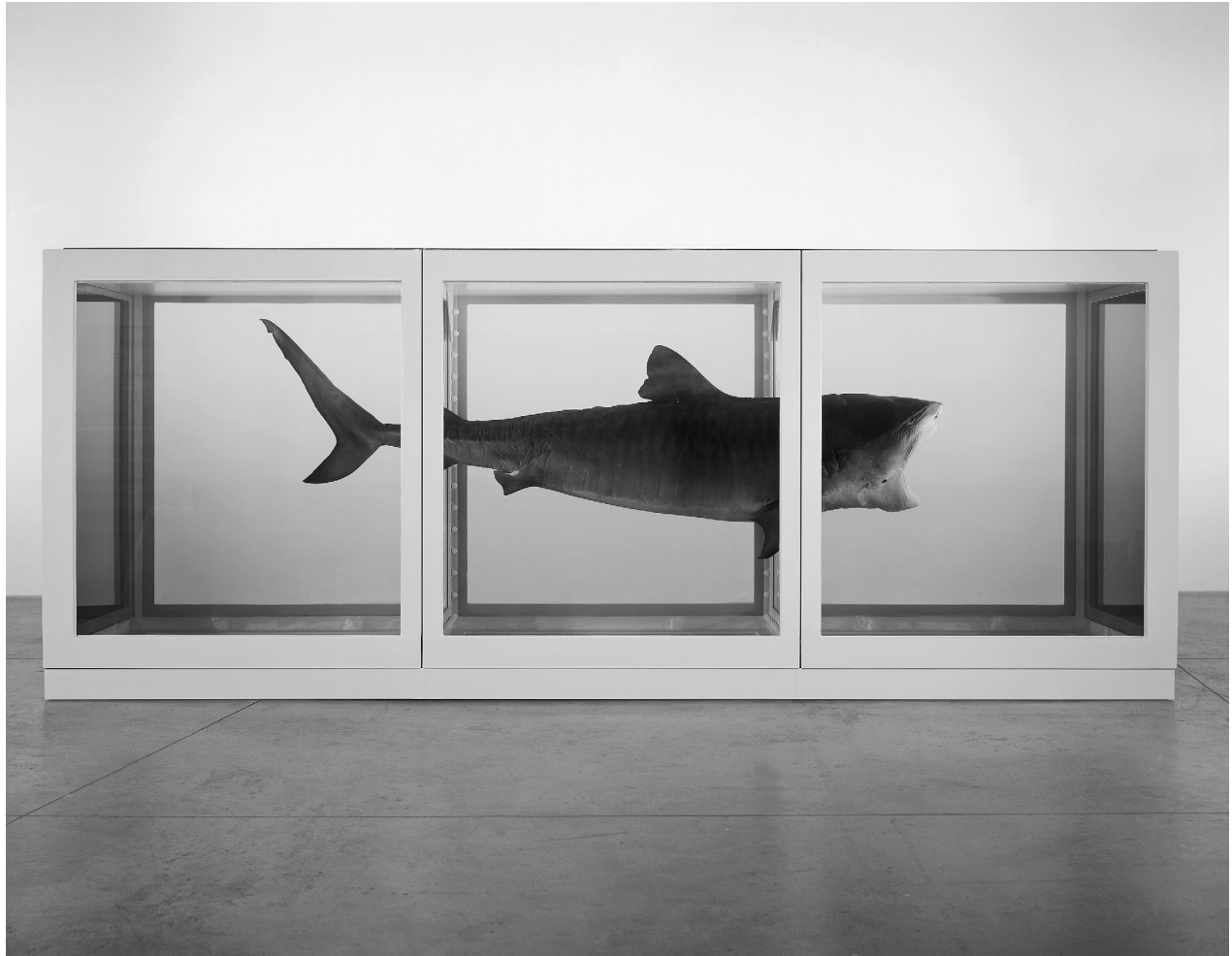# Death Rituals, Social Order and the Archaeology of Immortality in the Ancient World

Modern archaeology has amassed considerable evidence for the disposal of the dead through burials, cemeteries, and other monuments. Drawing on this body of evidence, this book offers fresh insight into how early human societies conceived of death and the afterlife. The twenty-seven essays in this volume consider the rituals and responses to death in prehistoric societies across the world, from eastern Asia through Europe to the Americas, and from the very earliest times before developed religious beliefs offered scriptural answers to these questions. Compiled and written by leading prehistorians and archaeologists, this volume traces the emergence of death as a concept in early times, as well as a contributing factor to the formation of communities and social hierarchies, and sometimes the creation of divinities.

Colin Renfrew (Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn) was formerly Disney Professor of Archaeology and Director of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the University of Cambridge. He is author of many influential books on archaeology and prehistory, including, most recently with Paul G. Bahn, *The Cambridge World Prehistory* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

Michael J. Boyd is a Senior Research Associate at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the University of Cambridge. He is co-director of the Keros-Naxos Seaways project, assistant director of the Keros Island Survey and co-editor of the Keros publications series. He is co-editor of a volume on funerary archaeology, *Staging Death*.

Iain Morley is Lecturer in Palaeoanthropology and Human Sciences at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of St. Hugh's College. He has published numerous articles and books, including *Becoming Human: Innovation in Prehistoric Material and Spiritual Culture* and *Image and Imagination: A Global Prehistory of Figurative Representation* (both coedited with Colin Renfrew), as well as *The Prehistory of Music*.

'The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living', Damien Hirst, 1991. (Photo: Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd. © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2015).

Death Rituals, Social Order and the Archaeology of Immortality in the Ancient World

"Death Shall Have No Dominion"

Edited by

COLIN RENFREW

MICHAEL J. BOYD

IAIN MORLEY

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Contributors

Terence N. D'Altroy is the Loubat Professor of American Archaeology in the Department of Anthropology and the Director of the Center for Archaeology at Columbia University in the city of New York. His research focuses on ancient empires, especially the Inkas of Andean South America, with a special interest in the organizational and the intellectual foundations of imperial rule. He has conducted field-work in Peru, Argentina, the United States, and Mexico. He is author or (co-)editor of *Provincial Power in the Inka Empire* (1992), *The Incas* (2002; 2d ed. 2014), *Empire and Domestic Economy* (2002), and *Empires* (2002), among other works. tnd1@columbia.edu

Michael J. Boyd is a Senior Research Associate at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the University of Cambridge. His main research interests lie in the prehistoric Aegean, where he has worked in the Peloponnese and Cyclades. He is Co-Director of the Keros Seaways Project, Assistant Director of the Keros Island Survey and co-editor of the Keros publications series. He is author of *Middle Helladic and Early Mycenaean Mortuary Practices in the Southern and Western Peloponnese* (Oxford 2002) and has recently published several articles on Mycenaean funerary practices, on which he is currently co-editing a collected volume, *Staging Death*. He has worked widely in Greece and Bulgaria. mjb235@cam.ac.uk

John L. Creese recently completed a Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge. His current research explores the interrelations of social power, community, and identity among ancestral Wendat societies of eastern North America. jlc75@cam.ac.uk

Karina Croucher is a Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Bradford. She held a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Manchester (2008–11) and is author of *Death and Dying in the Neolithic Near East* (Oxford 2012). K.Croucher@bradford.ac.uk

Oliver Dietrich studied Prehistoric Archaeology in Berlin. He is currently a Research Assistant with the Göbekli Tepe Project in the Orient Department of the German Archaeological Institute. His research focus lies in the Neolithic of the Near East and Bronze Age Europe, main interests including the archaeology of cult and religion and the concept of 'innovation' in prehistory. Recent publications include articles on Neolithic cult and feasting in *Antiquity* and Bronze Age hoarding in the *European Journal of Archaeology*. oliver.dietrich@dainst.de

Roger Doonan is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield. He has studied early metal-using communities across Eurasia since 1991 and has worked in Russia since 2007. He is currently co-principal investigator of the Sintashta Collaborative Archaeological Research Project. r.doonan@sheffield.ac.uk

Francesco d'Errico is a Director of Research with the French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique attached to the University of Bordeaux and Professor at the University of Bergen. A central achievement of his research has been the recognition of the most ancient symbolic traditions in Africa, Europe, and the Near East, which has enabled him to question the dominant paradigm of a sudden European origin of modern human cultures and propose new scenarios to account for the emergence of key cultural innovations in our lineage. He is the author or editor of several books and the author

of more than 250 papers, most of which have been published in peer reviewed journals. Recent research has been published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and *Current Anthropology*. francesco.d-errico @u-bordeaux1.fr

Bill Finlayson is the Director of the Council for British Research in the Levant. His research is on the transition from hunting and gathering societies to farming, focussing recently on the early Neolithic of southwest Asia with fieldwork at Beidha, Dhra', and Wadi Faynan. director@cbrl.org.uk

Norman Hammond is Professor Emeritus of Archaeology at Boston University and a Senior Fellow of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the University of Cambridge. He is also Associate in Maya Archaeology at the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, and the author of *Ancient Maya Civilization* (Cambridge 1982 and numerous foreign-language editions) and *Cuello: An Early Maya Community in Belize* (Cambridge 1991, 2009). He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and of the British Academy. ndch@bu.edu

Bryan Hanks is current Chair for the Department of Anthropology, University of Pittsburgh. He has been involved in extensive fieldwork on Prehistoric Steppe Communities since 1998. He is currently co-principal investigator of the Sintashta Collaborative Archaeological Research Project. bkh5@pitt.edu

Charles F. W. Higham is a Research Professor in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of Otago. He has undertaken fieldwork in Thailand and Cambodia since 1970, most recently with projects to identify the prehistoric origins of early states. His publications include *Encyclopaedia of Ancient Asian Civilizations* and *Early Mainland Southeast Asia, from First Humans to Angkor*. charles.higham@otago.ac.nz

Timothy Insoll is Professor of African and Islamic Archaeology at the University of Manchester. His most recent book (with Rachel MacLean and Benjamin Kankpeyeng) is *Temporalising Anthropology: Archaeology in the Talensi Tong Hills* (Frankfurt 2013). He has completed extensive archaeological fieldwork in Mali, Ghana, Bahrain, western India, and currently in eastern Ethiopia. tim.insoll@manchester.ac.uk

Emma Jenkins is a Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at the Department of Archaeology, Anthropology and Forensics, Bournemouth University. She is an environmental archaeologist, whose research interests are focussed on the Neolithic of southwest Asia, highlighted in recent publications in *Antiquity*, *Journal of Archaeological Science,* and *Journal of Social Archaeology*. ejenkins @bournemouth.ac.uk

Timothy Jenkins is Reader in Anthropology and Religion at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Jesus College. His most recent publications are *The Life of Property: House, Family and Inheritance in Béarn, South-West France* (2010) and *Of Flying Saucers and Social Scientists* (2013). tdj22@jesus.cam.ac.uk

Peter Kaulicke is Professor of Archaeology at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. His research foci include Archaic and Formative chronology, funerary contexts and analysis, art, religion, the origins of social complexity, the relationship between ethnohistory and archaeology, and research history. He has published many papers and books, including *Muerte y memoria en el Perú Antiguo* (2000) and *Cronologías del Formativo* (2010), and has edited Max Uhle's *Las Ruinas de Moche* (2014). pkaulic@pucp.edu.pe

Elena Kupriyanova is Director of the Educational-Scientific Centre for the Study of Problems of Nature and Man, Chelyabinsk State University. She is an expert in Sintashta identity and dress, and funerary archaeology. dzdan@mail.ru

George F. Lau is Reader (Arts & Archaeology of the Americas, Sainsbury Research Unit) at the University of East Anglia. He has written extensively about ancient Peru, including the books *Andean Expressions: Art and Archaeology of the Recuay Culture* (2011) and *Ancient Alterity in the Andes: A Recognition of Others* (2013). George.Lau@ uea.ac.uk

Lambros Malafouris (Ph.D. Cambridge 2005) is a Johnson Research and Teaching Fellow in Creativity, Cognition, and Material Culture at Keble College and the Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford. His primary research interests lie in the archaeology of mind and the philosophy of material culture. His publications include *How Things Shape the Mind: A Theory of Material Engagement* (2013), *The Cognitive Life of Things: Recasting the Boundaries of the Mind* (McDonald Institute Monographs, with C. Renfrew (2010), *The Sapient Mind: Archaeology Meets Neuroscience* Oxford with C. Renfrew and C. Frith (2009), and *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach* (2008). lambros.malafouris@keble.ox.ac.uk

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Darko Maričević is currently a Postdoctoral Research Assistant on the WF16 Project at the University of Reading and is working on the completion of the WF16 excavation monograph. He has previously worked at the University of Southampton as a Postdoctoral Fellow on the CinBA Project (Creativity and Craft Production in Middle and Late Bronze Age Europe) and has a Ph.D. from the University of Reading on Later Prehistory of Tiree and Coll, Inner Hebrides, Scotland. d.maricevic@soton.ac.uk

Steven Mithen is Deputy Vice Chancellor and Professor of Early Prehistory at the University of Reading. In addition to his research on the Neolithic in the southern Levant, he has field projects in western Scotland and northeast China, and undertakes research on the evolution of intelligence, language and music. He was elected as a Fellow of the British Academy in 2003. s.j.mithen@reading.ac.uk

Koji Mizoguchi is Professor of Social Archaeology in the Faculty of Social and Cultural Studies in Kyushu University, Japan. He is the author of several books on Japanese archaeology and archaeological theory, including *The Archaeology of Japan: from the Earliest Rice Farming Villages to the Rise of the State* (2013) and *Archaeology, Society and Identity in Modern Japan* (2006). He was elected president of the World Archaeological Congress in 2013. mizog@scs.kyushu-u.ac.jp

Iain Morley is Lecturer in Palaeoanthropology and Human Sciences at the University of Oxford, and a Fellow of St. Hugh's College. His research focuses on the evolution of human cognition and, in particular, on the emergence of music and ritual. He has excavated at prehistoric and classical archaeological sites in Britain, continental Europe, and North Africa and has produced numerous articles and books, including *Becoming Human: Innovation in Prehistoric Material and Spiritual Culture* and *Image and Imagination: A Global Prehistory of Figurative Representation* (both co-edited with Colin Renfrew), plus his own *The Prehistory of Music*. iain.morley@anthro.ox.ac.uk

Mohammad Najjar was the Director of Excavations and Surveys in the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. Since his retirement he has continued to undertake archaeological research, principally on the social archaeology of mining and metallurgy and on Neolithic settlement in southern Jordan. He has been co-director of the Edom Lowland Regional Archaeological Project since

1997, is academic and curatorial advisor to Museum with No Frontiers, and is affiliated with the Council for British Research in the Levant and the Levantine Archaeology Laboratory of the University of California at San Diego. m.najjar@joscapes.com

Jens Notroff studied Prehistoric Archaeology at the Freie Universität Berlin. His field of research includes the (Pre-Pottery) Neolithic of the Near East and Bronze Age Europe, and he is currently involved in the research project regarding the Early Neolithic sanctuary at Göbekli Tepe (southeastern Turkey) as research assistant at the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin. His research interests include the representation of power and social hierarchy in prehistoric societies, places of cult and ritual as well as the question of their archaeological evidence. Recent articles have appeared in *Antiquity* and *Levant*, among others. jens.notroff@dainst.de

Ben Okri is an accomplished poet and novelist. In 1991 he won the Booker Prize for *The Famished Road* and was made OBE in 2001. He has won various awards around the world and has published nine novels and several collections of poetry and short stories.

Alexander K. Piel is a Visiting Researcher in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge and co-directs the Ugalla Primate Project in western Tanzania. His research interests centre on behavioural adaptations of savanna-dwelling primates, and specifically the role of vocal communication in chimpanzees. He has published articles with Fiona Stewart and others in *Journal of Human Evolution*, *American Journal of Primatology*, *Primates*, and *PLoS One*. akpiel@ucsd.edu

Derek Pitman is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield. His study aims to characterise the Sintashta metallurgical process. d.pitman@sheffield.ac.uk

Colin Renfrew, formerly Disney Professor of Archaeology and Director of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research in the University of Cambridge, has excavated at a number of sites in prehistoric Greece and in the Orkney Islands, and is the author of many publications, including *Prehistory: The Making of the Human Mind*. He is Fellow of the British Academy and Foreign Associate of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA, and was the recipient of the Balzan Prize in 2004. acr10@cam.ac.uk

CONTRIBUTORS

Klaus Schmidt(†) was Referent for Prehistoric Archaeology of the Near East in the Orient Department of the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin and Professor at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg. His central interest was the early Neolithic of the Near East; from 1995 he led the excavations at Göbekli Tepe, Turkey. His large opus includes the first monograph on this important site, *Göbekli Tepe: A Stone Age Sanctuary in South-Eastern Anatolia*.

Julia Shaw is a Lecturer in South Asian Archaeology at University College London, Institute of Archaeology. She is the author of *Buddhist Landscapes in Central India: Sanchi Hill and Archaeologies of Religious and Social Change* (2007) and other research articles. She is currently working on a British Academy funded project on religion, nature, and environmental ethics in ancient India. julia.shaw@ucl.ac.uk

Li Shuicheng is a Professor of Archaeology in the School of Archaeology and Museology at Peking University. His research focuses on the Neolithic through Bronze Age periods of China, early East-west interactions across Eurasia, and comparative salt archaeology. Publications include the books *Painted Pottery of the Banshan and Machang Cultures* (1998), *East Wind Blows West: Prehistoric Cultural Process in Northwest China* (2009), and three edited volumes, *Salt Archaeology in China* (2006, 2010, 2013). lisc@pku.edu.cn

Sam Smith is currently Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at Oxford Brookes University, where his research focuses on exploring the archaeology and environments of the transition to agriculture in southwest Asia. Sam has worked in Wadi Faynan, southern Jordan, for fifteen years, undertaking survey, excavation, and analyses of stone tools from a range of Early Holocene and Terminal Pleistocene sites in the region. He has published in *Antiquity* and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. samsmith@brookes.ac.uk

Anthony Snodgrass was, from 1976 to 2001, holder of the Laurence Chair of Classical Archaeology at Cambridge, having previously worked for fifteen years at the University of Edinburgh. His research has concentrated on the Early Iron Age of Greece, at first focused on weaponry and metalwork, later becoming broader in scope besides extending into later periods. He has since the 1970s been a keen exponent of intensive survey in Greece. ams1002@cam.ac.uk

Alice Stevenson is the Curator of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology, University College London. She has published on several topics in prehistoric archaeology, as well as the on the history of archaeology and anthropology. She is the author of *The Predynastic Egyptian Cemetery of el-Gerzeh: Social Identities and Mortuary Practices* (2009) and has published widely in *Antiquity*, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, and *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, among others. alice.stevenson@ucl.ac.uk

Fiona A. Stewart is the Wheldale Onslow Research Fellow at Newnham College and Post-doctoral Research Associate in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge; she also co-directs the Ugalla Primate Project in western Tanzania. Her research focuses on the behavioural ecology of savanna chimpanzees from nest building and sleeping behaviour to reconstructing social systems with genetic data. She has published articles with Alexander K. Piel and others in *Journal of Human Evolution*, *American Journal of Primatology*, *Primates*, and *PLoS One*. fas31@cam.ac.uk

Simon Stoddart is a Reader in Prehistory in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, and a Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge. He has worked since 1986 on the prehistory of Malta, most notably at the Brochtorff Xaghra Circle. ss16@cam.ac.uk

Julian Thomas is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Manchester. His research interests include the Neolithic of Britain and Europe, the theory and philosophy of archaeology, and archaeologies of landscape and architecture. He is the author of *Time, Culture and Identity* (1996), *Understanding the Neolithic* (1999), *Archaeology and Modernity* (2004), and *The Birth of Neolithic Britain* (2013). julian.thomas@manchester.ac.uk

Dr. Marian Vanhaeren is a CNRS researcher, based at PACEA, University of Bordeaux, working on the oldest-known personal ornaments found in burials and settlement sites with the aim of characterising prehistoric societies, in particular their social organisation, exchange systems, and ethno-cultural units. She has authored one book and co-authored more than seventy research articles on the topic of prehistoric beads, appearing in *Science*, *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, and *Journal of Human Evolution*, among others. marian.vanhaeren@u-bordeaux1.fr

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Paul K. Wason is Vice President, Life Sciences & Genetics, for the John Templeton Foundation, where he is responsible for developing new research initiatives investigating the evolution and fundamental nature of life, human life, and mind. His work on inequality, leadership, cultural evolution, and archaeological theory has been published in *The Archaeology of Rank* (Cambridge 1994) and in work on themes such as the archaeological inference of intelligence, the role of religion in culture change, and the Neolithic cosmos of Çatalhöyük. pwason@templeton.org

Dmitry Zdanovich is a Vice-director of the Scientific and Educational Centre for Research on the Problems of Nature and Man at Chelyabinsk State University, Russia. He has worked in archaeology since the early 1990s. His main areas of research are the funeral practices of the Bronze Age, ethnoarchaeology, and questions of interaction between humanity and nature in ancient times. He has taken part in excavations of the Bronze Age fortified settlements of the south Urals and in the development of hypotheses concerning their origin and function. Dgz74@yandex.ru

João Zilhão is ICREA Research Professor at the University of Barcelona. Prior to his current appointment, he held academic positions in Portugal, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. He has written extensively on the origins of art and symbolism, early modern humans and the fate of the Neanderthals, and the origins of farming in Mediterranean Europe. joao.zilhao@ub.edu

Preface

And death shall have no dominion.
Dead men naked they shall be one
With the man in the wind and the west moon;
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones gone;
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.

(Dylan Thomas, Collected Poems, 1957. US & Canada: copyright ©1943 by
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Death provides archaeology with much of its raw material, and publications dealing with the archaeology of burial certainly already exist. But there has been little emphasis in them upon the emergence of death as a concept in early times, and insufficient on the different ways that death is used in human societies in a manner that favours the formation of communities, and of social hierarchies, and sometimes the creation of divinities.

The present volume seeks to move such considerations to the fore, drawing upon the papers prepared for the symposium held at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research in Cambridge from 11–14 April 2012. The papers, circulated before the meeting, were discussed after brief oral presentations. The revised papers are published here together with the three discussion papers that followed.

The symposium was part of a project funded by a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation, to which the editors are deeply grateful.

João Zilhão was unable to attend the meeting in person and his paper was introduced by Francesco d'Errico, while that of Li Shuicheng was kindly presented by Xinyi Liu. The editors are grateful also to the McDonald Institute for its hospitality, and to Patricia Duff, Evi Margaritis, Magda Matczak, and Paula Pugsley for their assistance at the meeting.

'The Unanswered Question': Investigating Early Conceptualisations of Death

Colin Renfrew

Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death.

(Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 6.4311)

Death does not concern us, because as long as we exist, death is not here. And when it does come, we no longer exist.

(Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, from Diogenes Laertius: *Lives of the Philosophers* 10.125)

INTRODUCTION

The difficulty that each of us faces in seeking to comprehend death is neatly expressed by Wittgenstein in the epigraph at the head of this chapter. A related insight of the sculptor Damien Hirst led him to create the work entitled 'The physical impossibility of death in the mind of someone living', which was first shown at the Serpentine Gallery in London in 1992 (Gallagher 2012; frontispiece). This gives material presence to the enigma that humans have faced since the dawn of measured time and before 'the unanswered question' as the American composer Charles Ives expressed it in 1906 (Ives 1953; the first of *Two Contemplations*, the second being *Central Park in the Dark*). It comes with the emergence of that self-awareness that is often taken as a defining quality of our own species, *Homo sapiens*.

One of the principal aims in collecting the papers assembled here was to undertake a fresh look at early human attempts to recognise, to understand, and to conceptualise death. The project may be said to fall within the scope of cognitive archaeology, involving, as it does, the world of ideas and of concepts. Such a project can only be undertaken by relying primarily upon the archaeological record. For inescapably consideration must be given to prehistoric times – that is to say to times when there

is no adequate historical (and therefore written) account or narrative for the periods in question.

The archaeological record is indeed a material record: it is constituted by the surviving material evidence of the human past. But that does not imply that it is concerned only with material things. As D'Altroy points out (this volume): 'essential features of human affairs are often deliberately not given enduring physical expression … because of the threat that material existence may pose. … An approach that assumes a parallel or mirrored relationship between things material and not strikes me as having the potential to confuse key issues'. That observation indicates clearly one of the problems that cognitive archaeology must seek to confront.

COGNITIVE ARCHAEOLOGY

To the extent that our work is unaided by written records we are dependent upon cognitive archaeology – sometimes called the archaeology of mind. This is a fast growing field, which seeks to study in a systematic manner past ways of thought as inferred from the surviving material remains (Renfrew 1994). This does not necessarily give direct access to the 'meaning' of the objects, or find complexes and symbols recovered from the past, in the sense of their meaning to those who made and used

them. That may be too ambitious an aim. But we can hope to develop a secure methodology by which we can seek to learn *how* the minds of the ancient communities in question worked and the manner in which that working shaped their actions.

So while we cannot aspire to establish just how a particular community conceived of death, and what death meant to them, we can investigate what they did in response to death. From the traces of their patterned behaviour we may hope to infer what they considered important and relevant, and appropriate as a response, in the aftermath of death.

THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN THE STUDY OF EARLY RESPONSES TO DEATH

First, however, a word of caution is needed. In modern times the notion of the nature of death is often shaped by contemporary religious faith. The three great world religions that are monotheistic in character – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – have views of death that are in some ways similar. This is not surprising, since their origins can all be traced back to western Asia in the first millennium BC. All are respectful of the Old Testament of the Bible and so are sometimes termed Abrahamic. In them the role of the Deity is central, and there are similarities in their perceptions of the 'afterlife'. For that very reason the focus of attention in the papers invited for the symposium has not been primarily upon the archaeology of death in societies whose beliefs and practices are likely to have been in conformity with those three world religions (see Goodison 2012). Instead our focus of attention here extends back to very much earlier periods and other traditions. It has seemed appropriate in the first instance to look at responses to death in historic or prehistoric contexts where interpretations are not overshadowed by monotheist assumptions.

It is difficult today to investigate the cultures of prehispanic Mexico or Peru, for example, without encountering the assumptions of those early Christian missionaries who were among the first to interpret and report the indigenous attitudes to death at the time of early contact. Clearly the information gained from the archaeological record alone is greatly enriched by the observations of those who were on hand to see and record some of the activities and behaviour that came to create that record. But it is not always easy to distinguish the beliefs of the chronicler from those he is seeking to record.

The problem is not so much easier for earlier periods where monotheistic belief systems can be excluded.

For, at these earlier periods in our time scale, belief in the existence of deities of any kind cannot be assumed. These periods may predate the inception of any religion, if we choose to define religion, following the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Onions 1973), as 'action or conduct indicating a belief in, or reverence for, and desire to please, a divine ruling power'. It is a matter for discussion when the archaeological record for each region first offers support for belief systems of that kind, which may be termed 'deistic'. In studying the responses to death in those early societies it is important for us to bear in mind that they may not have had any 'religious' component, in the sense of the term employed by the *OED*. It is perhaps not easy for us to imagine a world without religion and without deities, but such acts of imagination may be necessary if we are to do justice to our subject matter.

Within a volume that already seeks to cover a wide range of periods and of societies it was not easy to arrange that other religious traditions (i.e., those beyond the Abrahamic, to which most of the contributing authors are heirs) should be adequately represented. The Indian tradition is represented by the paper by Julia Shaw, dealing with Buddhist mortuary ritual. It would have been useful also to include a paper dealing with early Hindu responses to death. Yet while the inception of Vedic thought can be traced back well before the first millennium BC in India and Pakistan (although not recorded in writing until many years later), Vedic archaeology is not well documented at so early a date. Early East Asian responses to death are represented here by Mizoguchi (where the Yayoi to Kofun periods in Japan were influenced by Buddhist thought) and by Higham (where the kings of Angkor may likewise be seen as working in a Buddhist tradition). China is represented by Li Shuicheng, where the first use of jade for symbolic purposes anticipates by several millennia the earliest records indicating the development of Taoist thought.

One of the challenges facing cognitive archaeology is to deal with such a difficult (although sometimes richly-evidenced) theme as death in contexts where the thought frameworks and mental maps of the people we are considering were so far removed from our own, largely western traditions of thought. This is, of course, where the evidence from Africa may also have so much to offer. I regret that the confined scale of this volume did not leave space to broaden the geographical scope with experiences and responses to death in Polynesia and in aboriginal Australia.

ENCOUNTERING DEATH:
THE MATERIAL EVIDENCE

The inevitable starting point for our consideration of death is the human body. That approach uses the methods and potentialities of archaeological research, with their inherent accompanying limitations. Only when the mortal remains of the human dead are found, along with any items of material culture by which they may be accompanied, is there the necessary primary evidence that death is at hand. That evidence often enters the archaeological record in the form of deliberate burial. It subsequently comes to the attention of the excavator and so achieves notice and publication.

In most cases it is not death itself, but the responses of other humans towards that death, that leads to the formation of the residues that time preserves, and that remain to be uncovered by the pick-axe or trowel of that archaeologist.

Just occasionally the preservation comes about by natural agency. Remains of humans asphyxiated and buried in some cataclysmic volcanic eruption may be uncovered, as at Roman Pompeii or Mayan Cerén. But even Őtzi, the prehistoric alpine iceman, at first thought to have perished and been preserved in a sudden snowstorm, may owe his remarkable preservation more to careful high altitude burial in the course of funerary ritual (Vanzetti et al. 2010) than to a sudden natural event. Similarly in considering the circumstances producing one of the earliest known accumulations of hominid remains in Europe, at Sima de los Huesos at Atapuerca (Zilhão, this volume), there is real uncertainty whether that remarkable concentration of fragmented hominid bone is the taphonomic outcome of natural preservative processes or the result of systematic and patterned ritual action, perhaps the earliest indication of such ritual yet recovered anywhere in the world.

In studying human attitudes to death and the way death has over time been conceptualised, we are essentially studying human *responses* to death, and in particular *human* actions in response to death. Moreover it is only those actions whose traces or results or consequences are in some way preserved or fixed in the material record that can come down to us. If they do not leave some tangible, material trace, then there seems no way that we can have any knowledge of them. That may inevitably leave out of account many things that were said, many speech acts and affective utterances, and many performative actions, such as those alluded to by D'Altroy, as

noted previously. Such words and actions were significant and meaningful to those present, but having no immediate material consequence, they had no impact upon the material world and therefore none upon the archaeological record. That presents us, in studying past responses to death, with problems difficult to overcome.

In trying to give some coherent structure to the symposium that preceded this volume with the rich variety of papers offered, it seemed appropriate to highlight a number of themes. These are just several of the directions that one might take in considering early human responses to death that proved effective in giving focus to our discussions. So they have been used, in much the same way, to give structure to the present volume.

INTIMATIONS OF MORTALITY:
BEFORE *HOMO SAPIENS*

Before confronting the great diversity of early human responses to death, for instance, in the variety of early forms of burial practice, it is certainly worth going back further, to the earliest beginning. When were such burial practices first developed? That proves to be a difficult question to answer. Even more problematic, perhaps, is the issue as to when, along some long evolutionary time scale, one might place the earliest recognition of death. Is it possible that some other species are capable of formulating some notion of death? That may prove another difficult question. But it can at least be approached by investigating the responses to death as they can be observed today among other animal species.

The first contribution to this volume addresses that fascinating theme of non-human responses towards death. The observations by students of animal behaviour indicate, as Piel and Stewart (this volume) outline, that only a few mammalian species, most notably dolphins, elephants, and chimpanzees, pay particular attention to death, specifically to the dead body of a conspecific.

In an evolutionary perspective such behaviour seems likely to have preceded the practices of deliberate burial of the body by humans, which can first be documented at some point in the Palaeolithic period. It is interesting that elephants seem to react more noticeably to the death of a conspecific than do some of the great apes, where such behaviour has been observed particularly among chimpanzees and bonobos, but not among gorillas. Reacting attentively to a dead body need not, however, be the same as formulating a concept for 'death' or a category of 'dead'. Such a concept might be thought

to require the use of language and the formation of an adjectival category and word for 'dead'. Alas it is still by no means clear just when in the human evolutionary story a spoken language, involving a vocabulary and syntactical use of words, first developed. Such use of language is sometimes assumed to be a defining attribute of our own species, *Homo sapiens*. But to what extent our hominin predecessors, such as *Homo erectus*, or our early contemporary *Homo neandertalensis* in reality shared that attribute remains to be established.

To speak of the conceptualisation of death does however imply more than the manifestation of a different reaction towards an apparently sleeping individual who refuses to wake up than towards one who awakens. It requires the formulation of a category, 'death', which can only become sufficiently general to be meaningful if applied to more than one individual. This has obviously been achieved when a word for 'death' has been formulated. So the issue of the origin and development of spoken language does inevitably arise. But such linguistic issues do not necessarily need to derail the archaeological discussion. Great apes, like many other animals, clearly differentiate in their responses between different animal species. It is perfectly possible that a chimpanzee may, after encountering dead chimpanzees on a number of different occasions, develop through experience a learned response to 'dead chimpanzee'. One can even imagine a specific signal to draw the attention of other conspecifics to the presence of 'dead chimpanzee'. That, like the repertoire of other specific signals, may indeed be regarded as constituting a simple language, albeit a non-verbal one.

Such possibilities are by implication raised in the paper by Zilhão (this volume) in his discussion of the emergence of burial in the Middle Palaeolithic in Europe, prior to the arrival of anatomically modern *Homo sapiens*, and indeed in the much earlier accumulation of human bones found at the Lower Palaeolithic site of Sima de los Huesos at Atapuerca in Spain. He then deals with that fascinating period when hominin responses to death were developing alongside the speciation process that led to the emergence of our own species *Homo sapiens*, between 200,000 and 100,000 years ago. Zilhão then covers the period following the out-of-Africa expansion of our species some 60,000 years ago.

This is the crucial time, discussed in more detail for Europe by d'Errico and Vanhaeren (this volume). In Europe it is termed the Upper Palaeolithic and it lasts until the onset of a warmer climate with the Neothermal

period around 11,000 years ago. It is generally assumed that by the time of that out-of-Africa expansion, all members of our species, *Homo sapiens*, were capable of speech, employing a rich vocabulary and quite complex syntax. That assumption may be justified by the argument that it was at this time that the different lineages diverged, populating the different continents. Since all descendent lineages share these linguistic capacities it seems logical that their common ancestors at this time themselves already did so. With this speech capacity, it is argued, arose a new degree of self-consciousness and of self-awareness. It is tempting to link this self-awareness with the first use of personal decoration in the form of jewellery, seen in the shell beads that form the principal evidence in the study by d'Errico and Vanhaeren. They are found in the burials that are a particular feature of the European Upper Palaeolithic, well reviewed in a recent study by Paul Pettitt (2010). As he points out, well-organised cemeteries are also found in Europe at this time.

The practice of systematic and deliberate burial shows a coherent response to the phenomenon of death that must derive from inherited experience. It is a social response, and one that must be dependent on the shared experience and shared memory that the use of developed language makes possible. Interestingly this practice of burial is seen in the aboriginal communities of Australia already at Lake Mungo as early as 40,000 years ago. But to complicate the picture, burials of our related species *Homo neandertalensis* are found in Europe before the appearance there of our own species (Renfrew 2009). This too is suggestive of self-awareness and of some linguistic capacity.

The first evidence for major places of assembly also arises at the onset of the Neothermal period. Several insights are offered to us by the study by Notroff et al. (this volume) of the important site of Göbekli Tepe in southeastern Turkey. There the great monolithic pillars, arranged in a circle enclosing a still larger pair of stelai, may be compared with those at the village of Çayönü, some 150 km away. There they are in a general sense associated with funerary rituals. The precise connection has not yet been demonstrated at Göbekli Tepe. But the excavators are surely right to propose the association. This was clearly a place of assembly, a focal point for the still mobile communities of the surrounding territories, dominating a terrain of at least 10 to 20 km, or perhaps 50 to 100 km. Certainly the obsidian found there, albeit in small quantities, had travelled up to 650 km (Le Bourdonnec 2008). It is the insight of the excavator

(Schmidt 2012, 122) that 'Göbekli Tepe must be considered a monument of a cult of death'. It is tantalising that direct material links, for instance in the form of burials, or at least deliberate depositions of human bone, have not yet been located at the site. For here human societies were on the very threshold of sedentary life in permanent settlements.

MORTALITY AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN SOCIETY: SEDENTISM, THE COLLECTIVE, AND THE HOUSE

Death changed with the beginning of food production. The origin of farming was more than a shift in subsistence strategy. It made possible, effectively on a worldwide scale, the establishment of settled communities, of sedentism. And with a settled community, the dead are always with you. The cemetery or communal tomb or place of deposition is always there. Usually it is close at hand, but sometimes located at a more remote spot in the territory of the community. In rare cases it may be more distant, in a notional ancestral land.

Territory and community may be strongly influenced, indeed shaped, by the obligations that accompany death. In northwestern Europe, in the Neolithic period, the stone monuments that are generally referred to as megalithic chamber tombs, or more concisely as 'megaliths', were clearly constructed by the combined efforts of a number of families who came together to construct what became a marker and monument on a fitting scale. They have been termed 'territorial markers of segmentary societies' (Renfrew 1976). The more interesting point here is the manner in which the very act of going together to construct the monument created a permanent focus for what became a community. The monument became that focus for a group of persons that may earlier have had much weaker ties between them. This suggests 'how a particular form of engagement with the material world – the construction and varied use of a burial cairn – could help promote the emergence of a coherent new social unit' (Renfrew 2001, 109). Nor is this process restricted to times as early as the European Neolithic. John Creese (this volume) sets out in his study of the Northern Iroquois of southern Ontario to approach deathways as a vital creative field for the reconstitution of social orders – and the ideologies of body and person, community and cosmos that support them. This approach is developed further for the British Neolithic by Julian Thomas (this volume), who emphasises that the mortuary deposits found in the chamber tombs and long barrows of the British Neolithic may have been generated very quickly over a few generations. Yet such monuments clearly retained their importance over much longer periods. He develops the idea of a 'house' society and suggests that the tombs and barrows were not 'houses of the dead' but just 'houses', in the sense that they provided the material anchors for people who were developing new relationships with the material world.

Perhaps a process of the same kind was taking place in the villages of Pre-Pottery Neolithic Jordan and Israel, which are among the oldest known permanent settlements anywhere, dating from around 8,000 BC. They are broadly contemporary with settlements located farther north in the Fertile Crescent, for instance at Çayönü, not far from the great hunter-gatherer site of Göbekli Tepe, mentioned in the last section. In their paper Mithen et al. (this volume) show that the settlements in Jordan were accompanied by some of the oldest known cemeteries. They argue that it was partly in the practice of the rituals following death that communities of residents dwelling there were formalised. They describe how in these early villages the 'dead' remained a key source of inspiration and power for the 'living'. This was in part effected by the recycling of their physical residues through their incorporation into the building of structures used for habitation and for other activities.

This is seen for sites like Jericho, at around the same time. There the funerary rituals materialised the memory of the deceased person by the production of a plaster image, which was based directly upon the actual skull. This was a very special form of the materialisation of death, producing an enduring (although certainly not permanent) representation of the deceased person.

In coastal Peru, at a broadly comparable stage in the transition towards sedentary communities, abundant marine resources were encouraging sedentism. This was accompanied by a transition to the intensive exploitation and subsequently the domestication of terrestrial plant resources. Closely related themes are taken up by Peter Kaulicke (this volume) in his treatment of mortuary practices in the Central Andes of Peru from ca. 9000 to 2000 BC.

In many cases in the early days of sedentism it was indeed the community, rather than the individual, that was celebrated in the rituals and ceremonies pertaining to death. That was the case in northwestern Europe, as noted previously. It was sometimes the case also in coastal Peru, where some of the earliest settlements, such as

Caral (Shady Solís et al. 2001), have large congregational plazas and other monumental constructions that were clearly the product of well-organised collective labour. This point is emphasised by Stoddart (this volume) in his treatment of the 'temples' of prehistoric Malta and their accompanying underground burial places or hypogea. He draws on a Melanesian analogy (Mosko 1983), in which, following death the deceased are understood to undergo a process of 'deconception' that in a sense mirrors or reverses the conception or bodily union that preceded their birth. He suggests that the Maltese mortuary practices appear to follow processes of deconception resembling those celebrated in ritual by the Bush Mekeo of Melanesia. The aim of these social practices was to dissolve the individuality of the deceased into one common clan membership.

The parallel is an interesting one, and certainly could account for much of the Maltese evidence. These may be described as 'group-oriented' societies (Renfrew 2001) where the personal ranking of the individual is emphasised less than the affiliation to the corporate group. This collective social unit is often emphasised in the rituals of death and in the construction of major commemorative monuments.

CONSTRUCTING THE ANCESTORS

Sometimes the dead are personified in a different way. Here the personality and identity of the individual does not recede after death into the anonymity of the social collective. Instead the ancestors of the living individual, the forebears of his or her specific lineage, have a particular significance. The lines of descent can be well remembered and remain particularly clear, often figuring in narrative and in song. So it can be that the persons of the ancestors are commemorated, and sometimes they are represented in effigy. Very often also their material remains are carefully curated. In such cases they are not necessarily assimilated into the more general collective ancestry implicit in the amassing together of the bones of all the deceased persons of the community, as was the practice in some communal or collective tombs. It should be noted here, however, that the concept of 'the individual' is not so straightforward as it might at first sight seem (Knapp & van Dommelen 2008).

Insoll (this volume) stresses the importance of ancestor concepts in sub-Saharan Africa, and the role of the notions of 'good' and 'bad' death. The precise form of burial was often a significant factor in the in the effective

'creation' of ancestors through the emphasis on specific lineal predecessors and their commemoration. As he shows, the construction of the ancestors could be a complex process.

In the case of Peru, Lau (this volume) emphasises that specific ancestors were often regarded as esteemed progenitors who were thus different from the general dead. They were remembered and celebrated, in return for which they bestowed benefits upon the living. He emphasises that there were many types or categories of ancestor. The position of any specific dead being, with reference to its rank, its status and its social engagements, was in perpetual mediation. In the case of the Recuay culture which he discusses, there was strong emphasis upon anthropomorphic representation. Much Recuay imagery was made to commemorate specific individuals and to recall their networks of social relations through funerary ceremonies and in public festive events.

In an influential study by the anthropologist Arthur Saxe (1970) the practical economic implications of burial practices were set out, with wide-ranging worldwide examples. He was able to formulate a number of generalisations, some of which have been found widely relevant (Chapman 2003) in a wide range of contexts. They have been widely applied in the archaeology of the Americas, as well as to early Greece (Morris 1991). One of Saxe's 'hypotheses' on this theme is worth quoting:

> To the extent that corporate group rights to use restricted resources are attained … by means of lineal descent from the dead (i.e. lineal ties to ancestors), such groups will maintain formal disposal areas for the exclusive disposal of the dead …
>
> (Saxe 1970, 119).

The lineal ties to the ancestors, their association with property rights and the visible maintenance of the material remains of those ancestors are pertinent to several of the papers discussed here. Indeed corporate group rights are relevant also to some of the papers discussed in the previous section. But here we are dealing with individual or at least lineage burials, where ancestral links are more clearly emphasised. In his paper here, Snodgrass discusses the idea of the cemetery in prehistoric and early classical Greece, with Saxe's generalisation very firmly in mind.

In his study, 'Becoming Mycenaean?', Boyd (this volume) likewise examines the transformations in burial practices in prehistoric Greece. But he (and others in this volume) notes that the concept of 'ancestor' has, in the wake of Saxe's influential work, often been used rather loosely, a point well made recently by James Whitley in

his paper 'Too many ancestors' (Whitley 2002). Whitley argues that 'ancestorhood is an achieved status' (Whitley 2002, 122) emphasising that not all the dead were regarded as having attained that status. Yet Boyd points out that, in the Mycenaean cases which he considers, the physical remains of the funeral rites, including the human bones, were curated over several generations by the subsequent users of the tomb who respected and found meaning in the material remains, as is reflected in the commemorative and ritual activities which they carried out in the tomb.

The consideration of parental lineage, sometimes associated with emphasis upon the ancestors, has been brought vividly to life again by archaeogenetic studies (Renfrew & Boyle 2000; Jobling et al., 2004). Archaeologists and molecular geneticists think in very clear lineage terms when they discuss the transmission of mitochondrial DNA or of Y-chromosome haplotypes, transmitted respectively through the female or the male line. The concerns and preoccupations of the prehistoric genealogist are thus rekindled, in a sense, in some modern molecular genetic studies.

MATERIALITY AND MEMORY

As communities grow and develop, questions of identity are presented in new ways. Death in itself effaces memory, just as it can efface identity. Yet societies need to remember and to remember for longer than the single lifespan. In the previous section we have seen how the device of formalised burial, often in well-defined cemeteries, can maintain memories that are relevant to continuing survival, notably the right to access and exploit land for farming and for grazing. Rights to land tenure are important, and they can be maintained by claiming descent from the ancestors.

Material objects can also be good for remembrance. Heirlooms can be powerfully evocative. Memorials and images of the inherited past act as reminders and verifiers of a recollected story. In some cases the substance of which the heirloom is made can also be powerfully significant. Standing as it were opposite to death in the material record are those several materials which can serve directly to symbolise life. They often do so for a particular reason. Gold is a noble metal which does not tarnish: it can symbolise the incorruptible. Amber, in Greek *electron*, from which the modern word for electricity is derived, has indeed special electric qualities and can thereby symbolise vitality and longevity. Jade, in China

as in Mesoamerica, had associations with immortality, which go right back to Neolithic times. In his paper, Li (this volume) notes the very early occurrence of jade artefacts. The *bi* discs and *cong* tubes are a *leitmotiv* of the Chinese Neolithic. And the importance of jade does not decline. In the Han period jade 'suits' are an impressive feature of some aristocratic burials.

Gold, like jade, had a conspicuous role in early America, as the *conquistadores* knew too well. In Mycenaean burial practice it was used conspicuously for ornaments. Their juxtaposition of precious material with the human body, seen in the gold 'face masks' of Mycenae, has an evocative if perhaps superficial analogy with the analogous use of jade in China (documented in the jade burial suits of the Han dynasty) and among the Maya with the jade mask of Pakal, ruler of Palenque, as described here by Hammond. But, as Malafouris shows (this volume) the 'enactive sign' materialised in gold, the costly material, can be figuratively explicit. The gold signet ring and the gold seal depicting the 'lion hero', found in a rich burial in Grave Circle A at Mycenae (which were buried, and so not visible to a later visitor) carry a message which was also publicly made manifest in the relief carved on the grave stele which surmounted the burial. The iconography in this case is vibrant with life. It does not allude directly to funerary ritual but rather to the remembered vitality of the deceased, and no doubt to the continuing vigour of his successors. Heroic deeds of valour are recollected and recounted in this iconography, in gold and in stone.

Military valour is relevant too to the funerary practices documented in the Russian bronze age burials discussed by Hanks et al. (this volume). They draw attention to the association between artefacts connected with warfare and with metal working. The military equipment included chariots, as well as cheek pieces and other accoutrements for the horses that were pulling them. These burials, like those of the Mycenaean shaft graves discussed by Malafouris, with their rich panoplies of bronze weapons, are evocative of a heroic age. In the Mycenaean case the heroes were celebrated also in the Homeric epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. There the funeral games were remembered by which the fallen warriors were celebrated. In many such it was death itself which established the status of the hero, just as later it was death which could confirm the sanctity of the martyr. The warrior's beauty, to use the apposite term applied by Treherne (1995) to the European bronze age, was made eternal by his glorious death.

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HIERARCHY AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

Where there is a well-defined social order, as in any 'ranked' society, to use a standard anthropological terminology, a death holds significant consequences for the lives of others. Death turns princes into kings, and transforms heirs into persons of wealth. It leads to changes of office and of fortune. The inheritance of status is often clearly seen in the archaeological record, even in prehistoric times. Symbols of status are frequently buried with the dead. A particularly persuasive indicator of the inheritance of high status is the burial with rich grave goods of children who have died young. In most such cases, it may be inferred that these were children who were 'born great'. Too young to achieve greatness, they did not live to see the fulfilment of the expectations due to their rank or class, but yet were buried with clear indications of their status.

Such societies often have marks of distinction, symbols which express and convey the high status of their bearers. Often they bury their dead with a public extravagance, which certainly marks an event in the life of the successor and inheritor of the deceased (to recall the epigraph from Wittgenstein) even if not in the life of the dead person.

The wealth of the Royal Graves at Ur (Croucher, this volume) offers a striking example of conspicuous consumption in a funerary context. Among the 600 graves investigated from the Early Dynastic period by Sir Leonard Woolley was a group of 16 tombs which he described as a royal cemetery. He interpreted these as inhumations of a group of elite persons. In her reinterpretation of Woolley's excavations at Ur, Croucher confirms the very special nature of these tombs as representative of individuals of high class in the social order.

It is important to emphasise that such conspicuous burials are not simply reflective of the high status of the deceased persons. Such sumptuary magnificence has also an active role, by asserting their pre-eminence in confirming and naturalising the pre-eminence of their successors. The magnificence of the rituals and of the grave goods played an active role in both the constitution and the subsequent perpetuation of the dynasty, just as the monumental burial practices of the more egalitarian societies of the Neolithic period (for instance northern Europe) served to establish and perpetuate the communities for which that burial place was the principal monument and memorial.

This point is well made by Hammond (this volume) with reference to the Classic Maya. His description of the burial of Janaab Pakal, ruler of Palenque from 615 to 683 AD, as revealed in a series of monuments at the site, documents the enormous labour involved in the funerary arrangements. The wonderful relief-decorated stone depicting his descent into Xibalba, the destination of the dead, is one of the richest and most elaborate depictions pertaining to death that we have (Fig. 15.2).

The analysis by Mizoguchi of the burials in Japan of the Kofun period (3rd to 6th century AD) offers a further instance of this process of aggrandizement. He examines in detail the transition from the funerary practices of the preceding Yayoi period. This can be regarded as the time of early state formation in Japanese society. The great keyhole-shaped tumuli of the Kofun period in which the ruler was interred appear to have been designed to serve as symbolic loci for nothing less than the creation and reproduction of the order of the world. Mizoguchi suggests that the elite groups and the members of the communities who were involved in the formation of the new social order emerging at this time and who participated in the wide exchange networks which sustained it, may themselves have volunteered to construct the tumuli. He draws upon the paradox alluded to by Wittgenstein in the epigraph to this chapter (that death comes to everyone, but no one has first-hand knowledge of it). Here the commemoration of the deceased, and what one might also term the celebration of the death, played a significant role in the promotion of the status of the deceased (and his or her successor) to that of the ruler of a state society.

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY: GLIMPSING OTHER WORLDS

And they live untouched by sorrow in the islands of the blessed along the shore of deep-swirling Ocean, happy heroes for whom the grain-giving earth bears honey-sweet fruit flourishing thrice a year, far from the deathless gods, and Cronos rules over them.
Hesiod *Works and Days* 170

The changes in burial process in Kofun Japan and the concomitant elevation in the status of the ruler may profitably be compared with the evolution of society in Southeast Asia at about the same time. Higham (this volume) traces the development of mortuary practices in Southeast Asia from early hunter gatherer times onwards through a broad sweep of time. This reached its culmination in the Chenla period (500 to 800 AD) when the progressive deification of rulers may be seen to have taken place. In the kingdom of Angkor in the immediately succeeding centuries temple mausolea were constructed for

what had by then become god kings. The mortal ruler was now regarded as a divine being that, after corporeal demise, went on to a condition of immortality. As Higham puts it, 'Angkor Wat should be seen as the preserve of the immortal sovereign merged with Vishnu, in a heaven populated by celestial *apsaras'*. It is interesting to contrast this status or condition of immortality with that accorded posthumously to various Roman emperors by the ceremonial declaration, usually by a successor, of their *apotheosis*. In the Classical world Philip II of Macedon was the first ruler to declare himself divine during his own lifetime.

The belief system seen at Angkor was derived from the earlier traditions of Hindu India. So too, were the Buddhist mortuary rituals discussed by Julia Shaw (this volume), which originated in earlier Brahmanical practices. It was during the time of the Mauryan emperor Aśoka that Buddhism developed into a pan-Indian and subsequently into a pan-Asian phenomenon.

State society emerged very much earlier in Egypt, however, and with it came conceptions of divinity and of immortality, as Stevenson (this volume) notes. She surveys how, from the late Neolithic to the early bronze age, 'social relationships were dramatically reconfigured over an interval of some 1500 years, from pastoralist communities to a state society headed by divine kingship'. This anticipated the transition to statehood seen in Southeast Asia (where pastoralism was not significant economically) by nearly three thousand years. She develops the concept of 'experiential immortality', where, following Hodge (2011), she indicates that: 'it is possible to argue that a sense of immortality emerges not from people's natural propensity to imagine their own survival after death, but from people's intuitive sense of the continued existence of others'. This social perspective on the concept of immortality in a sense answers the observations of Epicurus and of Wittgenstein placed as epigraphs to this chapter.

