, Van Gennep 1960) base their observations of ritual on ritual repetition. Accordingly, the majority of their debates, including essentialist ones, take place on the basis of the ways of ritual repetition and order (Bell 1997, Bloch 1977).

For archaeologists, repetition of a practice is essentially what permits the identification of patterns on which we can construct hypotheses. For our object of study, the prehistoric people, ritual repetition in fluidity or in strictness, over specific time-periods, creates tradition. *Ritual can be a strategic way to traditionalize, that is to construct a type of tradition [...] (Bell 1992:124)*. Tradition is important not only as the guarantee of the repetition of ritual, but also for sociocultural, psychological and other reasons (Bell 1992:118-142). Tradition in ritual and ritual as tradition is a circular condition perpetuating itself. Tradition is created by the practice of ritual actions, but it also serves them. The repeated traditionalized and ritualized actions in these systems (society, culture, context, mytho-logic, communication, time, order, form), within the ritual system, function in all possible inter-relationships. Consequently, overall, ritual

results in being fluid and in functioning in a fluid way and form, precisely because of all these parameters which all, or some of them, may be strict and conservative or variant and fluid (Bloch 1974, 1977) over periods of time.

... in created areas or instances of liminality and the results of which [of the ritualized actions] have intentionally altered the physical world ...

What kind of actions comprise ritual in prehistory, by whom they were practiced or performed and in what way, has been explored (in an abstract modern western way). Subsequent, and important questions for archaeology are: where and when these actions take place? The answer is: ritualized actions took place in ritualized contexts. Ritualized contexts were liminal because they took part of the two worlds; the world in which the agents believed and the one they lived in and perceived with their five senses (Leach 1976:35). We know they did believe; because they were capable of imagination, of expression of their imagination in external symbolic storage and of symbolic communication, fluid between domains (Donald 1991, Mithen 1996, Watkins 2002). These worlds came so close together, in areas of liminality, that resulted in affinity. *In ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined [...] turns out to be the same world.* (Geertz 1973:112). In the areas / instances of liminality the two worlds overlap (Leach 1976: 82).

These liminal contexts are not only spatial: e.g. a shrine / a church / a tomb, they may also be instances / circumstances in the life of the agent(s). An example of this may be the Christian, who, in a moment of fear or of wonder, crosses themselves. But, in archaeology, these ritualized actions have to have changed the physical world in order for them to be traceable. An archaeological example of creation of liminality not spatially, but during an event / an instance / a situation, could be the ritual exchange of an object or material as a token of the same worldview, two or more agents share

(Appendix II). The instance of the exchange itself is where liminality was created. In this case, the "token", which may have had no other value, but only as proof of the belief in the same cosmology, could be found in places far away from the place of production / construction. The places where it could be found may not be liminal themselves. But the instance, during which it was exchanged, could be traced back and be attested as being a liminal one (Appendix II).

All the archaeological detected actions have altered the physical world; otherwise they could not be traced. But, not all of them have altered the physical world in areas or instances of liminality; not all of them require ordered repetition, and not all of them have been ritualized. But most importantly, not all of them happen:

... with the motivation to express sacred beliefs, ideas and ideals ...

All social, cultural, logical and communicational actions are acted in accordance with, and in subordination to the values that a specific socio-cultural system has (Bloch 1986:10). Otherwise they would be misunderstood within a socio-cultural system or they would not be understood at all. These values are prescribed by sacred beliefs, ideas and ideals. Generally, the beliefs and ideals of all people tend to be "sacred" to them. However, not all actions happen with *the motivation* and the intention to express these values, these sacred beliefs, ideals and ideas (Geertz 1973:112-114). All actions may express them, but they do not consciously intend to do so. In contrast, ritual intends to do precisely this: to express these sacred beliefs, ideas and ideals that the agents have. The need and the wish to express initiate the mechanism of ritualization. As a mechanism ritualization does not need another mechanism in order for it to function (§. 1.5.7). It needs "a key" for it to start functioning; "a catalyst" that will initialize the differentiation between "the washing of hands from germs" and "the



washing of hands for purification" (Bell 1992). This "key" is provided by a specific kind of motivation. The intentionality to express the believed.

Intentionality and motivation are not always clearly determined within the archaeological record. Intentional and accidental deposits are relatively easily distinguished. Also, intentional deposits, which are not repeated in an order or form, do not fit into recognisable patterns; they form the exception to the rule. Therefore, it seems that there would be a problem of identification of ritual practices, only in regards to intentionally constructed deposits, which have been attested to having been repeated and therefore have formed recognisable patterns. Renfrew's (1985:2) question is based exactly on this: *On what grounds for instance, is one pit, with animal bones and a few artefacts, dismissed as domestic refuse, while another is seen as ritual deposit with evidence of sacrifice?* On the basis of motivation, we should be able to answer Renfrew's (1985:2) question: It depends on the *motivation* and the *intention* with which the pit was made and the bones were deposited. This reply is only seemingly simple. I argue that intentionally constructed contexts, which have resulted from actions performed with the motivation to express sacred socio-cultural and mytho-logical realities, beliefs [...] *uniquely realistic*, as Geertz (1973:90) has stressed, should be considered ritual.

But how can motivation behind actions be deciphered? This part of the definition is especially important. Critical archaeology can distinguish the *motivation* behind actions on the basis of sociocultural and contextual information. Yet, because the identification of the motivation behind material remains of actions is a matter of interpretation of these material remains, such identification causes the majority of debates within archaeology. For example, we can tell with confidence whether a wall was built with the intention to buttress another wall or with the intention of fortification. Conversely, with more difficulty we are able to distinguish whether a wall was meant to be free standing as a stele or it was meant to support a loft or an attic that has perished over time (§ 4.4.1). The identification of the motivation behind the material remains of actions is of crucial importance to archaeology. Renfrew has expressed this

problem (“how to distinguish which pit is which”) as a focus of archaeological research on ritual. This is not only a problem of the archaeological research of ritual though. This is a problem of archaeological research in general. On what grounds should an archaeologist recognise the motivation by which something was made / deposited / buried / fragmented / acted upon in general?

All archaeological research (excavation and analysis) is based on this fundamental question. This question forms the base of our practice. Our discipline has formed principals upon which archaeological method and interpretation takes place (Renfrew and Bahn 1991, Greene 1983, Hodder et. al. 1995, Thomas 2000). Despite the *psychological abyss* (Oppenheim 1967, 1977) that separates us from the cultures of which the material remains, and by extension, the motivations, we interpret, our discipline has reached consensus regarding some aspects of the material culture. For example the need of prehistoric people to harm some animal from a distance, the decision to express this need and the motivation to do so, led to the creation of the arrowhead. The arrowhead was created small, light and sharp because it was made with the intention to be shot from far away and with the motivation for it to reach far away. In contrast, the need or wish to smash easily seeds, for example, and the motivation to find a way to do so, led to the creation of a tool which was made thick and heavy (pounder / hammerstone), with the motivation for it to be used for smashing. “Arrowhead” and “hammerstone” are also modern western cultural schemata and interpretations, but they serve in the identification of these objects. They explain very well why these objects were made, the way they were made, what they were used for and what sort of actions and intentions were related to the formation of these objects as such. This results in us ascribing to them the specific interpretational cultural schemata.

Yet, with other aspects of the material culture, consensus in the discipline is achieved with great difficulty, or not at all. If we have never seen a pounder in our lives, how are archaeologists able to make this interpretation and this distinction? How are they able to distinguish the motivation of the actions that resulted in the creation of

a pounder or a hammerstone, or an arrowhead? Tilley (2000:422), who posed similar questions, replied:

*The problem has always been the precise assignation of meaning. [...] This involves a search of recurrent associated elements in relation to their contextual patterning. [...] Several strategies may be utilized.*

Tilley (2000:422-423) proposed meticulous contextual and relational analysis and generalized about the ways this can be accomplished. Indeed the ascription of meaning to material remains, the recognition of the actions that formed them and the interpretation of the motivation behind these actions, all cause great difficulty. Yet, this is essentially what archaeology is about. Contextual and relational analysis, possible anthropological parallels, research for archaeological parallels, experimental archaeology, "common logic" on the basis of our common humanity (Ingold 1994, Mithen 1996, Watkins 2001, 2002, 2004a) are all ways of approaching the kinds of motivations behind actions of the past.

This work will propose a method which will assist with tracing a particular kind of motivation; the conscious, deliberate intentionality to alter the physical world in order for agents to express their beliefs, ideas and ideals. For now it should be stressed that it is actually the motivation behind the actions, behind the material traces, that initiates the differentiation of these actions. It is the motivation to smash something that generates the action of creating something heavy to accomplish this with (hammerstone / pounder). By analogy: it is the motivation to express sacred beliefs, ideas and ideals that ignites the mechanism / starts the process of ritualization of actions so that this is accomplished. Without the specific motivation ritualization would not start.

... in order to communicate and re-establish them [the sacred beliefs, ideas and ideals] via symbolism among the practitioners ...

Ritualized actions happen with the motivation to express sacred beliefs, ideals and ideas. The motivation to express initiates the process of ritualization. While the intention is to express and the way this happens is with the mechanism of ritualization, the purpose for this happening is the communication and re-establishment of “the expressed”. By analogy to the pounder / hammerstone example: need / wish and motivation to smash lead to the creation of a heavy tool. The purpose though was the smashing not the creation. By expressing, communicating and re-establishing sacred beliefs, ideals and ideas, via performing / acting and practicing ritualized actions, the agents’ purpose is to validate their beliefs, which they have created as beings capable of symbolic thinking and cognitive fluidity (Mithen 1996:76-78, 173).

The only way for this to be done is via symbolism. Symbolism is essential to every communication (Bloch 1974, 1977, 1982, Leach 1976, Geertz 1973). Via the symbolic practice, the agents re-establish what they were motivated to express. “The established” is challenged and validated and then re-established. For agents to validate their sacred beliefs in the framework of ritual may seem self-explanatory; there is a vast anthropological and sociological literature that supports precisely this (Bell 1992, 1997). But for them to challenge their own beliefs, ideals and ideas, via the ritual they practice in order to express them and establish them, may seem self-contradictory. However, by the process of expressing these beliefs, the process of challenge through the state of establishment and the process of re-establishment is logically un-avoidable.

*Ritual can be a strategic way to traditionalize, that is to construct a type of tradition, but in doing so, it can also challenge and renegotiate the very basis of tradition to the point of upending much of what had been seen as fixed previously or by other groups*  
(Bell 1992:124)

Ritual is shaped, shapes and is reshaped. Otherwise, change, generally within the general communication system and particularly within the ritual system would not

be possible. For example, when figurines of the “God of Copper” appeared in the archaeological record seemingly suddenly, this appearance presupposed that the pre-existing ritual system, which had no need, no explanation, no motivation to ritualize this belief, ideal or idea about copper, had to go through an internal challenge. Due to the new believed reality, it had to change through this challenge. The change would help it to establish itself in order for it to be able to accommodate the new cognitively explainable appearance. Communication, motivation, expression, challenge, negotiation and re-establishment are needed for the ritual to function in the first place and are reproduced by the ritual itself. [...] *ritual practices are themselves the very production and negotiation of [...] relations* (Bell 1992:196).

... [practitioners,] who have acted in view of dealing emotionally with situations of their reality, of understanding and explaining themselves and their world, ...

This second part of the definition of ritual could have also been formed on the basis of what ritual is and what ritual actions do, how and why. However, in the process of this definition, while more and more essential aspects of the practice of ritual are revealed, it is necessary to shift the emphasis from the actions to the practitioners who practice them. In this way, more and other aspects of ritual can be demonstrated and others already demonstrated can be emphasised.

As previously stressed existentialist debate on religion concentrates mainly on whether the “raison d’être” of religion(s) is to bring the believer closer to the sacred, so that the believer can experience the sacred (Eliade 1949a, Otto 1923, Renfrew 1985:16), or whether its “raison d’être” is the resolution of mysteries (Gerth and Mills 1948:267-359, Geertz 1973, Lawson and McCauley 1990:157) (§ 1.4.1 - 1.4.2). It has been argued that in archaeology this does not need to be an antithesis, but it can be a synthesis (§ 1.6.2). Existential questions concern archaeology on the basis of why ritual was

practiced by the sociocultural systems we study. Functionalist approaches are reductionist and do not explain fully the phenomenon of the existence of religion and of ritual practice. In its majority, archaeological research without excluding the first hypothesis (experience of the sacred) has focused on psychological and cognitive factors, as the characteristic of our species for curiosity and mystery resolution.

For example, Hodder (1990) has explained the “raison d’être” of religion and ritual on the basis of the idea of the *domus* and the *agrios*. *Agrios* is everything outside both the *domus* and the natural-empirical environment. The metaphysical, the superhuman, the supernatural, the unknown, the beyond is *agrios*. The need to bring the *agrios* in the *domus* and domesticate it is based on the need to encapsulate it mentally, to understand it and explain it. This process of domestication takes place by the formation of symbolic systems, religion and ritual. Cauvin (1994) and Watkins (2001, 2002, 2005) find, as an intrinsic element of the species, the need to express and explain what prehistoric people were cognitively capable of creating with imagination and of reproducing on the basis of memetic evolution (Watkins 2002:42, Dawkins 1976). As previously mentioned Renfrew (1985:16) preferred Eliade’s (1949a) and Otto’s (1923) explanation of the “raison d’être” of religion(s) on the basis of the believer coming closer to the sacred (§ 1.5.2). Verhoeven (2002b:248) attributed the abundance of ritual practice in the beginning of the new sedentary world, firstly, to the need of the people to explain their new world and to deal emotionally with their new conditions, while he accepted cognition, functionality and communication also to have played a dominant role. The difficulty of our discipline to establish prehistoric encounters with the sacred, beyond the construction of the sacred with liminality (Leach 1976) directs us towards Geertz’s (1973:90) definition of religion, without excluding the psychologically (and logically) valid possibility of the ritual agent’s need to come closer and experience the sacred. Cognitive explanations on the basis of our common human curiosity and need to seek for explanations to phenomena (Geertz 1973:100-101) seem the most appropriate within the constraints of our discipline.

So, the agents of ritual practice it, in order to be able to deal emotionally with situations of their reality, sacred real as really real (Geertz 1973:109-123), and in order to understand and explain themselves, their world and their place within it. This can be further understood in comparison to the extent of secularization of our modern western life, where the decline of religious life could be attributed to the advance of natural sciences, which have resolved most of the mysteries of our world, making ritual seemingly redundant.

... so that order, in the way they understand it, can be maintained or challenged ...

“Order - maintained or challenged”, may seem a repetition of the “re-establishment of beliefs, ideals and ideas via symbolism”. Partially it is, but the emphasis here is on the “order”. Order here refers both to cosmological order and to social order. The participants have practiced the ritual so that they can maintain and challenge their order. Order for them will follow rules prescribed by their sociocultural, contextual and mytho-logical tradition, their ideas and ideals. Establishing and maintaining order, makes people feel emotionally safe (Bloch 1982). More importantly, it means that via the practice of ritual, agents have managed to order their world; to understand it and explain it. Geertz (1973:100-101) demonstrated that humans, because of biological, psychological, and possibly other reasons, cannot stand chaos. They need to understand, and in order to understand they have to categorise and classify and order. If the new data do not fit their case, they are capable of challenging the order and re-ordering it, but they are incapable of leaving it in chaos, unexplainable, uncategorised, unclassified, in disorder.

Additionally, order could be viewed as social order. In this case the discussion moves to the “re-establishment of realities” (sacred real as really real). Anthropological examples of the relation of ritual and social power are numerous (Bell 1992:171-223,

Bloch 1989, Geertz 1973:193-344, Malinowski 1925, Radcliffe-Brown 1945). Douglas (1970:49-50, 84), developing Turner's (1970) understanding of the association of ritual and social order and/or power, constructed a model of four possible relations of ritual and social power, which exhibits four types of relevant social order. In short, Douglas (1970) demonstrated how ritual power and social power, changes through possible combinations of weak or strong governance and weak or strong cultural and ritual community ties. For example in the Medieval world, the church, via the sacred ritual of crowning the emperor, had the power to overthrow the latter on the basis of belief and had done so repeatedly. In times of a stronger and more influential emperor, this possibility was minimized.

Provided that it is clear that ritual creates, maintains or challenges cosmological and social order, a subsequent question could be: Does ritual power challenge ritual? As a variant and variable practice, it does this repeatedly in various ways, times and contexts. Ritual is a constant challenge to itself, because it is in constant communication (Bell 1992:124,196). Communication as already mentioned needs at least two parts, two cognitive systems which need to respond to each other (Bloch 1977:284). It should not be expected that they will always respond in accordance and in harmony. Archaeologists should neither be thinking of ritual as an authoritative system that is practiced only to establish itself, nor as a subordinated function determined by social factors. Archaeological investigation of ritual should be open to all possible functions and dimensions of ritual relations to other sub-systems and to itself, taking into consideration the vast variable of human diversity and unpredictability.

The latter can certainly be narrowed down by the consideration of sociocultural, contextual, mytho-logical and communicational associations. Therefore, how exactly ritual power causes ritual change, how this change is expressed and what kind of inter-influences it may cause to other subsystems or systems, will be determined by the combination of the processes between communication, social, cultural, contextual and mytho-logical realities.



...and their society can prosper.

The prosperity of society is a factor that encourages agents' practice of ritual. The need for social prosperity is one of these factors that also motivate and inter-influence the practice of ritual. Humans are social animals. They know how to live and survive in societies. Their need to explain the world and act upon it with ritual practices is dual: curiosity, intrinsic to their cognitive nature, and biology, the need for survival (Mithen 1996:89, Leach 1976:9). The need for survival also motivates them to live in societies and directs them to act upon the physical world with actions intended to produce their best interest. Agents are mytho-logic in their perception of their best interest. The way they understand their best interest lies within their worldview and the system of beliefs, ideals and ideas that they express in liminal zones.

Ritual action is practiced for social and biological survival, in addition to all these other reasons. If survival has been secured, then prosperity would be wished. For example, human agents practice rain ritual because they believe that in this way rain will come and this is beneficial for their crops; they perform sacrifices / offerings / votives and other practices, in order to please their God(s) / the spirits / the supernatural / superhuman; they treat their dead so that they do not haunt them / their soul can pass to the other world / for redemption. Fundamentally, they practice all these things for their interest; *for the preservation and welfare of society* (Smith 1889:28-29, Bell 1997: 4). As social beings, their survival and welfare depends on the survival and welfare of their society. Especially in small scale societies, where the interdependences on each one's roles are of higher importance than in large scale societies, where the existence of choice creates the illusion of independence, the welfare of each member of the society and the prosperity of the whole become of fundamental significance.

This argument about the reason of existence of religion and the practice of ritual, on the basis of a socio-biological need, does not disprove emotional and

cognitive arguments. The possibility of a synthesis of these arguments should not be excluded: societies-cultures needed to act upon their preservation and welfare; they needed to control their empirical and metaphysical environment while they were overwhelmed with things inexplicable to them empirically. Belief systems and ritualized actions served all these purposes.

With this definition, what we, as archaeologists, mean by ritual in prehistory comes closer to the possibilities of what ritual may have meant during prehistory (**Table 1, Fig. 6**). This has been based on logic and western epistemological abstract thinking, on cognitive conclusions based on our common human nature, on anthropological research and archaeological potential. Characteristics / intrinsic elements of the nature of ritual that have been stressed are: symbolism, ritualization, liminality, fluidity and communication. Parameters to be taken into consideration always are: culture, society, mytho-logic, order, motivation and context. Cognitively explainable reasons for the existence of religion and consequently the practice of ritual are closer to potential archaeological founded explanations (Verhoeven 2002a). However, emotional and psychological explanations of the "raison d'être" of religion and ritual should not be excluded, even as possibilities. Biological and social survivor reasons should also be taken into consideration as encouraging factors of the practice of ritual. Our well formed theories, as indicated by Verhoeven (2002a:8-24), should be revealing of several dimensions of ritual. Finally, the identification of specific intention and motivation behind the results of actions possibly is the most important aspect of archaeological ritual-identification, as in fact is of archaeological practice in general.

The intention of the definition provided is not the construction of a law. It is hoped to be a base upon which archaeological research on ritual can be facilitated. Our social science works in search of meaning - not law (Geertz 1973). It is also a common understanding amongst archaeologists that we will never know with scientific certainty what happened in the past. It is also within our common experience to have been

proved overpoweringly wrong about things that we used to believe thanks to new discoveries. This is the charm of our discipline. The possibility of a definition to be proved wrong in the future should not prohibit us from providing one. Only via the use of our theoretical tools, constant discourse and challenge can we improve our visibility to and understanding of practices of the past. In contrast, predetermining what we want to explain on the basis of what we have found will never resolve a problem of definition and identification. Check-lists and made-up-dichotomies (sacred-profane, ritual-more ritual, odd-normal) can only perpetuate the confusion. *Framing* (Verhoeven 2002a) has to be questioned on the basis of what this is that it is decided to be framed and by whose frame.

In contrast, we should be concerned with what ritual meant to a specific sociocultural system the remains of which we study. Starting by firstly understanding ritual in our own language, culture and society, via philosophy and sociology, and being open-minded about the extent of the different shades that the notion of ritual has in other contemporary cultures with the assistance of anthropology, we should be looking to identify and understand it in the past. Potentially, it may have all possible variations. Where can we find it? If a sociocultural system has not been understood fully, it could be potentially anywhere. Human subjects in all times constructed relations with non-human / superhuman / supernatural / unknown "objects" (Boyer 1994), which the mind of the former could identify beyond the empirical input of their five senses (Mithen 1996). Depending on the relation of subjects-"objects", and subjects-subjects, the subjects practiced ritual accordingly, following the rules of their perception, society and culture. If in regards to a specific sociocultural system, we have a very rich record on economy, architectural norms, technology, but lack indication of ritual practices, it should be evident that we have not understood this particular sociocultural system fully and we should be looking in a systematic way of where and how this society-culture was expressing its relation to the non-human, non empirical "objects"; where and how the particular society-culture was practicing ritual.

In addition to a linguistic, philosophical, sociological and anthropological understanding of the practice in general, when archaeologists seeks to identify the place and way of ritual practices of the past, there is one criterion that should be kept from Renfrew's list; this should not refer to artefacts, but to contexts and reconstructed actions: *The assemblage should not be explicable in secular terms in the light of what we know of the society* (Renfrew 1985:20). This should be taken only as advice for a specific point of the research and should be used as a safety net. In reality, in fieldwork and on the archaeological record of prehistory, the actual locus and the actual objects used for the realisation of ritual could be seemingly as profane as anything else used for any other purpose. What makes them different is the motivation with which they were used. So, we need firstly to have a very good knowledge of other aspects of the society-culture of which we are trying to identify the practice of ritual in order to be able to differentiate between analytical categories of potential data.

In the archaeological record: ritual can only be identified within a context where the motivation behind the actions can become clearly understood within specific sociocultural and mythological realities. Issues of visibility arise only when we are unable to think within the systems of mytho-logic, which those people used. The difficulty of doing this lies indeed within our cultural schemata and our epistemological inheritance. However, these are exactly the tools, which permit us to see things abstractly and create ways of seeing, identifying and explaining prehistoric ritual. There should be many starting points since, although we are so distant in time and in place from these past societies-cultures, what connects us is our humanity; the basic fact that both studied and students are human beings (Mithen 1996, Watkins 2001, 2002, 2005). Cognition is one window (Watkins 2002:46) with a view to starting points for ritual-identification towards art and symbolism. On the basis of our humanity and our common human nature, which seeks explanations to mysteries (Geertz 1973:100-101), another starting point of archaeological identification of ritual could be: Death.

## 1.7 Death

*Let me take a minute here to extol the inventiveness of death.*

*What could be more creative?*

*Each death unique like a fingerprint.<sup>8</sup>*

In post-processual archaeology the notation of a pattern equals the ascription of meaning (Hodder and Hutson 1986:163, Papaconstantinou 2006a:33) and therefore, of interpretation. Interpretation can only be valid if it takes into consideration socio-cultural, contextual and mytho-logical parameters (Hodder and Hutson 1986:161-166). This continuum of the contextual-hermeneutic circle is very difficult to penetrate and identify a beginning within it securely, since *everything has meaning to everything else* (Papaconstantinou 2006a:33). As it was evidenced, the attempt to identify material correlates of motivation in the archaeological record abstractly and generally was impossible and resulted in praising the importance of context (§ 1.6.2). As the questions of “what” and “why” have been answered, the question of “where” becomes urgent and the continuum of context-meaning has to be broken.

In order for this to happen, this discussion needs to go back to fundamental notions in relation to ritual. The idea and reality of the sacred and liminality, and the fluidity with which these communicate with the socio-cultural reality, has been examined. Ritualization was understood as breaking into the continuum of sociocultural communication and transforming a part of it into purely ritual communication. The motivation (to express in order) to ritualize was identified as the “key” for the mechanism of ritualization to be “ignited”. Consequently what remains to be explored is where exactly in the archaeological record this particular kind of motivation can be detected and recognised as such, securely. Namely, what category of material remains has resulted from actions which were initiated with the specific motivation to express beliefs, ideals and ideas? The way this question has been outlined points towards the practical aspect of Our problem. In order to identify a solution to this, I will start again by examining Our theoretical part first. This time this will happen

with the intention to find a way to break through the continuum of context- meaning in order to identify a starting point, with the examination of which the practical question can be answered.

### *1.7.1 Breaking through the continuum in theory.*

Religions have been seen as organised systems aspiring to resolve the mysteries of this and the other world, to provide answers about the unknown and to bring the believers closer to the knowledge of a non-natural/ *non- temporal* world (Bowie 2000, Boyer 1994, Geertz 1973, Kunin 2006, Lambek 2002, Leach 1976, Pals 1996, Watkins 2002, 2004). They have been seen to do that in theory, via myths, and in practice via ceremonies (Bell 1992, 1997, Eliade 1949a, b, 1957, Geertz 1973, Leach 1968, 1976, Levi-Strauss 1961, 1971, 1973, 1978). The world used to be full of mysteries, if not only mysteries, prior to Stoic philosophers (Allingham 2002, Barnes 2000, Craig 2002, Geertz 1973, Osborne 2004, Sorell 1987). These mysteries may or may not have been seen as such, as they were perfectly explainable via an interconnecting system of beliefs, of mytho-logic systemic tales, which helped in explaining, ordering and understanding the world. Mythology is the set of beliefs, ideals and ideas, which is expressed in ritual (Leach 1976, Levi-Stauss 1978, 1971: 675, Johnson 2003:85). If there was thunder and thunder had to be explained in a way that made sense to the way of thinking, to the mytho-logic, of a culture a myth would be created explaining the phenomenon and its cause. Ritual would have provided the physical manifestation of this knowledge, maybe the re-enactment of the myth and the opportunity to satisfy / please/ worship the believed powerful cause of the phenomenon.

Science has resolved these “mysteries” of the past providing answers which come from within a “new” logic, and has lead to the secularization of our society (Watkins 2001:5). This is a phenomenon shared in various forms by the modern western

world and not globally existent. On the contrary, in the Muslim world for example, religion still plays a dominant role, even though science is well established. In other, contemporaneous parts of the world where science has not penetrated the every-day life and the way of thinking, religion is still the provider of answers. Our relation to religion, as modern westerners, has also affected our perception as archaeologists looking for a potential way of identifying ritual practices in the past. Time barriers and our logic hinder our understanding. Our world is explained by science and logic, positioning us further away both from contemporaneous and ancient societies, who do not use our means of explaining the world.

We can however identify starting points that connect us with Them in order to be able to approach their 'logic' of seeing and explaining the world. [...] *a good archaeologist never rushes to dig holes. First he or she searches for further clues in the modern world* (Mithen 1996:78). One thing that still connects us with Them, one last mystery that we still share is death. If it is still a mystery for us, it has to have been for them, too. If we still cannot explain it with logic and science, and we still use religion to provide us with answers, they must have done so, too. If religions still exist in the modern western world it is probably because science has not resolved the mystery of what happens after death. It is most probably because of death that there are still religions, religious beliefs and religious practices (Cederroth et al.1988).

*Despite the physical evidence of post-mortem decomposition, refusal to acknowledge death as the definitive end of human life and personality is strong, and possibly instinctive.*  
(Campbell and Green 1995:ix).

There is no society without ritual, because there is no society without death. Watkins (2001:5) is actually exaggerating when claiming that *we are the odd ones out*. In our modern western society, there are indeed individuals who do not have religious beliefs and therefore do not practice ritual; they are non-religious; but as a society, or

sub-cultures we are not, yet. Ritual has not completely vanished socially and culturally from our modern western world. There are civil weddings, but there are no civil funerals just yet (Boyer 1994, Jacobson-Widding 1988). Even non-religious individuals may never spend their whole lives without having to attend a (religious) funeral, or without knowing somebody who did. Importantly, at the end of their lives, people may have no control over the religious or non religious treatment of their body. There are no human societies without death and no human societies without ritual relating to death.

Unquestionably, what is shared and therefore connects all human beings, modern and ancient is the fact that we all die. Most importantly, that we all know that we are going to die (Mithen 1996). The consciousness of death has been identified archaeologically from the epipaleolithic (Parker Pearson 2000, Mithen 1996, Lindley and Clark 1990). No matter how natural empirically the event of death may be, it emphasises the notion of the unknown, of the beyond, of the unresolved rationally, in natural terms. *Death is the inevitable lot of us all, and fear of death almost universal. [...] It is an ancient fear* (Campbell and Green 1995:ix). The sense and the fear of the unknown characterises human nature. Moreover, we all, ancient and modern, did not and do not know, cannot prove or demonstrate and cannot pass to others information about what happens after death. Conversely, all of us are capable of conceiving that something happens after death, even if we might believe it is nothing that happens. What happens after death is a matter of absolute belief created by the unique capability of the human mind to actually create beliefs. Cognitive archaeology has shown the capability of the human mind to produce concerns and ideas related to the supernatural since the emergence of modern humans (Mithen 1996).

Anthropological and archaeological approaches to the concept of death vary from functionalistic, using burial customs as the basis of sociopolitical analysis, to structural ones in search of meaning behind the actions surrounding death and burial, with a focus on symbolism, (religious) ritual and religion (Insoll 2004:70). Death has been seen as initiating production and reproduction of a number of social relations



between humans, between humans and objects, and among humans, objects and animals, which are expressed during associated ritual (Brück 2004, 2006, Campbell and Green 1995, Campbell and Croucher 2001, Dorbes and Robb 2000, Meskell 1999, Meskell 2000). *The dead does not bury himself* (Parker Pearson 1999:3), but when he gets buried, the expressed action conforms to certain ideas and ideals that belong to a belief system associated with death and the non-understandable in natural terms, other world. According to Parker Pearson (1993, 1999), *the dead is powerful* in the society of the living as they can influence and maintain social stability or mirror social change. Levis Strauss (1969, 1971, 1973) and Bloch (1971, 1982, 1986, 1988) provide numerous anthropological examples of societies who attribute to the dead an active, powerful role, demanding ceremonies, legitimating social status, privileges or punishments. Death-ritual constitutes *rites de passage, by which the passage of the living to the dead is ritualized. This is a universal function of rites de passage, [...]*. In some cases they may have *an added significance in that they act out the relation between the ideal unchanging society and the flux of the actual society* (Bloch 1971:138, Van Gennep 1960). Hodder (1987:4) senses contrast and opposition in the way humans lead their everyday lives, but experience the supernatural: *[...] ways of behaviour might be emphasised in ritual contexts, while the daily practice of mundane lives moves in quite opposite directions*. The difference between the supernatural and the savage environment is that this “third” world cannot be either seen or understood. Therefore it might be more dangerous and consequently it is definitely “agrios” (Hodder 1987). Renfrew (1985:17) emphasized that burial customs are related to cult and ritual. Leach (1968, 1976) accepted that the place and time of a burial comprises a liminal zone and focused on the stages through which the perception of the living for the dead passes, until a tomb is sealed and the dead is considered to be harmless. Liminality is created where the corpse is prepared to depart for the other world, but still partakes of the world of the living. Accordingly, the living come closer to the world of the unknown through the treatment of the one who departs.

Close to the idea of *the powerful dead*, but innovating in the way burial customs and attitudes towards death have been seen and explained is Timothy Taylor's (2002) work: the *Buried Soul*. Taylor's innovation lies in the fact that instead of trying to understand the impact that a dead, soulless body has on a cultural group as evidence of death or production of social relations, and instead of trying to comprehend the various ways that a culture may treat the dead on these bases, he investigated the incident of death from a different perspective: the sociocultural meaning and implications of the disembodied soul. He demonstrated that usually the dead, soulless, motionless body does not really, directly, affect the living. Whatever the living do to the soulless body is not related at all to the body itself, but to the soul that used to inhabit the body. The dead continues to live in the memory of the living and is capable of affecting the community (Williams 2003, 2004, Bloch et al. 1982). What every community does to a soulless body is closely connected with the beliefs that this community has about what people do after death. Therefore the primary aim of any community is to satisfy not the soulless body, but the disembodied soul and to protect the community from a "powerful dead". What is actually important for a community is to bury the soul of the dead. Namely, every community's obligation towards the dead is to facilitate the placement of their soul in the secure place, where it should go after leaving the body. All this is done with the scope of maintenance of tranquillity, equilibrium and prosperity in the world of the living.

Taylor (2002) understood burial customs not as ritually repeated activities of treatment of soulless bodies, but as formalised communal ways of excluding bodiless souls from the world of the embodied ones, for the benefit of the community of the latter. What is important in Taylor's presentation and analysis of numerous cultural examples is that he demonstrated that burial customs are expressions of the community's beliefs and ideas about cosmological and social order. For the living order has to be re-established and maintained. Bloch (1971), Geertz (1973) and Taylor (2002) provide many anthropological examples, where order in the world of the living has

been overthrown because of the event of death, or a delay of the treatment of the dead, or any accidental inappropriate development during the treatment of the dead. The communal beliefs relating to death-ritual and cosmic order are so strong, that in such cases, the community is overwhelmed with anxiety and fear which results in actual disorder (expressions of panic, feelings of insecurity and uncertainty, screams and fear of punishment). So, order -in the way the community understands it- has to be re-established and maintained. In order for this to be accomplished, a series of actions have to be practiced by the community with the motivation to express these beliefs and communal expectations, and with the intention to protect the community and secure cosmological and social order.

In this way, Taylor (2002) demonstrated that the treatment of the dead should not be understood as simply mirroring socio-political realities, but as expressing cosmological beliefs and cultural-communal expectations. Taylor's demonstration gains further significance in some archaeological contexts, where "burial customs" do not seem to conform with only one identifiable type and their variation does not seem to mirror social inequalities (§§ 3 and 4). The cultural-cosmological beliefs and the different cultural-communal expectations motivate the community to treat specific disembodied souls in different ways. In these cases, the community has communicated a different message to itself. The factors that influence the criteria of the choice of these particular souls for particular expectations and others for other expectations should be researched on the basis of sociocultural, contextual and mythological communal realities.

Approaches which start from the idea and context of death in order to reconstruct social realities and religious beliefs have been criticised as particularist (Insoll 2004: 66-71). Insoll argued that neither social reality can be demonstrated adequately by burial customs, nor a reconstruction of a past religion is possible. He claimed that religion is not linked only with death and in general, parts do not equal the whole (Insoll 2004:67, 71). However, acknowledging that deductive thinking is not

particularly productive within archaeology, and on the basis of the archaeological practice of reconstruction of a percentage of the whole from different parts, Insoll (2004) proposed an examination of many categories of the data in order for a social or cosmological reconstruction to be acceptable. Insoll (2004: 71-85) insisted that along with the dead and their treatment, factors such as the diet, the animals, the relation of humans with their environment, their social relations and contextual information should be taken into consideration, in the framework of processual archaeology. Although Insoll's (2004: 71) critique of some approaches as *particularist* was not justified adequately, Insoll's appeal for a realistic appreciation of what archaeology accomplishes on the basis of examination of percentages of a part, in reference to percentages of a whole, is an important one.

#### *1.7.2 Breaking through the continuum in practice.*

I argue that the context of death is a good starting point for the identification of actions which were practiced with the motivation to express sacred beliefs. Within the context of death actions were ritualized precisely with this significant motivation. By supporting the view that the context of death is a good starting point for the identification of ritual practices in the archaeological record, what I suggest is exactly that: a starting point. *Religion is a system of beliefs and ritual*. A particular type of ritual cannot be expected to mirror the whole of the system. However, death and death-ritual is an un-controversial and un-controversially identifiable part of the whole, from where archaeological research on ritual can start by having a safe and steady base from which to develop. The context of death is a *deliberate sociocultural context* (Campbell 1995: 29), with specific sociocultural, contextual and mytho-logical connotations, which communicate specific messages (beliefs, ideals and ideas). The syntax and semantics of the actions that surround death are structural elements of this communication.

Therefore they should also be expected to be the base of other, non death-related, rituals, which are also parts of the same whole and, on this basis, should be identifiable. Renfrew (1985:17) indicated that *patterns and relationships between the funerary remains [...] and the indications of ritual activity* should be expected to be retrievable. I argue that a community's attitude towards death is the material inside the nucleus of sociocultural, mytho-logical perceptions that carries meme-plexic information (Watkins 2002:42, 44). It is like the DNA, the material inside the nucleus of cells that carries genetic information. Watkins (2002:42) explored Dawkins (1976) cognitive research: *The selfish gene*, where the latter after examining models of biological evolution, turned to an examination of a non-genetic mechanism of evolution, where *memes (units of cultural transmission) act like the genes of biological evolution*. Watkins argued that:

*Mutually reinforcing religious ideas and beliefs, then [...] constitute powerfully contagious memplexes. [...] religious representations and [...] pervasive systems of belief, behaviour and symbolism.*

Attitudes towards death express religious beliefs and religious beliefs are expressed by actions surrounding death, reinforcing and re-establishing each other. *Structure in the belief system should engender pattern in cult practice [...]*. (Renfrew 1985:17). "Typing" the syntactic and semantic part of one section of the sociocultural whole, namely exploring the deeper syntax and semantics of attitudes towards death, provides information about the deeper nature of mytho-logic and ritual for purposes of identification. (**Fig. 7**, The wording: "Typing", was chosen metaphorically from "DNA typing", which is the analysis of sections of DNA for purposes of identification.)

Arguing that a good starting point in the archaeological research of ritual is "death", and the context of death, should not be confused with analysis of burial or cremation rites per se. It is not the actual treatment of the body that is important here, but the exploration of what death means to the society and culture under question.

What is more important and more illuminating of ritual practiced by a society/ culture, are the actions that surround the burial/ cremation when they can be retrieved: the actions prior to the deposition of the body; the choice of the place of the burial; the opening of the burial pit; the surrounding and incorporated burial symbols; the objects, animals or plants that may have been chosen to enter the context of death; the way the burial closure was done; actions following the burial. The actual burial custom is only the beginning in the identification of ritual practices. It is an un-controversial start because a burial can only be a burial. Death is only death. There is no question of which pit is which, neither the possibility of a questionable motivation. It is crystal clear that somebody died and their body was treated in some way. Two worlds are at a meeting, overlapping point: the dead and the living, the unknown and the known, or the "agrios" and the domesticated, or in any way these two worlds may have been perceived by a specific sociocultural system. One of the intrinsic elements of ritual - liminality- is created at this place, at this instance, automatically (**Fig. 8**).

By this un-controversial and definite starting point, after having identified the structural elements that constitute the actions of the context of death, research can turn to motivationally-questionable deposits. If those elements identified at the un-controversial, liminal context of death, are present in these other, motivationally-questionable deposits/ contexts, most probably the latter constitute evidence of ritual practice, too. For example, if the motivation behind the construction of "the pit with the animal bones" is not clear, structural examination of "the burial" of the same sociocultural system should be accomplished first. What will be important in the process of the identification of the motivation behind the construction of "the pit with the animal bones" will be: how the pit was made in comparison to the burial pit; where; what actions surrounding the opening of the pit can be identified in relation to the opening of the burial pit.; what categories of subjects/ objects/ animals/ plants entered the context of the "animal bones-pit"; were the same categories chosen for the burial pit, too? In what way did their deposition take place; how was the pit closed; what

actions can be identified surrounding the closure of the pit; how do all these relate to actions that took place during the treatment of the soulless body? Can there be a comparison of symbols between the two contexts? Can similar sets of symbolic actions be identified? The space and possibility for controversial identification of motivation of the construction of the "animal bones pit" is minimized in this way. Then, the investigation can move to what all these actions mean to the specific culture. The way, the sequence and the locus of these actions is of highest importance along with the actual actions.

With the death-context as a starting point, subsequent questions of the identification of a ritual system are: Can these actions, categories, symbols, combinations be traced elsewhere? Can they be illuminating of other controversial deposits? Accurate and detailed contextual information is of major importance as it is the basis of this method of examination and the only way for us to provide answers to all these questions. If these questions can be answered and a comparison with the structural elements of the "death context" can be provided identifying actions, or systems of actions, identical or of similar significance in other contexts, then a ritual system can be identified and reconstructed. How this system functions; what are its dimensions and its meaning in the specific society and culture, are subsequent matters of investigation. They are of course essential for the analysis of the system of ritual, as these will clarify the position and role of the ritual system inside the specific sociocultural one.

## **1.8 Conclusions.**

This research has attributed the pre-existing archaeological problem of the definition of ritual to the lack of definition of the problem, as a problem per-se. Non-productive questions lead to non-productive answers. After identifying the structure of

the problem, this work proceeded to propose a modern western archaeological definition in reference to ritual in prehistory. This can serve as the basis of ritual recognition and understanding by modern western archaeologists, and others who can understand modern western rationale, implications of archaeological practice and prehistoric contexts. This work has also suggested a starting point for ritual identification in prehistory, which is based on a connecting point of modern and prehistoric human beings, that of the concept of death and the meaning of the actions surrounding it.

The theoretical definition of ritual proposed lies within the particular parameters of prehistoric archaeology. In this framework the concept of diachronic ritualization and de-ritualization, based on the concept of (synchronic) ritualization as analysed by Bell (1992), were introduced. The possibility of the analytical category of "secular ritual" was rejected within the framework of prehistoric archaeology. Verhoeven's (2002:33) model was accepted as a good methodological guide for the analysis of ritual. Also, Verhoeven's (2002a) idea of classification of ritual dimensions as derivatives of particular theoretical approaches and his appeal for the use of all of them in the analysis of ritual in view of its understanding as fully as possible, has also been supported. However, it has been emphasised that ritualization is not a dimension derivative from a specific theoretical approach, but should be understood as an intrinsic element of ritual, along with symbolism, liminality, fluidity and communication.

It has been argued that the identification of ritual deposits in prehistory should be based on:

- a) meticulous contextual analysis.
- b) structural and relational analysis of all available elements

(We don't and cannot know, from the beginning of an investigation what was perceived as ritual to the specific sociocultural system we study, or what categories of objects, animals, plants and actions the particular system decided to



ritualize. A rough stone in a specific context may be equally important and sacred as an elaborate rare artefact.)

- c) research of meaning behind the patterns we retrieve.
- d) comprehension of the mechanisms and processes of ritualization synchronic and diachronic, and de-ritualization, symbolism, fluidity, liminality and communication.

Our duty as archaeologists studying a prehistoric sociocultural systems is:

- a) to be aware that ritual existed and was practiced.
- b) to try to detect where it can be identified within our data.
- c) to examine, analyse, reconstruct and describe it.
- d) to try to interpret it on the basis of the results that our contextual, relational, and structural analysis has produced about the specific sociocultural and mytho-logic system. In the light of new discoveries our interpretations may prove wrong, but it is need for them to have been offered, so that archaeological discourse on ritual can advance and develop.

This theoretical definition of ritual and this method of identification have proved successful in the regional study of early prehistoric Cyprus, where ritual had previously been identified only (i) as burial customs shown in harmonious typological conformity on the basis of their typological majority and (ii) as exceptional and isolated manifestations in the light of a few "special" depositions. Predetermined ideas about ritual practices in early prehistoric Cyprus caused analogous treatment of the material both during excavation and during publication. Selected material and minimal contextual presentations constituted obstacles to this research, which nevertheless has managed to demonstrate a wide spectrum of ritual practices in early prehistoric Cyprus. A review of perceptions of ritual regarding early prehistoric Cyprus and a

critique regarding management of contextual information follows in the next chapter (§ 2), prior to exploration of ritual practices in several Cypriot early prehistoric sites. The examination of the latter has been organised chronologically. Their selection for ritual identification and analysis has been based on two criteria: (a) provided degree of quality of excavation and publication, so that a degree of quality of contextual analysis can be maintained and (b) on the scale of excavated material, so that a degree of relational analysis can be realized.

## Chapter 2.

### *In Quest for Ritual*

Literature review of excavation reports on early prehistoric Cyprus.

*The strata of sedimentary rock are like the pages of a book...  
Each with a record of contemporary life written on it....  
Unfortunately the record is far from complete....  
The record is far from complete.....  
Jeanette Winterson (2005:x)*

#### 2.1 Introduction

Identifying ritual practices in early prehistoric Cyprus, while taking into consideration archaeological and wider cultural context has been a treatise that demanded research *ex nihilo*. Contextual analysis comprised a principal part of this research. It has been the ideology of this work that without this kind of analysis, interpretation of material remains of actions as ritual related or expressive could not have been realised (§§ 1 and 5). Objects / structures / actions have been seen as signifiers of messages whose meaning is dependant on their context within a framework of *pragmatics* (Yule 1996, Preucel 2006, Verschueren J. and Östman J.O. (et al) 2007). Natural and cultural *formation processes* (Binford 1962, 1965, Binford et al. 1968) have been taken into consideration while the aim has been the reconstruction of *systemic contexts* (Schiffer 1995:25-34) where both *signifiers* and *users* can be understood by modern western *interpretants*. In order to achieve a successful analysis of prehistoric contexts, it was fundamental to revisit sites via excavation publications and analyse the context of the excavated immobile and mobile material. This meant that publications of site reports had to be studied meticulously; no section could be left disassociated with

the rest. As Papaconstantinou (2006:1-14, 33) noted the compartmentalisation of the archaeological record demands "putting the archaeological finds back to their place". The latter was quintessential for the study of structures, objects and activities, so that they could be viewed under the light of modern and fruitful ritual theories and with consideration to ritual discoveries recently reported in the Near East (Beile-Bohn et al. 1998, Strodeur et al. 2000 and 2003). This endeavour has produced successful results and has permitted the discovery of activities unrelated to subsistence that had either been ignored or overlooked so far. Any kind of material without specific context could not consequently produce results and although it has been reported and taken into consideration, it has not contributed positively to this investigation.

It was essential therefore that this review be developed in a dual fashion: critique of the management of contextual information of the reported excavated material and critique of the few already identified ritual actions. Aiming for the avoidance of meaningless repetition, the latter is restricted here by indicating general tendencies of the excavators in interpreting ritual actions and by commenting only on striking cases and interpretations. Deeper analysis and further discussion that incorporates the excavators' views can be found in subsequent chapters, in sections where ritual activities have been reconstructed and discussed. The basis of the critique of the excavators' and editors' work in regards to ritual awareness and subsequent treatment has been based on current ritual theories within the framework of archaeological thought (§ 1). Critique on the quality of contextual information provided by excavators/ editors has been based on whether an understanding of the physical archaeological context as a matrix result of processes can be achieved through the study of these reports (Hodder 1981, Hodder et al. 1986:175-183, Trigger 1989:348-357, Papaconstantinou 2006a:32-33, 2006b:1-21).

## 2.2 Review of general publications on Cypriot early prehistory

An overview of publications on early prehistory of Cyprus reveals limited and a-systematic references to ritual practices. *Cyprus BC 7000 years of history* by V. Tatton-Brown (ed. 1979) comprised a brief account of archaeological finds on the island which emphasised several aspects of prehistoric life, but ritual. It referred occasionally to *symbolic* artefacts without providing a deeper analysis (Tatton-Brown (ed) 1979:17). *Cyprus: From the Stone Age to the Romans* by V. Karageorghis (1982) only saw *religion* in art (Karageorghis 1982:36) in an Art- historic way, and in burial customs. Although a pioneering book for its time, it is highly speculative in regards to ritual.

More recent publications are no more forthcoming. Although the *Archaeology of Mediterranean Prehistory* by E. Blake and B. Knapp (eds 2004), dedicated a chapter to *The material expression of Cult, Ritual and Feasting*, Blake declared in her first sentence that: *The material expression of ritual is arguably its least important aspect [...]*. She continued by demonstrating that attempts to address more important aspects of ritual, such as *beliefs, inspirations and social purposes* are *problematic endeavours* (2004:102). Although her intention was evidently to demonstrate the difficulty of identifying remains of ritual actions, she dismissed those remains as not important to those actions. After briefly discussing theoretical approaches to ritual, Blake (2004:103) asserted that: *Colin Renfrew's opening chapter in the Archaeology of Cult (1985) offers a sound framework for archaeological approaches to cult and ritual practices in antiquity*. Without doubt this is an inspiring, but outdated work on ritual theory (§ 1.5.2 - 1.5.4). Blake continued with a general discussion about ritual and society, feasting and statuettes and when she finally had to discuss evidence, the author admitted limited knowledge of Cypriot prehistory (2004:110). She used examples from other areas of the Mediterranean such as Italy and Spain and referred to Cyprus only in regards to the Bronze Age. Another recent publication, *Cyprus Before History*, by L. Steel (2004), referred to ritual practices as a part of the *ideological expression* of early Cypriot society, but without fully understanding or

attempting to discover what these ideologies were. Although Steel (2004) acknowledged the validity of research on ritual actions and recognised some actions as such, she looked into para-products of ritual practices without exploring the latter systematically. Her worthy work, providing the reader with a general “history” of Cypriot prehistory, strictly referred to burial customs and to the iconography of figurines in an a-contextual and a-relational way with only minor exceptions (Steel 2004:76).

### **2.3 Review of specialized publications on Cypriot early prehistory**

For the time span covering the Aceramic Neolithic phase until the Middle Chalcolithic, only a few works were dedicated to ritual related activities: one of the few is the publication of *A ceremonial Area at Kissonerga* by E.J. Peltenburg (1991), which is a work fully devoted to a single ritual action; the structural deposition of a hoard of exceptional and highly symbolic objects. Exceptional contextual presentation and analysis can be attested in this report along with engagement with contemporary ritual theories. The lack of comparative material coming from the island at the time of this publication necessitated comparative analysis including material from the mainland of eastern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, the identification of a ritual action as an exceptional practice within the specific cultural system cannot constitute identification of the ritual system for the Chalcolithic of Cyprus. More work is needed for the identification of ritual practices at the site of Kissonerga-Mosphilia in comparison with the local ritual practices and contextualisation of the former in the history of ritual systems of the island.

Two more works which entirely focused on just one aspect of ritual life are the publication of *Aspects of Burial practices in Early Prehistoric Cypriot sites c. 7000 - 2500/2300 BC* by M.K. Tomazou (1987) and the publication of *Early Prehistoric Burials in*

*Cyprus* by K. Niklasson (1991). Both of these concentrated solely on burial customs and comprised the only collections that provided an overview of the burial practices of Cypriot early society.

Tomazou's (1987) work on burial customs comprised a well made catalogue providing details about individual burials and then showing and analysing them diachronically. He examined all burials from early prehistoric Cyprus that were reported before 1987. The shape of the grave, the alignment of the body and the categories of grave-goods were the base of his analysis. In most cases he unquestioningly accepted the data provided by the excavated reports focusing on discussions about the relevant dating of tombs and sites. He treated burials as a separate archaeological context completely isolated from other surrounding evidence and certainly from other interrelated activities of those societies. A grave in a settlement site was not treated in a different way from a grave in a cemetery. Nevertheless, he discussed the importance of this shift in the choice of the place of the deposition of burials, following an evolutionistic approach to the explanation of the organisation of the first cemeteries. (Tomazou 1987:215).

Conversely, Niklasson (1991) provided her reader with all the necessary details related to a burial, without failing to see and comment on their wider context. She grouped the examination of similar deposits and thus managed to explore different activities concerning rites during the burials. She also questioned several excavators' interpretations in regards to the burial customs. Her major contribution is the collection and publication of the burials from the cemeteries at Souskiou, which were excavated by several researchers in a time span of about 40 years and remained unpublished. Particularly useful to this research proved to be Niklasson's work on burials from Kalavassos-Tenta, since details on them were absent from the excavation report of the site, because of the pending publication of Volume II, until 2005 (Todd 2005). Additionally, Niklasson's (1991: 166, 167) suggestions for possible patterns related to

Khirokitia burials and for further research for their demonstration proved fruitful within the scope of this research (§ 4).

Other monographs regarding Cypriot material generally considered to be of ritual nature involves the work of figurine specialists. Figurines in several materials, representing humans, animals or unidentifiable creatures, have dominated discussions concerning rituality, though predominately in an a- contextual way. Monographs on figurines saw them mainly as ritual paraphernalia (Karageorghis 1962, Vagneti 1975, Vagneti 1980, Karageorghis and Vagneti 1981, Morris 1985). The debates about the iconography, iconology, semiology and the use and function of figurines are endless. All authors saw and analysed figurines as autonomous units rather than as members of a whole and contents of specific contexts, while their synthesis of research was based predominantly on plundered material. Notwithstanding the powerful iconology and symbolism of these objects, when relational and contextual analysis is ignored in their study, this leads to impasses and fruitless debates that extend from functionalistic interpretations of the figurines as instruction dolls (Peltenburg 1991:91, 99, Goring 1991:49-55) to extremely romantic interpretations of them as gods or goddesses (Gimbutas 1989, Karageorghis 1962, 1969, 1970, 1982, Karageorghis et al. 1981). All these intriguing human representations inspired discussions on ritual without one of these authors clarifying why they considered figurines ritually related. Regardless of the interest that such interpretations might have for specialists, art historians and semiologists, or the indeed priceless information archaeologists can obtain by their specialised study, the ritual nature of these representations remains to be judged by the context where they were last deposited deliberately by the people who last used them. Within the framework of *ritualization* and *de-ritualization*, it is not the object itself that signifies rituality, but the actions that surround the object and the surrounding context of its last deposition.

Figurines attribute meaning to the context where they were found and vice versa. A great bulk of work on prehistoric Cypriot choroplastic art involves the study of



plundered material for which, sometimes, only rough topographical references have reached the archaeologists. However, the analysis of this material has influenced critiques and interpretations of properly excavated material. Sensing the symbolism of these representations as pieces of work or art by humans who [...] *like us, understood and expressed something of their humanity* (Watkins 2005:88), the particular nature of such representations has always been taken into consideration in this research and has been seen as an attribute to questionably ritual deposits. Worth underlining here though is the fact that the overwhelming interest in human or animal representations, wherever they occurred, along with the feeling that emerges from the literature that they were ritual objects, undermined the examination of other ritual paraphernalia in the past. Consequently, while acknowledging the symbolic importance of a figurine, this research sees equal rituality in a piece of antler or a pebble having been deposited in a context empowered with rituality. Therefore the figurines or other forms of human or animal representations used as ritual paraphernalia interest this work no more than a rough natural stone, used in specific patterned ways in attested ritual contexts.

#### **2.4 Review of excavation reports on Cypriot early prehistoric sites**

A brief overview of excavation reports of early prehistoric sites in Cyprus would demonstrate a-religious or a-ritual societies. Technological developments and socio-economic practices were the focal point of research, analysis and interpretation of life in early prehistoric Cyprus. So far the identification of any ritual context in Cypriot early prehistory had depended largely on the personality of the excavators, their sensitivity to the subject of ritual and their receptivity. Furthermore, their approaches were determined by tendencies of emphasising certain categories of actions while failing to notice others. All excavators seemed to have been intrigued by the burial customs of this culture and the material concerning anthropomorphic or animal

representations. The latter were mainly seen in an art-historic way and were treated a-contextually (Guilaine 2003b, Le Brun 1981, 1984, 1989, 1994) with only a few exceptions (Peltenburg 1991, Peltenburg 2003a). Burial customs were presented, analysed and comprised important parts of excavation reports. In different ways and degrees, all excavators / editors adequately demonstrated the individual context of burials. Yet burial customs as a whole were only perceived as the events of depositing the dead in a certain manner. Uniformity in the treatment of the dead was attested in each site, on the basis of general patterns, while the meaning of exceptions in the treatment of the dead was largely ignored. This research has viewed burial customs as part of the ritual life of the prehistoric communities rather than as a separate category of material deposits. The incident of death and the way this was treated by members of the Cypriot early communities has been seen as demonstrative of those people's cosmological beliefs (§§ 1.6 and 1.7). The context of death has been perceived as a zone of liminality, where other actions interlinked with the event of the burial have also taken place. In this light, many excavators/ editors failed to identify patterns which reveal important aspects of the life of those societies, while others sensed them but felt unable to support them at the time (Niklasson 1991, Peltenburg 2003a).

In certain cases the excavation methodology and the prioritisation in the presentation of the data, the unnecessary evaluation of the material and therefore the uneven scale of the detail in which material and context were presented have hindered our perception of ritual related activities. This is indicative of the difficulties this research faced due to the way particular sites were excavated or published. *Documenting archaeological context* (Papaconstantinou 2006:15-16) was not always done in a way that would provide full access to the evidence. Consequently, contextual analysis could not always be realised in the detail needed, due to the nature of the data. Several excavators did not show the adequate perspicacity to the importance of the presentation of contextualised evidence. On certain occasions this was additionally due to the aims of those excavations. For instance, in the late 70's and 80's, when Le Brun

(1984, 1989, 1994) was thought to have been excavating the most ancient site of Cyprus, the origin and the economy of those people whose settlements were being excavated, seemed more important than other aspects of their life. Therefore, analysis based on spatial distribution per excavated level and on typological percentages of material could answer these kinds of questions. Unfortunately this approach can forward other research interests only with extreme difficulty. Other researchers, as I. Todd (1987) working contemporaneously with Le Brun in Cyprus, provided more carefully examined contexts. Yet, he also failed to identify ritual activities in his *domestic* structures. Conversely, E. Peltenburg (1988, 1989, 1991, 1998, 2003a) proved discerning in the way he perceived and presented contextual evidence and cult practices, having used the results of specialised research and contextual analysis in a more fertile way. P. Dikaios (1940, 1953, 1961), excavating in an era when archaeology in Cyprus was in its infancy and researching at a time when archaeology had just started using the positive sciences, surprises with the meticulously detailed way he presented his well contextualised data. Although he mainly advocated functionalistic views, in several cases he proved particularly bold in his interpretation of several contexts as ritual. Since the quantity of the excavated comparative material -and to an even greater degree- the quantity of the published comparative material was rather limited at his time, he pioneered in sensing rituality correctly in particular contexts. At other times, however, he rather imaginatively applied an evolutionist approach to the evidence.