She addresses here a problem in cognitive archaeology pertaining there in a general way to the first emergence of symbolic concepts. This she applies appositely to the very notion of immortality. One very concrete case of symbol construction, operating at a much more mundane and material level, and already extensively discussed in considerations of cognitive archaeology, is the emergence of the concept of weight. This came about through the shared (and in that sense social) experience of encountering and working with heavy objects (Renfrew 1982). In such a context and, in the presence of a balance pan,

a weight becomes a constitutive symbol, itself acting both as signifier and as thing signified. Another, in some ways analogous, case of concept formation is offered by the emergence, in a rural population, of the notion of a specific group. This emergence was based on the shared experiences of a number of persons coming together to construct a funerary monument, as discussed above in the section 'Mortality and the Foundations of Human Society'. There the social unit, in effect a very small polity, develops and comes to be an enduring social reality through the shared social experience of constructing a funerary monument, and in its continuing use. Stevenson refers, following Seremetakis (1991, 7), to the concept of *poesis*, to the marking of something out of that which was previously experientially and culturally unmarked. This is a term which can be applied to all three of these instances of the initial formulation of an important new symbolic concept: weight, social unit and immortality (see also Malafouris 2013). In the present discussion, mortuary practices are seen not as directed only by pre-existing beliefs about death but as themselves contributing to the very appearance and development of new concepts of belief. It is in this way, she argues, that in Egypt the notion of immortality first emerged and could develop. It is precisely within the context of transformative mortuary ritual that alternative existential realities may be formulated and be reinforced, and where the concept of immortality may have been constructed. She shows how at the First Dynasty cemetery of Abydos, it came about that different forms of the hereafter were envisioned for the king, as a divinity on earth, so constructing a notion of the hereafter for the king that was very different to the fate of the rest of society.

Stevenson situates this 'dramatic reorientation of the collective experience of time and space' in the area known as Umm-el Qa'ab at Abydos, and specifically in Cemetery U. This was a crucial focus in late Predynastic Egypt for the emergence of divine kingship. It is remarkable that the evidence available in the archaeological record for the early pharaohs is so clear. It is of great interest that the cult of specific deities apparently does not, in Ancient Egypt, precede these elaborate indications of respect for the first deified rulers.

Among the merits of a wide ranging sample of societies such as are considered here, despite the inconvenience of discontinuities in context and in time period, are the opportunities to consider such abstract concepts in very different communities and locations. So it is that the rich burials of the Moche of the first millennium

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AD of north Peru can certainly be compared for their wealth and display with the burials in some early state societies, such as those of the Royal Graves and Ur or the burials of Anyang in Shang period China, even if they do not quite rival the magnificence of the tombs of the Egyptian pharaohs. So it is tempting to see them as inhumations of rulers, exercising authority over their local states. But as other authors have argued (Quilter 2002), they may rather be the burials of priests, and the status of Moche polities as state societies may not yet be regarded as securely established. There is much diversity in northern Peru, but certainly it would be difficult to deny the status of deity to the remarkable image known as the *lanzón* which is still preserved in its original position in the temple at Chavín de Huantar (Rick 2008, 16).

The last paper presented at our symposium before the more spontaneous discussions which followed, 'Killing Mummies', serves to emphasise how the notion of death was very differently conceptualised in different societies at different times. D'Altroy examines informatively the very special treatment accorded to the remains of the deceased ruler, the Inka, in Peru at the time of the Spanish conquest. The distinction between mortal body and divine spirit is not so clear there as in the Egyptian case. In Peru the mummified body of the deified ruler was venerated and respected, and sustained by libations. As he outlines, 'Andean peoples did not recognise death as the separation of an eternal soul from its body…Bodies did contain a spirit, but that departed shade flew back to its society's place of origin, usually a fixed place in the landscape. Even though death was a permanent state, it did not imply the loss of vitality and the capacity to interact with the living'. He goes on to outline what may be conceived as a rather different ontology of being from that of western culture, with space-time considered as a unified entity. Space and time were constituted in each other through language and performance. The Inkas 'did not so much live on the land as engage with it, since every notable topographic feature – mountain peak, spring, outcrop, plain, river confluence and the like – was considered to be a social being, with its own name, history, personality, and will'. D'Altroy emphasises that the material element within the Inka intellectual project was not dominant over the intangible element, or indeed over the performative aspect. For speech acts and ritual could ratify and reinforce the principles expressed through the material realm. He summarises the claim of the Inkas, as conceived within the Inka world view, to a legitimate right to rule humanity, and to provide in doing so an irreplaceable interface between people and all other powers of the cosmos, including the Sun itself.

D'Altroy shows how the mummified body of the deceased Inka had an enduring presence and power, so that the destruction of the mummified remains was an unfortunate event with significant consequences. The paradox implicit in his title – 'Killing Mummies' – reminds us that the simple duality of mortal body and immortal soul, with which so many of us are familiar, simply represents one philosophical possibility, and one which in the contemporary western world is often assumed. Both Epicurus and Wittgenstein were acutely aware that the nature of death is less readily understood.

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Intimations of Mortality

Non-Human Animal Responses towards the Dead and Death: A Comparative Approach to Understanding the Evolution of Human Mortuary Practices

Alexander K. Piel and Fiona A. Stewart

INTRODUCTION

The awareness of mortality is a human universal, although when and what factors contributed to its conception are poorly understood. That is, what biological, ecological, or cultural pressures encouraged its manifestation in *Homo sapiens*? It is not until we examine the Palaeolithic that archaeological techniques can be used to reveal human attention to, and perhaps understanding of death; in other species, no such material artefacts exist. Nonetheless, by examining extant animal responses to the dead we may learn of the emerging capacities to perceive death, and subsequent treatment of it within human and other animal societies.

Humans exhibit diverse cultural variation in mortuary practices (Huntington & Metcalf 1979), in which treatment of dead bodies ranges from their consumption to the placement of them as far above (Martin 1996) or below ground as possible (Andrews and Bello 2006). Some treatment patterns, however, are consistent with what we would predict given our species' hyper-sociality and environment (e.g. home-base use). For example, living in close societies means burial (or destruction) of dead bodies is important for hygiene and thus fitness. Some responses to dead (or to the death of) companions are universal and also consistent with evolutionary explanations. For example, Littlefield & Rushton (1986) showed that mothers grieve more intensely than fathers, and both grieve more intensely for dead men than dead women. Healthy children are mourned more intensely than unhealthy children, and parents with fewer children grieve more intensely than those with many children. Evolutionary biology, however, seems unlikely to explain the range in human responses to death, as other responses seem maladaptive, e.g. consumption of bodies (Macbeth et al. 2007). The type of death and relations between the dead and the survivor also play a role (Parkes 1985). Responses vary in intensity, duration, and whether the process is immediate or delayed after the death. Additionally, there may be a learned component. That is, whilst children have strong feelings at a death – characterised particularly by aggression, anxiety, sadness, and fear caused by the separation inherent in death (Hutton & Bradley 1994) – adults instead understand the complexity of death, and more fundamentally, experience it as a stage in the life cycle (Slaughter 2005; Slaughter & Lyons 2003).

Despite there being a rich literature examining human responses to death, we know little of how other animals respond to dead companions. Understanding to what extent humans and other species exhibit similar responses to death may inform on how these traits have evolved and to what extent responses to death may be associated with our increased relative brain size and sociality. Non-human animals also exhibit wide variation in responses to death (see Table 2.1). These include any change in behaviour following the death of a conspecific, and in particular treatment of the dead – any behaviour directed towards the carcass. Evidence from other species is limited and anecdotal due to the difficulty of observing sick or wounded animals in the wild, which often retreat from their social group shortly before death (Hart 1988). In captivity, observations are also few as it is common practice to remove dying individuals from their social group (Anderson et al. 2010). Even when responses to death might be observed, anecdotes make for weak analyses, thus discouraging researchers from publishing them. Published reports of negative results, e.g. animals that do

Table 2.1. *Species and observed responses to dead conspecifics*

Common name	Scientific name (s)	EQ^	Social system	Responses to carcass (observation frequency 0–3*)				Reference(s)
				Hygienic	Investigative			
					Aggressive	Sexual	Supportive	
Honeybee	*Apis mellifera*	<1.0	Eusocial	3	0	0	0	Spivak 1996
Ant	*Pogonomyrmex barbatus* *Strumigenys lopotyle* *Atta colombica*	<1.0	Eusocial	3	0	0	0	Brown et al. 2006; Wilson 1971
Aphid	*Pemphigus spyrothecae*	<1.0	Eusocial	3	0	0	0	Benton & Foster 1992
Sand martin	*Riparia riparia*	NA	Cohesive	0	0	1	0	Dale 2001
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	NA	Cohesive	0	0	1	0	Moeliker 2001
Ground squirrel		1.5–2	Cohesive	0	0	1	0	Dickerman 1960
Rat	*Rattus rattus*	0.4	Solitary	3	0	0	0	Pinel et al. 1981
Mole rat	*Heterocephalus glaber*	0.75–1.5	Eusocial	3	0	0	0	http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/02/ science/02angi.html
Ringtail lemur	*Lemur catta*	<1.0	Cohesive	0	0	0	2	Nakamichi et al. 1996
Gelada baboon	*Theropithecus gelada*	1.74	Cohesive	0	0	0	2	Fashing et al. 2010
African elephant	*Loxodonta africana*	1.88	Fission fusion	0	2	2	2	Douglas-Hamilton & Douglas-Hamilton 1975; Masson & McCarthy 1996; Moss 1988; Wittemyer & Douglas Hamilton 2005
Chimpanzee	*Pan troglodytes*	2.38	Fission fusion	0	2	2	2	Anderson et al. 2010; Anderson 2011; Biro et al. 2010; Cronin et al. 2011; Hosaka 2000; Stewart et al. 2011;
Bottlenose dolphin	*Tursiops aduncus*	5.6	Fission fusion	0	2	2	2	Bearzi 2007; Dudzinski et al. 2003;
Humpback whale	*Megaptera novaeangliae*	0.18	Fission fusion	0	0	1	0	Pack et al. 1998
Human	*Homo sapiens*	6.28	Fission fusion	3	0	0	3	Huntington & Metcalf 1979

Notes: ^ EQ: Encephalisation quotient, ratio of actual brain mass to predicted brain mass for an animal of a given size;

* Responses to conspecific carcasses summarised as 'Hygienic' (removal/destruction of corpse to clean living area or reduce exposure to disease) or 'Investigative' (visual or physical attention to the corpse, e.g. aggressive, sexual, or supportive. Supportive investigation may include carry, move, seeming to assist, clean or groom body). Observation frequency of such behaviours was rated from 0–3 (0 – no reports, 1 – a single anecdote reported, 2 – greater than one report, 3 – commonly reported).

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not respond to dead conspecifics, are even more rare. Although this is not an exhaustive review, we have tried to include examples from a range of species, and also negative observations where available. This paper is necessarily biased towards those species where most descriptions are available. We thus focus primarily on responses to death in social species, and in particular the Primates, with an emphasis on chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*).

Historically, animal responses to death have been studied in the framework of trying to understand the mental and emotional states of other species. For example, in a discussion of concept attribution in non-humans, Allen & Hauser (1991, 230) described baboon responses to death as '…like the distraught parents who will not accept the fact of their child's death'. Similarly, African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) investigation of bones has been described as 'mourning' (Masson & McCarthy 1996). (Later experimental work demonstrated that whilst there appears to be a clear preference for bones and tusks of conspecifics over those of other species, there is no evidence that individuals treat remains of kin differently over non-kin: McComb et al. 2006). In addition to potentially analogous emotions between humans and other animals in their responses to death, both also share adaptive behaviours. For example, some species, including humans, remove carcasses from their dwellings, ridding homes of otherwise potentially disease carrying agents and possible targets of dangerous scavengers or predators. Other social species thoroughly investigate carcasses, a potentially maladaptive response (see Table 2.1). Without comparative research into these responses across species, we cannot explain their diversity.

Furthermore, despite a surge of recently described primate responses to death (Anderson 2011; Anderson et al. 2010; Biro et al. 2010; Cronin et al. 2011; Fashing et al. 2010; Stewart et al. 2011; Whilde & Marples 2011), Anderson (2011, 3) concluded that these reports 'do little to elucidate [primates'] awareness of death, its psychological rather than its socioecological significance'. But a better understanding of this 'socioecological significance' may implicate phylogeny, social system, physical environment, or life history in explaining behavioural responses. For example, from cetaceans to hominoids, parallel behaviours exist, e.g. atypical vocalisations, tactile investigation, grooming, and attempts to revive (Anderson et al. 2010; Cronin et al. 2011; Dudzinski et al. 2003). Given the presence of the same characteristics in human burial ritual (Huntington & Metcalf 1979), comparison of responses across taxa that vary in relative brain size and social structure may reveal important social or environmental factors in the evolution of human mortuary practices.

Pettitt (2011) used a broad framework to understand the development of mortuary rituals in human evolution, ranging from behavioural evidence of extant primates to archaeological signatures in prehistoric human societies. In his review of chimpanzee responses to death, he sought to model key behavioural patterns, suggesting that they form the blueprint of mortuary activity within the Hominidae. A primatological perspective on death may reveal whether or not other members of the Hominidae share with us 'core' activities in response to death. Classifying behavioural responses into realms of e.g. Communication, Social Theatre, and Morbidity, Pettitt demonstrated how these common threads of response behaviour might unite hominoids and hominins, suggesting their roots in the earliest members of the Hominidae.

Although disagreement and uncertainty persist over attributing thoughts and feelings to other species, especially in the context of death, greater documentation of suggestive behaviours, especially across the Primate order, helps to strengthen and to test models that seek to explain the roots of these behaviours. What Pettitt's model lacks is a broader examination of death-responses across other species. Using such a cross-taxa comparative perspective may identify those responses that are universal and adaptive, as well as others that may be unique to humans, hominoids, or other large-brained, social species. This paper aims to explore the diversity of and influences on non-human animal responses to death. From a compilation of anecdotes, we describe whether such behaviour is supportive, aggressive, or sexual, and to what extent the relationship between the dead and survivors influences subsequent responses. Specifically, we try to answer the question of whether any animal patterns exist that are associated with larger relative brain size (here measured as the encephalisation quotient − EQ: see Table 2.1) or with sociality, such that the evolution of human responses to death can be reconstructed.

Innate Mechanisms

Several species respond to the death of conspecifics in what can be clearly seen as adaptive behaviours. Wilson (1971, 278–9) described ant responses to the death of conspecifics, including the carrying of corpses to refuse piles (observed in *Pogonomyrmex barbatus*) and piling

of corpses into rings around nest entrances on the forest floor (observed in *Strumigenys lopotyle*; see similar in social aphids: *Pemphigus spyrothecae*, Benton & Foster 1992; and leaf-cutting ants: *Atta colombica*, Brown et al. 2006). Aphids that carry out 'housekeeping' behaviours, including removal of the dead, have reduced life spans, highlighting the benefit of these hygienic behaviours to the colony (Benton & Foster 1992). Wilson (1971) carried out experiments to identify the mechanism triggering these behaviours, concluding that individuals 'recognise corpses on the basis of a limited array of chemical breakdown products'. Support for this hypothesis came shortly thereafter with the work of Pinel and colleagues (1981), who showed not only that rats (*Rattus rattus*) bury dead conspecifics, but also that the behaviour is at least partly under the olfactory control of compounds released during decomposition, cadaverine and putrescine. The experiments revealed that the instinct to bury is so strong that rats will bury even individuals that are alive if they detect those polyamines. Mole rats (*Heterocephalus glaber*) show a comparable behaviour, quickly detecting a corpse in their den, before dragging, kicking, or carrying it to the communal latrine. 'When the latrine is filled they seal it off with an earthen plug, presumably for hygienic reasons, and dig a new one.'[1] Honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) likely respond to similar chemicals, removing parasite-infected or dead brood members (Spivak 1996), but they encase small mammals that get stuck and die in their hives in resin collected from trees, perhaps because they are too small to move them (G. Robinson, pers. comm.). Whilst these descriptions suggest behaviour that is explained most parsimoniously by the removal of disease-carrying agents from enclosed dwelling-spaces (and are noted as hygienic behaviours in Table 2.1), they also elucidate one of the biological mechanisms for how animals detect a dead individual.

Necro–Socio–Sexuality

Not all responses, however, suggest this recognition. Dickerman (1960, 404), in an opportunistic observation of a dead female ground squirrel, watched a male approach and lay down beside her in a copulatory posture: '…undoubtedly, the flexed "female position" of the dead animal released the copulatory drive in the male.' The same mechanism may be invoked to explain Moeliker's (2001) description of male homosexual necrophilia in mallard ducks (*Anas platyrhynchos*). Whilst both homosexual and necrophilic behaviour have been seen in mallards, no one before had seen them simultaneously. Is

necro–socio–sexuality common in the animal kingdom or are these isolated incidents of pathology?

On review, socio-sexual behaviour with carcasses appears in several species. In their observations of the responses of three male humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) whales to the death of a rival, Pack et al. (1998, 869) described in detail a diverse behavioural repertoire, ranging from examples of epimeleticy[2] to dominance displays and copulation attempts. Immediately before the male died, all four individuals showed intense competitive displays (which was the likely cause of the death), but despite, or perhaps because of this, one of the males stayed with the dead individual for over four hours after the death. His visible penis and pulsating genital slit during this period suggested an unusually high state of sexual arousal. Bailey & Zuk (2009), in a comprehensive review of same-sex behaviour in animals, found no cases in whales, suggesting that this behaviour was unique and in response to the dead individual.

Dudzinski et al. (2003) described the responses of dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*) to conspecifics off Mikura Island, Japan. In one observation, six to eight dolphins spent almost three hours with a male carcass, focusing almost all their attention on its genital area. All male dolphins at the carcass site had penile erections, emitted vocalisations that differed from the normal repertoire, and spent much time chasing other males away. In other contexts with living conspecifics, these behaviours are described as mate guarding. Even after surfacing to breathe, they returned immediately and directly to the carcass. The behaviours towards the carcass were both aggressive (head-scanning), and affiliative (sexual), as if individuals were unsure how to behave. In another two-day observation of responses to a dead female, male dolphins showed no sexual arousal but were aggressive to researchers who tried to retrieve the corpse. The male dolphins 'assumed aggressive actions (S-postures, jaw clasps) at swimmers. The males then nudged and pushed at the carcass with their rostra, pectoral fins and bodies, and swam belly-to-belly to carcass…' (Dudzinski et al. 2003, 187). These descriptions reveal increased arousal levels, and possible confusion at the lack of response, and overall state of the dead individual. They also reveal an unusual combination of behaviours not seen together in other contexts.

Relationship Quality

One relevant factor in variation in responses to death may be the relationship between the dead individual and

the surviving group members. Given the importance of relationships to social animals, from alliance formation in dominance take-overs to cooperative foraging strategies, we hypothesise that relationship quality also influences how individuals respond to dead conspecifics. We thus predict that individuals that are more closely affiliated with the dead will exhibit stronger reactions, either in immediate or longer-term behavioural changes.

Dead Infants

Most observations of animal response to death across taxa, especially in primates, describe behaviours between mothers and infants (although see Bearzi 2007: *Tursiops aduncus*). Nakamichi et al.'s (1996) report of seven (infant) deaths of *L. catta* in Berenty Reserve, Madagascar included descriptions of visual and vocal behaviour that showed extended interest in the carcass for several hours post-mortem by mothers, especially in their reticence to leave dead infants. Unrelated group members sniffed, touched, or licked the carcasses, whilst six of the seven mothers beginning to travel moved back and forth between the group and the dead infant before eventually leaving it behind. None of the mothers carried their dead infants, however.

Mothers' responses to infant deaths have also been studied experimentally. Five squirrel monkey (*Samiri sciureus*) mothers whose infants died were presented with the carcasses of their infants and those of other females. For all mothers, the age at which an infant died was most predictive of her responses (that is, the older an infant was at death, the more often the mother discriminated her infant from another's offspring; Kaplan, 1973). This example suggests, at minimum, that familiarity increased maternal response to the death of an infant; however, older offspring have also received greater investment than younger ones. Kaplan's observations could therefore also indicate that a difference in maternal investment influences a mother's response to the death of an infant.

Infant relationships with other group members may also influence post-mortem behaviour. Merz (1978) recorded the behaviour of male *Macaca sylvanus* to dead infants in a semi-free-ranging population living in La Montagne des Singes, France. Males extensively handled the carcasses, roughly swinging, nibbling, and tugging at them. Merz (1978, 753) found that those males that had engaged with an infant in life continued to do so after the infant died, giving evidence of a 'lasting personal relationship'. She concluded that the relationships between all the individuals involved (infant, mother, male) were predictive of how males treat dead infants.

Examples of responses to dead chimpanzee infants date from almost a half-century ago, from the earliest studies at Gombe, Tanzania. These reports often centred on post-mortem cannibalism of infants (Bygott 1972; Goodall 1977). In her extensive review of infant killing at Gombe, Goodall (1977) detailed infant handling and killing, as well as treatment of the body. Both Goodall (1977) and Bygott (1972) reported sniffing, poking, touching, examining, and grooming of the body, plus more aggressive patterns, including the corpse's incorporation into male charging displays. In most cases, carcasses were carried around for amounts of time varying from hours to days but then were abandoned.

Boesch & Boesch-Achermann (2000) detailed the responses of Tai chimpanzees in Ivory Coast to the death of a two year-old male, Bambou. In response to Bambou's death (probably the result of a broken neck), his mother made loud alarm calls and carried the body for almost two days. There was much interest in Bambou's body by community members, but no aggression was exhibited. Instead, individuals smelled the carcass, emitted soft 'hoo' calls (usually emitted in contexts of puzzlement and distress – Goodall 1986) and left silently after almost four hours. Shortly after departing, however, Bambou's mother returned to collect her dead son's body. She carried him for 20 metres, before leaving the carcass behind. The alpha male guarded her (and the carcass), periodically during this period, at the same time displaying at her.

More recently, Biro and colleagues (2010) described the carrying of dead infants in the Bossou community, Guinea, where individuals of all age-sex classes 'attempted to touch, poke, or handle the bodies' carried by their mothers for up to 68 days after the infant's death. In contrast to other observations from captivity (Matsuzawa 1997) and the wild (see below), no aggression was ever observed towards the carcasses. A recent report from Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage Trust, Zambia represents one of the first descriptions that systematically quantifies a mother's response to her dead infant. Cronin and colleagues (2011) recognised there is a paucity of evidence that examines how, in this transitional process, a mother distances herself from the infant carcass. Measuring the proximity and interaction between mother and dead infant across time, the authors suggested that their observations specifically inform on how chimpanzees respond to the 'premature severing' of the mother–infant bond, slowly accepting the change in state of their offspring.

Finally, Fashing et al. (2010) detailed the responses of wild gelada monkeys (*Theropithecus gelada*) to dead infants, where carcasses evoke considerable interest from female group mates in particular. Females carried their own dead infants for approximately 1–4 days before abandoning the body, but exhibited limited or no interest in the death of adult or juvenile conspecifics. The authors also described the death of a mother-infant pair whose weakness eventually prevented them from keeping up with troop. On the first day the pair failed to follow the troop, group members looked back often in the direction of the pair, but eventually moved on to forage. Even upon return to the sleeping site where they had all slept the night before, no evidence was observed of any attempt to locate the weakened mother-infant pair. The mother died first, infant at her side; the infant died alone the following day.

Evolutionary biology explains well the extensive interest mothers exhibit in dead offspring. Mammals that experience long gestation and development will benefit with the successful survival (and subsequent reproduction) of their offspring thus premature abandonment of a suffering, but viable offspring has tremendous fitness costs. Silk (1999) also reminds us that infants are inherently interesting, and at least for living infants, should be even more attractive to females. However, a consistent female sex-bias is absent in observations of dead infant-interactions in primates. Rather, from the above reports, male primates may exhibit more interest than females, and use the carcasses as a tool in intrasexual encounters (Merz 1978). Finally, those individuals that spent time with the infant during its life continue to interact with it after its death, indicating the importance of relationship quality in predicting post-death responses.

Dead Adults

There are fewer documented cases of behavioural responses to dead adults than to youngsters. In primates, the responses of dependant offspring to dead mothers are the most commonly observed and offspring tend to remain close to their mother's body (e.g. Stewart et al. 2011; Fashing et al. 2010; Goodall 1986), and sometimes die shortly thereafter (e.g. Fashing et al. 2010). In chimpanzees, offspring may be adopted by other members of the community allowing them to survive to adulthood (although see below; Goodall 1986).

In elephants, there is general interest in sick, dying, or dead individuals, and behaviours upon encountering bones of conspecifics, in which they exhibit intense agitation and investigation with the trunk and feet, are well known (Douglas-Hamilton & Douglas-Hamilton 1975; Moss 1988). In their observations of five unrelated families (all matriarch herds) visiting the carcass of a recently dead matriarch in Samburu National Reserve, Kenya, Douglas-Hamilton and colleagues (2006) suggested a 'generalized response' from conspecifics, including kin and non-kin. Like primates (described below), the closest associate of the dead individual spent the most time in proximity to the carcass, for up to five days after the death.

Merte et al. (2008) described the reactions of 30 elephants to a freshly-dead male herd member, and how behaviours such as sitting on or mounting the carcass were shown that 'sought a response' from the elephant carcass. Sex differences were dramatic, with males comprising 97% of nearest-neighbour data over the first 2.5 hours after the death, despite a matriarch-led group watching nearby. Three males in particular – thought to be close associates – monopolised the carcass, performing almost 85% of all behaviours seen. Associations during life may sufficiently explain sex differences in these 'concerned' (Douglas-Hamilton et al. 2006, 100) behaviours: given that males and females each form same-sex bachelor and nursing sub-groups (Wittemyer & Douglas-Hamilton 2005), this sex difference in how carcasses are treated may reflect association during life, rather than curiosity at death.

Summarising chimpanzee responses from Mahale Mountains National Park, Tanzania, Hosaka et al. (2000) discussed the diversity of ways that chimpanzees respond to the death of community members (excluding those caused by inter-community aggression). They suggested that level of decomposition and cause of death influence emotional state, ranging from fear to curiosity, with females and juveniles tending towards the former and males the latter. Those feelings are expressed through vocalisations, which are usually emitted as warnings in response to a threat (e.g. wraa barks) or when curious or (e.g. hoo calls). As with the macaques described above, Mahale males are often aggressive with conspecific carcasses, using them in charging displays. Chimpanzees also show similar behaviour to the carcasses of other animals, whilst other primates pay little attention to them (e.g. *Cercopithecus aethiops*: Struhsaker 1967).

Teleki's (1973) observations from Gombe and Stewart et al.'s (2011) from the same community 40 years later are rare detailed descriptions of chimpanzee responses to the death of an adult group member. Teleki described

reactions to the sudden and dramatic death of an adult male community member, Rix, who fell from a tree and broke his neck. Behavioural responses varied across individuals, and were hypothesised to be influenced by age or social relationship. Some companions stayed with the corpse for many hours, and almost all made 'wraa' barks, prompting Teleki to conclude that such vocalisations may have a special significance in the context of a dead community member.

Stewart et al. (2011) made similar observations of the responses of 18 individuals to the death (following a long illness) of an adult immigrant female, Malaika. Initially, the corpse was visited by a succession of individuals who one-by-one briefly investigated the body, whilst other individuals watched from above. Soon thereafter, eight individuals formed a silent, tight circle around the body, mostly looking, but a few sniffing or grooming the body. During the observation, individual young males sequentially monopolised Malaika's body, in turn displacing younger chimpanzees (including Mambo, Malaika's four-year old offspring who spent the most time in proximity to the body). The young males' persistent manipulation of the carcass suggested they may have been frustrated with her lack of response, or else were using her body as a tool in displaying to community members. Malaika's body was not left alone during the observation and was eventually dragged for over 60m by at least four individuals. This dragging sometimes seemed to be attempts to monopolise access, as individuals dragged the body away from others, whilst at other times, seemed to be attempts to haul the corpse with the party after other individuals had begun to travel. In total, her companions spent at least four hours with the carcass before abandoning it to begin to travel. As with Teleki's interpretations, the authors found a relationship between age and sex class and interaction with the carcass, with younger males exhibiting more aggression than females and elder males.

Finally, at Tai, Boesch & Boesch-Achermann (2000) recounted community responses to the sudden death (possibly from a leopard attack) of a 10-year old female, Tina. The community showed a suite of behaviours in response to her death, from beating and dragging of the body to sitting around the carcass in silence. The authors reported sex differences, with males spending more time with the carcass than females, and one male spent almost five hours with it. Blood was regularly licked from the wounds of living individuals, but none was licked from Tina. From their observations, the authors raised the possibility that chimpanzees, like humans, have

compassion and empathy (see also Anderson et al. 2010). Unfortunately, as with the Gombe examples above, the authors did not describe the pre-death relationships between the dead (Tina) and those who interacted with the body: thus further analyses of the role of relationships cannot be made.

In summary, in elephants and chimpanzees, both kin and non-kin express an interest in dead companions, although in both taxa, association during life appears to explain greater interest after death. In chimpanzees, especially, males express more interest than females, although given male philopatry and dominance over females, males are both more likely to be related and able to suppress female access.

Environmental Explanations

Whilst reports from chimpanzees routinely explore the role cognition may play in responses to death, Fashing et al. (2010), in comparing extensive dead infant-carrying in baboons and chimpanzees, suggested instead that the physical environment requires more attention. They argued that perhaps cold or dry climates delay decomposition, and thus promote more interest from group members. Additionally, that wild animals need to travel and forage may preclude the more complex behaviours observed in captivity (Anderson et al. 2010). However, appropriate climatic conditions, or time afforded by captivity, although permitting 'extensive interest', do not explain it. For example, in describing a lack of interest by community members (excluding the mother) in a dead chimpanzee infant in Kibale National Park, Uganda, Wrangham[3] argued that even 'the capacities of empathy and cooperation that captive experiments show chimpanzees to be capable of must sometimes fall victim to baser urges due to the harsher life of a wild chimpanzee in a forest'. However, these observations contrast with the above observations from Gombe and Tai of extensive interest expressed for prolonged periods of time by chimpanzee community members to both infant and adult carcasses.

Death Versus Dead

The above reports provide a glimpse into how animals respond to a dead adult conspecific, but not to death itself. Across human societies people grieve the loss of companions on their death. This process is a response to the permanent absence of the individual (e.g. death),

versus examples above, of responses to a dead body. We could find only three examples of the former, two from captive primates, which provide evocative evidence of human-like grieving. In 1961, the death (and removal) of a male potto (*Perodicticus potto*) in a Yale University Laboratory gave researchers an opportunity to monitor the responses of his remaining two cage-mates, a male and a female, to permanent absence (Cowgill 1972). After the male's death, the two surviving pottos did not consume all the food provisioned to them but rather appeared to leave enough food each day for another animal. When Cowgill decreased food portions, thereby controlling for the possibility that the pottos were simply satiated, they continued to leave food even after food portions were cut to half of their initial amounts, to the point that she feared the surviving pottos would starve!

In the only case from the wild, Goodall (1986) described an almost fully independent juvenile 'Flint' showing symptoms of human like grieving: he remained with the body of his dead mother long after her death before himself succumbing to illness. Whether his symptoms of lethargy, lack of appetite, and his subsequent death were a result of illness or 'grieving' is unknown.

Finally, Anderson and colleagues (2010) reported on the death of an adult chimpanzee at Blair Drummond Safari Park, Scotland. Unique to this report were the detailed video records made before, during, and after the death. The authors described behaviours analogous to those that humans exhibit: chimpanzees appeared to care for the individual before death, to test for signs of life at the point of death, and to show signs of frustration after death, as well as subsequently to avoid the place where the death occurred (after the body was removed). They proposed that their observations differ in important ways from previous accounts: first, whilst reports from Gombe (Stewart et al. 2011; Teleki 1973) and Tai (Boesch & Boesch-Achermann 2000) described excited and aggressive behaviours by conspecifics towards carcasses, Anderson and colleagues observed subdued, calm behaviours, 'strikingly reminiscent of human responses to peaceful death' (2010, R350). Also, at both Tai and Gombe, chimpanzees showed notable interest in the carcass and the place of death, even dragging the body as much as 60m at Gombe. The opposite response was seen in Scotland, where individuals avoided the place of death for five consecutive days, despite having slept there the 29 previous nights. However, studies of wild chimpanzees responses to death have not yet investigated home-range use pre- and post- death of a community member, so

it remains unknown if the death site is also avoided in the wild. The contrast in behaviour pre-, during-, and post-death seen in Anderson et al.'s study encouraged the authors to draw conclusions about the possible mental and emotional state of the surviving chimpanzees, specifically whether empathy and self-awareness – traits shared by humans and chimpanzees – allow us also to share with them an awareness of mortality.

Mal-Adaptive Investigation?

Removing or isolating a carcass from one's home base makes adaptive sense by thereby reducing potential exposure to disease. Elephants, dolphins, and chimpanzees, however, spend significant time investigating dead bodies. Compared to the responses of ants, honeybees, and mole rats, all which live in confined spaces that may facilitate rapid pathogen transmission, such extensive tactile interest in a dead body by nomadic organisms seems mal-adaptive. During this stage, behaviours associated with high arousal, such as sex and aggression, are common, presumably to gather more information about the unusual unresponsiveness of the carcass. These highly investigative species share two other key features: (1) large encephalisation quotients, and (2) fission-fusion social systems (see Table 2.1). Fission-fusion social systems are fluid and flexible, whereby individuals form temporary sub-groupings that vary across space and time. Just as fission-fusion systems have been argued to promote intelligence, as well as theory of mind and self-conception in hominoids (Potts 2004), so might it, combined with large brains, have resulted in the ability to learn about death.

Knowledge of Death

Evidence from human infants suggests that they exhibit empathetic behaviour from nine months, but cannot fully conceptualise death until six to nine years of age. Until then, most children insist death is temporary, or reversible, associating it with sleep. Their initial responses to death include increased aggression towards peers, a desire to know who was responsible, and concrete questions surrounding how the dead will eat and breathe (Hutton & Bradley 1994). Children struggle to verbalise how they feel about death, and often are obsessed with what the body looks like (Saunders & Kastenbaum 1997).

Many human cultures channel emotive responses through religious and philosophical systems, ritual practices, and particular elements of social organisation to

facilitate the acceptance and experience of death (Grof & Halifax 1977). In non-human societies, such avenues are unknown. However, given well-established cultural diversity in many behaviours in other species (especially chimpanzees – McGrew 2004, and dolphins – Krutzen et al. 2005), it is possible that non-humans also have cultural activities related to death and dying.

How do these behaviours compare across species? Rat burial and insect embalming suggest that death-response behaviours are triggered innately by the release of poly-amines during decomposition, and need not be influenced by social relationship or context. The adaptive value is clear – isolating decomposing carcasses reduces exposure to potential disease or scavenging predators. An increase in mortuary activity in humans could be explained by the need for increased hygienic behaviours as a result of a more fixed home base. The widespread observations in cetaceans of sexual behaviour combined with aggression, suggests heightened, if misdirected, arousal levels. That is, a carcass is neither a potential mate nor threat, yet it is simultaneously treated as both, which mirrors chimpanzees and elephants in combining behaviours otherwise not observed in a single context. Alternatively, lacking limbs to investigate a carcass, cetaceans may use sexual behaviour to learn about the state of a motionless conspecific.

Stewart et al. (2011) discussed exploratory learning as a possible explanation for the age-graded responses at Gombe, where juveniles and younger individuals (specifically males) showed more interest in a carcass than did older individuals. Cronin et al. (2011) invoked a similar explanation for observations from Chimfunshi, suggesting that mothers were gathering information about response-levels of infants and so were learning about dying:

> The behaviours expressed by the mother are consistent with the suggestion that the mother was actively gathering this novel sensory information about the dead infant. Conceivably, this information could be remembered the next time she encountered the same set of cues, and the implications of death – that the individual is removed from one's social environment – could theoretically be learned by chimpanzees.
>
> (Cronin et al. 2011, 420)

The question of whether mothers themselves learn about death or the implications of it could be addressed by future studies on comparing responses to death in mothers who have or have not previously experienced infant death.

Parallels between the responses of chimpanzees and human youngsters to the dead are striking. We cannot know if non-human primates query those responsible for death, or how the dead will subsist, as human children do. However, across populations, especially in wild chimpanzees and dolphins, survivors share some overt tendencies, namely a propensity towards aggression, as well as vocalisations associated with stress and anxiety. In humans, weeping may represent incorporation of new information, including 'a shift in denial…to assimilation of the actuality of the event' (Marrone 1999, 514). The pattern described in Table 2.1 suggests that species of fission-fusion social systems and higher EQs exhibit more intense and possibly emotive responses to death; perhaps this is the same 'assimilation of the event' that Marrone describes occurring in other species.

Adaptive Denial of Death

Pettitt's (2011) interpretation of Tai chimpanzees' responses to Tina's death, which include unusual vocalisations, sitting silently, grooming, displaying, and dragging her body, is that an unusual combination of behaviours are exhibited which do not occur together in other contexts. Similar phenomena occurred at Gombe, Mahale, and Chimfunshi. Teleki (1973) suggested that the behaviour of certain individuals '…seemed to indicate awareness of a change from activity to inactivity of a group member, but it remained uncertain whether any participant grasped the conceptual difference between life and death', whilst Pettitt (2011, 37) concluded that 'chimpanzees appear to be aware that death has occurred'. On what level, then, do we expect chimpanzees (or other social and intelligent species) to be aware of death?

Fear of death has been argued to be a human universal (Becker 1973), and across societies 'death anxiety' is described as the complex and amorphous set of feelings aroused by thinking about death (Moore & Williamson 2003; Schultz 1979). Full self-awareness and a theory of mind that allow for inter-subjectivity probably have been propagated by positive natural selection and in some way benefitted ancestral hominins (Hauser 2009). Others have argued to the contrary, that these same traits may actually be evolutionarily detrimental to an individual or species. Specifically, Varki (2009) proposed that these traits bring with them an awareness of death and mortality which, '…far from being useful, the resulting overwhelming fear would be a dead-end evolutionary barrier, curbing activities and cognitive functions necessary for survival and reproductive fitness'. Varki (2009) suggested instead that other hominoids' (as well as cetaceans, elephants,

Table 2.2. *Behaviours seen in wild chimpanzees, dolphins, and elephants in response to dead conspecifics, under the realms of 'communication', 'social theatre', and 'morbidity'*

	Chimpanzees	Dolphins	Elephants
Communication			
Unusual calls	X	X	X
Gathering, loud calls	X	X	X
Sitting in silence	X		X
Play & laughter	X		
Social Theatre			
Aggressive displays	X	X	X
Banishing of low-ranking individuals	X		
Males stay longer at corpse	X	X	X
Morbidity			
Dragging of corpse	X		
Smelling and investigation of corpse, including sexual	X	X	X
Grooming of corpse	X	X	

Modified from Pettitt 2011, fig. 2.2; X indicates presence of the behaviours in each species

and some birds) conception of death might have been blocked at some point during their evolution. According to Varki, a human-like awareness of death would inhibit otherwise positively selected behaviours. Following this, one might predict no human-like responses to the dead in other animals. How, then, do we explain similar behaviours between, for example, chimpanzees and humans?

Pettitt (2011) has argued that observations of other primates can help us identify core behaviours towards the dead that may reflect our shared evolutionary history. He described these behaviours as falling into three overlapping realms: Communication, Social Theatre, and Morbidity. Behaviours associated with any of these realms could reflect a focus on the individual, the carcass, or the group. The reports from chimpanzees at Gombe, Tai, and Scotland contain features from all of these realms (see Table 2.2), supporting Pettitt's claim that embedded within our primate ancestry lies the foundation for contemporary human mortuary practices.

However, we have found that these behaviours also occur in other fission-fusion, large-brained species, e.g. elephants and dolphins, and so these complex responses to death instead may reflect a convergent path where, together with inter-subjectivity and self-awareness, may come the ability to learn about death. Pettitt's model may still apply, albeit expanded to species outside the hominoids.

CONCLUSIONS

Human perception and treatment of death in the later Palaeolithic are best understood through the lens of archaeology. However, prior to the later Palaeolithic,

early members of our genus and perhaps those of *Australopithecus* as well may have had the ability to learn about death in much the same way extant apes do. Consequently, these early hominins may have experienced an emerging concept of death, demonstrated only ephemerally, especially in their response to dead conspecifics. Exactly what that concept was, and how it manifested itself, we do not know, and may never. Despite these uncertainties, the behaviours of extant apes (and other species) that share with humans features of anatomy and sociality, provide us insight into non-human animal treatment of the dead, and perhaps perception, of death. Simultaneously, these behaviours offer a context from which we can examine the first material artefacts of death-recognition in the archaeological record.

In this paper, we have argued here that fission fusion and large brains may play a role in predicting animal responses to dead conspecifics. We have outlined the diversity of animal responses, from insects to mammals. With colony-dwelling insects, humans share the hygienic benefit of corpse-removal from a fixed home base. With chimpanzees, dolphins, and elephants, humans share a fission-fusion social system and hyper-investigative, potentially mal-adaptive behaviours towards carcasses. Fission-fusion systems require individuals to constantly renegotiate relationships; intense investigation may result from an ability to detect any changes in state and status upon each reunion. To further differentiate the independent influence of each of these factors, additional data are needed from small brained, fission-fusion species (e.g. *Crocuta crocuta*) and large-brained, non fission-fusion species (e.g. *Gorilla gorilla*). Regardless of the ultimate factors

influencing animal responses to death, some species (e.g. chimpanzee, dolphin, elephant) often behave in ways that are not seen in other contexts. It is difficult to determine whether any of these animals have developed an awareness or concept of death, but intense interest and investigation of dead conspecifics may allow them to learn that death has occurred.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1 From http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/02/science/02angi.html
2 Epimeletic behaviour is help by a healthy individual for a sick or injured individual
3 http://kibalechimpanzees.wordpress.com/2011/06/23/teddys-death-and-the-aftermath/

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Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Mortuary Behaviours
and the Origins of Ritual Burial

João Zilhão

INTRODUCTION

Although we now know that the site of the 1856 discovery of the eponymous remains – the Kleine Feldhofer Grotte, in the Neander valley – was in all likelihood a place of burial (Schmitz 2006), the fact that Neanderthals buried their dead was not scientifically established until 1908, at the Bouffia Boneval, one of the caves in the La Chapelle-aux-Saints complex of Palaeolithic localities (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). A near-complete skeleton, the 'old man', was found here, lying inside a 0.30 m deep, approximately 1.50 × 1.00 m depression of the marly bedrock whose morphology (roughly rectangular, with straight walls and a flat bottom) indicated that it had been deliberately dug for the disposal of the corpse (Boule 1913).

A string of similar discoveries followed and, with those made at Mt. Carmel in the 1930s (McCown & Keith 1939), the practice became documented also among the anatomically modern peoples that briefly occupied the Near East during the last interglacial. As a result, the notion that burial was a cultural innovation of the Middle Palaeolithic, appearing in the archaeological record some 100,000 years ago and irrespective of human taxonomic affinities, became commonplace in the field of palaeoanthropology until the late 1980s. However, in the framework of the 'Eve Hypothesis' and the 'Human Revolution' paradigm, whose internal consistency required the removal of Neanderthals from the range of human-ness in both biology and behaviour, that notion became the object of intensive scrutiny. Although, at first, questions were raised with the Neanderthals specifically in mind, the logic of the argument made it almost inevitable that such questions

eventually extended to the Middle Palaeolithic in general (Gargett 1989, 1999).

As two Israeli scholars were quick to point out, the ultimate implications of the sceptical argument were that burial should be considered unproven even as late in prehistory as the Natufian (Belfer-Cohen & Hovers 1992). However, this elegant refutation by reductio ad absurdum of the burial deniers' position did not suffice to put the issue to rest, as shown by interpretations derived from a recent re-analysis of the context of the child skeleton excavated in 1961 at Roc-de-Marsal (Dordogne, France: Sandgathe et al. 2011). At first glance, the new evidence can be construed as supporting the proposition that, in this particular instance, deliberate burial is not confirmed. But this conclusion need not imply that a similar verdict become the null hypothesis for the interpretation of all the other instances of Neanderthal burial currently known. In fact, recent work at La Chapelle-aux-Saints verified the veracity of the original accounts, via rediscovery and re-exposure of the artificial burial pit described by the excavators (Rendu et al. 2014).

In truth, the key questions underpinning these controversies had all been asked and answered by Leroi-Gourhan (1964) more than two decades before the onset of the late 1980s–early 1990s debate. If the preservation of Middle Palaeolithic articulated skeletons results from the operation of entirely natural processes and does not require purposeful protection to be accounted for, and if the large number of such finds known from this period is not a reflection of the emergence of intentional burial, how then do we explain (a) why identical instances of articulated human skeletons remain unknown from earlier levels of similar (if not the same) sites, and (b) why do we not find identical instances of articulated skeletons of
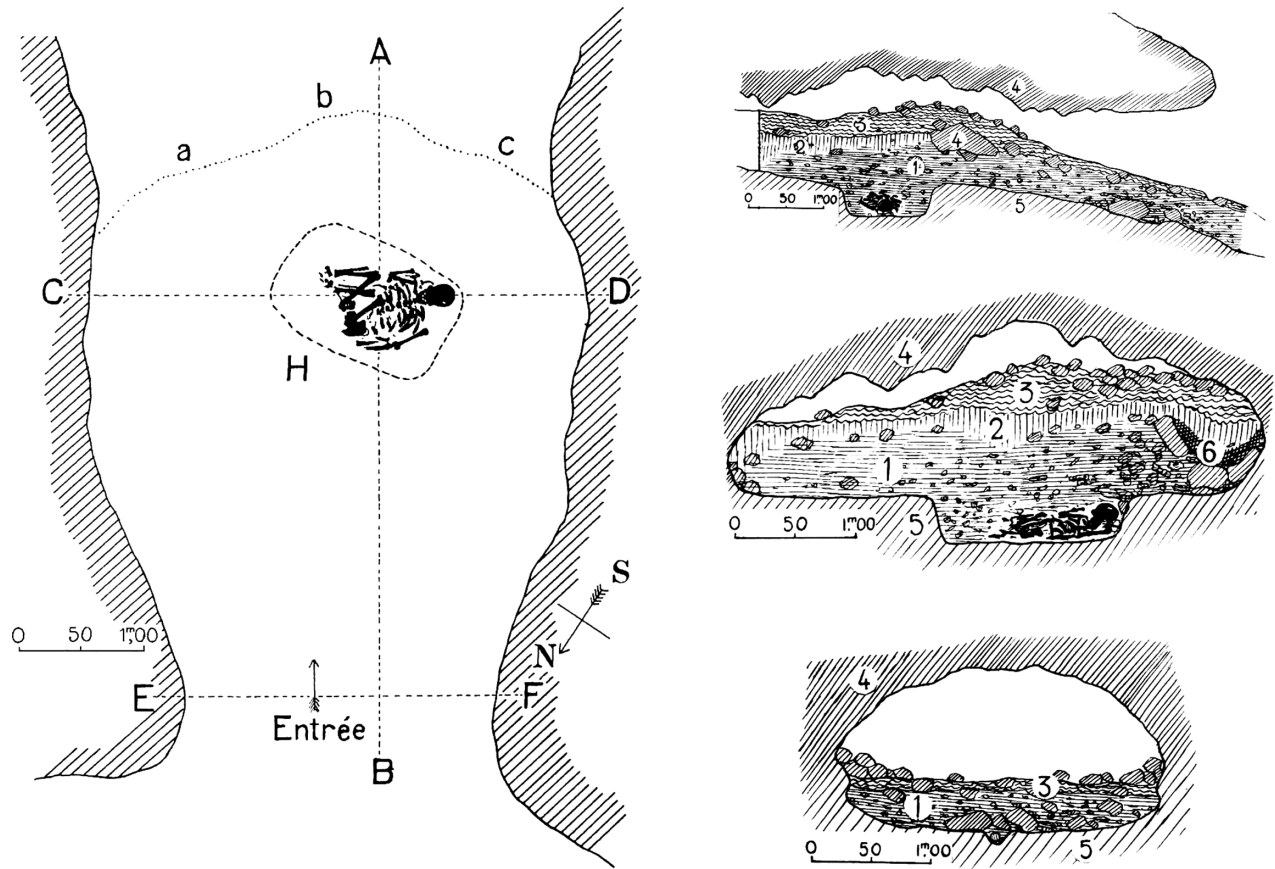
Figure 3.1. The Bouffia Boneval at La Chapelle-aux-Saints.
Left: Plan of the site, with outline of burial pit (H), limits of excavation (a, b, c), and different stratigraphic profiles (AB, CD, and EF).
Right: Stratigraphic profiles: 1, archaeological level; 2, clay; 3, loose clayey sandy earth; 4, rocky vault and collapsed boulders; 5, natural bedrock (limestone and greenish clays of the Infralias); 6, burnt earth level.
After Boule 1913: figs. 4–7.

other cave dwelling animals (foxes, wolves, hyenas, etc.) in the same deposits? Moreover, how do we explain that the La Ferrassie 6 individual, the skeleton of a three- to five-year-old child, was found inside a deep pit covered by a limestone slab whose inferior face was decorated with cup marks? What natural process would have produced the marks, and what is the probability that among the large number of slabs that fall from the roof and walls of any rock-shelter, this particular one would, uniquely among those found in the site's Mousterian levels, feature such marks and, by chance alone, happen to end up lying exactly atop the pit and with the cup-marked side facing down?

Deniers of burial in the Middle Palaeolithic in general, or only among Neanderthals in particular, have never been able to answer these questions. That is why I believe there is no point in reverting to the issue from a 'Did they do it or not?' perspective, or in repeating the descriptions of the evidence upon which the notion that 'They did do it' is based. A number of such overviews exist (e.g., Binant 1991; Defleur 1993), with a most recent addition being Paul Pettitt's (2011), which, additionally, has the merit of framing the practice in an evolutionary model of the relationship between humans and death. Pettitt's proposition is that the emergence of burial in the Middle Palaeolithic is preceded by a long period during which (a) behaviours seen, in a manner that is not qualitatively distinct, among our closest living relatives, the chimpanzees (and, therefore, presumably going back to a common Miocene ancestor), are elaborated in distinctive human ways (e.g., via the use of stone tools); (b) new behaviours emerge that reflect the beginnings of a symbolic appropriation of place; and (c) such new behaviours underpin the eventual emergence, much later in prehistory, of the repeated, long-term use of dedicated sites for the disposal of the dead, that is, of cemeteries.

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Figure 3.2. The Bouffia Boneval burial.
Left: As reconstructed in the Musée de l'homme de Néandertal at La Chapelle aux Saints.
Right: The associated funeral ceremony as imagined by artist Emmanuel Roudier.
Reproduced with permission of the author.

In the following, I will dissociate Pettitt's model, which provides a very useful device for the assessment of the evidence, from his account of how, when, and where different types of mortuary activity first can be seen in the archaeological record of the Lower and the Middle Palaeolithic. The account is entirely plausible, and my intention here is not to contradict it but simply to suggest that, where some aspects of the issue are concerned, alternative interpretations are at least equally plausible. Ultimately, the key question I want to address is the following: does the apparent emergence of burial ca. 100,000 years ago result from the long-term, cumulative development of ever more sophisticated approaches to death and the dead, and does such development perhaps have cognitive underpinnings at some level? Or is such

an emergence more easily amenable to description as a punctuated process, where the broad coincidence in time with the first appearance of body painting, personal ornaments, and object decoration reflects a common underlying cause, the complexification of social relationships?

TYPES OF MORTUARY ACTIVITY

At one end of the range, the evidence compiled by Pettitt (2011, 8–10) is very persuasive: *curation* ('the carrying around of the dead, either of an entire corpse, or of preserved body parts'), *morbidity* ('an enquiring concern with the injured, the diseased or dead body'), *Cronos compulsions* ('to dismember, injure or consume parts of the bodies of one's conspecifics'; Figure 3.3), and

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Figure 3.3. Goya's *Saturn [Greek Cronos] Devouring His Child*.
© Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado

'intermediate' types of mortuary behaviour, ones that are documented in humans in the present but not among chimpanzees, could have emerged during that long interval of time. These types (Pettitt 2011, 8–10) are (a) the production and circulation of *relics* ('corpses and body parts … accorded social agency and used accordingly'); (b) *structured abandonment* ('the deliberate placement of a corpse at a certain point in the landscape'); (c) *funerary caching* ('the structured deposition of a corpse, or parts of a corpse, in a chosen place, without modification of that place,' differing from structured abandonment in that 'the place is given meaning beyond prosaic concerns such as corpse protection'); and (d) *cairn covering* ('the creation of a cairn – a pile of stones – over a corpse').