#### *2.4.1 Excavation Reports on Cypriot Pre - Pottery Neolithic B sites.*

- **Kissonerga-Mylouthkia**

Presently, the excavation report of Kissonerga-Mylouthkia Pre-Pottery Neolithic phase comprises the only complete publication on a C-PPNB site. In the area of

Kissonerga-Mylouthkia, six wells were excavated (110, 116, 113, 2030, 2070 and 2100), a building (340) and three pits (347, 337, 338) (Peltenburg et al. 2003). The excavation publication of three wells (KMyI 2030, 2070 and 2100) is pending. The present publication starts with a very informative introductory chapter explaining the project goals and initiative, analysing the environment and the surroundings of the archaeological area, focusing on environmental change and presenting current activities at the area. The section dedicated to the explanation of the recording and archiving system and especially the appendices in the end, presenting all registered material in context is one of the most positive features of this publication. Well contextualized data in the appendices proved to be a priceless tool for this research. In every specialist's report a section entitled "contextual analysis" can also be found. This was most probably an editorial guidance with positive results. However, every specialist fit contextual analysis to the needs of the type of their material instead of vice versa. Each one of them interpreted context in their own way according to their evidence and the questions their specialized study sought to answer. Peltenburg in the end (§ 11.2, 87-93) collected this information and analyzed spatial and cultural context generally. Particularly successful is figure 11.3 (Peltenburg 2003a:88) in his analysis, which depicted drawings of the sections of the wells. Contextual information based on quantities and concentrations of categories of artefacts and ecofacts in combination with the level at which they were found was provided there. Nevertheless, three kinds of difficulty arise in regards to contextual analysis especially of Kissonerga-Mylouthkia wells (110, 116, 133): the first one is due to excavation methods in a deep, narrow space as a PPN well, the second regards distinction between natural and cultural deposits in such a context, and the third, the way context was treated by certain specialists, restricting possibilities for further research.

Firstly, contextual analysis problems derived because of the difficulties that were faced during the excavation of the CPPNB wells and the kind of retrieval techniques that were required due to the particular nature of this type of feature as an

excavation unit. Yet, slight differentiations in the way this type of feature was treated could have resulted in a better understanding of its context. CPPNB wells were very narrow spaces of maximum diameter more or less a metre and could reach a depth of more than 10m. Well 116 survived for a depth of about 8.50m. Eight metres above the ground is approximately as high as a 4 storey building. This should be imagined in depth; the excavator has to descend in a very narrow space, for a depth of some storeys and excavate. The movement of the tools, bucket and body is extremely difficult. The lower somebody goes the less light there is and additional technical light is required, even though it makes space even narrower and hotter. It is a humid dark tube within which it is difficult to manoeuvre.

All this limits the potential for smaller objects to be detected on the spot; so the place (middle / periphery / edge of the well) and the level (depth or asl) of their retrieval is very difficult to record in situ. That is why Paul Croft (2003a, b) dry sieved 50% and wet sieved the other 50% of the fills he excavated. The samples coming from the wet and dry sieving had a unit number which corresponded to the well-fills numbers. Different numbers were attributed to the fills of the wells, when the excavator detected change in their colour and texture indicating differentiation of excavation units. A fill, however, may have had the same consistency for many metres in a well; for example Fill 124 in Well 116 ran for just a little more than 5m and fill 282 in Well 133 was 3.20m deep (**Fig. 18**, Peltenburg 2003a:figure 29). So, clearly, the material which came from these particular fills and was not recorded on the spot cannot be more specifically contextualised in regards to the place of its retrieval. Although it is evident that nothing was missed during the excavations at Mylouthkia and particular effort was made for some deposits to be recorded in situ, it will be demonstrated that smaller excavation units were indeed needed. It would have been much more useful, if in addition to the unit numbers that were attributed to fills signifying change of deposits, extra numbers were given to sub-units, signifying change of depth or asl, about every 20-30cm. Although this may seem ineffective in a context in which everything was

expected to have been mixed because of water action and other factors, this would definitely have supplied us with more specific information about the position of retrieved objects and relevant concentrations. This method could have also proved constructive in the distinction between natural and cultural factors that affected the sub-contexts of the wells. Lastly, many more results and more useful results could have manifested from the specialists' analyses.

Secondly, the excavators' certainty that the fills of the wells were mixed to a great extent affected the way these fills were excavated, analysed, and interpreted. In general, with only few exceptions, the fills of the wells were considered results of natural processes. Natural factors that affected the context of the wells were very well explained by Croft (2003: 3-9) and Peltenburg (2003a:89 - 93) and they were stressed by all specialists. Wind and dust contributed to the filling of the wells, but water action was what affected the fills of the wells the most. Rain caused the upper layers of the surrounding earth to slide into the presumably unprotected mouths of the wells. Rain water would take with it whatever lay on the surface and would cover previous deposits in the wells with even more earth and water. Water action, particularly within a deep pit, has the effect of mixing intentional and unintentional depositions. The edges of the well were of soft *havera*, a calcaceous deposit, not extensively absorbent. So, a pool of water would gather every time after a heavy rain, mixing the deposits, causing some objects to flow and others to sink. Rain water would also cause underlying deposits to subside. Then the water would have been absorbed by underlying deposits or would have gradually evaporated leaving the top of each fill to dry. After the accumulation of so much soil every time and cultural as well as natural depositions, each fill would become a sealed safe deposit and water action would only affect its very top. Consequently, the context of a well is expected to have been disturbed naturally repeatedly.

Natural taphonomy processes did affect the contexts of the wells. However, it will be demonstrated (§§ 3.2 and 3.5.1), that natural taphonomy processes were not and

could not have been the major contributor to the content and context of the wells. The false decision by the excavators of the site that the extent of natural disturbance was pervasive, affecting all the depth of the wells led to excavation methods in large units rather than smaller ones and to contradictive interpretations of these units. Striking example of a result of this practice is Fill 124 of Well 116. Detailed analysis of this fill and discussion on its formation is realised in § 3.5, in this work. It is worth underlining here, though, its misinterpretation in the *Kissonerga-Mylouthkia publication*. Fill 124 was a unit that ran for about 5m. On the one hand the excavator thought of it as one depositional event (Croft 2003a:5). Surprisingly, despite the volume of soil this large unit generated, he considered it a naturally accumulated post-abandonment fill. On the other hand, the large amount of sea-shells found within this fill, was explained because of people collecting shells on the nearby beach and throwing them in the well, every time after consuming them (Croft 2003b:50-51, Ridoute-Sharp 2003:77-80). Evidently this is a contradiction since a naturally accumulated deposit in one episode could not have possibly accumulated a large amount of ecofacts through cultural gradual deposition. Again, organisation of the excavation in smaller sub-units would have helped the distinction of natural and cultural factors that contributed to the formation of Fill 124 and could have clarified its nature.

Both the large excavation units and the decision that the fills of the wells were extensively mixed affected the way specialists treated their evidence from the wells. Mary Anne Murray, for example, who studied the plant remains and took context into consideration in terms of fills, reported that there was a higher density of plant remains in Well 133 (2003:59-71) than in Well 116. Smaller unit numbers could have enabled her to see densities or concentrations of specific plant remains in specific fills or around specific levels. Her results could have contributed to the possible recognition of cultural choice of plant depositions in the wells. Eleni Asouti (2003:73-75) and Ruby Cerón-Carrasco (2003:81), who studied the wood charcoal macro-remains and fish remains respectively, both considered context per fill, but again the fills proved too large and

they were not able to detect any specific concentrations. Carol McCartney and B. Gratuze (2003:11-34) discussed chipped stone per period rather than context. Nevertheless the fact that precise information about the context of obsidian was available contributed to their meaningful discussion on *Context and assemblage function* (McCartney and Gratuze 27-29).

Ridout-Sharpe (2003:77-80), who studied the mollusca, discussed evidence from 4 wells (2003:77) but presented evidence from only three: Wells 110, 116 and 133, without naming the fourth well. In her "contextual analysis" she discussed evidence only in features mainly comparing wells 116 and 133, while completely ignoring Well 110. Both her discussion and the tables she provided focused on Well 116, which she concluded was used as *a dump for food refuse since over 2000 limpet shells* came from this well, comprising 97% of the total of shells, she studied. However, the study of animal bone from this well (Croft 2003:50) did not support her argument: *a handful of pig bones and teeth, a distal humerus of a goat and five caprine teeth, and two scraps of bone of a small bird* from Fill 124 (which was however more than 5m deep!) and *a few crab claws and a dozen fish remains* were found *scattered through the fills of the well* (Croft 2003:50). So, Ridout-Sharpe interpreted Well 116 without having studied possible variations of its fills, in case that specific concentrations of shells could be noticed. Most importantly though, even if she attempted to do so, five metres of the surviving 8.50m of Well 166 comprised Fill 124. It is therefore doubtful whether meaningful results could be concluded even in this case. Moreover, in Table 9.4 where Ridout-Sharpe (2003:79) attempted to present numbers of mollusca contextually, three of the wells (including 110 and 133) were grouped together, while Well 116 was attributed a separate column. As 1 of the 53 *Monotonda turbinata* was found in a well other than Well 116, it would be of extreme interest for this research to know in which well this was found and in which fill. Additionally, it would be very interesting for an informed reader to know whether the 47 *Monotonda turbinata* found in Well 116 presented any particular concentration. *Monotonda turbinata* shells were found in graves at Khirokitia with consistency, and the



history of the treatment and deposition of this particular shell would be very interesting within the framework of this analysis. Additionally, another kind of shell with particularly interesting history, the *Charonia* (triton shell), is missing from Table 9.4 (Ridout-Sharp 2003:79), where supposedly contextualised evidence was reported, and despite the fact that it was recorded under Marine shells in Table 9.3 (Ridout-Sharp 2003:79). The context of this sample can not be found not even in regards to archaeological features, as shells customarily were not given *small find numbers* and they are absent from the relevant appendices unless they were worked. Shells were attested as important ritual paraphernalia in later prehistoric contexts and the outset of their ritual history in deliberate depositions would certainly be of great interest.

Similar evidence management was noticed for the ground stone industry. Adam Jackson (2003:35-40) who studied the ground stone from the site, did not consider his material per fills but per features. In his discussion of context he compared the two chronologically distant wells (116 and 133), but not their individual sub-contexts, while excluding from his analysis Well 110. Nevertheless, the reader of this excavation report can navigate from Appendix B to Appendix D, and with extra work, they can see which types of ground stone industry were found in which fills of which well (§ 3.5.3, Tables 3 and 39).

Lastly, it is necessary for the exceptional work offered by Paul Croft as a specialist to be mentioned. Croft provided a very detailed excavation report (2003:3-9) and re-discussed the evidence providing exact position, level, spatial and relational information of human and animal bone, ecofacts and artefacts in his report of the animal bone (Croft 2003:49-58). Having the advantage of having excavated the features, he did not restrict his material to analysis and conclusions that derived only from the animal bone study. With exceptional receptivity of context, he made meaningful contributions with the association of his material with the rest of the finds in relevant fills of the wells. Moreover he used every piece of specific contextual information he had, in addition to fill numbers, and he systematically used the exact level and place of

retrieval of an object, when available. Thanks to his report, we know exactly, or within 20cm, where the obsidian blades were found, where and in association with what the animal and human remains occurred and which deposits seemed more secure than others possibly more mixed. With this kind of contextual analysis, he was able to identify three intentional events of structured deposition in Well 133 and disagreed (2003:55) with S.C. Fox (2003:43-47), the human remains specialist, in regards to human ambiguous depositional events (§ 3). S.C Fox saw her evidence also per fill numbers, although it is clear through Croft's report that exact level numbers (asl) were available for her material and could have been used. On the contrary, she based her conclusions only on the poor osteological evidence she had at her disposal, ignoring particular concentrations and considering the interior of wells as all mixed.

In general, it has to be noted that not withstanding the difficulties associated with the excavation and management of the well context, the contextual presentation and analysis in the excavation report of Kissonerga-Mylouthkia CPPNB is the most detailed and best user-friendly report that this research had to consult. It proved to be priceless in the examination of context within this research. Peltenburg and his team, who pioneered in the excavation and analysis of the first ever discovered prehistoric wells in Cyprus, managed to present them well-contextualized in time and space. Because they were pioneers at the excavation and presentation of such contexts, it is to be expected that they might have overlooked important aspects within well contexts.

Nevertheless via their report they promoted and facilitated further research towards every direction. Regarding awareness of and informed approach towards ritual practices, both the majority of the specialists and the editor proved quite successful with the questions they raised, the emphasis they placed on specific material and the constructive way they approached their evidence. Croft emphasised the close connection of the secondary human depositions and structured depositions of whole un-butchered animal carcasses (2003:52). Peltenburg (2003:42) made an imaginative, but valid, association of the deposition of an incomplete (?) human (foetus) and an

incomplete artefact found close enough for association. Both Croft and Peltenburg agreed with Jackson (2003:38) on interpreting the deposition of an elaborate macehead as a grave-good for an adult burial in Well 133. Jackson (2003:39) supported this argument with examples of maceheads found in later prehistoric burial contexts in Cyprus, Anatolia and the Levant. However, they all seemed to have forgotten how often *Motonda turbinata* shells were chosen to be placed in burial contexts in early prehistoric Cypriot sites and the significance of *Charonia* shells both in Kissonerga-Mosphilia hoard and at Ayios Epiktitos-Vrysi. Shells were there to enhance and complete the ritual of the burial of the dead and contributed to the meaning of other deliberate depositions with their significance to this culture.

The editor and excavators of the Kissonerga-Mylouthkia report were possibly influenced by traditional approaches to ritual practices, where rare objects were grave-goods and they accompanied the dead, while less elaborate objects could be neglected in terms of ritual. Additionally, although Peltenburg underlined the fact that these human burials were secondary (2003:93), to date, no researcher raised or examined the possibility that the human remains may have been deposited there in order to enhance and complete a ritual practice that did not have the burial as a focal point.

#### • **Parekklisha-Shillourokambos**

As excavations are ongoing at the site of Shillourokambos and the final excavation report is pending, this review is based on preliminary excavation reports and specialized articles. Most of them were published in BCH and the earliest dates to 1992. In October 1991 Jean Guilaine and his team, with the collaboration of the French School of Athens, started a survey expedition at the wider region of Amathounta, collecting and reporting material from several sites. Parekklisha-Shillourokambos had been first noticed by Catherine Petit in 1988, whose report to CNRS enabled Guilaine's

expedition to begin (Guilaine et al. 1992:778-779). Among several surveyed sites, *Parekklisha-Shillourokambos*, site 17 was chosen to be excavated. The following year, 1993, the first report on excavations at Shillourokambos appeared (Guilaine et al. 1993:716-717). Limited contextual information could be retrieved from the preliminary articles that followed, regarding the majority of features at the site. Although contextual analysis and research on ritual practices could not be accomplished to the extent that is permitted when complete excavation reports have been studied, the examination of this site should be considered fundamental for the presentation and analysis of ritual practices in C-PPNB.

The excavation of a close context, *Fosse 23*, which may prove to have been a well (Crubézy 2003:296), was presented in adequate contextual detail, rendering the examination of this feature not only possible, but also necessary. The examination of Parekklisha-Shillourokambos *Fosse 23* was essential for a synchronic analysis of ritual practices in C-PPNB, as it was the only feature at a site, apart from Kissonerga-Mylothkia, which produced dates in the C-PPNB and was published in adequate detail. Marotou-Ais Yorkis (Croft 2003c, Simmons 2003) has recently been excavated systematically and no adequate data has been published yet to permit contextual analysis, while legal complications prevent further access or detailed reference to the site of Akanthou-Arkosiko (Şevketoğlu 2002).

Regarding Parekklisha-Shillourokambos, the first published preliminary articles were dedicated to the explanation of the stratigraphy of the site and a brief presentation of dated material. Generally, reviewing all the preliminary articles on Shillourokambos, although information regarding stratigraphic relations of layers and dating was repeated or elucidated in successive articles, as a rule, information regarding specific contexts was constantly omitted (1995, 2001, 2002). This policy of constant provision of only partial information was followed carefully throughout the preliminary reports. Contextual ambiguity, contradictions and miss-information can be detected in all the articles on Shillourokambos. From this consistent practice only *Fosse 23* seemed to have

only partially escaped. Until the plan of sector 1 was published in 2001 (Guilaine 2001 et al 2001:38-39), only a vague impression could have been drawn of where the *death pit* (*Fosse 23*) was in the settlement. Information about its excavation and finds was given selectively every year since 1998 (Guilaine et al. 1998:604) and contextual questions could arise after the study of each of the subsequent articles. In 2003 under the prism of a specialised study by Crubézy (2003:296-311) the content and context of *Fosse 23*, was discussed in exquisite detail contributing and promoting further research and proving that contextual information can be incorporated in specialized preliminary articles.

The discovery of *Fosse 23* during the 1997 expedition changed the way the excavators viewed the site. This feature not only demanded a different excavation approach, but also caused Guilaine (1998: 604) to start discussing *cultural trends* and *ideology*. This kind of discussion was strengthened by the discovery of a sculptured head, either animal or human, in *structure 66*, which was also later identified as a well (Guilaine 2003a:4). The resemblance of this sculptured head to a feline provoked discussion about the role of this animal in the symbolism and ideology of the culture (Guilaine et al 1998). Until only recently, any discussion on the subject had been based only on the debatable interpretation of that figurine as a feline. A major discovery in 2001 (Guilaine 2002:596) of a human interment along with a whole cat skeleton and several grave-goods strengthened and justified these speculations (Vigne 2004, Pickrell 2004, Bower 2004). Limited contextual information about this *cat burial* and discrepancy between two preliminary reports and two articles (Guilaine et al. 2002:596, Vigne et al. 2004, Poydenot 2004, Gerard 2004) in regards to when human and cat burial date, did not permit their examination in this work

Additionally, reservations should be expressed here about whether all features (S 2, S 66, S 114, S 181) identified as wells by Guilaine (2003:4) are indeed wells or pits. A section in a recent article (Guilaine 2003a: 5, figure 1) of a supposed well S 114 revealed no underground stream. Additionally S 114 was only of 4m depth, in contrast to an average depth of at least 10m of Kissonerga-Mylouthkia wells, which seemed

necessary for access to the underground water horizon. Another difference between the supposed wells at Shillourokambos and the majority of the attested ones at Mylouthkia, is that the former have not been reported to have received any human remains depositions. No explanation has been provided so far why these deep features should be considered wells and not pits.

In contrast, after about 6-7m of excavation, while *Fosse 23* was reported to run even deeper, Crubézy (2003) stated that the feature was most probably a well. Additionally minimum fifteen individuals were identified to have been deposited in *Fosse 23*. As it will be demonstrated in the analysis of the depositions in *Fosse 23*, in chapter 3, the results of this research support Crubézy's present estimation. In addition to the human concentrations in *Fosse 23* in sector 1, (Guilain et al 2001b, 2002, Crubezy et al 2003), six graves of individual interments were found interspersed in the settlement probably in sector 3, which though dates to the middle-late phase of the settlement corresponding to early Khirokitian (Guilaine 2002:592, Vigne 2004:259). These graves encouraged Guilaine (2002:596) and later Vigne (2004:259) to discuss briefly social hierarchy, status and social differentiation, though without presenting any further excavated evidence that could support their hypotheses.

The fact that about ten percent of the bone found at Shillourokambos was cattle, constituted a milestone of the research at the site (BCH 121, 1997:830) and in Cypriot archaeology in general. Recent research (Croft 2003:274-278, Simmons 2003:69, Vigne 2003:248) raised the possibility of the presence of different culturally populations at the early stages of colonisation of the island by emphasising the fact that cattle were absent from the faunal remains at contemporaneous Kissonerga-Mylouthkia. Guilaine (1991-2003) did not engage himself in the discussion about the significance of the presence of cattle and only limited his presentation to the report of these uncommon finds providing minimum contextual information of their presence. Although the zoo-archaeologists on his team, Jean-Dennis Vigne and Isabelle Carrère, presented data about cattle at Shillourokambos, analysed it and compared it with other sites in Cyprus,

they did not provide contextual information in regards to cattle bone either (Vigne et al. 2003:239-251). From Crubézy's (2003) detailed report, it can only be concluded that cattle were absent from *Fosse 23*.

In the early preliminary articles, while emphasis was given to stratigraphy and explanation of the site, well contextualized evidence in the framework of preliminary excavation reports was presented. However, while excavations at the site proceeded, and major discoveries saw the light, the style of Guilaine's reports changed. His recent article on *symbolic objects* (2003b:229-340) was disappointing in terms of contextual information: only a number referring to the excavation sector was provided along with a number referring to the structure where the object was found. As not all structures that Guilaine referred to have been presented or explained in previous articles, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine the context of an object. It is perhaps expected in preliminary articles and reports that the information provided is selective. Impressive finds take priority over reporting context and delivering information about relations of deposits. This is though a practice that has been followed now for more than a decade by Guilaine's team even though more specialized articles have appeared (Crubézy 2003, Manen 2003, Perrin 2003, Vigne et al. 2003, 2004).

Especially in this last article, Guilaine (2003b) described the morphological attributes and the style of figurines and objects that he considered exceptional, in great detail, without however, explaining why he considered them special and expressive of the ideology of the community. Guilaine identified them as symbolic, but did not try to explain what he thought they symbolised. It was again the object that was interesting and not the society that deposited or discarded it at a specific place for specific reasons that made the object worth noting; contextual information was neglected in his examination. In his introduction he was already convinced that the schematic figurines were not of *practical function* ("pas de fonction pratique"), without them having been examined by a specialist for use-wear marks and as if symbolism has no functionality in a society. Guilaine failed to take into account earlier research on possible functions of

figurines as toys or induction dolls (Peltenburg 1991:91, 99, Goring 1991:49-55). Use-wear analysis would be particularly necessary in those cases in which the context of final deposition of figurines was interpreted as refuse areas by Guilaine (1995b:25). How and why an artefact of *symbolic* and/or *ideological* significance ended up in such contexts is a question that was not addressed by the excavators of Shillourokambos

Many justifications may be made, perhaps, for limited information in preliminary articles and presentation of preliminary results of research in a non-contextual or partially contextual way. However, it is harder to justify the lack of an explicit theoretical framework for the conclusions about burial customs, symbolic objects, *ideology* and social order made by Guilaine and his team. There appears to be troubling circularity in the ways the Shillourokambos team reached their conclusions and a lack of engagement with current theoretical approaches. Along with Crubézy, Guilaine interpreted the majority of the animal bone found in death pit *Fosse 23* as refuse on top of burials (Crubézy et al. 2003:303). Along with Vigne, he made statements about social differentiation and hierarchy on the basis of this single burial with a cat skeleton (Guilaine et al. 2002:596, Vigne et al. 2004:259), neglecting the rest of the evidence they had presented in previous articles, which was suggestive of different social realities. The traces of a possible triangular enclosure with traces of another parallel structure leading to *Fosse 23* (Guilaine et al. 2001:38, 39, 42, figures 1, 2) and their possibly controlled entrances were interpreted as domestic, with possible use as animal enclosures. The idols found at the site were immediately interpreted as cultic paraphernalia *a priori*.

In these terms Guilaine has been quite traditional in the way he viewed both objects and features. In terms of ritual theory, he appears to fall foul of Renfrew's (1985:11) archaeological cliché: for Guilaine, ritual is what we cannot explain; pits and wells are there merely for refuse or storage, and any peculiar structures can be interpreted in the framework of the requirements of farming.



#### 2.4.2 Excavation Reports on Cypriot Aceramic Neolithic sites.

- **Kalavassos-Tenta**

The excavation report concerning the Aceramic phase of Kalavassos-Tenta was published with the intention that it would comprise Volume I of a two part excavation report (Todd 1987). Volume II, which incorporated specialized research on the material found at the site was published only recently (Todd 2005). A report on geological and topographical aspects of the extended area of the excavation, from the ancient times until recently, was included in Volume I. Also the included history of research at the site and the explanation of the excavation and publication methodology was positively constructive. The main core of this volume of publication (Volume I) consisted of a detailed presentation and description of all the immobile material of the site. All architectural remains were painstakingly described, inter-relationally analysed and interpreted. Mobile finds were contextualised in small excavation units for which detailed descriptions were provided. This turned the publication of Volume II (Todd 2005) into an exceptional source of contextualized information with the most positive results. Stratigraphic information and interrelation of deposits externally and within larger structures was provided and explained exhaustively in Volume I (Todd 1987).

However, due to decisions related to the choice of place of excavation and the depth this was realised in particular areas, several problems regarding the chronology of areas of the site arose. N and S clusters of structures in the S slope of the hill of the site were not linked stratigraphically. Additionally, the exact relation of the structures on the top of the hill of the site with the ones found on the S and E slopes is questionable. Importantly the settlement wall and the top of the hill of the site were never linked stratigraphically. Due to well contextualized evidence McCartney (2005: 177-264), the lithics specialist at the site, was able to attest continuities and evolution on the basis of her material. Her contribution was of major importance for the clarification

of the chronology of questionable deposits and a revised history of Tenta (Todd 2005). Yet, Todd (2005:381) admitted that chronological and inter-relational problems at Tenta could only fully be resolved with further excavation and modern radiocarbon dating. These problems render the interpretation of the development of practices attested by this research difficult. Additionally, discrepancies in the publication (Todd 1987) regarding the attribution of specific structures to periods of occupation at the site render relational analysis a problematic procedure (§§ 4.2.3 and 4.4.1 A. xvii).

The way Todd (1987) approached the site lies within traditional frameworks of settlement archaeology (Brück and Goodman 1999:3). Generally, he classified *major structures* at Tenta as *non domestic structures*, *domestic structures* and *courtyard or enclosure walls*. He emphasised that the only structures that may be classified as *non-domestic* were S 1 and S 100, which were identified as *the outer settlement wall*, and S 2 and S 3, which were *inner ring [...] walls* (Todd 1987, 33). In the *list of structures* (Todd 1987, 52-172), customarily, the excavator gave a brief description of interpretative character for every structure prior to their complete examination. Structures: S 7, S 8, S 23, S 24, S 32, S 38, S 40, S 54, S 56, S 59, S 61, S 82, S 87, S 88, S 93 and S 104 were identified as **piers** within other structures. Structures: S 1, S 2, S 3, S 25, S 41, S 48, S 49, S 50, S 51, S 52, S 53, S 57, S 64, S 69, S 74, S 78, S 79, S 81, S 83, S 89, S 102, S 105, S 106 and S 107 were described either as **walls** or parts of walls, some of them of *purpose or use unknown* (S 48, S 49, S 69, S 74, S 78, S 79, S 83). The majority of structures that were not walls or piers were described as **domestic** (S 4, S 9, S 10, S 11, S 22, S 27, S 28, S 35, S 39, S 42, S 45, S 54, S 55, S 58, S 76, S 83, S 85, S 91, S 96, S 99), **presumably domestic** (S 5, S 37, S 43, S 63, S 66, S 77, S 80, S 95) and **probably domestic** (S 60, S 90). There were some structures which the excavator evaded interpreting due to **poor preservation** (S 26, S 12, S 84, S 97, S 108, S 109), and/ or **limited excavation** (S 44, S 62, S 70, S 42, S 86, S 97, S 98).

In other cases, the excavator avoided to offer an interpretation due to the **atypical** way in which some structures were built: for example structures S 73 and S 101, which may have represented the opposing mud brick walls of the same structure,

bear within their limits a paved area adjacent to the external southern wall (S 13) of complex S 14 (Todd 1987: 136). This prevented Todd from providing an interpretation. Some structures were designated as **buildings**: S 8 which was identified as "*almost certainly [...] circular building*"; S 29 as a *small preserved portion of curvilinear building*; S 72, which was excavated partially, as *part of curvilinear stone building* and S 36, which was identified as an *impressive building*. There was also S 17 which was described as a *building of ambitious size* and for which Todd avoided proposing any interpretation explaining that the artefacts related to the building did not elucidate its purpose (Todd 1987:86). These consisted of an axe, a pestle fragment, a dish fragment, a grinder, a grooved stone, and an obsidian blade (Todd 1987, 88). These artefacts were not exceptionally different from artefacts found in other structures that were interpreted as domestic, though.

There were some structures with **no descriptive characterisation**: S 94, *may have served a special purpose, which was not revealed by excavation* (Todd 1987:155). Todd's (1987:155) justification for this interpretation was the small size of this structure, but no explanation was provided for what *special* meant in this context. Also, he noticeably avoided assigning an interpretative description to S 14 complex and the structures related to it (S 13, S 15, S16, S 18, S 19, S 20, S 21, S 29, S 31, S 33 and S 71) (Todd 1987: 79 ). Furthermore, there was a **questionable walkway**: S 68 (Todd 1987: 133) and an **elliptic structure**: S 92, which *did not serve a domestic function* but probably a farming related one (Todd 1987:153).

The criteria which Todd used in order to ascribe interpretational descriptions to structures were not defined. According to Todd's (1987) account of Kalavassos-Tenta, ritual could not have been practised at this settlement site as there were no deposits or structures that could possibly indicate so; they were all *domestic* with simply different degrees of probability. It is not apparent from the evidence what made the excavator assign different degrees of probability or certainty to his description of several buildings as *domestic* spaces. Nevertheless, his approach to the evidence is not entirely

unambiguous. Todd followed functionalistic views according to which in settlement sites, space was used for domestic activities only. Current theories of the definition of *domestic* space have essayed to demonstrate that the term *domestic* can mean, or should mean to us, more than activities such as building, breeding, grinding, grounding, eating and procreating only (Brück and Goodman 1999). Accepting such a theoretical framework allows and promotes research for other activities to be identified within the limits of a so-called *domestic* space within settlement sites (§ 4).

- **Khirokitia-Vouni**

a) Publication by Porphyrios Dikaios (1953).

Dikaios' excavation report of Khirokitia comprises a beautifully detailed account of the excavations conducted at the site. He provided his reader with painstaking details regarding the stratigraphy of the structures, while their context was described in a similar fully explanatory way. The details in the description of the excavation of even ambiguous deposits raise only fruitful questions that promote research in every direction. Contextual analysis can be easily applied to the evidence he presented exactly owing to his detailed descriptions. Dikaios (1953) proved particularly skilful in reporting structures and objects found on the same floor or level relationally, thus permitting them to be located in horizontal and vertical space beyond doubt. His plans were also of excellent quality, completed with explanatory details of the position of movable and structural finds.

Difficulties arise only in some cases of movable objects, which were found on floors of buildings without interior structural arrangements. Usually, lack of structural remains meant lack of associated plan in the publication, rendering relational perception of the place of deposition of movable remains impossible. Difficulty in

spotting an object in horizontal space rendered the endeavour of determining vertical relationships between particular objects and underlying or overlying deposits impossible, also. In such cases movable material remains without detailed context (e.g. Dikaios 1953:117, 157, 171-172 and 213). However these cases are limited. In general, Dikaios (1953) provided exceptional opportunities for contextual analysis.

In terms of ritual theory, Dikaios did not follow any particular school of thought. He was aware of the possibility of ritual being practiced within the *domus* in the Neolithic and this is the way he explained the *practices of cult* he attested. His interpretation of the settlement of Khirokitia portrayed mainly functionalist and evolutionist views, without this being restrictive though for him analysing possibilities of animal and human sacrifices, hoarding and libations. On the one hand, for Dikaios (1953) burials were customarily interred under the floors of *houses*, any given burnt platform or even floor space with traces of fire was immediately interpreted as a hearth, pillars supported a loft or an attic and platforms -no matter their size and degrees of elaboration- were places for sitting or sleeping. On the other hand, in an a-systematic but imaginative way he sensed and implied the intentionality of the choice and place of deposition that conveys burials at Khirokitia. This was not based on extensive comparison of the evidence, but mostly on his instinct, relating evident intentionality with places of interment and structured deposition. This kind of correlation allowed Dikaios (1953) to attest relevant practices with confidence. Exactly due to the nature of his approach, his interpretations remain fragmentary and a-systematic, although inspiring.

b) Publication by Stanley Price and Dimos Christou (1973).

This publication regards an article published in RDAC 1973 reporting the finds from the excavations at Khirokitia, during 1972. Price and Christou (1973) excavated W

of the settlement wall. They opened a trench in the N of the settlement, N of the area named Area V, by Dikaios (1953: plate IIA) and excavated further in Area I, W of Tholos IA and S of Tholos V. The second area had been revealed but was not excavated by Dikaios (1953). In the N, they excavated Tholos XLVI and in the S, Tholos XII, which proved to have one pillar in its interior. Price and Christou (1973) linked the area they excavated stratigraphically with the area that was excavated by Dikaios and used his terminology for buildings, floors and burials. The fact that they associated the deposits they excavated with the deposits Dikaios had excavated is extremely important for any future research on the site (§ 4.2.3). This allows their finds to be incorporated with Dikaios finds and prevents compartmentalisation of any future analysis on Khirokitia.

Price and Christou (1973) avoiding Dikaios' imaginative interpretations followed his example in terms of contextual presentation. Exquisite detail in their data presentation and quality of plans and sections characterise their report especially in regards to the N trench. For no apparent reason, however, only a summary report was provided for the excavation of Tholos XII. Yet, the information provided in this summary was adequate to promote identification of patterns at Khirokitia, within the scope of this research. Price and Christou (1973) did not engage themselves in any interpretative discourse, despite the fact that they excavated ten burials in total, and restricted themselves to a detailed report of their finds.

c) Publication by Alain Le Brun (1984).

By 1981, Le Brun reported to have excavated levels I, II, and III in the W sector of Khirokitia in an area of 465 m<sup>2</sup> (Le Brun 1984: 9). These levels lay beneath the top soil and under a layer with ceramic evidence (*couche 2*) without substantial structural remains. Although Le Brun excavated W of the settlement wall and NW of Dikaios' (1953) Area V, he never linked stratigraphically the deposits he excavated with the

deposits Dikaios had excavated (Le Brun 1984:11-14, figures 4-6). Additionally, he followed a completely different system of stratigraphical references, rendering any attempt for association of the two areas an impossible endeavour. This resulted in subsequent analyses of the site in two parts: the part excavated by Dikaios (1953) and the part excavated by Le Brun (1984, 1989, 1994), preventing any possible founded unified overview of the site (§ 4.2, Papaconstantinou 2006: 53-58).

Additionally, the 1984 publication was organised in such a way that did not facilitate contextual analysis. Artefacts and ecofacts were ascribed to general occupation levels or floors, without their place of deposition or concentration to be provided more precisely or be marked on the plans. Hardly ever is a mollusc, an animal bone, a flint or even a stone vessel, a worked bone and an engraved pebble contextualized (Demetropoulos 1984:169-182, Davis 1984:147-161, Coqueugniot 1984:89-93, Mouton 1984:97-109, Strodeur 1984:129 -144 Cluzan 1984:111-124). Categorisation, typological, technological and metrical analysis, typological percentages per levels and areas, and distribution maps were provided, but contextual references were fragmentary and a-systematic.

This is exactly the way Le Brun himself treated the material (1984:191 - 197). Concentrations of artefacts and ecofacts, and spatial distributions were studied in a general and level-based way. Le Brun did not offer specific contextual information even when he described the content of structures. He referred both to structural and movable remains in a list per floor, for example: a platform, a hearth a shoulder blade and an engraved pebble (if in situ). In some cases a register number would accompany the items of his list, but not always. In the cases in which a register number was assigned and provided, there were higher possibilities of tracing an object in one of the specialists' reports. Yet, even when a register number was provided, the approach of the majority of the specialists in typological percentages rendered any possibility of retrieval of the context of specific artefacts or ecofacts minor.

Additionally, the plans in this publication were helpful for identification of structural remains, but they were ineffective when movable finds were considered; even when this concerned burials (!). These plans depicted structures as absolute circles without providing the identification number of the structure that each circle represented. Burials were depicted as smaller circles within the larger unidentifiable ones. Text referring to burials was not particularly helpful either. For example, Le Brun (1984: 37) reported that two burials were found on floor 279 of structure S 90 on level III b. No information was provided though about where exactly these burials were placed on that floor, where exactly in the structure they were found, in relation to which structural remains, and over and under which. He referred his readers to plans in figure 36 (Le Brun 1984:45). Turning to those plans, every hope of placing these burials in space diminished, because they entailed depictions of only the burial shaft with the skeleton and the possible grave-goods. This piece of information could not be retrieved not even in the section of the publication dedicated to the individual description of the burials (Le Brun 1984: 73). The distribution map in figure 35 ( Le Brun 1984:44) placed these burials roughly in the middle of a graphic circle that supposedly represented S 90, but without any other structural or movable remains depicted on it or on the subsequent plan representing the following level.

Consequently it is extremely difficult for the reader to obtain a complete view of the exact place of burials and of movable objects on each floor. It will become evident, in chapter 4, that this piece of information is particularly important for the identification of ritual patterns at Khirokitia. While the information provided by Dikaios (1953) and Price and Christou (1973) was abundant, offering endless possibilities of examination of the material, the scarcity of contextual information from Le Brun (1984) was unsatisfactory.

Lastly, not once in this publication was the question of ambiguous or special deposits ever raised. Everything seemed to have been quite uncomplicated to excavate and to explain. In the whole of 465 m<sup>2</sup> of the space reported to have been excavated by



1981 (Le Brun 1984: 9), the impression that a reader has about Khirokitia is of a village of thriving economy, whose inhabitants were busy with subsistence activities and were customarily buried under the floors of their *habitation structures*. Nowhere, could somebody detect them acting with the single motivation of celebration or worship. Those Khirokitians seem as if they had no questions about their world; as if no wonders surrounded them. Nowhere in this publication was the question of those people's belief system ever raised. Their architecture, technology and economy could possibly, more or less, be understood through the examination of this report; but complete comprehension of their society through the study of ritual practices is severely limited due to the scarcity of contextualized data.

d) Publication by Alain Le Brun (1989).

Publication 1989 started with a general discussion referring to general stratigraphic information of the settlement. In the section where every *habitation structure* was described separately, an opening paragraph was dedicated to ascription of levels, floors, and substructures register numbers to each *habitation structure*. Substructures identified within *habitation structures* were reported in a quantitative way (e.g. two benches) followed by their register number (Le Brun 1989:35-46). Those structural remains: hearths, platforms and benches were not described individually, not even in the separate section dedicated to them. Only a general description regarding them in groups, along with the characteristics of their majority and a typological division was provided in a different section of the publication (Le Brun 1989:48-60). In this publication the selection of plans can prove quite helpful and elucidating in regards to these structural remains. Again though, the context of non structural remains, burials and movable finds, can be retrieved either with extreme difficulty or sometimes not at all. Spatial distribution of burials per level of occupation, depicted schematically

within schematic representations of buildings was provided, but still the exact context of burials remains unknown.

Problems also arise because of the way Le Brun counted the floors of structures. Firstly, he did not provide either the total number of floors found within a structure, or the exact number of floors that corresponded to each level, if the particular structure survived for more than one level. Then, not all the floors were described. A selection of floors was described in detail, but the base for this selection was unclear. Sometimes Le Brun reported that a particular floor had several layers, but then he did not describe the different layers and the changes that must have been noticeable for him to be able to differentiate them (e.g. Le Brun 1989:42). Other times, quite randomly Le Brun (e.g 1989:43) ascribed only one unit/ register number to a succession of floors, reporting that this number represented a succession of floors, but without providing information on the number of floors that belonged to this succession, their depth or their consistency.

Contextual information of movable finds on the floors was generally missing. Also, categories of artefacts were noticed missing; for example stone vessels were studied, but other ground stone is absent. Nevertheless the specialised study of mobile material, artefacts and ecofacts was improved in this publication. The majority of stone vessels came with a structure number, which at least indicated a less general context than the level one noticed in the previous publication (Saliou 1989:137- 175). The same improvement was partly applied to the study of the anthropomorphic stone representations (Le Brun 1989:177- 186). However, it is shocking that any indication of context is lacking for the exceptional stone vessel fragment bearing an incised schematic human (?) figure with the hands (?) uplifted, resembling the wall painting on pillar S 82 in structure S 11, at Kalavassos-Tenta (Saliou 1989:149,172-173, Le Brun 1989: 279). Except for an inventory number, the only other detail that was ascribed to it and was published was an "hs" code indicating the level (Khirokitia 1989: 172, figure 52:9). This code was not explained anywhere in the publication. After studying the tables where Saliou (1989:141) provided percentages of vessel types per level of occupation, it can be

concluded that the specific vessel fragment came either from top soil or from informal survey collection.

The fauna and ichthyofauna remains were studied again in percentages (Davis 1989:190-221). This facilitated specialist's results. Still, the lack, again, of any information concerning any particular concentration of faunal deposits in relevance to specific places within or outside structures did not allow any possible identification of areas, where animal carcasses might have been used for purposes other than subsistence. Apart from a deer shoulder blade, which was found in burial 538 in structure S 123, level III / A and some unidentified animal bone fragments found in the fill of burial 667 in structure S 131 of level IV / B, no other bone assemblage can be useful to this analysis. Additionally, it is extremely unfortunate that no specific context other than a level number *D* was provided for the cat remains found in 1983 (Davis 1989: 193). In contrast, the study of the plant remains was very well contextualised. Hansen (1989: 236) underlined the purity and extremely good preservation of specific deposits in very specific areas considering that they might have been storage areas.

Le Brun discussed the use of space within the structures he excavated. Having already decided that they were *structures d' habitation*, he saw this space strictly as domestic (Le Brun 1989:61-62). So he explored activities that took place within these structures thinking in a functionalistic way: the pillars were to support the roof or a loft, the structurally secured basins were for washing or food processing, burnt areas or platforms were hearths used only for heating and cooking. He did not distinguish structures for specialised purposes, like Dikaios (1953) did, but he identified open spaces that he considered may have had a social purpose. Worth noting here is the free space he recognised between structure S 116 and the village wall on level E. This space remained wide on level D allowing a distance of 10m between structures S 122 and S 115. Although this distance decreased to 5m on level C, when structure S 117 replaced S116, S 118 was erected and S 122 remained in use, it still remained a large free space of about 25m<sup>2</sup> (Le Brun 1989:63). In comparison to the density in which the rest of

Khirokitia was built, this was a very large free space and was kept empty for more than three levels of occupation. Also, Le Brun underlined that the exterior of the structures that surrounded this space differed markedly from the common exterior of structures in the village, bearing traces of plaster.

Additionally, his spatial distribution maps were useful for identifying similar arrangements within and outside structures in different levels and sectors. He concluded that architectural organisation did not change fundamentally in the village, even after the wall entrance fell out of use on level B. Also, he stated that the management of *domestic* space did not change fundamentally at Khirokitia over the passage of time (Le Brun 1989:62-64). On this basis, he presented a village with continually roughly the same internal and external space management and therefore small social units interaction in similar ways for almost two millennia. The results of this work support Le Brun's impression of a long lived Khirokitia where life only slightly changed in the very end (§§ 4.5 and 5.3). Le Brun, however, did not proceed beyond this identification and did not seek an explanation of the kind of social force that kept society at Khirokitia together for so long, while forced it to fall apart in the very end.

On the whole, although the 1989 publication of the excavations at Khirokitia was improved in places, it still gave an impression of an incomplete and selective report. Nevertheless as more evidence was contextualised, in addition to the economy, technology and architecture, other aspects of the life of the villagers were taken more into consideration. Yet, Le Brun's description of the structural and movable finds in the *structures of habitation* developed in a sterile way that did not contribute positively to contextual analysis and reconstruction of actions within buildings. Consequently, the section that has been dedicated to the reconstruction of activities within buildings at Khirokitia that La Brun excavated is rather limited in comparison to the one describing activities within Tholoi that Dikaios excavated (§ 4.4.1, A), exactly because of the limited and selective information provided in Le Brun's (1989) report.

e) Publication by Alain Le Brun (1994).

Notwithstanding certain negative aspects of the third and last publication of Khirokitia, this publication showed definite improvement in the presentation of the data and their context. General discussion about the structural members that comprised *structures of habitation* preceded the presentation of the latter. The study of habitation structures was far more detailed than that in the previous publications. Furthermore it was accompanied by more detailed and explicit plans, sections and multiple photographic materials, which was problematically lacking in the previous publications. Another advantage of this last publication over the previous ones was the fact that no stone artefact category was excluded from examination. Again though, artefacts and ecofacts were not thoroughly attributed to contexts of structures, but a quantitative approach was preferred; e.g. *many flints* (Le Brun 1994: 72). The fauna was studied and presented again in percentages not allowing any contextual information to be extracted (Davis 1994:306-333). In contrast, Hansen (1994: 393) emphasised the importance of the context in order to be able to interpret some of her *unusual and warrant* plant samples. Nonetheless, in the section dedicated to the study of stone artefacts, the contextual origin of a majority of finds was easily retrievable through the consultation of relevant tables (Astruc 1994:256-289).

The contribution by the human remains specialist Le Mort (1994: 157-198) was a positive development in this publication. His participation in the project resulted in the description of burials and the presentation of their content and context in the utmost detail. His meticulous description of human depositions at Khirokitia and his remarks alter our previous understanding of burial rites at this site. Moreover, it was the first time that stone vessels found in burials were studied in a different section dedicated only to this group, acknowledging the particularity of this category (Le Brun 1994: 199-208). Even the palynology of burials comprised part of the interest of this publication (Renault -Miskovsky 1994:209 -212). Yet again, although the burial shaft itself was

thoroughly examined and presented in detail, spotting the exact place of a burial in a building remained an endeavour realised only with great difficulty. Le Brun insisted on not describing what he found on the floors of the structures except in quantities of categories e.g. Two burials no X and no Y. The detailed plans proved to be of extreme help in this publication.

Ritual practices were thought of as burial customs, examined by the physical anthropology specialist (Le Mort 1994:157-198). They were also seen as related to anthropomorphic representations which were studied separately by Le Brun (1994: 291-292). Le Brun identified patterns of deposition and provided a context (structure and floor) for figurines in this publication. He saw them mostly stylistically considering whether they depict a human or not, without engaging himself much in discussion on the meaning of these depositions. Again, although a floor number and a structure number alone could not be considered adequate for in-depth relational analysis, this was an improvement from the quantitative approach of the previous publications and the plans and selective photographs of the floors were more elucidating.

- **Cape Andreas-Kastros**

The publication of Cape Andreas-Kastros was the first publication on Cypriot material by Le Brun and his team. Research was conducted between 1970 and 1973, and the publication appeared in 1981. Then, supplementary research on fish remains was published in 1994 as an additional chapter in the last publication on Khirokitia (Le Brun 1994:335-392). After the Turkish invasion in 1974, the site had to be abandoned and field work stopped. It never became possible for Le Brun to return to the site and conduct further research answering questions that had been raised during those three years of excavation. As works were interrupted, Cape Andreas-Kastros publication was evidently not a complete report.

In terms of style, contextual presentation and ritual awareness, Cape Andreas-Kastros publication resembled the first publication of Khirokitia by Le Brun (1984). Enquiries on the ritual aspects of the life of the inhabitants of Cape Andreas-Kastros were not made at all. This was indicative of the perception of Le Brun, and possibly of a trait in archaeological perception at the time, that ritual life in a prehistoric settlement could be researched on the basis only of figurines or incomprehensible material with evident, but unverified symbolism. Cape Andreas-Kastros lacking both, while its burials were *poor in grave goods*, did not provide adequate information relating to the religious life at the settlement, according to Le Brun (1981:75).

Extremely limited contextual information was provided, while all evidence was viewed per level of occupation. The study of all material from the site was based on typological groups. Even the plans in this publication were not helpful in efforts of contextualising the material, as this was presented in distributions per level. This was also the way small finds, which were ascribed a register number, were presented in tables, demonstrating their occurrence per level. Additionally, the description of structural remains and their content was limited and selective. Regrettably contextual analysis was limited in regards to this site.

## **2.5 Review overview**

*Ritual was not important in the past and not worth studying in the present* (Bradley 2003:6, in reference to Marxist archaeology of the 60's and the 70's); could have been the slogan of publications on early prehistoric Cyprus. This literature overview revealed that when discussion about ritual activities, regarding Cyprus in early prehistory took place, it was fragmentary, arbitrary, a-contextual and a-systematic. Moreover, it was mainly contained as paragraphs in excavation reports, relevant preliminary articles and sections in monographs. A systematic analysis on ritual practices was evidently

missing. Researchers focused only on specific remains within individual sites and the majority of them identified ritual activities in burial customs only. Anthropocentric rather than material-centric approach to the data and its presentation has produced results interestingly different from those produced in the excavation reports (§§ 3 and 4).

As previously stressed, the potential for reconstruction of ritual actions can be fulfilled through thorough contextual and relational analysis (§§ 1.8 and 2.1). This review revealed an important set of difficulties that any effort for reconstruction of *context* (Binford 1962, 1965, Hodder 1981, Hodder et al. 1986:175-183, Schiffer 1995:25-34, Trigger 1989:348-357, Papaconstantinou 2006a:32-33, 2006b:1-21) would have to confront. These difficulties are related to:

- retrieval methods during excavation and associated recording e.g. large excavation units
- evaluation of the material, e.g. specific ecofacts and artefacts (pebbles, shells, rough stone) were not considered worthy for contextual information
- inconsistency in the description and presentation of the material because of its subjection to evaluation
- selective presentation of information on a basis of evaluation of the material e.g. structures considered very commonly found e.g. benches / hearths were presented and analysed in categorical groups
- choice of a quantitative approach to specific material according to the aims of excavation and specialized research (e.g. animal bone, chipped stone, mollusca in percentages per level)
- lack of detailed plans and sections

In subsequent chapters (§§ 3 and 4) it will become evident that although it was eventually possible for some of these problems to be managed and contextual analysis produced exceptional results in regards to identification of ritual practices, others



remained impediments to this research having undermined the quality of the data and consequently limited the extent of work that could be accomplished on them.

## Chapter 3.

### ***And there was Death. Initiation of Tradition.***

#### Ritual practices in the Cypriot Pre-Pottery Neolithic B. **Kissonerga-Mylouthkia and Parekklisha-Shillourokambos.**

*All this was fine, a casual stroll.  
But the wooden well-wheel- the 'alakátin' -  
asleep in the shade of the walnut tree  
half in the earth and half in the water,  
why did you try to wake it?  
You saw how it moaned. And that cry,  
brought forth from the wood's ancient nerves,  
why did you call it the voice of our country? <sup>10</sup>*

### **3.1 Introduction.**

The sites of Kissonerga-Mylouthkia (Mylouthkia hereafter) and Parekklisha-Shillourokambos (Shillourokambos hereafter) possibly mark the beginning of the sedentary world in Cyprus (Guilaine et al. 2000: 75-76, Peltenburg et al. 2000, 2001:62-63, Watkins 2004:29, Simons 2001:3), in which both sites produced dates to the Cypriot Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (C-PPNB here after) (**Fig. 9, 11**, Peltenburg 2003a:84, 87). Chapter 2 (§§ 2.4.1) reviewed the implications of contextual analysis resulting from previous excavations and publication methods. The process of identifying ritual practices, however, will necessitate partial return to these issues and a detailed analysis of the taphonomy of specific features. While the focus in this chapter is on the identification of ritual practices via contextual analysis and the comparison of

depositional practices at *Fosse 23* at Shillourokambos and the Mylouthkia wells, some facts relating to chronology and locality of the sites should also be stressed as they include important information central to current debates relating to practices at the two sites.

Six Wells (110, 116, 133, 2030, 2070, 2100) have been excavated so far at Mylouthkia. Three of them (110, 116, 133) were fully published along with Building 340 and Pits 345, 337 and 338, which allowed for a detailed contextual analysis. The site of Mylouthkia was found on the west coast of Cyprus within proximity to the sea surrounded by the minor rivers Apis, Mavrokolymbos and Xeros (Peltenburg 2003a:xxxiv). Although the sea level has been estimated 25-35m lower than present time, due to the localized uplift, it has been argued that the distance of the site from the sea was possibly similar as in modern times (Croft 2003b: 50, Peltenburg 2003a: xxxiv, Peltenburg 2003b: 33). No settlement evidence has been found close to the Mylouthkia wells, with the exception of Building 340, which was also contemporary with Well 133 (Croft 2003b:49, Peltenburg 2003a:84-85) (**Fig. 9, 10**). It has been argued that the settlement may have been further inland whereas the area around the wells would have been used for the production of stone vessels utilising the water from the wells and for agro-pastoral activities (Croft 2003b, Peltenburg 2003a:92). This argument was based mostly on the abundance of fragmented and incomplete vessels found in the interior of the wells along with abundance of seeds and fragmentary animal remains (Jackson 2003, Murray 2003, Croft 2003b). Amongst other important finds at Mylouthkia, the secondary burial remains found in the wells comprise important evidence for the investigation of possible ritual activities (Croft 2003b: 52, Peltenburg 2003: 92-93).

The site of Shillourokambos was situated further inland in comparison to Mylouthkia, in the valley between the rivers of Yermasoyia and Vassilikos. At Shillourokambos, a settlement site was identified and four wells have been claimed to have been excavated (Structures 2, 66, 114, and 181) (Guilaine 2003a:4). These wells were found amongst the remains of the settlement in Sector 1, where the

Early and Middle Phases of the site were identified (Guilaine and Briois 2001:39, 41, Guilaine 2003: 3-14). Pit 23 (*Fosse 23*) was found on the eastern edge of the settlement, in Sector 1. During excavation, Crubezy (2003:296, 309) noted that *Fosse 23* was most likely a well with the upper part forming an extended cavity due to a common natural *havara* hollow that was deliberately widened in places. As explained in chapter 2, *Fosse 23* comprised of the only context from Shillourokambos that was published in adequate detail. The selective, limited and fragmentary published evidence from the rest of the site did not permit in-depth investigation. For a more complete view of the site and the production of meaningful results, published information relating to other features at Shillourokambos was taken into consideration (**Tables 34, 35**).

The six burials excavated beyond *Fosse 23* dated to the Late Phase of the site and corresponded to Khirokitia and Kalavassos-Tenta late Period 2 (**Fig. 9, 12**, Guilaine 2002:593). These burials were found in Sector 3 and related to contemporary circular buildings. Unfortunately, only sporadic information was available in preliminary articles regarding this sector and the associated structures (§ 2, Guilaine 1992-2003). Similarly, the minimal information regarding the rest of the possible wells at Shillourokambos could not be used for an extensive analysis. Regarding their content, some information was possible to extract from preliminary articles concerning discussion on exceptional objects (**Table 35**).

As previously explained (§ 2), Guilaine (1991-2003) followed a more traditional approach to the material and focussed on what would generally be considered 'rare' artefacts. In contrast, *Fosse 23* with adequate contextual information, the human depositions found in the interior and the discussion this raised about contemporary burial customs was worth further examination. Additionally, the dates produced from the lower layers of *Fosse 23* (**Fig. 11, 12**, Guilaine 2003:14, Vigne, Carrère, Guilaine 2003: 240) were parallel to the dates produced at Mylouthkia from Well 133, Well 110, Building 340 and Pits 337 and 338 (Period IB) (**Fig. 9**, Peltenburg 2003:84) and provided an excellent opportunity for an intra-site comparison of relevant activities.

### 3.2 Kissonerga-Mylouthkia: Discussion of the material and the taphonomy.

The findings at Mylouthkia contexts were generally attributed to two categories by their excavators: accidental or deliberate. The former regarded findings mostly in the wells and the pits where so called *pit-trap victims* remains were also found (Croft 2003b). These included birds, amphibians, reptiles and rodents that possibly fell and were trapped accidentally in these types of contexts. For the rest of the finds: remains of animals, fish, shell, seeds, stone artefacts (e.g. chipped stone, ground stone), rough stone and human remains, controversial explanations were provided usually depending on the nature of the finds. Deliberate depositions were seen as either related to structured depositions permeated with intentionality and symbolism or as refuse without the equivalent importance, but with an element of accidental or occasional factuality.

More specifically, the material from Building 340 was treated within the norms of post-abandonment material from a house-deposit. No explicit interpretation, however, was offered for Building 340 (e.g. house? / workshop?/ structure overlooking and controlling the well? / ritual building?). Pit 345 (Fill 347) found within Building 340 and Pits 337 and 338 were also treated in the same manner with the acknowledgement that they formed deliberately opened, close and relatively shallow contexts and therefore with a minimal possibility of accidental presence of material with the exception of the few *pit-trap victims*. Again, no specific interpretation was offered (for example: storage pits?/ *rubbish* disposal pits?/ ritual structural depositions?/ post-abandonment deposits?).

In contrast, the large depth of the wells, their outdoor location - supposedly unprotected, the lack of upper parts and ancient surface due to modern destruction (Peltenburg 2003: xxxii), their questionable internal taphonomy and important finds became the focus of analyses, while favouring controversial interpretations of the material found in the interiors. Human remain depositions regardless of the degree of

fragmentation were typically thought as deliberate. Although, Croft (2003b:54) also examined the possibility of accidental presence. The remains of edible animals in fragmentary form were generally considered as food refuse. The same was applied to fish and shell-fish remains also regardless of their degree of fragmentation. Remains of other creatures, such as cat, fox and an owl, were considered as non edible and hypothetically could not have been *pit-trap victims*, but rather *rubbish* disposal. Rough stone depositions or concentrations were mentioned, but no further work was undertaken (e.g. stone kind, sizes and frequency of concentrations).