As acknowledged by Pettitt, however, cairn covering is essentially similar to simple inhumation and thus can be considered for all practical, archaeological purposes as a variant of formal burial. On the other hand, the recognition both of relics and of funerary caching depend on factors (agency and meaning) that are rarely preserved and for which it is not easy to derive indisputable archaeological correlates, and even less so in the material culture circumstances of the Lower Palaeolithic period. Therefore, the answerable part of my earlier question can be reduced to the following: can we recognise structured abandonment in the archaeological and human palaeontological record of australopithecines and early humans?

STRUCTURED ABANDONMENT

As well illustrated by Pettitt's (2011, 42–5) discussion of the *A. afarensis* AL-333 locality, the case for structured abandonment essentially revolves around the twin issues of numbers and concentration. In rejecting the hypothesis that this fossil accumulation could have resulted from a catastrophic depositional event, Pettitt's instrumental argument is that the hominin bone assemblage is composed of at least thirteen individuals, including adults and infants, spread over only about seven metres. Presumably, therefore, it is because they fail to combine concentration and quantity that Pettitt does not count as structured abandonment instances where the remains of a single individual were retrieved in similar depositional environments from the same broad geographical region – namely, the 1.8 million-year-old *H. erectus* adolescent known as the Nariokotome boy (Brown et al. 1985), or the >100,000-year-old *H. sapiens* adult Omo 1 (Fleagle et al. 2008). And there is indeed good reason not to do

abandonment ('the simple act of leaving a helpless individual to die') are all part of the behavioural repertoire of the chimpanzees. At the other end of the range, it is also clear that (a) *formal burial* ('the creation of an artificial place for the purposes of containing a corpse') is unknown before ca. 100,000 years ago, and (b) it is not until the very end of the Upper Pleistocene that, strictly speaking, the *cemetery* category ('places given over in the main or entirely to the dead, with little or no evidence of settlement'), as documented in northern Africa after some 20,000 years ago, can appropriately be applied to known burial sites.

This pattern leaves the period of about four million years separating the Middle Palaeolithic from the first australopithecines open to the question of whether four

so, as an Italian example, the Altamura Neanderthal, well illustrates (Vacca & Pesce Delfino 2004).

The Altamura fossil is a stalagmite-encased partial skeleton of an adult male preserved in a recess located sixty metres inward from the presumed point of entry to the cave system – an eight-metre-deep vertical shaft known as the Lamalunga Cave (Figure 3.4). The contextual evidence indicates that a single, complete articulated skeleton originally existed, and that the current arrangement (and representation) of body parts results from in situ disarticulation and collapse, which generated the observed spread, subsequently fossilised by calcite deposition. Given its location, tucked away in the deep karst, and completeness, this skeleton would therefore appear to be a prima facie candidate for the status of funerary cache – body deposition in a place so out of the way that its choice for the purpose of structured abandonment surely reflects the special meaning assigned to it. However, it is also readily apparent that we could be dealing instead with the remains of an accidental death, where an individual fell through the shaft, and surviving that fall but unable to climb back up, would have become trapped deep inside the cave system, in complete darkness, while attempting to find an alternative way out. Failing to do so, he would eventually have frozen, or starved, to death.

This example shows why numbers are important in the argument, at least from the perspective of parsimony. If, as in the AL-333 case, this recess of the Lamalunga Cave had contained the remains of thirteen individuals, including adults and children, the probability that the accumulation resulted from the chance repetition of the same story over a relatively long stretch of time would be vanishingly small – although the accident could have occurred more than once, why would the victims, presumably unprepared for what befell them and thus devoid of lighting to find their way underground, always end up dying in the exact same spot as their predecessors? Had a significant number of individuals been found, and with similar completeness, alongside the Altamura Man, we would therefore have to acknowledge that the accumulation resulted from intentional mortuary activity. The deposition of corpses directly on the ground surface deep inside a cave is, after all, a type of funerary behaviour well documented in the European Neolithic, the Portuguese cave site of Algar do Bonsanto being a near-pristine example thereof (Duarte 1998). In this speculative scenario, one would be logically led to infer that the origins of the behaviour would go back to Neanderthal times and to such hypothetical Altamura-type burial caves. And

that is exactly the issue raised by the Sima de los Huesos, one of the localities of the Sierra de Atapuerca (Burgos, Spain) complex of Palaeolithic sites.

THE SIMA DE LOS HUESOS

The Sima de los Huesos (SH) is a constrained space (circa twenty-seven square metres) accessed via a ramp located at the bottom of a thirteen-metre-deep shaft opening from a larger chamber above, the Sala de las Oseras (named after the bear bones and hibernation features therein); today, this chamber is reached via a speleological route starting at the Cueva del Silo, but it once must have been connected to the exterior in ways that were practical for the bears. The SH deposits are of Middle Pleistocene age, and contain the remains of at least twenty-eight individuals of Neanderthal or ante-Neanderthal affinities and a number of carnivores (Figure 3.5): bear, *Ursus deningeri* (minimum number of individuals [MNI] = 176), fox (MNI = 21), wolf (MNI = 1), lion (MNI = 3), panther (MNI = 1), wild cat (MNI = 1), lynx (MNI = 1), marten (MNI = 1), weasel (MNI = 2), polecat (MNI = 3) and badger (MNI = 1). No herbivore remains were found, and the single artefact is a biface whose Acheulean typology agrees with the chronology suggested by palaeontology (Andrews & Fernández-Jalvo 1997; García et al. 1997; Fernández-Jalvo & Andrews 2001; García & Arsuaga 2011; Bermúdez de Castro et al. 2004; Carbonell & Mosquera 2006; Martinón-Torres et al. 2012).

Bermúdez de Castro et al. (2004) interpret this accumulation as a two-step process. The first would have consisted of a relatively short event (geologically speaking) during which the human remains were taken to the SH space. The second step was the deposition of the bear remains, which, despite some mixing, tend to be found above the human ones. Among the latter, all body parts are represented, and the age profile is strongly biased in favour of adolescents and young adults: ages at death are between eleven and twenty in 64 percent of the cases, a single individual is less than ten, and only 11 percent are more than thirty-five years old. This age profile is considered to be non-attritional and used to argue against the assemblage of human bones being the result of the operation of non-cultural processes (e.g., natural trapping). The rationale underlying the argument is that such non-cultural processes would have culled the different age classes in proportions identical to those extant among the living but that such proportionality is not observed at the SH. That is why Bermúdez de Castro et al. also
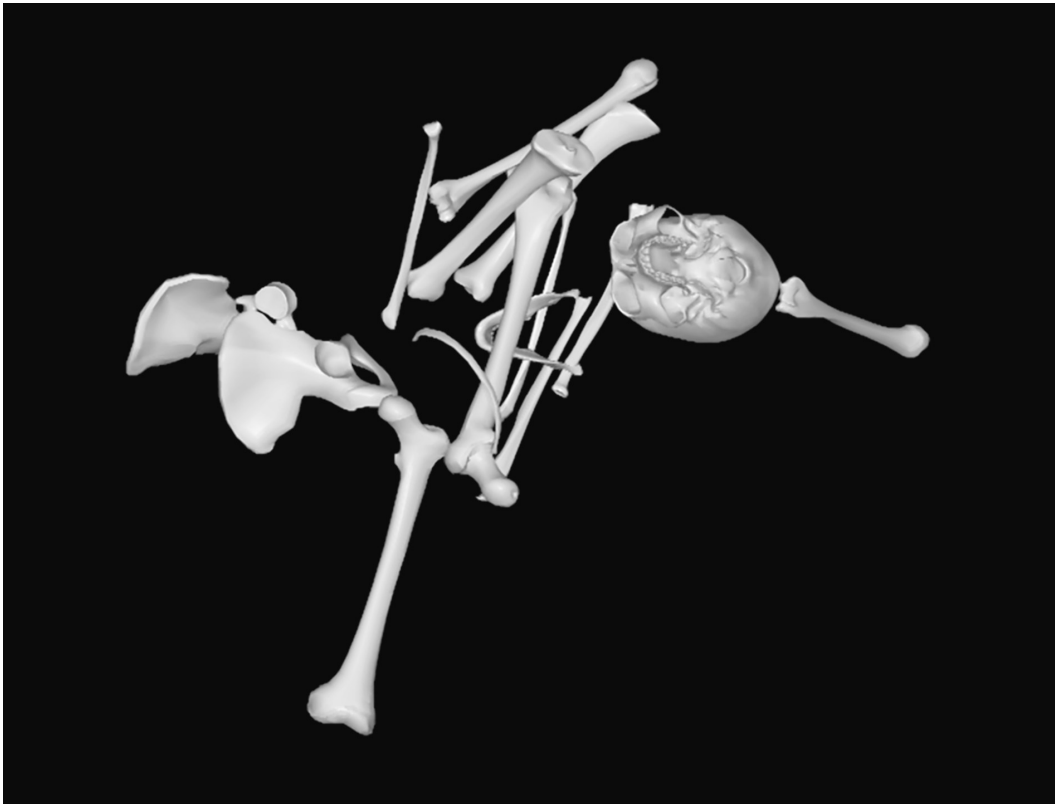
Figure 3.4. Altamura Man.
Above: Virtual, three-dimensional reconstruction of the topographic distribution of the bones.
Below: Photographic view of the calcite-covered remains.
After Vacca & Pesce Delfino (2004, figs. 1, 4).

Figure 3.5. The large carnivore competitors of the Sierra de Atapuerca Middle Pleistocene humans.
Top: Cave bear (*Ursus deningeri*, an ancestor of *Ursus spelaeus*). Copyright Raúl Martín/Madrid Scientific Films, used by kind permission.
Bottom: cave lion. Copyright François Miville-Deschênes; used by kind permission.

find it difficult to accept that the human bone accumulation could have resulted from a single catastrophic event, along the lines, for instance, of Bocquet-Appel and Arsuaga's (1999) hypothesis (see later discussion).

Bermúdez de Castro et al. (2004) conclude, therefore, that only a culturally mediated bias can explain the SH pattern. Specifically, they propose that the site functioned as a place for the dead, that is, in terms of Pettitt's model, as a place of structured deposition. Pettitt himself does not exclude this possibility, although, following the taphonomic arguments of Andrews and Fernández-Jalvo (1997) and Fernández-Jalvo and Andrews (2001), he rejects the specific modus operandi suggested by Bermúdez de Castro et al. (2004) – that the SH would be the place of primary accumulation of the human bones, the assemblage resulting from the use of the shaft above the ramp as a locus for the ritual dumping of dead bodies. In agreement with Fernández-Jalvo and Andrews (2001), Pettitt's view is that the SH represents instead the final resting place of the human remains, which would have undergone a bumpy taphonomic history with a number of intermediate steps involving carnivore activity (some 50% of the bones feature tooth marks inflicted by both foxes and a large felid) and transport by geological processes from elsewhere in the system.

Where exactly in the system might such an original locus of deposition be located is a thorny issue. Under the assumption that the activity of bears and humans was effectively contemporaneous (albeit, by necessity, alternating), the absence of bear-inflicted marks on the human bones implies rejection of the hypothesis that such a locus was the Sala de las Oseras, where bear hibernation is attested, where the SH bear remains probably originate, and where this bear activity implies the existence of a nowadays-collapsed entrance. In this scenario, an alternative point of entry would have to be considered; however, the topography of the system suggests that none exists.

Keeping in mind the absence of bear marks on the human bones and the stratigraphy of the SH deposits, a simple solution to this apparent conundrum can be envisaged. It consists of a site formation process whereby the human remains accumulated in an initial phase, one during which bears were not yet using the site; the straightforward transport path for those remains being the shaft above the SH ramp, the simplest hypothesis for the location of the original deposit would thus be the chamber where the shaft opens, that is, the Sala de las Oseras. Under these premises, the Sala de las Oseras could be construed indeed as a locus formally designated for the disposal of the dead. The implications are important: in Pettitt's (2011, 55) words, 'when this point is arrived at, the landscape has become dichotomised: places of life, and places of the dead.'

I agree with Pettitt that one cannot reject the possibility that the SH represents such a watershed in the prehistory of death, with corroboration provided by other, albeit later, Palaeolithic localities featuring accumulations of the same order of magnitude in terms of number of individuals. A case in point is Krapina, in Croatia, where, however, the cause of the accumulation is also controversial. Bocquet-Appel and Arsuaga (1999) relate it to a catastrophic event along lines that would also apply to the SH: 'a segment of the age-pyramid whose members, at first sight, are physically resistant and mobile … normally able to run away from the impact area of a catastrophe' would have 'under severe privation … stopped in the shelter exhausted' and eventually died there. Supporting Bocquet-Appel and Arsuaga's case, the Krapina human MNI, age profile, and body part representation (Trinkaus 1985, 1995) are indeed similar to those seen at the SH, which, thus, would be exceptional only in the degree of concentration of the finds; moreover, the Krapina body part representation pattern matches that of Middle Palaeolithic burials, suggesting that the human bones entered the site as complete corpses. This observation, however, has led most commentators to interpret the Krapina assemblage as originally formed by intentional burial, whether primary or secondary (the latter based on controversial cut mark evidence; Russell 1987; Orschiedt 2008), not as resulting from a catastrophic event.

On the other hand, even if, in terms of body part representation and age at death, Krapina and the SH are indeed similar, they also differ in that Krapina is the unquestionable primary locus of deposition of the remains, and, more importantly, in that it is a habitation site. These features align Krapina with the evidence from coeval sites of the Near East (Qafzeh and Skhul), opening up the possibility that the practice of interring the dead in the places of the living was widespread in the Greater Mediterranean of the time, and this irrespective of the humans involved being anatomically modern or Neanderthal (Shanidar being another example, if the earliest of its burials are of last interglacial age, as hypothesised by Zilhão & Trinkaus 2002).

The Near Eastern sites do not seem to display the same bias towards adolescents and young adults seen in the SH sample, but a dearth of older adults is a general feature of

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Palaeolithic samples up until Gravettian times (Trinkaus 1995, 2011). At the SH, only the near-absence of infants and children would therefore remain problematic and possibly a reflection of cultural bias, not populational mortality patterns. Post-depositional preferential destruction of the more fragile bones of immature individuals could explain their under-representation: this is explicitly suggested by Andrews and Fernández-Jalvo (1997) for the SH and could conceivably be the case at Krapina too (here, however, the under-representation of children disappears if a 'total sample' MNI is retained instead of the 'associated dentition' MNI used in Trinkaus' 1995 palaeodemographic calculations). In short, under differential preservation premises the SH assemblage might be construed as attritional, and the biases underpinning the need to invoke cultural agency in the explanation of the site's formation process would be no more.

However, if post-depositional loss of the more fragile elements of the skeleton is a viable explanation for the Krapina pattern, it is less clear that it works at the SH, because of the preservation of very delicate skeletal parts (e.g., ear bones: Bermúdez de Castro et al. 2004) seen among the adults. The notion that the age profile of the SH assemblage is a genuine reflection of the original thanatocoenosis thus seems to be warranted. If we reject catastrophe, this apparently leaves no option but to revert to the notion that the accumulation reflects mortuary behaviour – either in the form imagined by Bermúdez de Castro et al. (2004) or, following Andrews and Fernández-Jalvo (1997) and Pettitt, as structured abandonment elsewhere at the site. In order to be consistent with the evidence, however, the notion requires special clauses, namely, that such mortuary behaviour was rather selective, with at least four distinct possibilities being conceivable:

(a) The first is that only adolescents and young adults were deemed worthy of funerary treatment, the other age classes being dealt with at the time of death in a different way. One might then speculate as to why; for example, perhaps the death of infants and old people was 'natural' (or 'to be expected'), while the death of individuals in their prime was 'unnatural' and the cause of much grief, as it hindered the group's production and reproduction potential.

(b) The second possibility is that this specific locus was a place dedicated to the disposal of the bodies of prime age individuals, the other age classes being disposed of elsewhere at sites likewise specifically dedicated to

each of those classes (e.g., at places for infants and children and at places for the elders).

(c) A third possibility, given that a significant number of the SH individuals display some form of pathology, is that the place represented a locus for the disposal of prime age individuals killed by disease; as pointed out by Pettitt, however, the pathologies observed could not have been a direct cause of death, and those affected by them seem to have survived for long after such health problems began to develop.

(d) Fourth, bearing in mind Trinkaus' (1995, 2011) mortality estimates and a pattern that is very apparent much later (Zilhão & Trinkaus 2002; Zilhão 2005), it is possible that the absence of older individuals simply reflects the general dearth of aged people in human populations prior to the mid-Upper Palaeolithic, and that infants and children were, as a rule, deemed unworthy of any form of funerary treatment (as seems to be the case in the Gravettian, albeit with notable exceptions, e.g. the Krems-Wachtberg burials: Einwögerer et al. 2006).

The need to explore these different alternatives only arises, however, if we concede that the SH age profile is neither catastrophic nor attritional, but, by implication, culturally biased instead. As discussed previously, Bocquet-Appel and Arsuaga (1999) argue in favour of a catastrophe, but their hypothesis (a) requires the unlikely combination of a number of very special circumstances and (b) is in contradiction with the pattern of differential preservation apparent in the human remains (Fernández-Jalvo & Andrews 2001), which counters the notion that the bone accumulation represents a single event, one whereby all the individuals therein would have died at the same time. That the age profile is not attritional, on the other hand, rests on the assumption that the accumulation should reflect an ordinary mortality curve, that is, one in which the most vulnerable age groups, the very young and the very old, are best represented, not the observed opposite. But is this assumption warranted? I contend that, if we introduce into the picture issues of gender- and age-based division of labour and structured mobility across the landscape, it is not. Put another way, I contend that the SH accumulation can indeed be construed as a random sample of the human population that constituted the site's potential catchment of fossils.

The first point to bear in mind in this regard is that the Sierra de Atapuerca rises to circa one thousand metres in the middle of the northern Meseta, a region of

continental climate where, today, the average annual temperature is 10°C and the average low is at or below freezing from December to March. Under Ice Age conditions, and based on Last Glacial Maximum values for Iberia as a whole, temperatures would have been at least 10°C colder. The exact chronology of the SH deposit in the Middle Pleistocene remains controversial, but the composition of the carnivore assemblage suggests that it was formed at a time when the site's broader environmental setting consisted of a savannah-like open woodland; in addition, the pollen spectra from samples of the clay matrix of the SH fossils provide evidence for the presence of pine, beech, and birch – and, hence, of stands of boreal forest – in the site's catchment (García & Arsuaga 2011). This evidence is consistent with stadial rather than interstadial conditions.

Therefore, the assumption that, as among ethnographically documented hunter-gatherers living under similar conditions, the territory adjacent to the SH (or at least the Sierra de Atapuerca itself, if not the surrounding plateau too) would have been utilised in logistical fashion, perhaps seasonally, seems entirely reasonable. If so, we are then envisaging a scenario where (a) the human frequentation of the Sierra would have mostly consisted of hunting parties composed of individuals in their prime, and (b) only this subset of the population would therefore have been available for random culling by whatever environmental factors capable of causing human deaths were in existence – sudden disease, large carnivore predation, hunting or travel accidents, and so on. Even if such events had been very rare, given enough time they would have resulted in a substantial death toll; at one per century, for instance, less than three millennia would suffice to produce the MNI recorded at the SH.

The originally published sex profile of the assemblage of human remains, based on tooth size variation, is in apparent contradiction with this hypothesis. The method used resulted in an estimate that twelve males, eight females, and eight individuals of indeterminate sex were represented in the sample, and such a high percentage of females (40%) might not be expected at a death site related to the activity of hunting parties operating in cold environments. However, more recent work suggests that the SH sample is in fact mostly made up of males. For instance, among a sample of twenty-seven long bones sufficiently complete for measurement and discriminant analysis, only six (22%) were diagnosed as belonging to females (Carretero et al. 2012).

As the overall body part representation indicates that the SH assemblage derives from complete corpses and there is no reason to suppose that female bones would have preserved less well or be subject to some other form of bias, it seems reasonable to infer that these long bone percentages are a genuine reflection of the sample's sex ratio. This is corroborated by the fact that the two sufficiently complete fossils for which the diagnosis of sex is secure – the pathological skull nicknamed 'Miguelón' and the complete pelvis nicknamed 'Elvis' – are of males (Arsuaga et al. 1993, 1999). Even though any sexing of the sample carries significant uncertainty, the picture arising from these data is one of a thanatocoenosis primarily made up of adolescent and prime adult males – and all the more so if we bear in mind the possibility that some of the 'female' long bones could correspond to shorter, more gracile males.

This 'hunting party death trap' hypothesis explains both the particular age profile of the SH human bones and the evidence concerning their reported sex ratio, but in and of itself does not suffice to explain two other features of the fossil assemblage as a whole: its concentration in a restricted and secluded space, and the absence of herbivores. Brief consideration of a case study from 40,000 years ago, the Peştera cu Oase, in Romania (Zilhão et al. 2007; Trinkaus et al. 2013), sheds some light on these features too.

THE PEŞTERA CU OASE MODEL

The 2004–5 Oase excavation project was designed for the recovery of the missing parts of two individuals discovered as surface finds during speleological surveys and for the explanation of their context and depositional history. Where the latter is concerned, the basic question was, Does the presence of a mandible and a cranium in the middle of a jumble of cave bear bones located deep inside the karst, in a passage with no known communication with the exterior (Figure 3.6), result from entirely natural accumulation processes, or must some form of human agency have been involved? In short, a question that is much the same as that posed by the SH.

The results obtained at the end of the project were that the bone jumble corresponded to a palimpsest subsuming a number of depositional moments (Figure 3.7):

(a) Initially (Episodes 1 and 2), the place functioned as a bear hibernation den, and in >99 percent of cases bones are of cave bears that died there;

(b) Subsequently, an opening to an adjacent sinkhole formed along one of the walls of the Sala Mandibulei,

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Figure 3.6. Two views of the Oase 2 cranium in situ.
After Trinkaus et al. (2013).

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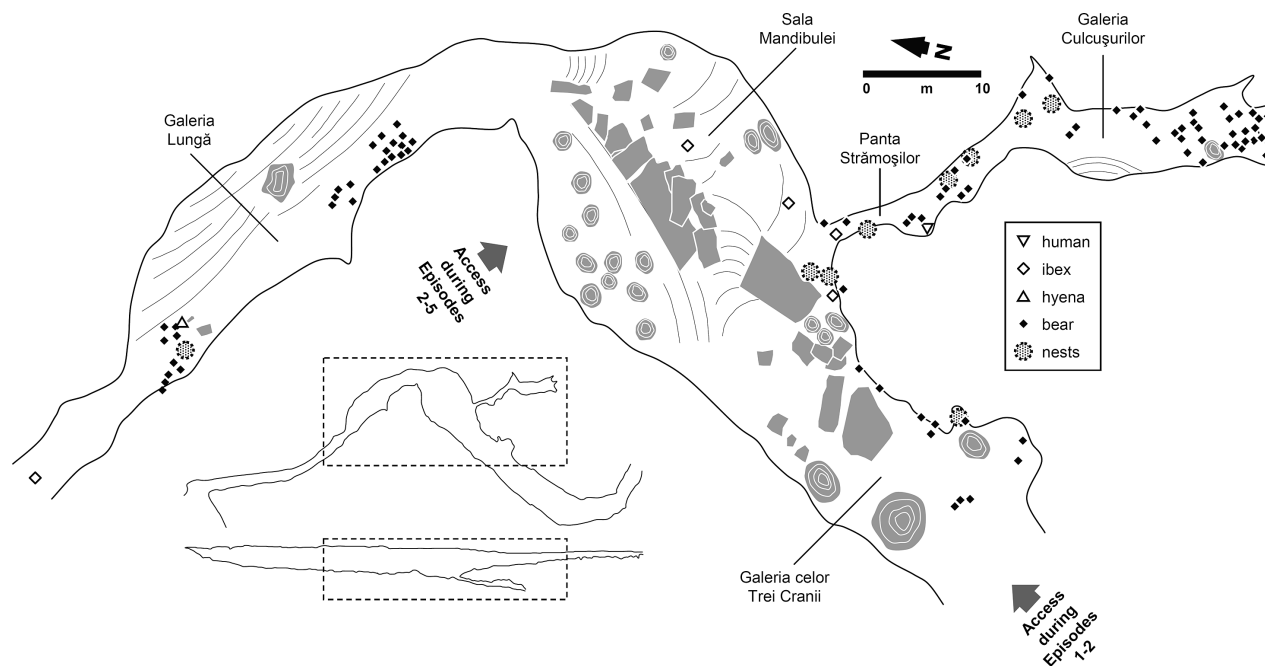
Figure 3.7. The Oase passages, with indication of their names, of the position of the cranial remains from different species, and of former entrances.
After Trinkaus et al. (2013).

which ceased to be appropriate for bear denning because of the new temperature and lighting conditions; besides those of smaller mammals (e.g., foxes), the accumulated bones are now those of the principal new occupants, hyenas and wolves, and of the latter's prey, cervids (Episodes 3 and 4);

(c) The gradual fill-up of the different entrances to the Oase passages eventually impeded use by the larger carnivores, and, reflecting the change of the surrounding environment from boreal forest to alpine desert, the new middle-to-large mammal bone material added to the Sala Mandibulei surface palimpsest consisted exclusively of non-cave-dwelling species – namely ibex, probably the remains of individuals that died while taking up shelter in the adjacent sinkhole (Episode 5);

(d) The growth of a massive stalagmite curtain sealed the connection between the Sala Mandibulei and the exokarst, and, but for minor changes generated by small-scale geological and biological agency (e.g., run-off and small mammal burrowing), the chamber regained the appearance it had when bears last hibernated in the cave (Episode 6).

The human remains entered this system at the beginning of Episode 5 and via the adjacent sinkhole. No evidence was found that living humans had ever been inside the cave system before its discovery by speleologists in 2002, and no artefacts (e.g., tools or objects of personal ornamentation) were found in the excavated deposits; therefore, no case can be made for the accumulation of these remains to have resulted from human agency, either as formal burial, funerary caching, or structured abandonment. This, plus the taphomony of the human remains, led the Oase project to conclude that the parsimonious explanation for the presence of the fossils in a chamber located deep inside the karst resided in the operation of purely natural processes. A conceivable scenario is one comprising the following steps: (1) random death by accident or natural causes; (2) burial under winter snow; (3) spring melt water transport of partly mummified bodies to the bottom of a sinkhole; (4) primarily gravity-driven, small scale dispersal of body parts across the surface of the adjacent passages of the endokarst; (5) burial under sediments introduced by the same mechanism; (6) re-exposure, via small mammal burrowing, atop the stabilised surface extant since the blocking of the connections to the outside; and (7) further dispersal of individual pieces of the skeleton to the eventual points of discovery by the continued activity of small mammals, low-energy water flow, and gravity.

This example shows that a number of the SH's features are not as exceptional as at first glance they seem to be. At Oase, in fact, we also see (a) a human thanatocoenosis mostly made up of late adolescents and young adults (exclusively so, albeit the sample is too small for the pattern to be taken as an age profile in any statistically meaningful sense), (b) a concentration of this material in an out-of-the-way place discovered by speleologists that can only be accessed via demanding speleological routes, and (c) an associated faunal assemblage forming a highly impoverished reflection of the mammal communities extant at macro-regional level. The only significant differences between these two examples lie in the smaller size of the Oase human bone assemblage, in that it is composed of skull parts only, and in that, alongside those of carnivores, remains of cervids (with a MNI of 3 calculated on the basis of skeletal parts, morphology, and ancient DNA [aDNA]) also accumulated at the site during Episode 3.

The difference in body part representation, however, may be a simple consequence of spatial sampling, as the SH is a 27-m^2 area that has been the object of extensive, continuous excavation over most of its area for two decades now. In contrast, the Sala Mandibulei of the Oase system − the inferred locus of deposition of not only the Oase 1 mandible but also the Oase 2 cranium, post-depositionally displaced onto the surface of the adjacent Panta Strămoşilor − is a >300-m^2 chamber where no excavation has been carried out. Moreover, the taphonomy of the Oase human remains suggests that associated post-crania were also present when this material first entered the system.

Where the difference in assemblage size is concerned, it could well be a simple consequence of temporal sampling, as the SH accumulation conceivably represents several millennia, while the two Oase individuals were broadly contemporaneous. The contextual evidence further indicates that the window of opportunity for the accumulation of the Oase humans was a rather short one, as all the other components of the palimpsest are either much earlier (at least four to five thousand years for the large carnivores and the deer) or much later (at least ten to twelve thousand years for the ibex).

Accepting these explanations for the differences, the SH assemblage can thus be construed as Oase multiplied by a factor of 10, with such a multiplication resulting from the operation of time alone. Let us posit, as implied by its use for bear hibernation, that the Galeria de las Oseras/Sima de los Huesos system was once connected to the exterior by a cave or sinkhole entrance (or a number of them) at present plugged by collapse or sedimentary fill. Acting as a funnel, as such karst formations always do, these entrances could have functioned as sampling devices, entrapping at the time of death the active life going about the area of their catchment at one end, and concentrating it in a restricted space at the other end. If such active life consisted primarily of large carnivores and humans competing for the same prey or the same shelter space, and if the humans in question were young and adult male hunters in their prime, then the accumulation of 80 percent or more of the SH sample is accounted for by entirely natural processes and there is no need to invoke human agency to explain it. And that Middle Pleistocene Atapuerca was a setting where humans and large felids indeed engaged in direct confrontation is otherwise proven by the finding of cut-marked bones of a single lion individual in a habitation context of the site complex − level TD10−1 of the Gran Dolina locality (Blasco et al. 2010).

In such a scenario, the dearth (or absence) of herbivores can be explained by the nature of the immediate setting if, at the time of formation of the SH assemblage, the Sierra was covered by boreal forest, as suggested by the pollen evidence. Such forests are notoriously poor in herbivore taxa − restricted to moose and reindeer in northern latitudes, and to deer in more southerly ones − and it should come as no surprise that none would have been sampled in the manner described previously if the carnivores involved did not include species whose behaviour includes the transport of body parts (whether skeletonised or not) to a den. In Oase's second phase, the only large carnivores present besides bear, whose death is denning or hibernation related and occurred in situ, are hyena and wolf, and their activity can account for the deer found in the fossil assemblage because they are well-known bone accumulators. At the SH, however, the other large carnivores are mostly felids, which consume their prey at the kill site and do not transport bones back to the den, and the single *Canis* sp. individual represented in the assemblage could well have ended up at the site in much the same manner as the humans (that is, as a result of inter-predator competition).

Duly accounting for local karst topography, stratigraphy of the bone accumulation, time depth involved, palaeoenvironmental setting, human social organisation, large carnivore behaviour, and the insights gained from consideration of the Oase case, there is, therefore,

Figure 3.8. Humans in the Sima de los Huesos.
Left: Like Alice, down the hole? Copyright Raúl Martín/Madrid Scientific Films; used by kind permission.
Right: Like Daniel, in the Lions' Den (after G. Doré).

no need to invoke cultural agency to explain the apparently unique features of the SH assemblage of human fossils (Figure 3.8). An alternative site formation process can plausibly be envisaged along the lines of the following two-phase model. Initially, the entrance or entrances leading from the exokarst to the Sala de las Oseras functioned as lion denning areas, ones where the accumulation of human remains would reflect the natural entrapping of hunters killed by accident or disease, or the infrequent but fatal outcomes of a number of close encounters between the lions and members of hunting parties primarily composed of adolescents and young adults; then, via the shaft uniting the Sala de las Oseras

with the SH, and after an interval during which they were exposed to gnawing by foxes, the human and felid bones were displaced by solifluction and debris flow to the eventual palaeontological find spot. At a later point in time, the Sala de las Oseras became a bear den, perhaps because of changes in the topography of the network of underground passages – for instance, the blocking of adjacent entrances could have transformed that chamber from a twilight into a deeply interior, completely dark space. This would have made the Sala de las Oseras inaccessible for large felids but optimal for bear hibernation. Subsequently, in a second iteration of the displacement mechanism, the remains of the bears that died while

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hibernating in the Sala de las Oseras would have followed the same route to the same place, where they would have ended up overlying the human bone bed previously formed – as is indeed the observed stratigraphic configuration of the SH deposits.

THE EMERGENCE OF FORMAL BURIAL

Altamura Man and the Sima de los Huesos are the two instances of Lower and Middle Palaeolithic accumulations of human remains whose formation processes are, at first glance, the most difficult to grasp and the most amenable to invoke intentional deposition of the structured abandonment or funerary caching types. If natural processes can explain them, then such processes in all likelihood explain other cases for which the evidence is less clear-cut. A good example is Pontnewydd Cave (Wales), which yielded the remains of a minimum of five and possibly as many as fifteen Neanderthals. The chronology is also Middle Pleistocene, the numbers are of the same order of magnitude as at the SH, and the sex and age ratios are similar: 'mostly male and under 20 years of age' (Pettitt 2011, 55). This is exactly what one would expect in the framework of a model of random cave and sinkhole sampling of the logistical hunters subset of human populations living off periglacial environments. Such a model further explains the difference in composition between the SH and the burial thanatocoenosis of the Middle Palaeolithic in general. The latter features a normal mortality profile (Zilhão & Trinkaus 2002; Zilhão 2005), indicating that differentiation by age class was absent from Neanderthal burial custom and weakening the case for the practice to underpin the lack of infants and children in the SH human bone assemblage.

The 'hunting party death trap' model also provides a consistent null hypothesis to assess 'off-site' instances of human bone accumulations from later Palaeolithic times, a case in point being the Aurignacian early modern humans from Mladeč (Teschler-Nicola 2006). As at the SH, one child is present, but the other five recognisable individuals are all prime adults or late adolescents, of which three are clearly male. The presence of females is possible but on the basis of cranial and pelvic evidence that is not really conclusive: 'Mladeč 1 and Mladeč 2 are quite different females, with so many masculine features that in the absence of the males they could well have been considered male specimens' (Wolpoff 2002, 744); 'the precise form of the Mladeč 21 preauricular sulcus may occur in males or females as a result of tension on

the sacroiliac ligaments (a paraglenoid sulcus), but the depth of the sulcus suggests the bony resorption through pregnancy that is diagnostic of its being female … the degree of openness of the greater sciatic notch would be very unusual in a male pelvis' (Trinkaus et al. 2006, 415).

Whatever the case was at Mladeč, the Cussac example shows that funerary caching in the deep karst was indeed present in the Upper Palaeolithic (Aujoulat et al. 2007). This observation thus prompts the question of why no similar, unambiguous instances from earlier periods have so far been found. Given the previous discussion, the parsimonious explanation would be that the emergence of the practice, even though apparently less 'complex', post-dates that of formal burial, the latter being in fact the earliest type of funerary behaviour in human prehistory.

If we accept this conclusion, we then have to face another interesting aspect of early mortuary practice – that formal burial first occurs at sites routinely used for habitation (e.g., Tabun, Skhul, Qafzeh, Shanidar, La Ferrassie), not at ones where habitation was infrequent or non-existent. In later prehistoric contexts (e.g., the Mesolithic shell-middens of Scandinavia and Portugal), the consensus interpretation of the close association between settlement and interment is that it stands for sedentism or, at least, a long-term focus of residential activity in a restricted number of specific places. I suggest we should think in much the same way about Palaeolithic sites that were inhabited durably and intensively and where burial occurred on multiple occasions. Seen from this perspective, the emergence of burial is therefore but a manifestation in the realm of mortuary behaviour of a broader process, that of the crossing of a significant threshold in the territoriality of human groups, resulting from demographic growth triggered by adaptive success and, ultimately, by technological progress.

Much the same can be and has been suggested as the explanation for the emergence of personal ornamentation and of stylistic variation in stone tools, which both begin to be seen at about the same time as formal burial (d'Errico et al. 2003; Zilhão 2007). I would argue that this evidence forms a consistent pattern and cannot be dismissed as simple coincidence. In short, paraphrasing Gilman's (1984) seminal paper on the emergence of what some call 'modern human behaviour', I would argue that, over a period of several millennia between the end of the penultimate glacial period and the beginning of the last, that is, over a period that can be construed as long in the historical time scale but that was actually rather

short in evolutionary terms, a sort of 'Middle Palaeolithic Revolution' occurred. Formal burial was part of the cultural package underpinning the crossing of this watershed.

CONCLUSION

It is certainly possible that the Herto cranial remains were retained as relics (White et al. 2003), and that some of the fossil human remains from Lower and Middle Pleistocene localities reflect a form of structured abandonment. However, the perforated human teeth of the Aurignacian (Henry-Gambier et al. 2004) remain the earliest unambiguous evidence that human skeletal parts were manipulated and used in a symbolic manner; 'Cronos compulsions' of the kind seen among chimpanzees suffice to explain all other earlier instances of body part manipulation, with the use of stone tools, evidenced by cut marks, simply representing the distinctively human form of the different behaviours subsumed in the category. Likewise, natural processes can account for these periods' human bone accumulations of apparently inexplicable location, abundance, and concentration, provided we duly consider two important factors that are often overlooked in the discussion of such instances: time depth of the accumulation and organisational structure of the source group (with AL-333 remaining perhaps the single exception where the operation of natural mechanisms alone could be insufficient).

If we accept the preceding, then it is not until the beginning of the Middle Palaeolithic that a kind of mortuary behaviour unseen among our closest living relatives first appears in the record – and that behaviour is formal burial. A corollary of this recognition is that apparently less complex types of funerary activity, such as body caching, which are only securely documented in the Upper Palaeolithic, may represent materially simplified but in fact conceptually more elaborate versions of burial, not an intermediate or 'transitional' kind of behaviour bridging the gap in the treatment of death that exists between apes and humans in geological time as much as in biological space.

I believe that the conclusions to be drawn from the preceding are of a demographic and social nature, and I would certainly argue against the search for cognitive underpinnings as a productive research strategy to obtain an explanation for the 'Middle Palaeolithic Revolution' proposed earlier. As in Renfrew's (1996) 'sapient paradox', the fact that a given behaviour is externalised in an archaeologically visible manner must be taken to imply a long pre-existence of the corresponding capacity. It is quite possible, therefore, that concepts about death, the dead, and an afterlife that were essentially the same as those seen among present-day humans existed in Lower Palaeolithic minds and societies before the emergence of formal burial – but, as pointed out by Pettitt, if their behavioural correlates were of the let-the-bodies-of-the-dead-flow-downriver-to-eternity type, no material evidence of the practice will have survived.

If such concepts did exist, it seems unlikely, however, that any and all forms of Lower Palaeolithic mortuary behaviour were of an archaeologically invisible nature; it would be entirely to be expected that other forms of mortuary behaviour existed alongside. For instance, to establish a link between death and survival, life, and afterlife, early humans could have celebrated their dead by burning them at the places where successful communal hunts occurred, and, if so, we might find sites of the La Borde (Brugal & Jaubert 1996) or Côte de St.-Brelade (Scott 1980) type but where the remains of aurochs or rhino would have become combined in a palimpsest with the remains of such funerary pyres. But we do not have such sites. It is in this respect that I find particularly telling in two respects the specific form – burial – under which mortuary behaviour of a kind that is novel in the ape lineage first can be seen in the archaeological record: its association with residential localities; and its timing, ca. 100,000 years ago, broadly coincident with the emergence of other forms of symbolic behaviour amenable to leaving a durable imprint in the archaeological record.

In short, the point I want to make here is not that forms of mortuary behaviour that are specifically human and fundamentally distinct from those seen among chimps did not exist in the Lower Palaeolithic. Rather, my points are simply that

(1) If they existed, no secure evidence to that effect has so far been found.

(2) When we do have such evidence is at the beginning of the Middle Palaeolithic and what we then do see – formal burial – is of greater elaboration than would be expected in the framework of a model of gradual evolution from simpler to more complex forms of mortuary behaviour.

(3) The emergence of formal burial is broadly coincident with that of body painting, personal ornamentation, and object decoration, forming a package that is more amenable to social- or demography-based explanations than to cognitive- or human taxonomy-based ones.

(4) The association of formal burial with residential localities is strongly suggestive of the existence of a link between the emergence of the practice and that of formalised territoriality − that is, of ethnicity and ethnic boundedness.

(5) Rather than signifying the crossing of thresholds in the capacity for symbolic thinking or the acquisition of 'religiosity', the emergence of formal burial in the Middle Palaeolithic seems instead to consist of using the dead for the staking of a claim − by associating them with long-term residential use of certain sites, formal burial can be taken as signposting that 'our ancestors lie here; this is our place.'

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Upper Palaeolithic Mortuary Practices: Reflection of Ethnic Affiliation, Social Complexity, and Cultural Turnover

Francesco d'Errico and Marian Vanhaeren

INTRODUCTION

For much of the twentieth century, Upper Palaeolithic (UP) primary burials were seen as a cultural innovation directly stemming from the spread of anatomically modern humans across Europe and strictly associated with the panoply of critical inventions that followed this peopling event (cave and mobiliary art, personal ornaments, blade technology, bone and antler technology, systematic use of pigments, and musical traditions). They were used, in this context, to support the scenario of a cognitive revolution occurring in Europe ca. 40,000 BP (Klein 2000; Mellars & Stringer 1989). Neanderthal burials from Europe and western Asia were in the framework of this scenario discarded as the outcome of natural phenomena, considered unreliable because of the antiquity of excavations, interpreted as revealing a much lesser degree of complexity, or seen as reflecting a qualitatively different cognition (see Pettitt 2011; Sandgathe et al. 2011; Zilhão, this volume, for a review of the debate). We argue in this chapter that this view is no longer tenable and will demonstrate that ensuant paradigm changes, methodological innovations, and new dating allow researchers to apply a novel research philosophy to UP mortuary practices. In particular we will use available ¹⁴C dates to test the unitarian character of the UP burial phenomenon, explore the potential of grave goods associated with Gravettian primary burials to reconstruct cultural geography, and use results from the direct analysis of grave goods associated with some UP primary burials to evaluate the degree of social inequality present in Palaeolithic societies.

The first reason for challenging the '*sapiens*-burial' equivalence is linked to the observation that chimps, to some extent, do it too. Although inhumation and treatment of the dead are generally regarded as quintessential features of modern humanity, carrying of infant corpses – in one case for sixty-eight days – and attention paid to corpses of adults have been reported for a number of primates in the wild (Anderson et al. 2010; Stewart et al. 2012; Piel & Stewart, this volume). We do not know the meaning of these practices and whether they are symbolic in nature, but they suggest that chimpanzees may have a greater awareness of death and dying than previously thought. These practices suggest that chimps' and humans' common ancestor, and subsequent members of the human lineage, may have shared a concern for the demise of their body. The inevitable corollary of this observation is that mortuary practices can no longer be seen as an exclusive *sapiens* business, but represent instead an inherent feature of the behavioural evolution of our lineage. This may have gone through a number of evolutionary steps reflecting patterns of cognitive evolution (Pettitt 2011) or manifested itself through variability in time and space reflective of different cultural and social settings. Some of the oldest instances of mortuary behaviour have left archaeological traces, which make evolutionary models concerning mortuary practices testable (see Zilhão, this volume).

The second reason for not considering UP burials as a monolithic hallmark of 'modernity' is that archaeological discoveries made during the last decade have challenged the 'Human Revolution' paradigm. We now know that the emergence of humanness, including aspects related to death, can no longer be conceived in antonymic terms. During the period between 160 ka and 20 ky BP, complex lithic technology, adaptation to hostile environments, engravings, pigments, personal ornaments, and elaborated bone technology appear, disappear, and reappear in

different forms, suggesting major discontinuities in cultural transmission (d'Errico & Stringer 2011). The discontinuous nature in time and space of this process, and the fact that this trend is common to modern humans in Africa and Neanderthals in Europe suggests that local conditions must have played a role in the emergence, diffusion, and eventual disappearance of crucial innovations or particular cultural choices in the different regions of the world. This contradicts a stochastic scenario for the origin of the modern behavioural 'package'. It also counters the gradualist 'Out of Africa' model according to which we should see the crucial cultural innovations that have made our species culturally modern occurring only in that continent and gradually accumulating there as a result of the origin of our species. There is no reason to think that beliefs and acts concerning death did not undergo a similar process. Data on early mortuary practices in Africa and Europe are particularly telling in this respect (see Zilhão, this volume, for a review of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic evidence). Instead of finding, as one might expect, increasingly complex mortuary practices including primary inhumations, associated with the Middle Stone Age in Africa, we observe a patchy pattern that does not fit the model. The claim for a polish suggestive of curation of a skull at the ca.-160,000-year-old site of Herto in Ethiopia has not been supported by additional data (Clark et al. 2003). Similarly, the first consistent evidence for a primary burial tradition is found in western Asia (at sites such as Skhul, Qafzeh, and Tabun) and not Africa, is a behaviour shared by early modern humans and Neanderthals (Pettitt 2011), and appears much later than the date suggested by palaeoanthropologists and geneticists for the origin of our species in Africa. In addition, we do not observe this practice again in modern humans for more than 40,000 years. Only three Middle Stone Age burials are known, that of the Border Cave (Beaumont et al. 1978) with an age of 74,000 BP, and those of Nazlet Khater (Crevecoeur 2006) and Taramsa, Egypt (Van Peer et al. 2010) dated to 40,000 and 68,000 BP respectively. The child from Border Cave is associated with a perforated *Conus* sp. shell, and one of the three individuals from Nazlet Khater has a biface close to the head. In sum, if burial practices leaving a trace in the archaeological record were seen as an indication of cultural modernity, the African evidence would hardly receive a passing grade.

This is more significant when considering that after a period of mistrust and intense debate exemplified by Gargett's critical approach to the issue (Gargett 1999), most Palaeolithic archaeologists (but see Sandgathe et al. 2011) have changed their view on Neanderthal burials. Among the sixty Middle Palaeolithic primary and possibly secondary burials reported from Europe and western Asia, at least forty belong to Neanderthals. Neanderthal burials in Europe are numerous, but concentrated in a few areas, suggesting that Neanderthals, as modern humans in Africa, often may have engaged in funerary practices that left no archaeological signature. Although in a number of cases this information is now difficult to verify, grave goods consisting of stone tools, bone retouchers, engraved bone, and a rock slab engraved with cupules were reported at Neanderthal burials such as La Ferrassie, La Chapelle-aux-Saint, and Le Moustier in France, as well as Amud and Dederiyeh in the Middle East (Maureille 2004; Pettitt 2011). New evidence indicates that Neanderthals may also have deliberately modified and used human bone. Research conducted by one of us has recently shown that the oldest known human bone used as a tool is a fragment of Neanderthal skull from La Quina in the Charente region of France (Verna & d'Errico 2011). Two human skull fragments found close to the bone tool, probably from the same individual, show traces of percussion, cutting, and scraping marks consistent with the hypothesis that the knapper cleaned the skull when soft tissues were still present, broke it, and subsequently selected the bone fragment s/he wished to use as a tool. This suggests that the knapper was aware s/he was using a human bone. The Neanderthal evidence and in particular its consistent variability in time and space shows that there may be no clear-cut boundary between the Middle and the UP and little, if any, between the Middle and the Later Stone Age but rather a non-linear process consisting of continuity in local traditions interrupted by choices of mortuary practices that are archaeologically invisible. There is no reason to believe that the pattern of change observed in the Middle Palaeolithic (and in most historically known human societies) should not also be at work in the UP.

Most of the partisans of the 'Human Revolution' scenario perceived UP burials as a unitary phenomenon, reflecting a threshold in cognition and representing a crucial step in the evolution of the way human societies conceived of death and the afterlife. By revealing that the history of mankind has long been dominated by non-linear cultural evolution, probably triggered by environmental changes and ensuing impacts on population dynamics, the new paradigm encourages a more in-depth analysis of UP burials in search of patterns of synchronic and diachronic variability that may signal

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changes in the way UP societies perceived death and that can tell us something about UP societies themselves. After all, cross-cultural analysis of mortuary practices, including those of hunter-gatherers, reveals an astonishing variability in the way the dead are treated (Binford 1971; Testart 2001). Why should we expect to find different trends during a period of more than 20,000 years and over a region covering more than 10 million square kilometres? The identification of a spatial and chronological continuity in UP mortuary practices would paradoxically contradict rather than confirm the modern character of UP cultural systems as it would make of such practices, seen as a whole, an evolutionary step of our lineage's cognitive trajectory, a step characterised by a much lower degree of variability than the one observed historically. Direct dating of primary burials (e.g., Formicola et al. 2004; Kuzmin et al. 2004; Dobrovolskaya et al. 2012; Pettitt 2011) and methodological innovations in the analysis of grave goods now place this goal within our reach. The former has played a major role in the last decade in reassessments of the age of a number of UP primary burials recorded decades ago and traditionally attributed to specific techno-complexes on the basis of often-uncertain stratigraphic evidence and associated grave goods. Many of these burials, and particularly those attributed to the Aurignacian, have been found to be much younger and in some cases not even Palaeolithic in age (Grootes et al. 2004; Street et al. 2006; Tiller et al. 2009; Hoffman et al. 2011). When confirming the traditional attribution, direct dating has significantly refined our knowledge of the age of the burial and identified possible inconsistencies with previous indirect dates. Although problems remain, databases of direct and indirect ^{14}C ages for UP burials can now be constructed and explored (see d'Errico et al. 2011) with the aim of identifying consistencies in UP mortuary practices through both time and space.

In parallel with such advances, a number of studies have highlighted the potential of personal ornaments, in particular those associated with primary burials, as a means of addressing issues of past cultural geography and social inequality. Ethnographic studies have shown that beadwork, like body painting, scarification, tattooing, garments, and headdresses, is perceived by members of traditional societies as a powerful indicator of identity, enhancing intra-group cohesion and fixing boundaries with neighbouring groups (Strathern & Strathern 1971; Faris 1972; Ray 1975; Hodder 1977, 1982; Lock & Symes 1999; Sanders 2002; Verswijver 1986; Kuhn & Stiner 2007; Vanhaeren 2010). Ethnographic studies also indicate that

the ethnic dimension of beadwork is conveyed through the use of distinct bead types or by particular combinations and arrangements of bead types on the body shared with one or more neighbouring groups. Since the other functions of personal ornaments – that is, markers of gender, age, class, wealth, social status, or use as exchange media, and so on – are governed by rules shared by the members of a community, beadwork used in these ways also contributes, even if unintentionally, to differentiate a society from a neighbouring one (Vanhaeren 2004). As a consequence, we may expect that contemporaneous cultural entities will be identified archaeologically by geographically coherent clusters of sites yielding particular ornament types as well as by characteristic proportions and associations of types found over broad regions. Archaeologically, this research strategy seems appropriate: personal ornaments are associated with most UP technocomplexes and they occur during this period as many distinct types. We have created a geospatial database recording the occurrence of 157 bead types at ninety-eight Aurignacian sites (Vanhaeren & d'Errico 2006). Seriation, correspondence, and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) analyses of these data identified a definite cline in ornament type association sweeping counter-clockwise from the northern European plains to the eastern Alps via western and southern Europe through fourteen geographically cohesive sets of sites. We have argued that this pattern, which is not solely explained by chronological differences between sites or raw material availability, reflects long-lasting ethno-linguistic diversity of Aurignacian populations. To date the potential of this approach has not been tested by a comparable analysis of beads associated with primary burials. This is one of the goals of the present study.

Ethnicity, however, constitutes only one element in the construction of social identities and is one of many that may be reflected in mortuary practices. In the last few years, ethnographers have explored mortuary practice variability with the aim of identifying consistencies that may suggest middle range theories to guide the interpretation of graves of mute past societies (Testart 2006). Results from such cross-cultural research revealed that in many instances grave goods may indeed inform us about the degree of social inequality of a given society and can provide insights into the way ideology and power influenced the possession and sharing of goods.

On the other hand, advances in analytical methods applied to the study of grave goods associated with prehistoric burials, in particular personal ornaments,

have significantly increased the quality and quantity of information on which archaeologists can rely to interpret this record (Giacobini & Malerba 1995; White 1999; d'Errico & Vanhaeren 2000, 2002; Vanhaeren & d'Errico 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2005; Vanhaeren et al. 2004; d'Errico & Vanhaeren 2002; Bonnardin 2009; Rigaud et al. 2010, 2014; Slimak & Plisson 2008; Cristiani & Borić 2012). Grave goods associated with primary burials are well suited to provide more precise data on the social status of the deceased. One can be certain that the types of beads (raw material, colour, species, shape, size, and so on) found and their manufacturing techniques were all part of the material culture of the mourners or the societies with which they were in contact. By combining taphonomic, archaeozoological, isotopic, morphometric, technological, and functional data and comparing them with dedicated natural and experimental reference collections, archaeologists can now gather valuable information on the origin, modification techniques, stringing, length of use, and other aspects of ornaments associated with burials. Such information is of great relevance in establishing, for example, the local versus exotic provenance of objects, in assessing the degree of craft specialization necessary for their production, and in identifying whether they represent offerings deposited in the grave or objects worn by the deceased during his or her lifetime. If offerings are taken as items that will facilitate the journey of the deceased after death, that will be used during the afterlife, and that signal a belief in a form of immortality, the methods with which we have experimented so far may contribute to the identification of such belief systems.

In a series of papers (Vanhaeren & d'Errico 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Vanhaeren et al. 2004), we have argued that the application of these methods to grave goods associated with individual burials and their comparison with ornaments and faunal assemblages from contemporary sites and burials may provide a means with which one can assess the degree of social inequality present in Palaeolithic societies.

The aim of this contribution is to combine the analysis of a georeferenced database of grave goods associated with UP primary burials, their ^{14}C ages, and results from the direct analysis of grave goods from a number of burials to understand the way in which these societies dealt with death. Our analysis highlights marked discontinuities through time as well as spatial consistencies that reflect ethnic and social identities at a regional scale.

METHODS

In order to investigate the geographic and chronological distribution of UP primary burials, we created a database including their geographic coordinates and ^{14}C ages using a variety of sources (Binant 1991; Dobrovolskaya et al. 2012; Vanhaeren & d'Errico 2001, 2003c; Formicola et al. 2004; Giacobini 2006; Henry-Gambier 2005, 2008; d'Errico et al. 2011; Pettitt 2011 and references therein; Marom et al. 2012). Whenever possible, information was cross-checked against recent re-appraisals of burial sites. A number of purported burials were excluded from the database either because their burial status is questioned or because their chronological attribution remains uncertain. The former is the case with the Marronnier child remains, and the latter with the Combe Capelle and Labattut burials.

To test the potential of UP grave goods for identifying ethnocultural diversity, a second database was constructed for the grave goods associated with Gravettian burials. We considered objects' raw material, function, morphology, and, in the case of personal ornaments, shell genus, and tooth species and type. These attributes were combined in order to create mutually exclusive grave goods categories. Data from single burials and burial sites were submitted to a principal coordinate analysis (PCoA), and an unconstrained seriation of the absence-presence matrix. Grave good types present only at a single burial were excluded from the study. We used the statistical package PAST (Hammer & Harper 2006) to perform these analyses.

In the last fifteen years we have directly analysed the grave goods associated with a number of Middle and UP burials and developed methods to characterise the provenance of the raw material, manufacturing, and stringing techniques as well as use wear. These include the sites of Skhul, Border Cave, Bausso da Torre, Paglicci, Cro-Magnon, Lagar Velho, Saint-Germain-la-Rivière, La Madeleine, Les Enfants, and Aven des Iboussières. Although only some of the results are published, we take those observations into account in our discussion of the burial record.

RESULTS

Chronology

At least 195 UP and Epipalaeolithic primary burials, discovered at sixty-one European sites, are reported in the literature. Most of the sites only have one or two individual

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burials. Multiple burials do exist but they are uncommon. All age classes and both sexes are represented. Sites with primary burials are not evenly distributed in space or time. Seventy percent of the primary burials are located in France and Italy. Only 17 percent of the UP burials are directly or indirectly dated by conventional or AMS ^{14}C (Tables 4.1–4.2). Analysis of these ages reveals that reliable primary inhumations are virtually absent during the more ancient phases of the UP, corresponding in western Europe to the so-called Proto-Aurignacian and Ancient Aurignacian. They fall into three temporal clusters separated by gaps of at least 2000 years (Figure 4.1). The oldest cluster, dated between 35,000 and 27,000 calibrated (cal) BP, includes a large number of burials attributed to the Gravettian (Figure 4.2) and contemporaneous cultural facies (Pavlovian and Sungirian). These burials are present across Europe (Figure 4.3).

The second cluster includes three sites from southwestern France attributed to the Ancient Magdalenian and dated to ca. 19,000 cal BP. The third cluster is situated between 15,000 and 12,000 cal BP and includes Epigravettian burials from Italy, two Magdalenian burial sites from France, and a Magdalenian site from the Czech Republic.

Grave Goods Associated with Gravettian Burials

Multivariate analyses of grave goods associated with Gravettian burials reveal a clear difference between sites in the Italian peninsula and those from eastern Europe, and a possible third intermediate entity represented by sites in England, southwestern France, and Portugal (Figures 4.4–4.5). Interestingly, similar results are obtained irrespective of whether all grave goods found at a burial site (Figure 4.5a) or just those associated with individual burials (Figure 4.5b) are considered in the analyses.

The Italian burials have in common the widespread use of shells as personal ornaments. Twenty different species of gastropoda and bivalvia were found in these burials, and two of them (*Cyclope* sp. and *Cypraea* sp.) are, respectively, associated with thirteen and seven of the twenty interments from this region. In contrast, perforated shells are rarely associated with earlier UP burials from northeastern Europe, and, when they are, we find species unknown in the southern sample, such as *Dentalium* sp. in Brno 2. Another dissimilarity appears in the choice of teeth for pendants. Fifteen of the twenty southern interments yielded red deer canines, absent in the northeastern burials. The latter shows instead a frequent use of fox

canines, never found associated with Gravettian burials from the Italian peninsula. Stone pendants and perforated discs are another feature that characterises northern burials. The Italian interments are instead characterised by an abundance of knapped stone tools, rare among burials of the other group. A disparity between the two groups of burials also appears in the use of personal ornaments and tools made of ivory. The presence of ivory objects in the Italian burials is limited to the pendants found at Arene Candide and Barma Grande. A large variety of personal ornaments and tools made from ivory is instead associated with contemporary burials from northern and eastern Europe. Faunal remains are restricted in the southern group to an ibex mandible and a horse maxilla associated with one of the two Paglicci burials, a bovid long bone at Barma Grande, and an astragalus, and possibly three red deer mandibles, found near the Caviglione 1 skeleton. Mammoth scapulae and rhinoceros ribs as well as rhinoceros, mammoth, and fox skulls have been recovered from interments of the northern group.

The grave goods associated with the burial sites of Cro-Magnon, Paviland, and Lagar Velho are different from both the Italian and the eastern sample. They share the presence of *Littorina* sp. shell beads, which are not found elsewhere. Paviland and Cro-Magnon ornaments also include ivory beads and pendants similar to those from eastern Europe while the Lagar Velho child is associated with red deer canines, which are present in all Italian burials.

Social Inequality

In hunter–gatherer societies where social inequalities are marked by the possession of riches, wealth comprises objects that display one or more of the following characteristics: (1) rare materials, either by their nature or through remoteness from their point of origin; (2) fabrication requiring a major investment of time and work; (3) production involving complex techniques mastered exclusively by certain members of the group; and (4) standardised forms and colours (Vanhaeren & d'Errico 2005). The first three characteristics ensure some control of the production of the units of value; the last one guarantees the interchangeability of objects of the same value. The ostentatious wearing of ornaments made up of numerous exotic objects obtained by exchange often characterises individuals as belonging to a dominant social group.

Depending on the society, this wealth may be inherited, distributed, exchanged, destroyed, or abandoned in

Table 4.1. *Indirect ¹⁴C radiocarbon ages of Upper Palaeolithic burials*

Site	¹⁴C age BP	±1 σ error	Laboratory code	Figure 4.1 (top) number
Kostienki 1 Poliakov	32600	1100	OxA-7073	1
Cavillon	28780	560	GifA-88202	2
Cro-Magnon	27680	270	Beta-157439	3
Dolni Vestonice triple	26640	110	GrN-14831	4
Krems-Wachtberg	26520	200	VERA-3819	5
Pavlov	26400	110	GrN-1272	6
Dolni Vestonice 16 male	26390	270	ISGS-1744	7
Pavlov	26170	450	GrN-20391	8
Dolni Vestonice 4 child	25950	630	GrN-18189	9
Dolni Vestonice 3 female	25950	630	GrN-18189	10
Predmosti	25820	170	GrN-1286	11
Dolni Vestonice 16 male	25740	210	GrN-15277	12
Dolni Vestonice 16 male	25570	280	GrN-15276	13
Dolni Vestonice triple	24970	920	ISGS-1617	14
Lagar Velho	24860	200	GrA-13310	15
Pavlov	24800	150	GrN-1325	16
Barma Grande triple	24800	800	OxA-10093	17
Barma Grande 5	24800	800	OxA-10093	18
Barma Grande 1	24800	800	OxA-10093	19
Paglicci	24720	420	F-55	20
Lagar Velho 1	24660	260	OxA-8421	21
Lagar Velho	24520	240	OxA-8423	22
Ostuni	24410	320	Gif-9247(1)	23
Dolni Vestonice triple	24000	900	ISGS-1616	24
Lagar Velho	23920	220	OxA-8422	25
Paglicci	23040	380	F-51	26
Parabita	22220	360	na	27
Parabita	22110	330	na	28
Pataud	22000	980	OxA162/GrN1876	29
Malta	19880	160	Oxa-7129	30
Tagliente	13270	170	OxA3532	31
Tagliente	13070	70	OxA-35313	32
Koneprusy	12870	70	GrA-13696	33
Fanciulli 3	12200	400	MC-402	34
Vado all'Arancio	11600	130	Ly-3415	35
Vado all'Arancio	11330	50	R-1333	36
Romito	11150	150	R-300	37
Romito	10960	950	R-221	38
Maritza	10420	60	R-1270-R	39
Aven des Iboussieres	10210	80	OxA-5682	40

Note: na: not available.

Sources: Data from Binant 1991; d'Errico et al. 2011; Dobrovolskaya et al. 2012; Formicola et al. 2004; Giacobini 2006; Vanhaeren and d'Errico 2003c; Henry-Gambier 2005, 2008; Marom et al. 2012; Pettitt 2011.

a ritualised way, for example during funerary ceremonies. The abandonment of these goods in the tomb is gener-ally part of a strategy of deliberately removing wealth from the exchange network, which prevents the gradual loss of their value caused by the introduction, through production or exchange, of new objects to the system. In these societies, those individuals who have access to this wealth constitute a minority. Other members may receive small quantities of these goods as loans or gifts, and possess goods of lesser prestige because they are less elaborate or not of exotic origin. Widely diffused within the society, and used by most of its members, these goods should have a better chance of being lost and then incor-porated into the archaeological record.

The funerary ceremonies reserved for 'common peo-ple' can be very different from those of the 'honourable' people or may simply constitute a simplified version of them (Testart 2006). Cross-cultural studies indicate that belonging to a privileged social group is often marked by the construction of durable mortuary structures.

Table 4.2. *Direct ^{14}C radiocarbon ages of Upper Palaeolithic burials*

Site	^{14}C age BP	±1 σ error	Laboratory code	Figure 4.1 (bottom) number
Kostienki 14 Markina Gora	33250	500	OxA-X-2395–15	1
Sungir 2	30100	550	OxX-2395–6	2
Sungir 3 late juvenile	30000	550	OxX-2395–7	3
Paviland	29490	210	OxA-16413	4
Paviland	28870	180	OxA-16412	5
Sungir 2 early adolescent	27210	710	AA-36474	6
Sungir 1 adult male	27050	210	KIA-27006	7
Villehonneur	27010	210	Beta-216141	8
Villehonneur	26690	190	Beta-216142	9
Paviland	26350	550	OxA-1815	10
Sungir 2 early adolescent	26200	640	AA-36475	11
Sungir 3 late juvenile	26190	640	AA-36476	12
Sungir 3 late juvenile	26000	410	KIA-27007	13
Paviland	25840	280	OxA-8025	14
Sungir 3 late juvenile	25430	160	OxA-15751	15
Cussac 1	25120	120	Beta-156643	16
Sungir 2	25020	120	OxA-15753	17
Sungir 3 late juvenile	24830	110	OxA-15754	18
Barma Grande 6	24800	800	OxA-10093	19
Ostuni 1	24410	320	Gif-9247	20
Sungir 3 late juvenile	24100	240	OxA-9038	21
Sungir 2 early adolescent	23830	220	OxA-9037	22
Brno 2	23680	200	OxA-8293	23
Arene Candide Principe	23440	190	OxA-10700	24
Kostienki 8 Telmanskaia	23020	320	OxA-7109	25
Sungir 1 adult male	22930	200	OxA-9036	26
Kostienki 18	21020	180	OxA-7128	27
Sungir 1 adult male	19160	270	AA-36473	28
Saint-Germain-la-Rivière	15780	200	GifA-95456	29
Laugerie-Basse	15660	130	GifA-94204	30
Lafaye	15290	150	GifA-95047	31
Wilczyce	12870	60	OxA-16729	32
Bonn Oberkassel female	12180	100	OxA-4792	33
Villabruna	12140	70	KIA-27004	34
Neuwied Irlich neonate	11965	65	OxA-9848	35
Neuwied Irlich adult	11910	70	OxA-9847	36
Bonn Oberkassel male	11570	100	OxA-4790	37
Roc-de-Cave	11210	140	GifA-95047	38
Fanciulli double	11130	100	GifA-94197	39
Arene Candide XIV	10735	55	OxA-11003	40
Arene Candide XII	10720	55	OxA-11002	41
Arene Candide VIII	10655	55	OxA-11001	42
Arene Candide VIb	10585	55	OxA-11000	43
Madeleine	10190	100	GifA-95457	44
Arene Candide III	10065	55	OxA-10998	45
Arene Candide Vb	9925	50	OxA-10999	46

Sources: Data from Binant 1991; d'Errico et al. 2011; Dobrovolskaya et al. 2012; Formicola et al. 2004; Giacobini 2006; Henry-Gambier 2005, 2008; Vanhaeren and d'Errico 2003c; Marom et al. 2012; Pettitt 2011.

We have argued elsewhere (Vanhaeren & d'Errico 2005) that as archaeologists, we should be able to iden‐ tify complex societies through the presence of burials associated with prestige goods and elaborate structures. These burials should either be accompanied by others, without grave goods or with goods of lesser prestige, which can include small quantities of exotic objects, or appear to be the only funerary evidence – a clue indicat‐ ing that the members of the less privileged groups were subjected to funerary practices that are archaeologically invisible. Additionally, a striking difference should appear when comparing personal ornaments associated with some burials and those found at habitation sites. The latter should mainly feature ornaments made of readily
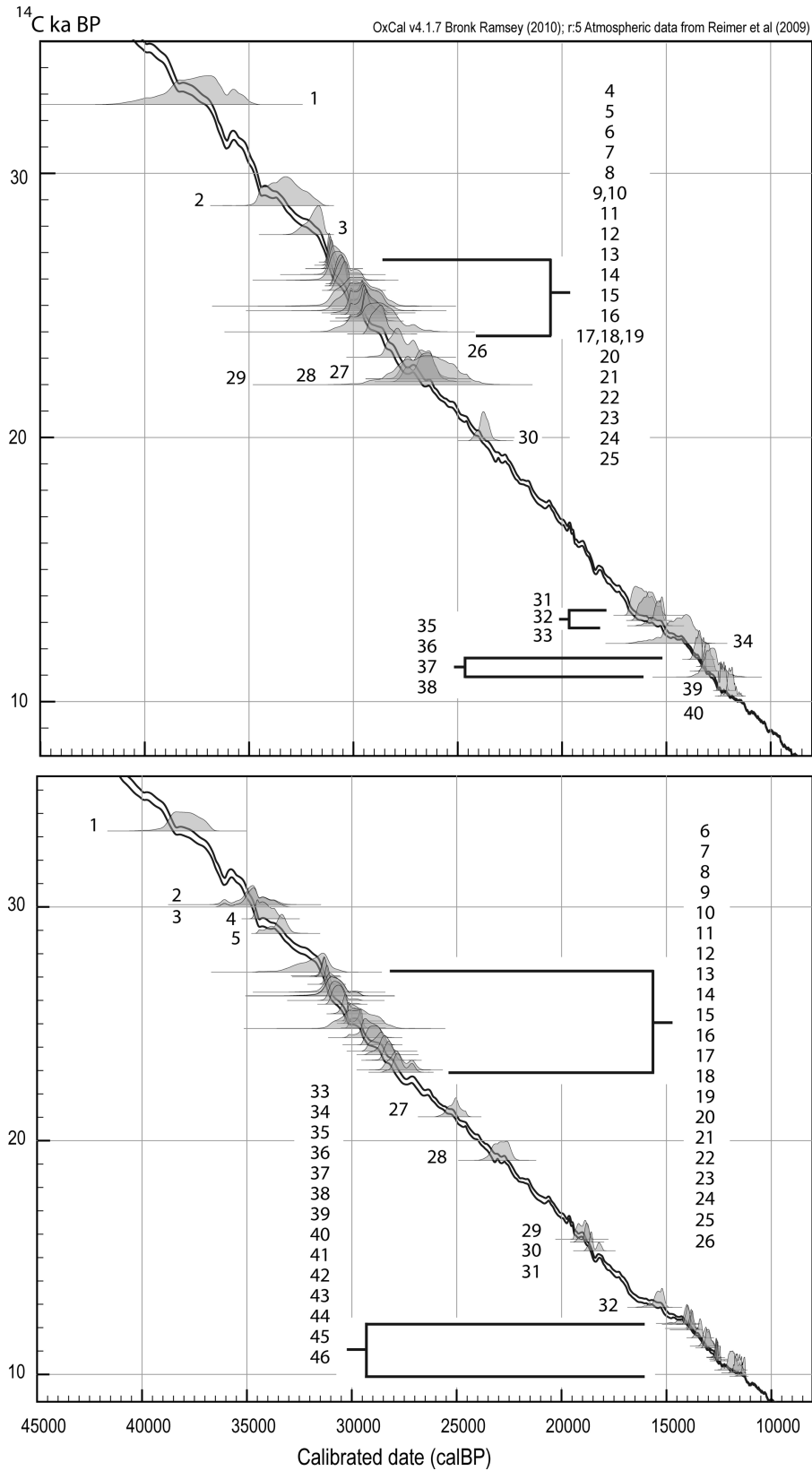
Figure 4.1. Available indirect (top) and direct (bottom) calibrated ¹⁴C dates for Upper Palaeolithic primary burials (cf. Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

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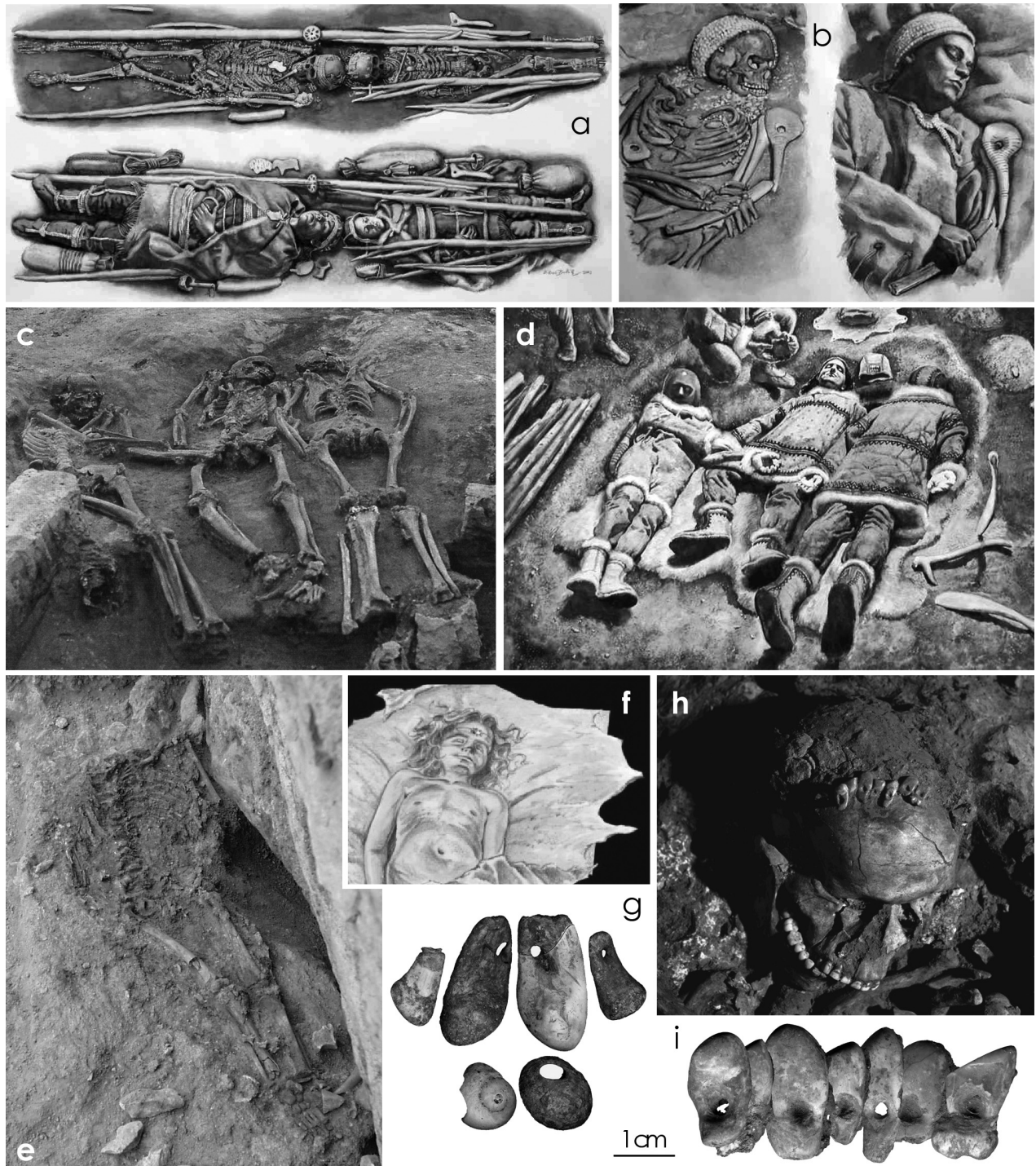
Figure 4.2. Examples of Gravettian and contemporary primary burials.
a: Sungir, Russia;
b: Arene Candide, Italy;
c–d: Dolni Vestonice;
e–f: Lagar Velho;
h: Paglicci;
g and i: perforated red deer canines associated with the Lagar Velho and Paglicci, respectively.
Figure 4.2a, b, and d copyright Libor Balák, Antropark, reproduced by kind permission; Figure 4.2e and f courtesy of João Zilhão;
Figure 4.2h courtesy of Maria-Grazia Ronchitelli.
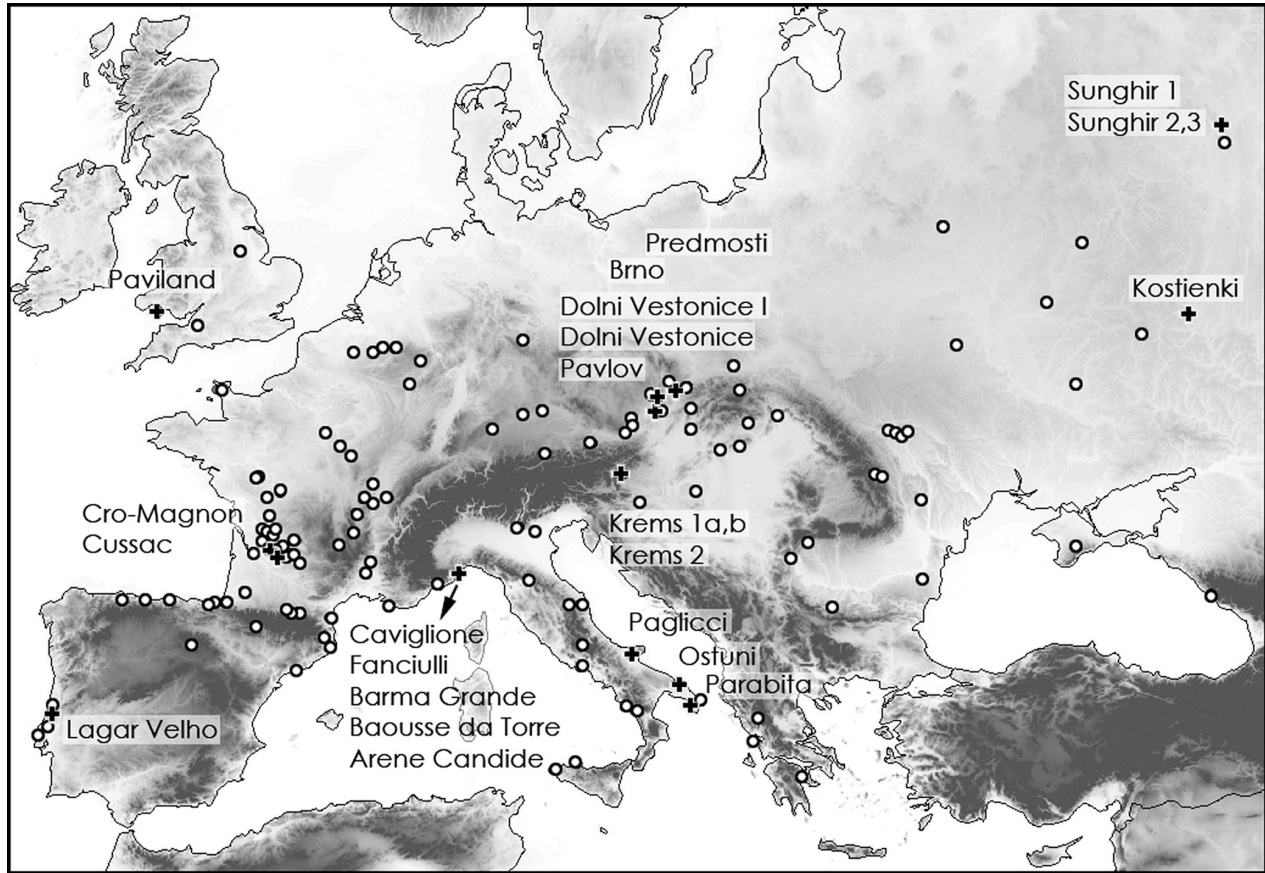
Figure 4.3. Geographical distribution of dated Gravettian sites (dots) and primary burials (crosses).

available raw materials and only rarely those found in the richest primary burials.

In other words, the contextualised comparative analysis of grave goods and contemporary personal ornaments found at habitation sites becomes a necessary epistemological requirement to establish whether they can be interpreted as riches.

White (1999) interprets as evidence for hereditary social ranking the difference in the number of elaborate grave goods associated with three burials from Sungir, Russia (Figure 4.2a), dated to ca. 30,000 BP (Marom et al. 2012). However, no contextual data (comparison with personal ornaments found at contemporary habitation sites, raw material availability, etc.) are provided to demonstrate that the Sungir grave goods represent riches. Such contextual data and results of an integrated taphonomical, archaeozoological, technological, and morphometrical analysis are lacking for almost all the other UP burials that have yielded grave goods. Exotic grave goods in the form of Atlantic shell beads and mammoth ivory pendants are, for example, found in Gravettian burials

from northern Italy. Nevertheless their exceptional character still needs to be demonstrated.

The two unique cases in which the approach promoted here has been applied and the hypothesis of social inequality supported by a range of data are those of the La Madeleine child burial, dated to 10,190 ± 100 BP (Vanhaeren & d'Errico 2003a), and the Saint-Germain-la-Rivière burial, dated to 15,780 ± 200 BP (Vanhaeren & d'Errico 2003a, 2005).

Analysis of the 1,500 shell beads associated with the La Madeleine three-year-old child shows that Epipalaeolithic craftsmen invested a substantial amount of time in the production of tiny versions of adult beads and their embroidery for ostentatious display on the child's clothing. Strontium isotope dating of *Dentalium* sp. shells, which represent the large majority of the beads associated with this burial, indicates they were collected on the Atlantic coast, some 200 km from the site (Vanhaeren et al. 2004). As the biological age rules out the possibility that the La Madeleine child achieved a special status through distinguished personal acts, the richness, variety,

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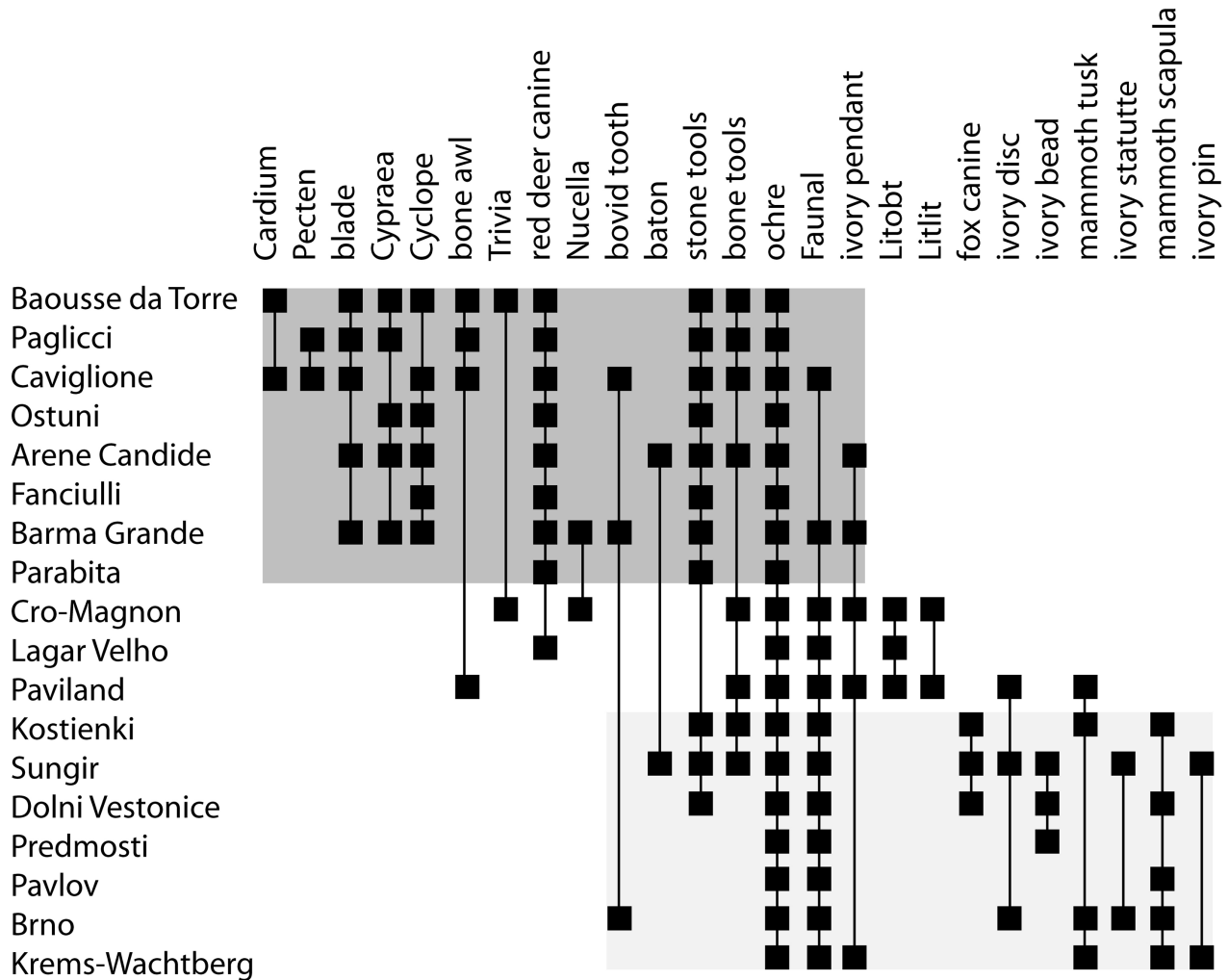
Figure 4.4. Seriation of grave goods associated with Gravettian burial sites.

and specific form of this child's beadwork either may mark all children as a distinct social grade, as suggested by Zilhão (2005) for all early UP child burials, or may be a result of the child's integration into a hereditary ranking system.

The excavation of the Saint-Germain-la-Rivière burial revealed a structure comprising four blocks supporting two slabs, which seemed to protect the deceased (Figure 4.6). A rich set of almost one hundred grave goods, including the skull of a bison, bone and stone tools, as well as seventy-one perforated red deer canines accompanied this burial. The virtual absence of red deer in southwestern French faunal assemblages dated to the same period and in the diet of the deceased (Drucker & Henry-Gambier 2005), the preference for teeth from young stags, the rarity of this bead type at the site and at contemporary sites from the same region, together suggest

that the teeth were obtained through long-distance trade and represented prestige items. This is confirmed by the analysis of personal ornaments found in the habitation layers of the Saint-Germain-la-Rivière site, which are dominated by beads made of locally available raw material, such as reindeer incisors and phalanges, and their imitations in steatite, fossil urchins, and fox canines. These studies indicate that certain members of Early-Middle Magdalenian societies in southwestern France possessed wealth made up of rare, and probably exotic, ornaments. The use of important quantities of exotic objects, probably implying structured exchange networks, seems to contradict the hypothesis that these objects served to mark individual social roles (such as chief or shaman) and, instead, suggests that their role must have been that of identifying groups made up of several individuals.

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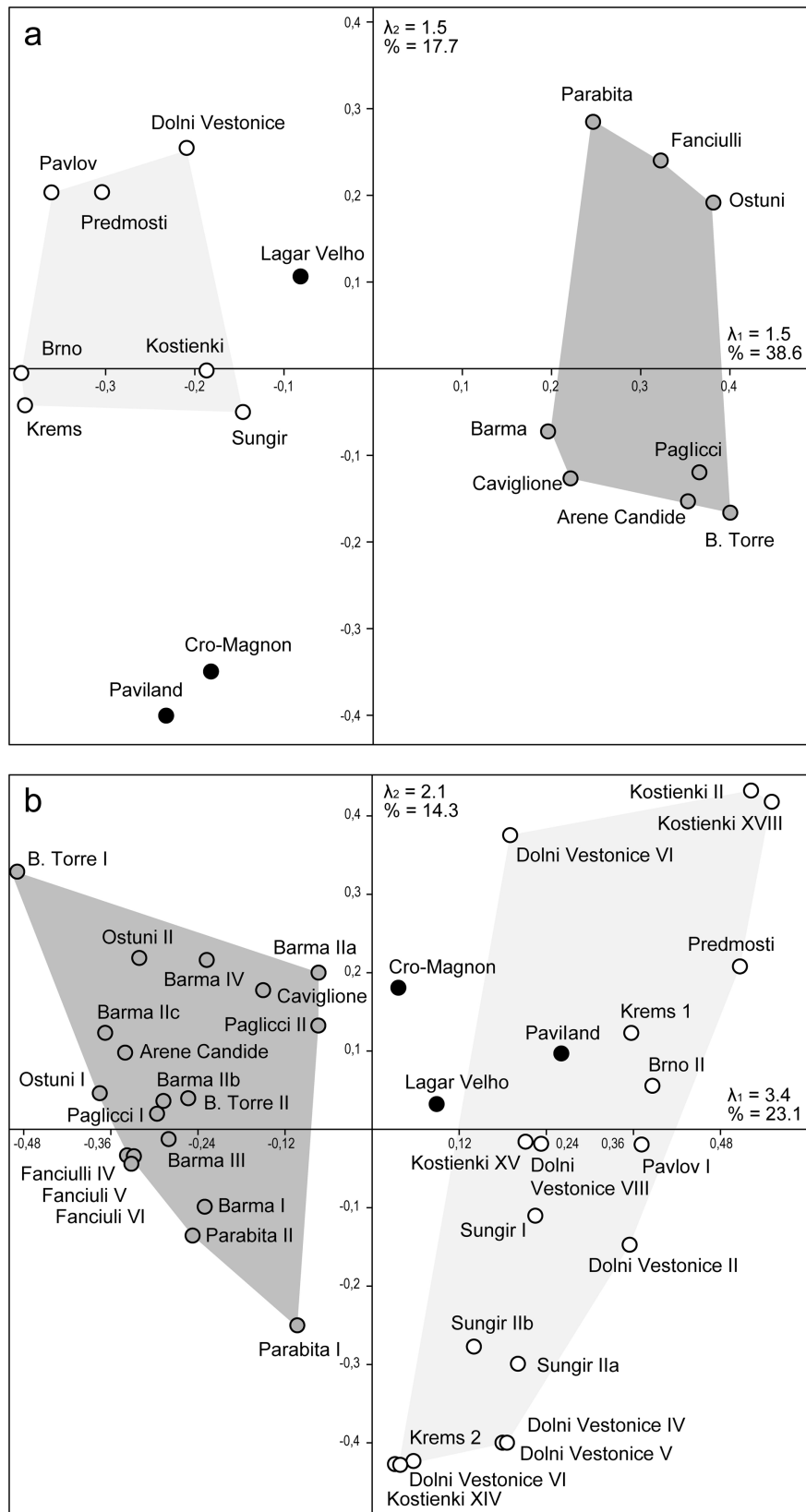
Figure 4.5. Principal coordinate analysis of grave goods associated with Gravettian burial sites (a) and with individual burials (b).

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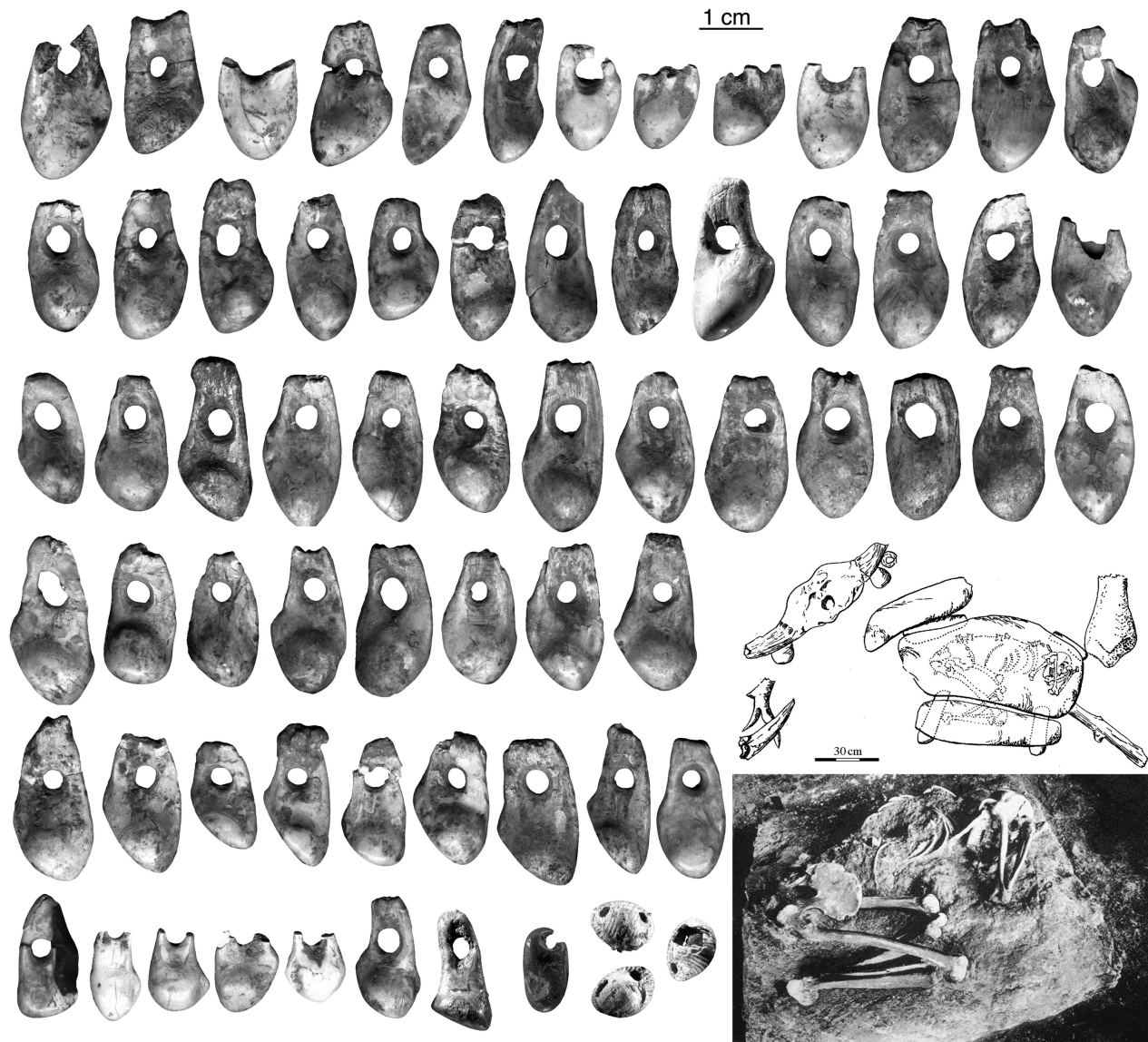
Figure 4.6. Personal ornaments associated with the Saint-Germain-la-Rivière Madgalenian primary burial, as well as a photo and reconstruction of the structure protecting the deceased.
Modified after Vanhaeren & d'Errico 2003a, fig. 6.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Geographic distribution and direct ^{14}C dating of primary UP burials contradict the idea that mortuary practices during this period were a unitary phenomenon. Two-thirds of UP burials were discovered in France and Italy. This cannot be solely attributed to the history of research or to differential preservation: some areas such as the Cantabrian coast, rich in Palaeolithic sites and with well-preserved faunal assemblages, have yielded no burials. The heterogeneous distribution probably reflects, as is also arguably the case with Neanderthal burials, the fact that mortuary practices other than primary burials in habitation sites existed in some regions and left no or ambiguous archaeological signatures.

Chronologically, episodes during which interment, at least for some individuals, occurs alternate with periods during which there is an absence of burials in the archaeological record. With just 17 percent of burials directly dated, this pattern may of course change in the future and may be only partially representative of past reality.

The absence of primary burials in the Aurignacian, for example, is not conclusive. One burial from Bausso da Torre, apparently associated with a typical split-based point, could well be one of the few primary burials from this period (Vilotte & Henry-Gambier 2010). Kostienki 14 could be another (Marom et al. 2012). Curatorial attention paid to UP burials, many of which were excavated long ago, represents a supplementary challenge to their accurate dating and may influence the observed pattern in the future. Application of a method based on extraction and AMS ^{14}C dating of hydroxyproline, a bone-specific biomarker, to the Sungir burials has recently shown that the addition of glues and consolidants to human remains kept in museums can significantly rejuvenate their age and that even the more advanced techniques that attempt to eliminate contamination entirely, such as collagen ultrafiltration, can be ineffective (Marom et al. 2012). This probably explains the considerable range − Sungir being a remarkable example − observed in the ages produced at different times and by different laboratories when dating the same burial. It is, however, a fact that the direct dating of the UP burials is narrowing down rather than widening the time spans during which primary burials occurred and increasing the gaps during which no primary burials are found. This suggests that additional radiocarbon ages and methodological improvements will serve better to constrain rather than call into question the observed pattern.

Statistical analyses of Gravettian grave goods identify two, possibly three, spatially cohesive clusters composed of burials that share similar grave good type associations. We argue that the more parsimonious explanation for the observed pattern is that geographic differences in grave goods mirror long-lasting cultural differences between the human groups that lived in these areas between 34,000 and 26,000 cal BP. Alternative interpretations appear unlikely, for a number of reasons. In the light of what is known about Gravettian cultural continuity, and considering the age of the burials composing the clusters as well as their geographic location, the identified pattern cannot be interpreted as the result of changes in grave good preference over time. Also, it cannot be attributed solely to raw material availability. Fox canines and *Dentalium* sp. shells were readily available in southern Europe during the Gravettian; stone blades and a variety of bone awls were manufactured at Gravettian sites in northern Europe. Yet they were not used as grave goods in these regions. The ubiquitous presence of artefacts made of mammoth ivory in the eastern European

burials does not explain the divide between the two main clusters. Pendants made of ivory, but of a different morphology, are also found in two burials from Italy, included by multivariate analyses in the Italian cluster. A third alternative hypothesis proposes that objects associated with Gravettian primary burials, and personal ornaments in particular, were simply offerings manufactured to be placed in the grave and were not objects worn by the deceased during their lifetime; that is, they would not reflect Gravettian vestimentary practices. However, microscopic analysis of grave goods associated with these burials (Vanhaeren & d'Errico 2003c; White 1999; additional data are unpublished) reveals that personal ornaments bear intense use-wear traces. This is particularly striking in the case of the Lagar Velho child, associated with four red deer canines from four different hinds and stags with one bearing evidence of having been recycled before being incorporated into the child's beadwork. This indicates that the ornaments found in Gravettian burials were used as ornaments by the deceased during their life and played a role in expressing their vestimentary codes.

An additional alternative hypothesis would be that only certain members of Gravettian societies were inhumed and that, as a consequence, associated artefacts would indicate their social status rather than cultural affiliation. One may reasonably expect in this case (see previous discussion) that some divide would exist between personal ornaments used by members of 'privileged' social groups and those used by the other members of the community, and that such difference could be identified when contrasting personal ornaments associated with burials with those lost or disposed of at habitation sites. Although a comprehensive database of Gravettian personal ornaments is still under construction, available data and our own results appear to contradict the grave goods–social status equation. Personal ornaments associated with the Lagar Velho and Paglicci burials are similar to those found at contemporary Portuguese habitation sites and in the habitation layers of Paglicci cave (Vanhaeren & d'Errico 2003c; additional observations are unpublished). Also, if the exclusive function of Gravettian personal ornaments was to convey the social status of the deceased, grave goods associated with burials would not, once submitted to multivariate analysis, cluster geographically but rather would associate individuals belonging to those classes independently of the location of the burial. This suggests that even if conveying social role was among the functions of personal

ornaments, they also unknowingly reflected cultural affiliation within the Gravettian technocomplex.

In other words, even if they were partially true, the last two hypotheses (offering and social status) would not be, in the light of our results, in contradiction with our contention. Differences between regions in the offerings placed in the graves or in the personal ornaments used by a particular social group would still be better explained as reflecting cultural geography. In the first case cultural differences between regions would be expressed by differences in mortuary practices rather than vestimentary codes, in the second by the compliance of a given social group rather than the entire society to principles governing the way it should dress. We must therefore conclude that grave good variability is a proxy for the cultural geography of Gravettian populations and probably reflects ethno-linguistic diversity, an argument based on the variability in bead type associations recovered from Aurignacian contexts.

This conclusion raises the question, which will need to be addressed in the future with appropriate methods, of whether the identified pattern is a function of distance between groups, and the result of horizontal transmissions through long-term trade and exchange systems (Jordan & Shennan 2003; Moore 2001; Terrell et al. 2001), or whether it reflects firm, though fluctuating, cultural boundaries determined by historical processes leading to group fission and isolation (Kirch & Green 1987; Renfrew 1987; Gray & Jordan 2000; Tehrani & Collard 2002, 2009; Rigaud et al. 2014).

The type of analysis conducted here on Gravettian grave goods is still missing for burials dated to the end of the UP. The contextual analysis of grave goods from Magdalenian burials suggests that some of them reflect more the social status of the deceased than his or her ethnic affiliation and point to societies that were characterised by some degree of social stratification, if not enduring ranking systems. Changes in grave goods between the Gravettian and the Magdalenian may signal a shift in social complexity that needs to be studied through the analysis of personal ornaments lost or disposed of at habitation sites across the entire European territory. The implications of such complexity for UP ideologies and the way they conceive the afterlife still need to be explored through a detailed contextual analysis of grave goods. In particular, novel information could result from the identification of 'offerings' as opposed to objects used by the deceased during his or her lifetime. The latter represents for the moment, in our experience, the more common type of grave good associated with UP burial.

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Mortality and the Foundations of Human Society: Sedentism and the Collective

Gathering of the Dead? The Early Neolithic Sanctuaries of Göbekli Tepe, Southeastern Turkey

Jens Notroff, Oliver Dietrich, and Klaus Schmidt

INTRODUCTION

Death and the awareness of mortality have to be considered one important impetus for the creation of world systems and mythologies throughout history and culture. Thus, the material manifestations of burial ritual and death cult may offer the chance to understand the imaginary world behind these practices. They gain importance especially when focussing on prehistoric periods, where they could shed some light on past life in the inevitable absence of written sources. New research in southeastern Turkey has produced a valuable insight into the changing belief systems accompanying the emergence of a new mode of living immediately after the end of the Ice Age in the Near East – the world of food-producing culture, the Neolithic way of life. There, the innovation of monumental architecture at Göbekli Tepe, erected not – or not only – for the living, and exhibiting a rich naturalistic and symbolic iconography, hints at a social complexity and highly complicated mythology hitherto quite unsuspected.

The tell of Göbekli Tepe is situated about 15 km northeast of the modern town of Şanlıurfa between the middle and upper reaches of the Euphrates and Tigris and the foothills of the Taurus Mountains. With a height of 15 m, the mound, which is completely artificial, covers an area of about 9 ha, measuring 300 m in diameter. Neolithic habitation was recognised during a combined survey by the Universities of Chicago and Istanbul in the 1960s (Benedict 1980) evidenced by remarkable amount of flint flakes, chips, and tools, but the architecture hidden by the mound remained unrecognised until its discovery in 1994 by Klaus Schmidt (Schmidt 2006). Since then annual excavation work has been conducted,

uncovering an unexpected degree of monumentality for such an early context and illustrating the exceptional role of this site – not as a settlement, but as a place of cult and ritual (Schmidt 2001, 2006, 2010).

At the current state of research it is possible to distinguish at least two stratigraphic layers, differing in the kind of architecture and find material they produce as well as their chronology. Their archaeological dating based on typological observation of distinct forms of the material culture is backed up and confirmed by a number of radiocarbon dates (Dietrich & Schmidt 2010; Dietrich 2011; Dietrich et al. 2013). The oldest layer hitherto uncovered at Göbekli Tepe, Layer III (Figure 5.1), is dated to the tenth millennium BC, that is, the earlier phase of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic (PPN A). This layer produced monumental architecture characterised by ten- to thirty-metre-wide circles formed by huge monolithic pillars in a distinct T-shape. These pillars, reaching a height of up to four metres, are interconnected by walls and benches that define the inner and outer spaces of the enclosures. They are always orientated towards a central pair of even larger pillars of the same shape, which are founded in pedestals cut out of the bedrock in some cases.

A younger layer is superimposed on this monumental architecture in some parts of the mound. This Layer II (Figure 5.1) is dated to the ninth millennium BC, specifically early and middle PPN B. The smaller, now-rectangular buildings characteristic of this stratum may be understood as smaller versions of the noticeably larger older enclosures. They measure about three by four metres, with a floor usually consisting of a terrazzo-like pavement. Number and height of the T-shaped pillars are reduced: now often only two small central pillars are present, the largest among them not exceeding a height of

Enclosure E
at western plateau, to scale
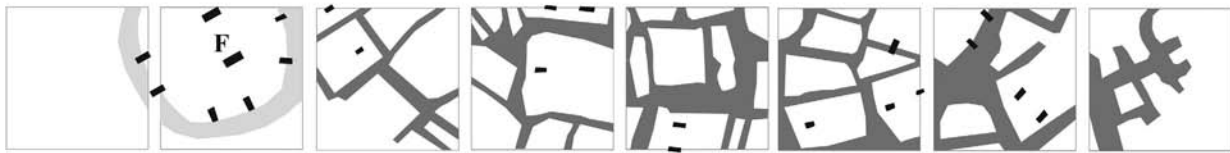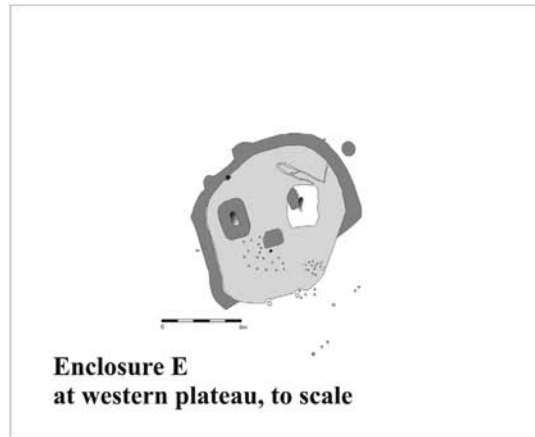
Figure 5.1. Schematic plan of the excavation at Göbekli Tepe and its stratigraphic units.
Plan: K. Schmidt, DAI.

two metres. Sometimes these rooms even have no pillars at all. As with the circular structures of the older Layer III, no traces of domestic activities, such as hearths or ovens, have been detected so far.