The vast amount of fragmentary and incomplete stone vessels along with complete objects, mainly hammerstones, pounders and chipped-stone was attributed to *rubbish*. This was considered derivative of a flourishing 'industry' above the wells that was possibly using well-water for the purpose of facilitation of limestone working. The presence of the stone objects was explained either as deliberate *rubbish* disposal coming from this supposed extensive manufacturing of limestone vessels adjacent to the wells or as accidental refuse due to natural rain water sweeping this material down into the wells (Jackson 2003: 39-40, Croft 2003b, Peltenburg:2003a:92, Peltenburg 2003b:24). Interestingly, several rare finds, such as an incomplete pendant (KMyI. 1170), a ping conglomerate macehead (KMyI. 1505), a fragmented-perforated disk (KMyI 1364), a perforated bone point (KMyI 1912) and a blade of obsidian (KMyI. 1947) were excavated from this mixed deposit of food-refuse and technology-*rubbish* and were treated as grave goods to the secondary burial remains, even if they were not immediately associated with them. Similarly, complete caprine carcasses were treated as *patterned* depositions and were explained in the framework of *some sort of ritual behaviour* (Croft 2003b:52, Peltenburg 2003a: 92).

Certainly these interpretations were not arbitrary. A major factor for these interpretations was the taphonomy within the wells. The taphonomy of the wells and the deriving contextual information has been especially important for the production of results within this research. In general, in the excavation report, the deposits within the

wells were treated as highly mixed due to natural reasons. Undoubtedly, they were mixed to a certain extent. For example, a tooth in Fill 264 of Well 133 at 19.62 masl belonged to human skull 1181 excavated from the overlying Fill 260 at 20.70 masl, almost a meter apart; however, in a rubbly deposit full of air-pockets (Fox 2003:44, Croft 2003b:54-55). As previously discussed (§ 2.4.2), the presumably uncovered opening of the wells possibly had rain water running down the well edges that would have created pools of water mixing fresh deposits and causing earlier ones to subside. Gradually, this repeated process would have resulted in packed deposits or secure enough to contain *air pockets* (Croft 2003b:54) under meters of depositions. Therefore, not all contents of the well should be considered mixed in the sense that 5m of deposition resulting to a volume of about 4 cubic meters (exactly: 3.93 m<sup>3</sup>, calculating an average well diameter equal to one meter) could not all have been mixed by natural causes. During excavation, some deposits, particularly the lower ones, were so tightly packed due to subsidence that it was impossible to visualize them mixed with higher deposits that were separated by meters of intermediary depositions. Rightfully, therefore, Croft (2003b: 55) did not accept Fox's (2003:45) interpretation of the human bone fragments found in the lowest fills of Well 133 to possibly belong to skeletal remains found 3m above them.

An additional reason for the deposits of the wells considered highly mixed by natural causes was their similar consistency (e.g. nature, colour, texture) throughout many meters. During excavation, Paul Croft changed excavation unit numbers under two conditions: either because of a difference in the consistency of the soil or in the retrieval of structural depositions or remains. For example such a need did not occur during the excavation of Fill 124 in Well 116, which was the unit number for a well fill that ran for about 5m in depth. This indicated a homogeneous soil concentration and a single depositional episode (**Fig. 18, Table 2**, Peltenburg 2003:91). This fill, however also produced more than 2285 (Croft 2003b:50) sea shells amongst 101 stone artefacts and other ecofacts (**Table 2**) that was explained as suggested gradual and natural

accumulation over time. The sea-shells were interpreted as food refuse, collected locally, cooked (Peltenburg 2003:90) and consumed on the spot (Croft 2003b:50).

The homogeneity and finds in this fill compelled the explanation of this 'naturally' accumulated volume of soil to have occurred during one season only (Peltenburg 2003: 91), presumably a very rainy one. Notwithstanding the probability of natural accumulation of some tens of centimetres during one season, 5m accumulation of soil with the addition of cultural *rubbish* (mainly sea-shells and stone vessel fragments) should be considered impossible. For example, the post-excavation abandoned tomb-pits at Souskiou-Vathyrkakas, also initially opened in soft havara bed rock, have only accumulated less than twelve centimetres of soil, dust and leaves, after remaining open to the natural elements without conservation or other post-excavation protective treatment for about ten years. Even if we take into consideration that the lowlands of western Paphos district, where Well 116 was located, could have been richer in superficial soil due to the subsidence of soil from higher plains, 5m of soil deposition (about 4 cubic meters of volume) was unlikely to have occurred naturally over one season. Such an event would have to presuppose a major flood event or natural catastrophe of the environment, which is not supported by vegetation and plantation evidence of Pre-ceramic Neolithic Cyprus and the taphonomy of Building 340 and the associated pits.

In regards to the possibility of an extensive lime stone workshop occurring above the wells, this hypothesis was based on two facts: Firstly, the large number of reused, incomplete and fragmentary limestone vessel fragments. Only hammerstones and pounders occurred with high degrees of completeness in the wells (Jackson 2003:39); secondly, the fact that limestone, being very porous, becomes softer and much easier to work with the use of fresh water. Peltenburg (2003:92) argued that salt water would not have been preferable for such use. There were at least three sources of running water in the proximity of the wells (Peltenburg 2003:xxxiv), which may have been more desirable to use during the production of limestone vessels. Limestone being



porous may absorb water quickly, but also evaporation occurs much more quickly because of these pores, thus making the material dry and harder again. A location next to a river, with the use of constant running water would have made limestone vessel production much easier and time efficient for the manufacturers than the process of water collection from a well.

Most importantly, the fragmentary and incomplete lime stone vessel fragments and the remaining whole or incomplete ground stone concentrate in the middle fills of the wells (**Tables 37, 38, 39**), starting well beyond one meter from the bottom of the wells. The bottom fills of the wells (more or less a meter of depth) were in fact almost empty or of minimal quantities of limestone artefacts (**Tables 7, 15, 20**). Therefore, it is evident that the wells not only had already dried-out when the deposition or disposal of limestone artefacts occurred, but were already in-filled for at least a meter. If manufacturing of limestone artefacts was taking place above the wells because of the need of water, this must have occurred when the wells were functional and the disposal of limestone scraps would have taken place elsewhere, as the wells would have been needed to produce water and not to have been blocked. However, the limestone 'rubbish' disposal took place after the wells dried-out. In addition, the limestone found in the wells did not comprise of scraps or remains from unsuccessful limestone working (Jackson 2003:40). The unidentifiable / miscellaneous stone objects from the wells were of minimal amounts (Jackson 2003:35). The absolute majority of them were whole or fragmented identifiable artefacts. Therefore, an explanation of the amounts of limestone artefacts and their degree of fragmentation should be sought elsewhere.

Lastly, a special point should be made in regards to the taphonomy and material of the lowest fills of the wells. In regards to the depositions in these lowest fills, Peltenburg (2003) was correct in arguing that it is ambiguous whether they occurred when the opening of the well was initially finished, successfully finding water, during its use or when it had first dried-out and was closed. The silty deposits that Croft reported at the bottom of the wells, such as the lowest muddy deposits

excavated in Well 2030 with still (!) slight water flow wetting the lowest fills (Appendix I), and the limited amount of artefacts and ecofacts found in all the lowest deposits of all the wells (**Tables 2, 8, and 16**) rendered the construction of a hypothesis difficult. Indeed, those first finds in the wells could have dropped or been thrown in shortly after the initial opening of the well, during the water producing phase or immediately after the well had dried-out and began to accumulate natural deposits. However, the differentiation of depositions found both at the very bottom and in the rest of the interior of Well 110 (**Tables 8, 11 and 12**), which collapsed shortly after it had been opened (Croft 2003a:3-4), should be considered indicative of when specific depositions customarily took place in the wells, without excluding the possibility of artefacts and ecofacts having dropped accidentally or thrown-in while a functional well was still in use (§ 3.5.3).

On the basis of this debatable contextual reality of the wells and their content, controversial interpretations were offered for the significance of the wells. Well 116, with only one human deposition in its bottom fill and a single subsequent depositional event of about 5m of soil, stone, sea-shells and limestone, mostly fragmented artefacts and other material was interpreted as a food-refuse pit (Peltenburg 2003a, Croft 2003b:50-51, Ridout-Sharpe 2003:80). At least three deliberate depositional events were identified in Well 133 on the basis of fill consistency, whole animal carcasses and secondary human depositions (Croft 2003b:55). These depositions were considered as a ritual context, but not clearly or not only (Peltenburg 2003: 92) due to the great amount of fragmentary limestone artefacts considered workshop 'rubbish' disposal. Regrettably, adequate attention was not paid to Well 110. The majority of the specialists, with the single exception of Croft (2003a and b), incorporated the material coming from this well into material from other contexts of the same period (§ 2.4.1). They did not provide a separate material analysis for this well in contrast to the treatment of the other two wells (McCartney 2003a, Ridout-Sharpe 2003, Jackson 2003). Peltenburg (2003:89-93) also did not include Well 110 in his general discussion about

the significance of the wells. Generally, this well was treated similarly to pits of the same period, and was presumably, but not clearly considered as a refuse pit due to the lack of structural depositions in the interior.

### **3.3 Parekklisha-Shillourokambos: *Fosse 23*: Discussion of the material and the taphonomy.**

The taphonomy and internal structure of *Fosse 23* at Shillourokambos was clearer than the Mylouthkia wells, possibly due to the wider occupied area (maximum 7m<sup>2</sup>, Guilaine et al. 1998:604, Crubézy 2003:296). This possibly limited the mixture of deposits due to water action and concentration, despite the 6m of depth excavated so far. Layers of structured depositions with multiple events of intervention and rearrangement alternated with extremely mixed cultural layers. Both kinds of depositions were considered deliberate (Crubézy 2003:297-307), yet different explanations were provided regarding their presence. The first type contained primary and questionably secondary inhumations and animal remains interment amongst fragmentary artefacts and possible grave goods. This type was interpreted as burial sites/ events. The second kind of depositions contained high quantities of fragmentary stone artefacts, extremely fragmentary animal bones and no human remains and was considered as repeated layers of 'rubbish' disposal.

In the nine out of the twelve excavated stratified layers (A-I) that were analysed thoroughly (Crubézy 2003:295-311), two episodes of coverage of the cavity with mixed cultural deposits were recognised (E and C). The top-most layer (over layer A) was at the same level of the surrounding archaeological deposit and was not recognised as a third and final 'mixed cultural deposit' in this sequence. Particularly in regards to this third and final coverage of the whole cavity, Crubézy (2003:309) reported that large stones, concentration of chipped stone and ram remains were secured vertically on the

surface indicating the 'special' nature of the area. In regards to the consistency of this layer, Crubézy (2003:296) noted that the rest of the material deriving from the ancient surface-layer, which covered the underlying cavity-layer A (i.e. chipped stone, fragmentary animal remains and debris) dated earlier than the layer A, which contained the first human burial found (**Table 33**). This dating was attested solely on relative chronology of the material. Crubézy (2003:96) tried to explain this oddity and speculated that the people, who filled the cavity, must have used soil from where they were "stepping on" to close the cavity. Therefore they must have used mixed earth older than themselves and of an earlier date than the fragmentary human remains that they had just deposited (in layer A).

Although Crubézy may not have recognised it, he interpreted a practice of deliberate collection of soil, in order to intentionally cover secondary (?) inhumations in a large, deep hole in the earth. This would not have been important in itself, if there had been a single current burial that needed to be covered. In this case though, a complete burial had been previously deposited, without any intermediate deposit, in layer B, under the skull fragments and mandible of layer A (**Table 33**). Also, further down this pit another three distinct successive layers (H, G, F), containing inhumations occurred prior to the first (chronologically) episode of coverage with mixed earth (E), although odd dating was not noticed in this case. Most importantly, what was evidenced was that this deliberate top infilling of the pit (/ cavity / well?), indicated that the mixed material was derived from earlier earth probably *stepped on* (Crubézy 2003:296) or from an already abandoned area and not from contemporary 'rubbish' disposal.

It is of great surprise, therefore, that Crubézy (2003:298, 303, 308-309) considered layers C and E, also similar in consistency, as 'rubbish' disposal, especially since layer C produced contemporary and earlier absolute dates than the following underlying layer D (**Fig. 11**, Guilaine 2003:14). These were not the only incidents: strangely layer B also produced absolute dates higher (earlier) than the underlying layers C and D (**Fig. 11**, Guilaine 2003:13), while the complete burial found within Layer B produced absolute

dates much later (**Fig. 11**, Guilaine 2003:14). The last note is correct only if *sepulture 1*, for which Guilaine (2003:14) offered information on absolute dating, refers to the complete burial found in layer B (**Fig. 11**). Reasonably, given the late absolute dates produced, *sepulture 1* could have only referred to either the complete burial in layer B or to the skull fragments (Crubézy 2003:297) and mandible (Guilaine et al. 1998:604) in layer A, as no information on burial numbering was provided. The fact though, that layer B produced earlier dates than C and D remains.

The first mixed layer (E) in chronological sequence also contained fragmentary stone artefacts and animal remains while lacking any human remains and without any peculiarity to have been noticed in regards to the relative chronology of the material. However, no absolute dating was provided. In theory, it should be considered relatively contemporary or later than the underlying layers F, G and H. Guilaine (2003:3-12, 13-14), who published the absolute dates from *fosse 23* as a supplement in an overview of the finds at the site per period, did not discuss the absolute dates further. Possibly more information on their exact place and material of retrieval along with a discussion will be included in the full forthcoming publication of the site.

To further discuss Crubézy's (2003) interpretation of the mixed layers in *Fosse 23* as 'rubbish' disposal, two more notes should be made. Crubézy (298, 303, 308-309), being certain that layers E, C and the very top one (covering A) were 'rubbish' depositions, concluded that *Fosse 23* was selected as a burial pit at some point (possibly at layer I) and was used as such for a considerable amount of time (layers H, G, F). Later, according to Crubézy (2003) the use of *Fosse 23* changed to a refuse pit (layer E). At some point, it was re-used again conveniently as a burial cavity (layer D) for several decades (Crubézy 2003: 298, 307) until its use changed again for 'rubbish' disposal (layer C). Later on, *Fosse 23* was used as a burial site again for two layers (B and A) and was then covered by ancestral 'rubbish' (top layer over A) after it was marked appropriately with upstanding stones, concentration of chipped stone and remains of a ram (Crubézy 2003:296,309).

Clearly, Crubézy missed a pattern. Communal decision must have taken place for this deep hole in the earth (probably a well, Crubézy 2003:296) to receive inhumations at some point during its history. It is essential to stress that: particularly in layers F and D, multiple inhumations took place that were manipulated during decomposition, with skull removal and dismemberment, and after complete or partial decomposition, their long bones were rearranged in bundles in several cases (Crubézy 2003: 298, 302-303, 306-307). The people who deposited them did not dispose corpses with the purpose of what we would consider as a conventional burial. They chose that particular context, they repeatedly descended into it, in order to place dead bodies and then again in order to remove parts of these corpses and rearrange others. When they decided to cover the remains of many episodes of inhumations and corpse manipulations that they had left in a single level (D) and in multiple ones (I, H, G, F, B and A), they did this in single events (E, C and the one over A), with consistent mixture of earth and cultural deposits, while one layer, the one over A, was undoubtedly much earlier than their 'rubbish'.

Lastly, a strong question-mark should be placed next to the word 'rubbish', not only in regards to the mixed layers in *Fosse 23* at Shillourokambos, but also in regards to the fills of the wells at Mylouthkia. Why these layers and fills were considered as 'rubbish' from their excavators has been reviewed; however, what 'rubbish' was doing in identified burial and ritual contexts (Croft 2003b:53-55, Peltenburg 2003: 92, Crubézy 2003: 296, 309) was not explained in any of the excavation reports (§§ 2.4.1). Also, if 'rubbish' and burial remains were found together, what was the common element in their semiotics that made C-PPNB people to invest time and energy over decades (?) (Crubézy 2003: 297-307) for them to be placed together? Finally, what would have 'rubbish' been for those people? Were those layers and fills indeed 'rubbish'?

### **3.4 Identification of common cultural elements at Kissonerga-Mylouthkia and Parekklissha-Shillourokambos.**

Prior to any further analysis and comparison between the Mylouthkia wells and Shillourokambos *Fosse 23*, there is a need for me to demonstrate my objects for a comparative study to have a common base upon which such an endeavour is permitted (**Table 36**).

#### *3.4.1 Contemporary wells?*

Firstly, as previously mentioned, Shillourokambos *Fosse 23* produced contemporary dates to Mylouthkia Period IB contexts (C-LPPNB). Secondly, if *Fosse 23* has not proved Crubézy's (2003: 296) estimation wrong and it was also a well, then both *Fosse 23* and the Mylouthkia wells were deep, narrow holes dug in the soft havara bed-rock for retrieval of non-essential water. Both sites were close enough to running water, rendering the choice of investment in digging a well seemingly unreasonable. These deep holes in the earth exhibit common cultural choices and definitely ones not out of need (Peltenburg 2003:27).

#### *3.4.2 No cattle.*

On the basis of the presence of cattle at Shillourokambos and its absence from Mylouthkia, reservations have been expressed about whether the two communities possibly were culturally different (Peltenburg 2003b:28). 8-10% of the animal bone at Shillourokambos was identified as cattle (Guilaine et al. 1997:830, Vigne, Carrère, Guilaine 2003: 240). Cattle were also reported to be present at Kritou Marottou-Ais

Yiorkis in western Cyprus (Simmons 2003:61-70) and at Akanthou-Arkosyko in the north-east of the island (Şevketoğlu M. 2002, Croft 2003b:49). The fact that Mylouthkia lacked cattle evidence raised questions of different origins of the inhabitants, of possible cultural / nutritional taboos, of differentiation in the practice of pastoralism or development of it, if the practice of cattle keeping was considered a *regional archaism* for the rest of the sites (Croft 2003c:278). Importantly though, cattle were identified at Shillourokambos, although were not reported in the context of *Fosse 23*. In contrast, a variety of animal bones including caprine carcasses (D), deer bone (D), antler (D), cat bone (E, F, G), pig skull fragments (D, G) and bird bone fragments (F) were reported, while were also attested in the Kissonerga-Mylouthkia wells (**Tables 2, 8, 16 and 33**, Croft 2003b:57, Crubézy 2003: 297-307, Vigne, Carrère, Guilaine 2003: 240). Apart from cattle, Mylouthkia also possibly lacked a settlement. The isolated Building 340 and the associated pits have not been considered adequate evidence for a safe hypothesis of a settlement site in the proximity of the wells (Peltenburg 2003b).

Another site of the same period that had a settlement, but lacked cattle was Kalavassos-Tenta. Although, Kalavassos-Tenta period 5 produced only a very limited amount of safe absolute dates (**Fig. 12**, Peltenburg 2003a:84, 86, figure 11.1), relative chronology demonstrated that Kalavassos-Tenta period 5 was contemporary with Mylouthkia Period IA (McCartney in Peltenburg 2003a:86, McCartney 2003a:24, 30, McCartney 2003b:141-142, 146, McCartney 2005:216). It could be argued that the limited excavation from Kalavassos-Tenta period 5 was, in itself, restrictive to the possibilities of retrieving the small percentage of cattle bone that was collected from the rest of the C-PPNB sites. Conversely, as Simons (2003:61) implied, it may have been indeed Kalavassos-Tenta period 5 that was the exception to a rule of cattle pastoralism. Kalavassos-Tenta period 5 has to be recognized as the only C-EPPNB site both without fortification and without cattle. The wall at Kalavassos-Tenta was erected in the beginning of period 4 (C-LPPNB) (Todd 1987, 2005). Shillourokambos, Kritou Marottou-Ais Yiorkis were settlement sites with cattle, but no walls (Guilaine 1992-



2003, Simmons 2001, 2003). Akanthou-Arkosiko reportedly had cattle and fortification (Şevketoğlu 2002). This fact, in addition to McCartney's (2005:216) recent contribution on the lithic assemblage from Kalavassos-Tenta, is possibly indicative of the questionable origin of the inhabitants of Kalavassos-Tenta.

In C-LPPNB, where Well 110, 133 and Building 340 and associated pits date to, cattle did in fact start disappearing (Vigne, Carrère, Guilaine 2003, Croft 2003c, Simons 2003). Nevertheless, Kissonerga-Mylouthkia, lacking cattle, a wall and possibly settlement, could not have been compared with settlement sites with or without walls and cattle. Kissonerga-Mylouthkia wells, as deep, close contexts have to be compared with *Fosse 23* of also the same nature. In the framework of a comparison on a common base, a possible pattern is identified: wells (/ deeply dug in earth contexts) in C-PPNB, which may have received inhumations, possibly did not receive cattle bone. As such, the exclusion of cattle from *Fosse 23* and their existence outside of it in the settlement of Shillourokambos is of great importance. The Mylouthkia wells did not have cattle either, despite its presence in a nearby contemporary settlement-site (Kritou Marottou-Ais Yiorkis). This depositional exclusion of cattle from a common assemblage, which included caprine, deer, cat, fox, pig and bird bone fragments, and antler clearly reflects a cultural choice common at both sites.

#### 3.4.3 Chipped stone.

Additional comparisons in the depositions between Shillourokambos *Fosse 23* and the Mylouthkia wells can be observed (**Table 36**). Analysis of the chipped stone technology demonstrated strong similarities in tool types, their use and development in the great majority of the assemblages from both sites (McCartney 2003a:21-30). McCartney (2003a:24, 30) argued for possible different antecedent populations on the basis of differences in *glossed pieces*. Nevertheless, she emphasised that the material

indicated a common origin from Northern Levant, with *mixture of influences* from this area (McCartney 2003a:24).

Unfortunately, neither McCartney (2003a, b) nor Briois (2003, Guilaine and Briois 2001) provided contextual evidence regarding the chipped stone, having incorporated their evidence into analyses per period rather than per period and context (§ 2.4.1). It is difficult, therefore, to draw conclusions regarding depositional preferences in Mylouthkia wells and Shillourokambos *Fosse 23* in regards to the chipped stone technology. Clearly, chipped stone was one of the artefact categories that was chosen to be deposited in both contexts, both in structured depositions and in mixed layers / fills. Obsidian was also present in both contexts. The presence of obsidian may have been especially indicative of cultural commonalities between the two sites, as its value for these communities was possibly not essentially functional, but rather entirely symbolic (Appendix II). Lastly, in reference to the assemblage from the Mylouthkia wells, McCartney (2003b:136) underlined the lack of *cores* and *core trimming elements* and the paucity in *blanks*. This fact should be considered suggestive of the production of tools elsewhere and their subsequent transport to the well heads prior to their deposition.

#### 3.4.4 Ground stone and vessel fragments.

Furthermore, a particular preference in the deposition of fragmentary stone vessels that did not form complete vessels can be noticed at both the wells and *Fosse 23* (**Fig. 14a** and **b**). Only one small whole vessel was found in Well 116 and one small whole vessel in *Fosse 23* layer, B, associated with the complete inhumation (**Table 9**, **Table 33**, **Fig. 14a**, Jackson 2003:39, Crubézy 2003:298,307). Especially in regards to *Fosse 23*, the predominance of stone vessel fragments is particularly evident in comparison with other contexts at Shillourokambos (**Fig. 14b**, Manen 2003:188). Also worth noting

is the limited amount of other ground stone classes in *Fosse 23* (**Fig. 15**, Perrin 2003:183, figure 4). This practice can be noticed extensively also in the Mylouthkia contexts (§ 3.5), but with some crucial differences per period and / or per context (**Table 40**). The extensive degree of fragmentation of stone vessels, the fact that they could not be reconstructed in complete form, but at maximum in halves and in a very small percentage, and the fact that they were evidently reused and recycled (Jackson 2003: 38-40, Peltenburg 2003a: figures 46, 47) places them in the very last stage of a fragmentation chain (Chapman 2000b:24) prior to their final mass 'discard' in the wells. Pounders and hammerstones were found in much smaller amounts and although were also reused, exhibited lower degrees of fragmentation, but still high degrees of incompleteness (Jackson 2003:36, 39).

In reference to the ground stone from Well 133, Jackson (2003: 40) stated that *cutting tools are rare and food processing equipment (e.g. querns and rubbers) are absent*. Also, in regards to the material from this well he noticed that it was in larger amounts, but less varied in comparison to the material from Well 116. Jackson (2003:40) agreed that the ground stone could have been secondarily discarded after it was transported to the wells as an alternative explanation to manufacturing of stone vessels above the wells. Importantly, he recognised *deliberate choice of artefacts for infilling* (Jackson 2003:40). His study of miscellaneous ground stone reveals an absence of scraps, which should be expected in the case of a supposed industry above the wells (Jackson 2003:38). He also attributed the limited amount of unidentifiable material to the excessive degree of fragmentation and damage. Additional contextual studies regarding the ground stone from Shillourokambos may reveal similar patterns in the secondary nature of the material in *Fosse 23*.

The information provided so far points towards an important depositional similarity between *Fosse 23* and the Mylouthkia wells: the excessive amount of vessel fragments in *Fosse 23*, by comparison to other structures at the site (**Fig. 14b**, Manen 2003:188) and to the amounts of other ground stone within *Fosse 23* (**Fig. 15**, Perrin

2003:183, figure 4), correspond to analogous and similar contemporary depositions in Well 133 (**Fig. 14a**, Jackson 2003:39).

#### 3.4.5 Maceheads.

Lastly, in reference to ground stone choices of deposition, the two maceheads found in *Fosse 23* in layers A and D (**Table 33, Fig. 16b**, Perrin 2003:177 (figure 1), 182) and the one coming from Well 133, Fill 282, KMyI 1505, were worth noting separately (**Table 16, Fig. 16a**, Jackson 2003:37-38, Peltenburg 2003:figure 46). Perrin (2003:182) did not identify these two objects as maceheads and contemplated their *enigmatic* function. Clearly though, he described and illustrated (Perrin 2003:177 (figure 1), 182) what Peltenburg (2003:92, 95) and Jackson (2003:37-38) identified as a macehead at Mylouthkia (KMyI 1505). Perrin (2003: 182) described them as rounded rings with *conic* and *biconic* perforation from both sides, while Jackson (2003:37) also recognized hourglass perforation from both sides regarding the macehead from Well 133. The latter was reported to be of sedimentary rock (*conglomerate*) (Jackson 2003:37), while the examples from *Fosse 23* were identified as calcareous rock (the one from layer A, **Fig. 16b**) and micro-gabbro (the one from layer D, Perrin 2003: 182). The same technology was used for their manufacturing. The kind of the material is the same; however, the Mylouthkia macehead appears more impressive as it is of pink coloured rock.

In both cases, the maceheads were found in layers / fill, which also included fragmentary or complete inhumations (**Tables 16 and 33**, Crubézy 2003:297-298, 303-307, Croft 2003b:51-55). Regardless of whether they should have been recognised as grave goods to the secondary burials in the fill / layer where they were found, on the basis of their contextual environment, they should not be considered disassociated from them. On this exact basis, however, they should neither be seen isolated from the fragments of animal bone and stone vessels in layer A of *Fosse 23*, from the fishing

weights, the stone vessel fragments, the antler, and the deer, ram, caprine and pig skull fragments, in layer D of *Fosse 23*, nor from the cat astragalus, the deer bone, the pig skull and pig bone fragments, the whole caprine carcasses, the burnt goat phalanx, the robust goat horncore and pigeon bone fragments and the minimal presence of mouse, amphibian and reptile remains, in Fill 282 of Well 133, simply because they comprised of what was considered as rare finds.

Regardless of whether the maceheads were rare or grave goods, they were chosen as appropriate objects to be included as part of a specific context. It has to be recognized that the maceheads were a choice in a series of choices that resulted in inclusions and exclusions of particular material forming specific content and were sealed in specific contexts. Thus, the question of 'rubbish' arises again. An explanation which would justify the coexistence of considered rare finds, associated with human depositions, and of 'rubbish' was not provided by the excavators of either site.

#### 3.4.6 *Rough / non-worked stone.*

Rough / non-worked stone was also reported as part of the same contexts where considered *ritual depositions* were mixed with considered *rubbish*. Crubézy (2003:297-307) noticed five instances of deliberate rough / non-worked stone deposition in *Fosse 23* (**Table 33**): presence of stone deliberately brought from outside *Fosse 23* was observed in the mixed deposits of layer C, two small stones were chosen to cover the two human skulls at the eastern edge of *Fosse 23* in layer F and other stones were used to subdivide the space in the same layer. In layer G, there was concentration of deliberately brought stones and in layer H stones were found in situ covering the head and the thorax of the complete burial, while their arrangement suggested their initial deposition to have been in some form of a basket, net or other perishable material (Crubézy 2003:303).

Regarding rough / non-worked stone deposition in the Mylouthkia wells Croft (2003a:3-7) noted eight similar cases: *significant quantity of fist-sized stones* in Fill 04 of Well 110 and in Well 116: a concentration of numerous stones *purposefully selected and deliberately deposited* in Fill 191, numerous *suggestive stones* in Fill 124 and rounded stones, pebbles and cobbles in Fill 114. Well 133 produced some amounts of stones and cobbles in Fills 332 and 333, the lowest in this well, numerous stones and cobbles in Fill 279 and many stones, cobbles and pebbles in Fill 264. Additionally, numerous cobbles were noted in Pit 337 and numerous stones in the fills of Pit 338 (Croft 2003a:8). Conclusively, there was lack of depositions of rough/ non-worked stone in all other fills of Well 110 (apart from Fill 04), in Fill 192 (the lowest) and Fill 123 (one of the two half-destroyed, upper ones) of Well 116, in Fills 282, 279, 331, 334 and 260 of Well 133, in Building 340 and in Pit 345 within it (**Tables 2, 8 and 16**). Peltenburg (2003:92) also underlined the *considerable amount of stone* that came out of all excavated wells.

Moreover, the occasional considerable size of stone should also be stressed, especially in regards to Well 2030. During the excavation of this well the size of some stones necessitated inventive removal techniques and the collaboration of at least two persons to pull up these stones to the mouth of the well (personal experience, Appendix I). Lastly, it is essential for a particular construction of stone inside Well 2030 to be noted (Appendix I) and past interpretations to be reviewed under the light of all this comparable material. My persistence on reporting this structure during that early stage of research, shortly after the completion of the excavation of Well 2030 (despite the contrary advice from Paul Croft) and without adequate time for interpretation regarding its purpose and function, had led me to explain it as:

*[...] a wall lying at 11.51masl, which stood 0.77m high. Consisting of stones bonded together with a clayey mortar, it covered the northern and most of the eastern part of the well at the elevation of the calcarenite horizon. Although its use and significance are not yet fully understood, its purpose so close to the bottom of the well may have been to narrow the width and raise the water level during periods of water shortage. (Appendix I)*

However, the following 40cm of silty fill until the bottom of the well, which I reported underlying this *wall* render this interpretation completely unfounded. The clayey-chaff mortar would have completely dissolved in the water and the stones of this construction would have been found loose in the fill of the well, had its purpose been to raise the level of the well-water. Additionally, this construction looked and stood like a wall, however, the word *wall* bears connotations that are irrelevant to the context and depth in which this construction of stone was found. Perhaps, the descriptive term 'horizontal/ upstanding construction of non-worked stone and mortar' is preferable.

Functionalistic interpretations in general may not prove plausible for the amount, size and concentrations of rough/ non-worked stone in the Mylouthkia wells and *Fosse 23*. Regrettably, a more systematic study on stone size and weight was not realized in regards to the deposition of rough stones in such close contexts, at neither Mylouthkia nor Shillourokambos. Current research (Cooney 2007) regarding the use and meaning of rock and stone for Aceramic Neolithic communities demonstrated that the Aceramic Neolithic was a context where people encountered stone, worked the stone, used it symbolically in burials, deposited it in pits and created hoards of un-worked stone and pebbled areas. They used stone for ritual closures, blocking entrances, covering structures and beings under hips of stone, and stone was used repeatedly as a marker; a mini-monument. Different kinds of stone were treated in different ways. This intentionally charged even mundane stone with cultural significance. Stone was possibly seen as a living material with particular qualities such as *permanency, durability and stability*. It was possibly treated as animate and alive, therefore as an agent outliving several generations, carrying the knowledge of the past and the power to interfere in the present. This active interplay of Aceramic Neolithic people with their material world created, established and re-established sets of relations between them, their world and the materials of their world.

In such a world and within such contexts as the wells, rough stone both at Mylouthkia wells and Shillourokambos *Fosse 23* possibly had particular significance,

adding a layer of meaning to the associated depositional practices. The concentrations of stone, their size and amount cannot be explained by natural or accidental processes. They also constituted deliberate choice and deposition, common at the Mylouthkia wells and *Fosse 23*. Lastly, the loss of information regarding rough / non-worked stone, which was a result of our established ways of excavation and treatment of non-worked material, should also be reviewed especially regarding close contexts of the Aceramic Neolithic in view of the possible significance of this natural material for the societies we excavate.

#### 3.4.7 Inhumations.

Most striking of all are the depositional similarities of inhumations in Mylouthkia wells and *Fosse 23* at Shillourokambos. Firstly, no other context at Shillourokambos was reported to have had human remains dated to the C-PPNB. In no other context at Mylouthkia were human remains found apart from the wells. No other pit, house or other construction at either site received inhumations.

Human bones, minimally burnt post-mortem, were found at both sites. Charred human bones were found in layer I, one of the lowest excavated layers of *Fosse 23* (Crubézy 2003). This was also where the burial of one complete individual was deposited. Two skull fragments were found charred in the very bottom fills (Fills 332 and 333) of Well 133 (Croft 2003, Peltenburg 2003). At Mylouthkia the practice of minimally burning bones was extended only to some animal bones (Fill 124 of Well 116, Fills 264, 282 and 332 of Well 133, **Tables 2** and **13**). This questions their association with food refuse, considering they were only a small percentage of the total of the animal bone deposited; unless of course the possibility of cannibalism as an explanation to the burning of some human bones was also accepted. Lacking additional evidence for such a hypothesis, other explanations should be sought for the similar treatment of



animal and human deposits. *Animality* and *humanity* are not necessarily universal concepts; neither is their sharp distinction (Ingold 1996, 2005:14-15). Distinctions between animals and humans may be fluid and culturally specific (Helms 2004, Ingold 1996:14-32).

The fact that animals and humans were found deposited together while they were treated similarly in both the Mylouthkia wells and Shillourokambos *Fosse 23*, was possibly indicative of such fluidity in the perception and distinction between human populations and animals. In a Pre-ceramic Neolithic Cyprus, archaic ideas dating to a past where animals and humans co-inhabited the environment and shared the same resources were possibly incorporated into the beliefs and associated practices of the first sedentary world. In reference to totemism and to representations of hybrid species, Lévi-Strauss (1963) argued that they exhibited employment of natural categories imposed on cultural categories for the distinction between human groups or individuals (Weiner 1994:595, Helms 2004:118). Such a hybrid representation in the shape of a feline head with questionably human characteristics was found at Shillourokambos outside *Fosse 23*, but in a contemporary and similar structure (Well ? 66) (**Table 35**, Guilaine et al 1998: 605, Guilaine and Briois 2001). Conceptualisation and recognition of human characteristics in animals and animal characteristics in humans, which would subsequently necessitate similarly and equally their categorical representation in associated depositions and depositional practices most probably occurred at both the Mylouthkia wells and Shillourokambos *Fosse 23*.

Returning to the inhumations, secondary burials were found in both contexts. However, reservations should be expressed in regards to whether the 'secondary' burials identified in *Fosse 23* were initially deposited as secondary. In different places of the same level, in layer D, under animal bones which were spread distinctly over the human (**Table 33**), Crubézy (2003: 298, 307) reported two skulls found together, a skull and some long bones, an infant in hyper-contraction and long bones found placed together in a bundle. He stressed the fact that the horizontal position of the long bones

and skulls showed that they were moved from somewhere else, implying that they were secondary burials. He also emphasised the fact that the long bones still had their extremities on and in general skeletal connections were found. This indicates that corpses deposited in *Fosse 23* were dismembered at some point during their decomposition, the long bones were kept in *Fosse 23*, they were rearranged and their skulls were removed. Crubézy suggested that some of these long bones possibly belonged to the skulls found separately in this layer, however the long bones outnumbered the skulls and skull removal must be considered.

This practice was more strikingly evident in layer F (**Table 30**). In this layer, Crubézy (2003:308) noticed that at least two phases of depositions took place some decades apart. Also, he identified multiple manipulations of corpses and skeletons during and after decomposition. Dismemberment took place repeatedly as the extremities of the long bones belonging to at least eight individuals were attached to the long bones, which were found arranged together in the north/ north-centre of this level. Moreover, the individual found in hyper-contraction in the north was missing its skull, but part of the upper dentition and the mandible were found in situ, indicating skull removal at some late stage of the decomposition. Also in the south at the same level, the long upper and lower bones of an individual were found arranged with some distance between them and the mandible was placed where the skull would have been if it had not been removed. Only one complete individual was found at this level. Two more possibly provided evidence of their way of transport into *Fosse 23*, as they were found to evidently have been placed in some sort of basket, net, or other perishable material. Lastly, only two skulls were found without a body in the west of the cavity covered by small stones. Crubézy suggested that those two skulls may correspond to the equivalent long bones found in the north / north centre of the same level; however, the long bones numbered more than two individuals, while the equivalent number of skulls was missing.

Under all these adult burials, infant bones were found spread at the bottom of this layer. No animal bones were mentioned apart from the bird bones found associated with the complete burial in the north of the cavity, but in plan (**Fig. 17**, Crubézy 2003: 300, figure 2), a number of animal bones are evident, mixed with the human. Although Crubézy identified only two depositional phases distinct in time, multiple intervention and manipulation events have to be recognised. The fact that there was evidence for deposition of whole bodies that were subsequently dismembered within the cavity at some point of their decomposition, their long bones then grouped together and their skulls removed to an unknown destination and for unknown use showed that people descended repeatedly in *Fosse 23* to complete these practices. Although the limited amount of skulls found in the cavity could have belonged to some of the long bones located there, the possibility of them to have been transported from somewhere else cannot be excluded.

Lastly, clearly, the practice of structured deposition can be observed. In layer F, infants were deposited, decomposed and their bones were spread. Their skulls were either missing or miss-represented. Over them adults and animals were deposited and their corpses were manipulated and rearranged during and after decomposition. This whole layer was sealed by the natural collapse of the ceiling of the cavity. The debris from the collapse of the ceiling of the cavity with the addition of mixed cultural debris formed the first chronologically mixed layer, layer E. In layer D, over the adult corpses, dismembered animals (antler, deer bones, ram, two skulls of young pigs, and at least six caprine long bones) were spread and mixed layer C sealed all the depositions.

In Kissonerga-Mylouthkia contexts, similar multiple interventions and manipulations to decaying corpses were not observed. The repetition of the practice of descending into the deep context of the wells, in order for some sort of human deposition to take place, however, was confirmed (Croft 2003:55). Complete human burials were not found in the wells either. All human burials at Mylouthkia were partial, with only one possible exception of a foetus found in the bottom Fill 191 of Well

116. Croft (2003: 50), however, doubted that it had been initially interred complete, due to the extremely limited representation of bones, which did not support such a hypothesis. Also, all burials at Mylouthkia were secondary; namely they had been transported to the wells from somewhere else. They were not transported as complete or they certainly were not deposited complete, but partially. Dismemberment was also suggested since the atlas vertebra and the tooth, probably belonging to Skull 1181 from Fill 260 of Well 133, (Croft 2003:55) suggested that the skull was removed from somewhere else at some stage of its decomposition and was deposited in the well along with the caprine carcasses and the pig and bird remains. Further down in this well the second episode of human remains deposition was identified, where at least four individuals represented by two skulls, many skull fragments, a mandible and only few selected long bones were partially secondarily deposited. It was not clear whether these were removed from a corpse or a skeleton. Lastly, at the very bottom fills of Well 133, three skull fragments were found, two of them charred, representing the first chronological human remains deposition in this well.

In addition to the repeated multiple events of descend in a close deep context for the deposition the dead, we may possibly be witnessing complementary ritual practices between the two sites. It is quite possible that at Shillourokambos, an initial place of interment was identified where dead bodies were left to decompose and at some point during decomposition the skull and possibly other parts of the body were removed. There is no evidence of what had happened to the missing skulls. At Mylouthkia there is a lack of evidence of where those skulls originated from and the location of the rest of the bodies. Skull removal from elsewhere was identified and the skulls had found a place for their final deposition in the wells. I certainly do not imply here that the skulls removed from layer F or D of *Fosse 23* were deposited in the contemporary Well 133. In principal, this may not have been impossible, but it is certainly an imaginative thought though lacking any supporting evidence. This could

easily be verified or rejected with a paleoanthropologist's (/ dental expert's) specialized examination.

What I suggest here is that there is evidence of two aspects of the same ritual practice. The skulls from *Fosse 23* were removed for some purpose for which there is a lack of evidence. It is not an unfounded possibility that they were removed with the purpose for them to be treated in some way; to be used for some practice and / or for them to be deposited in some other context that was considered appropriate. Also, no great imagination is needed for the concept that the skulls found at Mylouthkia possibly belonged to bodies that were decomposing elsewhere and then were removed and deposited in the wells. Considering all other commonalities between *Fosse 23* and the Mylouthkia wells: dates, proximity to water, identical exclusion of animals for interment, concentrations of chipped stone and rough / non-worked stone, presence of obsidian, high quantities of stone vessel fragments, excessive degrees of all content fragmentation and incompleteness, identical techniques of manufacture of maceheads, human and animal fragmentation (dismemberment) and common population origin from the wider area of Northern Levant on the basis of technological advancement (McCartney 2003a:24), it should be acknowledged that the excavated depositions possibly have revealed complementary practices.

#### *3.4.8 Structured deposition.*

Lastly, since all these similarities in the depositions between the Mylouthkia wells and Shillourokambos *Fosse 23* could not have been coincidental, the conditions under which the Mylouthkia wells were infilled should also be reviewed. As previously mentioned, accidental and natural causes cannot not sufficiently account for the depositions in the wells. The fact that *Fosse 23* exhibited a more stratified taphonomy may indeed have been due to its extended width that provided more surface area for

the rain water to be absorbed and less chances for pools of water to have been created in its interior, which in turn would cause some of the material to float and other to subside resulting in a mixture. This natural water action was attested in the fills of the Mylouthkia wells on the basis of the consistency of the soil: lenses, patches, discolourment (Croft 2003:3-8) and the evidence of mixed material (Croft 2003:7, 55). Under the light of the evidence from *Fosse 23* and the similarity that the depositional practices exhibited, it should no longer be excluded that the depositions in the Mylouthkia wells were initially structured.

Natural infilling possibly occurred in the very beginning, at the very bottom fills of the wells that were empty of cultural material. Limited water flow, evaporation and wind blown dust would have turned these lowest contexts into muddy fills. Then, the first human fragmentary depositions took place marking the beginning of cultural infilling. Human skull fragments (Well 133) and other human remains (Well 116) were deposited or thrown into the muddy bottom fills of the wells. At that point, a series of cultural and quite possibly structural depositions started. Well 116 was completely infilled in one episode with cultural material (Fill 124). Well 133 also received a volume of cultural material (Fills 334, 331 and possibly lower 282). Then the second event of human deposition took place in the interior of Well 133: people descended into the well and deposited decomposing and fully decomposed skulls and other remains of at least four individuals and complete animal carcasses (Fill 282). This deposit was then covered with a layer or layers of cultural material (Fills 279, 278). Lastly, a final event of human deposition occurred: a decomposing skull was interred along with animal carcasses and covered with cultural material (Fills 264, 260).

After every depositional event some time must have elapsed, during which natural phenomena (rain water, dust) and possibly scavenger animals (rodents, reptiles, amphibians) disturbed the depositions and affected their condition, thus resulting to the state they were found. Not all fragmentary objects and animals in those mixed deposits were structurally deposited one by one. This was possibly valid for the

complete animal carcasses, but probably not for those found in an exceedingly fragmentary state mixed with extremely fragmented cultural material, rough / non-worked stone and soil. What I suggest here is the possibility of layered, structured initial depositions in the wells in the example of Shillourokambos that resulted to all mixed fills because of the extremely narrow width of the wells and their less absorbent havana edges. Human, animal and material remains were interred, possibly one by one and then covered by mixed layers of similar composition, but in a more fragmentary state. Already mixed layers possibly alternated with initially structured ones. This alternation of layers of items (humans / animals / artefacts / stones) deposited one by one with mixed layers of fragmented artefacts, animals and stones, included in a volume of soil, exhibit initial structured deposition and patterned activity.

Under this light, the material found in the Mylouthkia wells and *Fosse 23* as selected structured depositions seemed more likely to have been *de facto refuse* (Schiffer 1995:29), namely *intellectual rubbish* (Hill 1996) deposited in culturally selected *containers with symbolic force* (Gable 2004:89-92).

### **3.5 Kissonerga-Mylouthkia Contexts: Reconstruction of the depositions and examination of the practice of fragmentation.**

Given the extensive degree of fragmentation of the content especially of the wells, along with possible strong symbolic significance of the *container* itself (Gable 2004), the amounts of fragmented artefacts, their degree of fragmentation and the frequency of their deposition were worth examining in a parallel view of a reconstructed history of their containers.

### 3.5.1 Well 116

Well 116 (**Tables 2-7, 37, Fig. 18**), the only C-EPPNB feature at Mylouthkia, was of about 8.50m of depth and of 0.90m of diameter (Peltenburg 2003a:88, figure 11.3, Croft 2003a:4). Expectedly, the highest concentration of artefacts appeared in Fill 124 (in total 104 artefacts, **Table 37b**) as this fill was 5.25m deep. Two points are important and should be noted. Firstly, the extremely limited number of artefacts in very bottom Fill 192: they were only three in total. These may be considered deliberate or accidental depositions and it is uncertain when they were deposited, i.e. while the well was functional or after it had dried-out. The silty deposits that Croft (2003a: 4-6) reported could have formed either during the function of the well in its muddy, unclear bottom or gradually during the last functional stages when it was drying out. The number of artefacts found in this fill (192) was extremely limited, especially in comparison to the number of artefacts yielded from other fills. A direct comparison between Fill 192, only 0.30m deep, and Fill 124, which was 5.25m deep could not take place. Since Fill 124 represented a highly mixed deposit and Croft did not notice a particular concentration of artefacts in the interior, an average number of artefacts per meter or every 0.30m is indicative. This estimates to 19.8 artefacts per meter and almost 6 artefacts (5.94) per 0.30m, which is double the number of artefacts found in the bottom fill (Fill 192).

The scarcity of artefacts and therefore depositional events in Fill 192 is more evident when this fill is compared to Fill 191 of similar soil consistency, but with 25 artefacts in total in a depth of 0.25m (!). Fill 191 also contained the remains of a foetus and a concentration of numerous stones *purposefully selected and deliberately deposited* (Croft 2003:5). The artefacts in Fill 192 can possibly be considered accidental or deliberately accidental, namely dropped or thrown without a particular purpose or motivation. The intentionally placed depositions in Fill 191 mark the acknowledgement of the dryness and closure of the well by human agents, the assumption of it never producing water again and the beginning of cultural depositions in the interior.



This initiation occurred with the event of the deposition of a fragmentary foetus, a partial cat, fragmentary artefacts and selected stones. Until that point, the well with any meaning it may have had for the Aceramic Neolithic community that dug it and / or used its water had been an entity between earth and water, between the underground and the surface, amongst the human agents as part of their world. From the point of the first deliberate deposition, the well became a culturally empowered entity: the deposition of one agents' dead descendant, probably in partial form, the deposition of agent's inalienable fragmented artefacts (Chapman 2000b:23-48, Chapman and Gaydarska 2007, Earle 2004, Hodder 1982a,b, Weiner 1992), the deposition of selected animals also in partial form and of selected stones, all selected material from the agent's cultural and natural world, signified the moment of the cultural empowerment of the well.

The people who made these depositions probably descended into the well. They could have done so to attest its dryness in the first place. This was probably the first human descent into the well after a considerable amount of time. It is not possible for the length of time during which the underground stream of this well had running water, filling up the well to be estimated. Certainly this could have varied between years, decades and most probably centuries, if no extreme geological change took place. Therefore, the deposition of the foetus, stone and fragmented artefacts and animals probably signified not only the acknowledged death of the stream and the well, but also the re-penetration of deep earth by people. It would have signified their re-descent, after a considerable amount of time in a structure that was initially constructed probably by their ancestors.

The dryness of a well was probably a major event for the community. It is not possible to perceive what the water of the well was used for and how often, considering the presence of rivers nearby. The water from the wells could have been considered appropriate for specific activities, whereas the water from the rivers for other. Miller (1985:155) presented an ethnographical example from 'modern' India. At the village of

Dangwara, in central India, a well has been there for centuries and knowledge of the agents of its initial construction is now lost. Another well has been recently opened by the government in order to limit antisocial events (e.g. arguments and fights) and congregations while collecting water. The first well is continually used extensively, due to beliefs about the *sacrality* (Sanders 2006) of the water surrounding it. Strict hierarchical rules apply to the priority of access to this well and to the time of the day access is allowed. The quality of the water is questionable; however, long queues form every day at its mouth. The well made by the government is underused, although the quality of the water is tested. Its presence was not well received by the village and water has been drawn from it only for specific washing activities, not for drinking. Also, strict rules apply to the vessels used for drawing water from the government-well to eliminate the possibilities of spreading *pollution* (Miller 1985, Douglas 1966). This water from the government-well has never been used for ceremonies. Intense distress, fear and disorganization in the daily and ritual life of this community would be expected if the old well stopped producing water (Miller 1985).

Without implying any cultural similarities, it is conceivable that the dried-out well at Mylouthkia would have certainly necessitated alternate arrangements regardless of the water-use customs and their frequency. If social arrangements and relations (e.g. who drew the water, who brought it to the settlement (?), how, when and for what purpose the 'well-water' was used instead of 'river-water') depended on the well, such a change would have challenged existing social arrangements and they would have to be re-established, or others would have to be initiated. As such, the active intentional closure of the well with cultural material after the well dried-out, was possibly demanded by sociocultural rules appropriate for such an event.

The deposition of a partial human was probably one of these rules as this practice was attested in the majority of excavated and previously functional wells at Mylouthkia. The latter was possibly associated with ideas relating to death: death of the stream, death of the well, death of a human being or deposition of a cultural death to

accompany the natural death. Conversely, it was possibly related with ideas regarding *death and regeneration of life* (Bloch and Parry 1982): return of a foetus to a watery womb (muddy fills of the well) for regeneration of other foetuses or other wells, or implantation of a dead descendant in a context that represented the work and / or life force of dead ancestors, who benefited the community by opening the well. Their knowledge of well construction was possibly invoked, with the death of the well and the cultural need to construct a new one, or perhaps their work was honoured, so that the tradition of successful well digging could be continued.

To further discuss the cultural depositions in Well 116, the major single episode of the deposition of Fill 124 must have come shortly after the initial deposition of Fill 191. Croft (2003b:50-51) suggested that the rib found in the very bottom of Fill 124 probably came from the same individual in Fill 191. The mixture of the lower deposit of Fill 124 and a part of Fill 191 would have been possible only if Fill 191 had not settled completely, and therefore had not become stable and compact yet. Fill 124, filled with air pockets, suggested a single depositional event of soil containing artefacts and an extraordinary amount of limpet shells. The *suggestive stones* Croft (2003a:5) mentioned were either included in this soil mixture or were thrown in intervals during this deposition of about three and a half cubic meters of soil ( $0.45\text{m} \times 0.45\text{m} \times 3.14 \times 5.25\text{m} = 3.40\text{m}^3$ ), which happened in one depositional episode or one phase of activity.

If this reasoning is correct, then the people who deposited this mixed soil would have gone to the location of the soil several times during a limited period of time (a day?) and returned to the well to deposit the soil. The homogenous consistency of the soil of Fill 124 not only showed one depositional event, but also one source for this soil. It could be argued that this mixture of soil was collected (in hips?) over time, was naturally mixed and judged appropriate for deposition in the well, and then covered previous cultural deposits and filled up to more than half of the well. Alternatively, this soil could have been extracted from a specific area as it was attested for the mixed topmost layer of *Fosse 23* at Shillourokambos (§ 3.4.7).

After the deposition of Fill 124, it is not clear whether an abandonment phase took place (Fill 123 and 114) or the subsequent fills were deliberate depositional choices and gradually accumulated. Possible structured re-deposition could have taken place after this ambiguous phase at the very top fills of the well, for which though there is no contextual evidence due to modern destruction. In the 0.58m of Fill 123, a total of only two artefacts were found and only a single artefact in the 1.45m of Fill 114 (**Tables 2 and 37**). The reported round stones, cobbles and pebbles plus the tiny fragments of animal bones could have accumulated accidentally (abandonment) and gradually, due to water action dragging material from the surface into the well or again gradually as appropriate depositions in the well (*intellectual rubbish*).

'Rubbish' is not a universal notion (Hodder 1982b:24), [...] *neither a homogeneous category, since it was structured according to cultural classifications* (Hill 1996:21). If objects (e.g. artefacts/ animal bone scraps) were thrown in these fills of Well 116, this move of 'rejection', of throwing something in a deep hole in the earth, was certainly not motivated and done in the form recognized as 'rubbish' refuse in modern times (Chapman 2000a,b, Chapman and Gaydarska 2007:73-75). Evidently, by comparison to the rest of the depositions in the well, the "refused" objects in these top fills were already judged appropriate for the infilling of the well. They were culturally appropriate categories of deposition-able items.

An important feature of Well 116 was the number of fragmented artefacts it produced, better understood per fill rather than in total (**Tables 6 and 7**). It should be emphasised that with the only exception of a small stone vessel, all complete artefacts were hammerstones and pounders, whereas the great majority of fragmented artefacts were stone vessel fragments with high degrees of fragmentation (**Fig. 14a**, Jackson 2003:39). In general (**Table 7**), about half of the objects deposited (and / or thrown) into the fills of Well 116 were fragmented. This ratio was maintained more or less throughout all the fills of the well. The fact that almost double the number of complete

artefacts was chosen to be deposited (especially in Fills 124 and 191) shows a preference for artefacts other than stone vessels.

Importantly, this also shows a limited (by comparison to the other Mylouthkia contexts) extension and importance of a fragmentation chain (Chapman 2000b), which appropriated as a final link the deposition of these fragmented artefacts in the wells. With the passage of time, as the *inalienable* (Chapman 2000b:23-48, Chapman and Gaydarska 2007, Earle 2004, Hodder 1982a,b, Weiner 1992) artefact became fragmented, it was reused and recycled; and became even more fragmented, gradually accumulating a culturally specific value, or possibly losing it, while other values and meanings were ascribed to it. The large amount of fragmented artefacts in Well 116, numbering half of the amount of complete artefacts, is considered limited in comparison to fragmented artefacts in other Mylouthkia contexts and mirrors specific culturally ascribed values. This depositional choice is characteristic for this well. It will become even more evidently important, as a shift of this choice will be demonstrated to have taken place in the following time period (§§ 3.5.2 and 3.5.7, **Table 40**).

### 3.5.2 Well 133

Well 133 (**Tables 16-20** and **38**, **Fig. 18**), a C-LPPNB feature of 0.90m diameter and of depth of 7m (Peltenburg 2003a:88, figure 11.3), produced an exceptional amount of artefacts, 450 in total; resulting in an average frequency of one artefact per 1.56cm. Of course, this is not a realistic account and concentrations of artefacts were noticed in each fill. In general (**Tables 20** and **38**), the fills of Well 133 presented a constant presence of artefacts. Fill 282, the central fill of Well 133 with a depth of 2.20m produced the highest amount of artefacts. The rest of the fills had an average depth of about half a meter. The average number of artefacts per half a meter in Fill 282 was 39 artefacts (38.87), indicating this fill did not have the highest concentration. Upper well

Fill 264 with a depth of 1m (raising the average depth of fills of the well) also conformed to this pattern of an average of about 39 artefacts per half a meter. In reality, Fill 331, with 49 artefacts and a depth of only 0.25m, was the fill with the highest concentration of artefacts. This was especially odd as Fill 331 (**Fig. 18, Table 38**, Peltenburg 2003: figure 29) was the top part of the stream outflow in the well, while the bottom part of the outflow, Fill 334 of 0.60m of depth, yielded only a single artefact.

This oddity should be considered additional evidence that the wells were not infilled during their functional period. If this was correct, the power of water from the inflow would push the artefacts towards the centre and the outflow of the stream, and while the water would raise inside the well (according to Pascal's principal), the stone artefacts would have either sunk toward the bottom of the well (Fills 332 and 333) or of the outflow (Fill 334), following the laws of physics and gravity. This was not the case, however. Bottom central fills (332 and 333) produced only 11 artefacts, while bottom-outflow fill (334) had only one. This reveals that Fill 334 was already compact in the well when the artefacts of Fill 331 (/ lower 282) were deposited. They were probably towards the centre of the shaft when natural water action (rain water) possibly created a pool in the well, mixed the deposits of 331 (lower 282), uppermost 334 and 329 and caused the artefacts of 331 to flow towards the empty upper part of the outflow. Alternatively, the fragmented artefacts could have been placed deliberately in the empty upper part of the outflow on the compact top level of Fill 334.

Bottom Fills 332 and 333 were of similar consistency and represent the fills accumulated after the well dried out. At some point during this process, the charred human skull fragments were thrown or deposited along with the 11 artefacts in total and the burnt fish bone, the deer, cat and caprine bone fragments, the pig cranial fragments, antler, stones and cobbles into these two bottom fills. Croft (2003b:53, 55) considered this one depositional event along with lower Fill 329 of the same soil consistency and depositional material (**Table 16**). Fill 329 exhibited soil consistency similar to both bottom Fills 332 and 333 and the lowest Fill 282 (334, in the outflow)

(Croft 2003a:7). Also, Croft (2003b:55) suggested the human cranial fragment found in Fill 329 along with identical Fills 332 and 333 animal bone remains to have comprised one depositional event. Both soil consistency evidence and cultural consistency evidence support this as a single event, only if this initial deposition took place in the well while a naturally accumulated muddy/ watery fill was already there (333, 332, lower 329). After the well had dried out and after the initial deposition had become compact, upper Fill 329, lower Fill 282 (both central fills) and Fill 334 (same level in the outflow) were probably thrown, deposited or naturally accumulated (**Fig. 18**, Peltenburg 2003: figure 29). Soil and material consistency (**Tables 16** and **38**, Croft 2003:7,) support this pattern. Next, the outflow fill, Fill 331 with a large amount of artefacts, a different soil consistency from the underlying fills and a human ulna shaft attributed to the human depositions of Fill 282 can only be explained as part of the same depositional event (with middle-upper Fill 282) and therefore as part of Fill 282.