Thereafter, building activity at Göbekli Tepe seems to have come to an end. Layer I consists of the surface soil resulting from erosion processes as well as a plough horizon bearing witness to the use of this fertile soil for agricultural activities in recent centuries. Although this layer is the youngest in terms of stratigraphy, it should be noted that it includes an amalgam of material from older layers and therefore also generates relevant finds.

TAKING AN INVENTORY: THE ENCLOSURES OF GÖBEKLI TEPE

The PPN A enclosures are the most impressive part of Göbekli Tepe's archaeology. A geomagnetic survey, including ground-penetrating radar, substantiated the prediction, based on the archaeological surface investigations, that these enclosures were not restricted to a specific part of the mound but existed all over the site. More than ten large enclosures were located on the

geophysical map in addition to the eight already under excavation – the latter designated A to H in order of discovery. Five of these monumental structures, A, B, C, D, and G, were discovered in the main excavation area at the mound's southern depression (Figure 5.2); one, Enclosure F, at the southwestern hilltop; another one, Enclosure E, on the western plateau; and Enclosure H, one of the most recent discoveries (Dietrich et al. in press), at the northwestern hilltop. Still under excavation, Enclosures A, F, and G are raising questions concerning their exact layout and relative chronology in relation to the other structures: Enclosure A, for example, seems to have been the object of alteration and modification, while Enclosures F and G, although close to the surface, show typical characteristics of the circular enclosures of Layer III. While Enclosure E was identified as an enclosure completely cleared of its architectural features, with only the floor and two pedestals cut out of the bedrock still visible, both Enclosures C and D were excavated to ground level in recent campaigns. They serve as good examples to characterise the general layout and character of Göbekli Tepe's older circular to elliptic PPN A enclosures.
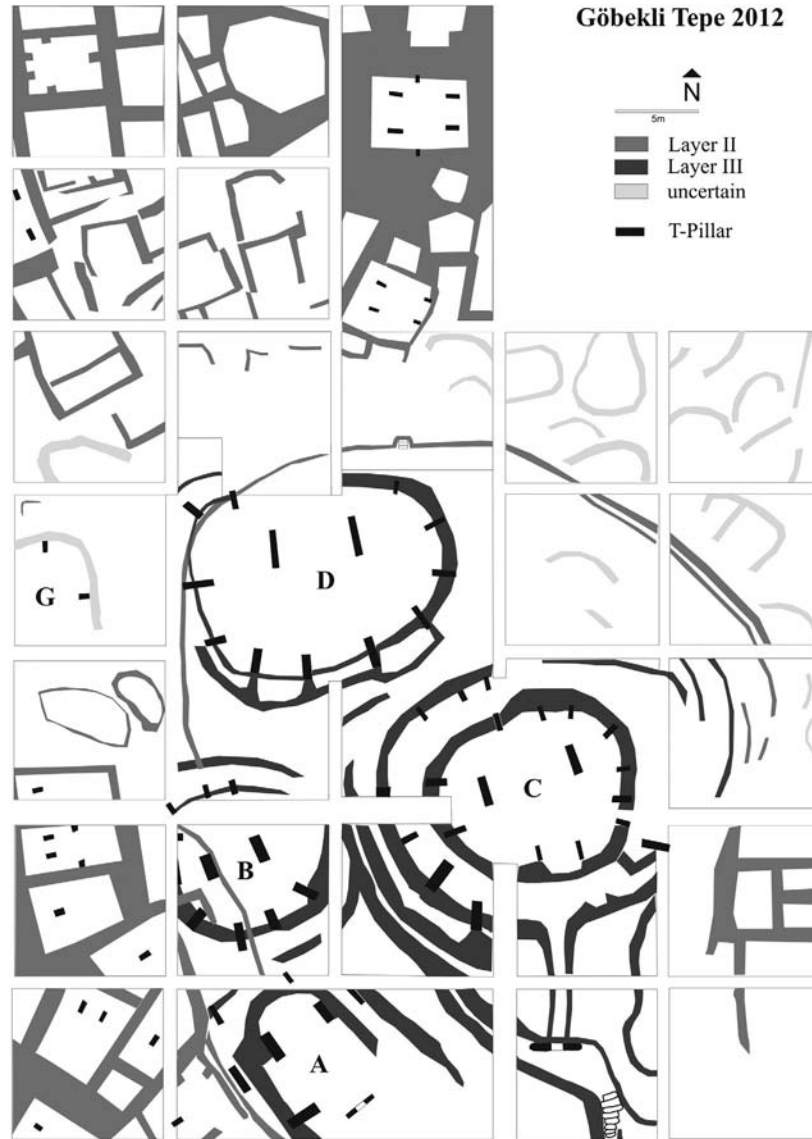
Figure 5.1. (*continued*)

Enclosure D is the largest and best preserved so far. Two huge central pillars are surrounded by a circle formed by – at the current state of excavation – eleven pillars of similar T-shape (Figure 5.3). Most of these pillars are decorated with depictions of animals: foxes, birds (e.g., cranes, ibis, and ducks), and snakes are the most common species in this enclosure, accompanied by a wide range of figured representations such as boar, aurochs, gazelle, wild donkey, and larger carnivores.

The two pillars in the centre of this enclosure, measuring about 5.5 m in height and weighing some 8 metric tons, are set in pedestals only 0.20 m-high, which are – like the rest of the floor level – carved out of the carefully smoothed bedrock, and, in one case, decorated with a relief frieze of ducks.

In particular these central pillars of Enclosure D demonstrate the anthropomorphic appearance of the T-shaped pillars. The oblong T-heads can be regarded as abstract depictions of the human head, the narrow side representing the face. Clearly visible are arms on the shafts with hands drawn together above the abdomen (Figure 5.4). The depiction of belts and loincloths in the shape of animal skins underlines the impression that these T-shaped pillars have an anthropomorphic identity and therefore should be regarded as pillar-statues. Some small bones from a foxtail found in front of one of the

Figure 5.2. Aerial image of the mound of Göbekli Tepe showing the excavation areas and position of enclosures excavated thus far. Photo: E. Küçük.

central pillars hints at the presence of a real fur here at one time, perhaps as some kind of offering or even to be understood as a tangible counterpart to the loincloth depicted. Without trying to draw a line of tradition here, this is reminiscent of the similar custom of decoration known from ancient Mesopotamian cult images (Foster 2007, 181).

Since the loincloth relief covers the genital region of the pillar-statues, we cannot be sure about the gender of the two individuals depicted in the centre. But some help may be provided by the clay figurines from the PPN B site of Nevalı Çori (Morsch 2002) about fifty kilometres north of Göbekli Tepe, now flooded by the Atatürk dam reservoir. Apparently, of those figurines depicting both male and female individuals, only the male ones wear belts. Thus, it seems probable that the

pair of pillars in Enclosure D also represent two male individuals. Indeed, it seems striking that the iconographic and symbolic world present at Göbekli Tepe is one dominated by masculinity. Whenever the gender of one of the animals depicted is indicated, it is a male specimen (the fox present at the left side of Pillar 33 in Enclosure D being an exception – it does not show a penis, but is depicted with a batch of snakes, maybe even giving birth to these snakes). Among the depictions of human beings, ithyphallic individuals are numerous. The sole clearly female depiction thus far is a later added graffito on a stone slab in one of the buildings of Layer II, which was most likely not an original decoration of that room.

Enclosure C, situated to the southeast of Enclosure D (Figure 5.2), is formed by a number of concentric,

Figure 5.3. View of Enclosure D, the largest and best preserved circular enclosure of Göbekli Tepe.
Photo: N. Becker, DAI.

interleaved walls with pillars, having a complete diameter of about thirty metres. The structure and layout of this peculiar enclosure changed significantly over time. An earlier entrance arrangement reminiscent of a *dromos*, for instance, was blocked by a wall apparently added later.

The floor was created from the bedrock in a manner very similar to the one in Enclosure D. Again, two pedestals, about 0.30 m high, were constructed for the central pillars, carved out of the bedrock while cutting and smoothing the floor. However, both of the central pillars were destroyed in prehistoric times. A large pit was dug into the already backfilled enclosure, obviously directed at finding the central pillars to carry out this destruction, indicating a still-present knowledge about this structure. The smashed pieces were found in the lower part of the pit and a virtual reconstruction was possible by laser scanning the individual pieces, the result showing a pillar with an original height of about 5 m.

The surrounding pillars of this enclosure again present a number of reliefs, dominated by depictions of wild boars. At one pillar such a flat relief of a boar is accompanied by the spectacular high relief of a snarling predator, which eludes proper zoological identification but provokes a wild and intimidating sentiment (Figure 5.5). It remains unclear whether the different techniques of depiction were used deliberately to evoke the impression that the boar is lying flat on the ground, legs stretched out – the already dead prey in front of the hunter.

This iconography of fear and death seems to have played an important role in the mythology of these people and will add to our understanding of activities surrounding the creation and use of Göbekli Tepe's enclosures as well as their functional character, which requires further examination on its own.

PLACES OF CULT, GATHERING, AND FEASTING

A major uncertainty concerning Göbekli Tepe's enclosures is whether these functioned as hypaethral structures

Figure 5.4. Pillar 31, one of the two central pillars of Enclosure D, illustrating their anthropomorphic appearance, which is due to the depiction of arms, hands, and elements of clothing.
Photo: N. Becker, DAI.

Figure 5.5. Pillar 27 in Enclosure C, showing the sculpture of a predator in high relief above the flat relief depicting an apparently dead boar.
Photo: D. Johannes.

or whether they may have been covered by some kind of roof construction (Kurapkat 2010). This relates directly to the interpretation of the characteristic T-shaped pillars. As demonstrated, these can be identified as anthropomorphic statues, albeit abstract in their depiction. Although reference may be made to examples from the Classical world such as Caryatids or Atlantes, it seems inconclusive and unsatisfying to reduce the T-pillars' meaning to this functional aspect. In any case, to imagine large roof structures, spanning the larger enclosures, which have a diameter of about thirty metres, raises the difficult question of how this might have been achieved technically.

However, there is a third option to be considered: it seems clear by now that the circles were not left open after abandonment. They were backfilled intentionally after a certain period with homogenous material in a manner reminiscent of a burial tumulus formed of thick layers, which resulted in the present, completely artificial mound. Ultimate burial seems to have been part of the enclosures' concept from the beginning. The duration of the use-lives of these enclosures as accessible installations remains open to discussion, as well as the moment of their backfilling.

The outlines of the enclosures at Göbekli Tepe suggest their use as meeting places. They contain benches along the walls ready for gatherings, and the setting of the anthropomorphic pillars seems to represent an assembly of some sort, with about a dozen stone figures around the perimeter bench, attendant on a pair of larger figures at the centre.

A hint at the character of the meetings held here can be gained from a closer inspection of the fills of the enclosures. These consist mainly of fist-sized pieces of limestone rubble and flakes of flint; flint tools are less frequent, as are fragments of stone vessels, grinding stones, and other ground stone tools. The fills also contain numerous animal bones. These represent only game, primarily gazelle, although in terms of weight of meat, wild cattle is the most important species. The sheer quantity of bone speaks in favour of large feasts and the consumption of enormous amounts of meat. Reciprocal feasting is considered an integral activity to strengthen a group's coherence (Rosenberg & Redding 2000, 44), but at Göbekli Tepe there is a further aspect to consider. To construct these monumental structures, people from a wider area had to be drawn together. Although removed in time and place, ethnographic data

show that this is best achieved through the prospect of a lavish feast. Such collective work events have been highlighted and described by Dietler and Herbich (1995) as a common mode for executing large communal tasks.

Records of the erection of megalithic graves on the island of Nias, Indonesia, dating from the beginning of the twentieth century, can give us an idea of how many people could be attracted to aid in construction with the help of such feasts. Some 525 men were involved in hauling a megalith of 4 m³ over a distance of 3 km to its final location in three days using a wooden sledge (Schröder 1917). At Göbekli Tepe, the distances from the quarries, situated at the surrounding rock plateaux, are smaller, but the megaliths transported are much larger. They can reach up to 7 m and weigh as much as 50 metric tons with a volume of 20 m³, as an example of an incomplete T-pillar in the quarries at the northern plateau illustrates (Notroff et al. 2014, 93–96).

Repetitive feasting of the amplitude visible at Göbekli Tepe must have stressed the resources of hunter–gatherer groups. To secure the supply of food for a large number of people repetitively at special occasions relying on hunted game only must have been a difficult task. Perhaps in response to this demand, new food sources and processing techniques were explored. In this scenario religious belief and practices may have been a key factor in the adoption of intensive cultivation and the transition to food production (Dietrich et al. 2012), a hypothesis that is backed by Göbekli Tepe's geographical situation in the distribution area of a number of Neolithic founder crops. Recent genetic analyses indicate that the domestication of single-grained einkorn and emmer wheat took place in the Karacadağ area (Heun et al. 1997), situated in close vicinity to Göbekli Tepe.

THE EMERGENCE OF A CULTIC COMMUNITY

The material culture of Göbekli Tepe shows strong connections within Upper Mesopotamia, shedding light on a common background of beliefs, a ritual community of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic. T-shaped pillars were for the first time recorded at the settlement site of Nevalı Çori in the 1980s (Hauptmann 1993). More sites are known with pillars resembling the smaller examples of Göbekli Tepe's Layer II, but no excavations have been carried out so far at Sefer Tepe, Karahan, or Hamzan Tepe. A fourth

site should perhaps be added here: photos showing some construction work in the area of the Neolithic site of Urfa-Yeni Yol seem to reveal a small T-shaped pillar here as well (Çelik 2011, 142, fig. 19). Furthermore, with Gusir Höyük (Karul 2011, 2013) and Taşlı Tepe (Çelik et al. 2011) two additional related sites can now be added to this list. These places form an inner circle of sites belonging to one cultic community, but this community was not confined to them. This may be seen through the common set of symbols used over a wide area in Upper Mesopotamia.

Several examples of shaft-straighteners from Jerf el Ahmar (Stordeur & Abbès 2002, fig. 16/1–3) and Tell Qaramel (Mazurowski & Jamous 2000, 341, figs 7–8; Mazurowski & Yartah 2001, 304, fig. 10; Mazurowski 2003, fig. 12; 2004, fig. 10) feature decorations in the form of snakes and scorpions, quadrupeds, and birds strongly reminiscent of the iconography of Göbekli Tepe. Similar motifs are known from the so-called plaquettes of the Jerf el Ahmar type (Stordeur & Abbès 2002, 586–91, fig. 16/1–3) discovered in significant numbers at Tell Qaramel (Mazurowski & Jamous 2000, 341, fig. 8; Mazurowski & Yartah 2001, 304, fig. 11; Mazurowski 2004, 509, fig. 10), Tell ´Abr 3 (Yartah 2004, 155, fig. 18/3), and Körtik Tepe (Özkaya & San 2007, fig. 19). Other examples have been found at Göbekli Tepe. The same motifs also occur on thin-walled stone cups and bowls of the Hallan Çemi type (Rosenberg & Redding 2000, 50, fig. 5). Large numbers of complete vessels of this group have recently been discovered at Körtik Tepe (Özkaya & San 2007, fig. 6, 15–18) as part of rich grave inventories. Fragments of such vessels have been found at Göbekli Tepe, Çayönü (Özdoğan 1999, 59), Nevalı Çori, Jerf el Ahmar (Stordeur & Abbès 2002, 583, fig. 12/1–4), Tell ´Abr 3 (Yartah 2004, 155, fig. 18/2, 4–5), and Tell Qaramel (Mazurowski 2003, 369, fig. 11/1–2). Another connection is suggested by the zoomorphic sceptres of the Nemrik type, which are present at Hallan Çemi, Nevalı Çori, Çayönü, Göbekli Tepe, Abu Hureyra, Mureybet, Jerf el Ahmar, and Dja´de (Kozłowski 2002, 77–80).

These places, in particular the sites with T-pillars in the region around Şanlıurfa, as well as the absence of such pillars at other places outside this vicinity, suggest that a similar spiritual concept must have linked these sites to each other. It seems that a cultic community was developing in the PPN in the surroundings of Göbekli Tepe. Because of the site's unique position and its early monumental architecture, it may have had the function of a central nodal point for a number of local hunter-gatherer groups of this area, serving social and ritual purposes beyond the needs of single and restricted groups.

How large the catchment area of Göbekli Tepe actually was may be further emphasised by the obsidian finds at the site. With the identification of seven different types of raw material originating from four different volcanic areas, the variety present there is significantly higher than in contemporary settlement sites. At least three of these obsidian sources are located in central Turkey, in Cappadocia, about 500 km away from Göbekli Tepe. Three other sources are situated to the east, close to Lake Van, at an approximate distance of 250 km. One more source was located in northeast Turkey, again nearly 500 km distant (T. Carter, pers. comm.).

Through careful examination of their imagery, we may move a step closer to these groups. The enclosures of Göbekli Tepe show a difference in the animal species most prominent in the iconography of each circle. In Enclosure A, for instance, the snake prevails, while in Enclosure B foxes are dominant and in Enclosure C boars are more common. Enclosure D shows a wider variation, with birds playing an important role. Interpreting these shifts in imagery as a material expression of social patterns and correlations seems possible, perhaps in the sense of totems representing the different groups that built particular enclosures (Becker et al. 2012). Distinct enclosures may have served different social groupings of male hunters, judging from Göbekli Tepe's iconography and find spectrum, as a symbolic storage system – a way to preserve and pass on cultural knowledge relevant to these groups (cf. Watkins 2004, 2010; Morenz & Schmidt 2009). The location of enclosures close to each other hints at interchanges in this knowledge between groups and perhaps other kinds of exchange, for example, of marriage partners or certain goods. Göbekli Tepe would thus have been a social and cultic central place. Unfortunately many aspects of the belief systems at the base of this remain unknown, although the iconography and finds are suggestive.

DEITIES AND ANCESTORS?

One of the most noteworthy aspects of the enclosures at Göbekli Tepe is their monumentality; the larger-than-life appearance of the T-shaped pillars is

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especially striking, particularly given that their highly abstract depiction is intentional and not the result of deficient craftsmanship. Apart from the animal sculptures, the so-called Urfa man gives witness to the ability to sculpt the human body naturalistically (Figure 5.6). This oldest known statue of a man, slightly larger than life-size, was found during construction work in the area of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic site at Urfa-Yeni Yol (Çelik 2000) in the 1990s (Bucak & Schmidt 2003; Hauptmann 2003; Hauptmann & Schmidt 2007). In contrast to the cubic and faceless pillar-statues, whose identity and meaning apparently are different, the 'Urfa man' has a face, his eyes depicted by segments of black obsidian sunk into deep holes; the mouth, however, is missing. The statue seems to be naked with the exception of a V-shaped necklace. Legs are not depicted; below the body there is only a conical plug, which allows the statue to be set into the ground.

From Göbekli Tepe there are several known life-size human heads made of limestone and similar to the 'Urfa man' (Figure 5.7). They have a broken edge in the neck area and therefore it seems quite probable that they originally were part of larger statues. Interestingly, some of these heads were found in the fills of the enclosures, placed there intentionally beneath the central pillars during the process of backfilling – burying – these places. This evokes the thought of another cultic practice of the Near Eastern PPN, when human skulls were removed from the bodies of the deceased and given a 'new' face by applying a plaster of gypsum to be displayed to the living, perhaps as part of an ancestor cult (Bienert 1991; Bienert & Müller-Neuhof 2000). Examples are known, for instance, from Israel (from Tell es-Sultan, Kenyon 1953, 86–7; Beisamoun, Lechevallier 1978, 147–51; and Kfar Hahoresh, Gorring-Morris 2000, 107–15), Jordan (´Ain Ghazal, Rollefson 1998, 108) as well as Syria (Tell Ramad, de Contenson 1967, 20–1; and Tell Aswad Stordeur & Khawam 2007).

Beyond these examples from the Levant and northern Syria further evidence of the peculiar role of human crania in the realm of cult and ritual is found in Anatolia. There, remodelled skulls are known from Çatalhöyük (Hodder 2006, 148; Lichter 2007, 251) and Köşk Höyük (Bonogofsky 2005).

These decorated skulls were re-buried after some time – just as the sculpted heads from Göbekli Tepe were. If thus these heads and life-sized statues are seen as depictions of ancestors, it becomes clear that the monumental

Figure 5.6. Greater than life-size sculpture of a man, the so-called Urfa man.
Photo: I. Wagner, DAI.
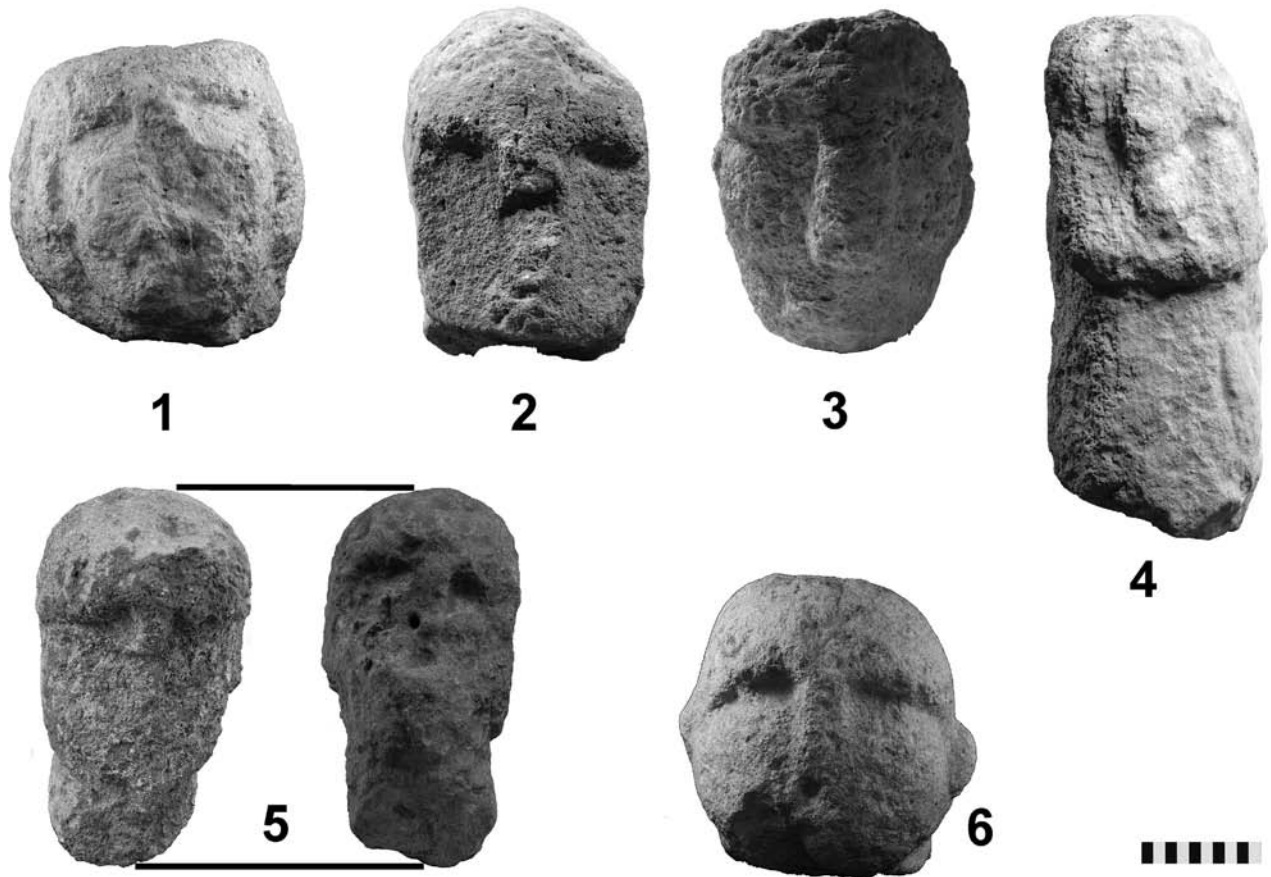
Figure 5.7. Life-sized human heads made of stone from Göbekli Tepe.
Photos: N. Becker, DAI.

T-shaped pillars project something different, something larger and more powerful (Becker et al. 2012). Since so little is known of the beliefs of the people creating these pillar-statues, it might seem a step too far to describe these supposedly supernatural beings as personifications of 'deities'. But – faceless, larger than life and highly abstract – these statues certainly represent a kind of numen beyond a self-referential depiction of human beings. They must be perceived as agents of rather complex mythological concepts, beliefs, and actions, which could naturally have included the perception and handling of death and the dead.

DEATH SHALL HAVE NO DOMINION

Although the rich iconography of Göbekli Tepe is a challenge to any interpretation, a general concern with dangerous animals such as scorpions, snakes, and larger predators can be noted.

The carnivore in high relief and its slain prey, a boar depicted apparently dead in flat relief on Pillar 27 in Enclosure C, or the depiction of another boar lying on its back perhaps also indicating its death, which can be seen in the *dromos* of the same enclosure (Schmidt 2006, 155), illustrates the important role of the topic of death in this iconographic programme. Particularly the predator in high relief (Figure 5.5) serves well to illustrate another characteristic of many of the sculptures unearthed at Göbekli Tepe. These are often shown in unfavourable conditions with their ribs clearly sticking out. Images of that sort are known from other contexts and sites in the Near Eastern Neolithic (Hodder & Meskell 2011) and even beyond (Huth 2008; Schmidt 2013) reflecting a dual symbolism of life and death, the interaction and correlation of both principles. Moreover, it may signify a concern for the process of bodily articulation and disarticulation, as Hodder and Meskell (2011, 248) proposed. Excarnation is an important part of a multi-phase

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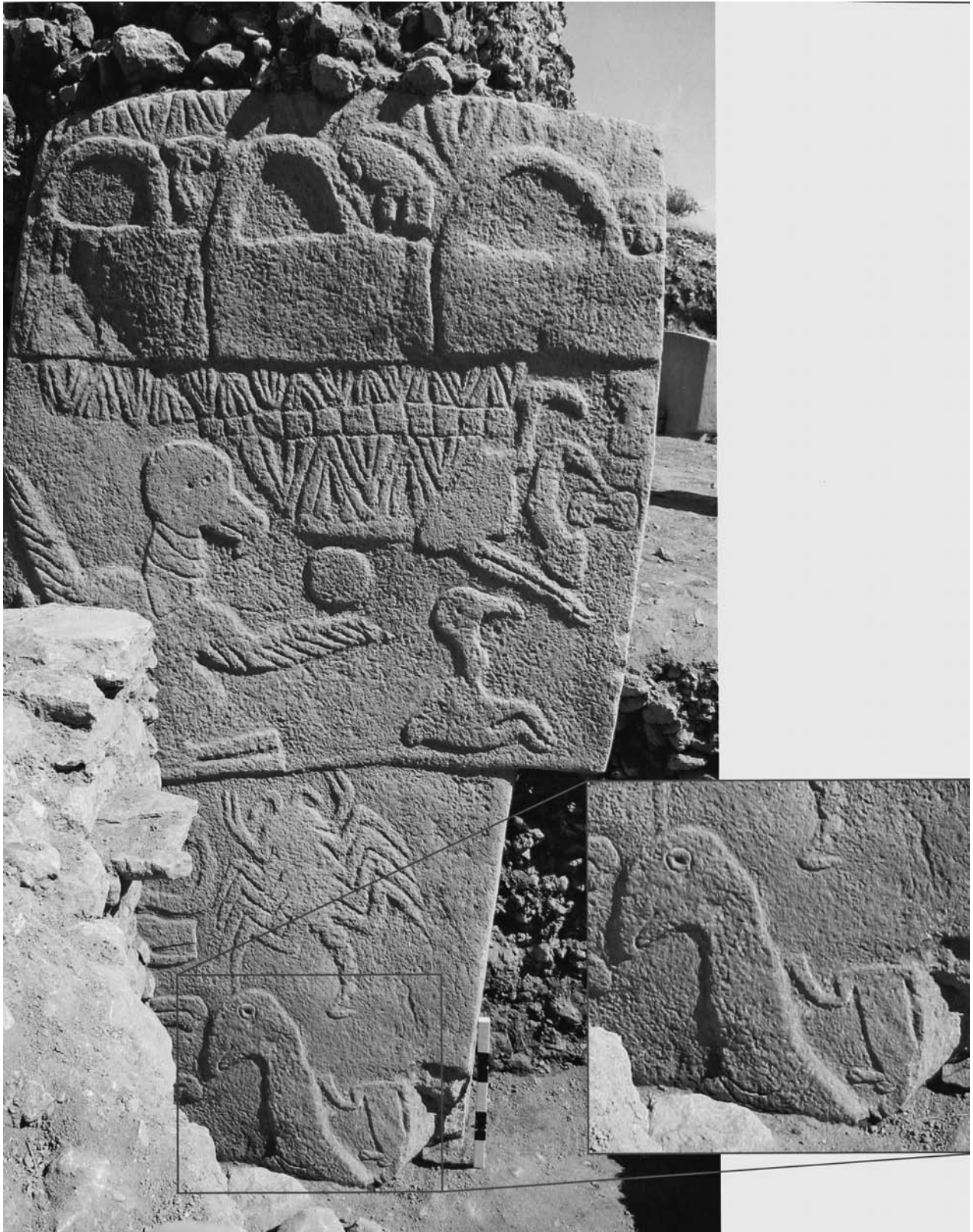
Figure 5.8. The rich decorated Pillar 43 from Enclosure D showing birds, a scorpion, and a headless, ithyphallic man. Photo: K. Schmidt, DAI.

Figure 5.9. A stone slab from Enclosure D showing an isolated human head (upper centre) accompanied by a hyena (centre), a vulture (right), and another animal (upper left).
Photo: K. Schmidt, DAI.

PPN burial rite, at least in some cases culminating in the recovery and re-modelling of the skulls of peculiar individuals as described previously. Its repeated depiction and prominent role within the iconography of Göbekli Tepe and other sites may well reflect the social significance of the subject of death and mortality to the people of the PPN.

Although its complex imagery is difficult to decode, Pillar 43 (Figure 5.8) from Enclosure D bears witness to the narrative character of the sometimes interwoven arrangements of animals and symbols at Göbekli Tepe, thus offering the possibility of getting at least a glimpse of Early Neolithic belief systems. At the lower right of this pillar is visible a headless man, who is accompanied by a large bird; even more birds, namely, vultures, can be seen in the upper part of the pillar. This symbolism is strongly reminiscent of comparable scenes known from places such as Çatalhöyük (Cutting 2007, 131; Lichter 2007, 256–7) and Nevalı Çori (Schmidt 2006, 77–8; Schmidt 2010, 246–9) and may be interpreted as part of

a concept of death assigning animals a practical role in the excarnation of dead bodies as well as a figurative one in carrying the dead, represented by their heads, into an afterlife (Schmidt 2006, 78; Lichter 2007, 256–7). An isolated human head, again in conjunction with a vulture and a hyena, depicted on a stone slab originating again from Enclosure D at Göbekli Tepe, is a variation on this motif (Figure 5.9).

Not only does the iconography of Göbekli Tepe express an atmosphere of death and fear, the material culture also seems to document that the enclosures may not have been (exclusively?) meant for gatherings of the living. Among the rich avifauna of the site (Peters et al. 2005), corvids make up more than 50 percent (Figure 5.10), which is considerably higher in comparison to the numbers known from settlement sites where they usually do not exceed 5 to 10 percent (Peters et. al 2005, 231). This suggests the habitat at Göbekli Tepe must have been very attractive for these birds, which are known to be necrophagous, a characteristic also applying to many

Figure 5.10. Composition of the avifauna of Göbekli Tepe based on bird bone material.
Graphics: J. Notroff, DAI with thanks to J. Peters and N. Pöllath.

well as an example of typical settlement architecture of the PPN (Schirmer 1983, 1990). Starting with circular wattle and daub constructions all way through the long stratigraphic sequence with the so-called Grill, Channelled, Cobble-Paved and Cell Buildings, a development is comprehensible, which finds its conclusion in the 'Large Room Buildings' of the PPN C (Schirmer 1988, 1990, 365–77; Özdoğan 1999, 41)., We are well informed about the structure and layout of the Grill and Cell phases in particular, which have been published in two comprehensive monographs (Bıçakçı 2001; Sicker-Akmann 2007).

Remarkably, the structures unearthed at Göbekli Tepe seem to reflect a peculiar type of specialised 'cult' or 'communal' building known within these settlements (Kornienko 2009; Dietrich & Notroff 2015) as the examples of Tell 'Abr 3 (Yartah 2004), Jerf el Ahmar (Stordeur et al. 2000), Nevalı Çori (Hauptmann 1999, 74–5), and again Cayönü (Schirmer 1990, 378–84) demonstrate. The function of these buildings has not yet been decisively determined. In this paper we have underlined the important role of gatherings for highly mobile groups like those of the PPN. In addition to their social significance as places for feasting, the exchange of goods, and less tangible exchanges such as of marriage partners, it may be proposed that these locations, marked visibly in the landscape, served as nodal points in a communication network, their imagery representing a storage system for cultural knowledge. The decorated pillars at Göbekli Tepe demonstrate that substantial information was encoded and translated into a symbolic visual language. The noticeable presence of death and the dead among this iconography may hint at another functional aspect of the enclosures of Göbekli Tepe. Direct material evidence for burial activity remains sparse. But considering the situation at Cayönü once again, it seems likely that those places where burial remains may be expected have not yet been excavated at Göbekli Tepe. One of the cult buildings from Cayönü, the so-called Skull Building, is named after a number of human skulls that were found in ossuaries within the walls as well as in the so-called cellar rooms. The quantity of bones indicating the regular presence of necrophagous animals at Göbekli Tepe, the iconography apparently relating to excarnation processes, and the indications of a contemporary burial rite including attention to defleshed bones can only lead us to conclude that

of the other animals depicted at Göbekli Tepe. In recent campaigns the fills of the enclosures have yielded a considerable number of human bones mixed with the faunal remains. Often they show evidence for post-mortem manipulations, mostly cutting marks. It seems reasonable to see at least one aspect of the function of the Göbekli Tepe enclosures in relation to death, and it is a possibility that the benches in the enclosures were used to lay out the dead for excarnation.

CONCLUSION

Göbekli Tepe assumes a unique role among the PPN sites of the Near East due to its character as a sanctuary, a central place of cult and ritual. This interpretation derives from the lack of domestic features at the site compared to contemporary settlement sites such as Nevalı Çori (Hauptmann 1999, 70–8) and others. Cayönü Tepesi, a site in the Turkish Tigris region, serves

death and burial ritual must be part of the interpretation of the functional and ideological role of the enclosures at Göbekli Tepe.

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Death and Architecture: The Pre-Pottery Neolithic A Burials at WF16, Wadi Faynan, Southern Jordan

Steven Mithen, Bill Finlayson, Darko Maričević, Sam Smith, Emma Jenkins, and Mohammad Najjar

INTRODUCTION

The Neolithic of the Levant marks the earliest appearance of sedentary farming communities in the world. The transition from hunting-gathering to farming began between *c.* 20,000 and *c.* 10,500 years ago, the latter marking the start of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB) period, during which domesticated cereals, sheep, and goat begin to appear (Kuijt & Goring-Morris 2002). Whether there was a relatively rapid transition during the preceding Pre-Pottery Neolithic A (PPNA) period (*c.* 11,700–*c.* 10,500 BP), perhaps as a response to the dramatic global warming that marks the end of the Pleistocene, or a more gradual emergence arising from long-term subsistence intensification during the Epipalaeolithic (*c.* 20,000–*c.* 11,700 BP) remains an issue of contention (for general reviews see Mithen 2003; Barker 2006). Moreover, there is evident regional variation with the PPNA likely continuing to *c.* 10,300 BP in the Southern Levant (Finlayson et al. 2014). It is undisputed, however, that the transition to sedentary farming lifestyles encompassed all aspects of economy, technology, architecture, social organisation, ideology, and 'culture' in the widest possible sense. Archaeological evidence indicating that attitudes towards life and death were transformed as part of this process should not be surprising as the harvesting and then sowing of domesticated crops are fundamentally related to manipulating the process of regeneration.

The documentation and interpretation of Epipalaeolithic, PPNA, and PPNB mortuary evidence is inevitably constrained by the quality and quantity of data available. This is notably limited for the PPNA period, which many see as the critical phase of transition from hunter-gatherer to farming lifestyles. In this contribution, we present new evidence concerning PPNA mortuary practices from the site of WF16 in southern Jordan. The number of burials located at this settlement is unusually high for a PPNA site. It stands at around forty burials found within the limits of the excavation (Table 6.1), but the total number of burials must be higher, considering the spatial and stratigraphic extent of the unexcavated part of the settlement. The excavation report is still undergoing preparation, and osteological analysis has yet to be undertaken. As such, any interpretation of this data set remains both incomplete and provisional. But even from the evidence currently available, WF16 contributes greatly towards our knowledge of PPNA burial and the transformation in mortuary practice across the hunter-gatherer–farming lifestyle transition in southwestern Asia.

We will show that the relationship between the living and the dead at WF16 was defined not only by the different ways in which the people were treated at death, but also through diverse attitudes towards their remains for a prolonged period post-mortem. The roles played by memory, curation, secondary intervention, and manipulation of human remains created multiple layers of mortuary practice at WF16, which was also part of the life of the settlement itself, with real consequences for its living community. This is best seen through the manner in which the dead continued to be part of the settlement through careful choreography of burials, the treatment of the human remains, and the repeatedly changing architectural make-up of the settlement that the burials were positioned within.

PPNA AND PPNB MORTUARY PRACTICES

While noting the absence of documented PPNA cemeteries, Kuijt and Goring-Morris (2002) drew on evidence

Table 6.1. *Table of burials at WF16*

F8, Context 298, Structure F8, Evaluation Trench 2
△ Cut into redeposited gravel, with the skull protruding through the floor of a PPNA structure and stratigraphically sealed by two PPNA floors and associated occupation. ↗ A NE-SW orientated arrangement of articulated and disarticulated bones with disarticulated skull placed on a 'pillow' stone. �✳ Fragile especially in the upper part of the inhumation. At least two adults and a juvenile appear to be present. ❖ Chipped stone artefacts including bladelets, a microlith and an awl.

F39910, Structure F3992, Evaluation Trench 3
△ With its skull probably protruding through the floor of a PPNA structure and positioned on a 'pillow' stone; stratigraphically sealed by a PPNA floor. ↗ A NE-SW orientated crouched inhumation on its right side with the skull facing NW. The skull was disarticulated but in position by appearing to have been stretched from the body and then placed on a 'pillow' stone. ✳ Appears to be a complete but fragile adult skeleton. ❖ Chipped stone artefacts.

O3, Structure O31
△ Cut through the infill and wall of a disused PPNA structure and sealed by deflated overburden. ↗ Undetermined. ✳ Fragmentary remains, appearing to consist of only two hand or foot bones, one long bone and several ribs

O4, Midden O60
△ Cut into PPNA midden deposits and sealed by deflated overburden. ↗ Probably a crouched inhumation; a mortar fragment had been set on an edge appearing to form one side of the burial. ✳ Fragmentary – only some hand and feet bones survive. ❖ Fragment of a mortar stone

O6, Area O108
△ Cut through the wall of a PPNA structure and sealed by deflated overburden. ↗ A NE-SW orientated crouched inhumation, lying on its back with legs bent to the right and head facing to the left. ✳ Appears to be a complete, well preserved juvenile skeleton. ❖ Fragment of a possibly worked animal bone.

O7, Structure O31
△ Cut through PPNA infill inside the structure and sealed by a PPNA floor. ↗ A N-S orientated crouched inhumation on its left side, facing east. ✳ Appears to be a complete but poorly preserved adult skeleton. ❖ A hammerstone, an El Khiam point and a chipped stone pick.

O8, Area O108
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure and sealed by deflated overburden. ↗ A semi-crouched inhumation, orientated E-W with its head at the east end facing NE. ✳ A fragmentary and poorly preserved juvenile skeleton appearing to have the lower right arm, complete left arm, hand and unfused epiphyses missing. ❖ A green stone bead.

O9, Structure O65
△ Cut through the wall of a PPNA structure and sealed by deflated overburden. ↗ A crouched inhumation on its right side, orientated E-W and facing north with its left hand under the skull. ✳ A fragmentary juvenile skeleton appearing to have only the skull, arms, hands and feet present. ❖ Four chipped stone artefacts and a caprine pelvis.

O10, Structure O84
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure and sealed by deflated overburden. ↗ A N-S orientated crouched inhumation on its right side with its head to the south facing east. ✳ Fragmentary remains with, at least, both scapulae, left side of the rib cage, hands and feet missing; bones in a poor condition with the inhumation having been affected by animal burrowing. ❖ A chipped stone artefact and a grooved ground stone object.

O17, Midden O60
△ Cut into and sealed by PPNA midden deposits. ↗ A NW-S orientated crouched inhumation on its right side with the head probably originally facing west, but cranium moved post-depositionally in front of the mandible to face south. ✳ An incomplete and poorly preserved adult skeleton.

O24, Area O108. **Figure 6.17**.
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure and cut by Burial O8. ↗ A NW-SE orientated crouched inhumation on its left side with its right hand underneath the skull facing SE. ✳ A slightly crushed juvenile skeleton. ❖ A marine shell bead.

O26, Structure O84
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure and sealed by deflated overburden. ↗ A NW-SE orientated crouched inhumation on its right side with two large stones placed on top of the body, one on the pelvis and one over the ribcage. ✳ An adult skeleton which appears to have been truncated above its lower ribs by deflation. ❖ Two chipped stone artefacts, a groundstone pestle and a fragment of red ochre.

O27, Structure O114. **Figure 6.7**.
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure and sealed by deflated overburden. ↗ A N-S orientated crouched inhumation on its right side, facing west. ✳ A poorly preserved juvenile skeleton, appearing to have some of its cranium missing. ❖ Two marine shell beads and a marine shell.

(continued)

Table 6.1. (*continued*)

O28, Structure O65. **Figure 6.12**.
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure and sealed by deflated overburden. ↗ A NE–SW orientated crouched inhumation on its left side, facing SE. ✕ A crushed and fragmentary juvenile or young adult skeleton, with at least its right ribs and foot missing, and both humeri in a fragmentary condition. ❖ Four chipped stone artefacts and a large stone

O32, Structure O72
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure and sealed by deflated overburden. ↗ A N–S orientated primary crouched inhumation on its right side, disturbed by the secondary deposition of multiple cranial fragments after the rearrangement of some of the original bones. ✕ The secondary cranial fragments have been truncated at the crown; the primary adult burial is in poorly preserved condition. ❖ Seven chipped stone artefacts (core, blades or bladelets and El Khiam points), two animal bones, stone bead.

O35, Structure O113. **Figure 6.15**.
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure and cut by a robber pit, then sealed by overburden. ↗ A N–S orientated crouched inhumation on its left side, facing east. ✕ Although truncated and crushed by the robbing activity, the juvenile skeleton appears reasonably well-preserved, with gypsum-like concretion on its right ribs.

O36, Structure O83. **Figure 6.8**.
△ Cut through the wall of the PPNA structure and sealed by PPNA deposits. ↗ A NE–SW orientated crouched inhumation on its right side facing SE, skeleton encased in mud lining and capping. ✕ A well-preserved adult skeleton with occasional black staining visible on the bones. ❖ A green stone bead, a serrated blade and a possible phallic object.

O37, Structure O83. **Figure 6.9**.
△ Cut through the wall of the PPNA structure and sealed by deflated overburden. ↗ A NW–SE orientated crouched inhumation on its right side with its head facing NW and tilted downwards. ✕ A well-preserved juvenile skeleton apart from a truncation of the crown of the skull. ❖ Two chipped stone bladelets and a marine shell bead.

O38, Structure O83. **Figure 6.10**.
△ Cut through the wall of the PPNA structure and cut by an Antique burial. ↗ A primary inhumation appearing to have been originally crouched on its right side and orientated SW–NE, facing NW with a hand below the skull. ✕ A fragmentary infant cranium on top of a heavily truncated primary burial of which only the skull, lower arm and hand appear to have survived; the skull of the primary burial has a gypsum-like residue and black linear markings. ❖ A fragment of possibly worked animal bone.

O39, Structure O83. **Figure 6.11**.
△ Cut through the wall of a disused PPNA structure and cut by a probable PPNA pit, then sealed by overburden. ↗ Secondary burial of semi-articulated remains. Not clear whether of one or more individuals. Some of the bones placed in gypsum-lined woven basket or cloth. 'Excess' gypsum found next to the skull. ✕ Relatively well preserved skeletal remains but in a jumbled arrangement. The bones were lifted in blocks, some of which were coated in a gypsum-like substance. ❖ Three blades or bladelets, an El Khiam point, a borer and a green stone bead.

O41, Structure O53
△ Cut through the wall of a PPNA structure, cut by a PPNA pit and then sealed by overburden. ↗ An E–W orientated primary inhumation crouched on its right side with the head originally to the west. ✕ An adult skeleton truncated across its upper body by a cut interpreted as an exhumation pit used to remove the skull and upper body parts. ❖ Four blades.

O43, Structure O19
△ Cut through the wall of the PPNA structure and Burial O93, and probably sealed by the infill of a disused PPNA structure. ↗ A NW–SE orientated crouched inhumation on its right side with the head end to the NW. ✕ Poorly preserved and crumbly probably adult skeleton. Possible gypsum-like substance noted adhering to the bones. ❖ A fragment of animal bone.

O44, Structure O12
△ Disarticulated teeth, mandible and skull fragments scattered among the collapsed rubble of the PPNA structure and sealed by further PPNA infilling. ↗ Scattered fragments of a cranium and mandible. ✕ Well-preserved.

O47, Area O108, Structure O75
△ Cut into a PPNA structure (mud-plaster bench) and sealed by PPNA make up deposits for an eroded structure. ↗ A NE–SW orientated crouched inhumation on its right side with its left hand under the skull and infant cranium fragments scattered around the body, perhaps deriving from an earlier and disturbed inhumation. ✕ A well-preserved adult primary burial with fragments of an infant cranium. ❖ A chipped stone blade placed on the chest and a stone object.

O76, Structure O72
△ Cut through the wall of a PPNA structure and sealed by PPNA deposits. ↗ A N–S orientated crouched inhumation on its left side facing east, with both hands partially under the skull. ✕ Appears to be a complete but fragile adult skeleton. ❖ A chipped stone blade and two marine shell beads.

O77, Structure O114
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure, possibly cut by burial O27, and then sealed by overburden. ↗ A group of disarticulated long bones with articulated unfused epiphyses. ✕ Reasonably well-preserved remains of a juvenile skeleton.

O78, Structure O72
△ Human mandible within the infill of a disused PPNA structure and sealed by PPNA deposits. ↗ A disarticulated mandible. ✕ Well-preserved.

O79, Structure O72
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure and sealed by PPNA deposits. ↗ A N–S orientated crouched inhumation on its left side facing east. ✕ An almost complete but very fragile infant skeleton, with a truncated skull and its lower left arm and hand missing.

O80, Structure O113. **Figure 6.14**.
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure and sealed by PPNA deposits. ↗ A N–S orientated crouched inhumation on its back with its head to the north and facing east, and with its legs bent eastwards. ✕ A well-preserved adult skeleton. ❖ Chipped stone artefacts, including four blades, an animal bone and a lozenge-shaped stone object.

O81, Structure O64
△ Cut through a PPNA sequence inside a structure and sealed by multiple PPNA floors and occupation deposits. ↗ Probably a N–S orientated crouched inhumation on its left side facing east. This was only partially exposed, being observed through a later pit cut that had allowed access to the burial. ✕ A well-preserved adult skeleton (unexcavated).

O82, Structure O65. **Figure 6.13**.
△ Cut through a possible floor inside a PPNA structure and sealed by PPNA deposits. ↗ A WNW–ESE orientated crouched inhumation on its right side with its right hand under the skull facing west. ✕ Appears to be a well-preserved juvenile skeleton apart from a truncated left side of the skull. ❖ Six chipped stone artefacts, including five blades, two stone objects, two bone beads, a bone point and a probable fox ulna.

O89, Structure O83
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure and cut by an Antique burial. ↗ A N–S orientated and probably crouched inhumation, on its left side facing west. ✕ A well-preserved but truncated infant skeleton.

O93, Structure O19. **Figure 6.6**.
△ Cut through the wall of a PPNA structure and cut by Burial O43. ↗ A NW–SE orientated crouched inhumation on its left side, with its right hand partially under the skull. ✕ Appears to be a complete but fragile adult skeleton. ❖ Two chipped stone blades, a green stone bead and a worked animal bone.

O101, Midden O60
△ Placed within and sealed by PPNA midden deposits. ↗ A NW–SE orientated crouched inhumation, possibly on its right side. ✕ A fragmentary juvenile skeleton, with its leg bones in a disturbed position. ❖ A stone bead.

O122, Structure O84
△ Cut through the infill of a disused PPNA structure and sealed by deflated overburden. ↗ Skeletal remains which are either disarticulated or heavily disturbed. ✕ Fragments of a cranium, mandible and ribs.

O123, Midden O60
△ An articulated human foot found within and sealed by PPNA midden deposits. ↗ Isolated. ✕ Articulated foot.

O124, Structure O85
△ No visible cut and so either placed within the infill of a disused PPNA structure or suffering from severe deflation; sealed by overburden. ✕ Fragmentary remains of an infant cranium.

O125, Structure O72
△ No visible cut and so either placed within the infill of a disused PPNA structure or suffering from severe deflation; sealed by overburden. ✕ Only right scapula, two right ribs and pelvis fragments present.

O126, Structure O75
△ Found within the rubble filling a disused structure and sealed by PPNA midden. ✕ The fragmentary remains of at least one cranium and possibly associated leg bones.

O128, Structure O33
△ Disarticulated maxilla and skull fragments found within the rubble infill of a PPNA structure and sealed by further PPNA backfill, floors and structures. ↗ Isolated finds at two different levels of infill. ✕ Fragments of a maxilla and cranium.

O129, Structure O45
△ Disarticulated teeth, mandible and skull fragments scattered within the collapse rubble of a burnt PPNA structure and sealed by PPNA levelling and occupation deposits. ✕ Scattered fragments of a cranium and mandible.

Notes:
△ Summary of context and stratigraphy (for full details see Mithen et al. in preparation).
↗ Field observations of position, orientation, or placement.
✕ Field observations of bone preservation or surface modification.
❖ Field observations of small finds coming from burial fill (these are likely to include a mix of deliberate deposition and those pre-existing within sediment used for the burial fill; further artefacts will be recovered from sieve residues of the fills. See Mithen et al. in prep. for full discussion).

from Jericho (Kurth & Röhren-Entl 1981), Netiv Hagdud (Belfer-Cohen et al. 1990), Hatoula, and Nahal Oren to describe PPNA mortuary practices as having been relatively standardised and differentiated between adults and children. After death, adults and children were buried without grave goods in individual interments; in some cases, the location of the skull appears to have been marked, enabling this to be removed later without significant disturbance to the post-cranial skeleton. Kuijt and Goring-Morris suggest that skulls may have been cleaned and used by the living community prior to re-burial, but acknowledge that this is 'difficult to trace archaeologically' (Kuijt & Goring-Morris 2002, 376). The archaeological evidence is also insufficient to confirm Kuijt and Goring-Morris' suggestion that infants were placed in dedicatory positions within houses, such as foundations, while adults were predominately placed in intra- or extra-mural locations. The absence of grave goods, burial of individuals, use of simple graves, and practice of skull removal are interpreted as serving 'to integrate communities and downplay socioeconomic differences between individuals and kin groups in the face of economic and social change' (Kuijt & Goring-Morris 2002, 377; see further discussion in Kuijt 1996, 2000). A somewhat contrasting picture to that of the PPNA mortuary practices in the southern Levant has started emerging at the northern PPNA sites with the findings of richly furnished burials from Körtik Tepe in particular (Özkaya 2009).

The mortuary practices of the PPNB period have been more extensively documented in light of the larger number of burials from sites such as Jericho, 'Ain Ghazal, Aswad, Beidha, Jerf el Ahmar, Nahal Hamar, Yiftahel, Tell Halula, and Kfar HaHoresh. Continuing their review of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic, Kuijt and Goring-Morris (2002, 394) described the mortuary practices of the PPNB as consisting of three inter-related systems: '(1) the primary interment of adults, probably both males and females in single graves; (2) the interment of infants in single graves; (3) the secondary removal of some, but not all, adult skulls from primary graves for some form of unknown ritual use with the eventual reburial in caches of single or multiple skulls'. Rollefson (1983) has characterised a further form of burial, the 'trash' burial, where an individual appears to have been discarded in midden deposits.