With Fills 333, 332 and lower Fill 329 comprising one depositional event, upper Fill 329, lowest 282 and 334 was an intermediate mixed layer of similar depositional categories, but with a scarcity of material (**Table 16, 19, and 38, Fig. 18**). Conclusively, the latter fills were probably created gradually, possibly partially accidentally and partially within an *intellectual rubbish* framework (Hill 1996). Namely, the material in this layer (/ fills) would have constituted culturally controlled categories of deposition-able items. The following Fill 282 with 171 artefacts (actual total of 221 artefacts, if the number from inter-belonging Fill 331 is added), 168 human fragments (Fox 2003:43-45), more than 50 animal fragments and a few whole caprine carcasses (Croft 2003b:57, Table 6.3, 52-55) represents one distinct depositional event.

People descended into this well and placed the skulls of an adult and a sub-adult (**Table 16**, Fox 2003:44, Croft 2003:54) by the edges of the well. They also deposited the remains of at least one child and of a second adult along with whole animal caprine carcasses, deer, pigeon and cat fragments, pig cranial fragments and robust horncore (**Table 16**). Then the soil containing all these fragmentary artefacts was

probably dumped in the well to cover these depositions. While doing so, possibly the numerous air pockets that Croft (2003:7) reported in this fill were created. Obviously, the natural power of rain water could not have acted upon 2.20m of soil (a volume of almost one and a half cubic meter (1.40m<sup>3</sup>)) to mix the deposits and cause compaction, disappearance of air-pockets and subsidence.

Following this event, two distinct mixed layers were deposited or gradually accumulated, although the possibility of them having formed accidentally was evidently minimized. Amongst soil, *numerous stones and cobbles* (Croft 2003a:7) and the 70 stone artefacts between them, whole caprine carcasses and bone fragments were deposited along with deer bone. Following these intermediate layers, the third human remains deposition took place in Fills 264 and 260. A human skull (KMyI. 1181) was evidently removed from a corpse during decomposition and was subsequently placed in Well 133, also covered by soil, *many stones, cobbles and pebbles* (Croft 2003:7) and fragmentary animal remains (pigeon, deer, crab and caprine fragments, **Table 16**). 122 stone artefacts and whole caprine carcasses depositions possibly occurred prior to and after the skull deposition as they were found both above and below it. The uppermost part of this well was also destroyed due to modern constructions in the area (Croft 2003a 3, 6, Peltenburg 2003:xxxii). Following the pattern so far in Well 133, Well 116, and *Fosse 23*, a last depositional event must have occurred: probably a mixed layer was deposited sealing all these depositions and possibly signalled the final closure of the well.

Stone vessels fragments were predominant amongst the artefacts deposited in Well 133. Amongst the 450 stone artefacts from this well (**Tables 19** and **38**), 400 of them were stone vessel fragments (Jackson 2003:38). The absence of food processing equipment and the scarcity of pounders and hammerstones, which continued to be found complete and reused in their great majority (Jackson 2003:36), raises the amounts of fragmented artefacts in this well by comparison to Well 116. Additionally, the stone vessels fragments with very high degrees of fragmentation raise the number of



fragmented artefacts in Well 133 significantly. No complete vessel was found in Well 133 and no complete vessel could be reconstructed from the 400 vessel fragments (**Fig. 14a**, Jackson 2003:39).

Consequently in all fills, fragmented artefacts were double the amount of whole ones with the exception of Fill 282; where the fragmented artefacts were almost triple to the amount of the whole ones (**Tables 19 and 20**). In Fill 334, the only excavated artefact was in complete form. Fill 332 produced five artefacts in total, of which three were whole and two were fragmented. As previously discussed, however, this was not a realistic representation. If the number of artefacts of Fill 334 is added to the number of upper Fill 329 and lower Fill 282, with which it belonged to depositionally and stratigraphically, the same pattern of more fragmented artefacts than whole ones can be recognised in all the fills of this well. The same applies for Fill 332 in that the number of artefacts should be amalgamated to the ones of Fill 333, with which it belonged due to stratigraphic reasons and other evidence previously discussed. Additionally, similarly to Well 116, higher concentrations of artefacts appeared in the central fills of Well 133. Evidently, and for reasons already explained, more artefacts were deposited after a well had dried-out. After several depositional events, the content of the well must have been considered appropriately infilled and less artefacts were then thrown or deposited (top most fills).

Despite these depositional similarities between Wells 116 and 133, this difference in numbers and degrees of fragmentation mirrors a shift in social practices. Higher degrees of fragmentation reveal higher degrees of artefacts inalienability, a higher ascribed value to the fragment and therefore a higher ascribed value to its final deposition (Chapman 2000b, Chapman and Gaydarska 2007). Longer artefactual biography entails more involvement of the artefact in the life of its maker / user and therefore in the social life of its maker, user, donor, borrower, re-user, gift-giver, gift-taker, inheritor and agent who finally deposits the object in a selected closed context. Longer artefactual history also entails more varied use of the artefact during a process

of gradual fragmentation and transformation, such as: from liquid bearing vessel, to solid bearing vessel, and then to tool and finally to culturally appropriate deposition-able artefact. Therefore, higher degrees of fragmentation mirror higher degrees of social inter-exchange, social interdependency and cohesion (Chapman and Gaydarska 2007). Artefacts circulated, changed hands and uses while their initial use and the process of fragmentation could not be forgotten, as it was part of the social history of the group who made them, used them and chose when, how and where to deposit them.

Also, the less varied material in Well 133 in comparison to Well 116 (Jackson 2003:40) shows development in the cultural categorization process. The categories of artefacts chosen to be deposited in Well 133 were sharply distinct and therefore clearer and more stabilized. During the one thousand of years that separated the cultural filling of the two wells, the practice of deposition of sociocultural categories within the wells was established and re-established possibly many times. This led to the development of practices, crystallization of rules and stabilization of socio-culturally bounded and mytho-logically coherent categories of deposition, appropriate for the meaning that had been ascribed both to content and *container*, in time (Gable 2004).

Additionally, the clearer and repeatedly structured depositions of animals and humans along with the evident excess of them (at least five decomposing, dismembered and transported individuals and a slaughter of at least twenty-three caprine carcasses) reveals that this ritual practice at the time of Well 133 was at its peak. The ritual, initiated probably long before the depositional time of Well 116, was established, possibly challenged and re-established during the thousand years that separated the two wells. It was developed and it reached its peak during the depositional time of Well 133. Excessive ritual activities may mirror instinctive sense and fear of change (Verhoeven 2002b). The depositional time of Well 133, during the last stages of Cypriot Pre-Pottery Neolithic B, occurred in a world that gradually transformed into a more sedentary, agro-pastoral dependent Neolithic society with walls and distinct group-based social organisation (Tenta period 2, Khirokitia, § 4), who struggled to maintain

their identity, traditions and values. This issue would have triggered conservative defence sociocultural mechanisms that would have caused ritual practices to become richer and more elaborate, emphasizing exactly the values in danger. Such high numbers of artefacts, such high degrees of fragmentation and such excess in depositional practices, will not be attested for the following Aceramic Neolithic era. Well 133 may have been one of the last times this ritual deposition took place in such a way and excess prior to the beginning of its downfall, its transformation and final integration in the new sociocultural and mytho-logical forms of categorization and ritualization.

### 3.5.3 Well 110

Well 110 (**Tables 8-15, 39**) is a particular feature that would not be fully understood without the prior analysis of Well 116 and Well 133. Dating to C-LPPNB and relatively contemporary with Well 133, Well 110 was a shaft of 5.3m in depth and of a destroyed shaft diameter ranging from 0.80m to 1.43m (Croft 2003a:3). It was not possible for this well to be viewed in the detail the other two wells were examined due to publication-excavation reasons (§ 2.4.1, § 3.2). Adequate and quite important information, in terms of taphonomy, animal bone and artefacts numbers and degrees of fragmentation, however, was possible to extract thanks to Croft's (2003:49-58) report and the excellent feature of 'the small finds register' of this publication (§ 2.4.1, Peltenburg 2003a). The bottom fills were empty of any artefacts and ecofacts (**Table 39**).

On the basis of the complete absence of cultural material in the bottom fills of Well 110, the soil consistency of these fills (*blocky redeposited havara, powdery havara, inwashed silts*) and the irregular shape of the shaft, Croft (2003a:3-4) suggested that this well *collapsed shortly after its completion*. The exact time of this collapse is not possible to determine. *Shortly after its completion*, however, did not suggest immediately afterwards

with the possible entrapment (/possibly injury) of the first diggers or their tools. Certainly the immediate collapse as a possibility cannot be entirely excluded. Though, it is more probable that the unstable havana first cracked in blocks and then started to collapse. This kind of collapse behaviour is considered regular for this type of soft rock and was suggested in Well 110 by the surviving blocks of havana found in the upper fills of the collapse (Fill 06 and 05) (Croft 2003a:3). In contrast, the water action of the stream below dismantled the collapsed havana blocks in the lowest fills, Fills 08 and 07, and rendered havana to its common powdery form apparent in excavation (Croft 2003a:3). Therefore, the shaft probably collapsed within hours or even weeks from the time it was initially opened.

This is especially important as it leaves only two out of the three possibilities for the timing of the initial depositions in Wells 116 and 133. It seems that the custom related to the opening of a well did not necessitate the deposition of human remains upon opening and initial usage. Thus, the initial depositions (e.g. human remains, fragmentary artefacts and animal bones) in Wells 116 and 133 probably occurred either during the productive period of the wells or after they had dried-out. Although it is not possible to determine what the well-water was used for, decomposing remains of humans and animals were probably not thrown in while it was in use for its water. If this hypothesis is correct, only one possibility is left for explaining the initial depositions in the wells: the wells must have dried-out prior to any depositions. Possible accidental deposits of small fragments of artefacts while the wells were in use cannot not be entirely excluded; most probably though initial depositions comprised parts of an assemblage, which including human remains, cat bone fragments, antler, pig crania fragments and a first phalanx of a goat (**Table 2, 16**) did not find their way to the bottom of the wells by accident or natural causes.

Under this light, there is a minor possibility that Well 110 did not collapse for months or years after the initial opening. This possibility though should probably be excluded. Although, in months or years of use of a well, human and animal remains

would not have been deliberately deposited and fragmentary artefacts probably would not find their way into the well accidentally, *pit-trapped* victims most certainly would have. Frogs, toads, reptiles and mice remains were quite common in the bottom fills of every other well, but were entirely missing from the bottom fills of Well 110 (**Table 8**, Croft 2003b:57, Table 6.3). Therefore, the time of the collapse of Well 110 should be placed within the time range of hours, days or weeks after its initial construction.

Additionally, the fact that human remains were found in the majority of the excavated wells, but Well 110, may highlight circumstances under which deposition of human remains in a well was appropriated. In a series of deliberate depositions, the inclusion or exclusion of human remains was probably not random. Mythological processes that ascribed meaning and *metaphorical value* to *de facto* content and *container* (Chapman 2000a, b, Chapman and Gaydarska 2007, Gable 2004, Miller 1985, Schiffer1995) must have bounded these depositions. This exclusion, therefore, probably related to what 'decomposing human remains' and to what 'well' meant to those people. Because of the evidenced collapse, Well 110 either never or only for a very limited amount of time provided water for the purposes of the community who initially dug it.

As a water producing agent in the framework of possible symbolism, personhood and agency of all that partook the Aceramic Neolithic world (Cooney 2007, Dorbes 2000, Helms 2004, Renfrew 2004, Verhoeven 2002b, 2004, Watkins 2004, 2005), wells must have been seen as taking part in the formation of sociocultural perceptions and relations regarding water production. For example, the level of the water in the well would have been higher or lower corresponding to periods of water shortage or excess depending on the underground water horizon following rainy or dry seasons. This could not have been attributed to environmental reasons or explained by the laws of physics. Most probably, it was the well or some other mythologically understood entity who offered the water to the community being the first and most important link in a chain of water transfer, offering, sharing (?) and use with corresponding

sociocultural importance. Therefore, the 'well' participated to the social relations linked with the production and use of the water, as a social agent and must have acted upon and interacted with the community.

Well 110 could not have taken part in this series of water-social-relations due to the early collapse and would not have been perceived as a water-agent. Therefore, what 'Well 110' signified for the community must have been different from the meaning of the functional wells. A socioculturally and mytho-logically bounded categorization process would have required the separate placement of this well in the order of these peoples' world. The category 'collapsed well' did not appropriate human depositions in the interior. The water-agent that did not produce water did not participate in the series of water-social-relations, did not offer life and did not give its diggers the gift / honour of knowledgeable and successful well digging, and in turn could not have demanded equivalent actions.

The exclusion of human remains from Well 110 is not only elucidating to the meaning of the *container*, but also to the meaning of human remain depositions in the wells. This shows that indeed human depositions were linked with a successful opening of a well by the people who constructed it and with the production of water from a well, possibly as a life giver. Concerns relating to ancestors, appropriate descendants' actions, the meaning of life and death and natural and cultural regeneration must have been central to the significance and metaphorical value of the human remains, their deposition in the interior of previously functional wells and their association with other categories of material inside the wells (e.g. stone, specific animal remains, specific classes and conditions of artefacts).

With the exception of human remains, other kinds of depositions did take place in the interior of Well 110 after its collapse. Fill 04 contained nine stone artefacts and a *significant quantity of mainly fist-sized stones* (**Table 8**, Croft 2003:4). These depositions in Fill 04 probably occurred shortly after the collapse of Well 110 since an intermediate layer of different soil consistency did not separate Fill 04 from the fills of the collapse.

Importantly, no animal remain depositions had occurred in this initial cultural fill either. The subsequent depositions in Fill 03 also probably occurred shortly after Fill 04 as not even pit-trapped victims were found in Fill 04. This suggests a short time period of exposure of Fill 04 to open air. Yet, the lack of water attractive to amphibians and organic material attractive to rodents and reptiles may have justified the absence of such remains. It is intriguing that pit-trapped victims were entirely absent from all fills of Well 110, even those that contained animal remains (Fills 04 to 01, **Table 8**, Croft 2003:57).

Again the nature of the specific animal remains may have also justified the absence of pit-trapped victims. In contrast to the other wells and the remaining contexts of Period IB, animal remains (**Table 8**, Croft 2003b:57) in Well 110 consisted mainly of horncores, antler and pig cranial fragments that would not have been regarded as food by reptiles and rodents. Therefore, exclusion also occurred in relation to animal deposition-able material in Well 110. Horn and antler were not edible parts of animals and the total lack of pit-trapped victims indicates that the minimal presence of post-cranial bones that Croft (2003b:55-56, 57) discussed probably was clear of flesh. This should be considered as additional evidence regarding similarity in the perception and categorization of animals and humans or at least parts of them. No decomposing humans or animals were deposited in Well 110, indicating that the two may have belonged to the same conceptual category for the specific community.

Additionally, Croft (2003b:56) underlined the fact that animal remain depositions in Well 110 were patterned and suggestive of *selective deposition [...] biased towards head parts*. Croft (2003b:56) also emphasised the fact that a preference to animal (and human) head parts was recognised in the depositions in Well 133. This reveals similarity in depositional preferences in both wells and according to Croft (2003:56) was indicative of their significance as *ritual foci*. Therefore, Well 110 may not have been seen as water-bearer, life-giver or water-agent, but rather maintained a part of its *sacrality* (Sanders 2006). This possibly necessitated different appropriate actions. Although no

decomposing humans and animals were appropriated, specific parts of animals (head bones) with specific significance and particular categories of artefacts were required. This suggests that a slightly, but importantly different, ritual with a possible different *ritual function* (Verhoeven 2002b:245) and meaning was judged suitable in the case of Well 110.

In terms of artefact concentrations in the fills of Well 110, this well was again an exception. With two concentrations of artefacts in its interior (Fills 03 and 01, **Tables 15** and **39**), Well 110 contrasted with the other two wells, in which a concentration of artefacts can be noticed in only one of the central fills (**Tables 7, 20** and **37, 38**). Regarding material variety and degrees of fragmentation, Well 110 exhibits traits in-between Well 116 and Well 133. Well 110 shows a greater variety of material classes than Well 133 and equivalent to Well 116 (**Fig. 14a, Table 13**), but comparable degrees of artefact fragmentation to Well 133 (**Tables 15** and **20**). All vessels were fragmented and incomplete. Two anvils and a pestle only were found whole. The majority of hammerstones and pounders were complete, while half of the remaining artefacts were found in complete form and the other half in fragments (**Table 13**).

Not only was Well 110 the only close context with two concentrations of artefacts at Mylouthkia, but also the only one that exhibited inconsistency in the amounts of material fragmentation in its fills (**Table 15**). The first two Fills (04 and 03) had more fragmented artefacts than whole ones, while subsequent Fills 02, 01 and 0 had more complete artefacts than fragmented ones (**Table 15**). The reversed numbers of fragmented artefacts in Well 110 are inconsistent with the depositional practices in all contexts of Period IB at Mylouthkia. This possibly reflected a choice of practice in terms of preference - or not- of deposition of fragmented artefacts. The majority of contexts in Building 340, Pit 345 and Pit 338 exhibited similarities in preference of extensive degrees and amounts of fragmentation, comparable to Well 133. Most importantly, all contexts at Mylouthkia, without exception, showed consistency in the preference of either fragmented or whole artefacts within their fills and not a combination of both as



observed in Well 110. This alternation in amounts of fragmentation in the fills of Well 110 is indeed unique at Mylouthkia contexts, even in comparison to Well 116 of Period IA.

In general, Well 110 does not match completely any chronological or categorical pattern. With human exclusion from its content, specific animal bone inclusion and a great variety of alternating amounts of fragmented artefacts, Well 110 can fit neither chronologically consistent depositional patterns nor contextual under the category 'well' or 'pit'. It is evident that Well 110 was probably unique even for the people who first constructed it and those who in-filled it. Its particularity placed it closer to the meaning of 'well', but not entirely. Conversely, as it will be demonstrated (§ 3.5.7), Well 110 was not treated as a simple deeply dug in earth pit either. Although Well 110 also was a ritual locus (Croft 2003:56), emphasis on its particularity should be considered evidence for ritual variation denoting something other than the practices attested in Well 116 and Well 133. *Ritual differentiation may provide the most pronounced and the most clearly articulated variation*, in Miller's (1985:178) words.

#### 3.5.4 Building 340 - Pit 345

Building 340 (**Tables 29-32**) was a pit-building and also dated to Period IB, as the rest of the contexts further discussed below. Three steps led to the interior where two floors were excavated, one of them plastered, and also a hearth and internal Pit 345 with only one fill, Fill 347 (Croft 2003:8-9). The scarcity of material in the interior of the building (**Tables 30, 31**) was characteristic, especially in comparison to Fill 347 of internal Pit 345 and Pits 337 and 338, which were found outside the building in close proximity to it and to Well 133 (**Fig. 10**, Peltenburg 2003:figure 28). The number of fragmented and incomplete artefacts was consistently larger than the number of whole ones in all contexts of Building 340 (**Tables 31 and 32**). Both comparative amounts and

degrees of fragmentation and variety of classes of artefacts were consistent with Well 133 (**Table 20**). Jackson (2003:40) noticed predominance of hammerstones and vessel fragments, but also underlined the paucity of material especially in comparison to contemporary Well 133.

Interestingly Building 340 yielded no animal bones, but a few rodent remains, a burnt crab claw found on the hearth and two deer bone fragments found within Fill 347 of Pit 345 (Croft 2003b:56). If Building 340 was a domestic context, more artefacts or at least more scrap bones would have been expected in the interior, especially by comparison to similar contemporary contexts at Parekklissha-Shillourokambos (Guilaine et al. 1992-2003). Even Pit 345 with a depth of 0.35m, a diameter ranging from 0.70-0.80m and a total of 22 artefacts in the interior, seemed extremely poor in comparison to other fills of equivalent depth in Well 133. No structured deposition was identified within this pit and the interior appeared to be of mixed deposits. The paucity in material possibly suggests that Pit 345 was not a *refuse pit*, but rather a storage pit (?), although supporting contextual evidence regarding plant remains was not provided (Murray 2003:61). The diameter was extremely large for Pit 345 to have been a posthole. There is also the possibility that Fill 347 of Pit 345 represents a post-abandonment fill. The lack of any further evidence for the reconstruction of a possible systemic context (Schiffer 1995:25-34) would render any further interpretation of this pit unsound. Other possible interpretations for the use of Building 340, however, should be sought (3.5.7).

### 3.5.5 Pit 337

Pit 337 (**Tables 21-24**) of 0.90m of depth and 1.2m diameter (Croft 2003a:7) was also extremely poor, both in artefacts (total of 28, **Table 23**) and animal remains (e.g. one caprine and one deer bone fragment and minimal presence of amphibian (Croft 2003b:57). Croft (2003:7-8) noted concentration of cobbles in the fills of Pit 337 and

material variety consistent with Well 133. Conversely, he also emphasized on the predominance of hammerstones and pounders. This predominance is the factor that raises the numbers of complete artefacts in comparison to fragmentary ones in this pit (**Table 24**). If this is understood under the light of classes of ground stone, evidently a preference for this kind of deposition is verified. However, the limited number of fragmentary artefacts in a period, where every other attested deposition provided more incomplete artefacts than complete, denotes differentiation in the depositional practices and separate categorization of this pit. Notwithstanding the possibility of statistical error due to the limited number of artefacts in the interior of Pit 337, this pit was the only context of Period IB with a consistency in more complete artefacts than fragmented ones. The difference between complete and fragmented artefacts in the bottom Fill 336 of Pit 337 was indeed marginal (seven whole to six fragmented and incomplete).

According to their excavator though, these fills did not denote two different depositional events, but formed one homogenous fill with the upper part (Fill 335) disturbed by roots (Croft 2003a:8). Viewing the two fills of Pit 337 together raises the ratio between complete and fragmented artefacts to 1.3:1 (16 whole to 12 fragmented and incomplete). Again the difference is not large, but is not marginal either, especially in comparison to Well 110 with two equally contrasting depositions in terms of fragmentation numbers (**Table 40**). Pit 337 is also difficult to explain with no structured deposition, too few animal bones to denote food refuse, limited fragmentary artefacts and consequently little *metaphorical value* of depositions (Chapman and Gaydarska 2007:5), with possibly the exception of cobbles and a lack of contextual evidence regarding plant remains in the interior (Murray 2003:61).

### 3.5.6 Pit 338

Lastly, Pit 338 (**Tables 25-28**), a feature of a 1.60m depth and an average diameter of 0.80-1.03m, yielded a total of 110 artefacts, which was slightly larger than the number of artefacts that Fill 124 of Well 116 yielded in 5.25m. With such a number of artefacts, Pit 338 could be considered the most representative of non-well contexts from Period IB. Croft (2003a:8) also noted numerous stones in the interior *ranging from half to double fist-size* and 11 caprine, 7 deer and 2 pig bone fragments and a minimal presence of amphibians, reptiles and rodents (Croft 2003b:57). The latter indicated that organic material decomposing in the interior was attractive to such animals. Also, the amount of plant remains found in the fills of this pit was proportionally equivalent to the amount found in Well 133 and almost double than the amount found in Well 116 (Murray 2003:61).

This pit exhibited a concentration of artefacts towards the bottom-central Fill 355 and consistent in degrees of fragmentation and amounts of incompleteness in all the fills with more fragmented artefacts than whole ones (**Table 28**). Croft (2003a:8) argued that the fills of this pit, all being silty, represented an abandonment deposit and that the original use of this pit was possibly that of a havara quarry, as havara was most certainly used as a building material. On the basis of amounts and categories of material inside Pit 338, Croft's interpretation is supported. Croft's (2003a:8) understanding that the fills of Pit 338 represented one depositional episode in a pit, which was initially dug to support the community with earth for building, is absolutely consistent, not only functionally (both earth and water were needed for building), but also both chronologically and categorically with Well 133. Both features exhibited high degrees of artefact fragmentation, which is consistent with the development of the practices of fragmentation and structured deposition in Period IB.

In a framework of cultural categories 'earth providing' was possibly experienced differently than 'water providing' and this may have been the reason for

the lack of substantial animal remains and the complete absence of human remains in this pit. Pit 338 had excessively more animal remains than any other non-water-producing pit of the same period and incomparable numbers of artefacts in the interior, with a predominance of vessel fragments. Something in the use of this pit possibly signified something similar to what Well 133 signified for this community; similar, but different enough to appropriate differentiation in mytho-logically bounded deposition-able categories and therefore variation in the ritual practice.

### *3.5.7 All contexts.*

A complex of neighbouring contemporary features including Building 340, Pit 345 and external Pit 337 can be recognised in the area of Well 133, especially with the presence of Pit 338. Pits, a building and a well as a complex of features possibly indicate more complex activities in the area than previously thought. Well 133 and Pit 338 can be observed as neighbouring complementary functional features and as similar categories in the order of the world of that community. The use of Building 340 with internal and external pit, however, remains ambiguous. Croft (2003a:5-6) discussed the presence of obsidian at Mylouthkia and underlined the geographical position of the wells. They were found on a plateau overlooking a natural harbour (Peltenburg 2003: figure 27). Croft (2003a:6) also presented evidence for use of the area in Byzantine times where a tower controlled sea faring in the area and probably this harbour.

In the Pre-ceramic Neolithic, this natural harbour could have also served for the grounding of boats that presumably would carry obsidian (Appendix II). The practice of well construction in the proximity of the sea was also attested in the Levant, although the findings were later than Mylouthkia dating to the PPNC (Galili et al. 1993, 1998, Croft 2003b:52). If well-digging proves to be a common cultural element, it is possibly indicative of the origin of some of the first colonists of Cyprus or of the

colonists at Mylouthkia (if multiple colonial events occurred on the island, originating from different areas of the surrounding mainland) (McCartney 2003a, 2005). The area of Mylouthkia wells acquires an additional layer of meaning with a natural harbour in the proximity, which was potentially linked with the initial grounding of colonists in the area. The presence of obsidian at the site may further support the occurrence of seafaring and contacts with the mainland. This evidence may be much more important than previously thought due to the lack of substantial evidence for seafaring for that era. Even the purpose of the well-water could be further explained with the possibility of a harbour in use in the area. Certainly, it could not be argued that Building 340 had a similar role with a Byzantine tower controlling the area, since cultural and social organization differences would not support something even distantly similar. A communal use of Building 340 for purposes related to the benefit of the community and their society's welfare, however, may be argued due to the lack of domestic evidence from the interior, special care for the longevity of the floor (plastering), the proximity of the building to Well 133 and Pit 338 (both packed with symbolic depositions for which ritual practice would have been required), its position overlooking a productive well and a possibly often or occasionally used harbour.

Lastly, a final comparison of the condition of all artefacts deposited at Mylouthkia should be examined (**Table 40**). Building 340 has been excluded from this comparison not only due to the paucity of its material, but also because such a comparison would only be valid for similar features and on a common basis. Therefore, Pit 345 as evidence from Building 340 has been included in this examination along with Wells 116, 133 and 110 and Pits 337 and 338. Due to the significant differences in depth of these features resulting into incomparable volumes of soil and artefacts, the following was decided: the bottom and upper fills of these features were excluded from this comparison with the exception of Pit 345 and Pit 337, which essentially had only one fill. In this way, disputable or ambiguous depositions from the bottom and upper fills are eliminated and the comparison focuses on the central fills of these features. The

latter are more secure deposits and offer an accurate view of depositional practices in their developed stage rather than during initial or late questionable attempts. As the central Fill 124 of Well 116 was of a 5.25m depth, the numbers of artefacts from central Fills 331, 282, 279, 278 and 264 (of a total depth of 4.45m) of Well 133 were grouped together. The same was applied to central Fills 03, 02, 01 of Well 110 and central Fills 355, 354 and 353 of Pit 338. Then, the numbers of whole and fragmented artefacts were viewed in percentages of the total amount of artefacts per central fills per feature to offer a more accurate account for comparison of the depositional preferences per feature.

A shift in the preference of deposition of fragmentary artefacts from Period IA to Period IB is then revealed. Significantly more fragmented and incomplete artefacts were deposited than whole ones in Period IB contexts. An exception is observed in Pit 337, in which there was a considerable difference between whole and incomplete artefacts with a majority of the former. In period IA, Well 116 exhibits clear preference for the deposition of complete artefacts over fragmented ones. Well 110 was again an exception in comparison to contexts from both periods with only a marginal difference between fragmented and whole artefacts.

The difference in the depositions between Period IA and IB, regarding artefacts and their degrees of fragmentation, can be attributed either to a shift of culturally and mytho-logically deposition-able classes of artefacts or to a shift in the strategy of fragmentation of deposition-able artefacts. Namely, the first possibility is that hammerstones and pestles (with a limited degree of fragmentation) were judged more appropriate than vessel fragments in Period IA, but vessel fragments were gradually considered more appropriate for deposition in these contexts in Period IB. The second possibility is that this shift was not entirely relevant to the classes of appropriate artefacts, but to their degree of fragmentation and their ascribed metaphorical value as a consequence. In this case, more metaphorical value appears to have been ascribed to complete artefacts in Period IA. This must have gradually been changing and when the

practice reached its peak; more metaphorical value was recognised to fragmented and incomplete artefacts. Related practices in Well 110 can be understood better within a pragmatics framework of thinking rather than within a chronological one.

### **3.6 Kissonerga-Mylouthkia wells and Parekklisha-Shillourokambos Fosse 23: content and container, fragmentation, rubbish and ritual.**

*In the beginning were animals, other people, and the dead*, Helms (2004:117) explained in regards to the cosmological order of the first sedentary world. Helms would have been more precise in her account if instead of *animals* she included animate agents in general (Mithen 1996:195-202). According to her, the first sedentary world initially extended the categories embedded in the understanding of the world by hunter-gatherer societies. Helms (2004:125) explained how *development and enlargement of the categories of cosmological order beings* took place gradually while the nature of societies and the way they dealt with their world was changing. Ethnographical examples supported her claim. Portable artefacts and animate agents, however, should be added in her account of evolution of cosmological order. Mylouthkia and Shillourokambos seem to have been a step later than the first sedentary world in terms of cosmological evolution. There were *animals*, animate agents, *other people, the dead* and made beings (i.e. artefacts and structures).

With emphasis to the latter, structures that penetrated the realm of the earth on which people stepped on, lived, procreated, died, believed, collected, cultivated, hunted, structures that produced water were liminal; in between deep earth and the populated surface; in between water and dry land and from earth, but containing and providing water, while being not exactly either. Deep holes in the earth, providing water, helping to sustain life, playing a significant role in social processes, were possibly considered sacred by merit. Wells are by definition liminal and they offer one



of the most important elements of the natural world; water on its own as a material of the natural world, one of the most important “materials” of life and for life in every period of time could not have escaped important ascribed meaning by the communities who constructed and used the wells. For those communities, well-water as water (coming) from the earth must have had different connotations and significance from sea-water or river-water found nearby. The fact that those communities felt that well-water had to be there for them, despite the presence of drinking water in the area, easily obtainable from streams and rivers, renders well-water even more important. It was not out of a survival need that well-water was sought for, but out of wish for it to be there, so that their world was in the order it should be. In this sense, this desire may have had similar qualities of a need as strong as the need for survival (*sacred real, as really real*, Geertz 1973:109-123). The drive and motivation for them to dig a well and have well-water was originated to these ideas they had about their world and the fact that it had to have wells and well-water, water from earth, for order and prosperity to have been maintained.

It is unknown what the well-water was used for. It would be improbable that the well-water had only one specialized use. Among its purposes, there was possibly its utilization in ritual practices. Among several ethnographical accounts presented by Miller (1985:129), there was one especially intriguing: During preparation for a wedding ceremony in the Dangwara village, water has to be obtained both from a sacred well and from the river Ganges and it has to be mixed together in a specific vessel for ceremonial use. This example certainly does not constitute a parallel of what the well-water from Mylouthkia and Shillourokambos was used for, but it is definitely illuminating for what ritual uses the ‘not-needed-for-survival’ well-water could have been utilised.

Upon the well’s death, namely when it dried out, a naturally liminal entity in the surrounding environment whose product (water) used to support life and ritual practices, became culturally liminal again, many years (or more possibly centuries) after

its initial opening. It was further ritualised with the insertion of other dead: animals, humans, stone and artefacts mostly in their fragmentary form. This cultural choice of ritualising a locus was not applied to any other pit or structure at Mylouthkia or Shillourokambos, but one. This was Pit 338, which was opened to provide the community with soil: earth from earth. This earth could have been used for building or for other purposes, too. In relation to other *containers* (Gable 2004), the wells were the only *containers* chosen for the deposition of dead humans and the only *ones* deprived from cattle bone. As Chapman (2000b:169) underlined: *Categorisation relies for its effect upon principles of inclusion and exclusion*. The human depositions in the wells were the extra-the key element that differentiated not only other equally fragmented depositions in other contexts, but also the meaning of the *container* itself. Ritual became the process that ensured this distinction happened meaningfully and clearly (Miller 1985:178).

Then the well constituted an *autonomous ritual locale* (Hamilakis 2004:146), by comparison with others (Pit 338) in the same area and by comparison with other ritual locales, within the same sociocultural system. As such, the wells became *containers* enfolding meaningful material. Gable (2004) agreed with Helms' (2004) categorical cosmological organization of the first sedentary world and emphasised on a shift in the understanding of this world that occurred exactly upon the beginning of sedentism and took its complete form within the fully sedentary world. At this later stage, this new understanding of the world was related to what Gable (2004:119-124) called *engagement with containers*. These were structures that had meaning within a mythological order and they were chosen to contain meaningful depositions. For Gable (2004) what was firstly required for this process to have taken place was the ascription of *symbolic force* to the *containers* themselves. During this process, ascription of *symbolic force* was applied also to the content.

When communal decision was made repeatedly for depositing this 'content' in *containers, ritual locales, liminal zones*, with the motivation to express these ideas and ideals, which influenced the decision of selection of the content in the first place, this

content cannot be explained as 'rubbish'. Rightfully, Chapman (2000a:61, 62) posed the question *what rubbish is*, while discussing depositions in pits and argued that in fact all we excavate is *rubbish*. In this way he showed that the dichotomy between *rubbish* and *non-rubbish* is not a productive one. The latter is particularly evident in reference to the confusion and controversial results caused by the ascription of the 'label' *rubbish* to some of the material from Mylouthkia and Shillourokambos *Fosse 23*. What the excavators of these sites thought as special finds were ascribed the status of grave goods and were associated with the human burials and rituals related to them. What they thought as mundane, fragmentary, unstructured material and material refuse, was ascribed to the most modest status of *rubbish*, while neglecting the fact that the two -for them- distinct categories were found within the same fills / layers, in the same close contexts. If this label-ascription is to be accepted, a basis has to be provided upon which death, ritual, rare objects and 'rubbish' are justified to have been found together. This has not been done by the excavators of both sites, and some attempts can not be accepted as adequately convincing, as previously explained (§§ 3.2 and 3.3). Alternatively, "Our" categories (as modern westerners) should be reconstructed in order for us to understand "Theirs" (of the prehistoric people).

'Rubbish' is another modern western category (Chapman 2000a,b, Chapman and Gaydarska 2007:73-75, Hill 1996:21, Hodder 1982b:24). Perhaps "rubbish" is not as controversial as "ritual" in our modern western world, but again it is one of "Our" categories, which is actually currently changing meaning with the modern employment of recycling due environmental concerns. Hill (1996), in agreement with Chapman (2000a, b), avoided the distinction between *rubbish* and *non-rubbish* in his analysis of structured deposition in pits. Instead, he suggested culturally specific criteria, upon which *rubbish* could be distinguished from *intellectual rubbish*, namely meaningful depositions, the content of which may seemingly include, what under different circumstances should be considered simply as *rubbish*. While Chapman (2000a:61)

argued that *in many cases the contents of pits share little in common with rubbish*, Hill (1996) suggested that many times *rubbish* is simply rubbish.

They were both, however, in agreement of how to approach such depositions. Chapman (2000a, b) suggested exploration of the cultural principles behind *rubbish* disposal and documentation of more cultural specific mechanisms that explain such a practice. Hill (1996) considered important the recognition of cultural classification of depositions, the retrieval of patterned activity and its nature and the presence of a variety of material that should be attested. The latter would include perhaps exotic items in order for a specific pit-content to be recognised as *intellectual rubbish*. Although Hill's suggestion may seem static, he emphasised the fact that even what is interpreted as simple, seemingly "meaningless" *rubbish* carried within it a specific culture's categorization processes. Even simple *rubbish* presupposes selection. Selection can only happen on the basis of cultural categories (Miller 1985).

Cultural categories have and obtain meaning according to mytho-logically bounded sociocultural rules. The way people classify their world is linked with the way they have ordered it and the categories they have identified within it (Miller 1985:1-14). Within a pragmatics framework (Preucel 2006, Verschueren and Östman 2007, Yule 1996), *container*, content, kind and state of *container* and content and the process by which each of them is recognized and signifies content, *container* or other, are all equally important elements: syntax and semantics. They are part of a whole that signifies something in a specific cultural environment. Syntax, namely structure, is one of the most important factors for construction of meaning. In purely archaeological terms, *deliberate structured deposition often in pits is an important social practice* (Chapman 2000a:69).

*Structured deposition* refers both to the conditions under which a chosen place became infilled, became *container* (Gable 2004) and the processes under which an assemblage obtained its meaning, its significance, its value, and became content of *container* (Chapman and Gaydarska 2007: 12-15, 19-26, 73-79, Gable 2004, Schiffer

1995:25-34). Chapman (2000a, b, 2007) noticed many cases of structured deposition where the condition of the content was in an extremely fragmentary form and was not possible for the fragments to reconstitute a whole. Chapman (2000a, b, 2007) observed fragmentation as a practice through which an important chain of social relations took place, while a whole became fragmented, it was offered / given / exchanged, reused, further fragmented, offered / given / exchanged and lastly deposited. He termed fragments that could not reconstitute a whole and have therefore been enchained in these links of social relations: *fractals* (Chapman 2007:9). Chapman and Gaydarska (2007:5) also successfully argued that *fractals* constitute material metaphors of interpersonal relations (Gable 2004, Helms 2004, Jones and Richards 2003).

With the help of numerous ethnographical examples (Bloch 1982) it has been suggested that these parts of a whole not only represent all the chain of meaningful relations and processes, which the whole and parts of it partook and underwent until they became *fractals*, but also have *symbolic force* (Gable 2004:88), both *metaphorical* and *metonymical* value (Jones and Richards 2003:46) and expressed *social [...], ideological relationships* and the sense of *affinity* and of *shared identity* (Helms 2004: 120, 122). Hence a part of a whole represented the whole, but also referred to specific attributes that the whole was considered to have (Chapman 2000b 49-104, Gable 2004:86-89, Jones and Richards 2003:46, Miller 1985, Bloch 1982). Furthermore, since both fragmentor and fractal participated in a chain of relations, they were bound together; they both acted upon the construction of meaning of these relations and they shared it. During this process they obtained common identities on the basis of this sharing and of their actions, which created this chain (Helms 2004:120).

In the present study, regarding objects, this has been mostly understood through Chapman's (2000b) *fragmentation* and *enchainment process*. Regarding animals and the dead (humans and animals), this has been considered on the basis of Ingold's (1994, 1996) animality/ humanity perceptions and a long account of ethnographical

examples of cultural perceptions related to animals and ancestors, which were not necessarily human (Jones and Richards 2003, Helms 2004, Bloch1982: 27-32).

Importantly, it has been noticed that the material, which was chosen to represent both the chain of relations and the agents of this chain by means of fragmentation and subsequent structured deposition was consistently and particularly durable (Helms 2004:120, 124). As Miller (1985:57) noted: *The initial element of differentiation comes from the selection of raw materials*. The most durable animal parts: shells, skulls, teeth, horn and antler, the most durable plant parts: seeds, and the most materially enduring human portions: skulls and long bones were usually selected for the processes of fragmentation and structured deposition, especially due to their quality. Helms (2004:120) explained this choice by the eternal human struggle to create and maintain stability, order and durability in the environment and to control cosmic forces. In her account, the most enduring parts of artefacts should be added. The very last fragment of artefacts representing the whole, which was used and reused and survived in the form and representation of its very last fragment was subsequently selected in consistence with other enduring materials and was deposited along with them, precisely because of the quality of persistent existence that it represented, in addition to its other attributes. Cooney (2007) recognised the same attributes on rough/non-worked stone for which he considered to have been chosen for similar enchainned and symbolic relations: *permanency, durability and stability*.

Lastly, in this account of durable and stable materials from the environment, animals and humans, and of cultural processes, earth namely soil should be recognised among them. In addition to stability and permanency, soil has the extra quality of transformation and therefore presence and endurance in other forms while still being soil. This does not necessarily refer to pottery. Pre-ceramic and Aceramic Neolithic populations must have noticed this transformational power of soil in the muddy fills of wells, springs, and pools of rain-water or in the connecting-mortar of their constructions. Even upon the destruction of the latter, soil would have returned to its

former physical form becoming soil and dust again. This transformational property of soil in combination to its permanency must have been especially fascinating to some early populations. Current ethnographical accounts of small-scale societies do include and emphasise the idea of transformation, especially in reference to the dead and the ancestors, while presence and permanency is emphasised through a transformational process and rites of passage (Bloch 1982:1-44, Helms 2004:119-124, Jones and Richards 2003:48-50, Van Gennep 1960).

Summarizing these cosmological concerns, beliefs, the struggle and anticipation expressed by the use and deposition of such materials, Helms (2004:124-125) presented an especially intriguing passage from a Wayapí mourner's poem / song, quoted in Campbell (1989:81):

*Why do we die?  
Stone doesn't die. Earth doesn't die.  
Trees do die but after a long long time.  
Why do we die?*

Both rules of categorization and categories should not be considered static and unchangeable, but established ways of thinking within a socio-cultural system. They are constantly challenged and re-established or challenged and changed, while life and circumstances evolve, sociocultural realities develop and mythological perceptions change.

*People act in terms of what they know and what they know is the product of their historically constructed culture. They may transform and change this culture but they do not do it from a zero starting base.*

(Bloch 1986:10)

Ritual (as communication and practice) would have provided the means and the basis for challenge and re-establishment or change to take place. Returning to the *container* and structured deposition in the interior, the case of Mylouthkia wells and

Shillourokambos *Fosse 23* provided evidence that enabled the naming of this important *social practice*, which Chapman (2000a:69) recognised in reference to fragmentation and structured deposition in pits. In the case of structured deposition within liminal zones, *containers* (Gable 2004:89-92), *ritual locales* (Hamilakis 2004:146), filled with *intellectual rubbish* (Hill 1996) and *de facto refuse* (Schiffer 1995:29) where the element of death was included, the deliberate structured deposition should be considered a specific social practice: the practice of ritual.

At Mylouthkia and Shillourokambos, attesting such practice within such containers in relation to such content provides the means of “breaking the code” and understanding the structure of ritual within the specific sociocultural system. This permits the recognition of ritual variation and therefore the recognition of ritual practices in *containers* that did not contain death (Well 110 and Pit 338). This has been considered further evidence of the fluidity of this ritual practice, which changed form depending on time (Period IA versus Period IB) and significance depending on the locus (Well 110 and Pit 338 versus Well 133). Furthermore, the variation of categories in the wells and their degree of fragmentation could only make sense in conjunction with one another as part of their context. The great bulk of the depositions in the wells, accidental and deliberate, took place after the wells had dried-out signifying a secondary use of the well potentially appropriating secondary rites, secondary burials and secondary objects. All these elements within the context of the wells were in the very last stage of fragmentation and discard chain (Chapman 2000:24). The enchainment of meaningful relations between animals, humans, plants, stone and artefacts was further emphasised by the high degrees of fragmentation of the majority of the content of the wells. All these elements were selected through a mytho-logically bounded categorization process on the basis of their natural and culturally ascribed qualities and were judged appropriate to the building up of the desirable content within the wells.



What the community communicated among themselves with this practice of ritual was dependant upon the understanding of these categories within their world and the way it was ordered. While this was the syntax, the structure that the community constructed in order for it to be able to communicate, what the community wanted to 'say', what was expressed with this ritual practice, namely the semantics of it: their actual beliefs, ideas and ideals may have been lost in time. However, among the possibilities examined in relation to every particular context (§§ 3.4 and 3.5) and within ethnographical accounts, two more possibilities should be explored in relation to the meaning of the practice. As it has been stressed these autonomous ritual locales included a key element of secondary burials of dismembered humans.

As secondary burials are not for the dead to be buried, there are two possibilities of ritual focus: either the focus of the ritual was the secondary burial itself or the focus of the ritual was the well and its content. Secondary human burials are connected with beliefs relating to *rites de passage* that the dead have to undergo (Van Gennep 1960). Depending on the sociocultural system and its mytho-logic, the rites of passage of the dead may be linked with eschatological beliefs relating to what the living have to do so that the *disembodied soul* (Taylor 2002, Cederroth et al. 1988) can leave the society of the living completely and join the realm of the other disembodied souls, or for it to be contently and safely transformed into what it is believed that it transforms (Bloch 1982, Helms 2004) and to successfully continue among the society of the living (in another form) or in any other believed society. In this first possibility of the focus of this ritual practice, some depositions within the wells, close or otherwise associated with the human depositions, could be considered paraphernalia related to the dead, to the needs of their "rites de passage" or to the needs of their final transformation (*disembodied souls* or anything else). These paraphernalia could therefore be understood as grave goods. The remaining fragmented depositions may have also been part of this ritual as a prescribed assemblage for the successful accomplishment of this rite of passage. However, within the possibilities of this interpretation, many aspects of these

depositions are difficult to explain: their material (e.g. shells), their amount, their mixed depositions and their high degrees of fragmentation.

The second possibility has been considered more probable throughout this examination by allowing more parts of the whole to fit together rather than an arbitrary selection of them. In this second possibility the actual focus of this ritual practice was the well as a *container*. The secondary burials of dismembered humans were only a part of a series of culturally controlled deposition-able categories. They were symbolic burials. They were only there to enhance and differentiate the content of a previously productive well from the content of a non-successful well or of a pit with different significance, within the variation of the ritual. The use of space previously supporting life in order for it to accommodate death, along with the accumulation and deposition of meaningful whole and fragmentary enduring artefacts, animals, plants and stone, possibly allows the consideration of the material as votive deposits. Bradley (1990:198) argued that depositions of living matter (plants, animals, humans) should be considered sacrifice, *whilst artefacts can only be offerings*. Certainly human sacrifice was not detected at the wells and although the whole caprine carcasses could be considered sacrificial offerings, the fact that many more animals were represented by their durable fragments only does not support this interpretation. Bradley (1990) perceived votive deposits as offerings to a deity.

This is not exactly the way these accumulations of fragmentations (Gable 2004) should be understood in reference to the wells. They have been perceived as the results of inevitable actions for the completion of a ritual, which was related to the deposition of meaningful items within deep holes in the earth, sealing and confirming their former state of life givers and transforming them into "life-receivers". These depositions may have been related to offerings in the way we understand them (Bradley 1990) or they were possibly expressive of a more ecological relation with the world in which the receivers returned part of what they had been given by nature and earth to the earth. Water, life, earth and stone, permanence, fragmentation, death and enchainment,

transformation and regeneration have been considered central ideas related to the ritual at the Mylouthkia wells and Shillourokambos *Fosse 23*, while structured deposition in subterranean structures has been understood as a cultural choice initiating a long tradition on the island.

## Chapter 4.

### ***The domestication of Ritual.***

Ritual practices in the Cypriot Aceramic Neolithic.

#### **Kalavastos-Tenta, Khirokitia-Vouni and Cape Andreas-Kastros.**

*And Atlas through hard constraint upholds the wide heaven with unwearying head and arms, standing at the borders of the earth before the clear-voiced Hesperides; for this lot wise Zeus assigned to him. And ready-witted Prometheus he bound with inextricable bonds, cruel chains, and drove a shaft through his middle, and set on him a long-winged eagle, which used to eat his immortal liver; but by night the liver grew as much again everyway as the long-winged bird devoured in the whole day.<sup>11</sup>*

*In the middle of the garden were the tree of life  
and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

#### **4.1 Introduction.**

The site of Khirokitia-Vouni (Khirokitia hereafter) is situated in S-central Cyprus, on the hill "Vounoi", surrounded by Maroni river in the E and the S (Dikaios 1953:3-4). About 5km E of "Vounoi", the site of Kalavastos-Tenta (also Tenta hereafter) is situated in Vasilikos valley on a lower hill surrounded by Vasilikos river from the E and the S (Todd 1987:1-3, figure 1, 2003:35). Both sites were fortified early in their history. Cape Andreas-Kastros is situated at the most N-E point of the island, in Karpas peninsula, and has no immediate access to fresh water (Le Brun 1981:11-12). It is naturally protected by sea in the N-E and S and by a steep slope in the W, leaving only a narrow passage which connects the site to the rest of the island. The site has been interpreted as a settlement of fishermen with a limited population, on the basis of its proximity to the sea, the small number of *habitation structures* and the great quantities of sea products found there (Le Brun 1981, 1994:335-392). It has been estimated it was occupied for a limited period of time (**Table 41**). This contrasts with the widespread and long-lived sites of Khirokitia and Kalavastos-Tenta.

Radiocarbon dates from all three sites show that at least each two of the sites were occupied simultaneously during at least one stage of their history (**Table 41**). Kalavassos produced very early dates as previously discussed (chapter 3.4.2) and later dates contemporary to Khirokitia's height of occupation (**Fig. 9, Fig. 12, Fig. 19**). The revised chronology of Tenta (**Table 41b**, Todd 2005) based on radiocarbon dating, which previously had been considered irregular, was now accepted and well contextualized within the developments of Cypriot-PPNB (McCartney 2005:177-264). Yet, evaluation of these early dates (**Fig. 12**, Peltenburg 2003a:84, 86, figure 11.1) demonstrated that more radiocarbon series need to be obtained from the site for a secure chronological sequence (Todd 2005:381). On the basis of the revised chronology of Tenta, examination of the site could have been included in a separate chapter. As it will be demonstrated though (§§ 4.3 and 4.4), common ritual elements attested between Tenta and Khirokitia were worth a parallel examination of the two sites. Later dates from Tenta, which would ascertain parallel lives with the site of Cape Andreas-Kastros, have been considered as *unacceptably late* (Todd 2003:41). Khirokitia has produced early dates parallel to Tenta's later periods (**Fig. 8, Fig. 12, Fig. 20**) and later ones parallel to Cape Andreas-Kastros (**Fig. 9, Fig. 21, Table 41**).

Common cultural elements at the three sites have already been attested on the basis of their technology (McCartney 2003a, b), their agropastoral and fishing management (Todd 1981, 2003, Le Brun 1981, 1984, 1989, 1994, Céron-Carrasco 2003, Croft 2003c, Davis 2003, Desse and Desse-Berset 2003, Peltenburg 2003a:93-103, Simmons 2003) and their architecture and representational art (Peltenburg 2004). In regards to their architecture, it is essential here for the presence of particular buildings at the sites to be emphasised. Peltenburg (2004:72-79) identified the type of the Circular Pillar Building (CPB) and the Circular Radial-Pillar Building (CRB) (**Fig. 22**). According to Peltenburg (2004:72), the first category refers to circular buildings, in the interior of which there are free standing pillars unrelated to structural support purposes. The Radial-Pillar Building type refers to the building, which is comprised of two concentric

circular walls, which are connected by radial partitions. These divide the space in-between the two circular walls into trapezoidal cells. Peltenburg (2004:74) demonstrated that the Circular Pillar Building originates to Northern Mesopotamia/ S-Eastern Anatolia and the Radial, to the Levant (**Fig. 23**, Peltenburg 2004:73).

Further to Peltenburg's (2004) observations, three additional building types should be distinguished, especially in regards to Khirokitia: the Circular Building with one or two Radial Partitions (CBRP) and the Circular Tri-Radial Building (CTRB). The first type refers to Circular Buildings with only one circular wall, from the inner face of which one or two Radial Partitions extend towards the centre of the building (**Fig. 24**, **Fig. 25**, **Fig. 26**). The Circular Tri-Radial Building is a particular type found only occasionally at Khirokitia. It refers to a Circular Building which has Three Radial Partitions in its interior, extending from its circular wall to the centre where they meet forming a central tri-radial structure (**Fig. 27**). Dikaios (1953:136) described this interior construction as a *triangular pillar [...] abutting to the wall*. This is not a very useful term for this type of construction; although indeed triangular in plan, it is certainly not a pillar, neither in the sense that Dikaios (1953:19, 23, 67-68, 122-123, 166, 179-181) employed the term in other instances, nor within the restrictions of the CPB type by Peltenburg (2004: 75). The term Tri-Radial Building is considered better here, making a clear distinction between this type of building and the Circular Pillar or Radial Buildings. Lastly, the common Circular Building (CB), without any internal structural particularity, should also be mentioned in order for it to be distinguished from the rest.

In total forty-three buildings, all within the settlement wall, were fully excavated at Kalavassos Tenta. Eleven were CPBs, one was CRB, and the rest thirty-one were CBs. No Circular Building with one or two partitions and no Circular Tri-Radial Building were found at Tenta (**Table 42**). At Khirokitia, by 1994, one hundred and eight buildings had been fully excavated, within (/E of) and out of (/W of) the settlement wall (the excavation currently continues at the site) (**Tables 47** and **48**). Forty-six buildings were fully excavated by Dikaios (1953), three by Price and Christou (1973) and fifty-

nine by Le Brun (1984, 1989, 1994). Khirokitia yielded eleven CPBs, only two CRBs, eight CBs with two Radial Partitions, twenty-two CBs with one Radial Partition and two Circular Tri-Radial Buildings (**Tables 50, 51 and 52**). The other sixty-three buildings are simple CBs with no structural particularity in their interior (**Table 47**). At Cape Andreas-Kastros, where a total of thirteen buildings were excavated, no CPBs, CTri-Radial Bs, or CBs with one or two Radial Partitions were found (**Table 53**). Three distinct CRBs were excavated while there is a very strong possibility that there was a fourth one. S 530-S 591 was partially destroyed by erosion, but its remains clearly outline a CRB (**Fig. 28**). Consequently, it has been assigned to this category (**Table 54**). Another questionable building due to erosion, S 501-S 506-S 509-S 604-S 605-S 524, most probably does not represent a CRB (**Fig. 29**) and has been assigned to the general category of CBs (**Table 54**).

In general, regarding the three sites, so far, it has been commonly accepted that they provide plethora of information about the socio-economic aspect of life at the settlements, while it has been suggested that little could be discussed about their ritual practices, excepting their burial customs (Le Brun 1989:73, 177-179). Even the latter were interpreted to present constant uniformity. The idea that *customarily, the dead were buried in single burials under the floors of houses* has been widely accepted (Le Brun 1994: 202, figure 82, 1997). The results of the study that follows challenge commonly accepted ideas and show a vividly ritual-practicing society. During the previous period (CPPNB), ritual activities seem to have concentrated in naturally liminal areas, where liminality was culturally emphasised and further recreated. During the Aceramic Neolithic, liminality is created within the immediate, safe and cultural environment, and seemingly focuses on the "house".

While the hearth may not have been simply a hearth and the apparently clean floor under which dead were buried may not have been used as a floor at all, some dwellings prove not to have been simply "houses"; at least not for the living. Others seem to endorse qualities well beyond any perception of the "domestic sphere" and

closer to what we would think as “temples”. This term has not been employed further as it is not considered to describe these particular buildings in the best possible way. The word ‘temple’ bears modern western connotations of worship directed to a superior being. In contrast, the reconstructed actions that took place within those buildings may not have had worship as their direct objective, although they betray beliefs, ideas and ideals within a specific mytho-logical system. These buildings were ritualized with the creation of liminality in their interior by the use of ritual burials and construction of symbolic structures. They were maintained for incredible lengths of time by communal decision, while the symbolic actions practiced in their interior communicated mytho-logical realities while re-establishing traditions founded long before the lifetime of the buildings and their users.

#### **4.2 Setting rules for study.**

There are three sets of difficulties arising from the meticulous study of eight excavation publications (Dikaios 1953, Stanley-Price and Christou 1973, Le Brun 1981, 1984, 1989, 1994, Todd 1987, 2005) and two complementary studies of the sites (Tomazou 1987, Niklasson 1991). The excavation reports were written by four different researchers following different terminology, contextual presentation and material management. They convey many years of excavation and study seasons, which produced vast amounts of material for contextual analysis.

The first challenge arises from the limitations of contextual presentation of some publications while others, even those dealing with the same site, prove priceless tools. For example, in regards to the site of Khirokitia, Dikaios’ publication overwhelms with information, while Le Brun’s is generally selective and often a-contextual (§ 2.4.2 a, c, d and e). As for Kalavassos-Tenta (Todd 1987), the unpublished study of the material and burials was partially complemented by the detailed presentation of the burials by



Niklasson (1991), until very recently, when Moyer (2005:1-17) provided a complete study of the burials at the site.

The second difficulty concerns the maintenance of consistency throughout the present study, where different sites that have been published in different ways at different times and with different degrees of contextual information are concerned. Due to the extent of time during which the sites had been under excavation and the different techniques and terminology that every researcher has employed, the creation of a common terminology was needed for any comparative study to take place. This concerns especially Khirokitia. The site has been excavated since the 40s by three different excavators Dikaios (1953), Stanley-Price and Christou (1973) and Le Brun (1984, 1989, 1994), and has consequently produced the core material for this study.

Lastly, the significant amount of material and information coming from all three sites could indeed have fuelled a thesis dedicated solely to the identification and reconstruction of ritual practices at these sites only. As the objective of this research is different, the approach applied to these three sites had to be different from the one followed in regards to Kissonerga-Mylouthkia wells and Parekklisha-Shillourokambos *fosse 23*, where smaller, closed contexts were concerned. Thus, even though contextual examination has been produced to the maximum extent permitted (**Tables 42-86**), the analysis focuses directly on the core interest of this research. Contextual analysis difficulties have been reported (§ 2.4.2) and have been managed using complementary and comparative information from several sources where possible. An explanation of a unified terminology created follows.