Kuijt and Goring-Morris (2002) argue that infants appear to have been more frequently buried in 'fill' and courtyard areas than within architecture, with a low incidence of skull removal, but some cases of infant burials in dedicatory positions, such as within foundations, have been documented.

Some of the removed skulls in the PPNB were 'decorated'. Several, perhaps all, of those within a cache of six skulls at Nahal Hemar had been partially covered in black asphalt in a geometric pattern (Arensburg & Hershkovitz 1989). Some skulls had faces modelled in plaster adhered onto them, occasionally providing a realistic impression of flesh. A variety of techniques were used, these appearing to vary between localities (Goren et al. 2001). They included multiple plastering events, painting, and inserting shells for eyes. Some skulls that had been plastered lacked mandibles, resulting in a distorted face. Kuijt (2008) has used this to argue that the plastering of skulls had not been done to create portraits of specific individuals. The re-burial of plastered and un-plastered skulls often occurred in caches, with a repeated pattern being found at 'Ain Ghazal of three skulls in a row within the southeast corner of a room and facing away from its centre. In addition to skulls themselves, human masks, statues, and figurines played a prominent role in PPNB ritual activity. The most striking evidence of this is the two caches of half-life-size plaster figures found within pits at 'Ain Ghazal (Tubb & Grissom 1995).

Kuijt and Goring-Morris (2002, 397) argue that the type of multi-stage mortuary practices evident from the PPNB were 'planned in advance, often held in conjunction by multiple households as part of a community festival, and require extraordinary levels of community involvement'. The deliberate removal of some or all of the skeletal parts has been related to ancestor worship, but what that might mean is not clear (Kuijt 2008). Watkins (1992) has suggested that the appearance of sub-floor burials may relate to new forms of residence, ownership, and lineage. While the primary burial of an individual may be a household event, secondary mortuary rituals often cross-cut households and kin groups, appearing to emphasise the community over the individual (Kuijt & Goring-Morris 2002, 397). Recent analysis of dental data from Çatalhöyük (Pilloud & Larsen 2011) has indicated that the proposition that burials within a single structure may be related to kin groups or families appears faulty, and that our ideas of Neolithic burial may be overly simplistic.

WF16: A PPNA SITE IN SOUTHERN JORDAN

Wadi Faynan 16 (WF16) is a PPNA site currently dated between 11,600 and 10,200 BP located in southern Jordan (Finlayson & Mithen 2007). It was discovered in 1996 as a scatter of chipped and ground stone artefacts across the
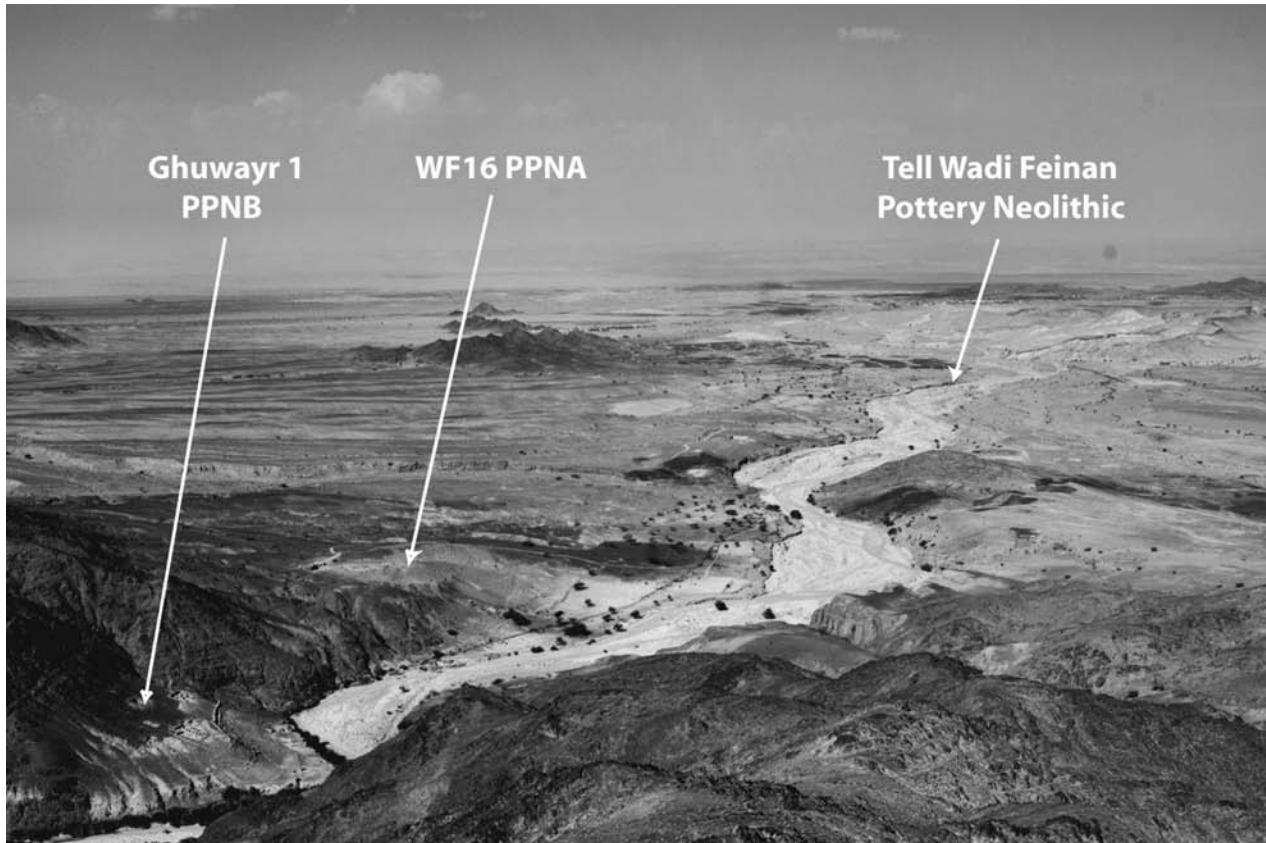
Figure 6.1. Wadi Faynan, southern Jordan, looking west towards the Wadi Araba and showing the location of Neolithic settlements.

surface of a knoll at the juncture between Wadis Faynan and Ghuwayr, immediately before the landscape climbs to the Jordanian plateau, and in close vicinity to the PPNB and Pottery Neolithic settlements of Ghuwayr 1 and Tell Wadi Feinan (Figure 6.1).

The site was evaluated between 1997 and 2003 by test excavation including test-pitting, three trial trenches at the peripheries of the settlement (Trenches 1, 2, and 3), and a geophysical survey. It was found to have relatively deeply stratified deposits with good faunal preservation as compared to other PPNA sites, a diverse material culture and presence of large structures, and burials (Finlayson & Mithen 2007).

An excavation covering the central area of the settlement was undertaken between 2008 and 2010. This exposed a dense cluster of pisé-walled, semi-subterranean structures (Figure 6.2), along with a monumental structure containing a central 'trough' and embedded grinding stones, the function of which remains unclear (Mithen et al. 2011). The smaller structures appear to have served a number of specific purposes, including storage and work spaces, with a number of midden and extra-mural

deposits (Figure 6.3). All structures and clusters of contexts within structures that relate to a distinct entity, such as a burial, are referred to as 'Objects', as in Burial O81 or Structure O45 (Figure 6.4), except for two burials found during the evaluation of the site in Trenches 2 and 3, which are referred to as Burial F8(298) and Burial F39910. The upper horizons of the structures were often severely deflated and disturbed. It is likely that the structural remains of a final phase of PPNA activity has been almost entirely eroded from the surface of the knoll, this being represented by stone mortars on and near the surface, a single free-standing building (O100) that had partially survived by having been constructed from a lower level within the base of an earlier structure (O75), and a number of other much less well preserved circular structures (O111).

Although large samples of animal bones and plant remains have been recovered, the analysis of these has not yet begun and hence the economy of the settlement remains to be determined; evidence from the 1997–2003 site evaluation indicated a reliance on wild animals and plants (Finlayson & Mithen 2007). The technology and

Figure 6.2. Excavation of Wadi Faynan, April 2008, showing exposure of a dense cluster of pisé-walled structures and the large, partly excavated sub-circular structure (O75) in the foreground.
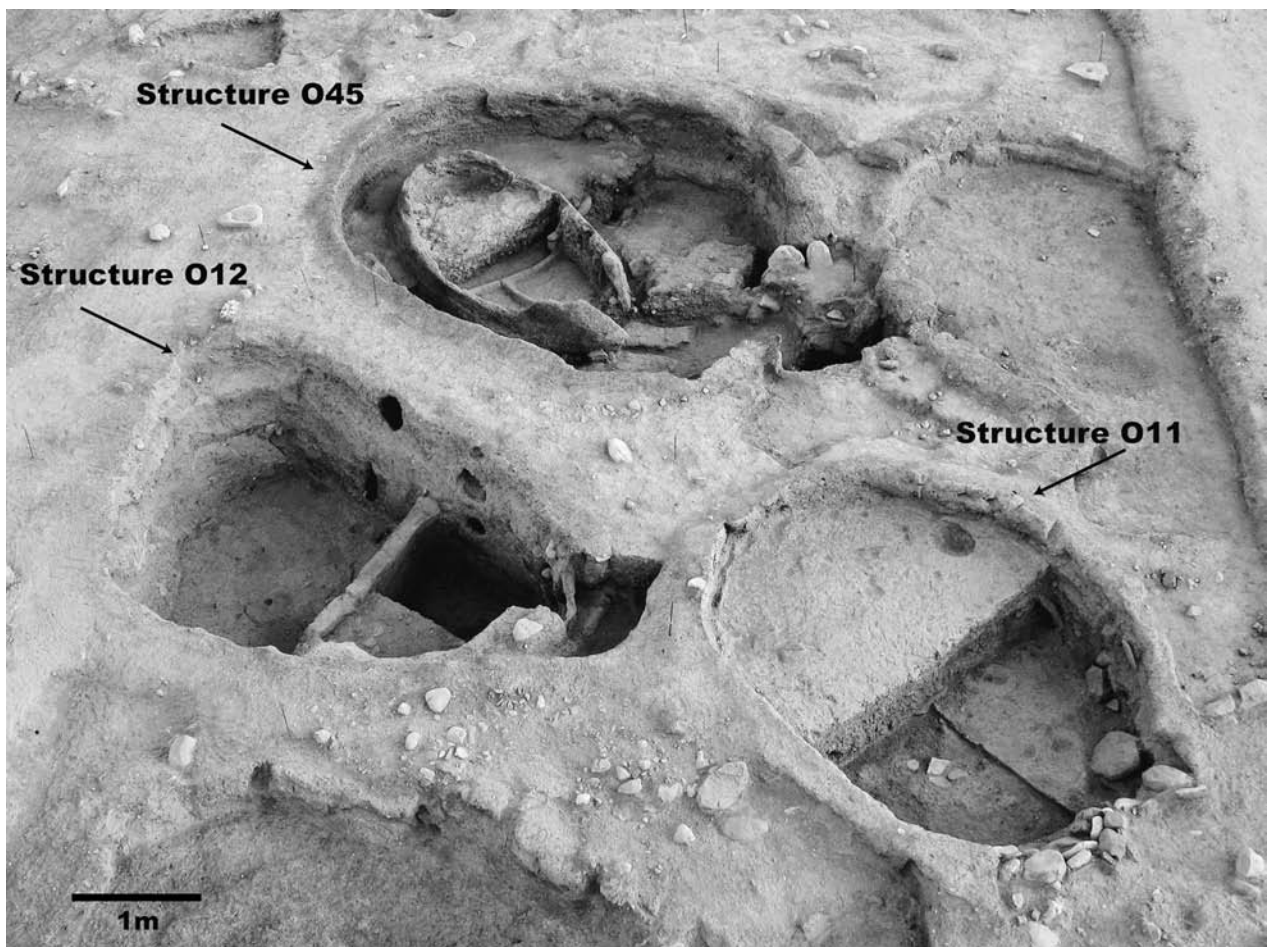
Figure 6.3. Semi-subterranean, pisé-walled structures at WF16, April 2010.

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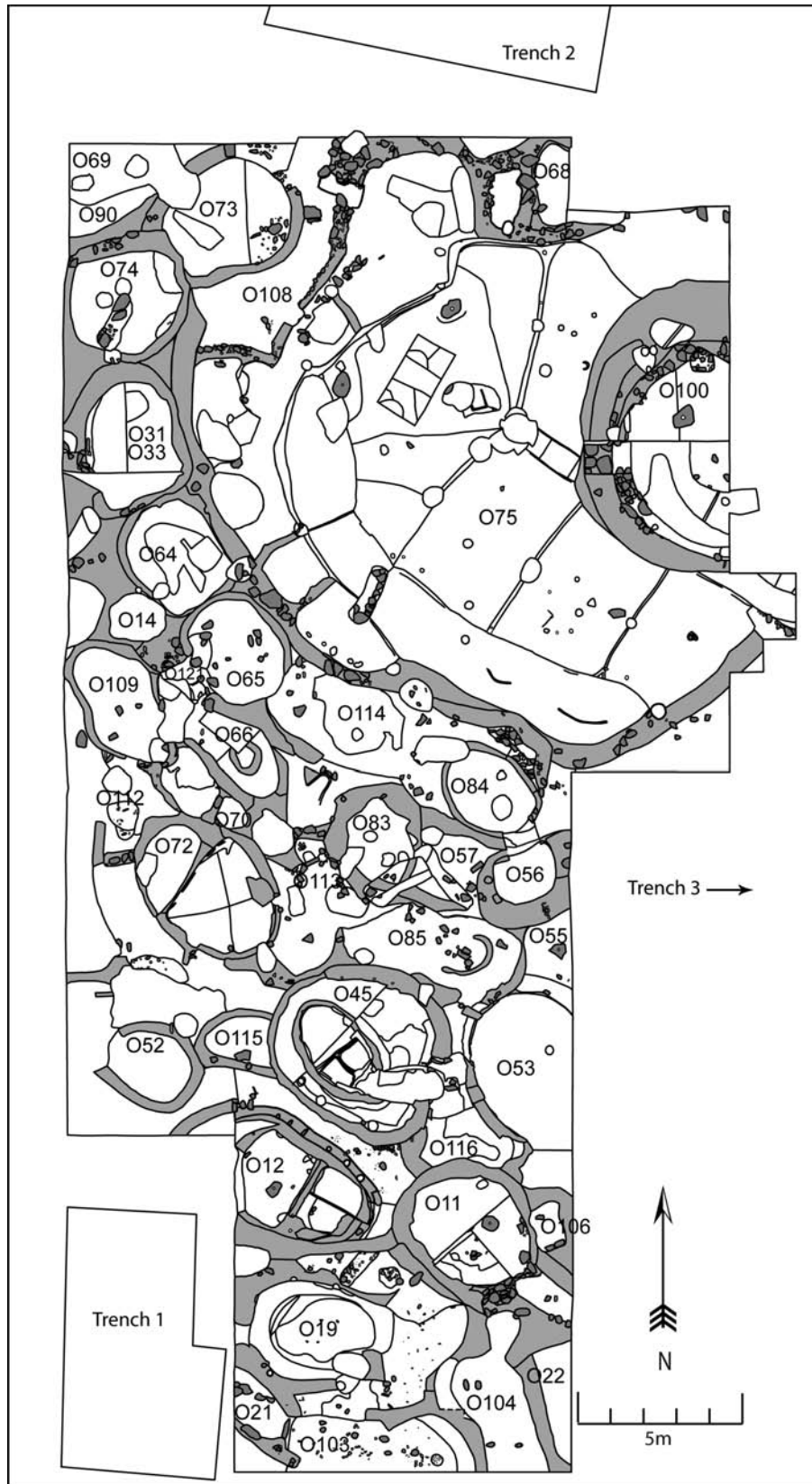
Figure 6.4. Plan of WF16, showing dense cluster of semi-subterranean pisé-walled structures, the large sub-circular structure (O75), and the later circular structure O100.

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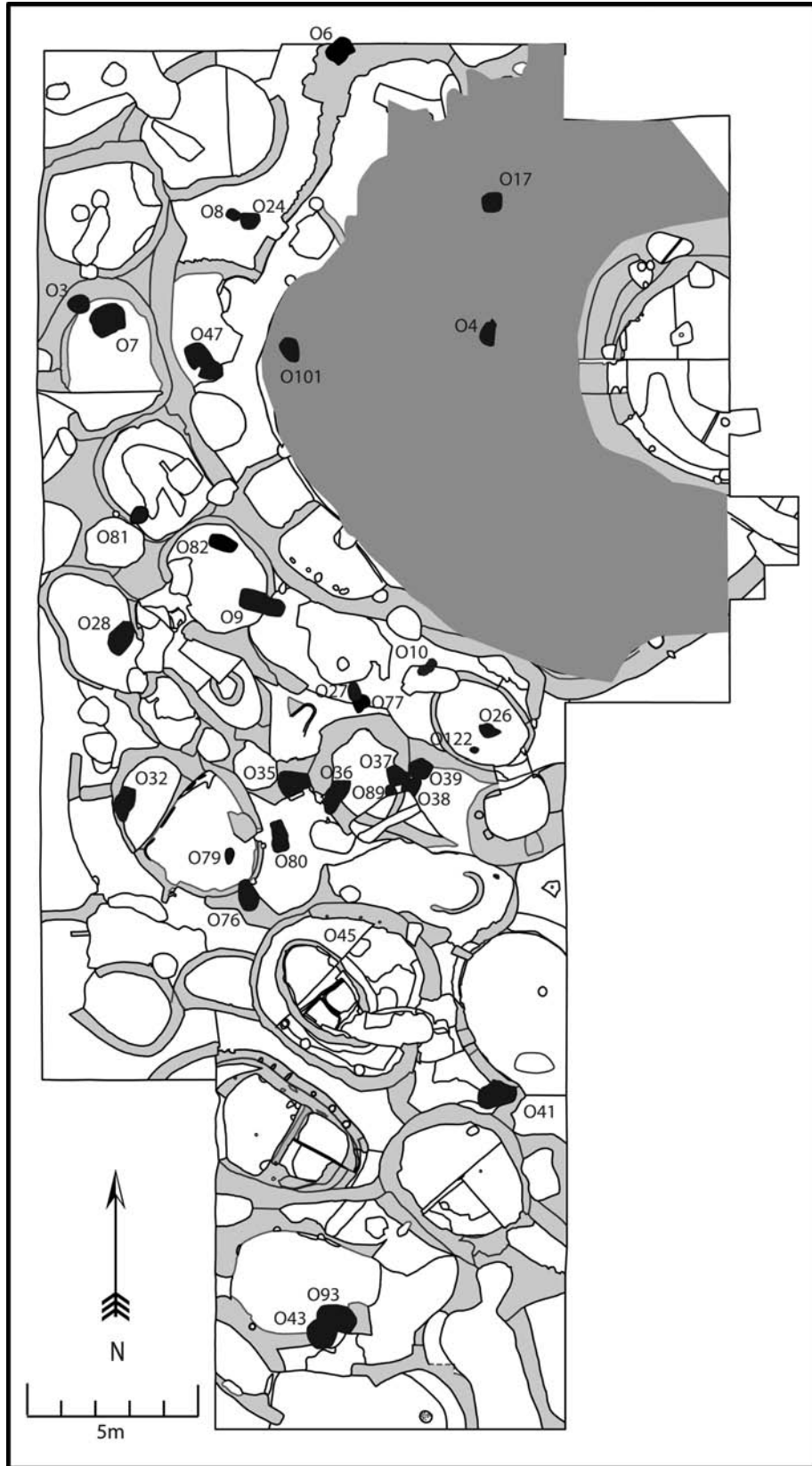
Figure 6.5. Distribution of burials at WF16.

Figure 6.6. Burial O93 from the northeast.

typology of the chipped stone along with twenty-nine new AMS radiocarbon dates from the 2008–2010 excavation confirm that the settlement remains are entirely encompassed within the PPNA period.

Excluding a group of six Antique (Nabatean-Byzantine) burials that were dug into the Neolithic deposits and one probable Bronze Age burial, more than forty burials of adults, juveniles, and infants from a variety of contexts are thought to be PPNA in date. Key information from field observations is summarised in Table 6.1 while Figure 6.5 illustrates their distribution and a sample is illustrated in Figures 6.6–6.17. In the absence of formal osteological analysis, our definitions of adults, juveniles, and infants are made on the basis of site excavation records. These document instances of unfused epiphyses for juvenile skeletons and place recognisable neo-natal remains within the infant category but are necessarily restricted in their level of detail.

A little less than half of these burials occur relatively late in the stratigraphic sequence at WF16, being located immediately below the deflated and disturbed horizons. They had suffered from erosion, many of the bones are poorly preserved, and the level from which their burial pits had been cut is no longer present. The remaining burials were sealed by PPNA deposits. Basic contextual and stratigraphic information for each of the Neolithic burials is given in Table 6.1, while full details of their excavation will be contained within the forthcoming site report (Mithen et al. in prep.).

The absolute chronology of the Neolithic burials at WF16 is yet to be established and their dating to the PPNA is currently based on site stratigraphy, material culture, and analogies in burial practice between those burials that were securely sealed within the PPNA sequence and those that were surviving at the top of that sequence. It is important to stress that the differences between the Antique burials and the Neolithic burials

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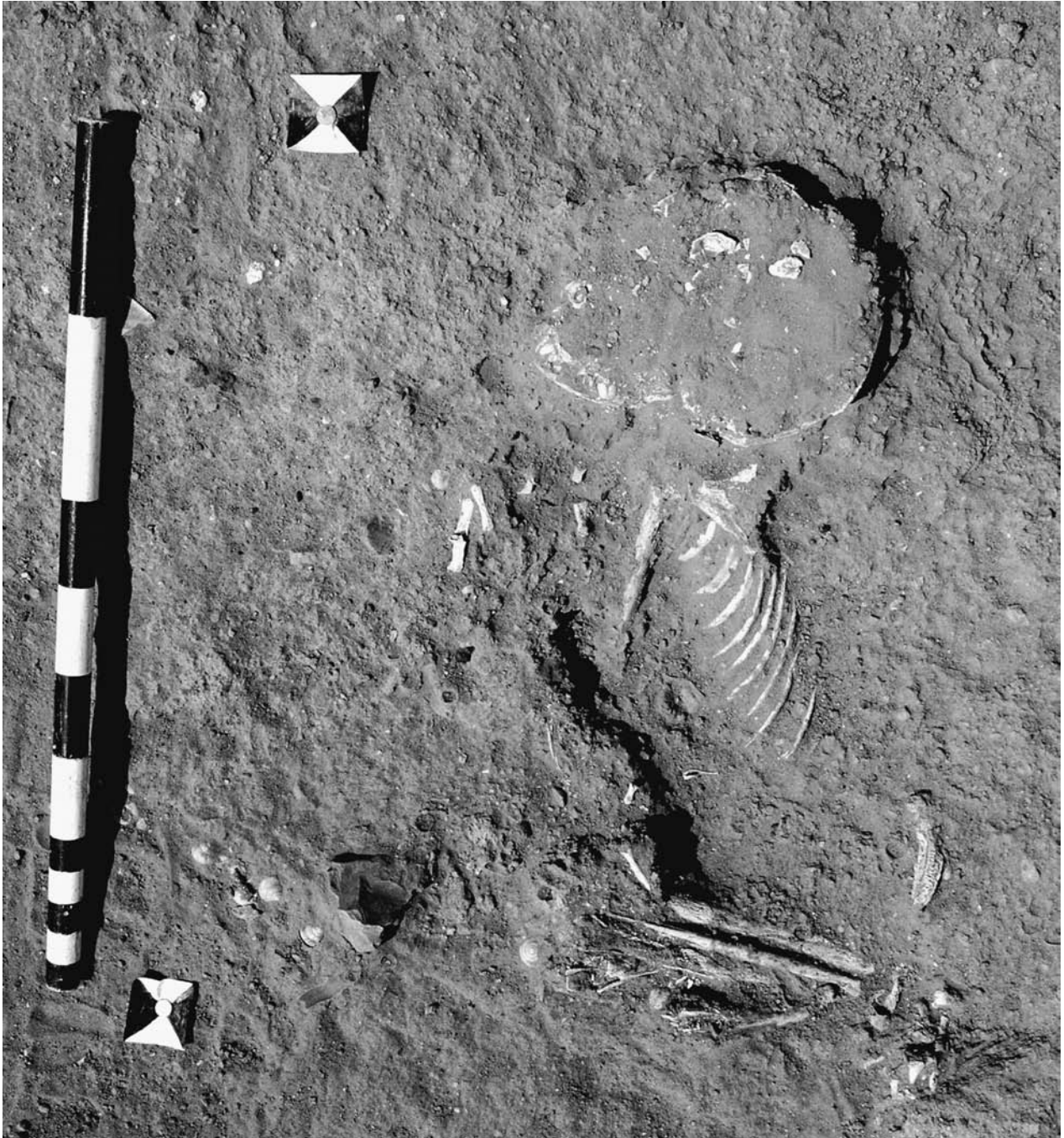
Figure 6.7. Burial O27 from the south.

were fundamental in almost all aspects of mortuary prac-tice, including the shape, the size, and the depth of the burial cuts; body treatment; and material culture. Equally, the specific nature of the Antique burials at WF16, which were placed in deep graves with characteristic undercut side chamber and lintel capping, clearly distinguishes them as a separate group. The instance of a probable

Bronze Age burial is supported by associated pottery within the burial fill, pottery otherwise being entirely absent at the site. While a small number of remaining burials from the top of the sequence, especially among those that had suffered substantial disturbance and defla-tion, could also date to the Bronze Age, the majority show consistent affinities with the PPNA in terms of

Figure 6.8. Burial O36 from the northwest.

both the material culture and the mortuary practices. The remainder of this contribution deals with the burials and the associated mortuary practices, which we are confident are PPNA in date.

PPNA MORTUARY PRACTICES AT WF16

Spatial and Stratigraphic Considerations

The spatial distribution of burials at WF16 (Figure 6.5) suggests two main concentrations in the central and the northern parts of the 2008–2010 excavation trench. Burials O41, O43, and O93 (Figure 6.6) seem to be outliers to the south, although scatters of disarticulated human remains have been found inside nearby Structures O45 and O12. Burials in Structures F8 in Trench 2 and F3392 in Trench 3 were discovered during the 1997–2003 evaluation and were located immediately to the north of the excavation trench and on the adjacent knoll to

the east, respectively (Figure 6.5). It is difficult to ascertain whether this spatial patterning of burials is meaningful, considering that different parts of the site have been excavated to different extents and the burials occur at different stratigraphic levels. Even those that seemingly occur in the same horizon at the top of the stratigraphic sequence, that is, immediately under the deflated and mixed overburden, probably do so superficially, as in reality we cannot tell how many cultural horizons have been lost by erosion and hence whether these had been cut from the same or different levels. A key question is whether the structures, and the settlement as a whole, had been abandoned when these latest PPNA burials were made. Had the site become a cemetery occupied by the dead alone, or did it also remain a settlement for the living?

Although yet to be formally demonstrated, the large circular structure O100 (Figure 6.5) is believed to be late in the PPNA sequence. Unlike all others, this had

Figure 6.9. Burial O37 from the south.

free-standing walls and particularly massive stone mortars. Its survival has been facilitated by having been constructed within a depression on the knoll caused by the earlier semi-subterranean Structure O75 (Mithen et al. 2011). The presence of several partially surviving stone wall arcs, large quantities of stone rubble, artefacts, and massive stone mortars within the deflation horizons across the knoll suggests there may have been other free-standing late PPNA structures on the knoll. These appear to have been almost entirely lost by erosion, with their remnants being heavily disturbed by post-depositional processes (wind, rain, burrowing animals, past vegetation, trampling by goats, later prehistoric and historic human activity, Bedouin tents, etc.) and rarely possessing any structure or contextual information.

If this interpretation is correct, it suggests that the latest PPNA burials excavated at WF16 were made by the inhabitants of these later and mainly lost structures, cutting through earlier PPNA deposits, which were either denuded walls or infilling deposits of disused semi-subterranean structures. With around 50 percent of

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Figure 6.10. Burial O38 from the east showing white residue and linear black markings on the back of adult skull.

the latest burials cutting through the old walls (Table 6.1, Figure 6.5) it may be the case that the walls were targeted and that the knowledge of past structures was still within human memory or passed on within the community. Alternatively, the old walls might have been encountered during the construction of the new structures and either formally or informally referenced by the positioning of the foundation burials related to the new constructions, thus providing a symbolic link between the PPNA past and PPNA present.

Primary and Foundation Burials

The majority of burials (although possibly not of the number of individuals represented) at WF16 were primary interments containing intact, articulated skeletons. Bodies with at least sufficient skin and sinews to maintain skeletal articulation were typically positioned into tightly fitting graves in a crouched position, often with the one arm flexed so that the hand rests below the skull, providing the impression of sleeping. The tightly flexed

bodies may have been bound or wrapped to maintain their position as they were apparently squeezed into the burial cuts. Infants, juveniles, and adults appear to have been treated in the same manner. There appears to have been no preference for resting the body on its left or right side or its orientation.

A number of such primary burials, most often of adults, were situated below the floors of the newly constructed structures as foundation burials, which could indicate that deaths of certain members of the community might have acted as a catalyst for the reorganisation of a particular structural space within the settlement. We have argued elsewhere (Finlayson et al. 2011) that the diversity of structural forms and the evidence for their use at WF16 do not support the view that any particular structure on the site could be seen as a household specifically associated with a kin-related group and that, in fact, the entire mosaic of structural spaces on the site was, more likely, serving the community as a whole. As such, the foundation burials at WF16 are also unlikely to represent household founders, and the relationships between

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Figure 6.11. Burial O39 from the north.

individuals buried in, under, or over particular structures were probably qualified in other socially meaningful ways and this might have been reflected in multiplicity of differently choreographed relationships among the community, the burials, and the structures. It is important, therefore, at this point to emphasise the overall level of variability in the mortuary practices at WF16 including deviations from a single primary inhumation described previously.

There are several examples of foundation burials from different parts of the site and different parts of the stratigraphic sequence. Burial O47 is a good example of the association between the old and the new architecture described earlier. Its cut truncated a disused plastered wall as well as a bench surface of monumental Structure O75. The broad bench surface, among other things, provided a good solid platform for a new structure, the evidence

for which is derived from the make-up layer and overlying stone surface, constructed directly on top of Burial O47. A cup-marked stone was found adjacent to the remains of the surface, these two components being all that was left of this upper structure apart from a shallow construction cut, which provides its vague footprint. The burial itself contained a semi-crouched adult inhumation lying on its right side with the left hand placed under the head. A flint blade was clearly placed on the chest of this individual and another stone object was found in the fill nearby. The cut of the burial disturbed an earlier infant burial. The cranial fragments from this burial were scattered in the fill around the adult skeleton, as well as within the overlying make-up deposit.

Burial O7 was also a primary crouched adult inhumation, but lying on its left-hand side. The fill around the skeleton contained a hammerstone, an El Khiam point,

Figure 6.12. Burial O28 from the southeast.

and a flint pick. Burial O7 provides another example of a foundation burial positioned between two successive phases of construction. Unlike Burial O47, however, which cuts into earlier structural elements, Burial O7 was located centrally within the backfill of Structure O33. This backfill, composed almost entirely of pisé rubble from a demolished structure, was not itself devoid of human remains. Fragments of a maxilla and a cranium (O128) were present at different levels within it. The reason for placing foundation Burial O7 in between the walls rather than into the walls of Structure O33 might have been purely due to the fact that the remains of these walls were re-used as the foundation for the construction of the over-lying Structure O31, which shared the same footprint. At some later stage, Burial O3 was cut into the floor and wall of Structure O31, but any possible association with a further phase of construction was removed by deflation, which also damaged the skeletal remains.

It is not clear whether or not the disturbance of an earlier infant burial by the cut of Burial O47 was deliberate, but other examples found at WF16 show that the position of at least some of the older burials was not only known but also actively curated by the living community.

Burial F8(298) within Structure F8, a sub-circular stone-walled structure located in Trench 2 (Finlayson & Mithen 2007), appears to have been a foundation or dedicatory burial that had been an integral part of the primary floor constructed within the first phase of the structure. This consisted of a wall made from large boulders backed by re-deposited gravel and a solid floor constructed with mud-plaster packed around stones into which a quern stone had been set. Immediately adjacent to this was a burial pit. This contained articulated and disarticulated bones of at least two adults and one juvenile. There was a single human skull (Roberts 2007). The spatial area of the floor and survival of the skeletal remains suggest that

Figure 6.13. Burial O82 from the southwest.

activity within this structure had been limited, although flint debitage immediately around the quern indicates that it had not been used for a symbolic purpose alone.

Part of the burial pit had been sealed by a second floor, through which a pit had been cut from a higher level. This suggests that there may have been a primary burial before the second floor was laid, with the location of the burial having been marked and then later re-opened for the addition or the removal of bones, or both. This may explain the mixture of articulated, disarticulated, and arranged bones, and the variable fills within the pit. The skull was contained within the burial and protruded above the plaster floor, appearing to have been an original built-in feature, possibly acting as the burial marker itself. Adjacent to the quern there was an unplastered area of floor within which a series of silty fills had accumulated. Owing to the preservation of the skull, together with the soft nature of the unplastered elements of the floor covering well-preserved bones, it appears unlikely that there had been substantial activity within the structure.

A similar and perhaps more poignant case of prolonged knowledge of earlier burials was found in Structure O64, where Burial O81 was sealed by at least ten successive mud-plaster floor surfaces. Despite this it must have been possible to locate the burial as it was accessed via a small oval pit that was positioned immediately above it. The excavated pit reached through to the burial to expose parts of the pelvis, the ribcage, the right elbow, and upper legs of a crouched adult skeleton lying on its left with feet to the south and skull presumably to the north. The rest of the burial including the skull and foot bones was sealed by the sequence of floors and occupation, which represents not only the repeated resurfacing of the interior but also the time elapsed between the act of the burial and its re-visiting via the pit. Unlike the case of the primary burial in Structure F8 there had been no attempt to remove or rearrange bones.

Immediately to the southwest of Structure O64 a mud-plaster lined pit O14 was constructed apparently with full knowledge of the presence of Burial O81 in the side of adjacent Structure O64. Pit O14 undercut older Structure O64 in the exact place where Burial O81 could be accessed and its lining shows evidence for repeated re-plastering events, perhaps due to the repeated exposure of the burial for an as yet unknown purpose. The burial, being sealed by later sequence inside Structure O64, remains unexcavated.

Figure 6.14. Burial O80 from the south.

In other cases, such as Burials O93 (Figure 6.6) and O43, later burials were positioned almost directly above earlier burials, placement that seems unlikely to have occurred by chance. These two 'outliers' were located at the southeast perimeter of Structure O19, a relatively small structure located in the far southwest corner of the excavation (Figure 6.5). They are typical of the burials at WF16, consisting of cuts made through the floor and wall of a structure to create a pit into which crouched primary burials were placed. Burial O93 (Figure 6.6) contained a crouched skeleton whose right arm was bent across the body and tucked under the left humerus with the right hand partially under the skull (Figure 6.6). The left arm was flexed with the hand up to the chest. Both legs were tightly bent with the knees together and the feet slightly apart. The fill contained a greenstone bead and two flint blades, interpreted as deliberately placed grave goods. A second cut had been made directly above this inter-ment into which a primary, crouched burial (O43) had also been placed. Unfortunately, the skeleton was poorly

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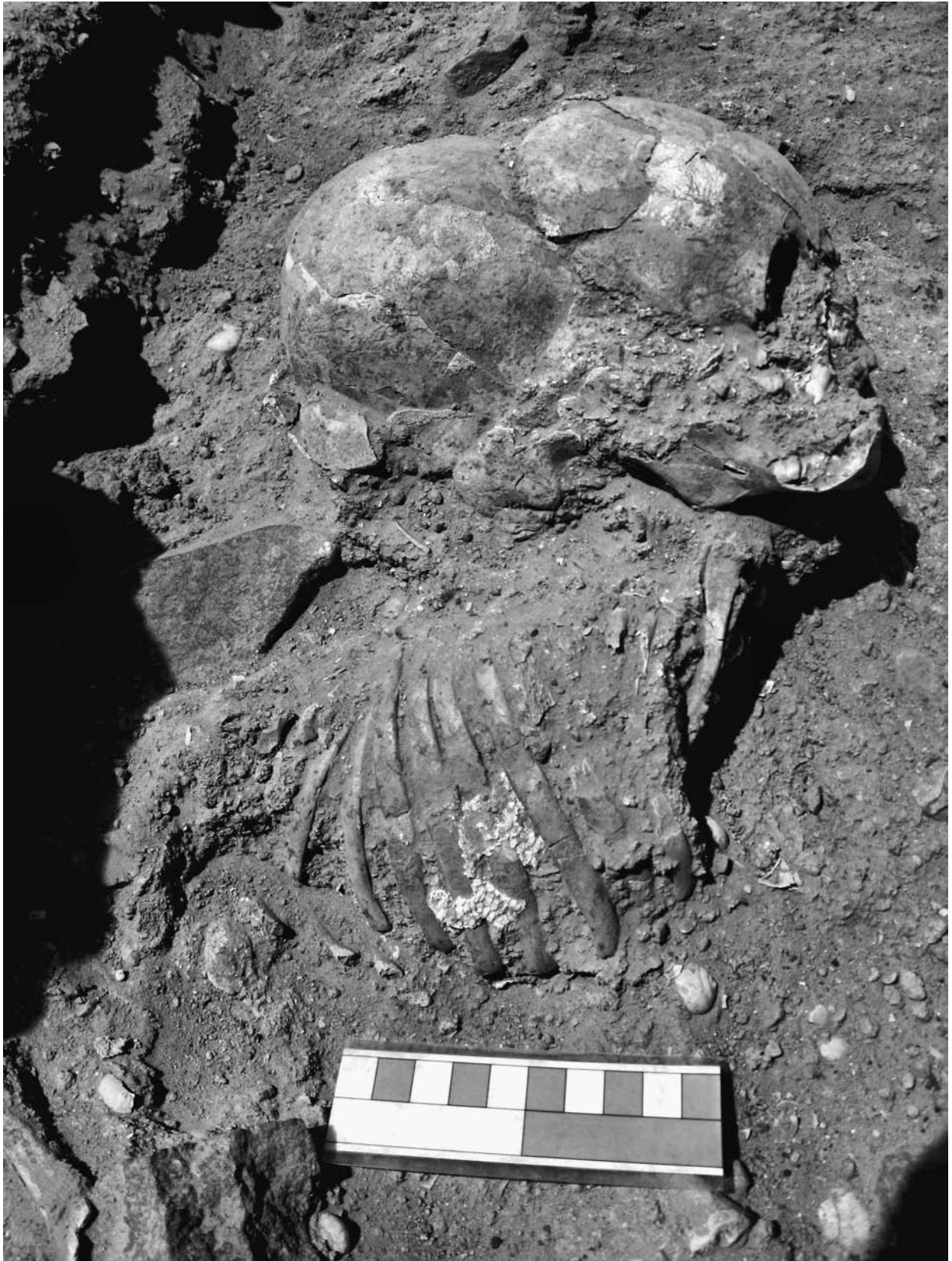
Figure 6.15. Burial O35 from the south showing white residue on the ribcage.
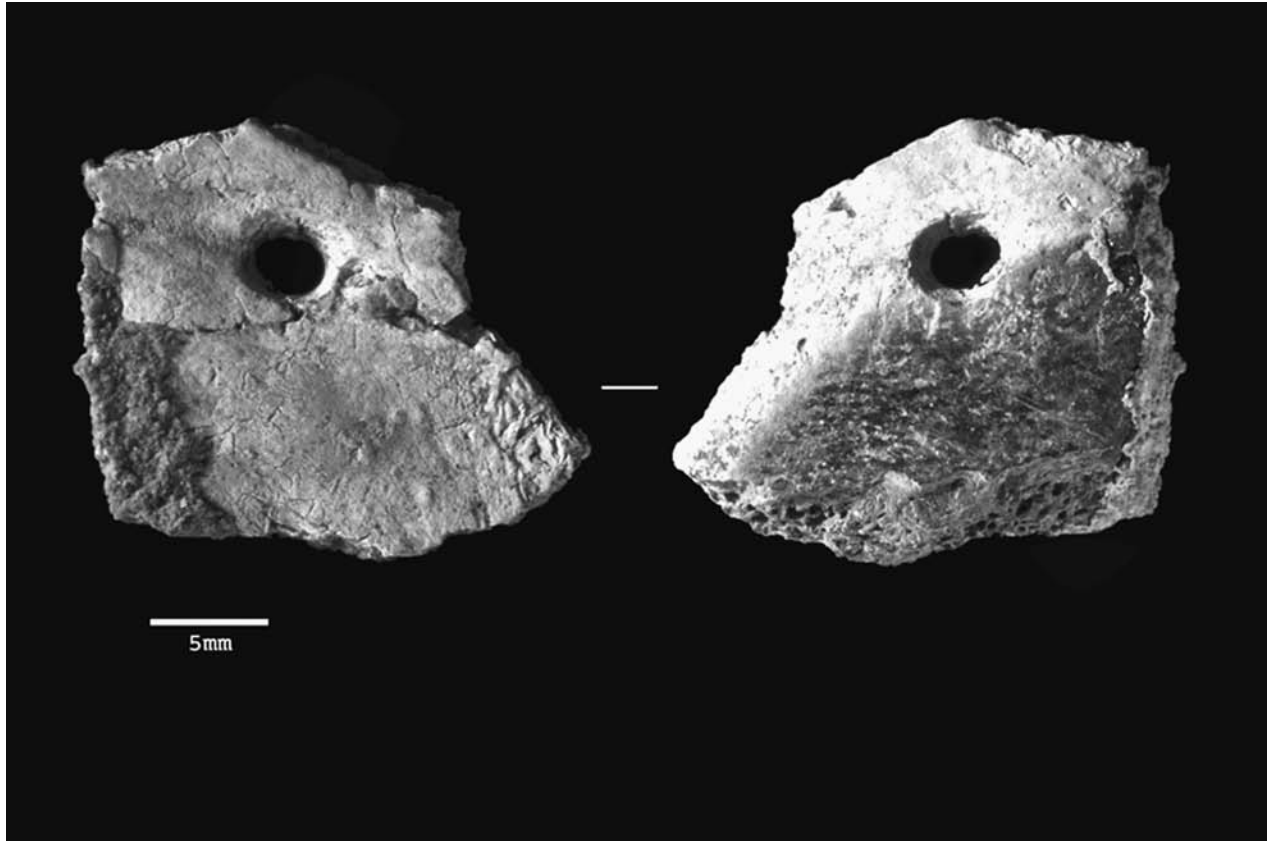
Figure 6.16. Pierced and polished fragment of human cranium SF558.

Secondary Burials

preserved. Lenses of light grey sediment adhering to the better-preserved bones have been interpreted as deliberately placed gypsum deposits on account of better preserved instances of such practice found on the site (see later discussion).

Secondary Burials

At least five of the WF16 burials – F8(298), O32, O38 (Figure 6.10), O39 (Figure 6.11), and O77 – contain groups of disarticulated bones that are judged to have arisen from deliberate (re-) burial rather than post-depositional disturbance. The burial within F8 appears to have begun as a primary foundation burial and then had bones removed and inserted through a cut made from an upper floor horizon. As far as can be deduced from the excavation this later intrusion was a single event, but the new arrangement of bones now contained at least three individuals. The original skull, which was set into the mud plaster floor, formed not only part of the original burial, but an integral part

of the original building design of the whole structure. Following the resurfacing of the interior the skull was left as a visible feature in the floor.

The most dramatic example of secondary burial also emphasises a concern with skulls: Burial O32. The burial cut was N-S orientated and had clipped the interior face of the pisé wall that formed the western arc of the oval Structure O72. The structure was filled with silts at this point in time and was most probably out of use, although the extent of deflation prevents us being sure whether or not another structure on the same footprint had succeeded it, as was the case with Structures O33 and O31. The Burial O32 cut was roughly rectangular, providing just enough space to accommodate a skeleton, requiring it to have been tightly crouched. The burial was first recognised by the remains of a single human cranium immediately below the overburden deposit. Excavation revealed that this was the first of at least ten substantial cranial fragments, which had been stacked together. The upper four crania were in a better state of preservation and almost certainly represent four different individuals.

Figure 6.17. Burial O24 from the northeast.

The lower group was constituted by cranial fragments, which might represent a further four individuals. The cranial fragments of this lower group had fractured after placement, possibly resulting from the re-cutting of the grave, which may have happened on more than one occasion. It is possible that the better preservation of the upper four crania was due to their separate deposition at the end of the sequence. Discrete burial cuts could not be identified within the surrounding loose fill, which contained much disarticulated bone.

Directly underlying the lowest cranial fragments were disarticulated adult long bones identified as a left femur and a right tibia. These were placed at a right angle to each other with the tibia angled downwards. These bones belonged to an individual whose partial skeleton lay in a crouched position on its right side at the base of the burial. The right leg was in situ flexed towards the chest, but without the tibia, which had been moved towards the upper part of the body. The long bones of the left leg had all been moved upwards, leaving only the foot bones in their original position. The left leg must have been originally flexed, too, as there was no room within the north-south orientated sub-rectangular grave cut, 1.30 × 1.40 × 0.25 m deep, for any other articulated arrangement. The right knee met the right elbow and the right arm was flexed in the opposite direction, but the bones of the right hand were scattered throughout the fill. The upper part of the left arm survived in situ, but the position of the lower arm and hand is not known. The position of the right hand suggests that it may have originally been placed underneath the head, but the skull and mandible were missing and in their place were the long bones of the left leg, as well as the tibia of the right leg. Whether the skull was present with the original burial, included with cranial fragments of the secondary interment, or taken elsewhere, or whether the body had been decapitated prior to burial cannot be established without osteological analysis.

Several objects were found in the grave, but it is diffi-cult to determine the stage and circumstances in which they entered. It is possible that a bird bone and a flint core belong to the primary phase because of their close association with the in situ part of the primary burial, but the next stage in the history of the burial is so intrusive that the finds are more difficult to assign to a particular phase. Judging by its position near to the skeleton a flint blade might belong to the primary burial, too, while a flint point, which was found under the repositioned tibia, might be an addition, or perhaps it was moved during the re-cutting of the grave. It is even more difficult to be sure about the provenance of the finds beneath the skeleton. These included an El Khiam point and could have been taken up from the underlying loose deposits rather than being a deliberate part of the burial.

Despite its similarities to Burial F8(298), Burial O32 also provides notable contrasts. The similarity resides in the intrusion into a primary crouched burial and the rearrangement of the bones of this individual, as well as the introduction of the remains of completely different individuals. The contrasts are in the differential treatment of the original skull inside the primary burial, which in F8 remained in situ and in Burial O32 was either removed or not present to start with, and in the content of the secondary interments, which in F8 are mainly long bones and in O32 skull fragments of different individuals. Nevertheless, in both cases there is an over-riding con-cern with skulls and long bones.

Yet another completely different secondary treat-ment of human remains was observed in Burial O39 (Figure 6.11), which was cut into the eastern wall of Structure O83. It formed a tight cluster of four adjacent burials with Burials O89, O37 (Figure 6.9), and O38 (Figure 6.10), the latter two of which were cut through the same wall. It seems likely that there was a deliber-ate avoidance of intercutting between these burials and, hence, knowledge of their positions relative to each other. The Burial O39 was cut across its northeast extent by a pit, filled with mid-yellowish grey silty sand containing a high concentration of small stones. A ground-stone pes-tle had been placed centrally at the base of the pit. The pit cut an orangey brown silt forming the uppermost fill of Burial O39. This deposit contained the human remains and a range of chipped stone tools and debitage, includ-ing a blade, an El Khiam point, and a possible borer. Some of these tools were coated in a white material, as was a stone found with them. A green stone bead was also found in the deposit.

The skull was the highest placed part of the skele-ton. It was tilted at ca. 45° on its right temple and faced north-northeast. Adjacent to and resting against the apex of the skull to the south-southwest was a greyish white strip of clayey silt. This formed a bowl-like container filled with compact orangey brown silt. The excavation of the remainder of the fill in the northern part of the burial revealed further disarticulated human remains. The mandible was in place and tightly shut against the maxilla. The front teeth were touching the pelvis, which was partially overlaid by the top of the right femur, but the two were not attached to each other. The femur and a bundle of other bones were 'wrapped' inside a white paste-like material. This 'wrapping' material, which has since been chemically analysed and confirmed as a mix-ture of gypsum, quartz, and calcite, had a well-preserved impression on its outer surface, resembling a weaving or basketry pattern.

The bones 'wrapped' with the right femur could not be fully identified during the excavation as they were all lifted as a block to preserve the impressed pat-tern on the gypsum 'wrapping'. Underlying the 'wrap' were part of a tibia and some finger bones. The western part of the burial contained fragmented bones, which included part of a humerus, the head of the left femur, part of a tibia, and the remains of a lower arm. A hand and the finger bones were placed underneath the skull, although clearly detached from the upper arm and the rest of the body.

The eastern part of the burial contained a compact brownish orange sandy silt deposit, which extended from the eastern edge of the burial up to the skull of the skel-eton. A compact lump of light greyish white sediment, measuring 0.21 m × 0.12 m × 0.10 m, underlay this deposit and sat at the base of the eastern part of the burial cut. The white colour of this deposit was very similar to that of the bowl-shaped deposit that was found on top of the southern side of the skull. Both deposits appeared to contain some gypsum, which explains their whitish col-our, but they were both mixed with grey silt and neither was as clean as the gypsum 'wrapping'.

Traces of a completely different brownish grey silt fill were found on the opposite sides of the cut, suggest-ing that the burial was cut into an older feature, barely larger than O39 and directly underlying it. Too little of it had survived to be able to say whether it was a pit, a post-hole, or perhaps the cut of the primary burial from which the semi-articulated remains found in Burial O39 were exhumed and afterwards partly wrapped in a basket

or a bag lined with white paste and buried in almost exactly the same spot. This would to some extent follow the pattern of secondary burials in F8 and O32, which were made into the pre-existing primary burials and involved rearrangement of the primary remains. What we do not know as yet in the case of O39 is whether more than one individual was represented among the disarticulated and 'wrapped' remains.

The remaining evidence for secondary burial on the site is from Burial O38 (Figure 6.10), which contained a child's skull, which appears to have been placed directly above an earlier interment of an adult, and Burial O77, which consisted of a group of disarticulated long bones that may have been from a single individual; for the complete details we must await the osteological analysis.

Removal of Body Parts from the Primary Burials

Having reviewed some of the intact primary burials on the site and the full range of evidence for the secondary interments it is apt to ask from where the human remains in the secondary burials derived. Only part of the re-arranged bone content in Burials F8 (298) and O32, for example, can be related to their primary burials, and in both cases bones were added from elsewhere. Some attention should therefore be given to the incomplete primary burials. The poor preservation of numerous burials makes it difficult to assess whether missing bones were caused by erosion or deliberate removal. Burials O41 and O26 were both missing the upper elements of the skeleton. We strongly suspect that these had been deliberately removed, perhaps in the process of specifically targeting the skull and the upper body.

Burial O41 appears to provide a robust example in which a secondary pit had been excavated over the burial for the removal of the skull, with the upper torso also having been either deliberately removed or destroyed during this process. This burial was located on the outside of Structure O53 at the eastern edge of the excavation trench. It was exposed immediately below the deflation horizon with its eastern end cut into the wall of Structure O53. The burial fill was cut at its western extent by a sub-circular pit, which was 0.70 m in diameter and filled with stone rubble. The base of this pit was at the same level as the base of the burial, both being shallow with maximum depths of 0.20 m. The cut of the pit removed the western half of the burial together with the upper part of the skeleton it contained. The remaining part of the skeleton, which was lying on its right side, comprised the partially surviving ribcage, bones of the right arm, the right scapula, most of the pelvis, and the bones of both legs, which were tightly flexed at the top of the eastern end of the burial. There were few vertebrae present; the left arm and hand were missing, as were both clavicles and the skull. These would have been situated in the area cut away by the pit.

The surviving end of the burial was 0.60 m wide with regular sides with sharp corners, suggesting that the grave was originally rectangular in shape. Considering that the burial did not continue beyond the pit to the west, it could not have been more than 1.20 m long. The position of the leg bones in particular shows that the body was crammed tightly into this small grave. The burial fill contained a limited amount of chipped stone and animal bone, among which were five flint blades. Two further flint blades were found in the fill of the later pit, as were small amounts of other chipped stone, animal bone, human bone, and human teeth fragments.