#### *4.2.1 Burials*

The excavators of the sites (Dikaios 1953, Le Brun 1981, 1984, 1989, 1994, Price and Christou 1973, Todd 1987) and both Tomazou (1987) and Niklasson (1991) who

studied the burials at the sites, count burial assemblages rather than counting the number of individuals. According to their account a burial does not necessarily correspond to the interment of an individual. It may refer to many individual interments or so-called “double” or “multiple” burials. Usually, these were found within the same pit or in such a proximity that counting them as one assemblage was justified. Although this method of identification seems to have been followed often, it has not been judged productive within the scope of this research.

Firstly, this method neglects the internal taphonomy of the burials by indentifying an assemblage that may have been created during a period of time rather than as one episode. Secondly, it does not provide a pragmatic account of the burials themselves, as the individuals buried together did not necessarily die at the same time. In this way, both systemic (Schiffer 1995) and pragmatic (Yule 2006) context are not taken into consideration. Thirdly, this way of numbering burials results in a false account of actual burials, while the burials counted do not correspond to the number of individuals buried at the sites. Dikaios' (1953) differentiation between graves (grave pits) and individual or multiple burials within the same grave is more reasonable. However, his method presupposes that all individuals were buried within graves, again neglecting possibilities (and in some cases excavation realities), where individuals or parts of them may not have been interred in a grave, but may have been scattered, thrown in a ditch or placed within structural walls.

Therefore for both contextual reasons and reasons of consistency, this research has preferred to focus on numbers of individuals buried at the sites as they have been identified by their excavators and by the paleoanthropologists and other specialists who studied the remains (Angel 1953, Le Mort 1994, Moyer 2005, Niklasson 1991, Tomazou 1987). Assemblages of individuals buried together have of course been taken into consideration within contextual analysis. Where the word ‘burial’ has been used it refers to individual interment. If an individual burial has been found together with one other or more this is clearly indicated. Additionally, since broadly contemporaneous

burials have been examined from eight excavation publications (corresponding to seven excavation periods and four excavators with different methods of accounting for the excavated material), it has been decided that a unified counting system of interred individuals should be employed. This simplifies comparison of burials both within the same site excavated by different researchers and intra-site comparison. Also, it prevents the potential confusion of burials from different sites bearing the same number. The number that corresponds to interred individuals as counted in this research has been specified with the prefix 'VK' (**Table 56**). For reasons of clarity in text, the corresponding excavator's / researcher's number has been placed next to the 'VK' no. in a parenthesis, only where judged necessary.

#### 4.2.2 *Buildings and other structures*

Each excavator's preference of naming the excavated structural material has been generally followed, even if current research (including this one) has explicitly opposed those specific terminologies. Explicitly, Dikaios (1953:223) has used the term Tholos and Tholoi (meaning dome in Greek) for the round structures he excavated at Khirokitia because he believed that they were roofed by a dome. More recent research (Le Brun 1989, 1994) proved that the structures at Khirokitia were sheltered by horizontally placed reeds and mortar. Although these modern results have been accepted, the term Tholos / Tholoi has been used here referring to the major structures excavated at Khirokitia by Dikaios for reasons of clarity. Stanley-Price and Christou (1973) have also followed Dikaios' terminology. Le Brun (1984, 1989, 1994) refers to *structures d'habitation* (habitation structures) for the major structures at Khirokitia, believing that they were used for strictly domestic purposes, namely as houses. He has differentiated them from other, smaller constructions by calling the latter simply *structures*. However, his terminology is also problematic, particularly in reference to

*structures d'habitation*, as it bears modern western connotations of domestic use of buildings. Recent research (Brück and Goodman 1991) has demonstrated that settlement archaeology must review ideas and interpretations relating to perceptions of the “house” and the idea of “domestic” space and relevant practices. Following the British system, Todd (1987) has called all structural remains *structures*, differentiating between major structures and smaller internal or external ones by describing them and ascribing to them an interpretational term (§ 2.4.2). Considering current research and aiming to a consistency within this study, all major structures from the three sites have been called buildings, with the addition of the prefix S for Structure, following Todd’s and Le Brun’s numbering for the buildings they excavated and published, and the prefix Th. for Tholos / Tholoi for the buildings excavated and published by Dikaios and Stanley-Price and Christou.

#### 4.2.3 Periods and levels

In regards to Khirokitia, the fact that Le Brun never stratigraphically linked the area he excavated with the area that was excavated by Dikaios has created even more problems in the management of the data from Khirokitia in a consistent way. Dikaios excavated Khirokitia E and W of the settlement wall in levels, which he linked stratigraphically. He then provided an organised way of viewing Khirokitia through time, attributing buildings and levels to three Periods (**Fig. 30**, Dikaios 1953:311). Every period includes contemporaneously erected Tholoi and the time period of their use and survival. Le Brun also excavated on both sides of the settlement wall and provided two hypotheses for their stratigraphical linkage (**Fig. 31**, Le Brun 1989:190, Tableau 1 and 1994:15, Tableau 1). According to this, the first upper level (A) inside the settlement wall corresponds either to the two upper levels (I and II), or to all three levels (I-III) excavated outside the settlement wall. Exactly because it was not possible for a safely

linked stratigraphy to be produced, he numbered the excavated levels W (outside) of the settlement wall with Latin numbers (I-IV) and the levels E of (inside) the settlement wall with letters of the alphabet (A-G). His system has been maintained in this research alongside Dikaios' system for the parts of the settlement each of them excavated.

Understandably, no unified level numbering could be employed here, as only excavation could provide safe solutions. An informed guess would assign Le Brun's Levels I-II and A to Dikaios' Period III as the most recent, Levels E (?), F, G and IV to Period I as the most ancient and Levels III, B, C, D (and E ?) to Period II, since they are the levels and periods with the highest numbers of buildings and represent the time of peak of Khirokitia (**Table 52, Figs. 30 and 32**, Dikaios 1953:311). However, this remains an educated guess. Consequently, all three systems (periods, levels E and levels W (Dikaios 1953, Le Brun 1984, 1989, 1991)) had to be used. As they are all distinct from each other and refer to distinct areas of the site, the potential for confusion is rather limited. Yet this has often resulted in examining the site as disparate parts rather than as a whole (**Tables 48-52, 56, 65-85**).

Several problems regarding the assignment of structures to periods at Kalavassos-Tenta will become apparent during the discussion of evidence (§ 4.4.1, A, xvi). Discrepancies in the publication and the hesitancy of the excavator to provide a consistent hypothesis on the basis of his evidence have been indicated both in the review chapter § 2.4.2 and in § 4.4.1, A, xvii. Recent developments in archaeology (Peltenburg 2003a: 86-87) challenged the established chronological order of Tenta. In the publication of Volume II, where early radiocarbon dates were accepted and chipped stone examination assisted the formation of a sounder chronological framework, Todd (2005:379), appeared more certain in regards to the ascription of specific structural remains to specific time-periods. Yet, the lack of evidence, such as further excavation for secure stratigraphical linkage between areas of the settlement and modern radio-chronology for a reliable chronological sequence (Todd 2005:381) does not permit complete negation of the available system. A chronological basis is needed for a

meaningful discussion of practices within a cultural-historical framework. Due to lack of any other option, generally, this research has respected the chronological order of the site as organised by Todd (1987:28, 53-172, 2005:179, 183-184, 379), while trying to manage the complications this involves.

### **4.3 Tracing liminality. The contexts of death at Kalavastos-Tenta, Khirokitia-Vouni and Cape Andreas-Kastros.**

#### *4.3.1 Kalavastos-Tenta*

At Kalavastos-Tenta only twenty burials were found (**Table 57**, Niklasson 1991:106-109). Moyer (2005:1, 5) identified minimum eighteen individuals and maximum twenty two. This is an extremely small number for the forty-three excavated buildings at Kalavastos. Certainly the average number of twenty interred individuals cannot be accepted as representative of the number of dead inhabitants of Tenta. It is significant that no burials were found dating to period 2 and 3, which share twenty-nine buildings between them (**Table 44**). Clearly, the burial customs are not represented by the burials found at the settlement in period 4, where thirteen buildings were found. These burials seem to be the exception to what people did with their dead rather than burial customs per se. The revised chronology of Tenta (Todd 2005) proved period 4 of the settlement contemporary with Mylouthkia (Period IB) and Shillourokambos (Early-Middle Phase). While the practice of human interment beyond the settlement was certain for Tenta, the practices at Mylouthkia and Shillourokambos should be considered indicative of a part of burial associated practices. Further indication of the diversity in the management of the dead is found in the fact that four out of the total twenty burials were found in a ditch amongst cultural "rubbish" (?) outside the settlement wall (**Table 57**, Niklasson 1991:106, Todd 1987:54-58). These are

burials VK 13, 14, 17, 18 (Todd 8, 9, 12) and represent both sexes. Burials VK 17 and 18 (Todd 12) are represented only by scattered remains (Niklasson 1991:106).

According to assignment of structures and material to periods by Todd (1987: 28, 53-172), no individuals were buried in the settlement in period 3 and 2, where Todd (1987:31) estimated the population of Tenta to have been a maximum of almost 150 individuals. In period 4, where the population of Tenta was estimated to have been more than 60 individuals (Todd 1987:31), only sixteen individuals were chosen to be buried in the settlement. These individuals were associated with just five buildings, all situated on the S-SE slope of the hill. Three of these five buildings were CPBs, two with one pillar and one with two pillars in their interior. Buildings S 9, S 10, S 11, S 26 and S 42 were the only ones chosen for burials to be associated with them. Ten burials were found within three buildings (S 9, S 10 and S 26), and four were found *just outside* the outer wall of three buildings (S 10, S 11 and S 42). Two burials (VK 20 / Todd 14 and VK 9 / Todd 5) were found under two buildings (S 9 and S 26). Buildings S 9, S 11 and S 42 were CPBs while buildings S 10 and S 26 were CBs.

CPB S 9 had one pillar in its interior and was chosen to include more burials than any other building, five in total: one infant, two children and two adults (VK 1-4 and 16 / Todd 1-3 and 11), while another child burial had been deposited under the building prior to its erection. CB S 10 had four burials in its interior, all infants, buried together within the same pit (VK 5-8 / Todd 4). A burial of a fifth infant (VK 12 / Todd 7) occurred in the outside against its western wall. CPB S 11 had one pillar in its interior and only one adult burial (VK 15 / Todd 10) in the outside against its wall. CB S 26 had one infant burial in its interior (VK19 / Todd 13) and one infant burial over which it was built (VK 20 / Todd 14). CPB S 42 had two pillars in its interior and two adult burials outside against its wall (VK 10, 11 / Todd 6).

Six CPBs were found at Tenta dating to period 4 (**Table 45**). These were S 4, S 9 S 11, S 27, S 42 and S 55 (**Table 45, 60**). Three of them (S 9, S 11 and S 42) were chosen to be associated with burials. While CPB S9 had the majority of burials and the ones

representing the greatest variety in terms of age, CPB S 11 and CPB S 42 had as many burials as pillars (or vice versa). They both had burials outside against the outer face of their circular wall and they both had adult burials only. The remaining seven burials were associated with two CBs only (S 10 and S 26). All seven burials in CBs were infant burials. Five were placed within CBs S 10 and S 26, while one had been buried under S 26 before it was erected, and one was placed outside building S 10 (**Table 57**). The CBs with burials constitute the minority of CBs in this period (two out of seven, **Tables 61 and 63**) and were associated only with infant interments.

There was a clear distinction of the place of intramural burial for adults and infants during this period. Adults were buried only in association with CPBs. The majority of the adult burials found in association with buildings have not been sexed and no correlation of sex and place of burial can be conducted. Lastly, the four adult burials found amongst cultural rubbish in the ditch S-SE outside the settlement wall, were not attributed to a specific period. The ditch contained material that has been radiocarbon dated to the earliest period of Tenta (Todd 1987:174), but also Neolithic ceramic material in the top fills. Niklasson (1991:107) stated that according to her personal communication with Todd these burials postdated the wall by *a certain time*. Todd (1987:53 and 2005:183-184, 379) dated the erection of the settlement wall to period 4. Therefore, the burials must date either to the middle-late stages of period 4 or to the early of period 3. In the first case they reveal an additional appropriate place for the deposition of adults and in the second, they only partially explain what happened with some of the dead during that period.

Regarding the development of burial practices, in general, it can be noticed that in period 4, the practice of human interment was variable. Some people were buried. Some of them were buried in specific locales in the settlement (**Fig. 33 and 34**), in relation to specific buildings. Some others were deposited in a ditch beyond the settlement wall where other cultural depositions were also made. The majority of the dead inhabitants were not buried in the settlement and they were not deposited outside



the settlement wall in its proximity. This lack of evidence for the majority of the dead at Tenta is especially significant, because it shows that the burials that took place in association with the settlement did not concern the management of the dead in general. This lack of evidence also suggests that quite possibly the burials in the settlement were used in order for something other than 'burial of a dead body' to be communicated within the community.

This is further supported by the differentiation of the placement of the dead: under floors of specific dwellings, outside specific structures or extramurally within cultural material. This variation of burial practices at Tenta suggests that a system of choices for burial management must have been in place in order for this differentiation in practice to have taken place. Consequently, the presence and absence of burials signify that the choice for some burials within the settlement wall could not have been coincidental or arbitrary, but both dead and place must have been chosen for specific mytho-logic reasons. These reasons could not have been in place during period 3 and 2. Intramural and extramural burials of period 4 served a purpose, a ritual. Via the practice of the latter this purpose was not re-established, while no decision was made for repetition of the practice of interment within the settlement in the subsequent periods.

Hence, this may show a shift of the ritual, of the mytho-logic and therefore a sociocultural shift. Alternatively, the purpose the burials served must have been fulfilled and no reason for repetition of this practice was needed. While occupation has been attested at Tenta in the earliest period 5, the settlers who erected the wall at the beginning of period 4 may have judged it essential that cultural "roots" be "planted" for their walled and permanent choice for settlement to be founded. In order for this to happen, ancestors may have been needed, offering rights for possession of land and establishing their descendants' right for presence in this land. Although some problems regarding the dating of structures to period 3 exist and are discussed in §4.4.1.A xvii, abiding to the individual dating of structures by Todd (1987:53-166 and 2005:179, 183,

379), the following can be noted in general. In period 3 (**Fig. 34**), with people already well established within the settlement walls, the repetition of such a practice as burial within the settlement was evidently unnecessary. The five Burial Buildings of period 4 were likely still visible although partially covered, while their memory probably survived. In this period, while eleven buildings were erected, among them only one CPB (S 85), no ritual necessitating intramural burials was practiced. Furthermore, a firm socio-cultural system must have been rising, while the variability in burial practices witnessed in the previous period, disappeared. What happened to all the dead at Tenta during period 3 conformed to the rule that no dead were buried within and / or in proximity to the settlement. This clearly demonstrates a believed absence for a reason for intramural burials, while it shows uniformity in the belief for the significance of the dead and the meaning their treatment must have had.

In period 2, the only CRB, the largest building at Kalavassos-Tenta, was erected on the top of the hill (**Fig. 35**). Eleven more buildings were erected, among them four CPBs. This is two fewer CPBs than the total number erected in period 4, but this is important as the practice seemingly almost became extinct in period 3, with just one CPB erected (**Table 46**), and according to Todd' (1987:28, 53-172, and 2005:179, 183-184, 379) assignment of structures per period). Although a return to this architectural trend took place, no equivalent return to an old ritual occurred and no dead were buried in the settlement. In period 4, three out of the total five Burial Buildings were CPBs, while another three CPBs existed at the settlement without burials (**Tables 62 and 63**). Yet, in period 2, persistently, customs and rituals regarding or using the burial were not practiced within the settlement wall, or in its proximity. Uniformity of belief and practice is attested within a firmly now established system of no ritual-burials within the settlement, while sociocultural and / or mytho-logical reasons did not permit or demand the ritual of intramural interment to take place.

#### 4.3.2 Khirokitia-Vouni

At Khirokitia, as at Tenta, most of the dead were not buried at the settlement. It has been estimated that a minimum of about 300 to an absolute maximum of 600 individuals inhabited Khirokitia per level of occupation (Le Brun 1984:71). The total of 238 burials excavated at Khirokitia, from 1936 until 1991, representing the dead from all levels and for a time-span of almost two millennia (**Table 41**) cannot be considered representative of the way the living treated their dead. Calculating a minimum of 300 inhabitants per five levels (A-E that Le Brun has excavated to a great extent), a total of about 1500 burials should have been found. If the average number of inhabitants per level is estimated to about 450, by five levels of occupation, the amount of about 2250 buried individuals should have been found. Instead we have about one sixth of the minimum and almost one tenth of only the average number of estimated dead inhabitants at Khirokitia.

Therefore, it should be clear that the dead were buried at the settlement only exceptionally. While Todd (1987:182-183) noticed the variability of burial customs at Tenta, a seemingly more standardised pattern regarding the majority of the 238 settlement-burials at Khirokitia has probably prohibited the excavators of the site from detecting variations in burial patterns and from acknowledging their equivalent significance at the site. Contrary to what has been generally believed so far (Le Brun 1997), the dead at Khirokitia were not buried only in pits under the floors of *houses*, they were not only buried in single burials and they did not necessarily share the same space with the living (**Tables 65-69**). Niklasson (1991:237) also questioned the previously believed conformity on the basis of burial distribution at the settlement and encouraged further research on the subject.

A general overview of the chronological and spatial distribution of burials at Khirokitia (**Table 70**) reveals that the overwhelming majority of burials took place in the W sector in period II, resulting to a total of at least 119 burials in the W only,

excluding burials excavated by Le Brun. Within the settlement wall, in the E, period II produced a total of at least fourteen burials (excluding the burials found in the middle levels by Le Brun). Period II has been considered the time of peak at Khirokitia (Dikaios 1953) and has produced at least nineteen buildings in the W and at least fifteen, in the E. Including in this comparison buildings and burials excavated by Le Brun (1984, 1989, 1994), it is evident that the overwhelming majority of burials took place in the W sector producing a total of one hundred and sixty-six burials, in contrast to the total amount of seventy-two found in the E. While a similar difference in numbers of buildings excavated in the two sectors would probably be expected, the evidence suggests that building numbers are not proportional to burial numbers. Fifty-six buildings in total were excavated in the W and fifty-two in the E. These numbers do not correspond to surviving buildings per period / level, but to actual buildings. In terms of total numbers of buildings per periods / levels of occupation, thus duplicating some of them depending on how many levels they survived for (**Table 48**), similar results are produced: sixty-six buildings in total in the W and sixty-eight in the E.

Clearly the evidence does not support a correlation between the number of buildings, either actual or virtual (per periods / levels), and their estimated inhabitants (Le Brun 1984:69-71) and the number of the dead found. The practice of where the dead were buried within the settlement limits was determined neither by how many people inhabited Khirokitia at a given time, nor by how many buildings were built and used. Khirokitia settlement expanded to the W, beyond the settlement wall, relatively early in the life history of the settlement (Le Brun 1989:190).

During the last stages of Khirokitia (Period I, Levels I and / or II (?) and A), buildings were built over the settlement wall cancelling its function as such. However, in period II (and the middle levels excavated by Le Brun), although the settlement had expanded in the W, the settlement wall could have still maintained its significance. It is quite probable that a notion of distinct behaviours and practice appropriate to the intramural and extramural worlds was in place during period II. Such a categorization

could have indicated as more appropriate place for the interment of the dead, extramural settlement contexts rather than intramural ones. Certainly, this must have been applied to the treatment of dead infants. More infants and children than any other age group were buried at the settlement of Khirokitia, particularly in the W sector during period II (**Table 71**). Consequently, more dead adults than any other age group must have been deposited not only extramurally, but significantly beyond the space occupied by the settlement in the W. In this way, burial practices at Khirokitia resemble proportionally burial practices at Tenta. Lastly, it becomes evident that the burials found within the settlement of Khirokitia, in both sectors, regard particular cases and not the general practice. These dead found must have been selected on a certain basis, through a socio-culturally and mytho-logically controlled categorization process, which permitted or demanded their interment in specific settlement contexts.

#### 4.3.2 a) *The choice of place for human interment.*

Considering again the particular place of burial within the settlement, the great majority of the burials, two hundred and eighteen individuals were buried under floors and within layers or fills within buildings (**Table 72**). Five burials took place under buildings: VK 69, 70, 71, 114 and 122. The first three were found under building Th. XV (II) partially on the bedrock, partially on pebbles and Dikaios (1953:91-92) considered these burials as foundation rites. Burial VK 114 was found outside the settlement wall, under building Th. XXIII. It was excavated within the limits of it, where no other building was revealed. However, it could not be clear whether it was an extramural burial or associated directly with the foundations of building Th. XXIII. Burial VK 122 was also found partially on the bedrock, partially on pebbles. It was under CB Th. XXVII covered by a thick layer of dark soil prior to the construction of the first floor of this Tholos. Thirteen burials were found in the fills covering buildings. These are

burials VK 198, 199, 200, 201 and 202, which were found in the abandonment fills of building S 124. Also, burials VK 210, 211 and 212 were found in closure fills of CPB S 116. In particular, burial VK 212, could also be seen as burial *under building*, since the foundation wall 461 of the overlying CPB S 117 was covering it (Le Brun 1989, 1994). These two CPBs, S 116 and S 117 were built the one over the other (**Fig. 32**) and burials VK 210, 211 and 212 may have been related equally to the closure of the first and / or the foundation of the second. Belonging to the same group of burials *over buildings*, are burial VK 243, found in the abandonment fill of building S 83, burial VK 244 found in the abandonment fill of building S 84 and burials VK 256, 257, 258, which were found in the abandonment fills of building Th. XLVI (I) (Price and Christou 1973).

Lastly, two burials were found in settlement fills unrelated to buildings in any direct way. These are burials VK 186 and VK 187, which were found in eroded settlement fills, between levels B and A (Le Brun 1989). In terms of chronology, the practice of not burying the dead within floors, layers or fills within buildings seems to have been taking place in all periods / levels and in both sectors at Khirokitia (**Table 73**). There seems to be a minor predominance in the middle levels and period II, which is proportional with the total amount of burials dating to this period and the difference in burial numbers from the rest of the periods (**Table 71**). Also, all age groups and sexes seem to have been chosen for this practice. However, infants and children seem to have been preferred over adults for interment in the closure fills of buildings (**Table 74**).

#### 4.3.2 b) *Communal burial assemblages.*

Thirty-eight individuals of the total two hundred and thirty-eight were buried in fourteen burial assemblages (**Table 75**). The communal burial assemblages distribution shows a clear predominance of communal burials in the W sector: twelve, while only two communal burial assemblages were interred in the E sector (**Table 76**).

Also, the predominance of the practice is clear in the middle levels/ period II, while only one communal burial took place in the earliest levels/ period III (VK 66-67-68). The practice almost disappeared in the later levels/ period I, with again one communal burial assemblage (VK 203-204, level A). All age groups and sexes are represented in the communal burial assemblages, in all possible combinations (**Table 75**). However, where the individuals interred together exceeded a total of three, then clearly only infants were selected. Also, in general, the number of infants found in communal burial assemblages exceeds the number of adults of both sexes that had been chosen for this practice (**Tables 76, 77 and 78**).

Additionally, it should neither be assumed that the communal burials took place in single episodes, nor that they necessarily shared the same grave pit. Only two assemblages were detected by their excavators to have been buried as one episode. These were VK 69-70, interred under CB Th. XV (II) in period II and VK 203-204 interred in Floor 524 of CB S 127 in level A. In regards to communal burial assemblage VK 66-67-68, Dikaios was able to detect stratigraphy and the sequence of the interred individuals. Although this was not possible, as clearly, for the rest of the communal burial assemblages, their excavators doubted the possibility of simultaneous interment. Most of the communal burial assemblages were found in the same grave-pit.

Five exceptions are: VK 30, 31, 32, found close together and covered by the platform of Floor III, in CB XII A and VK 40-41, found close together and covered by a layer of pisé and pebbles over Floor Ib of CB Th. III. Also, VK 84-85 found under slabs reddened by fire in Floor II of CB XV(II). Regarding this assemblage, while it was not possible to decipher which burial took place first, it is worth noting that burial VK 84 was manipulated during or after decomposition as its skull was found with burial VK 85, but its body had been placed further away (Dikaios 1953:96-97). Additionally, burials VK 97- 98 were found close together in a layer in between floors (II-I) and covered by pebbles in CB Th. XIX and lastly, burials VK 250-251-252-253-254 were found on the same depression on Floor III of CB XLVI (I).

Concerning both the cases of successive interment in the same grave-pit and those found in proximity to other deposits, the living must have shared the knowledge of the exact place of previous interments so that the successive ones could take place in proximity. Especially in regards to the communal burial assemblages placed horizontally in intermediate floor deposits or depressions and covered by a layer of pisé and pebbles, slabs or a platform, the possibility of the first burial(s) to have been exposed should also be considered. If these burials were indeed successive, the possibility of their simultaneous coverage by one layer of pisé and pebbles or by one platform, could have been realised only if the first burial(s) were still in view. Subsequently, this questions profoundly the possibility of these floors in the specific dwellings to have been used for purposes of the living (sleeping/ eating/ working).

#### 4.3.2 c) Burial manipulation and secondary burials.

Twenty-seven of the total two hundred and thirty-eight burials indicate burial manipulation, while the possibility of secondary interment should also be considered for some of them (**Table 79**). The majority (twenty-three out of the twenty-seven) were found in the W sector. Eleven of them date to the last period / levels of Khirokitia. Twelve of them date to period II, three to contemporaneous (?) level B and one to (contemporaneous?) level III. All sexes and age groups were again represented, while infant burials were again predominant.

Eleven burials were reported incomplete or partial. Infant burial VK 76 was found, on Floor IV of CB Th. XV (II), with the skull crashed under stone vessel fragments, while some long bones were missing. Adult burial VK 249 in CPB Th. XII was missing part of the skull. VK 255 was represented by only one tooth found in the raised pisé ridge of a hearth on Floor I of CB Th. XLVI (I). This was the abandonment floor of the Tholos and the layers that followed it backfilled and sealed the building



completely (Stanley-Price and Christou 1973:8, 14, 22). In these fills the burials of a male and two females (VK 256, 257, 258) were found *disturbed, fragmentary and incomplete*. The burials were found on the same level (stratum 4), but within some distance from each other and they were not reported as communal by their excavator. Additionally, a fire-pit was found N of the burials. The adult burial VK 233 covered by Floor 392 in CRB S 96 was found incomplete and fragmentary. Parts of the skull were found in different places under the floor in the N of the building and only some long bone fragments presumably belonging to this burial were collected (Le Brun 1989:71). Burials VK 191 and 192 regard a communal burial assemblage of two infant skulls found in Floor 464 of CB S118. The bodies were missing. Burial VK 201 includes an infant, of which only the skull and the torso were interred in the abandonment fills of CB S 124. Burial VK 32 is represented by skull fragments of an infant interred with an adult (VK 31) and a male burial (VK 30). Two burial assemblages presented evidence of post-mortem manipulation. As previously discussed (§ 4.3.2 b), communal burial assemblage VK 84-85 regards the placement of a skull of a female next to the body of another, while the body of the first was found nearby. Communal burial assemblage VK 97-98 concerns two males found in the same grave-pit, in Floor II of CB XIX, presenting good skull preservation, but long members disorder (Dikaios 1953:117).

Lastly, as most burials at Khirokitia were found very well preserved in general, even in the deepest levels, the badly preserved state in which some of them were found (twelve in total,) seems irregular, especially in association with other contextual evidence. The most striking example of this category is the female burial VK 51, found against the W pillar of CPB Th. VII of period III, on Floor I, the last floor used. As the burial was not found in a grave pit, but only a floor depression was attested, Dikaios (1953:68) implied that the burial was initially placed against the pillar. The actions that followed this deposition were not clear, as mixed and eroded fills covered the burial. It is quite possible that the burial was either left exposed next to the pillar for an undetermined length of time and then the CPB was backfilled and sealed or that the

building closure took place quite soon after the burial deposition. A similar practice was attested for female burial VK 168, which Dikaios (1953:181) also considered secondary due to the arrangement of the bones and the state of its preservation. Burial VK 168 was placed at the S edge of the W pillar of CPB Th. XLVII, while the primary interment of another female (VK 161) was placed at the S edge of the E pillar (§4.4.1, A, iv).

A series of infant burials (VK 235-241) took place in the same layer between floors in CB S 89, without pit graves. They were not reported as a communal burial assemblage, but as badly preserved and some of them partially scattered. Given the place and disarrangement in which they were found, their poor preservation may have not been related to their youth, but to other factors related to the practice of their deposition: exposure and/ or the rearrangement of bones so that the successive burials could be interred. The same could not be noted for infant burial VK 217 and communal burial assemblage VK 117 and 118, concerning two females, and indeed their poor preservation may have been related to other natural factors. However, they are an intriguing minority at Khirokitia, where the overwhelming majority of burials found present almost excellent preservation.

#### 4.3.2 d) Burial association with Building types.

Although no correlation could be attested between numbers of actual and virtual buildings and burials, a very interesting association can be noticed between burials and particular types of buildings. The five burials found by Dikaios *under buildings* near the bedrock (burials VK 69, 70, 71, 114 and 122) and the two burials found by Le Brun in settlement fills (burials VK 186 and 187) have been excluded from this account, due their ambiguous or absent relation to buildings. In contrast, burials *over buildings* have been included as they were found in the closure fills of buildings, within

them, and they are considered part of their history, from the moment of their erection until their sealing.

In general, only about half of the buildings at Khirokitia were chosen to include burials at some stage of their history (**Tables 80, 81 and 82**). The base of their selection was not their position in the settlement as buildings including burials were equally distributed E and W of the settlement wall and N and S on the hill (Dikaïos 1953, Le Brun 1984, 1989, 1994). The size of their walls and the space the buildings occupied did not influence the decision for their selection to receive burials either. Burials were found both in smaller and larger buildings, while no striking differences in the size of buildings can be noticed at Khirokitia (Dikaïos 1953: 1996-202, 214-221, 228-231, Le Brun 1984:32, 45-46, 1989:36-46, 1994:67-107). However, there is a clear selection of buildings for burials on the basis of their type (**Table 82**). While still half of the CBs, half of CBs with Partition(s) and half of the C-Tri-Radial Bs (**Table 82**) were chosen to receive burials, there was no Circular Radial Building or Circular Pillar Building at Khirokitia that did not have burials in its interior (**Table 82**).

The total amount of burials found at CPBs (sixty-six) and CRBs (three) comprises the 29 % of the total amount of burials found at Khirokitia (**Table 83**). Nearly the one third of the people buried at the settlement of Khirokitia was interred in these buildings. Regarding burial selection on the basis of a specific age-group or sex, a slight preference for the deposition of infants and children in CPBs (thirty-eight in total) can be detected. However, the difference between them and adult burials is not significant - adults were also well represented (twenty-five in total, **Tables 84 and 85**). Importantly, out of the total of eighteen males and the fifty-eight infants found in period II in the W (**Table 71**), ten males and twenty-eight infants were distributed between the five CPBs of this period and area (**Tables 83, 84 and 85**). While no adults were found buried in CBs at Kalavassos-Tenta, at Khirokitia, adults were also buried in all types of buildings. However, there is again a significant proportional preference for adults to be interred in CPBs and CRBs, in contrast to any other type of building especially during period II.

Furthermore, it will become evident (§ 4.4) that specific CPBs were chosen for adult interment only, while other CPBs nearby were selected for more children/ infants than adults. Additionally, there is a clear association of the timing of the deposition of burials and the erection of the pillars in CPBs (§ 4.4).

Regarding spatial distribution of burials in CPBs and the position of the latter at the settlement, it must be noted that the number of CPBs was roughly the same in the W and the E: six in the W and five in the E (**Table 50**). They were also spread N and S at the settlement equally. They firstly appeared at Khirokitia in late period I/ early levels, their number augmented in period II/ middle levels and their type survived until the time of the abandonment of the settlement, while the longevity, preservation and monumentality of some of them is unprecedented (**Table 48 c, b, Table 50**, §4.4). In contrast, the two CRBs at Khirokitia were both built in the same area of the W sector, they were both erected in the very final stages of Khirokitia (**Tables 48 and 50**) and they survived for a limited length of time, while the one replaced the other at the end of its life-use (**Fig. 36**). Further contextual analysis and reconstruction of actions, especially within the CPBs, will demonstrate that most probably they were not “houses” related to the living’s subsistence needs, but they were serving ritual purposes (§4.4.1).

#### *4.3.3 Cape Andreas-Kastros.*

No burial was found within buildings or in any direct way associated with them at Cape Andreas-Kastros (**Table 86**). Burial VK 259 found in the N-E edge of the settlement on level VI was subsequently covered by deposits, which formed the E area outside CRB S 530-590 on level V (**Fig. 36**). Burials VK 260, 261, 262 were found on level III, in an open area about 4m SW of CB S556. This area was partially covered by the building complex of CBs S 560-608 on level IIb and then by CB 567 (**Fig. 38**). With only one exception, burial VK 259, all other burials at Cape Andreas-Kastros were found

disarticulated, partial, incomplete and disturbed. Again with the exception of VK 259, no burial was found in a pit, but they were interred in deposits in open-air areas of the settlement. They were covered by stones (burial VK 260), cultural material (burials VK 261 and 262) or loose deposits (burials VK 263, 264, 265 and 266). Burials VK 263, 264, 265, 266 were represented only by cranial bone fragments scattered in different areas and levels at the settlement. Burials VK 261 and 262 were represented only by an adult skull and long bones, and a mandible of a child found in proximity, in deposits of level III. Niklasson (1991:104) suggested that these individuals may have not been interred at the same occasion. The human bones found at Cape Andreas-Kastros represented only eight individuals. The majority of them belong to adults (five). Only two children were represented by cranial bones and there is a mandible belonging to an individual of undetermined sex and age.

Understandably, again, the number of individuals found interred cannot be considered representative neither of the number of individuals who lived at the settlement in a time span of about 300 years (**Tables 41, 54, 86**), nor of the burial customs generally practiced at the settlement. This short lived (**Table 41**) settlement with restricted occupation area (**Table 54**, Le Brun 1981:110, Niklasson 1991: figure 70) provided evidence of ritual use of some burials in the very final stages of the Aceramic Neolithic. After the period of its survival a lacuna in Cypriot prehistory followed, and after that, the perception and categorization process of the (Ceramic Neolithic) world appeared significantly changed. Importantly, this limited sample of burials at Cape Andreas-Kastros -early levels- mirrored aspects of equivalent use of burials at the settlements of Kalavassos-Tenta and Khirokitia.

The variability of this practice at Cape Andreas-Kastros resembled to the one attested at Kalavassos Tenta, while incomplete, fragmentary and manipulated post-mortem burials comprised a part of settlement burial practices at Khirokitia, also. However, the large proportion of burials within buildings attested at Khirokitia was completely absent from Cape Andreas-Kastros. Significantly, though, the only

articulated burial found in a pit at Cape Andreas-Kastros (VK 259), along with an adult cranial fragment (VK 266) found in mid deposits, dated to one of the earliest levels of the settlement. One out of the three buildings found on this level was a CRB (**Table 54**). A CRB was also built over burial VK 259 on the subsequent level (**Fig. 37**). On this level V, a total of four buildings were found: three of them were CRBs and only one CB. No burials dated to this level or the following one, level IV. Bone assemblages (burials VK 260, 261 and 262) dated to level III, where only one building was found (CB S 556). No burial was found in level II, where two CBs (S 560-608 and S 567) existed. In the top soils, bones of burials VK 263, 264, 265 were found scattered. Burial types and architectural types (CRBs) of the earliest levels (VI-V, **Tables 54 and 86**) seemed to have conformed, only to some extent, with traditions practiced at Tenta and Khirokitia, while no CRB was found after level IV at Cape Andreas-Kastros and only representative bones of burials were interred only in one level (III).

The maintenance of a specific kind of architecture and the persistence in a tradition of created areas of liminality, in this specific way, show once again a sociocultural and mythological linkage of burial and architectural types that was extensively practiced during the previous era, but was only reminiscent at Cape Andreas-Kastros. The prominent position and size of the CRB at Kalavassos-Tenta (**Figs. 33 and 35**) established it as a rather significant building (Peltenburg 2004). However, at Khirokitia CRBs appeared in a limited number, only for a limited period of time and at the very last level (**Table 50, Fig. 36**). Despite the degeneration of the importance of the CRB at Cape Andreas-Kastros, due to its habitual occurrence in the early levels, its presence at those levels, where the living were still following rules prescribing the selection of a percentage of the population for complete interment in the settlement, cannot be overlooked.

Even though the burial sample from Cape Andreas-Kastros is extremely small, it is in perfect proportion to the amount of buildings found, while again proportionally in full accordance with the sample from Kalavassos-Tenta and Khirokitia. These

practices at Cape Andreas Kastros, especially at the earliest levels, were the swan-song of a long tradition and era. The evident shift in practices during the last stages of this settlement represents a world that was already changing. Ritual practices in the following periods, after the lacuna, mirror and express this change in ideology, worldview and mytho-logic: identified architectural types ceased to exist and the burial was not a focal point of ritual practices any more.

#### **4.4 Ritual Buildings?**

The concentration of burials in specific buildings, as created areas of liminality, other elements particular to the type of specific buildings and the associated contextual evidence, suggest a specialization of some loci for ritual activities.

##### *4.4.1 Circular Pillar Buildings*

A debate regarding both the functionality of pillars in CPBs and the way buildings were roofed at Khirokitia and Tenta had started since the times of Dikaios and has influenced research and perception of the CPBs at both sites until recently. Dikaios (1953) generally believed that the pillars were used to support either the roof of buildings (Tholoi IA, VII, XLVII) or a loft, creating extra space for storage or sleeping (Tholoi XX and XLV (I)). As a result, he was surprised to discover no pillars in one of the largest buildings of Khirokitia, CB Tholos XVII, with an internal diameter of 5m, only one meter smaller than CPB Th. IA and an external diameter of 10m, one meter larger than CPB Th. IA. Dikaios (1953:19) underlined the absence of pillars in such a wide building as *noteworthy*, while he also noticed that pillars in CPBs Th. XX and XLV (I) did not seem to support the roof because they were situated in the western part of these buildings. As a result he suggested that the particular pillars must have been

supporting a loft. Lastly, he could not adequately explain the pillar with the stepped top in CPB Th. XLVII (Dikaios 1953:179). Price and Christou (1973) considered the pillars in CPB Th. XII necessary for the support of the roof. A similar approach was followed by Le Brun (1984, 1989, 1994) for the pillars in CPBs S 105, 116, 117, 122 and 131, despite the presence of a stepped pillar in the latter (**Fig. 39**). Todd (1987:31) also considered pillars structural.

Recent discoveries in the mainland at Nevali Çori and Göbekli Tepe initiated re-interpretation of the function of pillars in CPBs both in the mainland and Cyprus (Peltenburg 2004:75-77, Strodeur 2003, Watkins 1989, 2004). Finally, Peltenburg (2004) sealed this debate by demonstrating and emphasizing the symbolic nature of the free standing pillars. He insisted that they were *redundant architecturally* as they were larger than structurally needed. The buildings which included pillars were not generally larger than a common building at Khirokitia and Kalavassos-Tenta; they comprised a minority type of buildings at these settlements proving that dwellings of this size did not need pillars for the support of their roofs. Additionally, he demonstrated that their interpretation as buttresses of lofts for the creation of extra storage space is contradictory. Pillars restricted the floor space by covering up to 35% of it (Tholos IA). Furthermore, the traces of plaster on their tops, and the two stepped pillar examples (in CPB S 131 and in CPB Th XLVII, Floor VII) eliminate every possibility of them having been used in order to support an upper structure. Nevertheless, the residents at Khirokitia and Kalavassos-Tenta invested extra labour and time in order to build these massive pillars. The decoration of the pillars (Todd 1987: 76-79, 146, figure 39) and the decoration and associated symbolism of CPBs (Le Brun 1994:54) have been perceived as further suggestive elements of their symbolic nature. Many researchers now perceive pillars as stelai (Peltenburg 2004:75-77, Strodeur 2003, Watkins 1989, 2004), although Peltenburg (2004:80-85) insisted on the socio-political significance of the CPBs.

The archetypal concept of the pillar can be traced in the mythology of many later cultures. It may be related to the idea of a central pole connecting earth and sky or



to the idea of a great tree, life giving and/ or life threatening, both in the form of some vertical free standing object. Eliade (1957:20-65) identified this symbol as *axis mundi*, the sacred pole that connects the two worlds, a bridge rather than a buttress, and provided numerous examples from the Norse, Indian, Chinese, Semite and Muslim religion and mythology. Alternatively, the archetypal idea of the pillar may be related to the idea of order and balance that exists in the cultural world thanks to divine intervention and structural support of the cosmos, again, in the form of some free standing vertical object. Arthur Evans (1901:130-135) explained this symbol, which he identified reoccurring in the Minoan and Mycenaean cult in the form of a tree or a pillar, as an archetype found in the Semitic and Egyptian religion, also in Greek, Caucasian and Indian myths. The idea of a God or a tree as the foundation stone, the corner pillar of the cosmos, can be traced in many cultures. The Greek concept of Atlas who upholds the world on his shoulders at the garden of the trees of Hesperides (and whom Perseus transformed into a rock mountain by showing him the head of Medusa), is also found in the Hittite Kumarbi epic, in the Babylonian epic of creation Enuma Elis, in the Sumero-Akkadian epic of Gilgamesh, in the Norse mythology (Yggdrasil) and in Egyptian cosmology (Shu) (Wernike 1896:2118-2133, Watson 1980, Evelyn-White 1914).

While the interpretation of the pillar lies in hermeneutics and these ethnographic literature parallels can be useful only as illustrative analogies (Verhoeven 2002a:31-32), archaeological evidence clearly sets the CPBs apart. At an extremely densely inhabited Khirokitia, where often the dwellings were separated by less than a meter (if that), CPB Th. IA had a corridor around it that reached a maximum width of 3m from the outer wall of the Tholos, to the outer wall of an adjacent structure (**Fig. 40**, Peltenburg 2004:75). Also, Le Brun (1994:139) noted an open space of 20m<sup>2</sup> between CPB S 122 and CBs S 40 and S 136, and another, smaller one amongst CBs S 139, S 118 and CPBs S 116/ S 117 and S 122. CPB S 131 on level B4 (Le Brun 1994:150, figure.57) obtained an extensively open area in the SW with the closure and coverage of short-lived CB S 130 (level B5). Additionally, CPBs Tholoi XLVII and XLV (I) shared a wide

corridor in the SE with CBs XXII and XXV (Dikaios 1953: plate II). Lastly, CPB Th. XX had a wide corridor in the E separating it from the settlement wall (**Fig. 42**).

The existence of these open spaces could not have been coincidental. They were most probably created precisely because of the presence of CPBs. Their maintenance - through several levels of occupation, for as long as the CPBs were maintained - would have presupposed communal decision, strong traditional rules and social ties for them to be preserved. These spaces contributed to the distinction of CPBs in space and to an attributed status. Additionally, they formed areas where a relatively larger amount of people could gather. Le Brun (1994:139-141) saw the free space around CPBs S 116/ S 117 and S 122 as a space for group gatherings, linked with decision making and the maintenance of social order. It is not only through social purposes that make people gather. Ritual performance is also very attractive and demands participants, protagonists and audience, and for that, it needs space, distinction, status and formality (Tambiah 1979). Additionally, regarding that period of time, what we call communal gathering and social decision making would most probably have involved sacred ritual. The separation of the divine from the social affairs is a post-Socratic perception of the world and regards only very recent, post-Enlightenment era developments in the Western civilization (§ 1.3.1-1.3.3). Regarding the Aceramic Neolithic, the social, psychological and economic should be better understood to depend upon the ritual, since religion functioned as the *cause* of what happened in the world rather than as the *effect* (Eliade 1949a).

The distinction of CPBs was not restricted only in space, but extended also in terms of time. The persistence for the maintenance, the preservation and, if needed, the replacement of these buildings in the same chosen area, is unparalleled. CPB Th. IA, in the W, is one of the largest and longest lived buildings surviving for two periods (II and III), namely for the two thirds of the time the settlement was occupied (**Table 41**). Similarly, CPB S 122, in the E, which was erected in level E survived until the beginning of final level A. Remarkably, CPB S 116, which was built next to CPB S 122 in the NW,

was also erected in level E. In level D, it was sealed with two thick layers in which two burials were interred and it was immediately replaced on top by CPB S 117, in level C. CPB S 117 also contained two burials, in total, and survived until the very end of level B next to CPB S 122. This extent of survival, from level E to level A, corresponds to a time span nearly as long as Khirokitia itself survived; almost two millennia.

The significance of these buildings to this culture must have been as important as the Parthenon to the Western civilization; or as significant as early Medieval churches are for the wider Christian community and the history of architecture of the Western civilization. Ancestral memory and well founded and re-established tradition should be considered central notions in the interpretation of these buildings. The responsibility that the community must have carried, nourished and transmitted for the uninterrupted maintenance of these buildings and the repeated actions practiced within and outside of them must have been part of their identity; of the perception of who they were and their position in the world. The longevity of these buildings would not have been possible otherwise; what this culture believed in and the way they viewed their world was evidently embodied in the CPBs. Communal decision and communal action would have been necessary. Communal cohesion is portrayed in this everlasting and continually renewed system that enabled those buildings to continue existing. The ritual practiced within them and/ or in association with them could not but have been communal, too. It should not be construed that "by communal" a large number of people was allowed to enter these buildings. Most probably a relatively large amount of participants would be gathered outside, while more active participants would perform acts within the sacred space. *The concept of communal ritual does not, of course, imply that participation is open to the whole community: it need not be public in that sense, although it could be so* (Renfrew 1985:21).

Regarding the distribution of CPBs, it is important to note that at Khirokitia, they were built in pairs like their pillars. This practice could not have been coincidental either. Its significance possibly was also symbolic. CPB Th. IA was erected in the very

beginning of period II and lasted until the very end of period III (Dikaios 1953:311). In the W of the opening of the corridor that semi-encircled CPB Th. IA (**Fig. 40**), CPB Th. XII was erected also in early period II and also lasted until the end of period III (Stanley-Price and Christou 1973:29, Dikaios 1953: plate II) (**Fig. 41a**). Further in the N, again in the W of the settlement wall, CPB Th. XLV (I) was erected in the last level of period I and survived until the very end of period II. Next to it, in the N-E, CPB Th. XLVII was erected immediately afterwards, in the very beginning of period II, and lasted until the very end of this period, too (Dikaios 1953:311) (**Fig. 41a**). CPB S 116 was erected in the E of the settlement wall, in level E3 (Le Brun 1994:23). Immediately afterwards, CPB S 122 was erected in level E4 and survived until the very top level A. CPB S 116 was replaced by CPB S 117 in level C, and the latter continued existing along with CPB S 122 until the end of level A (Le Brun 1994:23) (**Fig. 41b**). Three pairs of Circular Pillar Buildings have been here identified, being erected the one next to the other and coexisting until their end of life use.

This coexistence of CPBs, in pairs, in image of the majority of their pillars (**Table 83**), possibly was initiated as an extension of the symbolism of the pillars to the buildings themselves. Most probably, those buildings standing the one next to the other, with all this space around them, were perceived as “pillars”, too. They were pillar-like buildings. Like pillars, CPBs were not only found in pairs (**Table 83**). CPB Th. XX (period II), with a wide corridor in the W, probably stood on its own among CBs, unless future excavation of the partially revealed Th.XXI proves the latter to have enclosed pillars (**Fig. 42**). Excavation around CPB S 131 (level (C?)B5-B3, E) and CPB S105 (level IIIb-IIIa, W) was not completed either (**Fig. 41b**). Consequently, it is unclear whether they formed a pair with another CPB or stood on their own. The same cannot be hypothetically construed for CPB Th. VII, which was erected in period III in the SE of the settlement, E of the settlement wall, and survived only for the duration of this period. All buildings around CPB Th. VII were excavated and proved to be CBs (**Fig. 41a**). Consequently, the possibility of CPBs Th. XX, S 131 and S 105 to have been

standing solely should be taken into consideration. In the fluidity of the practices of ritual, in a mytho-logic system, such variations have their own meaning. The isolated CPBs may have been mytho-logically associated with the single pillars in the interior of other CPBs, or they may have been paired in a way not easily detectable over a wider area of the settlement.

At Kalavassos-Tenta all the CPBs that included burials (S 9, S 11, S 42) were built in the same period (Todd 1987:28, 53-166) and they concentrated in the S slope of the hill (**Fig. 34**). Additionally, while burial practices were more variable at Tenta, all intramural burials (all dating to the same period) concentrated again in the S slope of the hill regardless of whether they were deposited inside CPBs or CBs (**Table 61, Fig. 33**). The only CPB dated to period 3, S 85 was built in the E slope of the hill close to the settlement wall (**Table 45, Fig. 34**). In period 2, CPBs at Tenta, concentrated around CRB S 14 in the N and the E (**Table 45, Fig. 34**). Tenta was not as densely inhabited as Khirokitia and large open spaces seemed to have been widely available. It is worth noting however that the open space reserved among CPBs S 10, S 9 and S 11, in period 4, was left bare during the subsequent periods.

While CPBs at Tenta seemed to be concentrated in specific areas of the settlement, at Khirokitia, they were equally distributed. It is remarkable that in every separate area that Dikaios excavated either one, or two CPBs were found (Dikaios 1953:Plate IIA). The same is valid for the areas excavated by Le Brun (1994:16, figure 3), with the single exception of a third CPB, in the same area with a pair, only for the duration of level B. This regards CPB S 131, which was erected in the NE of the pair of CPBs S 116 / S 117 - S 122 (**Fig. 41b**). With only this exception, CPBs seem to have been erected in distinct neighbourhoods for the same period of time (**Table 50, Fig. 40 a, b**). CPBs may have been local ritual buildings. This organisation of a specific number of CPBs for a specific area possibly mirrors equivalent social organisation in neighbourhoods or even in clans. However, the latter is a rather slim possibility, since differentiation in symbols (/ totems, Frazer 1887) and use of CPBs should have been

expected. No such evidence can be noticed between CPB clusters. On the contrary, CPBs seem to have shared the same symbolic, mythological and ritual language. Nevertheless, the possibility of socio-ritual organisation on the basis of cohesive-cooperative neighbourhoods rather than competitive clans possibly was a social reality at Khirokitia. A similar spatial, and by extension social, organisation in neighbourhoods, has recently been identified at Çatalhöyük, too, on the basis of burial distribution in specific buildings (Düring 2007).

At Kalavassos-Tenta, the concentration of CPBs and burials in period 4 in the S slope of the hill and the subsequent concentration of CPBs only around large CRB complex S 14 on the top of the hill, in period 2, may mirror a particular social group empowerment. While burials were no longer interred at Tenta in period 2, the significance, the symbolism and the status of ritual buildings such as CPBs must have had, could have been used to enhance the authority that this new building-type in Cyprus possibly represented. New powers, new authorities need to use older and already established symbols, in order to secure their legitimacy (Douglas 1970:54-81). The fact that the CRB type appeared in Cyprus suddenly at Kalavassos-Tenta, in period 2, and at Khirokitia at level Ic, it was extremely short-lived and never well established at Khirokitia, may represent a new trend in the island, that a particular group may have decided to adopt. At Tenta, it seemed to have succeeded in strongly founding this new trend for the last period of the settlement. At Khirokitia, where the CPBs seemed to gather all the communal attention and the tradition they represented was better founded and supported, the CRB appeared and shortly after, it disappeared with the rest of the society and societal ties that had held Khirokitia together for so long (Peltenburg 2004:85).

Inside the CPBs, the series and combinations of actions that took place indisputably point towards the symbolic nature of the pillars and the ritual function of these buildings. It is important here to underline, that, like the function of symbols in myths (Eliade 1949a), ritual actions are meaningless outside the ritual system. They

have meaning in an inter-connective, inter-relative, complementary and sequential way within the ritual. The first concern in this sequence of actions is the creation of liminality. In the case of CPBs, liminality was created with the construction of the pillars and was empowered with the introduction of burials. Complementary actions like burning substances in specific areas, hoarding, construction of seats for the performance, ritual closure and sealing, were identified as ritual exactly because of the context where they were practiced, the sequence in which they were performed and their relation and mytho-logic connection to each other. They were ritualized because they were practiced within these buildings and they became ritually meaningful within the “logic” of the ritual. The ritual would not have been completed without them having been practiced.

#### 4.4.1. A) Ritual actions at CPBs

*-Khirokitia: W of the settlement wall.*

##### i) Tholos IA

CPB Th. IA (period II-III, Area I) had five floors, seven burials in total, distributed in its floors and two pillars throughout its history (**Fig. 40**, Dikaios 1953:18-27).

On Floor V, the most ancient floor of this CPB, in its S part, the bases of two pillars were found. In between the pillars, female burial VK 21 was interred. Burnt animal bones, ashes and charcoal were collected from the filling of the burial. A rim of pisé encircled the burial *including boulders and a quern* (Dikaios 1953:21). A platform of boulders was built over the burial. In the N opening of the pillars, pebbles were embedded in pisé and were found covered with *a layer of ashes, burnt animal bones and*

*flint flakes. This was evidently the hearth*, concluded Dikaios (1953:23). It will become evident that although Dikaios offered many imaginative explanations for several depositions that he considered the result of ritual practices, his view of Khirokitia as a settlement-site was through a very narrow perspective. All buildings at Khirokitia were houses to Dikaios, and as such they ought to have had a hearth for strictly domestic purposes. He failed to see the significance of the pillars. Most importantly, though, he failed to identify structural ritual elements and ritual forms that were clearly associated with the liminality of the burials. Consequently, it was not possible for him to isolate these elements and identify them within other liminal areas.

Dikaios did not offer an explanation of how identical deposits were found in situ both in the fill of burial VK 21 and on a platform directly opposite it. Additionally, he did not consider unusual the presence of flint-flakes in the mixture of ashes over embedded pebbles that he interpreted arbitrarily as the hearth. Most probably some substance and possibly animal parts were burnt in the opening of the pillars over the pebbled area, after burial VK 21 had been recently interred. Most probably, part of the burnt material was spread over the burial or was mixed with soil and was subsequently spread covering the burial. Flint-flakes were mixed with the remaining of the burnt material over the pebbles and were left to be covered by the following floor after the burial was covered by a platform of boulders.

No other material was found on Floor V, which may have been cleaned (if there was need) prior to the following floor being laid. Floor IV covered the remains of the pillars which were dismantled and the two platforms (one of which was covering burial VK 21). In the NW, this time, two pillars were built with boulders and pisé. Again in between the pillars, close to the W one, a burial of a female (VK 22) was interred. The head was covered with a quern and the body with pisé and pebbles. In the W side of the W pillar, two infant burials (VK 23 and 24) were deposited. Rough stones and pebbles were spread on this floor. Floor III, a thin layer of pisé covered these depositions, while the pillars remained as they were previously. No considerable



amount of time must have passed between the coverage of Floor V and the laying of Floors IV and III. On Floor III, a shallow pit was opened over the place where burial VK 21 had been interred on Floor V.

This was not a coincidental event. On the contrary, this was a practice which was repeated often over burials. Dikaios (1953:180-181) noticed that quite often a platform, a hearth or a pit was found laid or dug exactly over a burial of a previous floor. In order for this to have happened, in some cases a marker was left in view on the layer ("floor" according to Dikaios) that covered the burial(s). On the exactly subsequent floor, one of these three practices was performed. In the case of VK 21, no other evident marker was noticeable apart from the S opening of the new pillars, where it must have been estimated that burial VK 21 was lying underneath. Alternatively, it should be considered very possible that Floor IV was not actually a floor but a layer which was used to seal the deposits on Floor V and to provide adequate depth for the subsequent burials. Again, it should be noted that this is a practice that happened often within CPBs for the sealing of previous depositions and the creation of adequate depth for new ones. In either case, the exact position of burial VK 21 must have been known. This pit was lined with pebbles and was found filled with darkish soil. A second smaller pit also containing pebbles and darkish soil was found at the S edge of the E pillar. Between this pillar and the circular wall of the building, male burial VK 25 and infant burial VK 26 were deposited. Their grave pits were separated by the arrangement of a quern placed over a gypsum slab. No other finds were found on this floor.

The following Floor II was thicker and was laid immediately over the previous one. A shallow depression was noticeable over the position of the shallow pit, which was opened over the platform which covered burial VK 21 (of Floor V). The depression could have been possibly due to subsistence of the floor since it was laid over a pit. However Dikaios (1953:23) reported a burnt area on the centre of this depression, which again he interpreted as the hearth. On the subsequent Floor I, the same area presented

traces of fire. Again in the S of the E pillar, a small pit was opened again containing pebbles and dark soil, while the area around it was carbonised. At the W side of the W pillar, an adult burial VK 27 was deposited.

Repetition of actions in specific areas is a practice that characterises the interior of this CPB: human interment in specific places and always in association with the pillars, burnt substances again in specific areas and in relation to the burials, small structural arrangements covered by intermediate layers, pits and depressions with dark soil and pebbles. All these results of actions comprise elements that, combined together, indicate high possibility of a series of ritual to have been practiced in this CPB. Liminality was created by the presence of the pillars and the interment of the first burial deposited in between them. Pillars and burials were evidently in constant association throughout the life-history of this CPB. Then elements, as stones (pebbles), digging of the earth (pits), small quantities of animal bones and artefacts, presence and use of fire all coalesce, contributing to the completion of a ritual linked with the pillars and the burials. *Fire was never far from ceremony. For some rites, fire itself was the focus, but there were many more in which it was simply an enabler* (Pyne 2001:85).

The significance of stone and water has been analysed in the previous chapter (§ 3.6). While stones in the form of small depositions, artefacts or a structural arrangement are well witnessed in CPB Th. IA, somehow the element of water is seemingly missing. There are all sorts of elements of ritual that archaeology is unable to trace: the songs, the dance, the gestures, the smells (Renfrew 1985:15). Water and/ or liquid substances could also be one of them. It is regrettable that, at the time of Dikaios, soil chemical analysis was not widely used for archaeological purposes. Could the dark soil in the first shallow pit on Floor III over burial VK 21 and the dark soil in the third pit on Floor II, again over burial VK 21, have been proved to be residues of some liquid substance? In the framework of this kind of series of actions where pillars and burial are a focal point, libations over the first and centrally placed burial should not be considered implausible, especially since a persistence of opening pits right above it can be noticed

on subsequent floors. The clean floors (Dikaios 1953:24) noticed in this CPB in addition to the presence of fire, stone, liquid, earth (from the pits), animal bones, structured deposition, pillars and burials accord here in a ritual composition.

While the interior of CPB Th. IA was heaving with liminal elements and traces of related ritual actions, its surroundings also provided additional indications for a particular use of this CPB and the nearby area. Dikaios (1953:15) presented adequate evidence which supported that the corridor semi-encircling the CPB in the N-NW was sheltered. In this corridor, stone round "tables" and depositions of animal bones were found (Floor II, Dikaios 1953:25-27). The door of CPB Th. IA was not situated in a way to open towards this corridor. It was found in the SE, just opposite and very close to the doorway of CB Th. XII A. In order to gain access to this corridor, individual(s) who would exit CPB Th. IA would have to turn W, then cross the paved area found amongst CPB Th. IA, CB Th. XII A, and CPB Th. XII and turn N in order to enter the roofed corridor. A second paved area of pebbles was found outside, to the E of CB Th. XII A. There, *a platform surrounded by andeside river boulders forming a kind of raised rim* (Dikaios 1953:35) and a large unfinished andeside tray were found. In the SW of CB Th. XII A, a semicircular enclosure was found, from which a curvilinear wall was extended towards the W. The paved areas around the two CPBs, the curvilinear wall in the SW, the roofed corridor in the NW and the settlement wall in the E along with these three buildings form a court-yard. These buildings were all evidently interconnected.

CB Th. XII A was one of the thirty-four CBs containing burials at the settlement (**Tables 81a** and **82**). It was erected after CPB Th. IA and it survived until the end of period II. Dikaios (1953:35) speculated a doorway in the SE, although he presented evidence for an additional doorway in the N-NW, which evidently connected CB Th. XII A with CPB Th. IA (**Fig. 40**). Seven burials were distributed in two out of the three floors, in total, of this CB. A male (VK 30), a second adult (VK 31) and the skull fragments of an infant (VK 32) were found together centrally placed in a pit in the building, on Floor III. A stratigraphy of this communal burial assemblage was possible.

Dikaios explained that the male was interred first and an animal jaw was placed over it. The second adult was placed over the male. This adult (VK 31) was found with the jaw open and infant skull fragments (VK 32) were found scattered over the skeleton. It could not be clear whether this communal burial assemblage was interred in one episode, or if the place of the first interment was maintained somehow known and the subsequent burials followed at later time.

Importantly, though, it is clear that the infant burial was secondary and its skull fragments may have been ritually broken and distributed over the second adult. On the same floor (III) with these burials, a raised platform of pebbles was constructed in the W and a pit was opened in the E containing a mixture of pisé, fine earth and ashes. This pit was maintained on the subsequent Floor II and it was covered with pebbles, while a second one was opened in the SW filled with small-sized stones. Again, a raised platform was constructed in the NW. Boulders, pebbles and cultural material was employed for its construction (Dikaios 1953:37). Remarkably, half a stone axe (1498) was found in the N of the platform, while its other half had been deposited in the S. This platform surrounded and covered child burial VK 36. Over it, a burnt area was noticed. At the SW edge of the platform, another infant burial (VK 35) was deposited. In between the two pits in the S part of the building, female burial VK 33 and infant burial VK 34 were placed in separate grave-pits. The thickness of Floor I covered all these depositions. On it, another two platforms built of stones were erected over the area where the platform of the previous floor was (NW and W) and a stone round "table" of boulders, pisé and plastered top was built in the E.

Dikaios (1953:39) recognised CB Th. XII A as part of a complex with central building CPB Th. IA, despite the fact that he could not explain the presence of CB Th. XII A other than speculating the supposed growth of a nuclear family inhabiting CPB Th. IA. Dikaios (1953:27-39) mistakenly associated CPB Th. IA with other CBs (Th. XVI and Th. XI) in the NW. CPB Th. XII had only been revealed ( and later excavated by Stanley-Price and Christou in 1973); but this was not the only reason why Dikaios failed

to see the connection of buildings in this area. Major factors for his misinterpretation constituted his functionalistic views and his modern western ideas of space management. Dikaios (1953: 227) reported:

*The scantiness of traces of domestic life in the large Tholoi seems to coincide with the general tendency in the settlement to carry out cooking, or other domestic work, in separate rooms connected with a main Tholos and standing in the immediate neighbourhood.*

Dikaios (1953:222) considered CPB Th. IA one of the large Tholoi at Khirokitia and consequently he was looking for a kitchen and a workshop, since CPB Th. IA did not provide relevant evidence. In his understanding, a large household needed extra buildings. Dikaios (1953:28) interpreted CB Th. XVI as a workshop of CPB Th. IA because of the discovery of a quern and a pounder on Floor II. Dikaios (1953:31, 32) interpreted CB Th. XI as the kitchen of CPB Th. IA. He was led to this conclusion by having found two pounders (1291, 1288), a spindle-whorl (1284), a stone bowl, a stone cup (1289, 1290) and animal bones (among them a shoulder blade around the "hearth", in situ on Floor II). Dikaios (1953:31) stated that *All these testify to the domestic use of the Tholos*, neglecting the fact that especially the top floors in these buildings represented abandonment deposits.

Regardless of whether CB XI was a building for *domestic use*, leaving behind artefacts / ecofacts and sealing them with a layer of soil prior to abandoning them could have hardly meant domestic use for the people who used to utilize that building. The presence of a shoulder blade found in situ on a particular area of the floor was also attested in a place commonly accepted as a ritual building, S 148, recently excavated at Khirokitia (Le Brun 2003). Although Dikaios did not have this evidence available at the time, abandonment deposits should not have influenced his judgement of systemic contexts. Additionally, by trying to justify the paucity of *domestic* material in CPB Th. IA and CB XII A and by looking for buildings in the area which could provide this evidence, he overlooked the spatial arrangement of Area I: the CBs (Th. XVI and Th. XI)

that Dikaios regarded as annexes of CPB Th. IA were clearly separated from CPB Th. IA by the roofed corridor. It could not have made any sense for an individual to have exited the main Tholos IA, to have turned towards the W, to have crossed the paved area (among CPBs Th. IA, Th. XII and CB Th. XIIA), to have passed in front of the S opening of the corridor (with almost 3m diameter), then to have turned towards the N, to have passed CPB Th. XII (on their left), to have passed also CB Th. V (on their left), in order to finally reach their workshop and kitchen. In addition, such space specialisation occurred in domestic architecture and in use of space much later in human history. Only a large room, in Medieval times (even in post WW II rural areas), could have been the kitchen, the sewing room, the playing space for the children, the rest area, the living-room and the reception area of a household. So, CB Th. XI could indeed have been a kitchen and have all these other functions as well, without needing a larger building of which to be the kitchen. Certainly, its position in relevance to Th. IA cannot be justified as a satellite building of the latter.

CPB Th. IA was completely and distinctively isolated from the concentration of CBs in the NW because of the presence of the corridor formed by the long curvilinear wall. CPB Th. IA, along with CB Th. XII A and its elaborate interior, the corridor, the paved areas, the "tables", an installation with a tray and CPB XII form a complex on their own. Again, Dikaios (1953:35) saw this extended area *for some domestic use*. However, the surviving material from this period of time would not have been different for ritual practices and for domestic uses. Certainly, archaeology misses the colours, the smells, the ambiance that might have more greatly differentiated those items. What allows the distinction to be made is the context and the close examination of a number of factors that may indicate use of space charged with intentionality which differs from the one associated with strictly domestic activities. The stone-bowl that contained the everyday food might not have been different from the one that was used in order for a sacrificed animal to be carried from the altar to a place of sacred deposition. Additionally, material that was used as domestic could equally have been

ritualised through its use during ritual ceremonies. It was the intentionality with which the material was used that transformed, through the process of ritualization and the sequence of ritual actions, the secular / domestic into ritual.

In a space charged with liminality and ritual intentionality, as the compound of CPB Th. IA, CPB Th. XII and CB Th. XII A, the presence of stone “tables” in the corridor, the enclosed paved area in the W and the installation of the stone tray in the E paved area could hardly be perceived to have been structured for domestic activities; especially when the majority of buildings at Khirokitia lack this kind of outdoor arrangement. Consequently, this arrangement should not have been perceived as the norm at the settlement. The depositions of animal bones on Floor II of the corridor (Dikaios 1953:26) could have been remains of animal sacrifices over altars and not tables. The animal bones that found their way in burial VK 21 and on the ritually burnt area of the pebbled platform on Floor V in CPB Th. IA, in addition to the animal jaw that found its way in burial VK 30 in CB Th. XII A, could have been processed on the permanent stone tray installation of the outside E paved area. Seen under this prism, the remains of the actions practiced in this compound do not discord with each other, neither with the nature and use of the surrounding buildings or the patterned outdoors activities at the settlement.

#### *ii) Tholos XII*

CPB Tholos XII (period II, Area I) was erected slightly later than CPB Th. IA, along with the roofed corridor and CB Th. XII A in the same area (Dikaios 1953:33, Stanley-Price and Christou 1973:29). Only a summary report was published for this CPB and no plan accompanied its publication. Only its S part was explored in detail due to erosion, particularly in the E (Stanley-Price and Christou 1973:29). Two floors, one pillar and one burial were found in its interior.

The first floor of this CPB must have all been set on fire. Traces of charcoal mixed with animal bones were found in abundance on its surface. An intermediate layer of 0.80cm was used to seal these remains, or possibly initially to tame and extinguish the fire. The top of this layer was used as Floor II. On it, a pillar of river stones was constructed. It was found standing up to a height of 1.20m and it had a diameter of about 1m. An adult burial VK 249 with the greater part of its skull missing was placed next to the pillar at its E side. Around the burial, *two stone axes, two bone pins, three miniature cup-shaped stone vessels, fragments of a small stone bowl and a number of marine shells* (Stanley-Price and Christou 1973:29) were found. Stanley-Price (and Christou 1973) was not clear whether the burial was placed in a grave-pit or exactly next to the pillar on the floor. Also, there is ambiguity about whether these artefacts were found within the burial pit, or on the floor around it. Therefore, it is uncertain whether they were grave-goods or depositions left in situ on the floor close to the burial and the pillar. Lastly, no information was provided about the coverage of all the interior of this CPB and the circumstances under which it was abandoned.

### iii) Tholos XLV (I)

CPB Tholos XLV (I) (late period III-period II, Area V) along with CPB Th. XLVII formed a pair of CPBs in period II, in the northern area that Dikaios (1953:166) excavated. The circular wall of CPB Th. XLV (I) was founded immediately on the circular wall of a second building Th. XLV (II) post abandonment. The latter was not excavated. CPB Th. XLV (I) had initially a very thick outer wall of three courses of stone (Dikaios 1953:166). Its interior included three floors, two pillars and seven burials in total distributed in its floors (Dikaios 1953:166-172).

On the most ancient floor, Floor III, two pillars of stone and pisé were erected. The W pillar was built very close to the circular wall. Dikaios estimated that the door to the CPB was in the SE; therefore exactly opposite of the opening formed in between the



pillars. A male burial (VK 134) was placed further away from the S opening of the pillars, relatively close to the estimated doorway. A low platform of pisé was built close to the S opening of the pillars, in between them. A second male burial (VK 133) was placed in between the pillars, closer to the E one, at their N opening. The burial was found holding a *group of pointed bone tools* (1447) in his right hand. A slab on which some substance must have been burnt was found at the SW edge of the platform. SW of the W pillar, in the space between it and the platform, a paved area of slabs, also burnt, was found. Dikaios (1953:168) supposed that there were two hearths on this floor. The subsequent floor (II) was a thin (7cm) layer of pisé which was thick enough to adequately cover the burials and the low platform. A male (VK 136) and a female (VK 135) burial were deposited at the SW edge of the E pillar and at the SW edge of the W pillar respectively. In between the pillars, at their S opening, a male burial (VK 138) was placed in a shallow pit. This grave-pit was scooped out of the pisé floor and the pisé of the platform (of Floor III) over which the burial was placed. Diametrically opposite to this burial (VK 138), at the N opening of the pillars close to the N wall, another male burial (VK 137) was placed. A pit was opened at the W side of the W pillar. It was lined with pisé and it was subsequently filled in with pebbles.

The following floor (I) covered these depositions. At this stage, according to Dikaios (1953:168), boulders were removed from the outer ring of the circular wall of the CPB and were used for an extension wall that was built in the interior of the CPB. This wall connected, in an almost straight line, the larger W pillar to the E edge of the circular wall creating a border and dividing the N from the S part of the CPB. The entirety of the N part was filled in with compact yellow pisé which covered completely the top of both of the pillars, creating thus a superimposed massive platform. The S side of this buttress wall of the massive pisé platform was plastered. The S part of the CPB was extremely limited. People who would enter the CPB would come across a rectangular restricted space and they would face a high plastered wall. This S part of the CPB was destroyed by modern surface activities and its context cannot be further

reconstructed. In the N part of the CPB, on this impressive platform, female burial (VK 139) was placed. It was found surrounded by boulders and with a quern next to the head. The skeleton was found with the jaw wide open.

All seven burials in this CPB were adults. It will become evident that specialization of specific CPBs for only adult interments occurred at Khirokitia. The seven adult burials of CPB Th. XLV (I) contrast highly to the twenty-five infants and only four adults that neighbouring CPB (Th. XLVII) received. This may be an additional revealing element of the nature of the coexistence of the two CPBs, which were additionally connected with a straight wall, running from the NE edge of the S one (Th. XLV (I)) to the SW edge of the N one (Th. XLVII). Complementary actions possibly were practiced in pairs of CPBs, or a kind of ritual specialization / variation within the same ritual system could have been taking place. This categorization of CPBs within the same ritual system concerns only a subdivision of the kind of actions practiced within them and not a separate categorization of these actions. Explicitly, human interments occurred in all CPBs and they actually occurred in the same way, in selected places. The category of meaning of "CPB-human interment-pillars / platforms / heaths" remained the same for all the CPBs. However, the "human interment" part of this category of the ritual system was further subdivided to regard adult and/or infant interments. While the structural elements of the ritual remain unchanged, it seems that this subdivision occurred within the same ritual or ritual system on the basis of some kind of mythologically influenced choice.

#### *iv) Tholos XLVII*

CPB Tholos XLVII (period II, Area V) was erected in the NE of CPB XLV (I), close to the settlement wall. It had eight floors in total and twenty-nine burials distributed on its floors (Dikaios 1953:172-186). It also included a free-standing pillar on Floor VII and two pillars on Floor IV, which were abutting to the circular wall.

On its most ancient Floor VIII, four infant burials (VK 140-143) were interred, three pits were opened in the floor E to the burials and a small raised platform was constructed in between burial VK 143 and the most E pit. The floor must have been cleaned, as nothing else was found on it, and then sealed by a layer of *light coloured earth of 0.24 cm of thickness* (Dikaios 1953:177). On the following Floor VII, a rectangular elongated pillar with stepped top and plastered sides was erected in the middle of the CPB. A male burial (VK 144) was deposited at the N edge of the pillar. A platform of flat stones was constructed to the E of the pillar. A second low platform was constructed on the SW edge of the pillar right in front of the entrance. In front of the burial, two seats were made against the inner face of the N circular wall, facing the burial and the N side of the pillar. As Dikaios (1953:177, 179) reported in the NW :

*the first seat consisted of the seat proper, a circular sand stone slab 0.36m across with upper face slightly hollowed and the back built against the face of the circular wall [...] and the second seat [...] was a limestone slab with smaller gypsum slabs on either side but no back.*

The space in between the seats was covered with pisé. This must have served as a bench connecting the two seats and creating extra space for seating. Alternatively, it may have been made in order for it to separate distinctly the two persons seated in either side of this space, leaving thus the burial and the pillar in clear view and exactly in the middle of the space in between the two seats. The small wall partition coming out of the N wall of the Tholos right next to the NW seat limited the area where the seats and the burial were. Along with the pillar, it formed a barrier that separated the building in exactly two parts: the one full of features and the other one, an empty space. Perhaps the one part was often full of action and the other one was often full of attendants who could be present, could look and / or participate in actions not traced by archaeology (for example: signing). They would have to be restricted in the W, the empty part of the CPB, limited by the partition and the pillar.

It also is of significance that the doorway of the CPB was in the SW, slightly off the axis of the pillar. The person who would come in the building would immediately

be seen by the person sitting on the NW seat, also situated slightly off the axis of the pillar. Then the entrants would have to choose either to turn right or proceed ahead. In the first case they would have to go behind the narrow space between the pillar and the S limit of the circular wall and approach the NE seat. This space was rather limited and only one, two or three individuals could fit there. Alternatively, entrants would have to continue straight over the paved area and stay on the western, empty part of the Tholos. They would be constantly under the surveillance of the person seated on the NW seat, and if they proceeded towards the central part of the Tholos they would be seen by the person seated on the NE seat, too. Still, if they looked towards the E, they would face the physical barrier of the wall partition and the pillar. They would have to look through the gap in between them in order to face straight to the seating arrangement. The E part of the CPB would thus be populated by the two seated persons and the dead deposited right in front of them. The western part, being empty of features, could have accommodated more people participating, or simply attending. The seats had been strategically situated opposite the entrance of the Tholos, right in front of the pillar and facing the burial.

These seats were not common places for the seating of people, but were exclusive constructions; a setting in a specific kind of *stage* (Tambiah 1979). It cannot be certain whether these seats were constructed for selected individuals or other settings of perishable material were placed on them. The arrangements of the structural remains on this floor of the CPB and the possibilities of reconstructed actions are strongly reminiscent of similar arrangement in a scene portrayed at the ceramic Vounous Bowl (**Fig. 43**, Dikaios 1940, Karageorghis 1970:10, Morris 1985:281-283). Certainly the pillars are missing, since the artist had different mental references in his period of time from those attested at Khirokitia. However, taller, distinctively different figures from the majority portrayed, were placed seated against the circular wall, within a round setting, where the intentionality of the practices shown, most probably, was not subsistence related. Additionally, the controlled access to this round setting was explicitly

represented by the placement of the figure in the outside, trying to glimpse inside without being noticed. Also, the ceramic Bucrania Wall from Kotsiati (**Fig. 44**, Karageorghis 1970:10, Morris 1985:283-284,) portrayed (non-human) figures possibly made of perishable material in a votive setting. These two ceramic models are of a distant era to Khirokitia and consequently not necessarily related to actions having taken place at Khirokitia in any way. However, after the reconstruction of the staged interior on Floor VII of CPB XLVII and the reconsideration of actions that must have taken place within it, there is little not to evoke the similar scene depicted in the Vounous Bowl. Also, there is little not to trigger the visualization of so many possibilities of perishable material that would have enhanced appropriately this ritual stage in CPB Th. XLVII. Lastly, the possibility that those seats were not made for people but for figures made of perishable is also plausible.

Returning to Floor VII, it should be noted that, apart from two bone pins (1059, 1060), for which no exact place of retrieval was provided by Dikaios, nothing else was found on this floor. The floor was cleaned and sealed by a layer of 0.45m of thickness, which covered all the features and left the stepped top of the pillar uncovered. Although Dikaios (1953:179) described this layer as *light colour earth*, he understood its thickness as either collapse of the superstructure or intentional filling. However, in other cases of collapsed superstructure, he reported to have found debris and loose stones whereas this layer was clean even from artefacts. The only objects found in between Floors VII and VI are a flint scraper (1067) and a broken axe head (1069). Both of them might have been used in the process of laying this layer and Floor VI. The lack of artefacts on Floor VII and in this layer, the uniformity of this layer, and the fact that the top of the pillar was left to open view, resembling a platform, on Floor VI (Dikaios 1953:178, figure 97), support the interpretation of this layer as intentional filling. The new floor (Floor VI) was laid on top of this layer. These repeated actions of cleaning the floor and then sealing it with an intermediate layer prior to laying the following floor formed a pattern that was noticed by Niklasson (1991: 230), too. She also proposed that

not every new floor at Khirokitia was made so much out of necessity for replacement of a worn out previous floor, but often in order for the burials on the previous floor to be sealed (Niklasson 1991:224-231, 230).

The new floor was prepared for new burials: Floor VI accommodated two groups of burials. Five infants (VK 149-153) were buried in individual small graves exactly next to the platform-former pillar in the E. Four infants (VK 145-148) were buried again in individual shallow pits, one next to the other, over the place where the arrangements of the seats used to exist, in the NW of the Tholos. E to this second cluster of burials, a wide pit (0.80m) was opened over the place where the wall partition used to come out of the wall in the N of the Tholos, on Floor VII. Dikaios did not report the depth of the pit. He reported, though, that it was lined with pisé and contained pebbles. Two bone awls only were found on Floor VI, which must have also been cleaned, prior to its sealing. It was covered with a thinner layer of 6cm thickness, over which Floor V was laid.

On this floor (V) six paved areas were found. The first one was made of flat boulders and was found right in front of the doorway where the third and last step of the entrance met this floor. Floor V corresponded to the period of time when the steps leading inside the CPB reached the level of the interior floor of the CPB. Prior to the construction of Floor V, the entrance to the CPB possibly was extremely and deliberately difficult. The superstructure of the CPB was not altered in the time that passed between the construction of the earliest Floor VIII and this one, Floor V. Floor VIII was found 0.75 m below the surface of Floor V. This is calculated without adding the thickness of Floor VII, VI and V, but just by adding the thickness of the intermediate layers in between the floors. The entrance to the CPB at the time when Floor VIII was in use would have involved descending about one metre from the last stone-step in order to access the interior of the CPB. In order to reach Floor VII, somebody would have to descend about 76-72 cm. For access to Floor VI, there would have been the need for descending half a metre from the last step (Dikaios 1953:177). Probably the access to

these floors was realized by a wooden ladder or in some other similar way. This would make the access to the Tholos even more controlled and its interior protected. This is especially significant in regards to Floor VII, where the pillar, the partition and the sitting arrangement contributed more to a directed and controlled entrance to the building.

On Floor V, the last step reached the interior of the Tholos at the level of the floor. The middle step extended to the side of the internal circular wall. There, a slab upstanding on the step and leaning towards the wall of the Tholos was found in situ covering an animal hip bone (Dikaios 1953:177). Returning to the paved areas: right in front of the steps, a paved area of slabs was found resembling the paved area found in front of the entrance on Floor VII. The other three paved areas were found in a row in about the middle of the building towards the N. The western one was a circular area paved with pebbles; the middle one was paved by a gypsum slab; and the third one was a rectangular low platform made of pisé and slabs arranged in a circle in the middle. This area was reddened by fire and was formed exactly over the place of burial VK 144 on Floor VII, although Dikaios (1953:180) interpreted it as the hearth. It is also worth noting that this particular area was left bare on Floor VI. The exact place of the burial at the time of Floor V would not have been difficult to know; the top of the pillar in front of which the burial was deposited was left in bare view on Floor VI, as a marker. In addition, on Floor VI, this particular area was located in between the two clusters of infant burials. On Floor V, in the N-NW of the building, the arrangement of structural features copied the arrangement of the seats on Floor VII. Two *superimposed rectangular slabs* (Dikaios 1953:180) were arranged next to the internal circular wall in the N-NW. Although they were not elaborate in construction like the seats on Floor VII, which are reminiscent of modern seats (Dikaios 1953:180, picture b in plate XXXIV), the rectangular slabs on Floor V of CPB XLVII were evidently positioned there for seating purposes. Right in front of the western one, infant burial VK 154 was deposited. The platform with traces of fire was found right in front of the seats. Of the two last paved

areas, one was created by flat boulders and it covered burial VK 154 (on Floor V), unifying the middle paved area in a row and the so-called hearth. The last paved area was found in the southeast of the Tholos made of *gypsum slabs surrounded by boulders and pebbles* (Dikaios 1953:180). On this paved area, a Gastropod shell (1044) was found in situ. On either side of the new seats of Floor V, a wall partition came out of the wall, defining, enclosing and restricting the area of the seats, the burial and the platform. Again, the seats were permanent in character and strategically placed opposite the doorway against the NW circular wall.

In order for this structural arrangement to be covered, a layer of 0.40 m of *light coloured hard earth* was used subsequently (Dikaios 1953:180). On it, Floor IV was laid. Dikaios supposed that this layer must have been created again due to a *partial collapse*. Again though, this layer was homogenous in consistency and it was obviously packed and trampled (Dikaios 1953:180). One object only was found in between Floors V and IV: a fragment of a ladle (1064). Again, Dikaios reported no debris or loose stones. Therefore, there is no reason to construe this layer as the result of another collapse of the superstructure. The evidence actually points to the contrary: intentional filling of features and floors was a pattern that was followed throughout the life span of this Tholos. Unless, of course, we are to imagine that the superstructure collapsed by hazard every time prior to the construction of a new floor and that it always resulted in a clean thick layer which happened to cover all the structural features within the Tholos each time and left specific others in view, by chance. This layer was again laid in a way that sealed intentionally all the previous features. Additionally, it provided the considerable depth needed for the following floor to accommodate new interments and for the foundation of new pillars. Clearly, the deposition of this layer was a deliberate, well-planned act. It needed to be done so that the series of previous acts were completed and other acts could take place again within the CPB on Floor IV.

On this floor (IV) two massive pillars were constructed. After the erection of the pillars, five burials (VK 155-159) were interred in the southern part of the Tholos. Two



infants were buried in the S of the pillars: one (VK 155) next to the SE edge of the W pillar, and VK 159 next to the SE edge of the E pillar. Three infants (VK 156, 157, 158) were buried in individual graves in the S, next to the circular wall, E of the doorway. Then all five burials were covered with a layer that Dikaios identifies as Floor III. "Floor III" was a very thin layer, identified only at the S of the CPB. No other intermediate layer was applied. Then, rectangular slabs were placed horizontally in front of the doorway and towards the W of it. One of them partially covered burial VK 156, which was closer to the doorway. On the uncovered part (N) of Floor IV, three burials (VK 160, 164, 167, two infants and a male) were deposited in between the pillars. Infant burial VK 160 was in the very centre of the building surrounded by small-size stones and next to it, in the E, a deer antler was deposited (Dikaios 1953:178). Additionally, female burial VK 168 was deposited in the SW edge of the W pillar and female burial VK 161 at the SW edge of the E pillar, close to the S edge of the circular wall and aligned to the cardinal S of the compass. Male VK 164 was situated at the N edge of the building and aligned to the cardinal N of the compass, thus in the same axis with female burial VK 161.

This could have been incidental or not: the place of interment of three adult burials form a triangle: two females in the SW edge of each pillar (one in the S and one in the W of the building) and a male in the N of the building in between the pillars. It is worth noting though that Dikaios (1953:180), observing the state and the arrangement of the bones of female burial VK 168, concluded that it was actually a secondary burial, which must have been interred somewhere else first and was then transported and deposited in this CPB. This demonstrates the planning and intentionality that conveys both the choice for these particular burials and the choice of place for their deposition.

Two infants (VK 165, 166) were deposited over the male burial in the N (burial VK 164) and two infants (VK 162, 163) were interred very close, next to female burial VK 161, one on each side. Subsequently, slabs were used to pave the area in the SE of the Tholos, exactly next to the S-SE of the circular wall partially covering female burial

VK 161. Also, a limestone slab, forming a platform / paved area, was used to cover the burial of infant VK 160 which was in the centre and surrounded by stones. Dikaios interpreted this paved area as the "hearth" (Dikaios 1953:180-181). He must have found traces of fire over it, and he commented about the practice of the construction of a hearth over a burial, providing examples from CBs Tholoi V, XV (II). However, he viewed the practice of the building of a "hearth" over a burial as an indication of sacrifice prior to the instalment of the hearth. For Dikaios, "house" was the important element of the settlement he excavated. A house had to have a hearth and the hearth may have required sacrifices to be founded as "hestia", as well the "house" had done in many cases in his opinion (Dikaios 1953: 77, 90-92, 180-181).

Floor IV/ III was the only floor of the sequence of floors within this CPB which was not cleaned prior to its sealing and some artefacts, predominantly stone vessels, antler and engraved pebbles were found. Probably, there was no need for ritual cleaning this time. Hermetic sealing of the whole CPB was planned, as the building would soon be abandoned. All deposits of Floor IV/ III were sealed by a layer of 0.20 - 0.30 m which Dikaios called Floor II. This layer sealed the "hearth", the paved areas and the burials and it reached almost the middle of the height of the pillars. On it, an unbaked clay head of an idol was deposited (1063). Dikaios did not specify the exact place where the fragment of the figurine was found; no plan was provided either. No other features were reported and no evidence for any other action was attested. This figurine was the only object deposited on a packed layer of earth ("Floor II"), which did not bear any other traces of any other use apart from sealing 29 burials, 3 pillars and two sets of monumental seats along with all the memories, the significance and the rituality of the acts that had taken underneath.

After the figurine had been deposited, it was also buried in the same exact way most of the human burials at Khirokitia were buried: it was covered with the laying of another layer above it ("Floor I"). This layer (Floor I) was of the same substance as the previous one (Floor II) and of 0.20m of thickness towards the N and 0.50m towards the

S. It would have reached almost the top of the pillars. On it only a circular depression was found containing carbonised matter. Dikaios (1953:182) interpreted it as a "hearth". Again, no plan of the specific place of this area was provided. However, the limited space left between the top of the pillars and the ceiling renders the idea of a "hearth" rather unsuccessful. Dikaios (1953:182) reported that, at this stage, the vault collapsed: *this is evidenced by the yellowish earth and pisé resting on the floor*. No debris, though, or loose stone were found. In addition, the fact that the only evidence found under the collapsed roof of a building was only a circular depression with traces of fire is rather strange. Moreover, Dikaios (1953:182) himself reported: *The collapse of the vault marks the end of the Tholos But before it was abandoned, the gap in the S straight wing was walled up with coarse stone, thus sealing up this remarkable structure [...]*. Evidently, this CPB was intentionally sealed.

The word "hearth" representing a burnt area or platform over a burial, may not be an appropriate term. The word "hearth" bears connotations of use of fire for cooking and heating. It is rather probable that the repeated activity of burning some substance on a platform over a burial was not motivated by such intentions (cooking, heating), but with the intention for fulfilment of an appropriate series of actions related to what lay beneath. Dikaios' interpretation of these burnt areas was strictly functional. "Hearth" for Dikaios is the place where food is cooked, a nuclear family gathers and eats, or is a term for the fire for heating and lighting purposes. Additionally, the way Dikaios perceived it, a "hearth" is every burnt area, notwithstanding the place of its retrieval. Although he noticed that elaborately built or paved areas were used for burning of some matter right above burials also in CBs Th. V and XV (II) (Dikaios 1953:180-181), he did not manage to contextualise this practice and correlate it with the cult of the dead in significant buildings.

It is of great importance that a "hearth" was "needed" only in two out of the six floors of CPB Th. XLVII. Carbonised matter and pebbles were traced in the pits on Floors VIII and VII. The first horizontal area bearing traces of fire that appeared in this

CPB was found on Floor V. This was a raised rectangular area built of reddish pisé and paved with slabs in the centre. Dikaios noticed that this area corresponded with the area where the grave of the first adult (VK 144) was deposited in the building in Floor VII. The top of the stepped pillar had served as a marker. The only other "hearth" found in this CPB was on Floor IV/ III, roughly off the area where the hearth on Floor V was built, towards the W; thus right in the middle of the circular building, in between the pillars and over burial VK 160. The small-sized stones which encircled this burial and the deer antler next to it were left uncovered by this platform. They were left to be sealed by the following sealing layers ("Floors II and I"). The extension of this "hearth" to the NE also covered burials VK 167 and 164, previously buried in between the two massive pillars of Floor IV/III. Thus, it was clearly related to a ritual sequence of depositions. The act of lighting a fire over a burial was linked with the specific practice of the burial of the dead in a CPB. It was practiced because all of the other acts within this kind of building had been practiced. It complemented them and it was complemented by them. The one without the other would signify a completely different message as they would have been done for entirely different reasons than "sacral" (Sanders 2006). This kind of act was ritualized within the liminal zone that was created by the erection of the pillars and deposition of the burial within CPB Th. XLVII. This was the act of ritual burning.

In summary, a reconstruction of the actions taken place after Floor IV/ III, which was the last floor in use in Tholos XLVII, indicates that layer "Floor II" was actually used to seal the deposits of Floor IV/ III. It was used in order to finalise the ritual actions that had taken place in this building and in order to protect the sacred deposits. For symbolic reasons, in a mytho-logic sequence, a fragmented idol was deposited. Then, this ritual deposition, this burial of a ritualized object needed to be sealed again. This happened with another thick layer, "Floor I". On it, ritual burning took place as part of ritual sequential actions. At the same time, the gap between the straight outside wing was sealed by a large stone. Finally the upper superstructure and

roof of the Tholos collapsed or was made to collapse shortly after the ritual closure. Of course, this could have happened accidentally, at a later stage. The possibility, though, of this collapse having been caused deliberately should also be considered. The people who used this CPB evidently took extra precautions in order to protect and seal the deposits within it. They never destroyed them, but they ensured that they were protected by layers of compressed earth and that they were sealed again and again after the completion of the stages of the ritual. Even if layers, "floors" II and I, had been used in any other way, they were definitely cleaned prior to their abandonment and symbolic actions took place prior to their sealing: intentional deposition of a figurine and burning of some matter respectively.

Schematically, in either case, the sequence of actions could be reported as follows: Ritual Cleaning=> Ritual intentional deposition of symbolic item (idol) => Ritual sealing, ritual burning (for cleansing / purification / symbolising the control over the natural world / the force of fire or the forthcoming destruction) => Ritual sealing by permanently closing the access to the interior of the CPB=> Ritual destruction (?) => Abandonment.

The sequence of actions in this Circular Pillar Building could be demonstrated as follows:

- Foundation, construction of the entrance high up from the interior floor=> Deposition of burials on the most ancient floor => Burning in pits=> Sealing=>
- Further ritualization of the space: Construction of pillar, partition, monumental seats, ritual burial in front of the pillar=> Sealing=>
- Use of the top of the pillar as a marker=> Deposition of ritual burials in clusters and burning in pit=>Sealing=>
- Reconstruction of seats, paving and burning=> Sealing=>
- Construction of two pillars, Deposition of ritual Burials in between and around the pillars, structured deposition of antler, paving and burning => Sealing=>
- Deposition of a symbolic item, ritually broken figurine=>Sealing=>

- Ritual burning=> Hermetic Sealing, complete protection of the contents of the CPB=>
- Abandonment and natural destruction or cultural destruction and Abandonment.

#### v) Tholos XX

CPB Tholos XX (period II, Area IIA-III) was considered one of the large Tholoi at Khirokitia by Dikaios (1953:120, 124). It was the only CPB excavated in the region of Khirokitia that Dikaios (1953: plate IIA) named Areas IIA, III and IV. However Dikaios (1953:122) indicated that two buildings (Th. LIII and Th. XXI) in the SW and SE of this CPB were connected to it, but they were only revealed and not further excavated for this to be confirmed. CPB Th. XX had one floor, two pillars and four burials on its floor.

It was one of the few buildings where Dikaios (1953) attested three doorways: one in the S, one in the N and one in the E. The S doorway lead to a semicircular enclosure, which was situated in the SW of the CPB and strongly resembled the enclosure found in the SW of CB Th. XII A, in the proximity of CPB Th. IA. The enclosure was defined by two rings of pebbles, in between which a pair of moufflon horns (1503) was found. Within the enclosure, a large quern was embedded in the pisé floor. E of this quern, a fragment of a shell was found, and a smaller quern was wedged with boulders in permanent position. Dikaios (1953:122) regarded this installation as domestic. The rest of the doorways (N and E) were both connected with a ramp which led over the settlement wall, proving that the settlement wall was well out of use as a defensive system by period II. The doorway in the N was subsequently blocked externally leaving a niche in the interior wall of the CPB. Most probably, the blockage of the N doorway must have taken place when the doorway in the E was opened, possibly connecting CPB Th. XX with unexcavated Th. XXI.

In the W, outside the N doorway, a permanent installation of a stone round "table" was placed in the wide area N-NW of the CPB, between it and the settlement wall. Again, all of these arrangements outside this CPB -the wide area in the N-NW, the "table" installation, the querns permanently installed, the enclosed area, the possible connection to the E with the adjoining building (Th. XXI)- bear a strong resemblance to the outside arrangement of the pair of CPBs Th. IA - Th. XII and CB Th. XII A to which CPB Th. IA was connected. The possibility that CPB XX was the only CPB in this area and stood without a connection to any CB, is also considerable, but of course only further excavation can verify this.

Inside CPB Th. XX, two pillars were built of boulders: one in the S and one in the N, close to the W wall. So, the opening between the pillars faced the E doorway. In this opening in front of the pillars, halfway to the doorway, burial VK 104, of undetermined sex and age, was buried. Diametrically opposite to it, in between the pillars, close to their W opening, male burial VK 102 was placed with a quern (1149) on the head. A rectangular platform was built, running from the W edge of the grave-pit of burial VK 102 to the W side of the S pillar. A stone pounder (1456) was found on the floor (Dikaios 1953: 124, figure 60) in the narrow space in between the S pillar and the S wall. Female burial VK 105 was placed in the NW of the building and male burial VK 103 with a quern (1146) on the head was placed in the SW of the building. A low platform of slabs embedded in the pisé floor was built next to each one of them. The place of deposition of the three adult burials formed a triangle (VK 102, 103 and 105). Also, each two of the total four burials were placed opposite to each other (VK 102-104 and VK 103-105). This arrangement of the place of interment of adult burials within this CPB is strongly evocative of the arrangement of adult burials on Floor IV/III of CPB XLVII. The excessive number of burials interred in CPB XLVII may suggest that this choice could have been coincidental. As Floor IV/III of CPB XLVII accommodated fourteen of the twenty-nine burials in total that were deposited in this building, it may seem that lack of space would indicate burial deposition anywhere

possible. However, it becomes evident that the place of interment within a CPB possibly was charged with intentionality.

Returning to the floor of CPB XX, Dikaios reported to have collected a fragment of a stone bowl (866) and a flint (909) from it, but he did not provide their exact place of retrieval. Additionally, possibly due to the eroded deposits overlying this CPB, Dikaios did not provide information relating to the closure of this building, its filling and the overlying deposits.

#### vi) Structure 105

CPB S 105 was found in the northernmost area revealed by Dikaios (1953: plate II A), whose excavations were an attempt to trace the length of the settlement wall (the main road as Dikaios (1953:186-195) believed it to have been). In Dikaios' system, S 105 corresponded to Tholos LI, which was revealed at the NW edge of Area V, but according to Dikaios (1953: 187, note 1) was *insufficiently cleared*. However, Le Brun (1984: 42) reported that the uppermost level of the building, in his system level IIIa, was excavated by Dikaios. Since Le Brun (1984:42) reported the deposits covering level IIIb in this CPB, Dikaios most probably revealed the building by removing the top soil, as he habitually reported in his publication in other cases, but never excavated it. CPB S 105 (level III) had three floors and two burials distributed in its two floors. Remarkably, this CPB had initially one pillar but then obtained two more, while Le Brun suspected a fourth one. It was the only CPB excavated until 1991 that had more than two pillars in its interior, resembling pillar buildings at Nemrik (Kozłowski and Kempisty 1989-1990, Peltenburg 2004:74, 76).

On its most ancient floor (Floor 432, level IIIb), a large rectangular platform was built in the centre of the building, which Le Brun interpreted as the hearth without presenting evidence why. Most probably, he found some sort of evidence of burning. In the N of the platform another burnt area was also found and in the W two circular



depressions. SW of the platform, close to the SW circular wall and W of the doorway, which was in the S, a small enclosure was found. Le Brun did not provide more details on it. The first pillar in the building was built in the NW of the building, also NW of the platform. Compact earth in the NE and mixed earth with lumps of pisé in the NW covered Floor 492. On the subsequent Floor 329 (level IIIb), the entrance remained in the S and the firstly built pillar was maintained in the NW. Le Brun listed structural remains found on this floor without explaining their relational position or their position in this building (Le Brun 1989:38) while the plans he provided were not particularly helpful either (Le Brun 1984:33, figure 24, 1989:96, figure 19). A trapezoidal platform replaced the one on the previous floor exactly over it, in the centre of the building. Again, Le Brun (1984:42, 1989:38) considered it a hearth. He also found an installed basin, but it is impossible to decipher where exactly it was found in the building and whether it was embedded on the floor or wedged against the wall. In addition to the pillar in the NW, two more were constructed: one in the NE and one in the SE. Le Brun (1984:42) suspected a fourth one in the SW. The pillars would have formed a square with the platform in the middle. The position of child burial VK 221 (Le Brun burial no.:434) in the building was neither described nor marked on the plan of CPB S 105 (Le Brun 1989:96, figure 19, 1984:33, figure 24). On a general level plan (Le Brun 1989: 118, figure 42), it was marked as a small circle in the NE of the building. Hence, it cannot be clearly determined whether burial VK 221 was deposited in front of the NE pillar, W, S, or E of it, close to the circular wall.

On the subsequent floor (349, IIIb), the pillars disappeared and two internal curvilinear walls meeting in the NE of the building were constructed. It is not clear whether the pillars of the previous floor were covered by a thick intermediate layer. Le Brun (1984:48) reported that the longer curvilinear wall covered the pillars. The longer curvilinear wall ran from the S of the building, where the doorway used to be (Le Brun 1984:33, figure 24), curved in about the middle of the building and abutted to the NE wall. The shorter curvilinear wall ran from the SE of the wall and abutted to the E side

of the longer curvilinear wall, at a point close to its NE edge. If the second curvilinear wall abutted in about the centre of the longer curvilinear wall, thus in approximately the centre of the building, this interior arrangement would more closely resemble a Tri-radial partition. At the point where the two curvilinear walls met, a rectangular basin was placed and was found in situ on top of these walls.

Le Brun (1984:42, 74) reported that this floor (349), on which these curvilinear walls stood, sealed adult burial VK 220. On plan (Le Brun 1984:33, figure 24:1), the burial is indicated to have been under the short curvilinear wall. Le Brun (1984:48, 74) also reported that this burial was partially excavated by Dikaios. However, if the burial was sealed by Floor 349 (level IIIb) and if it was found under the short curvilinear wall, it could not have been partially excavated by Dikaios. Additionally, Le Brun described the deposits over this last floor (349); consequently they could not have been excavated by Dikaios either. It is therefore ambiguous where burial VK 220 was found.

Paucity of material characterised the interior of this CPB, too. Only two stone vessel fragments (2217.1, 2337.1) were found and an engraved pebble (2918) (Le Brun 1984:98, 100, 1994: 274), but again their position in the building is not clear. Subsequent mixed deposits sealed this CPB. They contained stones, mud bricks and fragments of pisé, while in the S there was concentration of bones mixed with stone and plaques of pisé.

*-Khirokitia: E of the settlement wall.*

#### vii) Structure 131

The excavation of CPB S 131 (Level B, possibly C) had not finished by 1991 and only one floor (Floor 634) had been identified until then (Le Brun 1994:95). On this floor (level B4) the entrance to the CPB was in the NW. This is significant, because in the SW,

there was CPB S 122 and further to the S, CPB S 117 on this level. Evidently, CPB S 131 did not share common space and was not directly in contact with the other two CPBs in this area. If CPB S131 formed a pair with another one, the latter would probably be in its N. Remarkably, a semicircular enclosure was found in the SW outside of the CPB, abutting to its circular wall and resembling the enclosures found in the SW of CPB Th. XX and CB Th. XII, in the proximity of CPB Th.IA.

Inside the CPB, on this floor, a stepped pillar (**Fig. 39**) was built exactly in the centre of the building, over female burial VK 182. This was the only stepped pillar found at Khirokitia until 1991, and significantly different from the ones with the stepped tops that Dikaios (1953:18-27) described in CPB Th. IA. Additionally, the practice of the instalment of a pillar directly over a burial is identified uniquely within this CPB. No more contextual information was provided for this floor of CPB S 131. An engraved pebble (5274) was reported to have come from this building, but again with no further contextual information (Le Brun 1994: 276). The level under the burial had not been excavated by 1991. Fine brown earth mixed with thick fragments of pisé and mud bricks covered the interior of this CPB.

#### viii) Structure 116

CPB S 116 (level E) was erected in the beginning of level E (E3) and was in use only for this level. Subsequently (on level E2) large CPB 122 was erected in the NE. CPB S 116 had two pillars in its interior throughout the history of its three floors. Two burials were interred in its fills.

On the most ancient floor of CPB S 116, Floor 752, the doorway was in the SW. Two pillars were erected on this floor, one in the NW and one in the SE of the building. Their SE opening was facing the doorway. A platform of slabs was found in the NW of the NW pillar, between it and the circular wall, on which an installed basin (793) was found (Le Brun 1994:72, figure 20). No other finds were reported on this floor, while the

N-NE part of the building was reported destroyed by erosion. This floor was sealed by a thick (15-20cm) layer with patches of different consistency. In the NW stones were placed directly on the floor covering the basin and the gap between the NW pillar and the NW wall. This layer was subsequently covered by compact earth. The remaining of the floor was covered by a layer of fine pisé mixed with fragments of pebbles, small stones and mud bricks.

On the subsequent floor (588) the entrance was suspected to have been still in the SW, while the N-NE of the CPB was destroyed by erosion. A platform of pisé was built in between the pillars connecting them. In the SE of the SE pillar a wide pit (766) was found containing fine earth and a large number of flint (Le Brun 1994:72). The layers above this floor were not clear as three pits (584, 581, 457) were cut through from the deposits above (Le Brun 1984:39, 97, 1994:72), while the NE part of the CPB was reported destroyed by erosion. Subsequent Floor 589, the most recent of this CPB, was also disturbed because of these three pits. The pillars were maintained, but it is not clear where the doorway was situated. Le Brun (1984:39) speculated that the doorway must have been in the SE, but no evidence suggested that. Adult burial VK 210 must have been deposited between the NW pillar and the circular wall (Le Brun 1994: figure 40) since Pit 457 reached it. Le Brun reported that the stratigraphic position of the burial was not clear because of the presence of this pit (1984:39). Adult burial VK 211 must have been in the W of the SW pillar, very close to the circular wall, as it was found disturbed by pit 581 (Le Brun 1984:39, 97, figure 20).

A layer of compact earth of 0.10 - 0.15m of thickness covered these deposits. The layer was mixed with pisé and bricks and was packed. On top of this layer another one of finer earth was laid. The three identified pits (584, 581, 457) were cut through from the top of this layer, which was left free of any structural remains during level D and was an empty area in the SE of CPB S 122 for the duration of use of this level. Towards the E, distinctive layers covered these deposits: they consisted of refined earth mixed with gravel and some stones on which the walls of S 117 were founded in the beginning

of level C. Towards the W a layer (593) similar in consistency sealed previous deposits and remained empty of structural remains for the duration of levels C and B, when CPBs S 117 and S 122 were in use. The area where CPB S 117 and S 122 stood, was subsequently covered by the same mixed layer of earth and bricks that was identified under S 117 and S 122 and in the free space between them. CPB S 117 and S 122 were also sealed at the same time intentionally (Le Brun 1989:13, 39-41).

#### ix) Structure 117

CPB S 117 (level C) was erected almost exactly where S 116 had been during level E and next to S 122 which had been erected in the middle of level E, to the NE.

On the most ancient floor (535) of the CPB, the entrance was speculated to have been in the SE (Le Brun 1989:38), but on plans (Le Brun 1989: 98-99, figure 21, 22) it is noted in the E. Two pillars were built: one in the E and one in the W and a platform in between them, connecting the pillars. The position of the doorway is an exception in this CPB. In the majority of the CPBs with two pillars, the doorway was customarily situated opposite the opening of the pillars. Both of the pillars in this CPB were fragile and had a semicircular groove on their top, crossing the width of each pillar, in the same axis. Additionally, their tops were plastered. Due to this evidence, Le Brun (1989:34) expressed doubts as to whether the pillars in CPB S 117 had the same function as the ones in Tholos IA and considered them an exception. Nonetheless, he did not offer an alternative explanation for the use of the pillars and the reason for their construction.

A "hearth" was built in between the pillars, at their opening in the S. W of the "hearth", in the S of the western pillar, a shallow pit was opened and to the W of the western pillar, in between it and the circular wall, a paved area was found. To the E, between the E pillar and the circular wall, a basin was found installed on a paved area. No burial was found on this floor. Two vessel fragments (4375.1 and 4658.1, Le Brun

1989:158, figure 45) were reported to have been found on this floor, but without specific contextual information.

An intermediate layer of compact fine earth of about 0.10m was laid, covering platforms and hearth. Subsequently, Floor 492 was laid over it. The two pillars were maintained and the space between them was raised by an elaborate platform on which traces of straw or chaff were found (Le Brun 1989: 33). In the S opening of the pillars a platform of pisé was placed. SW of the western pillar, along the circular wall and opposite the doorway, (which however on plan (Le Brun 1989:99, figure 22) is noted in the E) a small rectangular construction was made, measuring 0.40x0.30m and height 0.26m. On the top, it had a rectangular groove matching the pillars in this CPB, but being much smaller in size (Le Brun 1989: 40). It is very probable that this structure was a seat constructed for the same purpose as the seats in CPB XLVII.

Under Wall 461, which was the renovated wall of S 117 in the NW-N-NE, on the subsequent floor (462), child burial VK 212 was found. Le Brun did not specify whether this burial belonged to the context of this floor (492), of the overlying layer, or of the following floor (462). Also he did not specify where exactly under wall 461 the burial was found. As the new wall (461) was constructed in NW-N-NE of the building and the pillars were maintained in the same position, burial VK 212 must have been placed in the N of the W pillar, or in N of the N opening of the pillars, or N/NE of the E pillar. The end of use of Floor 492 signified the end of level B. Le Brun reported burial VK 212 (Le Brun burial no. 499, Le Brun 1989:40, 66) to have belonged to level B. A thick (0.40m) layer of fine earth mixed with pisé and small stones covered Floor 492. This layer would have raised the level inside the building by the middle of the height of the pillars (Le Brun 1989:33, 40) and would have covered the seat. Considering practices in other CPBs at Khirokitia, where more detailed contextual information is available (Dikaios 1953), it is very probable that subsequent Floor 462 was laid in order for this burial (VK 212) to be covered.

Floor 462, 0.20-0.40m thick, was laid in the beginning of level A and had one pillar in the E, built over the E pillar of the previous floor. Also Le Brun (1989:40) listed a trapezoidal platform and a basin, the exact position of either of which was not reported. Information was extracted from the plan (Le Brun 1989:100, figure 23), where the position of the basin (483) was noted in the SE, close to the circular wall, most probably wedged in a platform of slabs or boulders. The position of the platform is questionable. This floor was covered by a layer of loose, fine earth mixed with mud bricks. Le Brun reported that child burial VK 213 (Le Brun burial no. 475, Le Brun 1989: 40, 69) was found in this layer. Again, no specific contextual information was provided.

CPBs S 105, S 116 and S 117, seemed to have burials within layers of their infilling. It is not entirely clear though whether it was due to erosion (S 116), confusion with previously excavated deposits (S 105), or limited contextual specification. Nevertheless, if the information is correct, a variation of the ritual should be considered as three CPBs in the N of settlement did not seem to include burials in direct association with their pillars and other structural elements. The same was not true for CPBs S 131 and CPB S 122 (as it will become evident), which were also both in the N of the settlement. Therefore, it cannot be certain whether a ritual variation within the fluidity of the same ritual system can be confirmed, or inadequate contextual information collection and report cause this data discrepancy.

Lastly, three vessel fragments (3543.1, 3761.2 and 3761.1) and a schematic anthropomorphic figurine (3544) were reported to have been found in CPB S 117, in locus 480 (Le Brun 1989:160 figure 46, 162 figure 47, 170 figure 51 and 184 figure 55), but the location of locus 480 was not specified either in the text describing the interior of CPB S 117 (Le Brun 1989: 39-10), or in the general discussion of the stratigraphy of the area and levels (Le Brun 1989:11-16).

x) Structure 122

CPB S 122 (levels E-A), one of the longest lived and largest buildings at Khirokitia was erected in the middle of level E (beginning of E2), in the NE of CPB S 116. It had two pillars in its interior, (at least) five floors and 10 burials distributed in its floors.

Level E2 was under excavation when this report (Le Brun 1994) was published. On level D, on Floor 831, two pillars stood in the W part of the CPB: one in the NW and one in the SE. This is according both to plan (Le Brun 1994:76, figure 22) and picture (Le Brun 1994:80, plate XI). However, Le Brun (1994:75) reported only one pillar in text. The two pillars were connected in the middle and this may be the reason why Le Brun considers them one structure. However, the part that separates them is not a groove on the top of one pillar but a low connection wall of two separate structures. According to the plans, the doorway was in the N, and not facing the opening of the two pillars, contrary to the pattern attested in the majority of CPBs with two pillars. In the S opening of the pillars a round basin was installed on the floor. A paved area was constructed in the NW, W of the doorway. Nine postholes were found in the N part of the building. Le Brun (1994:75) also listed a burnt area and a trapezoidal platform. No burial was found on this floor.

On level C, Floor 815 the doorway was moved to the SE, again off the axis of the opening of the pillars. The pillars were maintained and a triangular platform was built W of the W pillar connecting it to the W wall. A burnt area and nine postholes in the N were found. Also, a plaque of picrolite (6008.1) in the shape of a human (?) head was found in situ on this floor (Le Brun 1994:292, 296: figure 104). No contextual details were provided. Traces of painting on plaster were found on the N face of one of the pillars and on the E circular wall (**Fig. 45**, Le Brun 1994:54, figure 15). As already noted, Le Brun (1994:75) considered the pillars as one and did not specify more precisely on which part of the structure the painting was found in the N (/NW) face.



Two infant burials were found on this floor (Floor 815) (VK 169 and 170) and one burial of undetermined age (VK 171) was found on the triangular platform in between the W pillar and the W wall (Le Brun 1994:82, 158-160). No contextual information was provided for the infant burials. Le Brun (1994:82) reported that the subsequent floor (647) covered these burials. However his (Le Brun 1994: 82) stratigraphic information suggested that Floor 815, was covered first by a thin layer (0.05-0.10m) of mixed composition, with a patch of fine compact earth in the W. It is unclear from his account whether the burials were deposited on Floor 815 while it was in use, or whether they were deposited on this floor and they were sealed by the intermediate layer, with Floor 647 following. Le Brun (1994:82) stated that it was not clear whether the burial pits were cut through Floor 647. On the basis of identified practices from areas with more detailed contextual information (Dikaios 1953), most probably the burials were deposited on Floor 815 and were subsequently covered by the intermediate layer. This is additionally supported by the lack of evidence of grave-pits been cut from Floor 647. The lack of detailed contextual evidence from this remarkable, large and long-lived CPB is extremely unfortunate.

Actions within in it can only be implied and suggested, but not securely reconstructed. Important ritual elements such as the pillars, the burnt area, the burials and the deposition by the doorway can be identified on the basis of previously reconstructed contexts. In addition to all these elements, a glimpse of the ambiance of this space was available; walls and pillars decorated with geometrical and / or representational motifs in red and yellow on the white plaster, scent (or other substance) could have been burnt (on the burnt area) and two large figures (the pillars) would seem standing, imposing in a room, with limited (?) or plenty (?) of light coming in, while a dead body would have been left (?) decomposing on a platform next to one of the looming figures (W pillar), or would be covered by compact earth (patch of the intermediate layer on Floor 815 in the W). Other "figures" of perishable material could have been secured on thin wood poles (0.04-0.06m of diameter) placed in the postholes

found, or drapery in different colours or feathers could have been hanging from these poles in some way, mystifying the view to the pillars and the surroundings. The room must have been impressive and awe-inspiring.

On the following floor (647), the pillars and the paintings were maintained. Le Brun (1994: 79) persisted in describing the CPB with one pillar contrary to the plan (Le Brun 1994:78, figure 24) and picture (Le Brun 1994:81, plate XII). Especially at this level, the connecting wall of the pillars was very low, having been covered by series of floors and it resembled strongly to a paved platform connecting the pillars, which stood well apart (**Fig. 46**, Le Brun 1994: 81, plate XII). Three more postholes were opened (12 in total) in the N part of the CPB, the door remained in the SE (according to plan: Le Brun 1994:78, figure 24) and a triangular platform was built again in the W connecting the NW pillar to the wall. A "hearth" (765) was built right in front of the pillars, in their E opening, two basins (814,737) were placed in front of the SE pillar, in the E, and a small rectangular radial partition abutting to the N wall was built. A thick intermediate layer (about 0.65m, Le Brun 1994:82) covered this floor (and the pillars) prior to the laying of the subsequent Floor 552.

Le Brun (1994:82) reported that Floor 552 sealed an infant (VK 176/ Le Brun burial no.685) and a child (VK 177, Le Brun burial no. 730) burial in separate grave-pits, the latter with fragments of different stone vessels deliberately broken, scattered over it (Le Mort 1994:194). He also reported that platform-"hearth" 631, on the subsequent Floor 552 covered infant burial VK 176. So, the place of interment of this burial must have been over "hearth" 765 of Floor 647, right in front of the NE opening of the pillars. It was impossible for the place of interment of child burial VK 177 to be deciphered. These two burials must have been deposited on Floor 647 and must have been covered by the intermediate layer covering this floor. In this intermediate layer scattered infant bones of at least three individuals (VK 172, 173 and 174) were found (Le Brun 1994: 83, Le Mort 1994:160-161).