Interpretation of this evidence is that a small rectangular burial (O41) containing a tightly flexed inhumation had been made when Structure O53 was already out of use. The burial clipped pisé walls, as has happened with numerous other burials excavated at WF16. A pit had then been dug into the western half of the burial, the skull and some of the bones of the upper torso were removed, and the pit was backfilled with stone rubble.

Burial O26 contained a skeleton within light grey-brown loose silt. The fill showed signs of intense insect burrowing around the skeleton, which was orientated northwest to southeast on its left side and would have originally faced southwest. The entire upper part of the skeleton above the lower four ribs was missing. Because of the similarity of deposits inside and outside the burial it was not clear whether the upper part of the body was lost as a result of erosion or whether there was a secondary intrusion that had removed the upper part of the burial. Judging from what remained, the body had been packed tightly into a sub-oval cut in a flexed position with the pelvis and the sacrum in the northeast corner of the grave and the feet in the adjacent northwest corner. A large stone was situated on top of the pelvic area and another was found between the leg bones and the lower ribcage. The fill contained a number of objects, including two chipped stone artefacts, a ground-stone pestle, two unidentified fragments of worked stone, and a fragment of red ochre.

The only clue as to what might have happened to the upper part of the skeleton in Burial O26 was the somewhat unnatural position of the remaining part of the spine, which was pressed against the northeast side of the cut in a near-vertical position. From the position of tightly flexed legs, lying flat on the left-hand side, it could be expected that the rest of the skeleton would have also been lying on its side, like the majority of primary burials at WF16. The position of the spine suggests that the skeleton either was laid with its upper body raised or that this position was post-depositionally acquired, perhaps as a result of pulling the upper part of the body out of the cut. This could have only happened in this way if the skeleton was still held together by some of the flesh and sinews, the state in which remains in Burial O39 must have been at the time of their secondary burial. The positioning of large stones on top of the body of the individual in Burial O26 was a unique occurrence among WF16 burials, which seems to have happened at the time of the primary interment.

Display and Relationships of Skulls and Structures

The skull of the primary burial in Structure F8 was made into a visible feature within the floor of the structure and had remained displayed in this way after the rearrangement and secondary burial of multiple human remains followed by the laying of the new floor. Similar treatment of the skull in relation to the floor of the structure was found in a stone-walled circular Structure F3992 excavated during the 1997–2003 archaeological evaluation on the adjacent knoll to the east (WF328; Finlayson & Mithen 2007). The structure is thought to occur relatively late in the PPNA sequence. A combination of sparse deposition and substantial erosion resulted in there being limited stratigraphy on this knoll. Burial F39910 was found within a pit cut into the underlying bedrock within F3992. The burial contained a complete primary interment of an adult in a crouched position. The skull had been positioned on a 'pillow' stone, requiring it to have been raised and disarticulated from the neck. It seems likely that the skull had once protruded through the floor level to be exposed within the interior of the structure, just as was the case with the skull in Structure F8. The floor of F3992 was not well enough preserved to assess contemporary activity. Unlike in Structure F8 there was no sign that this burial had been reopened during the use of the structure.

The possibility of skulls' having been displayed within structures, perhaps in niches or suspended, is suggested by the scatters of human remains O129, O128, and O44 found among the rubble of collapsed or demolished Structures O45, O33, and O12. Structure O45 is one of the most complex and best-preserved structures excavated at WF16. This is partly because it appears to have had a distinct function during at least one phase of its existence involving an internal domed structure, possibly used for storage, and a raised floor. The structure burned down in a single event that led to the preservation of structural evidence, such as a flat roof made of mud on reeds, roofing timbers, and stone supports for a raised floor.

The destruction by fire resulted in the deposition of large quantities of pisé blocks, rubble, and charcoal within the interior of the structure. This contained disarticulated human remains: loose teeth, small cranium fragments, and one mandible (O129). The mandible was crammed between pisé blocks in the southernmost part of the interior, where the highest concentration of loose human bones and cranium fragments were also found, some of which were partly burnt and blackened. The distribution pattern was affected by the burrowing animals, demonstrated by the location of a burnt cranial fragment within the fill of an animal burrow cut into burnt rubble. It appears likely that the teeth and cranial fragments in this area belong to the same skull as the mandible. One possible interpretation is that the flames from the fire that destroyed the building reached and partly charred a human skull, which was either hanging from the roof, resting in some niche high up in the southeast part of the wall, or built into the wall itself. When the structure collapsed, it shattered into pieces over the area below and a few pieces perhaps flew farther still across the interior.

A similar concentration of scattered fragments of human mandible, teeth, and cranium (O44) was found among structural pisé rubble in Structure O12, adjacent and to the south of Structure O45. These remains were concentrated within a narrow part of the stratigraphic sequence in Structure O12 relating either to collapse or demolition of the secondary structure on the same footprint as the original and largely subterranean structure below it. The only difference between O44 and O129 is in the fact that neither these skeletal remains nor the pisé rubble in Structure O12 was burnt. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the remains of the skull and the mandible were deposited together with the rubble, most likely as part of the collapse of the secondary structure, in which case the same kind of interpretations apply to O44 as to the burnt remains O129.

Another similar case is the maxilla and cranium fragments O128 found among pisé rubble in Structure O33 in the north part of the site. Although the structural rubble in O33 most likely represents deliberate backfill of the subterranean part of the structure, this almost certainly happened very rapidly and perhaps in a single event. The human remains O128 appear to have been deposited as part of the rubble, suggesting that they were perhaps integrated within the pisé rather than suspended or otherwise attached to the wall of the structure. The same could have been the case with O129 and O44 inside Structures O45 and O12.

Not many pisé walls on the site have been excavated, preventing us from assessing the full range of deposits that might have been incorporated inside them. A small part of a wall in Structure O56 was excavated and found to contain a complete set of caprine horns, which were not visible from either the inside or the outside of the structure. A disused post-hole set into the wall of Structure O75 contained a fox skull, which also would not be seen behind the plaster. This example of a probable symbolic deliberate deposition of an animal skull could be an indication that the scatters of human skulls in collapsed or demolished Structures O33, O45, and O12 might have been originally incorporated within their walls rather than simply displayed within the structures.

Elsewhere at the settlement, within the backfill of Antique Burial O71, an isolated piece of human cranium (SF558) that was recovered had been polished and pierced, with the hole being well rounded, suggesting it had been suspended from a cord (Figure 6.16). Antique Burial O71 was cut through the PPNA midden deposits (Midden O60) and backfilled with the same material, so it is likely that the pierced cranium fragment originally derived from the PPNA midden. A second pierced bone object (SF572) was found in the same backfill and a third (SF566) in the surrounding midden; it remains unconfirmed whether they are animal or human. The shape and the size of the piercings were very similar in all three pieces, which could have been used in several different ways. They might have been pendants or utensils or have been hung for display in one of the structures.

The existing evidence indicates a complex set of relationships between the human remains and the structures in which they are found. It is possible that the importance of skulls in the PPNA was enacted in more than one way. In some instances this was done with focus on display so that the skulls were visible at the floor level or possibly suspended from the roof or the walls or, alternatively,

completely hidden from sight inside the walls of the structures. In addition, it is possible that human cranial fragments and other skeletal remains were used as corded mobile artefacts either carried about the person or displayed in the structures.

Midden Burials

Four sets of human remains were found within the area of Midden O60, which accumulated within the walls of large Structure O75 and around the inserted Structure O100 with which the midden is at least partly contemporary. One of these, Burial O4, was cut into the top of the surviving midden deposits, and as with the rest of the burials found immediately underneath deflation horizon, we cannot be sure of the kind of activity on the site to which it actually relates.

The remaining three 'burials' were sealed within the midden deposits and were all fragmentary to varying degrees. Burials O17 and O101 appear to have started as crouched inhumations of an adult and a juvenile, respectively, but were both probably disturbed post-depositionally. The adult in Burial O17 was incomplete, but lying on its right side and originally facing west. However, as a result of some later activity the cranium has moved forwards in front of the mandible and faced south. It is unclear whether the incompleteness of the skeleton was also due to this disturbance or whether the initial interment did not contain the whole of the individual from the beginning. A second burial (Burial O101) comprised the bones of a child in a crouched position with the right arm lying by the body, the left arm extended, and the legs completely disturbed lying in a sandy silt. It was not possible to detect a cut for the burial, which may have simply been placed within the accumulating midden.

The remaining 'burial' O123 consisted of an articulated human foot and some other disarticulated bones. Once again there was no visible cut associated with these bones and the likelihood is that they represent remains of a heavily disturbed burial, whether inside a cut or loose in the midden. Alternatively, such remains could represent midden discard from a burial disturbed elsewhere on the site, a PPNA version of so-called trash burials of the PPNB (Rollefson 1983). Other isolated instances of disarticulated human remains were present from several disused structures, which served as a dumping ground, such as disarticulated mandible (O78) from the loose infill of Structure O72.

A difficulty with the interpretation of such remains is in whether they can really be qualified as discard even when found in midden deposits. Burials O17 and O101 do not greatly differ from many of the burials in other contexts on the site, while the practice of partial secondary interments is also well attested elsewhere. Furthermore, the evidence from WF16 shows that middens cannot be viewed simply as dumping grounds for unwanted discard. We do not know exactly what period of time was required for Midden O60 to accumulate, but we do know that many different activities took place within it during this time and are represented by series of pits and post-holes, as well as the knapping debris. It appears that burials were another aspect of what was happening in this area, and it would be wrong to argue on the basis of their midden location alone that they were somehow less meaningful or associated with a particular social class. In this instance, at least, 'trash' burial is not a very helpful label. Rather than 'dumping' these burials into particular contextual category, often defined purely by preservation and secondary activities, it is probably more insightful to regard them as part of the overall mortuary practices intrinsically linked to the life of the settlement as a whole. We have seen elsewhere on the site how the burials became part of the structures and became their founding and defining elements, either overtly or covertly. Similarly, burials inside Midden O60 are not only 'in the midden' – 'they are the midden', defining it for what it is together with other activities that took place there.

'Decoration' of Skulls and Other Bones

Several of the burials contained patches of white sediment, either as flecks within the burial fill or in some cases adhering onto bones. Preliminary analysis indicates that this is not a naturally occurring precipitate but a deliberately manufactured 'paste' primarily of gypsum that was applied to the bones. The most striking example is that which appears to 'wrap' a bundle of disarticulated bones in secondary Burial O39 that had been encased within a woven fabric or basket that left an impression on its surface. Other instances of similar white sediment occurring in association with human remains were observed in Burials O35 (Figure 6.15), O38 (Figure 6.10), and O43.

Burial O35 (Figure 6.15) was located within Structure O113, a poorly defined structure appearing to consist of two cells. A pit had cut the burial, destroying the southern

portion of the cell in which the burial was placed. It contained a juvenile skeleton in dark brownish grey silt in a crouched position on its left-hand side facing eastwards (Figure 6.15). The uppermost part of the skeleton was truncated, indicating that the right arm and the right leg were lost. The skull had been damaged by the later cut and the front teeth were mostly dislodged. Apart from the damage caused by the truncation, the bones were in an excellent condition. A gypsum-like white concretion was present on the ribcage of the skeleton, spanning the gaps between the individual ribs on its right-hand side. If we are correct that this is a deliberate deposition rather than natural precipitate, it could have only been applied post-mortem. Either the skin and flesh had sufficiently decayed prior to burial to enable the application of this 'paste' onto the ribcage or the grave was re-opened after soft-tissue decay for its application. In light of the fragility of infant bones the second scenario appears more plausible.

Similar white sediment was found adhering to the top and left-hand side of the adult skull within Burial O38 (Figure 6.10), which was immediately adjacent to Burials O39 and O37 (Figure 6.9). Its southwest extent had been cut by a large Antique burial (O87) making it impossible to determine how far in this direction Burial O38 (Figure 6.10) had once extended and what human remains had been destroyed. The first human remains exposed within its sandy silt fill were the front teeth of a maxilla, facing upwards. A second fragmentary skull had been placed on top of a group of large stones contained in the fill of the burial. This second skull belonged to a young infant and must have been placed in the burial pit after the placement of an adult skeleton contained deeper in the fill.

The adult skull faced north and had been severely damaged by an animal burrow. The burial fill contained white flecks, possibly gypsum, and the skull had traces of a white residue on its top and the left-hand side, possibly a gypsum-based paste. A series of linear black marks were present on the back of the skull. These might be stains from a basket on which the skull had been resting or deliberately applied pigment. It is possible, therefore, that this skull had been decorated with both a plaster-like substance and a black pigment, seeming to act as a precursor for the presence of such decoration in the PPNB.

Excavation of the stones in the north part of the burial revealed a localised deposit of dark grey ashy silt with a high frequency of white inclusions, which may be also gypsum. The silt formed a thin concave lens, as if

originally contained in some organic bundle or a bag. Apart from the skull, the only other bones that could be assigned to this individual were the remains of the lower arm and the hand, which were articulated, but truncated above the wrist. The hand was placed under the head. This might suggest that these truncated remains were part of a primary burial laid in the sleeping position, with secondary infant remains added at some later stage. It remains unclear whether the decoration (if this is what this is) on the adult skull had been applied to the partially decayed body prior to burial, or within the grave itself after the soft tissues had decayed.

Black staining was observed on most of the bones of the skeleton within primary Burial O36 (Figure 6.8), which was cut across the line of the wall of disused Structure O83. The skeleton lay on its right side in a crouched position facing eastwards (Figure 6.8). It appeared too big for the burial cut, the body having been crammed into the grave with the left hand and the feet squashed against its side. It is possible that the left femur had been dislocated from its socket in order to flex the leg sufficiently to fit into the grave. The right hand had been placed between the right shoulder and the head. The finger bones were found splayed on each side of the upper part of the right humerus. A serrated flint blade was found underneath the skull. The upper fill contained chipped stone and animal bone, as well as a small stone object shaped like a phallus, found near the elbow of the left arm of the skeleton.

The skeleton was set into compacted light grey silt, which lined the sides and the base of the burial pit and formed a 0.10-m-thick ledge at the northeast end. This mud lining made the available space within the burial even smaller. The same deposit was found around and between the bones, suggesting that it had been poured in after the soft tissue had decomposed. The bones were in a good state of preservation with the aforementioned black staining visible on most of the bones, but with no obvious pattern to it.

Overall, the evidence for the decoration or the embalming of bones at WF16 can be divided into two categories – one concerning white paste and the other concerning the black staining or possible paint. Most of these instances are much more ephemeral than the famous examples from the PPNB. Nevertheless, it is extremely significant that we can document possible precursors to such practices in the PPNA, which have not been seen before. The gypsum, quartz, and calcite paste found wrapped around some of the bones in the Burial O39 (Figure 6.11) is especially intriguing, not only for the

practice itself, but for the recipe involving three different white substances, which must have been sought and collected and mixed for this purpose, indicating that the colour was the most important quality of this material.

Grave Goods

Numerous artefacts were recovered from within the fills surrounding the skeletal remains, including bone, green-stone and marine shell beads, animal bones, bone objects, chipped stone tools, and ground-stone objects. When the cranial scatters and otherwise loose bones in broader deposits are excluded, thirty-six cut burials remain in different states of preservation, with the majority containing finds within their fills (a ratio of 25:11). Chipped stone artefacts were the most numerous. This might not be thought significant if it were not for the fact that most of these were blades or bladelets rather than knapping debris, which is abundant throughout the site. In several burials the intentional placement of blades in relation to the body of the individual appeared highly likely. Thirteen burials contained blades or bladelets: ten were burials containing adult skeletons, while three were juveniles. Various types of bead were the next most numerous category of finds within ten burials (five adults and five juveniles). Seven burials contained both beads and blades or bladelets. The infant burials were all without finds. What these preliminary quantifications show is that the distribution of different types of grave goods was not random and this further supports their deliberate inclusion, although it is doubtful that all of the objects found within the burials were deliberate grave goods, as some mixing and inclusion of residual finds are to be expected on as densely stratified a site as WF16.

CONCLUSION

We began this paper by comparing the existing evidence for the PPNA and PPNB mortuary practices and noting many of the profound changes that occurred across these periods in almost all aspects of human 'culture'. Unlike PPNB mortuary phenomena, which can be set against economic and social change related to the introduction of domesticated modes of subsistence, PPNA attitudes to death probably predate this fundamental change in the way humans negotiated their existence. Yet, the PPNA was characterised by many other radical changes in social behaviour, the most salient of which was probably the explosion of symbolic

expression through material culture and architecture (Watkins 2010; Mithen et al. 2011; Finlayson et al. 2011). The evidence from WF16 excavations firmly confirms this view and adds greatly to the overall understanding of the PPNA, not least by considerably enriching our knowledge of the existing range of architectural forms and mortuary practices.

These two aspects of PPNA life appear to be closely related at WF16. The burials were fully integrated into the lived-in settlement. The construction and use of structural spaces at WF16, both in the case of monumental Structure O75 and the closely knit arrangement of smaller structures around it, seem to encapsulate communal effort and performance (Finlayson et al. 2011). The close connection and spatial choreography between architecture and burials might indicate that the PPNA mortuary practices should be viewed in a similar way. When taken with the evidence for secondary burial, the removal, decoration, and display of skulls and other bones, it would appear that the 'dead' at WF16 remained as active elements, if not members, of the PPNA community.

We are yet to grasp what might be happening with the human remains for the periods when they are not inside burials, as, for example, with those taken out of their primary burial and perhaps awaiting their secondary interment. It is reasonable to suppose that they were subject to further ritualised activity, which might involve all or part of the community, but this part of mortuary practice must remain elusive. What the range of relationships between burials and structural spaces suggests though is that the burials were used to negotiate successful regeneration of the settlement. This is demonstrated by the way that certain burials apparently deliberately reference older structures and provide foundation deposits for the new ones above. Thus we see how the idea of renewal becomes central to the functioning of the community even before we can say that such notions could have been influenced by the adoption of agricultural practices in the PPNB. Full interpretation of the WF16 burial evidence must await complete osteological analysis, along with that of the stratigraphy, finds, and further absolute dating. Moreover, it is likely that those burials so far excavated are a fraction of those at WF16 because the basal deposits in the majority of structures have yet to be excavated and hence further foundation burials are to be expected. But even with the partial information available for this chapter, it is evident that several mortuary practices that become fully manifest in the PPNB, most notably those surrounding the removal, decoration,

display, and re-burial of skulls, have clear precursors in the PPNA. The evidence from KörtikTepe suggests the same (Özkaya 2009) with some notable parallels between the mortuary practices and the treatment of the deceased at KörtikTepe and WF16, which are otherwise absent in the southern Levant (Kuijt & Goring-Morris 2002). Moreover, the evidence from WF16 counters the view that PPNA burial practices were relatively standardised, differentiated between adults and juveniles, and lacking in grave goods (Kuijt 1996; Kuijt & Goring-Morris 2002). Once the post-excavation analyses are fully completed, WF16 will provide an outstanding case study in which to explore more fully the evident diversity within PPNA mortuary practices and the relationship between the living and the dead at a critical phase of the transition from mobile hunter-gatherers to settled farming communities in the southern Levant.

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Corporealities of Death in the Central Andes (ca. 9000–2000 BC)

Peter Kaulicke

Initial colonisation of the Central Andes probably commenced some 13,000 to 14,000 years ago, but sustained evidence of human presence only begins with the Early Holocene. This is particularly true for the extremely scarce evidence (or indeed absence) of Late Pleistocene human remains and funerary contexts (see Dillehay 1997), while these too increase with the Early Holocene. In this paper, therefore, approximately 7,000 years of human presence in the Central Andes are considered (Table 7.1), bracketing the Early Holocene or Early Archaic (also called Early Preceramic) and the Final Archaic (ca. 2000 BC; all radiocarbon dates are calibrated). Pottery in Ancient Peru is generally present at ca. 1700 BC, called the Initial Period or Early Formative (for discussion and definitions see Kaulicke 2010). The term 'Central Andes' is used here in a rather broad sense including the southern part of the Ecuadorian coast, especially the Guayas peninsula, and the northern Chilean coast down to Antofagasta (Figure 7.1), as both are relevant or form part of the proper central area in between. Generally, the overall unequal coverage in space and time as reflected in the available database should be taken into account. Thus, burial places usually have not been excavated completely and often are limited to salvage projects, or else may be unexpected by-products of field research focussed on other topics. Sites are predominantly coastal and cases from the highlands are scarce. This, among other reasons, is due to different preservation conditions. While the extremely dry Atacama desert climate in southern Peru and northern Chile guarantees almost optimal conditions for the preservation of organic material and therefore the presence of almost complete burial contexts, the more humid climate in southern Ecuador and northern Peru, including

Table 7.1. *Chronological table for Ecuador, Peru, and Chile*

Years cal. BP	Period
13,800	Early Archaic
8000/7000	Middle Archaic
5000	Late–Final Archaic
4000/3000	(Early Formative)

Notes: Early Formative in brackets refers to Ecuador. The end of the Early Archaic and Final Archaic varies depending on region.

the highlands, usually causes reduction to bones, shell, and inorganic remains. In general, bioanthropological analyses, detailed context descriptions, or analyses of associated materials and their spatial distribution are also uncommon; interpretations such as definition of burial sequences, composition and total duration of burial grounds in terms of generations, motivations for differential body treatment, or the relationship between landscapes of the dead and landscapes of the living are hardly known. More commonly, analogies from ethnographic or historical cases all over the world have been offered as interpretations, but these are not especially helpful in grasping the social and ideological background that produced an astounding diversity, even given the limited evidence. These caveats indicate that complete coverage of this topic would be an over-ambitious goal. What is intended here is to highlight some issues in order to stress diversity of body treatment and placement in space and time.

What is intended by the term 'corporeality' is interventions on or transformations of the human body in order to produce a new artefact, a representation. This process of corporeality includes other substances in a
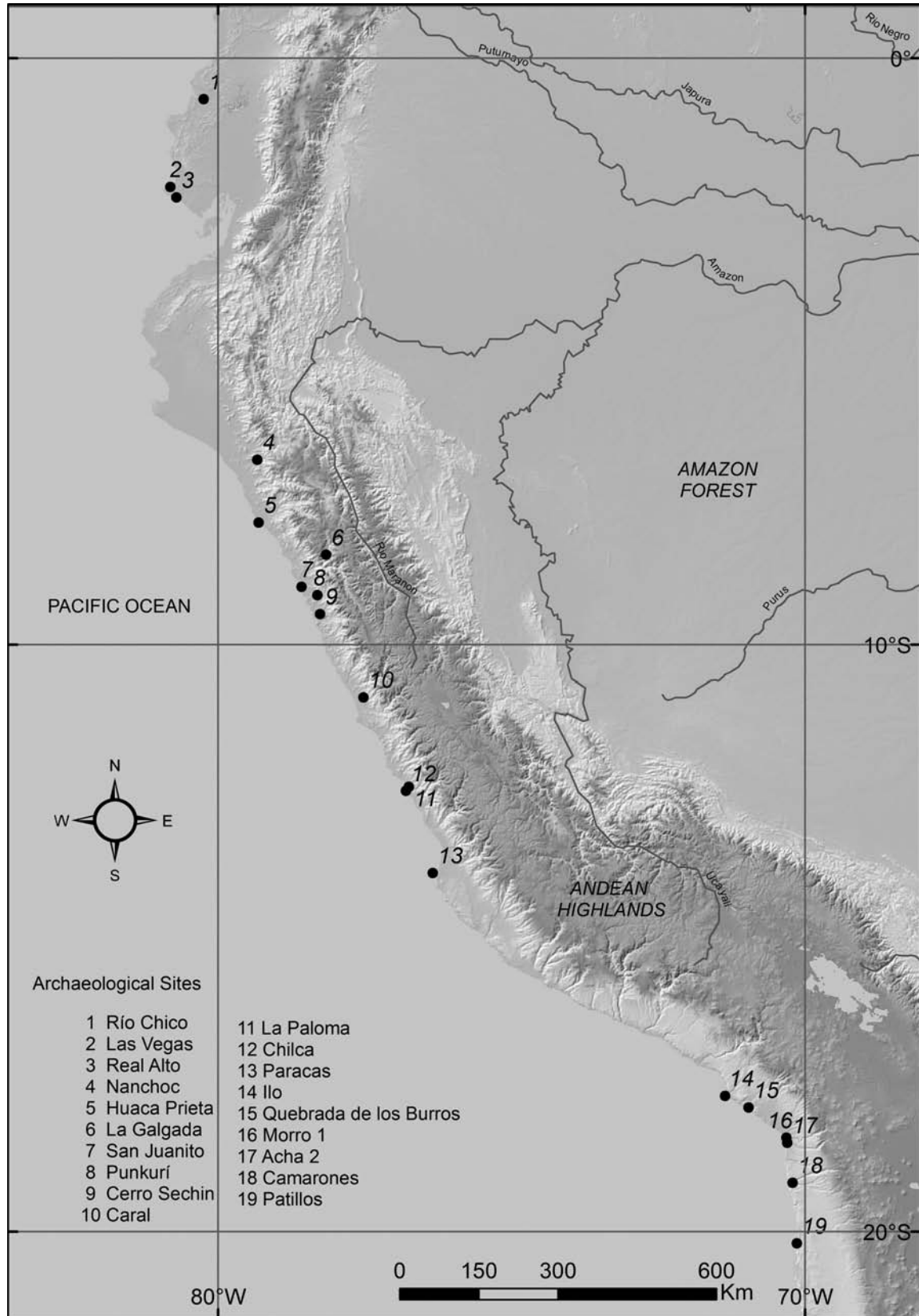
Figure 7.1. Map showing sites mentioned in the text.
Map by H. C. Ikehara.

sequence in which the body ultimately is replaced by other non-human materialised simulacra, which may or may not include real body parts. Technically these processes are subsumed in secondary or delayed body treatment that presupposes a reburial after a previous or primary interment. The latter remains rather hypothetical as its existence cannot be proven, but even primary burials could have been treated more or less intensely before disposal. As we shall see, primary contexts prevail in many cases, particularly on the Peruvian coast, and can also form part of burial grounds with mostly secondary contexts in other areas. Instead of seeing primary contexts as 'forgotten candidates' for later more complex treatment (see Stothert 1988), it may be that 'untreated' bodies had in fact undergone some degree of intentional desiccation by salting or smoking as well as a delayed interment (see Benfer 1999, 233); in any case they also reflect intentionality and a final stage. But it is the 'secondary' or 'special' treatment that shows, particularly in the cases discussed here, an astounding diversity in techniques of body manipulation, modification, and transformation, even among what should be considered contemporaneous social groups. The technical aspect, including anthropological definitions of age, sex, and pathologies, is extensively treated in the literature on Chinchorro by Chilean colleagues (see Allison et al. 1984; Arriaza 1995, 2003; Aufderheide et al. 1993; Guillén 1992; Standen 1991a); however, hypotheses concerning their social and ideological implications require further consideration (see Standen 1997).

In the following, attention is drawn to detailed or individualised aspects of the body, as well as its outer and inner treatment, its placement with other bodies or body parts, and associated features or objects: the organisation and formation of bodies as part of a wider landscape. Initially evidence from the Peruvian central coast is presented in order to discuss the relevance of primary contexts; then the northern Chilean coast is discussed focussing on the so-called Chinchorro Culture or funerary tradition, and finally Ecuadorian (Las Vegas and Real Alto) as well as some northern Peruvian sites (Huaca Prieta, San Juanito, Punkurí, La Galgada, and Cerro Sechín) are presented.

'DOMESTIC' BODIES ON THE PERUVIAN CENTRAL COAST

Human burials are known since the Peruvian Early Archaic Period, particularly in the northern coastal

Paiján area (11800–7800 BC); relevant data are rather sparse but seem to compare to contemporary and later sites farther to the south. These usually contain primary contracted individuals in temporary domestic sites, rarely with associated objects and sometimes traces of wrapping in reed mats in individual or small group contexts (Briceño & Millones 1999; Chauchat et al. 1992; Lacombe 2004). Some secondary treatment cannot be ruled out (Briceño & Millones 1999, 63–4), but this has not been conclusively shown. One clear instance of secondary treatment, however, is reported from the Nanchoc area of the Zaña valley (Las Pircas and Tierra Blanca phases, 7800–3000 BC; for location see Dillehay 2011, plate 1, and for description and discussion of the material Verano & Rossen 2011). Most of the highly fragmented bones show breaking, cutting, grooving, and burning, apart from a single primary contracted adult male. Adults as well as subadults are represented with a high percentage of skull bones, particularly the cranial vault (forming more than half of the sample, Verano and Rossen 2011, table 8.1). They are concentrated in shallow pits within the habitation area, and later on they are intermingled with midden remains. This treatment is known from other sites in Colombia and Panama, but in spite of contrary opinions (see Lumbreras 1989, 206–11) it does not seem to be common during the Peruvian Archaic. A causal relationship with anthropophagy (endocannibalism?) cannot be ruled out.

A remarkable number of burials were excavated by Frédéric Engel between the 1950s and the 1970s in an area delimited by the Peruvian north-central and the south coast, apart from some highland sites. All date from Early to Late Archaic, most belonging to the Middle Archaic period. While his numerous publications do present material, mostly in the way of catalogues, his analyses are incomplete and his interpretations often less than helpful (see Engel 1957, 1958, 1960, 1963, 1966, 1970, 1980, 1981). Most of these burial contexts are remarkably well preserved, allowing some definite statements concerning treatment of the body and context. These burials are mostly located within or around circular, oval, or sub-trapezoidal reed huts organised in clusters (Figure 7.2). The individuals often form groups in contracted or extended positions, in pits or on the floor. Both sexes and all age groups are present, making it possible that some may represent families – at La Paloma, in the Chilca valley, for example, the average of fifty-five huts is four individuals per hut (Benfer 1999, 227) – but this hypothesis is far from certain. At the same site one
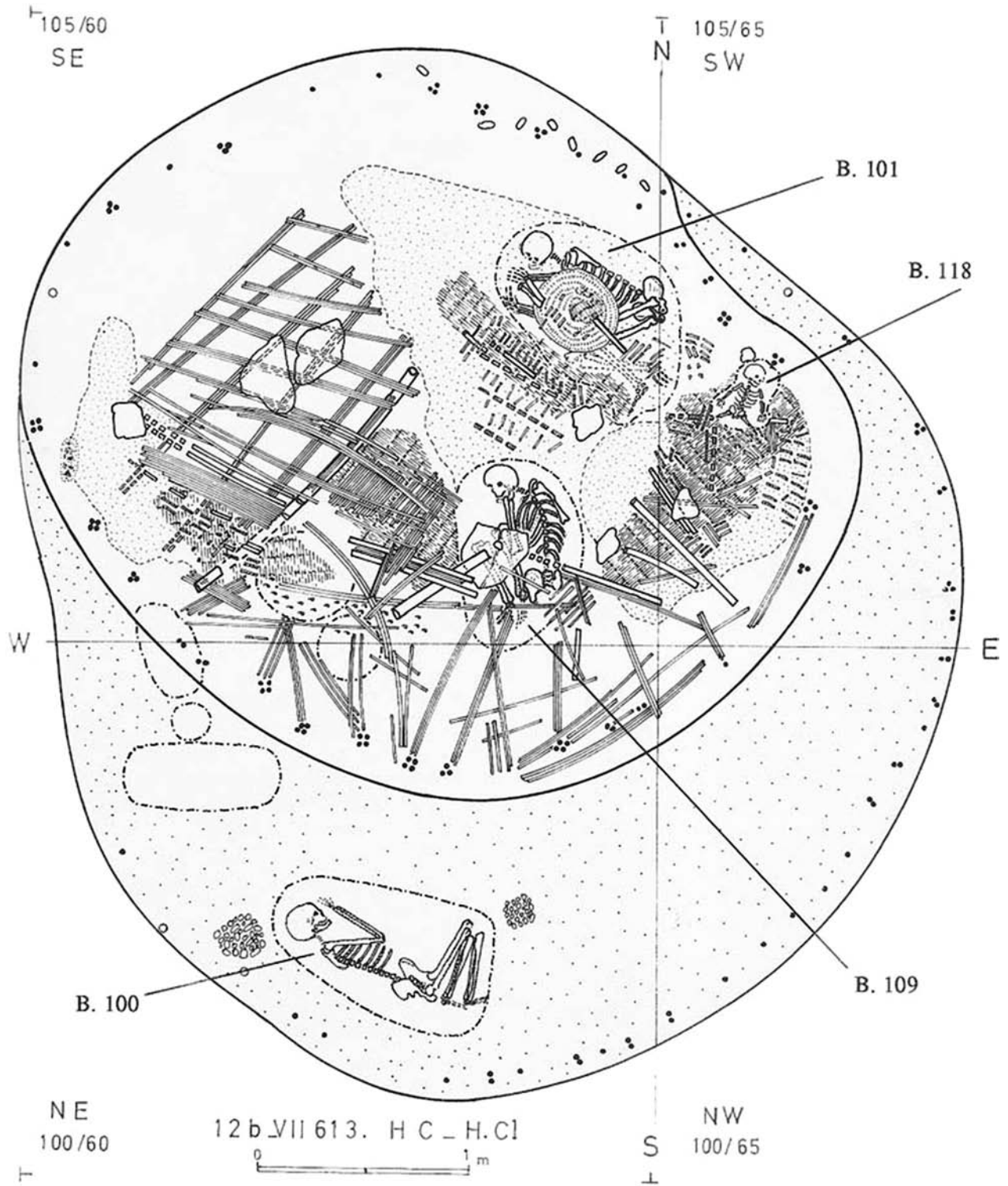
Figure 7.2. House 100, La Paloma, central coast of Peru.
Courtesy J. Quilter.

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Figure 7.3. Cane structure over burial, La Paloma.
Courtesy J. Quilter.

of these structures contained up to twelve foetuses or neonates and another grouped many juveniles together with some adults (Quilter 1989, 62). The huts were collapsed intentionally by burning the posts at their base, which were held in place by big stones often in the form of grinding stones (Donnan 1964; Quilter 1989; Benfer 1999, figures 5–7). Thus they become large wrappings for the dead, a shelter for the living transformed to a shelter for the dead. In a special case an elaborate cane structure (Figure 7.3; a miniature hut?) covers the pit of a young male associated with many different items (Figure 7.4; Quilter 1989, 59, figures 40, 41). The construction materials of these huts were used as reed mats to wrap the dead and served as (sleeping?) mats (or rugs). These wrappings can consist of up to nine various layers of reed mats, textiles, nets, and camelid skins (see Engel 1966, figure 16) or skins of other animals such as sea lions or penguins. These transform the dead into elongated bundles that hide the body entirely and contain personal belongings, adornments, containers, bone tools, and others. Stones similar to those serving as weights on the collapsed roofs are sometimes put over the bundles, or wooden stakes (similar to those used for hut construction) perforate the bodies and fix them to the ground (as seen at Chilca: Engel 1988, 17–18, figure 23a). Offering pits around the huts (Quilter 1989, 18, figure 10) might point to later visits in order to memorialise the dead. These same sites often are located in ancient fog oases that 'die' seasonally in order to regenerate during the winter months.

These general aspects of group burials in domestic surroundings hold true for the majority of Archaic sites on the Central Andean coast and in the highlands. Some loss or displacement of body parts may be due to delayed or repeated deposition, but it seems clear that heads or skulls were intentionally removed, especially in situations where their separate textile wrapping excludes largely unintended reburial. An important

Figure 7.4. Young male under cane structure, La Paloma.
Courtesy J. Quilter.

general aspect is the high percentage of young individuals including foetuses, perhaps a third of the whole sample: special care is evident for them as they receive fine textiles, necklaces, or other materials (Quilter 1989; Engel 1966, 89).

These group burials are usually to be found in habitation sites, but they occasionally occur without traces of huts or other occupation remains. One case is the so-called Paracas ossuary, on the southern coast (Engel 1960). While the body treatment in this site is basically the same as elsewhere, six primary contracted or extended individuals (some incomplete) with shared orientation (south: Engel 1960, figure 3) are connected with a large circular area (approximately four metres by four metres), covered by some sixty incomplete bodies (Engel 1960, figure 7) with a clear preference for heads rather than other body parts. These heads seem to form several concentrations, but formation processes are far from clear (see discussion of Las Vegas, in the following).

THE CHINCHORRO BURIAL AREAS: SOCIETIES OF BODIES AS EFFIGIES

The spectacularly varied body treatment that ultimately has become known as the Chinchorro funerary tradition had already been recognised by the German Uhle during his stay in Arica in the early twentieth century (Uhle 1917, 1922; Llagostera 2003), when he recovered more than fifty bodies, subdividing them into 'simple', 'complicated', and 'sand cover' treatments. Nowadays the distribution area has been enlarged considerably, including Ilo (Wise 1999; Guillén & Carpio 1999) and Quebrada de los Burros (Lavallée & Julien 2012) in southern Peru, as well as Antofagasta in northern Chile, but the main concentration still is located in the mouth of the Azapa River. The Morro de Arica is an imposing red spur, 139 m high, which protrudes into the ocean and forms the southern valley flank, where elongated and probably almost continuous funerary areas with hundreds of bodies overlook the valley floor (Standen 2003, figure 1). Another such

zone is located on the shore at the opposite foot of the Morro (Playa Miller), while others occupy the central shore and the less spectacular northern area near the Lluta River (Arriaza & Standen 2009, plate 4). Another important concentration is the Camarones River mouth to the south of Arica, where many bodies, most still in situ, were deposited on the steep ocean shore (Schiappacasse & Niemeyer 1984). Farther to the south information is less complete (True & Nuñez 1971; Llagostera 2003).

The earliest evidence (Early Archaic) in the Azapa valley is Acha 2 (Muñoz et al. 1993) with the burial of a contracted body wrapped in camelid skin and a reed mat without evidence of the body treatment typical of later burials. As this individual seems to be associated with a group of circular huts, the similarity with contemporary and later Peruvian sites is evident. The Chinchorro tradition probably covers a time span from about 7000 BC to 1700 BC, but most contexts fall between 5000 and 2500 BC (Arriaza 2003, figure 5, table 3). The burial locations, mostly unconnected with habitation sites, seem to be occupied for long periods, resulting in a certain disorder in the remains, although groups can usually be defined. These consist of rows of seven or fewer individuals in extended positions and characterised by special body treatment. They probably do not represent family groups, as young adults (usually female), and more often neonates and foetuses prevail (Standen 1991a, 1997). The latter may form half or even more of the funerary population (as demonstrated at Morro 1). These, and young children of up to twelve years, receive a particular care in their body treatment (Standen 1997, 150). Nearly a third of the population at Morro 1, a well-researched burial ground (Standen 1991a, 1997), received sophisticated modelling and reconstruction of the body in one of two ways. The earlier method consists in removing skin and flesh from the body, cutting the skull in two, rasping the epiphyses, and then reconstructing the skeleton with the help of wooden stakes bound with ropes, filling the body interior with clay and other materials, finally covering it with clay and the original skin painted with manganese. In adult or adolescent individuals the genitals are modelled too. The face is covered by a clay mask and the skin, which is also painted black. Finally a wig of human hair is sewn to the mask (Figure 7.5). The later method involves evisceration and the refilling of the body interior, that is, real mummification. Cuts in the skin are placed in different parts of the body in order to refill the interiors with vegetal fibres, algae, camelid fur, soils, manganese, and organic remains. The clay modelling and the skin removal of the former

method are absent, and the mask, painted in black or red, usually has an open mouth. In one case the skin of a bird replaced human skin in a neonate. A third, less popular, method is represented by adult bodies covered with sand, usually without evisceration (with one exception with complicated treatment). Finally a significant part of these same populations does not show any particular treatment whatsoever. This overall notable diversity is additionally amplified by specimens from a site farther south (Patillos, near Iquique, from the excavations of Nielsen: Llagostera 2003, figure 5) such as the bundle containing the masked head of an adult and two neonates together with a flint knife with wooden handle, shells, a wooden needle, and a bone instrument (specimen 2569).

The examples with simple body treatment at Morro 1 are associated with a large variety of objects, as was the case at the Central Andean context of La Paloma (see earlier discussion). Bodies with complicated treatment are more rarely provided with objects (Standen 2003). An exception is a thirty- to thirty-four-year old woman (T-10B) with a less conservative body preparation and lacking paint. A sea lion skin covered the body and a camelid skin the head. A reed mat was placed above the sea lion skin, and the whole was sealed with sea lion and whale bones (Figure 7.6). Different parts of fish, bird, and mammals as well as bone and lithic implements form the set of associated objects (Standen 1991b, 30; 1997, figure 10a).

In interpreting these contexts and bodies several aspects should be taken into account. The most intensive modification of human bodies is not applied to the whole population but more often to very young or even unborn members. Apparently the interest was not focussed on preserving individual features after death but, in a literal sense, on remodelling the body into an effigy by using clay to fill the body cavities or cover it, indicating the genitals in adults, and forming a rather uniform mask with simple indications of eyes, nose, and mouth. In very young individuals the mouth is wide open, as if to stress the capacity for sound emission, perhaps as singing (Figure 7.7). Human hair is often attached, but in neonates or foetuses at least it cannot have been their own (Figure 7.8). Apart from filling with camelid fur or skins, the skin of the corpse is sometimes overlain by an animal or bird skin, perhaps an indication of links between certain animals and humans. The result therefore is a kind of composite being, only partly human.

While the adult heights average about 1.60 m, the children are obviously shorter (between 0.46 m and 0.90 m where measured: Arriaza & Standen 2009), and

Figure 7.5. Detail of treated body with mask and sewn wig, Morro I, Arica, Chile, Archaeological Museum San Miguel de Azapa. Courtesy V. Standen.

treated foetuses or neonates measure only 0.13–0.23 m (Figure 7.9). Their overall doll-like appearance and scale, as well as their possible shouting or singing pose, could be useful in performances related to burial ceremonies where the adult 'mummies' are not so easily moved around. But this problem was probably resolved somehow, as many of the better preserved bodies show damage such as absence of feet and hands, so that their final disposition is probably not so much the result of a single burial event but more a kind of final ritual discard together with other effigies after the relevant group ceremonies had been performed.

The foetuses treated in this special way belong to a wider group of representations that also includes figurines of wood and unbaked clay (True & Nuñez 1971; Arriaza 2003, 178–81; Arriaza & Standen 2009, 150–1, 154–5; Alvarez 1961). These figurines may contain whole bodies of foetuses or parts of them. Just like those of the

'real mummies' the face is heightened by shared traits such as simple dots for the eyes and mouth and a more modelled nose, but the body often is amorphous. In special cases the latter consists of a dolphin jaw, and the head in another case contained a sea swallow skull. Spines seem to imitate the sticks used in real mummies (True & Nuñez 1971, 68, 69, figures 3d, 4a). Most probably these figurines or statuettes also formed part of the dramaturgy of memorialising and forgetting.

The unusually frequent instances of the unborn, neonates, and very young individuals treated in these preferential ways, sometimes in association with young females, should be related to a sense of fertility and the potentiality of life forms even (or perhaps above all) in a not yet socialised form (they usually have no sex indications) as a means of rejuvenation for the whole society (see Kaulicke 1997, 30; 2000, 291–2). The landscape may form part of this logic by connecting the sea with death and

Figure 7.6. Cover of T-10B, Morro I, Arica.
Courtesy V. Standen.

Figure 7.7. Young child with mask showing open mouth, Morro I, Arica, Chile, Archaeological Museum San Miguel de Azapa. Courtesy V. Standen.

Figure 7.8. Foetus with wig, Maestranza, Arica, Chile, Archaeological Museum San Miguel de Azapa. Courtesy V. Standen.

Figure 7.9. Complete foetus inside a statuette of unbaked clay, Playa Miller 8, Arica, Chile, Archaeological Museum San Miguel de Azapa.
Courtesy V. Standen.

rebirth, which might be the reason why these people chose to leave their dead in the same place for many generations.

THE NORTH: CENTRALITY, FIGURINES, AND ANCESTRALITY

The situation in the north is characterised by some differences highlighted by a couple of sites in Ecuador (Middle and Late Archaic) and Northern Peru (Late and Final Archaic) but that are not without similarities with the evidence discussed so far.

The first site to be presented is Las Vegas (Stothert 1988) on the Sta. Elena peninsula, Guayas, Ecuador. It is one of thirty-six sites of the so-called Las Vegas Culture (see Raymond 2003, figure 3), located at a central position on a slight elevation between two ravines, 3 km from the sea. The earliest occupation is an Early Archaic shell midden, covered by an extended area of about 270 m² of Middle Archaic age (late eighth to sixth millennium cal. BC). It is the only burial area of all thirty-six Las Vegas sites and contains at least 192 individuals, who were analysed by Ubelaker (1988). Thirty-nine were primary contracted burials; the remainder consisted of 'small' and 'massive' secondary burials (Stothert 1988, 135–50, figures 6.1–6.2); secondary treatment was evident with ca. 82 percent of the population. Subadults are slightly more frequent than adults. Several aspects are particularly interesting. One is the association of two primary contracted individuals (adult female E.13, old male E.33) with rectangular bone concentrations made up of a single individual (a subadult with E.13, and a young woman with E.33; Stothert 1988, 139, figures. 6.9, 6.8; Figure 7.10). In another case a contracted woman is associated with a rectangular concentration of a skull, a 'body' of long bones and a kind of 'collar' of ribs in the centre (Stothert 1988, figure 6.7). Vertebrae are placed as if they were intended to represent ear pendants. Two of them probably were placed in disintegrated boxes while the child could have formed a bundle or a kind of effigy comparable to most of the contracted burials known from the Peruvian and Chilean cases. Another interesting example is a contracted primary burial, a woman of more than forty-five years of age, beneath the threshold of a circular hut and associated with many flakes and pebble tools. This hut is situated close to three circular concentrations of human bones of almost the same diameter (about 2 m to 2.50 m), each with remains of some forty to fifty individuals with a high percentage of foetuses and neonates. It is likely that contracted burials were present at the base of these concentrations, one of them another woman of forty to sixty years age (with flakes and tools, ochre, and fox teeth), the other a subadult. Stothert (1988, 147) suggests that these concentrations might have been placed inside circular structures much like the one with the single burial (Figure 7.11). The skull groups forming part of E.25a could originally have been placed inside baskets, and all the skulls in the lower level share the same orientation. This

Figure 7.10. Young woman with subadult, E. 13, OGSE-80, Las Vegas, Guayas, Ecuador.
Courtesy K. Stothert.

interpretation of simple structures as charnel houses is attractive as they would have dominated the landscape as visible monuments. On the other hand, it is quite evident that the burial place is a central place as such during Middle Archaic times.

During the subsequent Valdivia Culture (Final Archaic or Early Formative), known for its early pottery, new centres with more formalised architecture emerge, beginning with simple clusters of circular huts like those of the Las Vegas Culture and progressing to larger elliptical houses with clay walls and wooden posts built on platforms. This change is accompanied by a more rectangular settlement layout, with two central mounds in the centre dividing the settlement into two halves (Marcos 1990, 179–80, figure 5; 1988, map 7) in the case of Real Alto during Valdivia 3 phase (2800–2400 cal. BC). Burial areas are situated in the plazas, but the most elaborate contexts are found in the so-called Charnel House, one of the mounds noted earlier, a series of superimposed platforms

and houses of which E-7 (Valdivia 3) is the most representative (Stothert 2003, figure 8). Twenty primary contracted and secondary burials are located in the northern half of the structure; the most important context was found beneath the threshold of the southern entrance, where a woman of about thirty-five years of age was buried in a contracted position, associated with grinding stones, pebbles, and a decorated pottery sherd with a modified face as a 'pillow'. The lateral walls and the base of the burial pit were faced with grinding stones. The body probably had a cover of badly preserved wood or mats (Marcos 1988, 164–5, 167–8). To the east of this context is a separate pit containing eight individuals: one of them, a young adult male, was possibly sacrificed, mutilated, and buried in association with lithic tools, together with another seven individuals represented by groups of skulls and other bones (Marcos 1988, 163–4, 166). Another important context is that of a contracted neonate in an oval pit associated with a female figurine and fourteen *Spondylus* beads around the waist (Marcos 1988, 95–6, 170). Anthropomorphic pottery figurines are also found in earlier and later construction phases (Valdivia 2 and 4: Marcos 1988, 90–101, map 16e), in some cases directly associated with burials. Stothert (2003, 399–402) speculates about the possible meanings of these figurines making use of abundant ethnographic parallels, but some points are of major importance: the figurines are usually female, though less pronounced or bisexual examples are also known. They wear elaborate hair dress and have breasts and arms flexed. Their naked bodies usually are covered by a red slip and they are found in various contexts, often intentionally broken. An interesting context is mentioned by Stothert (2003, 400, figure 35). At the Río Chico site on the central coast an intrusive pit in a Valdivia 2–3 platform contained animal and fish bones, seashells, fishhooks, cut and perforated shells, as well as fifteen intentionally broken figurines and five vessels (López 1996). Some of these female figurines were oversized (ca. 0.30 m, while the normal size is less than 0.10 m: Figure 7.12). These seem to have been used in rituals and thus form part of offerings and discard items. The breaking of figurines could be related to concepts associated with secondary burials.

Some further information from northern Peru may be adduced before closing the discussion. The Late and Final Archaic contexts are relevant not only inasmuch as they demonstrate continuity with the earlier and contemporary examples mentioned, but also because they bear witness to important changes in the definition of
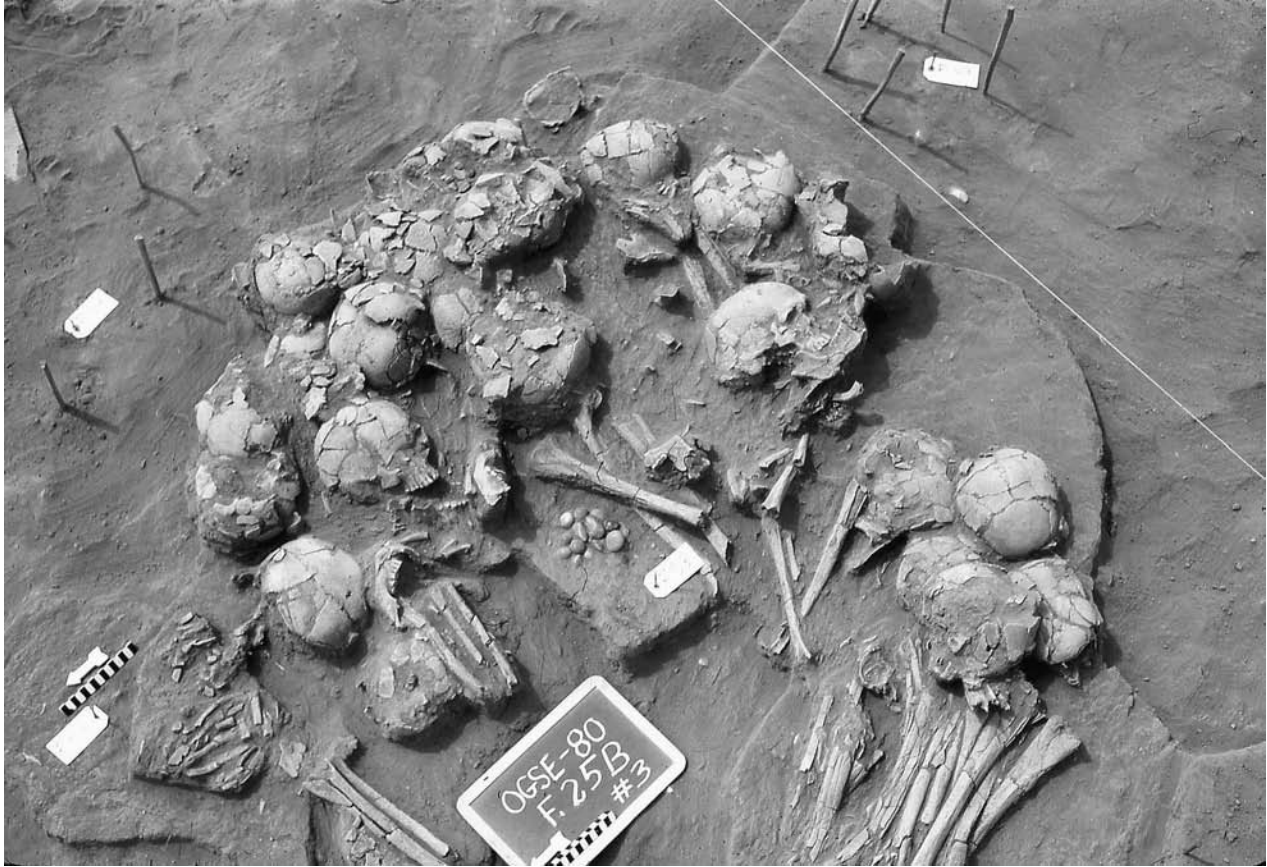
Figure 7.11. Circular accumulation of human bones F.25B, OGSE-80, Las Vegas, Guayas, Ecuador. Courtesy K. Stothert.

centrality in relation to monumental architecture. On the north-central coast a cluster of early sites (ca. 3000 to 2000 BC) is known mostly because of large sites such as Caral, which are formed by superimposed buildings with offering pits, but are almost devoid of associated burials. On the other hand, anthropomorphic figurines of unbaked clay are rather frequent (Figure 7.13). Unfortunately these are not adequately published, but they usually show elaborate hair dress, probably for both sexes, though the body often is simple without explicit indication of sexual organs. Mural decoration is rare, but in one case an anthropomorphic head with closed eyes is represented, possibly indicating a dead person (Shady Solís 2005; Shady & Leyva 2003).