On level B5 (the most ancient layer of level B), on Floor 552, only the N part of the CPB survived. No pillars were found as the W part of the CPB was completely destroyed by erosion. The doorway remained in the SE (according to plans Le Brun 1989: 103, figure 26 and Le Brun 1994: 79, figure 25). As previously mentioned, a platform ("hearth" 631) covered infant burial VK 177. On it, substances were burnt. A basin (630) was installed in the floor, E of the "hearth" and five postholes were opened in the NE part of the building. A human (?) shaped schematic figurine (5634.1) was placed on this floor, unknown where exactly (Le Brun 1994:294, figure 103). A triangular enclosure was built in the S of the CPB, with two radial short walls coming out of the S-SE wall and meeting towards the NE part of the building. W of this enclosure, the grave pit for female burial VK 175 (Le Brun burial no. 664) was cut from this floor through the underlying intermediate layer (Le Brun 1994:82). The place of the grave-pit was noted on plan (Le Brun 1994:79, figure 25). This adult burial was placed exactly over the top of the SE pillar (plans combined: Le Brun 1994: 77 and 79, figures 23 and 25, of the same scale) and was covered by stone vessel fragments deliberately broken (Le Mort 1994:194). A layer of c.0.30m of thickness sealed these deposits and infant burial VK 178 (Le Brun burial no. 557). Alternatively, burial VK 178 was interred somewhere in this thick layer over Floor 557. Le Brun (1989:42) only reported that this burial was sealed by the subsequent floor (486), meaning the grave-pit was not cut through it.

On level B4, Floor 486 survived only in the NE and towards the centre of the building, where a basin (517) surrounded by slabs was installed in the floor. Subsequent floors were identified but had only minimally survived until the end of level B. Consequently, the end of this CPB is unclear. It seemed to have had a longer history than the one identified (level E- late level B). Its parallel history with CPB S 116 and CPB S 117 is also remarkable. CPB S 122 ceased to be used at the same time with S 117 and they were both covered by the same layers of mixed brown earth and mud-bricks (Le Brun 1989:13, 39-41). Lastly, it is worth mentioning some artefacts found

within this CPB for which regrettably no context was provided: a schematic figurine (5467.1), a second plaque of picrolite in the shape of a human (?) head (5805.1) (Le Brun 1994:294-296, figures 103 and 104), two stone axes (7585, 7612) of diabase (Le Brun 1994:256, figure 89 and 260, figure 91, an engraved pebble (7754, Le Brun 1994:274, figure 98), two picrolite beads (5366, 3515, Le Brun 1994:278, figure 100), other small artefacts of stone and shell (4702, 5580, 4684.1, Le Brun 1994:280, figure 101) and a small catapult of calcareous rock (5921, Le Brun 1994:282, figure 102).

The sequence of reconstructed actions in this CPB could be summarized as follows:

- Building, erection of Pillars, burning of some substance, sealing=>
- New floor, Maintenance of the pillars, Decoration of the building and the pillars, burning of substances, deposition of a figurine, deposition of burials (one on a platform next to a pillar), sealing=>
- New floor, Maintenance of the Pillars and the Decoration, burning of substances in front of the pillars, installation of basins, deposition of burials (one on the platform), Sealing with a layer of soil which contained infant remains=>
- New floor, construction of platform over burial, burning over burial, deposition of burial on top of previous pillar, sealing=>
- Deposition of burial => sealing with the new floor.

#### *xi) Tholos VII*

CPB Tholos VII (period III, Area I) had three floors, with one pillar and a burial on its last floor only. The structure had two rings of stone walls and one of pisé in the middle. On the most ancient floor of the building, Floor III, the doorway was placed in the N. Under the step within the building, a whole caprine had been deposited. Towards the S, some stones, among them a pounder (1446) of andesite, were placed. Dikaios (1953:77) considered the caprine burial product of a sacrifice and foundation

rite. Also, a central burnt area and six postholes in the N were found on this floor. No structural remains and no other artefacts were found on this floor.

The following floor (Floor II) was laid directly on this one, without an intermediate layer. The doorway remained in the N, a paved area of slabs reddened by fire was installed off the centre towards the S, and a wide shallow pit lined with yellow pisé was dug over the area where the animal grave was. In the W of this pit, close to the NW wall, a second paved area was built on which two pounders (1436, 1537) were found in situ. S of this area, close to the SW wall, there was a concentration of nine postholes. In the E of the pit, close to the NE wall, an unfinished stone axe (1435) and an unfinished stone bowl (1434) were found in situ on pebbles. Both depositions were made in either side of the doorway.

On the subsequent Floor I, the doorway was most probably moved to the S of the building (Dikaios 1953:65). Two pillars were erected in the N part of the CPB. The E one had a small partition projecting from its S side, forming a small enclosure, where substances were burnt and left a thick layer of carbonised matter. A platform was built in the S opening of the pillars, exactly over the place where the platform of the previous floor used to be. This second platform also had traces of fire and was surrounded by pebbles reddened by fire. A much decomposed and badly preserved adult burial (VK 51) was placed against the W pillar and was found partially over the remains of this pillar. No artefacts were found on this floor apart from a poulder of andesite. The subsequent layers were much eroded and suffered modern destruction, which did not permit reconstruction of actions relating to the abandonment of this CPB.

The practices in this CPB are especially significant. The depositions by the doorway confirm a pattern of symbolic depositions right or left of the entrance of CPBs, attested also in CPBs S 122, Floor 815 and Th. XLVII Floor V. Additionally, the practice of the placement of an adult next to a pillar, possibly leaning against it, was also attested in CPB Th. XII, while in many cases a burial was placed on a platform next to a pillar. Most importantly though, because of the evidence from this CPB, the relation

between burials and pillars at Khirokitia becomes clearer. Th. VII started its history as a regular CB. As soon as it obtained pillars, it became necessary for a burial to be deposited in its interior. Furthermore, as there are many other buildings which have burials in their interior but that have no pillars (**Tables 80-84**), it becomes clear that in a sequence of ritual actions, the erection of pillars rather than the deposition of burials is of paramount importance. At Khirokitia, if a building had pillars, it would certainly obtain burials closely associated with those pillars at some point in its history. The pillars necessitated the burial, and not vice-versa. This primacy of importance of the pillars in a sequence of appropriate ritual actions suggests that the ritual that took place inside the CPBs at Khirokitia did not have burials as its focal point. Burials were complementary ritual actions to the ritual, like burning substances and depositing artefacts in specific places. The "burial" was an element in a sequence of ritual actions for the completion of the pillar-ritual in this ritual system. Corpses transported inside the CPBs for burial were not deposited there with the intention that they would be treated in a conventional way according to burial customs; they were brought to be used for the ritual, so that the ritual could be completed. Burials inside CPBs at Khirokitia, were not burials for burials, but burials for ritual.

- *Kalavastos Tenta*.

xii) Structure 9 (period 4)

In CPB S 9 (period 4, S slope), at least four distinctive floors could be identified. The CPB had plastered walls and obtained only one pillar (S 40) at a later stage in its history, while burials had already been deposited in its interior in earlier phases. It was not possible to determine the location of the doorway with certainty, but the indication of a step in the SE suggested that it should have been there (Todd 1987:64). This would

mean that the entrance to the building would be realised from the open space existing between S 27, S 4 and S 10 (**Fig. 34**).

In total, six burials were found in relation to building S 9. Child burial VK 9 was found in a pit within the SE limit of the circular wall covered by the lowest floor of the building. It was found over a cultural deposit overlying the bedrock (Todd 1987:67). In the NW of this burial, a wide pit was found containing reddish-brown burnt material (Todd 1987:66). The first floor of the building (2:13) was a series of at least four plaster layers with very thin ashy intermediate layers. Adult burial VK 2 was deposited over this floor. It was placed in the NE of the building close to the NE wall. Only a bone point fragment (K-T 313, Todd 1987:69) was retrieved from this series of floors. Soils of variable consistency covered this series of floors and an uneven plastered floor (bottom 2:7) was laid subsequently. No artefacts or structural remains were reported from it. The floor was subsequently covered by a thick layer of brown soil (2:7) which extended across the entire area of S 9 and in which three burials were found. Adult burial VK 1 was deposited in a pit in this fill in the SW, but it was not clear from which level the pit was cut (Todd 1987: 66). Child burial VK 3 was deposited in the SE, possibly in front of the estimated entrance, in a pit which was cut through the top of this fill, postdating it. An infant bone fragment (VK 4) was placed with the child burial (Niklasson 1991:108).

Another layer (2:6, 2:5) of mixed consistency covered this one, on which a plastered floor was laid (2:4). This floor was also repeatedly re-plastered. An area (2:3) consisting of dark brown soil and charcoal was found in the SE of this floor, where a few artefacts were found (Todd 1987:65) but which were not reported in the register (Todd 1987:69).

A very thin grey-brown layer (2:2) was laid over the previous floor (2:4) from which it was not clearly divided. Pillar S 40 was built of boulders on this layer. A grinder (K-T 197) and a stone with a depression (K-T 208) with a depression were also employed within its construction (Todd 1987:113). The pillar was an elongated structure, aligned N-NE to S-SW, which occupied a large part of the building. The

grave-pit of infant burial VK 16 was cut through this layer (2:2), in the N of the building, at the NW edge of the pillar, between it and the N wall. A lump of worked red ochre was placed next to the head of the infant, flecks of charcoal and small pieces of white plaster were found in the burial fill (Todd 1987:67). Packed light grey brown soil (2:1) covered this deposition and the rest of the floor. Todd (1987:69) reported a bone needle fragment (K-T 98), a stone bowl (K-T 113) and several lithics (Todd 1987:65). The consistency of this layer, especially in contrast to the paucity of the material of the previous ones, could be considered suggestive of intentional filling with soil brought from some area of the settlement. From the surface of this layer, a pit (2:8) was cut through reaching the level of the first identified plastered floor (2:4 / 2:2), but without cutting it. The pit was in the SW, exactly over the place of the deposition of burial VK 1. Also, several post holes were found on this surface and a low raised curvilinear feature in the SW of the floor reaching the W edge of the pit (Todd 1987:65, figure 29). Subsequent layers were composed of loose soil and presented modern contamination under the top soils.

It should be underlined here that with the exception of burial VK 9 (S-SE) - which antedated CPB S 9, having been deposited under it- all five burials within the building were placed along the circular wall, in different places (SE, NE, SW), at different periods of time, surrounding the pillar (S 40), but in no direct association with it, except from VK 16, in the N.

### xiii) Structure 11 (period 4?)

CPB S 11 was built in the N of CPB S 9. They belong to the same period although their stratigraphic correlation was not securely established (Todd 1987:28, 30). The walls of the CPB S 11 were plastered. Plaster was not found on the lowest part of the walls close to the floor. This CPB had five floors, but only one burial and one elongated pillar (S 82) with direction N-NW to S-SE throughout its history. The



entrance to the CPB was probably originally in the E through a gap of the E wall, which was subsequently blocked. Alternatively, this gap could have been a large window and the entrance may have been possible only from the S throughout the history of the CPB (Todd1987:76)

The first floor (3.7) of the CPB was of hard brown soil containing an admixture of lithics and animal bone fragments. Excavation did not proceed beyond this floor and the base of the pillar was not found. Hence, it is not clear whether the pillar was erected at the same time when the building was built or later. The following floor (3.6) was of grey packed earth and contained pieces of charcoal and a fair amount of lithics. Subsequently, the first plastered floor (3.5) was laid in the CPB. No artefacts or structural remains were linked with it. Dark brown soil was packed on top of the floor (3.4). In the SE of the floor area, a patch of *whitish deposit of uncertain nature* containing animal bone fragments and a lithic blade (Todd 1987:77) was found.

A large structure (S 95-S 96) forming a semicircle was built of boulders and mud-brick, between the N side of the pillar and the N circular wall. The structure was plastered with the same layer of plaster that covered the pillar, as the plaster found on the N face of the pillar extended horizontally over this structure. Todd (1987:77) suggested rightfully that this structure was a built basin. Stone basins were found installed on the floor and in association with the pillars in many buildings at Khirokitia (CPBs S 35, S 105, S 116, S 117, S 122), while paved areas and small constructions of boulders were often found connecting a pillar to the neighbouring part of the inner circular wall. Traces of plaster and a closer correlation of these structures with the pillars could not be attested at Khirokitia, but this exceptional construction at Tenta provides an additional element in the understanding of such features. Additionally, in plan (**Fig. 47**, Todd 1987: figure 31) this feature strongly resembles the semi-circular enclosures found outside and adjacent to CB XII A (**Fig. 40**), CPBs Th. XX (**Fig. 42**) and S 131, while the small triangular enclosure on Floor 552 of CPB S 122 could have served for a similar purpose.

The subsequent floor (3.3) of fine hard packed yellowish-brown soil mixed with white plaster or havara was laid immediately on the previous one. Its lower part contained a high number of animal bone fragments (some of which were burnt) and on its surface in the E, a concentration of stone, mud-brick fragments and animal bone fragments was found. Three major fills were used to backfill the CPB, the topmost of them covered the walls of the CPB S 11 and of the neighbouring structures CBs S 73, S 76 and CPB S 42 (Todd 1987:27-28, 76, 137, 140-141)

The area in the N, outside of CPB S 11 and between CBs S 73 and S 76, was paved on the level of internal Floor 3.4 of CPB S 11 (Todd 1987:140). Over this paved area, cultural 'rubbish' was found: numerous fragments of animal bone, many of them burnt, charcoal and fragments of mud-bricks. Among these depositions, adult burial VK 15 was placed in the same axis with the pillar (S 82) inside CPB S 11 (**Fig. 46**). The skull was charred but not the postcranial bones. Over this layer collapsed dark brown mud-bricks were found representing material from the adjacent structures. The overlying fills were the same with the top fills that signified the closure of CPB S 11.

On the pillar (S 82) of CPB S 11 Todd (1977: 39, 42, 46-47, 76) identified multiple layers of thick plaster. An exceptional wall painting (K-T 776) was found on the E face of the pillar facing the doorway / window (**Fig. 48**, Todd 1987: figure 39 and 2003:44, figure 6). No traces of paint were found anywhere else in the CPB (Todd 1987:47). The painting regards a composition of two figures standing (?) apart from each other with the hands (?) raised. They are painted red on white plaster; although the surviving colour nowadays is reddish-brown, chemical analysis proved it to be red ochre (Todd 1987:47). Although it cannot be determined on which floor-level the painting of the pillar took place, on Floor 3.4 the effect must have been impressive. The previous white plastered Floor 3.3 was covered with a thin layer of darkish brown soil (3.4). The white plastered surrounding walls, the tall white plastered pillar elongated by the white plastered basin, forming perhaps a large relief composition seemingly coming out of the wall on this dark floor and the freshly coloured bright red ochre figures would have

created a contrasting, but well matched, imposing result. If the doorway was indeed in the E, the entrant would face immediately the height of the pillar and these two figures. If the opening in the E was a window, already by that floor / level, the entrant coming from the S would see the light from the window shed on the white plaster and the two figures would seem almost animate. Direct sun light, strong coming from the E, has a vibrant, striking effect on fresh white plaster; almost blinding. In this case, the red ochre figures would be distinguished vibrantly.

Research on this wall painting has focused primarily on the better preserved figure on the left (**Fig. 48**, Todd 1987: figure 39), the one in the S edge of the E side of the pillar. A low relief figure from a stone bowl (4037.1) from the top soils of Khirokitia (Le Brun 1989:172-173, 175, figure 52.9) resembles strikingly the southern figure of Kalavassos-Tenta wall painting. Peltenburg (2004:77, figure 7.6) recognised both figures as possible representations of a reptile with extended forepaws (**Fig. 49**), finding a N. Mesopotamian parallel from Göbekli Tepe (Beile-Bohn 1998:69, figure 32), while Todd (1987:48) suggested a similarity with Anatolian reliefs from Çatalhöyük (**Fig. 50**, Mellaart 1967). Although indeed the figure may represent animal or human, what is maybe even more important is that at Tenta, this figure does not stand on its own; thus, possibly finding exact parallels at Çatalhöyük (**Fig. 51**). Additionally, the figure next to it, which is most probably identical, is placed well apart from the southern one, in the N edge of the E face of the pillar. Two figures with the arms (or paws) extended, set next to each other, in the context of a CPB, on its pillar, may have been a more representational sign of what the pillars themselves signified. In this case, the pillars themselves should be seen as representations of a personified entity or symbols of a sacred being from the animal kingdom. Alternatively, the figures of pillar S 82 could have been one of the totems we may be missing from the ritual buildings in the neighbourhoods at Khirokitia.

Lastly, remarkably, the only burial (VK 15/ Todd 10) associated with this CPB (Niklasson 1991:107) was placed outside of it and with no direct relation to its pillar.

Association of pillars and burials was not an unknown practice at Tenta. Yet, the non-association of the only pillar, with the only burial in CPB S 11, contrasts strongly with the meaningful relation of pillars and burials at Khirokitia. In CPB S 9 at Tenta, as already seen, only one burial (VK 16) was directly associated with pillar S 40. As it will also be shown, CPB 42 had no burials in its interior either, while the other three CPBs (S 4, S 27, S 55, **Table 61, Fig. 35**) of this period received no burials at all. Within the framework of the *fluidity* of ritual, at Kalavassos-Tenta, where burial use and corpse treatment were so variable, this may simply signified a variation in the practice; a dialect or even an accent within the same ritual language. Alternatively, since period 4 at Tenta is much earlier than period I / the early levels at Khirokitia (**Table 41, Fig. 9**), this variation may indicate the outset of this ritual practice; clumsy and variable at first, was not yet fully established, developed and standardised, as at Khirokitia.

In the very beginning of a ritual system which permitted, appropriated, and / or demanded the *domestication* of burials, the exact theory and practice, mytho-logic and appropriate ritual action, would have been more fluid. It was only a few centuries earlier that some human corpses or parts of them were used as inalienable objects, unbreakable links of enchained symbolic actions, within a mytho-logic that was appropriating their deposition, among others, in deep holes in the earth, which used to provide water (§ 3.6). The same mytho-logic conditioned ritual practices at Tenta in this period of time, too, where some human corpses were used again for a “greater” ritual to be performed; however, a shift is evident: these burials took place distinctively within the settlement, closer to the *Hestia*, in association with symbolic sub-structures and within *containers* above the earth. At Tenta, where no burials were interred within the settlement wall in subsequent periods, obviously this practice was an endeavour that never blossomed. At Khirokitia, it became well rooted and bore fruit (§4.4.1 B, § 4.5).

xiv) Structure 42 (period 4?)

CPB S 42, was situated immediately to the E of CPB 11 and belonged to the same level as CPB S 11. It was assigned to same period as CPB S 9, period 4, but in a later stage (Todd 1987:28, 30, 114). It had two pillars in its interior, which were built at the time of erection of the building (Todd 1987:121, 128). Three floors in the building and two burials associated with it were excavated. Significantly, perhaps, CPB S 4 was the only building found at Kalavassos which had a second outer wall not of stones, but of mud-bricks (Todd 1987:114). No sign of plaster was found on the mud-bricks. This way of building constitutes the only exception among dwellings built at Khirokitia and Tenta. While at Khirokitia two and three rings of outer walls were recognised no building had the outermost wall of mud-bricks.

The most ancient floor excavated in the building was a plastered floor (bottom of 5.4), but the excavation did not proceed beyond it. At the time of this floor the doorway was situated in the S-SE, but an older doorway was recognised in the N of the building, by excavation in the outside. The N doorway belonged to a much earlier phase of the building below this plastered floor and was subsequently blocked. A large window was found in the W-SW of the building. Two pillars were erected in the building: one in the N facing NW-NE (S 54) and one in the SW, N of the window, facing E-W (S 61). They were both rectangular rather than square and had a lower part which abutted to the circular wall of the building. In plan (Todd 1987: figure 31) they resemble to radial partitions, but they should not be confused with them. Although clearly they were not free-standing and they were slimmer than the majority of pillars, especially in comparison to the ones found at Khirokitia, they could not be considered as radial partitions either; radial partitions were in general much lower. They were never found even as high as one meter, the height to which most of the pillars have survived. Additionally, the radial parts of the pillars in CPB S 42, connecting them to the walls,

were distinctively lower than the main parts of the pillars (**Fig. 52**, Todd 1987: plate X), clearly indicating the difference.

Both pillars, the base of the window and the internal wall of the CPB were plastered. A large platform built of mud-bricks was built in between the two pillars connecting them and abutting to the E-NE wall. The platform was also plastered. Todd (1987:115) noticed that the window was cut in the circular wall in such a way, that the light could pass over the lower extension of the pillar, through the circular wall and the free standing part of the pillar, onto the centre of the platform between the two pillars. Nothing was found on this platform.

The interior of the building must have been impressive, all in fresh white plaster, while certainly the light from the W window would illuminate the whole room. What is further intriguing is that this W window in CPB S 42 was in the same axis as the E window/door of CPB S 11. The person standing in front of the window inside CPB S 42 would be perfectly able to see the figures on pillar S 82 of CPB S 11 (**Fig. 53**). Or, if indeed those figures were attributed agency (Dorbes and Robb 2000) they would be able to observe and supervise (?) actions taking place inside CPB S 42 also. Tightly packed brown soil (5.4) with patches of plaster covered this floor, but not the platforms. A subsequent fill (5.3) of loose brown soil with patches of mud-brick fragments covered both floors and platforms. On this fill the subsequent floor (bottom of 5.2) of CPB S 42 was found. At this stage the only structural arrangements inside the CPB would be the pillars. No artefacts were found on the floors, while intermediate layers and floor deposits were also poor (Todd 1987:117). Subsequently the CPB was back filled with at least two distinctive deposits of similar composition in which a few artefacts were found (Todd 1987:117). The upper-most fills, under the top soils covered CPBs S 11, S 42 and CB S 76 (Todd 1987: 78-79,117,140)

The place of deposition of burials VK 10 and VK 11 found in the N, outside CPB 42 (**Fig. 53**) was not linked stratigraphically with its interior. It is not clear during which stage of this CPB the burials were deposited. Male burial VK 10 was found among

loose stones, lithics, and animal bones and under ashy layers (Todd 1987: 108). Female skeletal fragments VK 11 were found in the same fill in association with the male burial VK 10. The deposit overlying these depositions was differentiated from the surrounding floor surface as it was a distinctively dark grey-black ashy patch. The surrounding was brown packed soil which was recognised among CPBs S 42 and S 55 and CBs S 35 and S 76, and was also found in the S, outside the doorway of CPB S 42 (Todd 1987:106, 108, 117: G10D 2.2, 2.3, G11B 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3). Subsequent fills covered the whole area (Todd 1987: 106, 116). It is worth underlining here that a link between burning substances and deposition of burials is identified both at Tenta and Khirokitia.

xv) Structures 4, 27 and 10 (period 4)

CPB S 4 was found S of CPB S 9, SE of CPB S 27 and SW of CB S 10. CPB S 27 was SE of CPB S 9 and CB S 10 E of CPB S 9. Three CPBs and one CB belonged to this S cluster of buildings which Todd (1987:28, 61, 64, 93) dated to period 4, but only CPB S 9 and CB S 10 received burials (**Tables 57, 60, 61**). These buildings seemed to have shared the same open space found in the S of the settlement and may have been closely associated with each other. CPB S 9 had its doorway in the SE, while in the same axis a doorway or window was identified in the NW of CPB S 27.

CPB S 27 may have had a second doorway in the S (Todd 1987:93-94). No burials were found in CPB S 27, however a wide part in the centre-N of the building was never excavated. Despite the lack of information from the N part of this CPB, it is very probable that no burials were interred in the building, since other fully excavated CPBs attributed to the same period did not enclose burials (CPB S 4 and CPB S 55). CPB S 27 had two pillars with direction E-W, which were connected by mud-brick platform, probably plastered like the floor, the pillars and the surrounding walls (Todd 1987:94). Under this platform, a large pit was found, which according to Todd (1987: 94) may have been supported a large wooden post. Alternating layers of clean, hard-packed soil

with layers admixed of lithics, animal bone fragments and cobbles were identified in its interior, but no further evidence more suggestive of the use of this pit was found.

Considering the fact that the stone pillars at Kalavassos-Tenta and Khirokitia were not structural (Peltenburg 2004) and given the fact that only back-fill was identified in this pit of about a meter depth, the probability of an initially wooden pillar in CPB S 27 with the same significance as the subsequently wide-spread stone built pillars would not be implausible. Partially excavated CB 36, under complex CRB S 14, also had a similar pit centrally in the interior. Todd (1987:109) also considered this pit possible evidence for a central wooden post. According the revised chronology of Tenta (Todd 2005:183), C(P?)B S 36 belonged to the same period (4) as CPB S 27. If indeed these pits in the two structures represented evidence for a central wooden pole, it would be highly probable that an initial wooden version of "the pillar" and equivalent connotations existed prior to the full development of the "stone pillar". Yet this remains an educated guess while no other supportive evidence was identified in other CPBs.

CPB S 4 also had its doorway in the NE, towards the empty space. Traces of plaster were found both on its circular wall and on its single pillar (S 38). Limestone paving was found surrounding it, but was not traced further away from it. The pillar (S 38) within CPB S 4 was directed NE-SW. S-SE of the SW edge of the pillar, a platform, bearing no evidence of burning, was installed on the floor (Todd 1987:62). Although CPBs S 4 and S 27 did not receive burials, their position in space, their place near buildings with burials (CPB S 9 and CB S 10), their link with a most probably commonly used court-yard, the significance of their pillars and their impressively plastered interior would have contributed to an ascribed significance of these buildings.

CB S 10, the only CB in the cluster, received burials both in its interior and exterior, which should be better discussed as burials in a CB belonging to this cluster of CPBs rather than separately. Although the entrance to CB S 10 was not identified, it may have been situated in the southernmost part of the building which was not



excavated, again providing immediate access to the courtyard among buildings of this cluster. Importantly though, CB S 10 had a semi-circular enclosure in the E-NE, abutting to its outer wall, in the space shared between it and CPB S 9 (Todd 1987:70, 75). No artefacts were found in this enclosure, but some lithics in its fill (Todd 1987:75). This enclosure was covered by the same deposits that overlaid burial VK 12 in the W-NW of the CB (Todd 1987:73, 75). In the W, outside CB S 10, two platforms with evidence of burning, charcoal and ashes, one of them surrounded with pebbles also burnt, were found installed on the floor of this courtyard (Todd 1987:73)

As previously stressed, similar semi-circular enclosures were found outside CB Th. XII A, part of the CPB Th. IA complex, CPB Th. XX and CPB S 131 at Khirokitia. Although no other structural remains were found in the open space among the S cluster at Tenta, significant elements in this complex suggest similarities in use of space with compound CPB Th. IA. The structures for burning in the W of CB S 10, this semi-circular construction outside CB S 10, which is a CB that received burials, in the proximity of a CPB (CPB S 9), which also received burials, along with two more neighbouring CPBs (S 4 and S27) without burials, and the paving that was found surrounding CPB S 4, are all elements possibly suggestive for similar use of space as identified for the compound surrounding CPB Th. IA (§ 4.4.1, A, i). Additionally this evidence may be suggestive of complementary practices shared between these buildings of the S cluster at Tenta. Although the extravagance noted at Khirokitia (corridor, stone tables, extended paved areas and connection of buildings through doors placed close together) seems to be missing at Tenta, similarities in the use of space may be indicative of similarly practiced activities. Additionally, the evidence of the semi-circular enclosure attached to pillar S 82 inside CPB S 11, at Tenta, found plastered over and recognised as a built basin, and a similar triangular enclosure inside CPB S 122, Floor 552, at Khirokitia, is further indicative of the use of such constructions especially in the proximity of CPBs. Water or other mixed liquids, fire and burning,

would have been needed in the practice of ritual as much as pillars and burials, both at Tenta and at Khirokitia.

The western half of the interior of CB S 10 was covered by an imposing platform built of stones, boulders and pebbles, while stone vessel fragments, grinding stones and lithics were also used for its construction. This large platform (**Fig. 54**) was plastered and over it, another smaller one was built of mud-bricks and also plastered. Subsequently, over the second platform an even smaller one of gypsum and mud-bricks collided together and plastered over was placed. This construction was built over the most ancient plastered floor of the building. Under this, in the S-SE side of the CB, four infant burials (VK 5-8) were placed together within brown soil containing flecks of charcoal. Infant burial VK 12 was the only burial placed outside a building at Tenta, found in a pit (Niklasson 1991:107). It was placed in the N-NW of CB S 10 under a burnt area in the proximity of the platforms with evidence of burning in the W of the building. The grave-pit was excavated through hard-packed courtyard soil containing fragmentary animal bones and lithics (Todd 1987:73). A cobble was found next to the skull and a fragment of painted plaster between the skull and the cobble.

xvi) Structures 26 and 55 (period 4).

CB S 26 was situated in the W of CPB S 11 and was dated to the same period and level as CPB S 11 (Todd 1987:92-93). This CB suffered severe destruction by erosion and only its northern part survived, although also severely damaged. Todd (1987: 93) estimated that CB S 26 may have resembled CPB S 11, although no evidence supporting this was provided. The extensive construction of boulders and fragmentary artefacts (**Fig. 55**), badly preserved over a layer of pebbles, in the N part of the building, may be indicative of a CB similar to CB S 10, with an equivalent large platform covering half of the building. The burials found in association with CB S 26 should be considered further supportive to this suggestion. The fragmentary and incomplete infant burial VK

19 was found under this layer of pebbles over patches of a formerly plastered floor and an infant burial (VK 20) was found in intermediate layers under CB S 26 (Niklasson 1991:107) antedating its construction. CB S 26 was the second CB at Tenta having received burials. Importantly, CB S 26 was the second CB to have received burials being in the proximity of an importantly charged with liminality CPB (S 11). Although no courtyard could be identified linking CPBs S 11, S 42, S 55 and CB S 26, since they were built in a row (Todd 1987: figure 31), their coexistence on the same level, the fact that three of them had burials and another three of them had pillars, their surviving elaborate interior and similarities to the S cluster of CPBs S 9, S 27, S 4 and CB S 10, are all elements suggestive of similar use of these buildings with complementary practices taking place in their interior. Although indisputably symbolic communication and complementary practice at some level was attested for CPBs S 11 and S 42, the same could not be demonstrated with certainty between CB S 26 and CPB S 11, or CPB S 42 and CPB S 55.

CPB S 55 was situated E-SE of CPB S 42 and had its entrance in the NW towards CPB S 42, but could not be seen linked with it in any other way. Another doorway was identified in the E-NE of CPB S 55, belonging to an earlier stage of the building and subsequently blocked and plastered. Todd (1987: 123) estimated a third possible doorway in the S. CPB S 55 had two pillars in the interior: one in the N and one in the S, with direction E-W. It was considered very probable that S pillar S 86 was erected at the same time as CPB S 55 (Todd 1987:123), but there were indications that N pillar S 56 was later than the erection of the CPB and most probably replaced a previously existing pillar. All the interior of this CPB was found plastered or with traces of plaster apart from the N circular wall and the N face of the N pillar (S 56). A possibly significant exception in the construction of the pillars occurred in this CPB. They were built entirely of mud-bricks instead of stones, as it was attested in all the CPBs at Tenta (Todd 1987:122). No other structural remains were found on the floors of CPB S 55 and no artefacts were recovered from its floors.

xvii) Structure 85 (period 3?)

CPB S 85 is the only CPB attributed to period 3 (Todd 1987:147). Situated in the far E of the settlement, W of the settlement wall, with the area surrounding it not adequately excavated (**Fig. 34**), CPB S 85 cannot be fully understood. It is worth noting here that a discrepancy in the publication regarding the chronology of the site and Todd's indecision about which period specific structures should be attributed to, affects the discussion particularly of this CPB (Todd 1987).

In general, this research respected Todd's attribution of buildings to specific periods as they were presented in the text dedicated to each one of them (Todd 1987:53-166), with consideration of the discussion of stratigraphy (Todd 1987:28). In the latter, Todd explained that the S cluster of buildings (CPBs S 9, S 27, S 4 and CB S 10) belonged to period 4. The N cluster (CPBs S 11, S 42, S 55 and CB S 26) were later than the S, but dated to the same period. Then, surprisingly, in a brief discussion of periods with assigned structures, Todd (1987:29) placed the N cluster under *Period 3*. On a chart presenting schematically periods and structures (Todd 1987:29, Table 1), he assigned the N cluster structures neither to period 4, nor to period 3, but in between, considering them late period 4 and early 3. He must have considered that CPB S 85 clearly belonged to period 3 since he did not include it in the ambiguously-dated structures. In the individual description of architectural remains, he assigned all buildings of the N cluster to questionably period 4 (*period 4?*), giving the impression that he considered them belonging more to period 4 rather than period 3 (Todd 1987:76, 92, 114, 121), while CPB S 85 was assigned to period 3, unquestionably (Todd 1987:147). Lastly, the plans of the settlement (Todd 1987: figure 57, figure 23, figure 20 and figure 19) contribute more to the confusion: the pillars of CPB S 55 were shown belonging to a different period from the building in figure 23 and 57, while Todd (1987: 123) stated that the S pillar was most probably erected during the same period as CPB S 55 and the N pillar at a later stage, but during the same period. Most importantly, the N cluster

was thought to date in the same period as the S in the general plan in figures 57 and 23, while in the plan figure 19, the same cluster was shaded in a such a way as to indicate that it belonged to a later period than the S cluster, and in the same period as CPB S 85. Lastly, in volume II (Todd 2005:379) where the chronology of Tenta was revised, the N cluster of buildings was attributed to period 4, but with a degree of uncertainty.

These discrepancies in the publication clearly indicate indecisions and ambiguities of the levels of the excavated material. Evidently, such problems could only be resolved with further excavation and identification of continuous deposits below the buildings linking N to S and E to W. Given the fact that no major differences in architecture and material culture can be noticed between S and N clusters, but strong similarities can be noticed between the two clusters regarding: cluster organisation, burial management, pillar construction, use and significance of the buildings, an arbitrary assignment of all period 4 and period 3 structures to a single period 4 / 3, with acceptance of earlier and later levels, would resolve the issue of ambiguous periods, but only superficially of course.

McCartney (2005:177-264) seemed to have faced similar problems with the periodisation of the site and studied the chipped stone from the problematic periods as one assemblage (under *periods 4-2*, McCartney 2005:193-203, 221-226). She also identified continuities and evolution. While a similar organisation of the data in this research could work within the discussion of practices development, regarding N and S clusters as levels presenting similar practices within one period, and contrasting them to period 2, CPB S 85 would remain a problematic building.

Even the attribution of CPB S 85 to period 3 with certainty (Todd 1987:147, 2005:179, 379) seems arbitrary as no excavation took place between it and the northern most part of the settlement (top of the hill) in the W (**Figs. 33, 34 and 35**). CPB S 85 was not linked stratigraphically with any of the buildings in the W and was only assigned to period 3, dated in relevance to the settlement wall in the E and postdating it. A building (CB 77) found on top of it, suggested that CPB S 85 did not belong to the latest period 2.

Yet, its relation to the N and S clusters remained unknown. If the N cluster dated to early period 3 and CPB S 85 to mature/late period 3, then most probably, CPB S 85 was not the only standing CPB at Kalavassos during that period. Given the longevity of the CPBs in the N cluster, on which Todd (1987:76-77, 114-115, 121-123) commented repeatedly, two distinct areas with CPBs would be noticed for that period of time: one in the S slope of the hill (N cluster) and one in the E. Additionally, in this case, CPB S 85 would not be the only CPB which did not receive burials, since CPB S 55 standing in the W of CPB S 42 had not received burials either.

Alternatively, if the N cluster structures were erected during the last stages of period 4, rather than the beginning of period 3, then there are more possibilities that CPB S 85 was the only CPB at Tenta during period 3 and it stood isolated on the E most slope of the hill. As excavation was not realised S, N or W of CPB S 85, any estimation this CPB was not the only CPB in its area, would remain an estimated guess.

The interior of CPB S 85 did not differ from the interior of CPBs both in the N and S cluster. It had only one pillar in its interior (S 87) with direction N-S, which was erected during a later phase of the CPB. Both pillar and inner wall of the CPB were plastered. No clear floor was reached within the CPB and Todd (1987: 147) estimated that the first definite floor should lie further below the excavated fills, but the excavation did not proceed further. Clearly, even the statement that CPB S 85 did not receive any burials is based on the available evidence, and only further excavation could verify or overrule it.

*xvii) Structures 22, 35, 58 and S 91 (period 2).*

The rest of the pillar buildings at Kalavassos-Tenta were not associated with burials (**Tables 59** and **61**). As already noted, no burial belonging to period 2 was found at the settlement. Significantly, in period 2, all CPBs at Tenta clustered around the largest complex structure CRB S14 (**Fig. 35**). This type of building appeared in Cyprus

firstly at Tenta at that period of time. Its significance is discussed in the following section (§ 4.4.2, a). Most probably though, the CPBs at Tenta of period 2 cannot be fully understood without the meaning of CRB S 14 complex to have been explored first.

At first, CPBs S 22, S 35, S 58 and S 91 did not seem to differ majorly from CPBs in the N and S cluster. However additional structural remains in their interior and a complete absence of burials distinguish them substantially. Firstly, it should be noted that they were all heavily plastered and re-plastered, as were their pillars (Todd 1987: 89-91, 104-108, 125-128 and 151-152). Scarcity of material on floors was attested in them, too. However, in CPB S 22, stone benches were constructed in the W between the pillars and the W wall. A platform between the pillars and a higher stone bench on the platform in the SW close to the W wall was built in CPB S 35. The latter had additionally an elaborate stone basin on a built construction embedded in the N circular wall, N of the N pillar. CPB S 91 featured a pillar with a stepped top and thickly plastered floors. While no other structural remains were found inside CPB S 58, apart from pillar S 59, which was as heavily plastered as the interior walls of the CPB, a heavily stone paved area was found in the outside connecting this CPB with CPB S 22 in the W and the surrounding area.

Although no burials were found in association with these buildings their interior seemed more elaborate and better attended than the interior of CPBs on the S slope of the hill, of period 4/3. The notion of liminality may have been created and maintained only with the construction of the pillars. Evidently, however, burial-use, in relation to CPBs and pillars, was *de-ritualized*. During period 2, pillars no longer demanded burials at Tenta. Consequently the pillars may have been de-ritualized, too. They clearly had maintained their importance, surrounding so excessively the most important building at Tenta during that period (CRB 14 complex). But they may not have been important any longer as sacral symbols, but more as symbols of status, as a direct linkage with the ancestors, and as foundations of continuity and power. Additionally, the benches and platforms in their interior is another important element

that may have not been related to ritual per-se, but more to ritual-use for socio-political reasons. Elaborate places for seating were created within these CPBs, while evidently similar constructions were not judged necessary for the CPBs of the previous period.

#### *4.4.1 .B) Discussion of the ritual at CPBs*

Summarizing the ritual evidence from CPBs, especially at Khirokitia, it can be noticed that customarily, selected burials were deposited at the one opening of the pillars, further off it, towards the doorway (CPBs IA, XLVII, XX, S 122). A second burial would usually be deposited in the opposite opening of the pillars closer to the circular wall in the back, or in between the pillars. Depending on the placement of the pillars within the building, whether they were more central or closer to the circular wall, the first burial may have seemed to have been interred in the centre of the building. However, in relation to the pillar(s), it would usually be at one of their openings, in between them. Customarily, if many burials were deposited within a CPB, two places of burial deposition would usually form an axis which would cross the axis of the first burials, in a way that they would be diametrically opposite to each other (CPBs XLVII and XX ). If even more burials were interred they would be close to the pillars, at one of their edges or sides. Even from limited available context in some CPBs, it is evident that intentionality charged the burial placement in relation to the pillar(s). The choice of where a burial was placed was clearly associated with the placement of the pillars, while the sequence of the next appropriate depositional place was directed by mythological rules.

At Kalavassos-Tenta, the burials seemed to have been mythologically connected with the building rather than with the pillars. Even in CPB S 9 which had five burials in its interior, the burials were placed along the circular wall rather than in direct connection to the pillar. This contrast of burial-pillar association between Khirokitia



and Tenta is not due to the number of pillars in the interior of CPBs. For example, at Khirokitia in CPBs Th. XLVII, which initially had only one pillar, and Th. VII (with only one pillar), the first burial, having been deposited at the base of the pillar, was directly linked with it. It is very probable that the practice attested at Tenta represents the outset of this ritual where the domestication of the burial, namely the introduction of the burial to the settlement and its association to a building was the focal point. At the development of the practice, at Khirokitia, the burial was clearly associated to the pillar(s).

Complementary ritual use of CPBs in clusters, pairs or complexes most probably occurred both at Khirokitia and at Tenta. Striking examples are the W window of CPB S 42 with direct view to the figures painted on pillar S 82 of CPB S 11, at Tenta. Additionally, it is characteristic for this cluster that both CPBs S 11 and S 42 received adult burials, whereas CB S 26 in the same cluster received only infant burials. Similar arrangement probably occurred between CPBs Th. XLVII and Th. XLV. The former received predominantly infants, 25 in total, over only four adults, while in the latter, all seven burials were adults. Similarly, CPB S 116 received only adults while CPB S 122 predominantly infants, although later on, when CPB S 117 was erected, children were interred in it, also. CB S 10 in the same cluster as CPB S 9, also received only infants, while in CPB S 9 all ages were represented.

Beyond burial selection and individual-age division between CPBs in clusters, pairs and complexes, other ritual activities must have also been shared between them. A striking example comprised CPB Th. IA complex with CPB Th. XII and CB Th. XII A. The connecting doors between CPB Th. IA and CB Th. XII A, the stone "table" (altars?) arrangements around them, the paved areas shared between them and other permanent installations on the outside may indicate ritual interrelated activities. Similar, but not as elaborate outdoor arrangements were also noticed in the S cluster at Kalavassos-Tenta between CPBs S 9, S 27, S 4 and CB S 10.

Also impressive is the similarity of two different sets of inhumations, at Khirokitia. Two adult burials were found placed next to pillars, not in a pit, but leaning towards them: one in CPB Th. VII and one in CPB Th. XII. Two more inhumations in different buildings were found with the jaw open: VK 31 in CB Th. XII A and VK 139 in CPB XLV (I). Dikaios (1953: 76, 91, 181) considered some animal and human depositions as possible sacrifices, mostly as part of foundation rites, having found them under doorsteps. As physical evidence did not support his claim, it may have been the case that Dikaios was influenced by folklore practices from his own culture. However, Dikaios must have seen the intentionality that characterised some burial use and must have sensed emerging patterns that he did not recognise explicitly.

While evidence for physical violence was not detected on human remains from Khirokitia by more recent research either (Le Brun 1984, 1989, 1994), it is well known in modern research that experienced butchers do not necessarily leave butchery marks. Also, there are other methods for the preparation of a sacrifice such as calming substances leading to the poisonous death of the victim (Taylor 2002, Ralph Lewis 2001). While sacrifice at Khirokitia cannot be proved, the intentionality that charged the use of some burials and patterned actions surrounding them might insinuate that sacrifice could have been practiced. The two adult burials, found with the jaw open in prominent places, the one within a central pit with other inhumations (VK 31) and the other one (VK 139) within an elaborate platform, could have been victims of strangulation or suffocation, deposited in this manner for the sacrifice to be underlined. Additionally, many burials, especially at Khirokitia, were found in unnatural positions: e.g. with the back bent backwards (Dikaios 1953, Le Mort 1994:157-198). While the latter may have been secondary burials, sacrifice should not be completely excluded as a possibility of practices at Khirokitia.

Common ritual practices, beyond the choice and placement of the burial have been confirmed in CPBs both at Tenta and at Khirokitia. Semicircular enclosures attached to the outside of a building have been noticed at CPBs Th. XX, S 131 and CBs

Th. XII A (at Khirokitia) and S 10 (at Tenta). While the internal semi-circular enclosure in between pillar S 82 and the circular wall in CPB S 11 (at Tenta) was recognised as a large built-in basin, thanks to the surviving coat of plaster covering it, the possibility of these enclosures which abutted to the external walls of specific buildings having been built-in basins is rather high. Installed, embedded and built-in stone basins were found in the interior of many CPBs S 35, S 105, S 116, S 117, S 122, repeatedly. CPB S 122 featured also a mysterious triangular construction that could also have been a built-in basin. Water or other liquid substances could have been used to enhance the ritual or they may have been central, meaningful elements of actions within it. Water, blood (?), or boiled leaves of plants releasing hallucinogenic fumes or other scents, are all probabilities that should not be excluded from practices within ritual buildings.

Additional evidence, supportive to the possibility of ritual use of such constructions, comprise the stone "tables" (altars?) found outside CPB Th. XX and Th. IA, and the surrounding pits with animal bone depositions. Additionally pits found containing only ashes, pebbles and small sized stones were found repeatedly in association with the pillars in CPBs Th. XLV (I), Th. XLVII, S 116 and CB Th. XII A. Pebbles were also used to surround a burial pit, a platform for burning substances, inside platforms and elaborately paved areas in association with CPBs. Shells were also transported and symbolically deposited within burials, over burials or abandoned and found in situ in prominent positions (CPBs Th. XLVII, Floor V, and Th. XX in the semicircular enclosure). Moreover, next-to-door symbolic depositions in CPBs VII and XLVII would probably have functioned as offerings in these ritually charged environments.

Many areas in the CPBs, both at Khirokitia and Tenta, bear traces of fire. Dikaios (1953) noticed that customarily a "hearth" would be built over the place of a burial. Burnt areas surrounded by pebbles were found on many CPB floors. Additionally, there were a few cases of human bones found charred (e.g. VK 15), while more often the burial fill was found full of charcoal and evidence of fire action (VK 12). Fire was as

important as water for those early populations. Both ecological research (Pyne 2001) and archaeological evidence (Lewis 1972) have demonstrated that fire was used extensively by early farmers for clearance of the fields and preparation of the land for cultivation. Natural fires were also evidenced often in prehistory (Pyne 2001). While fire in the outside is controlled by natural elements, humans had total control of the domesticated fire. Control over the natural environment was one of the central concerns of Neolithic people, while ritual seemingly provided the means for prediction and control over the natural and supernatural.

*Fire lived in the mind as well as on the land. It had to be explained. It loomed too large in human experience not to cry out for a story, a theory, a personification. It became a source of myth that explained how and why humanity differed from the rest of creation. (Pyne 2001:137)*

Myths related to fire and its origin can be found in many ancient and current cultures (Frazer 1923, 1930). Also, pyrorituals have recently been attested in Chalcolithic cultures of the Balkans (Gheorghiu 2007). At Khirokitia and Kalavassos-Tenta, the fire did not seem to be a focal point of the ritual. However, its remains over platforms in ritual contexts, over burials, in areas of the floor as a marker and within burial fills, suggest that it was one of the essential complementary actions during the practice of the ritual. Burning for purification, ritualization, for enhancement of a mystifying ambiance, as a marker was repeatedly practiced in CPBs.

Elaborate platforms and seats were also a reoccurring type of construction within CPBs. In several cases, Dikaios (1953) suggested that the platforms at Khirokitia were used generally for sleeping or seating. Although this is definitely a possibility for platforms in CBs rich in evidence of subsistence activities, it is worth noting that the great majority of platforms, interpreted by Dikaios for this use, were constructed in order to cover dead human bodies, thus forming an area where fire was sometimes lit on top. Where burning had taken place, Dikaios (1953) interpreted these platforms as hearths. Where only burials took place inside platforms, but no evidence of burning

was attested, Dikaios suggested the possibility of use of these of platforms for sleeping or seating. Dikaios overlooked the fact that in some cases a platform was used not only to cover burials underneath, but also in order to accommodate more within the raised space that was created as a result of the construction of the platform itself. It is also worth noting that some of these platforms were monumentally constructed and extended in space at a width which covered more than half of the available area within CBs and CPBs. Additionally some were built at a height that would approach more or less at least half of the total height of the buildings. Striking examples of this practice are: the monumental platform of CB Th. XVII: Floors II and I, the second one of boulders in a II shape, which accommodated three burials in total and the platform in CBRP Tholos V, Floor IV, with a total of four burials. Especially these three platforms were most probably not constructed, as elaborately as they were, for sleeping.

Additionally, Dikaios saw benches, seats and centrally placed boulders only for seating for the facilitation of the execution of subsistence activities. Indeed structures of pisé, stone or boulders placed away from the edges of the circular wall of a CB might have been used for seating while working, especially within CBs rich with relevant evidence (CBs Th. XV Floor VIII, Th. III Floor VI, Th. IV Floor V, CBRP Th. XXVI). These constructions could have provided an elevated horizontal space for seating above or at the same level as a working area, facilitating any kind of work that would demand the person working not to be seated at ground level. The benches or seats though, which were placed close to the circular wall in ritually empowered contexts, provided the seated person with a secure end, with full surveillance of the whole circular space of the CPB and with control over the entrance. All actions within the circle could be clearly observed and nothing and nobody could enter the CPB without being noticed. Additionally, the permanency and elaboration that characterised the construction of these seats transformed them into a kind of privileged seating setting and the interior of the CPB into a *stage* (Tambiah 1979). In addition, given the actions that took place within CPBs, the seats in CPBs Th. XLVII on Floors V and VII and S 117 on Floor 492

(and a questionable one on Floor 462) (at Khirokitia), along with the extensive platforms of CBs S 10 and S 26 (at Tenta) were more than places for sleeping and working; they were ritual instruments in a ritual context.

Lastly, Niklasson's (1991:230) suspicion that some of the floors at Khirokitia were not made in order for an older floor to simply be replaced can now be confirmed. Repeatedly fills, intermediate layers and floors were laid over burials. In many cases they were used as the top, the sealing of the burial-pit, both at Khirokitia and at Kalavassos Tenta. Dikaios (1953:222) expressed the belief that the number of burials within a building depended on the length of time a building was used and consequently on the number of floors it had. According to the evidence this is absolutely wrong. Half of the buildings at Khirokitia (**Table 82**) were abandoned without any burial having ever been deposited in them. Then several buildings fell out of use after a sequence of only one or only a few floors; for example CPBs Th. VII and Th. XII (one floor) and CB Tholos XI (three floors only). Consequently, the relation of the number of burials to floors did not depend on the longevity of a building and the number of floors it had, but on the number of burials that were selected to be deposited in its interior. Ritual closure and ritual sealing was attested in most CPBs. Striking examples are CPBs Th. XLVII, S 116, S 117, S 122, where not only the practice of ritual-sealing of burials was particularly evident, but the whole CPBs were ritually covered by deposits ritually sealing them and transforming them into *containers* with ritual content (Gable 2004).

#### 4.4.2 Circular Radial Buildings.

##### 4.4.2 a) CRBs at Kalavassos-Tenta and Khirokitia

The CRB type has not caused nearly as much discussion and debate as the CPB. While on the mainland, well founded evidence suggested that the CRB was both a ritual type-building and a building for gatherings and social organisation (Strodeur et al. 2000, Strodeur 2003, Strodeur and Abbès 2003), in Cyprus its use remained an unapproachable mystery until recently. Peltenburg (2004) rightfully associated it with socio-political control and decision making, rather than ritual. The CRB did not seem to be charged with liminality as the CPBs. Elaborate constructions (complex architectural plan), symbols of status (extended red plastered floors and satellite CPBs) and concern with maintenance seem to characterise the CRB at Tenta; but liminality was not a major concern. Certainly symbolism and rituality on a certain level would have played a role in the construction, maintenance and decoration of the CRB, but clearly not a focal one.

Radial signs and concentric circles archetypally refer to celestial bodies, their movement and the division of the time in seasons or months depending on this movement. Similar signs were shared by many cultures; the Maya, the Aztecs and the Egyptians (**Fig. 56, Fig. 57, Fig. 58, Fig. 59**, Aldred 1968, Carlson et al. 1987, Palca 1989, Otto 1966, Wilkinson 2000). In these cultures radial signs were more standardised, with specific numbers of rays and compartments formed in between them. In the Near E no two CRBs seem to share a standardised form. It would be very difficult, therefore, to decipher their references. However, the fact that most probably, as a radial sign, the CRB at Tenta referred to celestial body movements possibly is indicative of a different nature of the CRB as building type from the CPB. Celestial body movements were important for management of agricultural works such as cleaning of the fields, planting and harvesting at an appropriate time to maximize the effect. While agropastoral works were the base of the economy in Aceramic Neolithic Cyprus, the erection of such a

building referring to the organisation of such works possibly was suggestive of the function of the building itself. The CRB possibly was linked more directly with control and organisation of the economy and therefore with the socio-economic organisation and management, rather than ritual.

CRB complex S 14, with its imposing size, its predominant position on the top of the hill overlooking both the settlement and the valley, its red plastered floors, its lack of burials and other liminal symbols, with a satellite concentration of CPBs around it and finally, its original (for Cypriot prehistory) architectural type point towards a significant building, but not directly linked with ritual. Its significance must have been directed more towards the socio-political aspect of life. The CPBs that were used as its satellites could only be understood within this framework. Structural ritual elements were identified within them, only in comparison to well attested ritualized CPBs of the previous period (§ 4.4.1 B xiii-xvi). It is clear though that those elements possibly were not used for the purpose of ritual, but ritual symbolism could have been used for socio-political purposes. While the social, the political and the economic during that period of time was most probably subjected to religious beliefs and practices, any new trend, any new empowered group would need religious symbolic support to have functioned. The satellite CPBs at Tenta in period 2, most probably had exactly this purpose. They were adequate in numbers, they concentrated around the powerful CRB and they seemingly maintained a world order, where the socio-political system was adequately supported by the "ritual". Older CPBs (N and S clusters) were covered and nothing was erected on them; no continuity with them was established. Only their ritually powerful symbols were needed and were used for the new world order to be founded.

At a Khirokitia that was dying, the new architectural trend, the "CRB", along with its socio-political package may have appeared as a solution to a society in decline. CRBs at Khirokitia appeared at the very last level (I), under the top soil, in the western-most edge of the settlement (**Fig. 60**). CRB S 96 was erected at early level Ic and lasted only for the duration of this level (Le Brun 1984:39). Two burials were found in it: child



burial VK 234 and adult burial VK 233, which was very disturbed, was found in the NE of the building with the two cranial parts at a distance of 20cm from each other (Le Brun 1989:71). The only floor (392) found in the building sealed these burials. A platform was found on this floor in the N. Although Le Brun (1984:39) did not provide adequate contextual details, the platform may have been over the place of the adult burial. Layers of pisé and mud-bricks, some with evidence of fire, which may represent ritual sealing and burning, covered this building on level Ib. On level Ia, slightly to the SE of where CRB S 96 used to be and within close proximity (fig. 35, fig. 59), CRB S 111 was erected. The building was found very poorly preserved and in erosion fills (Le Brun 1984:44). No floor was identified and adult burial VK 248 was found disturbed in fills in the NE of the building (Le Brun 1984: 50, figure 41, 1). No further information was provided.

Significantly, at Khirokitia, burial use for the ritual empowerment of a building had been such a well founded tradition by that level, that even the CRB could not escape it, if any meaningful association was to be linked with it. Since 19 burials were buried during level I, W, at Khirokitia, while 12 buildings were available (**Table 70**), it must have been of significance that three of these burials were interred in the two existing CRBs. Eight burials were found in CBRP S 89 and two in CB S 91, while the rest six of level I, W, were distributed in CBRPs S 82, S 84 and S 106 and in CBs S 83, S 94 and S 95 (**Table 69**). At Khirokitia the CRB was one of the buildings that had to receive burials. Clearly, though, the endeavour of ritual charge of this type of building did not last. For that matter, any newly adopted trend, probably linked with attempts to maintain Khirokitia's unity, was already futile. Alternatively, the type of the CRB at Khirokitia could have exactly expressed a world that was already evidently changing, while Khirokitia had already declined.

#### 4.4.2 b) CRBs at Cape Andreas-Kastros

At Cape Andreas-Kastros, the CRB was the predominant type of building during the earliest levels of occupation but disappeared completely during the latest levels (**Table 54**). CRBs at Cape Andreas-Kastros did not seem to represent something new and powerful, but more a new way of building houses. The inhabitants of this settlement seem to have followed the new trend that was established much earlier at Kalavassos-Tenta and shyly appeared at Khirokitia towards its end. No liminal elements could be identified in those buildings; however, most probably symbolic actions -but not necessarily ritual actions- did take place within them. The exception may have been CRB S 530-591, which was built almost over burial VK 259 (**Fig. 37**). The event could not have been coincidental as burial VK 259 was the only one interred at the settlement in level VI and no other burial was deposited at the settlement for two subsequent levels (V, IV). Additionally, burial VK 259 was the only one interred complete at the site. The paucity of contextual information regarding both level VI deposits and CRB S 530-591 on level V (Le Brun 1981: 19-22) does not permit a better understanding of the practice.

On level III, while no CRB existed at the site (**Table 54**), only skull burials (VK 260, 261 and 262) took place in midden deposits outside / under buildings. Scattered human remains found on subsequent levels under the topsoil provide an indication of burial manipulation and management of the dead beyond the settlement during the last stages of Cape Andrea-Kastros. Taking into consideration the general characteristics of burial VK 259 (selected adult, in a pit, with shells, outside and underneath a building) and the predominant architectural type at the settlement (CRB), the practice is strongly reminiscent mostly of Kalavassos-Tenta rather than Khirokitia.

While on the earliest levels, both architectural and burial types are reminiscent of ritual practices of the previous era and previously inhabited places, there is nothing in the subsequent levels to recall Tenta and Khirokitia ritual. The presence of skull burial, extensive burial manipulation and fragmentary human remains in loose

deposits within the settlement comprise a new practice for the Aceramic Neolithic. At those late stages, the site possibly was not using the ritual language Kalavassos and Khirokitia shared for a period of time. Some elements are traceable, but the assemblage of contextual and relational information does not seem comparable with Tenta and Khirokitia. During the last stages, Cape Andreas-Kastros does not seem to be placed correctly alongside with these two sites. It seems to introduce a period of time coinciding with when Khirokitia ceased to exist with tremendous consequences on the island (Peltenburg 2004:85).

Little evidence is available from the subsequent period, which comprises one of the lacunas of Cypriot prehistory. The architecture, the ritual, the society had already changed and only scattered ritual elements of the previous periods can be recognised when again early Cypriots left traces on the archaeological record (Ayios Epiktitos-Vrysi, Sotira-Tepes). At the latest levels, Cape Andreas-Kastros seems to be part of and to introduce a new ritual system. In this ritual system, which shared only elements with the previous one and had not yet completely changed, liminality was created via a completely different mytho-logic. Syntax and semantics, structure and meaning, of the ritual language differ significantly at Cape Andreas-Kastros from the ritual language at the peak time of Khirokitia and the early developments at Tenta. However, this language is not entirely different yet, either. It seems like a dialect which developed within the same ritual language, but at Cape Andreas-Kastros had not formed fully, yet; it had not matured and had not established its grammar, rules and conditions.

Cape Andreas-Kastros expressed the transition between a ritual system that had already declined and another one, which was not fully developed yet. Only elements of the previous one continued, while the new ones were not well determined yet. At Cape Andreas-Kastros the ritual seems unclear, uncertain and ambiguous, as the society must have been uncertain of itself, of its worldview, of its position in the cosmos. Khirokitia and Kalavassos-Tenta represent the *domestication* of Ritual in Cyprus. Cape Andreas-Kastros represents the transitional phase prior to the complete "extra-

domusment" of Ritual, which took place in the Ceramic Neolithic, with the exile of the burial from the "house" / settlement and the burial allocation in organised areas.

#### *4.4.3 CBs with Burials, CBs with one and two Radial Partitions and C-Tri-Radial Buildings.*

About half of the buildings of each type received burials at Khirokitia (**Table 82**). These buildings (**Table 51**), in contrast to CPBs, were much richer in cultural material and evidence related to subsistence activities. No particular base for the selection of these buildings for burials can be detected. They were found in all areas and periods of Khirokitia (Dikaios 1953: plate IIA, Le Brun 1984:50-51, figures 35-42, 1989:118-119, figures 41-42, Le Mort 1994:193-194, Tableaux 1-4), while their type could vary between all three types during their use.

A very explicit example is C-Tri-Radial-B Th. XV (III) which received two burials. The grave pit of child burial VK 69 was cut through the floor covering Th. XV (III) and underlying CB Th. XV (II). It was deposited exactly over the N part of its tri-radial partition, while infant burial VK 70 was deposited close to the S part of the tri-radial partition. The latter was subsequently covered by a platform with traces of burning. Subsequently, and for a considerable length of time, Th. XV (II-I) remained a CB and received 15 burials (Th. XV (II), **Table 81**). Another example is CBRP Th. V, which had one radial partition on Floor IV, but two on Floor IX (**Table 51 a, b**). Similarly, CBRPs Tholoi X (II), XXII (II) and S 97 (IIIa-b), had one partition on one floor, but two on a subsequent or a previous one (Th. X (III), XXII (I) and S 97, Ib) and received a considerable number of burials (**Table 81**). The fact that the buildings had or lacked radial partitions, their size, their position at the settlement, and the extent of their use in time or space, did not influence the choice of their selection for burial deposition.

Ritual actions previously identified in secure ritual contexts (CPBs) can be detected in some CBRPs and CBs. Symbolic deposition of a fiddle-shaped stone idol (1401) and of a fragment of a stone bowl (1402) occurred SE of the doorway of CB Th. V. A hoard of 203 shells (963) was deposited SW of the last floor of CB Th. XXV. A hoard of many pebbles of different colours was deposited in between two conglomerate slabs, SE of the doorway of CB Th. XXVII (Dikaios 1953:147). A hoard of animal bones, antler and animal skulls was found on Floor XI of CB Th. III. A pit full of pebbles was cut through Floor VI of CB with one Radial Partition Th. III. A hoard of shells (1299) and a fragmentary stone bowl (1300) was found on Floor II of CB XI. A pit with animal bones and pebbles was found on Floor XI of CB X (IV) and an animal grave of caprines next to adult burial VK 55 was found on Floor XII of the same building. Ritual burning occurred customarily over burials on platforms, while other burnt areas surrounded by pebbles, also in relation to burials, occurred in many CBRPs and CBs (Th. XIX, Th. XXII (I) Th. V, Th. III, Th. XV (III-I), Th. X (IV), Th. XXXVI).

Customarily, the floor was made to cover burials in these buildings. Two striking examples are: Floor IX of CB Th. XV (II) in the pisé of which the toes of female burial VK 72 were found. The burial had been deposited on Floor VIII. For the toes of the corpse to be detached and mixed with the pisé of the overlying floor, the burial has to have been in an advanced state of decomposition. This is especially significant as it further indicates that corpses at Khirokitia had been exposed on floors or next to pillars, suggesting that this practice could have been a reality of the ritual life at the settlement. Lastly, a hole on Floor VII of CB Th. III may have been left for libations over female burial VK 37, or as a marker since male (VK 38) and infant (VK 39) burials were deposited over the female, on the subsequent floor.

The rest of the CBs and CBRPs present limited ritual interest. In the cases where they include burials, burnt areas or platforms were usually found over them. Additionally burials in CBs with two Radial Partitions would be placed predominantly right in front of the opening of the radial partitions or in the space in between them. It

is worth underlining that, although ritual was indeed generally practiced at Khirokitia outside Ritual Buildings (CPBs), some buildings may not have been used as habitations structures, but as Burial Buildings for specific groups or selected individuals. Such cases include CB and later CBRP Th. III and C-Tri-Radial B and later CB Th. XV (IV-I). The quite high numbers of burials placed within them, their internal arrangements, the frequency with which their floors were made and remade, and the presence of pits, hoards and burnt areas in their interior suggests a particular use for these buildings.

#### **4.5 Ritual elementary meanings.**

*A comparative approach between different levels of ritual offers the possibility of discovering relationships of meaning between different levels of ritual activity (Gheorghiu 2007:281). Viewed in the light of possible ritual meaning, the attested ritual practices at Khirokitia and Tenta (period 4) permit the identification of their basic mytho-logic categories.*

Stone and pebbles maintained the significance they had culturally and ritually accumulated in the previous period (CPPNB) and were found repeatedly deposited in pits close to burials, in the context of the burial pit, embedded around platforms and grave-pits, and in hoards. Water or other liquids were indirectly shown to have been used in the ritual sequence since built and installed basins were identified in the ritual context. The use of fire, only minimally evidenced on charred human and animal bones at Kissonerga-Mylouthkia wells and Parreklissha-Shillourokambos *Fosse* 23, became a necessary link in the ritual sequence at Khirokitia and Kalavassos-Tenta. Fire, tamed and domesticated, may have symbolised control over the natural and a hope for the supernatural also to be tamed. Symbolic and structured depositions took place repeatedly in formally organised areas, while CPBs themselves could have been seen as *containers* of structured depositions (Gable 2004). Ritual cleaning and sealing were

performed at the end of every series of ritual actions, every time the ritual was considered complete. They were also practiced on a larger scale when the *container* was loaded with sacrality.

All of these ritual actions revolved around the pillars and the burials, and only through this close relationship did they obtain meaning as such. Pillars and burials seemed to be the focal point of the ritual practice. Pillars as the materialization (Watkins 2004a) of a supernatural idea represented something unknown, beyond the empirical experience of *world A* (Leach 1976). They represented a *mystery* that had to be approached and explained (Geertz 1973). A way had to be found for the believer to come closer to the *awe* and experience it (Eliade 1957). A liminal zone (Leach 1976) was needed and was created with the introduction of the burial. Death was a way for the unknown to be approached. Death was used and manipulated and therefore tamed and domesticated. The burial allowed the liminality to be empowered in these *ritual locales* (Hamilakis 2004). Structures already believed as *sacral* (Sanders 2006) initiated this sequence of ritual actions that formed the ritual practiced within them.

The exploration of the *chaine-opératoire* of the ritual process (Gheorghiu 2007:269) revealed a vividly ritual-practicing society at Khirokitia. The ritual organisation appeared well founded and coherent. Ritual language, with well formed and strict grammar, appropriated specific actions within Ritual Buildings. Ritual fluidity and variation occurred in aspects of the practice of the ritual rather than in its theory (mytho-logic). Four well defined categories can be detected at Khirokitia in regards to the ritual category of the burial:

a) burial use for the Pillar Ritual (in CPBs), accompanied by a series of ritual actions focusing on the burial and the pillars,

b) selective burial deposition in large numbers in possible Burial Buildings. CBs and CBRPs were selected repeatedly on a mytho-logic basis to include burials in large numbers, where ritual actions were also appropriated. They were transformed into ritual *containers* (Gable 2004).

c) selective burial deposition in limited numbers within floors of CBs and CBRPs, where the abundance subsistence related cultural material suggested that they were habitation structures. The burial as symbol of a well established ritual and socio-cultural system was introduced into the house.

d) burial management outside the settlement walls, suggested by the lack of burial evidence for the majority of the population of Khirokitia.

While the mytho-logic appeared strict, variation could be detected in the processes of the practice. This can be seen in particular in reference to the grave and the corpse: communal or single; manipulated or undisturbed; sealed, marked or simply covered; in undetermined orientation; rich in grave-goods or poor. At Tenta, the ritual logic itself remained more variable in the beginning of the history of the site and stabilized later, with the complete absence of burials from the settlement. Inhumations located within zones of cultural material, either in the ditch beyond the settlement wall or just outside structures, abided to the tradition established in the CPPNB where animal bones, fragmented artefacts and human corpses (fragmentary or in whole) were deposited together in meaningful assemblages. In period 4 at Tenta, a transitional socio-cultural episode was expressed. While conforming to appropriate ritual practices of the previous period, the emergence of a new ritual system, which appropriated burial within the settlement and in relation to specific *sacral* symbols (Sanders 2006) and structures, can be detected. The use of selective burial for ritual and / or the foundation of ancestral rights was evidenced through burial deposition and associated ritual action in the S part of the settlement. During this transitional period the ritual was variable and CPBs without burials expressed exactly this transition in the mytho-logic.

Territoriality with the settlement walls and with the dead in the land of the habitat (Bloch 1982:34, Bourdieu 1972, 1980) was evidenced both at Kalavassos-Tenta and at Khirokitia. At Tenta (period 4) burials and ritual were used as symbols for the foundation of the new world order of a society that had to function within walls, had to establish its identity and a tradition upon which it could be based and flourish. At



Khirokitia, where the society succeeded in establishing this tradition and flourishing, territoriality was subtle. It could be seen in the socio-ritual organisation of discrete neighbourhoods on the basis of ritual buildings. Khirokitia securely founded this tradition that Tenta (period 4) attempted to establish. At Khirokitia the established ritual brought people closer together. It emphasised the meaningful things that held their society together. It took conscious social decision to maintain these buildings with their pillars, to customarily bury some of the dead inside them, to forbid any other construction nearby them and thus to maintain open spaces and distinguish these buildings in space and time. Generation after generation respected those rules. Tradition had been created. New generations implemented the ancestral rites. They practiced the same ritual for almost 2000 years. Ritual held Khirokitia together for maybe longer than any other identified settlement in the prehistory of Cyprus.

*The social group is anchored, not just by political power, but by some of the deepest emotions, beliefs and fears of people everywhere. Society is made both emotionally and intellectually unassailable by means of that alchemy which transforms death into fertility.*  
(Bloch 1982:41)

While Khirokitians used the Death-Pillar-Ritual to express their beliefs and ideology, to manage their fears and fertilise their ever-lasting flourishing societal prosperity, at Tenta (period 2) death was exiled. If ritual was practiced within the satellite CPBs of the CRB complex S 14, this was not related to the re-establishment of ancestral traditions and birth-death and rebirth of the socio-cultural system in a perpetual circle. The absence of burial from the settlement must have been linked with a new ideology, which did not appropriate burial use for ritual. This new ideology was expressed by the adoption of a new (for the island) architectural trend. The latter was expressed in a single building, larger than any other seen on the island until that point, with elaborate, spectacular decoration and strategically positioned on the top of the settlement hill. The new ritual principals and the new architectural trend were most

probably associated with the rise in power of a particular group. The particular concentration of CPBs around CRB S 14 expressed the exploitation of popular and previously well functioning ritual symbols by a particular group in order to establish their authority.

*[...] a position of real authority cannot be entirely rooted in a pristine ideological order, since [...] this removes the actor from the world where his authority is to be exercised. He must at once be part of the ideal world where death is replaced by eternal fertility and part of this world where death and time remain. As a result he has to keep a foot in both camps.*  
(Bloch 1982: 41-42).

Bloch (1982:42) presented an example from Maoist China where systematic propaganda campaign was directed against the existing mortuary system of Cantonese Hong Kong. While similar methods cannot be confirmed at Aceramic Neolithic Tenta (period 2), the sudden termination of a ritual that had just (period 4/3) begun establishing itself and while it was elaborately and persistently practiced at the neighbouring Khirokitia, cannot be explained otherwise in the history of Tenta. Despite stratigraphical problems, no discontinuity in the occupation of the settlement has been attested (McCartney 2005:177-264). In contrast, the satellite CPBs do confirm a continuity of ritual-cultural symbols. However a fundamental point of their ritual association, death, was suddenly and strikingly missing. Ritual could not have simply disappeared. Most probably political influence was involved.

These radical changes at Tenta must have taken place without major social disruption and most probably happened gradually within the questionable horizon of period 3 (late). No major destructions or indications of violence have been evidenced at Tenta. Also, both Khirokitia and Kalavassos-Tenta seemed to have been peacefully abandoned. With the continual presence of CPBs at the very last levels of Khirokitia and therefore the perpetual practice of the ritual that kept it together, it may be difficult to understand why, after such a long time, the ritual failed. Signs of change had already

appeared at Khirokitia. Uncertainty and social tension must have led a group at Khirokitia to experiment unsuccessfully with a different cosmotheory. Two CRBs appeared in the W, on level I. That must represent a clumsy, groundless attempt to save Khirokitia from declining. The hopelessness of this attempt was evidenced by the introduction of burials in the two CRBs and the extremely short histories of both buildings. Although, as witnessed at Kalavassos-Tenta, the ideology embodied in the CRBs could not be combined with burials, such an idea was incomprehensible at Khirokitia and burials were bizarrely incorporated into them.

The life-giving, nurturing properties of the Pillar-Ritual at Khirokitia must have no longer explained adequately the Khirokitians themselves and the world around them. Peltenburg (2004:85) posited the decline of Khirokitia as a result of its excessive size not permitting socio-economic management in a traditionally egalitarian Neolithic way. Ritual evidence affirms that. As previously underlined, no evidence for ritual differentiation between Ritual Buildings or neighbourhoods can be attested. Consequently, despite the fact that social organisation at Khirokitia was likely based on neighbourhoods, these must have functioned on a group-egalitarian basis. The organisational foundation of ritual, its theoretical "pillars", functioned perfectly and provided an explanation for the world on the basis of neighbourhoods. When this base was shaken by its inability to regenerate itself in a larger size, ritual failed to explain and support the cohesion of such a world. The perception of the world had started changing and a new ritual language was required to explain the new world, the new social order and the new cultural reality. This only happened when the structure of Khirokitian society fell apart completely after a very long time. Khirokitians, with their persistence in their traditions, beliefs, ideology and cosmic order did not manage to shift and comprehend the world in a different way that would have guaranteed their survival.

Khirokitia was abandoned. Its inhabitants dispersed. After a millennium of Cypriots being invisible in the archaeological record, Sotira-Tepes appeared. The new ritual was only slightly and sporadically reminiscent of the previous one.

## Chapter 5.

### ***Cypriot Pre-pottery and Aceramic Neolithic Mytho-logic.***

#### Conclusions

*[...]magic is always related to desire.  
The whole purpose of magic is the fulfilment and intensification of desire.  
Magic is private.  
It deals in secrecy and disguise.  
Religion by comparison is peanuts.  
A social affair.  
The world was ordered magically before it was ordered socially*

*All novelty or innovation is a sign of death to her  
and history only to be trusted when it coincides with  
myth.<sup>12</sup>*

#### **5.1 Introduction.**

The particular difficulties that archaeology faced as a discipline with the subject of "ritual" were highlighted. "Ritual" was explained as a cultural schema of the language in which this text has been written. It was also examined as a by-product of Aristotelian logic and Post-Enlightenment developments, used as an interpretative tool in current epistemology. Anthropologists and archaeologists were seen in attempts to evade their cultural schemata and modern western logic in order to approach culturally different realities and break time barriers. Theories applicable on archaeological data were observed to have been adopted successfully from the realm of anthropology. Archaeological methodologies also have contributed to a formation of an understanding of ritual. Within these traditions and their derived constraints, an archaeological definition for ritual in prehistory was offered. The idea of death, as a universal human worry, and the context of death, as a socio-cultural reality of the past

and as archaeological physical record, provided the basis for identification of ritual practices in the Cypriot PPNB and Aceramic Neolithic. Fieldwork organisation and excavation publication management had hindered our understanding of ritual practices in Cypriot prehistory (§ 2). Re-organisation of the data, and *putting [...] the finds back to their place* (Papaconstantinou 2006a:33), to the extent that this was permitted, enabled the reconstruction of *systemic contexts* (Schiffer 1995:25-34) and their better understanding within the specific socio-cultural framework.

The context of death provided the spatial identification of *liminality* (Leach 1976, Renfrew 1985). Other ritualized elements that were incorporated into the “context of death” were identified. Fragmented artefacts and standing structures, among others, were recognised as having become ritual via the process of *ritualization* (Bell 1992, 1997) within liminal zones. *Fluidity* in the ritual communication (Leach 1976, Bloch 1974, 1986, 1989, Levi-Strauss 1971, 1978) was attested in the variation of practices and the choice of the material used for them. Within the *continuum* (Bloch 1974, 1989) of socio-cultural communication, where ritual occurred (**Fig. 6**), synchronic and diachronic social interrelationships of the agents (human and non-human) (DeMarrais et al 2004, Dorbes and Robb 2000,) were identified; objects were collected, constructions were dug or built and liminal zones were created with the intentionality and the *motivation* (Geertz 1973:112-114) to express values, sacred beliefs, ideals and ideas which had meaning in and gave meaning to the world of these agents. Lastly, the *mytho-logic* (Leach 1976:69-70) which ordered those sacred ideas and the practice of ritual was revealed and mytho-logical categories of socio-cultural and ritual meaning were approached.

Accentuation of these categories is deserved here. Verhoeven’s (2002a: 33, **Fig. 5**) guide provides an excellent double opportunity for summarizing the evidence from Cypriot early prehistory, while testing his model and the results of this research. After this overview of ritual *on its own terms* (Dutton 1974), namely within the approached mytho-logic of the people who practiced it. A final overview of the practiced ritual in our own terms is also deserved. Sociocultural relations that have been revealed find

here their place in an overview within a socio-historical framework. In this framework, the Pre- and A- Ceramic Neolithic world, as it was understood by those communities, was attested to be “dying” in the final stages of those eras, while something new and hardly identifiable within the previous mytho-logical framework was seen to have started appearing (4.4.2, b). Traces of values, beliefs, and well founded traditions though can be detected in a continuation of practices in the Ceramic Neolithic, while others can be seen within the final stages of their de-ritualization (§ 1.4). This is examined here briefly, while “new ritual doors” to further research, both on the attested practices and on the ones that can be discerned in the following time-periods, await their opening.

## **5.2. Ritual *on its own terms*; the final test.**

Isolating the phenomenon of ritual communication assists in its anatomical observation and understanding, in Aristotelian terms (Barnes 2000). The structural understanding of this communication in Levi-Strauss’ terms (1971, 1973, 1978) allows a deeper understanding of the functionality of the phenomenon as a system. The exploration of this communication system through pragmatics (Pierce 1857-1890, 1905, Preucel 2006, Verschueren J. and Östman J.O. (et al) 2007, Yule 1996) enables an even deeper understanding of a different -from ours- conceptual, categorical, and sociocultural context (Binford 1962, 1965, Hodder 1981, Hodder et al. 1986:175-183, Miller 1985:1-14, Papaconstantinou 2006a:32-33, 2006b:1-21, Schiffer 1995:25-34, Trigger 1989:348-357).

Dismantling while obtaining information of how things function in a specific socio-cultural context and of their development within it is of major importance. When this involves three variables: the distant past, the diversity of human beings and the fluidity of ritual, and when this examination occurs in a post-modern and relativist

world, the objective of the modern-western archaeologist cannot be only the identification of patterns and their socio-cultural developments. The exploration of as many possibilities as the past socio-cultural system allows, in view of both the expansion of our understanding and the approach to the past reality as close as is potentially possible, should also be one of the central objectives. Possible scenarios that could have taken place within the Cypriot early prehistory, in regards to the attested ritual practices, were explored previously (§§ 3 and 4); here, only the highest considered possibilities are highlighted and only the principal practice is emphasised.

Verhoeven's model (2002a:33-34, **Fig. 5**) has been judged (§ 1.5.5-1.5.8) a very good guide for the production of analysis of previously identified ritual practices. By changing *framing* into 'pragmatic context' (for reasons explained in § 1.5) and by understanding *symbols* as the semantics of 'ritual communication' (Bloch 1974, 1977, Geertz 1973, Leach 1976), this guide serves here the construction of a summary of identified ritual practices:

#### *5.2.1 Kissonerga-Mylouthkia Wells and Parekklisha-Shillourokambos Fosse 23: summary of the ritual system.*

##### *Pragmatic Context:*

Liminal containers (wells) enclosing high numbers of selected pieces of fragmented artefacts, animals and humans.

##### *Syntax:*

Context: Cypriot PPNB,

Kissonerga-Mylouthkia: questionable settlement site, where wells were constructed in the bedrock and were backfilled after they had dried.

Parekklisha-Shillourokambos: settlement site, where deep pits and a probable well, *Fosse 23*, were constructed and subsequently backfilled.



Object: Containers with symbolic force; agents represented mainly by their most enduring fragmented parts.

Act: - well digging

- initiation (on the island) of a tradition of construction of subterranean structures

- use of well-water for a variation of activities possibly including rites

- possible re-descent into the subterranean structure after considerable amount of time for confirmation of the end of water production; re-descent possibly orchestrated within a ritual practice

- encounter and confirmation of the death of the well (with the end of the water-production), recognition of the breakage of a socio-cultural and mytho-logical chain of relations

- first symbolic deposition of other dead (*fractals*: human and animal and/ or objects)

- cultural and ritual empowerment of the container with *symbolic force*

- subsequent structured deposition of *fractals* in frequent intervals

- ritual transport of enduring natural materials (rough stone, remains of stone artefacts) and of transformative materials (soil, decomposing humans, killed (?) animals)

- ritual closure, abandonment

Typology: 1. Symbolic construction

2. Death ritual

3. Votive / sacrificial depositions / offerings to an entity (well?), who provided a life / identity-gift (well-water) and to the ancestors, who brought the community into "communication" with itself and / or the entity (?) by successful well-digging (probably with the blessing of the entity?)

4. Transformation (of a life-giver into a life-receiver)

5. Secondary use of the well, secondary burial rites; burial manipulation, dismemberment

6. Ritual transport (possibly procession) of ancestors and secondary burial.

Agent: Collective ritual, *communitas*, possibly public ritual.

*Semantics (Symbols):*

- fractals, as symbols of enchainment processes of meaningful social interrelations

- obsidian, as symbol of the socio-cultural and possibly mytho-logic origin of the community and as symbol of affirmation of *common identities*, [...] *shared worldview and knowledge* with the world of origin (Appendix II).

- human parts as symbols of the actions of human agents and / or ancestors; as representations of the previous living whole; as symbols of acknowledgement of death and *humanity-animality* (Watkins 2005:88, Campbell and Green 1995, Ingold 1994).

- human and animal parts as possible intergraded cultural categories.

*Dimensions:*

Function: - re-affirmation of cosmological and social order

- social cohesion

- creation of tradition

- fulfilment of obligations towards disembodied souls

- creation, establishment and re-establishment of mytho-logical categories and appropriation of material categories

Emotionalism: - reassurance that world order will be maintained and the society will prosper

Material culture: engagement with subterranean structures and fractals

Meaning: Culturally, socially, contextually and mytho-logically bounded communication system of ritualized actions, which were practiced with the motivation to express sacred beliefs, ideals and ideas.

*Analogy:*

Archaeological (Galili et al. 1993, 1997) and ethnographical examples (Miller 1985, Bloch 1982) were offered for illustration of the attested practices.

*5.2.2 Kalavassos-Tenta and Khirokitia-Vouni CPBs and Burial Buildings: summary of the ritual system.*

*Pragmatic context:*

Circular Buildings for specific functions in distinct areas of the settlement, which contain non-structural pillars (stelai) with traces of plaster and/or paintings on their surfaces. Burial of selected dead within these buildings in close association with the stelai. Evidence for water or other liquid use, burning, formalized seating, hoarding and structured deposition. Maintenance of free spaces in the settlement in order to make these buildings distinct from the rest. Incomparable longevity of use of these buildings.

*Syntax:*

Context: Cypriot Aceramic Neolithic, Kalavassos-Tenta and Khirokitia-Vouni, two long-lived settlements which were peacefully abandoned.

Object: Circular Buildings which have non structural large pillars (stelai). Burial use. Deposition of symbolic items within the buildings, deposition of the dead customarily in relation to the stelai. Distinction of these buildings in space. Incomparable longevity of these buildings.

Act: - Continuation of tradition: construction of symbolic structures (CPBs) and transformation of these structures into containers with symbolic force. Continuation of burial manipulation and burial use for the completion of a ritual.

- Burial use for empowerment of liminality.

- Domestication of Death (with its entrance within the settlement walls and/or in the *domus*).

- Domestication of the Unknown, with the construction of structures symbolizing mytho-logical entities within the settlement walls and in proximity to or within the *domus* (Hodder 1987).

- Creation of sacred spaces inside the *domus*, within the settlement walls.

- Institutionalisation of rules and routines that strengthen the ritual, promote social cohesion and maintain social order.

- construction of symbolic sub-structures, burial, ritual burning, ritual use of water and/or other liquid, symbolic structured deposition, hoarding, ritual closure and sealing.

Typology: Cosmological ritual.

Death ritual.

Agent: Collective ritual, *communitas*; communal ritual with possible public aspects (in the open spaces) and with restrictive access to the sacred space.

Semantics (Symbols):

- Stelai possibly as materializations of (a) mytho-logical entity (/ -ies)

- Paintings, anthropomorphic representations in paint and sculpture.

- Pebbles as symbols of durability and permanency.

- Water and soil as symbols of transformative longevity

- Fire as symbol of taming the natural world and hope of taming the supernatural world, the "Unknown".

- Burials as symbols of manipulation of death in the domus, symbols of taming "Death", therefore taming the "Unknown", the "Beyond" of empirical experience.

- Burning and floor cleaning possibly as symbols of purification

- Sealing and hermetic closure possibly as symbols of maintenance and stability.

*Dimensions:*

Function: - stelai, as material expressions of ideological or archetypal pillars supporting religious beliefs.

- burial used to express the ritual and reaffirm social order

- communal decision to construct pillars and maintain specific buildings and the empty spaces around them over generations (investing time and labour)

- creation of a system of values and tradition.

- promotion of social cohesion

Performative aspect: emphasised with the staged interior of some buildings, the seats, the controlled access to the "main stage", the creation of ambiance with fire / flame / burnt substances, the creation of a vivid surrounding with the use of plaster, colours and painted figures.

Material culture: maintenance and persistence

Meaning: Culturally, socially, contextually and mytho-logically bounded communication system of ritualized actions, which were practiced with the motivation to express sacred beliefs, ideals and ideas.

*Analogy:*

Archaeological (Beile-Bohn 1998, Evans 1901, Mellaart 1967, Strodeur 2003, Watkins 1989, 2004) and ethnographical literature parallels (Eliade 1957:20-65, Evans 1901:130-135, Evelyn-White 1914, Watson 1980, Wernike 1896:2118-2133) were used for contextualization and interpretation.

### 5.2.3 *The result.*

Verhoeven's (2002a:33-34) *model* proves successful for crystallization of an analysis on ritual and for summarising the identified evidence. Repetitions between the first step (*framing/* pragmatic context) and the second (*syntax*) occurs inevitably since *context* and *object* (of ritual) is part of the *syntax*. This is not a result of the replacement of *framing* by pragmatic context; it can also be noticed on the application of Verhoeven's (2002a:34, figure 4) *model of analysis* (**Fig. 5b**), proving that Verhoeven's model lacks the step prior to every analysis; the ascription of "the analysed-to-be" into a modern western category and the identification of this category for what it is.

By constructing this summary (§§ 5.2.1 and 5.2.2) in this way, it was not only Verhoeven's model that was tested, and proved successful as outlined (§1.5.7), but also the results of this thesis; through the identification and analysis that this thesis offered, questions, posed by another archaeologist, in regards to archaeologically detectable ritual practices, were successfully answered.

### 5.2.4 *Analysis.*

The identified ritual practices in Cypriot early prehistory demonstrated actions which expressed engagements with issues of the first colonists and the first sedentary world in general. The construction of the wells and the pillars suggested persistence in and maintenance of traditions established long before the Cypriot PPNB and Aceramic Neolithic, on the mainland (Peltenburg 2004). Engagement with the natural and

supernatural world, continuous attempts for taming both, expression of identity, and preservation of memory seem to be central issues in the construction of a socio-ritual reality in prehistoric Cyprus. There also seemed to be a preoccupation with the dead and, by extension, "death". Dead were buried, exhumed, disembodied and re-buried in the CPPNB. *Fosse 23* possibly constituted the place where collective burials occurred as an initial place of interment. Subsequently the dead could be manipulated and their decomposing body could be used in rites where the focus was not the burial. Kissonerga-Mylouthkia wells provided the indication of a place where parts of decomposing dead were used and finally deposited. At Kissonerga-Mylouthkia wells, there was also evidence of the sort of ritual practice where parts of the dead were needed for the initiation and / or completion of a ritual that was related more to the *well* rather than the dead.

The dead found in a ditch within *rubbish* outside the settlement wall and outside buildings, in common yards, at Tenta, revealed the existence of a variation in the ritual use of burials. The lack of evidence for the great majority of burials both at Tenta and at Khirokitia suggested that the practice of collective graves possibly continued beyond the settlement walls, also during that period of time. There was no evidence though, for extensive burial interference and transport. Burial manipulation was evidenced at Khirokitia to a minimum extent. Practices related to the dead in both the CPPNB and Aceramic Neolithic revealed that the burial, the dead and, by extension, "death", could be used for the completion of other ritual practices. Both the "well-ritual" and the "pillar-ritual" needed "death" for creation and / or empowerment of liminality. The powerful element of a liminal zone, where the believer came closer to the Other, the Unknown world, in order to experience, observe and understand the mysteries that lay beyond the empirical world (Leach 1976) was central both in the Cypriot PPNB and Aceramic Neolithic.

Burials under the floors of buildings did not constitute "the burial customs" as previously thought, but formed a separate category within them. Social interaction did

not involve only the relations the living created with themselves, but also the relationships they constructed with their dead (Parker Pearson 1993, 1999) and other mytho-logic entities, which were materialized (Watkins 2004a) and attributed agency (i.e. wells, pillars and fractals). Generations and generations of ancestors were buried in those buildings at Khirokitia. The descendants assumed the obligation to continue the tradition, to maintain these buildings as living monuments and to keep them distinct in space. At Kissonerga-Mylouthkia the elapsed time between the construction of a well and its final sealing, suggested *collective memory* (Williams 2003) and possible attribution of honour to the ancestors who first dug it. The chronological distance of a thousand years between Well 116 and Well 133 (period IA and IB) also indicated a well-founded tradition, transmission of knowledge and persistence to the same rite; therefore maintenance of mytho-logic categories and values.

Lastly, taming, controlling and domesticating, which must have been central notions to the psychology and identity both of the first colonists and the first settlers in general, was expressed in the ritual practices both in the Cypriot PPNB and Aceramic Neolithic. Practices at Shillourokambos and Kissonerga-Mylouthkia exhibited excessive familiarity with the dead. "Death" was manipulated, possibly in a constant attempt for it to be tamed (§ 3.6, Helms 2004). It was manipulated and controlled and in the end it was "domesticated" with its introduction to the *domus* (Hodder 1987) in the Aceramic Neolithic. The use of fire on dead bodies evidenced by charred skulls and long bones at Shillourokambos and Mylouthkia, and within restricted areas in sacred buildings in association with the dead, at Tenta and Khirokitia, possibly expressed a victory in regards to the taming of a different force (fire) that also used to be a mystery. If stone lived for ever, soil could transform and survived for ever, the trees died *but only after a long long time* (Campbell 1989:81, Helms 2004:124-125) and fire had been tamed and fully controlled, who or what could suggest that "death" was not to be tamed, too.

Ritualization of other natural and cultural material occurred at liminal locales in the Cypriot PPNB and Aceramic Neolithic. The fluidity of the ritual permitted a



variation of the kind and the quantity, but stone, water, fire and artefactual fractals seemed to be predominant depending on contexts. Additionally, the performative aspect of ritual (Tombiah 1979) must have been central to both to the 'well-ritual' and the 'pillar-ritual'; the descent to and ascent from the well were possibly practiced ceremoniously both during the construction of the well and during the process of its sealing. Descent in that deep, dark and humid tube (§2.4.1) by the constructors of the well, in order to further its depth and reach water, certainly demanded the transport of fire for provision of light inside the earth. The descent was possibly initiated with the appeal to a spirit (?) and a ritual prior to the initial digging so that the endeavour would have a successful end. After so much effort and labour investment (Peltenburg 2003a, b), the retrieval of water, such an important life element and identity indicator for the community, was probably celebrated with communal ritual. At the event of the "death" of the well, re-descent into it, after probably centuries, would have possibly demanded invocation of the ancestors and the *well* agent. Subsequent depositions of quantities of artefacts, stone and soil would have involved the community, while the exhumation of decomposing ancestors and their transport to the mouth of the well would probably have happened ceremoniously. During the 'pillar-ritual', the smells, from the burning substances and the bodies decomposing -in some cases only under some ten centimetres of soil, or possibly by the pillars- would have certainly created a mystic ambiance. The plaster, the colours, the human and non human representations would have contributed to a staged effect (Tombiah 1979).

In the Cypriot PPNB and Aceramic Neolithic, the whole world was animated (Dorbes and Robb 2000, DeMarrais et al. 2004, Renfrew 2004, Watkins 2002, 2004a, 2005). Nature, animals, objects embodied dynamic divine energy that manifested in the eyes of the believer and formed part of their world; a meaningful world. Wells and CPBs were loaded with symbolism, meaning and ideology. They constituted liminal spaces where the idea of the Unknown could be approached by the believer, examined, understood and possibly tamed and domesticated. Sacred beliefs, ideas and values

were expressed. The ritual was practiced repeatedly for millennia and social order and prosperity was ensured until the very very end.

### **5.3 Ritual on our own terms; ritual histories - ritual societies.**

*The pragmatics of unofficial relationships are expressed through the semantics of religion* (Helander 1988:132). While ritual itself was the categorical unit analysed, it would not be fully understood without reference to the socio-historical processes which occurred in the ordered system of the specific culture (**Fig. 6**, §1.6, Geertz 1973: 12, 144, Bloch 1982, Cederroth et al. 1988). In the framework of a socio-historical overview of Cypriot PPNB and Aceramic Neolithic, ritual practices revealed a complex web of social relations. At Kissonerga-Mylouthkia and Parekklisha-Shillourokambos, the 'well-ritual' indicated social solidarity and cohesion. Excessive numbers of *fractals* (Chapman and Gaydarska 2007) suggested strong group interrelations, production and reproduction of social practices and structures (Meredith 2007, Williams 2004). Ritual as instances in the continuum of symbolic communication (Bloch 1974, 1989:38-45) was central to the reproduction of social relations between human and non-human agents (Chapman 2007:69). The practice of the same ritual in two locales separated in time by a thousand years (Well 116-Well 133) corroborated further a system of consistent values and symbols, a firmly founded tradition, conformity to ancestral rules and rites, and a compact social organisation.

On the basis of the revised chronology of Tenta (Todd 2005, Peltenburg 2003a: 86-87), Tenta period 4 represents a transitional phase. High degrees of ritual variation occur during times of change, when the messages that are communicated within the society are mixed and uncertain (Bloch 1974, 1989, Douglas 1970). At Tenta period 4, the minimal presence of intramural burials, the burials in the ditch and in back-yards amongst *intellectual rubbish* (Hill 1996) exhibited possible continuation in the ritual

system. At the same time though, the outset of a new tradition appeared: burials in association with the *domus* (Hodder 1987). Differentiation in the ritual use of the burial indicated the beginning of the “domestication of ritual”. Burial differentiation on the basis of age (§ 4.3.1), differentiation of buildings on a mytho-logic basis (§ 4.4.1) and attribution of meaning and agency to constructions on the earth rather than subterranean indicated a shift in the symbolic language and consequently a shift in the ritual system.

Alternatively, if maceheads and walls indicated group conflict in the Cypriot Aceramic (Peltenburg 2003b:28), the consistencies that Tenta period 4 exhibited in comparison to the Mylouthkia wells and Shillourokambos *Fosse 23* possibly is explicable on the basis of a common ancestral origin of the indigenous population and the new arrivals (McCartney 2005:219, 223-224). Their origins from populations who “spoke” the same ritual language (Appendix II), although “accents” could be identified (Verhoeven 2002b, 2004), possibly explains the common ritual elements shared between the sites. At the same time Tenta period 4 emphasised its identity by the erection of a wall, the foundation of ancestral rights on the land by the use of burials within the settlement wall and the burial association with highly symbolic buildings. The erection of the pillars at Tenta period 4 coincided with *the increase of obsidian artifacts in lithic samples* (McCartney 2005:223) demonstrating a need for accentuation of symbols of identity and ancestral values (Appendix II).

At Tenta period 2, the subsequent disappearance of intramural ritual burial use and the re-generation and accentuation of symbolic buildings (CPBs) in direct association with a new, impressive and powerful building-sign (CRB) possibly represented empowerment of a specific social group. Certainly, this shift in the practice of ritual demonstrated radical changes in the worldview, the associated values, the cosmological order and consequently in the social order.

*In the contexts where emphasis changes, where a competing set of social relations are brought forth and allowed to dominate, a corresponding shift of ideological dominance also occurs.*  
(Helander 1988:113)

After the ritual fluctuation attested at Tenta, at Khirokitia the ritual appeared again solid, stable and with well defined and distinct mytho-logic categories. Ritual elements from Mylouthkia, Shillourokambos and Tenta were noticed at Khirokitia. Well-digging was already de-ritualized; but hoarding, symbolic and structured deposition and transformation of constructions into *containers* (Gable 2004) was practiced repeatedly. Additionally, ritual use of natural elements such as stone, water and fire, which was observed at Mylouthkia and Shillourokambos, found a very specific position in the ritual sequence at Khirokitia. Ritual Buildings and pillars with agency, which were noticed at Tenta period 4, were established as primary and focal points of the ritual at Khirokitia, while ritual burial use continued. Strict syntax in the ritual language and well defined meanings in the socio-cultural communication characterized ritual life at Khirokitia.

As [...] *the ritual act may also manifest the organisational needs of the group* (Eastmond 1988:79), ritual organisation in neighbourhoods was identified to have been mirroring possible equivalent social organisation in egalitarian groups. The relatively large open spaces for social gatherings at Khirokitia (Le Brun (1994:139), were considered suspiciously small for the estimated population size of the settlement, which otherwise exhibited traits of a traditional egalitarian Neolithic community (Peltenburg 2004:84-85). These spaces should be considered large enough for "neighbourhood-chiefs", probably with achieved status (Parker-Pearson 1999:74), to be gathering as "first among equals" (*primus inter pares*). Concurrently, totemic symbols (Frazer 1887, Freud 1913) which would emphasise differences and / or competition among neighbourhoods or groups, were absent from Khirokitia. Therefore if a chiefs' council was a social reality at Khirokitia, the latter must have been ordered in a

cohesive and egalitarian manner. In Douglas' (1970:104-105) terms, Khirokitia exhibited strong grid and group. It would be classified under "C" in Douglas' (1970:105) diagram, where she explained:

*[...] Roles are well defined, but not so as to inhibit free transactions between groups and categories. [...] It is a magical cosmos in the general sense of belief in efficacious symbols. But the power of symbols is thought to uphold the structure of society.*

With the collapse of this structure and the first disperse of prehistoric Cypriots (Peltenburg 2004:85-86), small short lived settlements, possibly of perishable material, must have emerged. Cape Andreas-Kastros represents the transitional phase between the collapse of Khirokitia and the disappearance of early Cypriots from the archaeological record. In the early levels of Cape Andreas-Kastros the newly adopted building-sign (CRB), symbolizing a new social order, represented the norm of building practices. The only complete burial at the site dating to these early levels probably suggested traces of continuity with the practices of the previous period. This burial could be understood as indirectly linked with the overlying CRB. On the subsequent levels, absence of CRBs and complete burials possibly suggested the new socio-ritual order, which was emerging. Scattered human remains and skull depositions in midden deposits, along with absence of coherent ritual symbolism were indicative of a second manifest of high degrees of ritual variation.

Although absence of virtual context due to excavation publication reasons (§2.4.2) prohibits a comprehensive perception of practices at Cape-Andreas Kastros, it is clear that there is nothing on those late levels to remind of the socio-ritual system of Khirokitia. Winds of change had already swept away all identifiable mytho-logical categories of the previous period. As traces of ritual elements dating back to Khirokitia and the CPPNB can be identified in the subsequent periods (§5.4), it could be argued that Cape-Andreas Kastros represented a conscious social reaction to a ritual system that must have been considered to have failed for that community.

In general, ritual variation was in higher degrees during the outset of a practice and after its decline (Well 116, Tenta period 4, Cape Andreas-Kastros early levels), while excess in material and elaboration in the practice was attested during the peak time of the ritual (Well 133/ *Fosse* 23 and Khirokitia period II/ middle levels). Well defined mytho-logical categories and solid ritual practices with emphasis on agents' interrelations and lack of differential symbols revealed cohesive egalitarian and / or group-based egalitarian societies (Mylouthkia, Shillourokambos, Khirokitia). The results of this work demonstrated that the understanding of the technology, economy and architecture of a people is not enough in order to comprehend their culture and society. Ritual was an important aspect of early prehistoric societies and without its study, no complete understanding of these societies could be claimed to have been accomplished.

#### **5.4. Ritual continuities and discontinuities in the Ceramic Neolithic; the exodus of ritual.**

The endeavour to explore continuities and discontinuities of ritual practices in the Ceramic Neolithic would be complete only after thorough localized contextual and relational analysis. After the lacuna in Cypriot prehistory, exploration and identification of the ritual system within the Ceramic Neolithic is required first, prior to any substantial comparison. Nevertheless, people did not disappear from Cyprus in the end of Aceramic Neolithic. They dispersed carrying with them the classifications of their civilization. These people should be expected to have acted within the boundaries of their historically constructed culture (Bloch 1986:10). At Cape Andreas-Kastros, they were observed to have already initiated changes in the pre-established ritual system, which they had chosen not to re-establish. When they appeared in the archaeological record again (Ayios Epiktitos-Vrysi, Sotira Tepes, Kalavassos-Kokkinoyia), they had

already transformed and changed their ritual system, but certainly did not do this ex nihilo (§ 3.6, Bloch 1986:10). The people who inhabited Ayios Epiktitos-Vrysi and Sotira-Tepes were not different from the people who settled at Cape Andreas-Kastros or from the people who abandoned Tenta and Khirokitia. They were not the same either; they had changed, but their change could not have occurred, but on a pre-existing basis. On this basis and by taking the risk of a possible *confirmation bias* (Wason 1960, 1966, 1968), some conspicuous elements, which indicate ritual practices in the Ceramic Neolithic, should be noted here.

It is a common feeling of research both in Cyprus and on the Mainland that dramatic indications for ritual were generally absent from the periods succeeding the (C-)PPNB/C (Verhoeven 2002b:241). No burials were found within the settlement sites of the Cypriot Ceramic Neolithic. The appearance of the first organised cemetery in the outskirts of Sotira-Tepes settlement initiated a different long tradition of burial management (i.e. cemeteries e.g. Souskiou-Vathyrkakas, Souskiou-Laona). Expected equivalent practice was not identified at Ayios Epiktitos-Vrysi, although no burial was found at the settlement-site. Because of the extra-domusment of the powerful liminal element of the burial, two routes should be followed for the identification of ritual practices in the Ceramic Neolithic. Firstly exploration of the ways liminality was created at Sotira-Tepes cemetery and identification of the structural elements of the ritual within the burial context, and subsequent contextual and relational analysis of the finds at the settlement-site for possible identification of ritual practices. Secondly, exploration of possible ritual structural elements within the settlement sites, which possibly represent continuities from the previous ritual system. In regards to the second:

At Ayios Epiktitos-Vrysi, in House 1, on floor 4b-a, seats were found along the E wall of the building, N of the entrance, which was situated in the SE. Peltenburg (1982: 24) noted: *This was the most elaborate seating arrangement at Vrysi*. Opposite to these seats, against the W wall, a hoard of twelve horizontally stacked axes, chisels and an adze

were found in situ. In the NW corner of the building, diametrically opposite to the door in the SE, three upstanding stone pillars (389 a, b) of maximum height 0.58m were found secured on the floor (**Fig. 61**). Entrants to the building would directly face this “pillar model”. In the adjacent building, House 7, on floor 2, which was contemporary to House 1, floor 4b-a (Peltenburg 1982:38, Table 1), a plastered basin, 1.20m long, was found along the S wall. Elaborate arrangements of installed stone basins and other containers were placed at either side of the large basin. A triton shell was found in situ on a container secured in between the basin and the S wall of the building.

These internal arrangements organised in two adjacent buildings of contemporary use, are strongly reminiscent of arrangements in and around CPB complexes at Khirokitia (§4.4.1 B) and may represent continuation of the ‘pillar-ritual’ to a subtler degree. The ‘pillar-ritual’ at Khirokitia could have survived within the oral traditions and the memory (Williams 2003, Meredith 2007) of the people who abandoned Khirokitia. It was too much part of their identity for it to have been forgotten (Appendix II). Additionally, the “pillar-model” at Ayios Epiktitos-Vrysi possibly represents the final stages of the gradual de-ritualization of the pillars and by extension, probably the very last performances of the ‘pillar-ritual’. Furthermore, the comparatively miniature size of these stone pillars at Ayios Epiktitos-Vrysi, possibly represents the outset of an engagement with models for this culture. Models could have been used for the re-enactment of a mytho-logic story. Story-telling with the help of induction models and / or figurines (Peltenburg 1991) would promote established values and beliefs and would perpetuate tradition. Further investigation of the particular context and of the wider settlement context would certainly be needed for an in-depth understanding of ritual practices at Ayios Epiktitos-Vrysi.

Peltenburg (1989:112) noted possible similar arrangement, to House 1 at Ayios Epiktitos-Vrysi, in House 5 at Sotira-Tepes (Dikaios 1962:41-50). There, a phallic shaped figurine (106) was found under a layer of fragmented combed ware and red-lustrous sherds, in a stone-wall enclosure, in the NE corner of the building. On the same floor a



hoard of red jasper pebbles was found (Dikaios 1961:43, 148). In the same building, in the NW corner of the subsequent floor (II), a stone quern was found covered with sherds and deer antler. Several areas can be noticed in buildings at Sotira, where concentrations of pebbles occurred and / or antler was left on the floor. Also, small pits with pebbles and ashes exhibited structured deposition (Dikaios 1961:164-165).

Lastly, the conflagration in the end of Sotira phase I, which was witnessed by a thick carbonised layer covering all the remains at the settlement (Dikaios 1961:219) was too extended for it to have been accidental. Experimental research has demonstrated that buildings of stone, mortar and mud-bricks burn with remarkable difficulty (Thomas 2005). Deliberate burning to the extent that it was witnessed at Sotira was possibly related to pyroritual (Gheorgiu 2007). The earthquake that destroyed the site in subsequent phase III probably had a series of pre-quakes, which are quite common prior to an earthquake of a large scale. The frequent movement of the earth, spreading anxiety to the inhabitants of Sotira, could have demanded a purification ritual for cleansing and regeneration. Alternatively, the shift in the architectural traits that Dikaios (1961:219) noted in phase (II) following the conflagration can be considered suggestive of a previous need for pyroritual relating to cleansing, sealing and social regeneration within a new sociocultural emerging order.

In the Ceramic Neolithic period well-digging was de-ritualized, but the tradition of underground constructions with possible equivalent mytho-logic associations was continued. Pit digging, structured depositions and hoards can be identified throughout the Aceramic and Ceramic Neolithic. The underground complex at Kalavassos-Kokkinoyia (Clarke 1993, 2006, 2007) possibly represents an elaborate version of a relevant ritual practice associated with subterranean features. Especially significant may prove the deposition of a pestle, a pebble, a triangular chalk block and a large triton shell with the apex removed, in subterranean chamber 105. Clarke stressed the importance of triton shells in earlier and later contexts. Within the framework of

structured depositions and offerings, the Kalavassos-Kokkinoyia complex may prove an important site for the investigation of ritual in the Cypriot Ceramic Neolithic.

Ritual structural elements identified generally in subsequent phases in Cyprus can now be reviewed within a history of ritual practices of the island. Hoarding, fragmentation and sealing attested at Kissonerga-Mosphilia (Peltenburg 1998), the previously mysterious pebble (KM 1533) and the triton shell in the Kissonerga-Mosphilia hoard (Peltenburg 1991) find now a comfortable place within the sequence and evolution of mythological categories of this culture. Elaborate ceramic models (Dikaios 1940, Morris 1985), burial manipulation and secondary burials (Keswani 2004) attested in the Early Bronze Age can now be reviewed within a long history of equivalent practices on the island.

### **5.5 "Ritual doors" awaiting their opening to future research.**

In addition to the suggested continuities and possible discontinuities in the Ceramic Neolithic and Chalcolithic, which would need equivalent meticulous contextual and relational analysis for them to be demonstrated in detail within the socio-cultural realities of those eras, more research in the Cypriot PPNB and Aceramic Neolithic would enhance our understanding of that world.

More fieldwork needs to be undertaken both at Tenta and at Khirokitia with specific objectives. At Tenta there needs to be a deeper and more extensive excavation with two aims: a) to stratigraphically link areas which are ambiguously related and b) to obtain material for radiocarbon chronology so that relations between areas can be understood within a sounder chronological framework. Further excavation around CPB S 85, at Tenta, would not only assist a better understanding of the stratigraphy of the settlement, but would also further our understanding of this CPB and activities related to it and its proximate area. Additionally, re-work of the periodisation of Tenta is

needed. On this basis, evolution of ritual practices which remains somewhat ambiguous within the present periodisation will become clearer.

More fieldwork is also needed at Khirokitia. Excavation at the site has been realised to a great extent. Two fundamental questions though remain unanswered. Further fieldwork at Khirokitia needs to securely stratigraphically link east and west sectors, to demonstrate the chronological period during which the settlement expanded beyond the settlement wall and the synchronic relations between eastern and western structures. This information is available for the structures Dikaios excavated, but it is absent for the structures Le Brun did. Additionally, fieldwork needs to be undertaken at Khirokitia so that the areas Dikaios excavated can be stratigraphically linked with the areas excavated by Le Brun. Viewing the site as a whole, instead of in two parts, would facilitate future research and would enhance our understanding of practices at Khirokitia.

In regards to further research on ritual practices, the forthcoming publication of Shillourokambos is expected to provide complete contextual presentation of *Fosse 23* and other wells/ pits and burials at the settlement. The meticulous contextual study of the material will reveal more aspects of the ritual life in the CPPNB. Importantly, the reported undisrupted sequence from the CPPNB until the Khirokitian period at the site and its subsequent analysis will offer a good basis for the study of ritual evolution and the mytho-logic process of categorization. Additionally, intra-site comparison with Khirokitia will verify or reject possibilities of a common mytho-logic, common ritual practices and, by extension, possibilities of a common origin of the inhabitants of the two sites. The forthcoming publication of Kissonerga-Mylouthkia wells (2100, 2030, 2070) will further our understanding of the “well-ritual”; mytho-logical categories will be further clarified and the sequence and evolution of practices will be better understood.

Khirokitia still remains a rich site for further exploration and analysis of ritual practices. This research successfully distinguished between Ritual Buildings and Burial

Buildings or Buildings for subsistence purposes. Further research following the proposed methodology could demonstrate evidence for classification, which would further distinguish Burial Buildings from “subsistence” Buildings amongst Circular Buildings with one or two Partitions, C-Tri-Radial Buildings and Circular Buildings. Given the fact that prominent ritual elements were identified even within buildings without burials, deeper research could provide evidence for a basis of distinction between public, communal and domestic ritual practiced at the site.

Within a framework of identification of continuities of ritual practices the verification of whether the CPPNB wells were indeed fully de-ritualized in subsequent periods would constitute important research interest especially because of the attested cultural engagement with subterranean structures in the Ceramic Neolithic (Clarke 1993, 2006, 2007). Although well construction was never again repeated in the later Neolithic and the Chalcolithic, concentrations of combed ware and early Chalcolithic sherds were noticed above pits and wells and were considered to have been intrusive both at Shillourokambos and Mylouthkia. At Shillourokambos ceramic material was found only above wells / deep pits, at their top levels, although later Neolithic structures were identified at the wider periphery of the earliest settlement, but not over the Aceramic levels (Guillaine et al. 1996:953). Ceramic material was not even reported to have been found in the top-most stratigraphic layers such as *couche 1*, over the Aceramic horizon (Guillaine et al 1993:717, 1995a:25). These were exactly the circumstances in which later material was found at Kissonerga-Mylouthkia, also (Peltenburg 2003a).

The explanation that was provided was that activities in the area of the wells continued in later phases (Croft 2003:4) and taphonomic conditions such as water action affected the concentration of later material in the higher layers of the wells and above them. However, if any activities were continued at Parekklisha-Shillourokambos in later eras, those must have been concentrated only around or above deep pits and previous wells. It would be of extreme interest if a tradition of repeated activities linked

with deep holes in the earth of previous periods can be attested in the late Neolithic and Chalcolithic as a continuation of practices related to these features and the way they might have been perceived since the Aceramic Neolithic. No published article on Shillourokambos so far has dedicated an informed section on the later Neolithic or Chalcolithic material and only general references have been made (Guilaine 1995a:25 and 2001b:41). In view of the forthcoming complete excavation report from Parekklisha-Shillourokambos and given the fact that late material from Kissonerga-Mylouthkia has already been published, this may prove to be a very interesting research topic.

Lastly, the methodology provided by this thesis could be applicable to specialized themes on the basis of previously identified ritual practices. "The ritual history of a shell" could explain the gradual ritualization of the triton shell from the CPPNB until the Bronze Age. Also, "The ritual history of a hoard" could contextualize the Kissonerga-Mylouthkia hoard within the history of hoards and structured depositions on the island, with associated evidence from Khirokitia, Sotira-Tepes and Kalavasos-Kokkinoyia.

## Quotations

### Notes on quotations in the beginning of chapters.

1. Title of a short story in the collection *after the quake* by Haruki Murakami (2003:41), which arguably is not relevant with religion necessarily, but with one of the human mysteries.
2. Phrase from *Oryx and Crake*, a postmodern novel by Margaret Atwood (2003:419-420), where a new species of humans has been genetically manufactured and freed to start living in a community, after a holocaust that has caused almost the extinction of nearly all other human life on the planet. Even though this new human species has been genetically improved, and has started their free community life in a "primitive" way, at some point, they prove capable of symbolic thinking, which signals the possibility of the inevitability of repetition of the process of civilization.
3. Famous stirring phrase from the poem *Sweeney Agonistes*, by T.S. Eliot (1932). Jack Goody (1959:31) himself uses this quote in the beginning of the chapter: *The Analysis of Ceremony and Rite*, dedicated to the anthropological definitions of the notions of ritual and religion.
4. Famous quote among Archaeology undergraduates, coming from the second movie (*Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, 1989) of the trilogy, *Indiana Jones* by Steven Spielberg. The script writers, George Lucas and Philip Kaufman, put this phrase in the mouth of the character of a young and adventurous professor of archaeology, played by the actor Harrison Ford. The movie, although enjoyable constitutes an archaeological parody, in a sense, but became influential enough to mislead many adolescents to Archaeology Schools, although they were envisioning adventures and not long hours in a library for their future. The quote does not of course cover or represents what archaeology or philosophy is about, but I think, it makes a successful distinction, identifying in short what the two disciplines seek.
5. The famous quote by Lewis R. Binford (1962:217) at a time when archaeology was discovering and accepting the benefits of anthropological research in archaeology, especially prehistoric. I think it ties very well with the following quote.
6. David L. Clarke's (1968:13) reaction to Binford supporting that the particular parameters archaeology faces as a social science of the past, set the discipline apart from all others distinctively.

7. I have used Renfrew's (2003) title of his recent book, *Figuring it out*, as a title for this section as I believe Renfrew's concern as described and analysed in his book is also central and influential both to this particular section and this research in general. Renfrew's title should not be considered as simply a phrase - a title for this section while trying to figure out the definitional problem of ritual, but also as a position towards it.

8. Phrase from the *Ventriloquist's Tale*, a novel by Pauline Melville, where a native community in an Amazon forest comes in contact with members of the modern western civilization. Values of life conduct and beliefs about death of the latter perplex the native community.

9. Part of the introduction to the beautiful novel *Weight. The myth of Atlas and Heracles*, based on the myth of Heracles at the garden of Hesperides, by Jeanette Winterson (2005:x).

10. The third verse of the poem *Details on Cyprus. To the painter Diamandí* written by Gheorghios (George) Seferis, a Nobel Prize awarded Greek poet.

11. Hesiod 514-519, translation by Evelyn-White (1914). In Hesiod's *Theogony*, Zeus nailed, as corner pillars of the structure of the cosmos, the *ready-witted* Prometheus in the East, who gave people fire and his brother, the *stout-hearted* Atlas in the West. The myth symbolizes the sharpness of the mind and the physical power, in balance, for order in the world to be preserved (Wernike 1896: 2118-2133). The passage that follows this quote is from Genesis 1:8.

12. Beliefs of the grandmother of the main character in *Ventriloquist's Tale* by Pauline Melville (1999:7, 9). The native old woman cannot understand the westerner's religious thought or practices. For her anything beyond the mytho-logic of her tradition was not only meaningless, but also dangerous.

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