The area to the north, between the Casma and the Jequetepeque valleys, yields more elaborate representations related to monumental architecture, albeit in a somewhat reduced scale compared to those in the south. Several of these also contain elaborate burials (Punkurí, San Juanito, and La Galgada). It is interesting to note that

all of these are mature to senile women. In the case of Punkurí a headless contracted woman is buried in a pit under a staircase with a large number of cut *Spondylus* and turquoise pieces, five of them in triangular form (teeth?), seashells, and a shell trumpet with an incised open hand motif. In the upper part of the pit a decorated stone mortar with pestle was found. The whole building, in fact three superimposed buildings, was profusely decorated with polychrome murals, even the building material in form of conical adobes sometimes converted into an anthropomorphic head. An incised head with appendages belongs to the earliest building; feline elements are prevalent but other zoomorphic motifs, including a probable sea lion and fox, are also present (Samaniego 2007).

In the nearby Santa valley another very similar building sequence was recently excavated at San Juanito with dates ranging from probably earlier than 2000 to 1600 BC. A profusely decorated stone mortar with pestle was placed near the mouth of a pit that contained a bundle containing an extended old female (fifty to sixty years).

Figure 7.12. Large ceramic figurine, Valdivia Culture, Río Chico.
Courtesy Erick X. López Reyes.

Figure 7.13. Figurine of unbaked clay, Caral, north-central coast, Peru.
Courtesy Proyecto Especial Arqueológico Caral-Supe.

The woman had an elaborate headdress made of cotton, human hair, and feline fibres. Her body was wrapped in a total of fifty-two textiles, some of them decorated with birds and motifs similar to those of the murals. The most spectacular object on her chest was a wooden anthropomorphic figurine of indeterminate sex with slightly flexed legs and hands that might originally have been dressed. Five decorated baskets and eight gourds were found outside the bundle in the region of the head. Several other burials were also found, one of them a child of less than one year with an elaborate headdress of vegetal material and textiles shaped as an animal head, probably feline. An evident mixture of zoomorphic (feline) and anthropomorphic creatures also decorate the mortar,

and anthropomorphic heads form central motifs on the polychrome murals (Pimentel & Chapdelaine 2007).

Farther up in the valley still another related example, La Galgada, this time in the Mito architectural tradition, yielded further burials in chambers of reused buildings. One is a group of bundles containing two women and a male, all of them above fifty years of age. They are associated with a remarkable range of items such as decorated textiles and baskets similar to those from San Juanito. Bone worked to simulate feline claws was part of a necklace from another context (Grieder et al. 1988).

A last case is Huaca Prieta in the Chicama valley, where a burial of an aged woman in flexed position was provided with decorated textiles and two pyroengraved

Figure 7.14. (Lost) Representation from Cerro Sechín, north coast, Peru.
After Lerner, Cárdenas & Kaulicke 1995, 283, ficha 39.

gourds. These decorated items distinguish this context from others found at the same site (Bird, Hyslop & Skinner 1985). Unfortunately the architectural background and the dating are not clear, but the first results of a recent project much improve this situation (Dillehay et al. 2012).

Finally as a case of monumental architecture without human burials but with an impressive stone façade, Cerro Sechín in the Casma valley should be mentioned. About four hundred decorated blocks are decorated with variations of complete or incomplete bodies or body parts, particularly heads. These are organised in a dual composition oriented according to the cardinal points, ordered as a kind of procession. The eastern one ends in a complete anthropomorphic representation, which looks as if composed of reused body parts (Figure 7.14), whereas the western one is larger with tripartite appendages originating in the navel, dividing the figure in two, and adorned

with small frontal heads (Kaulicke 1995). It may well be that the whole composition was painted as an earlier set of murals on a previous clay building. The site is clearly intended to function as a centre, located in a natural recess of an isolated, double-peaked mountain in the delta between two rivers, facing one of them. This iconographic programme has been subject of numerous interpretations or speculations, most often as a representation of fighting between two groups of people (see Arkush & Stanish 2005). A different interpretation would allow us to include this site in the present discussion, with the advantage of being more in line with other contemporary representations. Two actors with anthropomorphised but also non-human features are entangled in confrontations that lead to death and regeneration. Solid body parts are reassembled on the eastern, male side while blood and other liquids are reunited on the western, female side. This is oriented to the ocean (death) and is more incomplete than the eastern side, which receives the first sun rays (rebirth), shown as a kind of cosmogonic dance. This frieze therefore could also be understood as a depiction of secondary body treatment with subsequent transformation.

SYNTHESIS

As in other parts of the globe Central Andean human populations experienced more or less profound changes in their entanglements with their exterior and interior worlds in the period discussed in this paper (Dillehay et al. 2004; Kaulicke 2012). In this sense the Central Andean sphere is particularly important as these changes ultimately led to complex societies.

Instead of visualising the presence of what would be counterparts of Epipalaeolithic Old World hunters, Early Archaic human groups were well adapted to their differing environments, equipped with technically varied fishing strategies within a broad spectrum economy, even including domestic plants to some extent (Lavallée & Julien 2012). In the realm of the entanglement between the living and the dead, some traits later developed were already present as Proto-Chinchorro body techniques in southern Peru and northern Chile (Delabarde et al. 2012; Muñoz et al. 1993) and in the Paiján contexts on the Peruvian north coast. Burials, mostly single, are often situated near temporary camp sites in the south, while those on the north coast seem to be placed near the hearth within huts or shelters, usually with few or no associated objects and often wrapped in mats or skins.

Therefore, it seems that burial rites probably were the task of small, probably family, groups, and not all group members enjoyed the same treatment. While these treatments and placements suggest some notions of the afterlife, it apparently was of less concern to the survivors, who seemed to lose contact with their dead rather soon.

More benign climatic conditions during the Middle Holocene allowed more intensive exploitation of natural resources, technical innovations, sedentism, and what is generally known as the Neolithic Demographic Transition (Bouquet-Appel & Bar-Yosef 2008). While these phenomena are not necessarily linked to intensified horticulture – domestic food plants are known to some extent at all sites discussed in this chapter – their impact on the total number of individuals per funerary area and density of burial sites between 6500 and 3000 BC is evident, as is the high percentage of very young individuals. This might be related to a sharp increase in birth rates and the subsequent high mortality rate of infants such as registered at the Chinchorro sites, Las Vegas, and elsewhere, as outlined previously.

This increased permanence in circumscribed and rather restricted long-term areas of inhabitation also led to changes in social organisation as shown by the shape, dimensions, and spatial ordering of structures, apparently not all used for domestic purposes. But these changes are predominantly apparent in the treatment of the deceased. In an otherwise non-figurative material culture, the Chinchorro people excel in focussing their attention to the body as an art form. The drastic alteration, the elimination of body parts (inner organs), and the application of a whole range of organic and inorganic non-human materials led to figurative representations (figurines and effigies) with few or no human components, but formally related to the bodies thus transformed. Animal parts, particularly bones, skin, and furs as internal filling material and body covering, as well as elements from other human individuals (such as wigs of human hair for foetuses), hint at a transformation that implies a fusion including the animal realm (the exterior world) as well as a connection with concepts related to the inner world. Special attention is dedicated to facial attributes and forms of hair dress, thus stressing the importance of the head.

These features are not restricted to the Chinchorro worlds but include the central and northern Andean area too. While bodies there do not undergo such extraordinary efforts to transform nature into culture, animal components are present, especially hides, and head treatment is particularly important. In the Final Archaic the fusion of animal and humans is more evident in elaborate headdresses and decoration on associated objects (as evidenced at San Juanito, Punkurí, Huaca Prieta, and Cerro Sechín). While preservation usually does not allow the detection of possible decoration, the heads or skulls are sometimes separated from the body, interred in the form of skull groups (as at Las Vegas, and perhaps the Paracas ossuary), perhaps consumed preferentially (seen at Nanchoc), or used in different social contexts. In Late and particularly Final Archaic, evidenced by the murals at San Juanito, Punkurí, and Cerro Sechín, heads are prominent motifs. In later times they are usually interpreted as trophy heads, but in Archaic contexts other interpretations are to be preferred (Bonogofsky 2011; Chacon & Dye 2007).

Particularly important are the anthropomorphic figurines, which seem to occur regularly along the whole stretch of the Pacific coast from Ecuador to Chile and extending to the highlands since the beginnings of the Late Archaic, and earlier examples cannot be ruled out. Those from Ecuador are made of baked clay, those from Peru and Chile of unbaked clay, here probably using the same material as in body preparations. Other materials such as wood are known from Chile and may also occur farther to the north (as indicated by the figurine from San Juanito). Only in the Chinchorro contexts might they contain other material including human or animal body parts. Their association with burial contexts is documented in each of these areas, but they also occur elsewhere, most often as broken discards, probably from previous rituals. Morphologically, anthropomorphic representations of standing or slightly contracted beings prevail, with special care taken over the heads and particularly the hair. Sexual organs are often avoided, but females seem to be more popular than males.

Thus, it seems that the materialisation of dead bodies and their simulacra, as well as their use in extra-funerary contexts, were central to identity and memory construction and acted as long-standing models of the link between the dead and the living in an interpersonal and generalised ontological sense.

These aspects related to representation must be complemented with others such as the placement in the landscapes of the living and of the dead, and the rituals involved in preparation, disposal, and memorialisation. As for landscapes, the northern area (southern Ecuador to south-central Peru) seems to be primarily characterised by retaining the dead in the living space, that is, inside or in close proximity to structures, whereas in the south the

burials seem to be separated from settlement, though this differentiation is far from clear-cut. While some (or perhaps most) of the structures probably contained bodies of families who occupied these spaces during their lifetimes, suggesting rituals on a reduced social scale, others seem to have been 'special' buildings with higher numbers of bodies of similar age or the same sex; still others are more elaborate single contexts. These latter categories might reflect rituals on a more communal scale. At the Las Vegas site complex ritual sequences seem to have been performed periodically over an extended period, presumably on a communal scale. These included preparation of the bodies, and the periodic placement of secondary human remains after inauguration by a founder body, usually an elderly woman (see later discussion). These depositions were realised inside circular structures similar to huts for the living, but turned into highly visible monuments of the dead, forming a central place. Later on, monumental architecture in the form of platforms and more formalised structures include large numbers of burials; some special platforms show differential treatment of individuals of both sexes and different ages. The probably cyclical superimposition of buildings during the Final Archaic in Ecuador and Peru may have been conceived as burial and renovation or death and regeneration: buildings perceived as living organisms paralleling human life and death (see Kaulicke 2010).

About the same time large mounds began to be built on the Peruvian north-central coast, but these seem to have been ceremonial centres almost devoid of human burials. These are found near the shore, sometimes connected to monumental architecture. Another architectural tradition farther to the north boasts complex iconography in murals, highly decorated mortars and gourd recipients, and painted textiles, linked to 'special' individual burials. This may mean that the rest of the population was buried elsewhere, perhaps also on the shore. The relationship between burial grounds and the sea is most evident and consistent in the Chinchorro tradition, as at the Morro de Arica sites, where large burial grounds are placed on a high terrace of the massive red spur overlooking the valley. It seems that there was a constant concern with the dead, the sea, perhaps the colour red to be related to the course of the sun (sunset as death), a relationship that was to continue during Formative times in Peru (see Kaulicke 2015). This might be related to still another concept of death and regeneration (as at Cerro Sechín). As such they might also have been considered as places of origin. In the case of these Chinchorro burial grounds,

ritualised dramas were perhaps performed with the dead as effigies and their simulacra in the form of smaller figurines, probably accompanied by music (indicated by the open mouths of the dead children). Such communal events were perhaps seen as part of a kind of rejuvenation cult of society and the world. It is unclear whether these burial grounds were marked on the surface, but the presence of low mounds and perhaps some marker effigies is not to be ruled out.

Finally the implication of burial data for social organisation should be contemplated. The differing body treatments within the same communities that characterise the Middle, Late, and Final Archaic may reflect differing positions on a community scale. Thus, while infants and even neonates undoubtedly enjoyed special treatment, their visibility, particularly in Chinchorro contexts, is not necessarily a proof of growing social complexity. More pragmatically, it might result from increased birth and mortality rates, and their 'mobility' in rituals because of their reduced size. Where present in groups, interpreted here as ritual discard, they include other age groups, particularly adolescents. It seems that infant males are proportionately more important than females (Standen 2003). The role of the relatively few sand-covered adults remains unclear. The naturally mummified bodies, numerically more significant and associated with far more objects, do not seem to reflect strict gender differentiation, as is also the case with those with complex body treatment. These also include infants and neonates (more than a third of the total: Standen 1991a, 143) in the case of Morro de Arica 1.

The single case of a person with probably higher standing is an adult female buried under a layer of sea lion and whale bones at the same site. While the body treatment seems to be less careful than those for infants, the whole context involves a greater number of objects, including implements and animal body parts as well as a more complex structure than in other contexts at Morro 1. It belongs to the first phase (probably late Middle Archaic), together with other nearby groups characterised by early complex body treatment (Standen 1991a, 2003). No other similar context seems to be known from other Chinchorro sites.

This isolated case is paralleled by others at the Las Vegas site. Several women were buried there inside what seem to be special huts, in two cases apparently beneath several layers of secondary human bones, probably within similar circular structures. They also are associated with a number of objects such as lithic implements and fox

teeth. These contexts again differ markedly from others. One of their functions seems to be that of founding burial sequences. This function might be shared by the Chinchorro case. Later on, another female from Real Alto (Valdivia, Late Archaic) was buried in a similar setting as part of monumental architecture, probably accompanied by (sacrificed?) individuals as well as secondary components. Finally monumental architecture on the north coast of Peru regularly contains such contexts, highlighting special social position by their setting and a wealth of decorated objects, some of them of exotic material. From the Middle Archaic it thus becomes difficult to avoid recognition of some kind of leadership, apparently attached to elderly women, whose functions, however, are difficult to define.

CONCLUSIONS

Death must have been of major concern for Archaic populations in the Central Andes, as is shown by a great variety of body treatments, placements, and memorialisations in different and changing social worlds. The complexity hinted at in the chosen examples is probably only a weak reflection of much more complex situations, both synchronically and diachronically, as a result of our limited access to fuller pertinent evidence.

One point stressed here is the body or body parts as initial foci for representational art, which diversifies greatly during the Final Archaic (ca. 2600 BC), transferring interpersonal communication (of the mourners and the dead) from restricted spaces to more complex ontological themes of cosmogony and cosmology, as depicted on monumental murals and transportable objects in monumental centres, with or without 'special' burials.

As such secondary body treatment is a kind of 'culturisation' of death that implies not only transformation but also memorialisation by communal ritual sequences delaying final disposal, repeated with each new deposition in basically the same place. These sequences were probably perceived as eternal repetition in the sense of death and regeneration. This theme is extended to the landscape, particularly the shore, water (river and sea), and the course of the sun.

The different treatments would also affect individuals and groups of individuals in different ways as a reflection of an ordering of the community into persons or identity groups whose definitions largely escape our present perception, but include some signs of inequality.

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Mediating the Dominion of Death in Prehistoric Malta

Simon Stoddart

INTRODUCTION

The ritual monuments of prehistoric Malta transcended the impermanency of the individual life courses of their builders. These substantial constructions were probably founded in ca. 3600 cal. BC and endured in active use until they were apparently deliberately closed down by their own communities in ca. 2400 BC (Malone et al. 2009a). This remarkable period of active use of about 1,200 years contrasts vividly with the transient lives of their constructors, who often perished in childhood and rarely reached mature old age (Stoddart et al. 2009). This implicit contrast immediately raises the question of how prehistoric Maltese society dealt with the contradiction between the fragility and instability of their personal lives and the apparent stability of their cultural habitus. It appears that it was precisely by developing strategies to project that cultural habitus through the generations that the dominion of death was effectively mediated if not controlled. This chapter seeks to explore the strategies that were employed, in a physical environment that was well served by the preservational qualities of the geological and environmental context of easily worked stone and clay and the general absence of alternative malleable materials such as wood (Carroll et al. 2012; Djamali et al. 2013) that might not have survived archaeologically.

GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Maltese islands occupy part of the Italian 'continental' shelf some 80 kilometres off Sicily (Stoddart 1998) (Figure 8.1). In recent prehistoric times, they have always been small islands not much more than 300 square kilometres in size. At 18,000 BP, the landmass was a headland of Sicily and the subsequent rise in sea level may have been sufficiently rapid, at least up to the time of initial agricultural colonisation at 5000 cal. BC., to have had an impact on the trans-generational memory of the monument building inhabitants (Table 8.1). The effect may have been even more enhanced around lowland inlets when the sea suddenly breached lagoonal barriers (C. Hunt, pers. comm). The time of first agricultural colonisation coincided with a slowing of sea level rise. This was also the moment when, at 10 metres below current sea level, Gozo was separated from the main island of Malta (Furlani et al. 2013). The memory of a shrinking island replaced by a much more stable island landscape may have been significant.

Resources in the Maltese islands, once established as islands, have always been restricted to sediment, stone, relatively limited water, and human capital. The current status of Malta as a very densely occupied island, maintained by a connectivity with the outside world, only became possible when the islands became part of large state scale or imperial organisations in the ninth century BC (Stoddart 1999). Over the period we are considering, Malta had much lower populations; as a result, the islanders were self-sufficient for most needs, albeit not immune from environmental perturbations. The combination of perennial springs appearing from above clay strata in the geology, terraced (?) sediment, and abundant building stone permitted the continuity of an agricultural economy, once cultigens and animals had been imported from Sicily. Nevertheless, the potential vulnerability of a small island society, with a low-lying topography not suited to
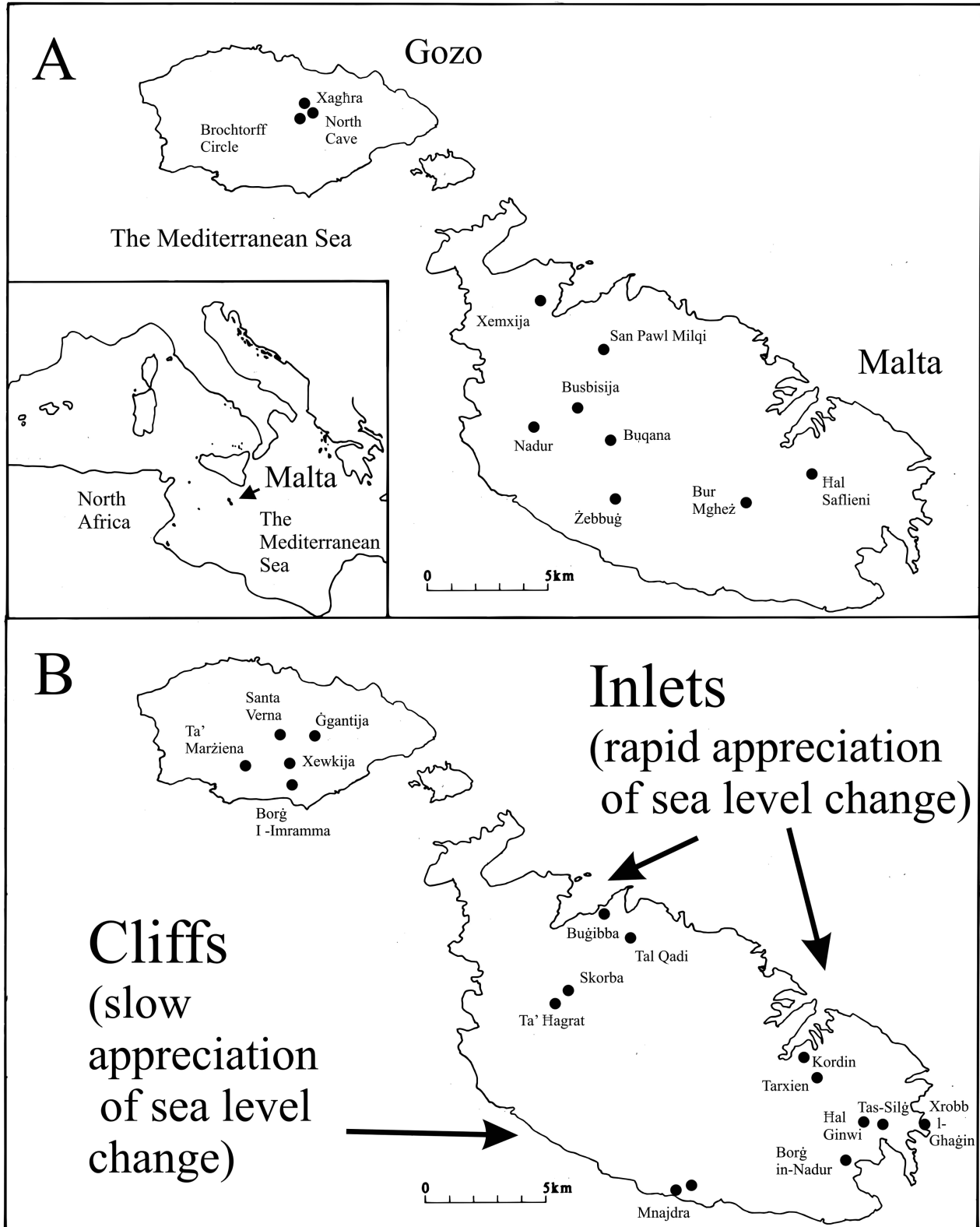
Figure 8.1. The Maltese islands. A, Burial sites. B, 'Temple' sites, and the differential appreciation of rising sea level on the physical landscape.

Table 8.1. *Ability of prehistoric inhabitants to register sea level change*

Date	Relative sea level (m)	Years per 1 m change	Memory generations per 1 m change
19000 BC	−130	216	ca. 3
12500 BC	−100	70	1
11800 BC	−90	70	1
10400 BC	−70	130	ca.2
9100 BC	−60	90	ca. 1
8200 BC	−50	60	ca. 1
7600 BC	−40	60	ca. 1
7000 BC	−30	80	ca. 1
6200 BC	−20	120	ca. 2
5000 BC	−10	580	ca. 8
1 BC	−1.36	1250	ca. 18
1000 AD	−0.56		

Notes: Sea level change data from Furlani et al. (2013). 'Relative sea level' is relative to the current sea level.

rainfall, led to a level of uncertainty, less easily buffered than on the more extensive mainland (Malone & Stoddart in prep.). The combined uncertainties of a memory of a shrinking land surface, combined with current fluctuations in local resources, may have enhanced the need for elaborate ritual systems. The apparent remarkable success of these ritual practices in the conditions of imagined and actual uncertainty may have been one reason for the longevity of religious practice.

TIME AND GENERATIONAL MEMORY

The prehistoric societies of Malta, by definition, lacked the technology of literacy (Goody & Watt 1968) to appreciate gradual long-term change. However, if we posit a life span of some forty years for the more fortunate members of society, and an educational overlap of at least ten years for the transmission of material information about the condition of the island world, we can posit a 'memory generation' of at least seventy years. If appreciable change took place during that time, then it would have been witnessed at nearly first hand and recognised for what it was. If, as was the habit of oral societies, it was possible to fix points of reference in myth or landscape (Hirsch 2006), then memories of threatening change could be transmitted beyond that time frame. More positively 'memory monuments' could have been installed in the landscape that provided secure tethers, usually set well above the sea, in an uncertain world that contained memories of rising sea level, annual uncertainties of rainfall, and daily scenes of premature, but all too common, mortality. Strategies could have been developed in these

'memory monuments' of both life and death rituals that appeared to the participants to be remarkably successful, since the rising sea level had slowed and the uncertainties of the agricultural cycle were overcome so that, in spite of very high perinatal and childhood mortality, the society survived. In these circumstances, ritual specialists must have thrived and may have combined their ritual abilities with self-promoting differential access to the outside Mediterranean world. However, at a certain point, ca. 2400 BC, their strategies of buffering the uncertainties of the fluctuating agricultural cycle may have proved less successful in circumstances of increasing aridity (Dalfes et al. 1997; Malone & Stoddart 2013.). Small changes may have been sufficient to persuade the prehistoric inhabitants to close down the ritual system that had previously appeared effective in controlling the dominion of death, in spite of its apparently overwhelming presence at both an individual and a societal level.

The Life Rituals

The best known 'memory monuments' of the Maltese islands have been frequently designated temples, a term that need not necessarily be associated with Greek and Roman Classical practice, but that in the Maltese case is definitely associated with monumental constructions associated with ritual practice. This ritual practice underlined the enduring continuity of prehistoric Maltese society. Furthermore, the liturgical artefacts were dominated by images of plenty on a monumental scale. In addition, the liturgical practice revolved around ritual largesse measured in terms of immense quantities of offering bowls, presentational platters, storage containers, grinding stones, and, to a level only visible in the excavation notes of Zammit (Malone & Stoddart in prep.), the discard of striking quantities of animal bones and floral remains (Colaianni et al. 2007; Fiorentino et al. 2012; Malone in prep.). There is clear evidence that the Maltese temples, often arranged in clusters, provided rival locations for the storage and redistribution of food stuffs, reawakening an idea that has a long history (Bonanno et al. 1990; Renfrew 1973). As such, they provided secure points in a landscape of potential uncertainty, a protection against discontinuity and death.

The Death Rituals

A parallel process took place in the locales of the death rituals of prehistoric Malta. This evidence has only

recently come to light since the analysis of the Brochtorff Circle at Xaghra (Malone et al. 2009b), which can now substitute for probably similar practices within the largely unrecorded empty Hal Saflieni Circle (Zammit 1928). The underground Brochtorff mortuary enclosure at Xaghra was surrounded by a Stone Circle that protected the dead from interference. No evidence has been found for their exposure or scavenging. The dead were thus maintained as a protected resource in another form of memory monument. In the two main known cases, this form of memory monument was deliberately situated on high ground between temples where the life rituals were practised.

These relatively recent analyses (Malone & Stoddart 2009) reveal the liturgical practice on death, which can briefly be summarised here. Each individual was subjected on death to a sequence of burial and, normally after some probable delay, disarticulation and placing of the parts of the dead in new locations within the monument. In this way, the transient individual was incorporated within the permanent memory monument. Some possibly significant individuals, particularly males, were never disturbed but remained stacked in intact anatomical sequence in key zones of the site: near the entrance threshold, in the heart of the site under deliberately (?) deposited ritual paraphernalia, and in the inmost cave of the site.

This practice of the *deconception* of the individual on death (Figure 8.2) and the re-insertion of that individual within a broader eternity of the community not only has connections with our own society's ethnographic practices, immortalised by Dylan Thomas, but also with the ethnography of pre-modern communities. The study of Melanesian practice is particularly fruitful. Many Indonesian societies had a flow of life concept that guarded against the dominion of death, and a broadly similar concept was shared by a number of Melanesian communities. More specifically there was amongst the North Mekeo 'a substance termed *ngaka* which is thought to cycle between villagers' lands, bodies and social relations in the course of human life and death' (Mosko 2006, 278). The nature of this substance is particularly interesting for archaeologists because it has materiality, and more specifically because it consists of the parts of other persons. The essence was 'originally acquired from the materials of the territorial world, incorporated into the bodies and relations of human beings and, upon death, returned to the ground in human burials' (Mosko 2006, 278). This produces a continuity of the world as territory, the human body, and human sociality.
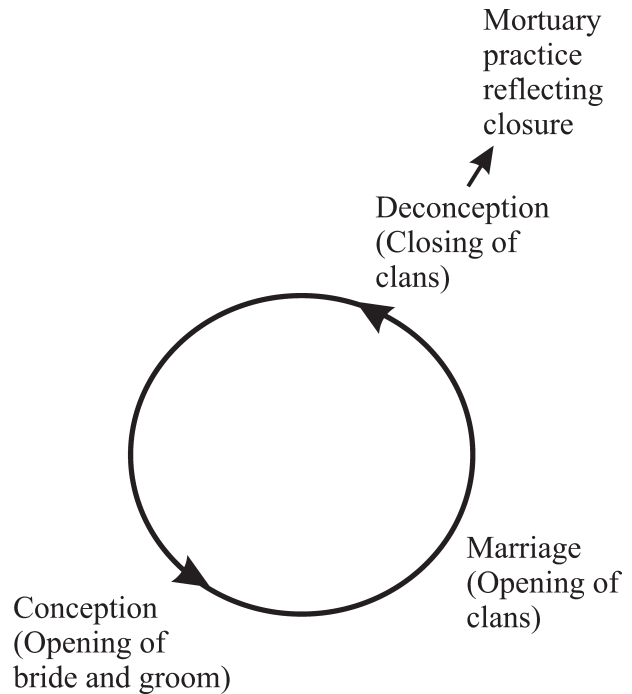
Figure 8.2. The cycle of conception and deconception. Diagram created by the author from evidence presented by Mosko (1983).

Amongst the Bush Mekeo, 'non relatives … through reproduction consequent upon marriage mix their respective bloods and conceive in the bodies of their children kin or relatives who share blood bilaterally' (Mosko 1983, 24). This process of biological and social conception has to be reversed at the time of death. 'But then upon death, mortuary ritual and feasting *deconceive* certain categories of these bilateral kin from one another thereby translating kin back into non relatives of different blood who can consequently marry' (Mosko 1983, 24). The social dynamic of this society is, therefore, a holding in balance of conception and *deconception* that contributes 'to the structural coherence and continuity of the total society' (Mosko 1983, 24). The life course of an individual is, thus, marked by three key events, birth, marriage, and death (Figure 8.2). Birth is the product of the 'openness' of the bride and groom through the custom of agnatic clan exogamy. This procedure is enacted at the marriage ceremony, where 'relatives of the bride and groom gather and exchange articles of value such as arm-shells, strings of cowrie and dog's teeth, bird of paradise feathers, and the raw flesh of domesticated pig' (Mosko 1983, 27–8). This action 'complementarily *deconceived* [the bride and groom] of their own respective grandmothers' clan bloods' (Mosko 1983, 28). The most important ceremony

is, however, the mortuary feast, where foods symbolically redolent of the deceased's flesh and blood – raw plant food, smoked wild pig, and recently butchered domestic pig – are exchanged and consumed. 'Feasting unmixes by *deconception* those bloods which were once mixed in the deceased's own procreation. ... By *deconceiving* members of the clans upon their deaths, the clans purge themselves of bloods which had entered in the very conception of their respective members' (Mosko 1983, 31). This whole process becomes a reaffirmation of the boundaries of the clan, which, in most small-scale island societies, must have been known to be a social fiction, if all the genealogical links were carefully traced.

Other ethnographic variations on the same theme of control or mediation of the dominion of death are seen amongst the Sabarl of New Guinea (Battaglia 1990; Battaglia 1992) and Aré Aré of the Solomon Islands (De Coppet 1981). In the first, elaborate theatrical mortuary ceremonies make statements with food and ground stone axes so that 'in an act of congruency with their ancestors, the living make statements and gestures about surviving in spite of having "finished" – selectively and officially forgotten – that part of themselves that is "present in absentia"' (Battaglia 1990, 162–3). In the second 'it is not the life of the individuals or of the corporate groups which is at stake but the perpetuation of the community, which is seen as responsible for the "creation" of time and for the continuous resumption of life' (De Coppet 1981, 200). The individual passes through stages of last breath, body, and then image, whose immortality is retained by a continuous process of mourning as part of a wider community.

The Maltese mortuary practices appear to follow similar processes of *deconception* whereby the social practices dissolved the individuality of the deceased within one common clan membership. In the first place, this was represented by the disarticulation of the once anatomically assembled bones. Those few individuals who remained anatomically intact probably had a clan seniority within the fictive or biological community, and thus in their own way represented the unity of that community. In the second place, the mortuary rituals were accompanied by feasting deposits of animals, which ran in parallel to those also noted in above ground temples. In the third place, images rich with meaning were employed to symbolise the continuity of the community in spite of the apparent fragility of society at the time of death.

These images of mortuary liturgical material culture can be divided into three types on the basis of size and character (Figure 8.3). At the upper end of the size scale,

there are corpulent self-standing skirted images. These *pre-sided* over the death rituals and conveyed a mediation of the dominion of death by their sheer corpulent bulk and by the presence of the emblematic skirt. The representations conveyed the continuity of the community, a control on the fragility of human 'breath', through the retention of an enduring corporate image. The pair of seated figures may also have played on the cycle of life, by representing a child in the hands of one seated figure and a mortuary offering vessel in the hands of the second (Stoddart 2007). Reassuringly, this individualised cycle of life is held firmly by the enduring corporate figures, both corpulent and skirted. The dominion of death suggested by the life cycle is countered, encased, and controlled by the continuity of the community lineage. These reassuring figures presided over the ceremonies unaided by any human agency. By contrast the next class of object was completely dependent on human agency, since they necessarily *participated* in the death rituals. The plaque figurines, found as a bundle, were unable to stand by themselves, but must have been handled during the mortuary ceremonies. It can be no accident that these are different stages of production from rough-out, through intermediate production forms, to slightly damaged perfect object. The final class of object is a group of even smaller figurines, which were *placed* with the intact dead in an open display area of the mortuary enclosure. Some are full corpulent representations in baked clay of the human form. Some are simply animal phalanges carved with the form of the human head. In summary, all three of these scales and forms of liturgical material culture relate the connections among the individual human form, the life cycle, and the continuity of the community lineage. The materialised message is that in spite of the frailties of human existence, the overwhelming presence of the dominion of death, there was a prospect of enduring existence, provided proper ritual practice was implemented.

LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION?

One key element considered in greater detail elsewhere is the degree of participation of the Maltese prehistoric populations in the mortuary rituals so far investigated. The age at death and sex profile of the human remains are broadly what would be expected from a Neolithic society, with substantial proportions of pre-mature individuals and a rough sex balance. On the other hand, by any estimate, there were many too few individuals to match the estimated living populations

Size of body representation in the Temple Period
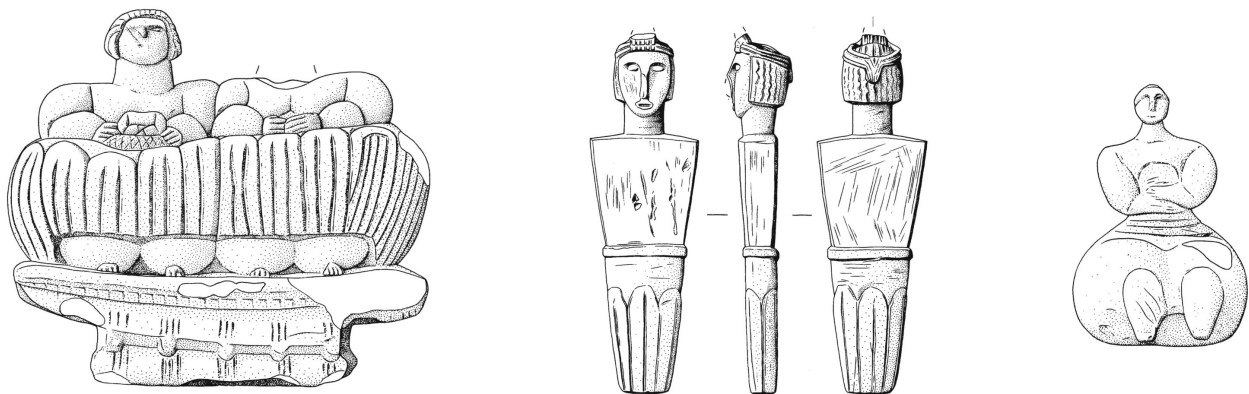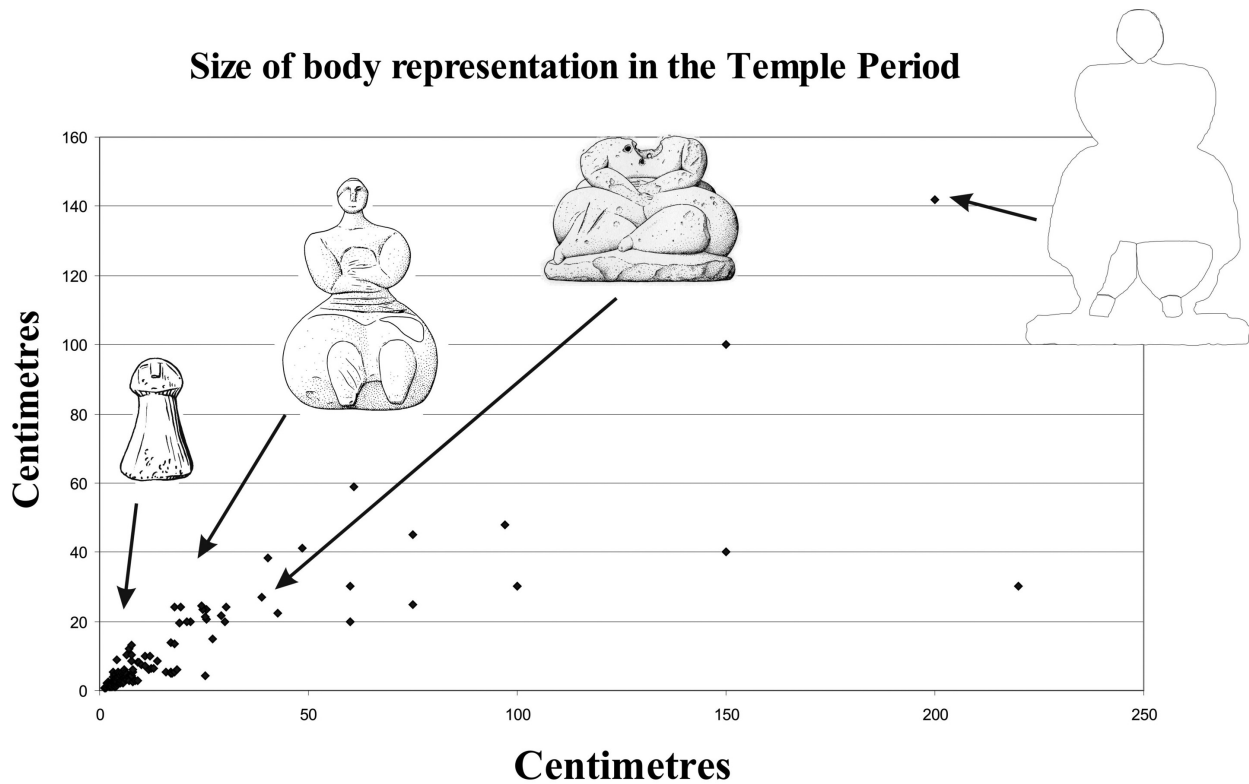
Figure 8.3. Scale and role of Maltese material liturgical culture. Upper, Mortuary liturgical material culture lies at the bottom left-hand end of the scale of manufacture. Lower, Mortuary liturgical material culture. From left to right, presiding, participating, placing. The images are not to scale.

of the island communities over the period concerned. Various explanations can be proposed ranging from the *extreme*, such as mortuary visits from Sicily (Bernabò Brea 1960), through the *selective*, such as restriction by descent group or by status, to the *theatrical*, such as repeated events followed by careful clearance of all preceding evidence after the completion of the performance. The precise nature of the episodes of funerary ritual are likely to be clarified by new chronological

and skeletal research funded by the European Research Council.

CONCLUSIONS

Whatever the relative likelihood of these alternative interpretations of levels of participation, it does seem clear that at least part of the prehistoric Maltese community was engaged in rituals that clearly emphasised the

continuing words of Dylan Thomas: 'They lying long shall not die windily; / Twisting on racks when sinews give way'. The bones were reworked into a new fabric of the social community, providing an eternity unaffected by the dominion of death. We can also approach the same issue through another example of Melanesian ethnography. In New Ireland, the men's rites of death have multiple stages. Primary funerary rites permitted the clearance of *sum* ('negative relations of loss and debt associated with the deceased': Kingston 2003, 689), while secondary funerary rites, many years later, employed 'men's initiatory spirit masks (*tubuan*) [to] take away *nambu* – material evocative of the deceased, including a *lalamar* shell–money effigy' (Kingston 2003, 689). Furthermore the 'tubuan' was the 'poetic image produced by and for the ongoing reproduction of the Lak social world. It exemplified an intersection of contrasting temporal dynamics: ephemerality so that people may live anew, and permanence so that there is identity of form in that renewal. It is an instant of "pure" form recurrently emerging from the timeless, formless *taraiu*, and sinking back once more into its oblivion. It gives specificity to a generality of human absences' (Kingston 2003, 689). In case the reader thinks that these are selective choices of ethnography, there is the widely recognised pattern that each stage of a life cycle should be seen as a link in a chain of transformations without end in many pre-modern societies (Barraud et al. 1994), with a consequent defeat of the dominion of death. Prehistoric Malta provides one such archaeological example of the considerable time depth of the control of the dominion of death.

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House Societies and Founding Ancestors in Early Neolithic Britain

Julian Thomas

INTRODUCTION

The combination of AMS dating, high-precision calibration, and the use of Bayesian statistics is gradually creating a more refined chronology for the Neolithic of northwest Europe (Whittle et al. 2008, 66). While the more precise dating of particular sites and artefact types is an immediate consequence of these developments, the implications for our understanding of Neolithic social relations and social practices will take rather longer to work through. One specific area in which a chronology that operates at the level of generations rather than centuries or millennia will potentially have a profound impact will be in the investigation of mortuary practices and funerary monuments. Until recently, it was possible to consider particular sites and structures as individual manifestations of processes that distinguished entire blocks of time ('the Early Neolithic', etc.). But as our temporal resolution begins to render the construction and use of these sites as increasingly event-like, some of our established interpretations will need to be modified. In this contribution, I will begin by revisiting two important accounts of megalithic burial in northwest Europe, before showing how new dating evidence from Britain raises difficulties for each, and finally suggesting a revised reading of the evidence.

In 1981, Robert Chapman built on an approach to the social significance of mortuary practices that had been pioneered by Arthur Saxe, Lewis Binford, Joseph Tainter and others to suggest that megalithic tombs in Europe should be understood as formal disposal areas linked to emerging territoriality on the part of human groups (1981, 75). While traditional perspectives had focussed on architectural similarities with structures in the east

Mediterranean in order to establish the ethnic or cultural affiliations of the 'megalith builders', Chapman sought instead to emphasise the demographic and social circumstances of the earliest Neolithic communities. In particular, he argued that where critical resources become increasingly restricted, corporate descent groups may use the conspicuous placing of the dead as a means of laying claim to these resources and controlling their transmission through the generations (Chapman 1981, 74). One important effect of Chapman's approach was to erode the exotic and exceptional character of megalithic tombs by lodging them more firmly within the continuum of west European prehistory. For although the megaliths represented something new in the scale of their monumentality and their architectural elaboration, in another sense they could be seen as a continuation of trends that had developed during the later Mesolithic.

In Portugal, Brittany, and Denmark, a series of flat-grave inhumation cemeteries of Mesolithic date had been identified in locations of enhanced ecological productivity, such as estuaries, straits, peninsulas, and islands. These reflected a shift towards the intensive exploitation of aquatic resources, such as migratory fish and marine mammals, as the post-glacial period had developed. Later, when agriculture was introduced, the construction of megalithic tombs could be seen as a continuation of an extant tradition of mortuary practice, building on the idea that access to key resources was sanctioned by the presence of the ancestral dead (Chapman 1981, 80). While the nature of those resources had changed, megalithic tombs were often concentrated in regions that had had dense populations of Mesolithic hunter-fisher-gatherers. The implication of Chapman's argument is that megalithic tombs can best be understood as *cemeteries*, or places

in which groups of people linked by kinship and descent placed their collective dead. It follows from this that tombs would have been used for burial over an appreciable period, perhaps by quite small social groups, and that the excavated tomb population constitutes a more-or-less representative sample of Neolithic demography (e.g., Hedges 1984, 176). In this respect, Chapman's argument connected with a continuing debate over the status of Neolithic funerary monuments as the resting-places of entire communities, or as the preserve of a restricted elite. Richard Atkinson (1968, 91), for instance, had argued that as the funerary deposits contained within long cairns and earthen long barrows had built up over many centuries, this form of burial had only been afforded to a minority of the members of the communities that had built them. The bodies of the majority 'were habitually disposed of in a way which has left no archaeological trace' (Atkinson 1968, 92).

Reacting against Chapman's argument a few years later, Ian Hodder (1984) attempted to recover the historical and cultural particularity of chambered tombs and earthen long barrows. For Hodder, identifying tombs as merely one kind of formal burial amongst others neglected the rich symbolic associations of their architecture. In particular, he noted the formal similarities between mortuary monuments in Atlantic Europe and rather earlier houses in central Europe. These included the trapezoidal form, orientation towards the southeast, elaborated entrances in the broader end of the structure, and flanking quarry ditches (Hodder 1984, 59). Thus cairns and barrows 'evoked', 'referred to', or 'signified' houses, yet they were not houses, for they were tombs (Hodder 1984, 63). This argument drew on a long history of debate on the relationship between longhouses and long barrows (e.g., Childe 1949, 135), but placed this into the context of recent developments in social and cultural theory.

Hodder sketched a sequence in which a symbolic elaboration of the house and domestic paraphernalia including pottery developed in central Europe during Linearbandkeramik (LBK) and post-LBK times, in a context in which biological reproduction and the control of labour power had become central to social strategy. Here, women were celebrated as reproducers of the lineage, but also secluded and monitored by elder males, as is the case in many kin-based societies. During the fourth and third millennia BC social competition shifted from reproductive capacity to productive resources (and particularly land), as settlement expanded to fill up the landscape and intensive horticulture was replaced by extensive plough agriculture. At this point, the cultural elaboration of the house was transferred into the sphere of death, ancestry, and the past. Monumental tombs now became symbols of continuity and stability for dispersed and mobile social groups who increasingly lacked a fixed domestic focus (Hodder 1984, 65). While these tombs referred to the domestic world, they did so within a quite separate sphere of symbolism and ritual action. One important criticism of Hodder's approach rested on the lack of spatial and temporal overlap between houses and tombs in the European Neolithic. For people building a long cairn or a long barrow in fourth millennium BC Britain, did the longhouses of central Europe represent a cultural archetype or a social memory, or was any connection between the two simply imposed by archaeologists in the present (Barrett 1987, 471)?

THE 'SHORT CHRONOLOGY' OF FUNERARY ACTIVITY AT HAZLETON NORTH

Hazleton North is a long cairn of the Cotswold-Severn tradition, located on the Gloucestershire Cotswold hills east of Cheltenham, one of a pair of long mounds immediately north of Hazleton village. It was totally excavated by Alan Saville between 1979 and 1982, in one of the most detailed and meticulous investigations of a megalithic tomb conducted in recent times (Saville 1990). The cairn was highly structured, with a series of sub-rectangular embayments filled with limestone rubble attached to a central spine of pitched limestone blocks, and with a forecourt at the western end framed by a featureless cuspate façade (Figure 9.1). Two orthostatic chambers were set within the mound, one accessed by a passage leading to an entrance in the northern side of the cairn, and one in the south. The chambers and passages contained more than nine thousand pieces of human bone, representing the fragmentary remains of at least forty-one persons (twenty-two adults and nineteen children) (Saville 1990, 182). Apparently, the bodies had initially been introduced into the structure in a fleshed condition, and had progressively become disarticulated (Figure 9.2). This was in part a consequence of bones' being pushed aside to facilitate further inhumations, but there had also perhaps been some deliberate reorganisation of remains, such as the placement of skulls at the bases of orthostats (Saville 1990, 250). Towards the end of the use of the monument, two of the orthostats of the northern passage collapsed, blocking the passage. The last burials introduced to the
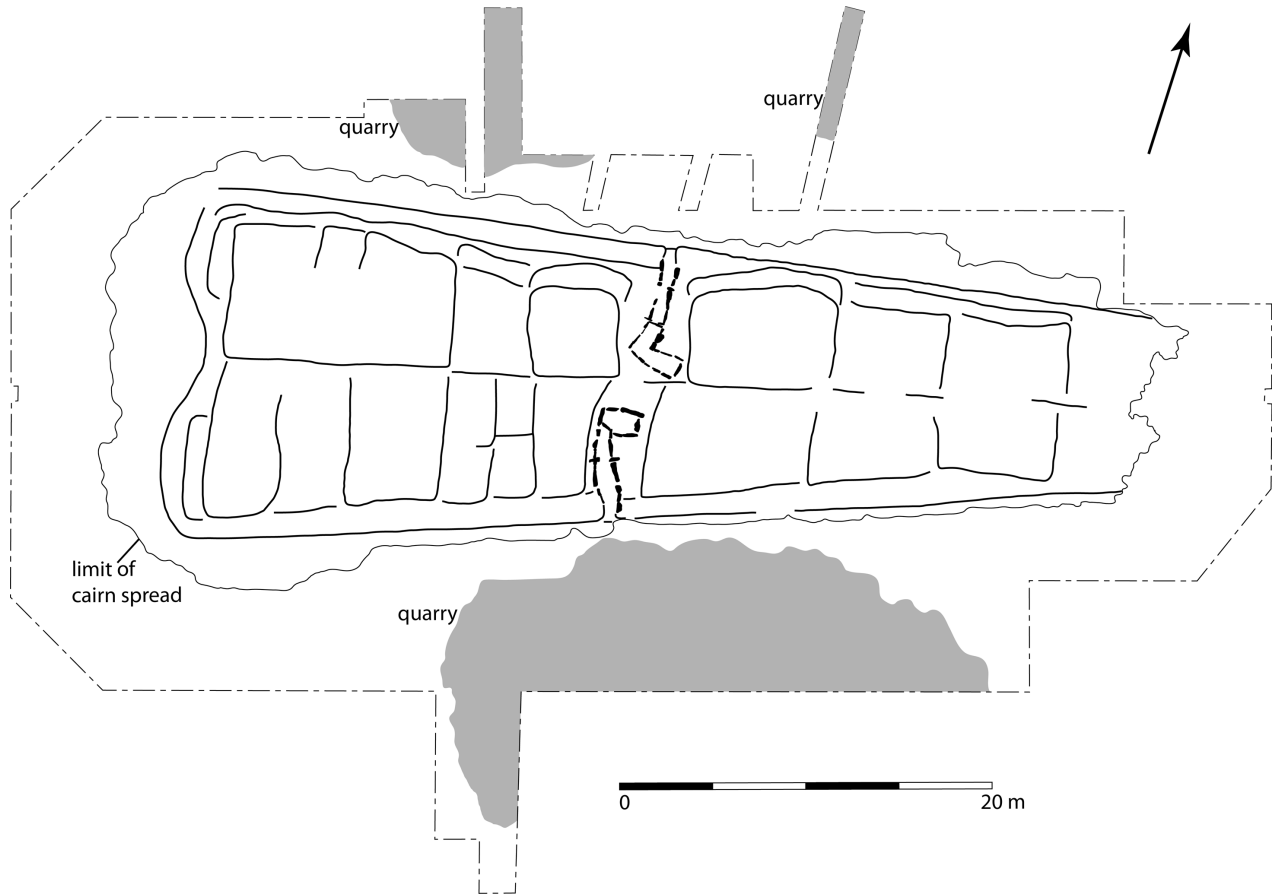
Figure 9.1. The Hazleton North long cairn, near Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.
Redrawn after Saville (1990).

northern entrance area subsequent to this collapse were found in a less disordered state than the remains in the chambers. This 'snapshot' of mortuary practice at the end of the sequence provides support for the view that deposition in a fleshed condition followed by disarticulation had been the norm throughout (Saville 1990, 104; Figure 9.3).

Subsequent to the excavation, what was for the time an unusually comprehensive suite of radiocarbon dates was obtained from the human remains, and these proved to be remarkably homogeneous. Eighteen of these dates were statistically inseparable, and in an interim publication on the dating evidence it was concluded that all of the burials could have fitted into a period of 140 years (Saville et al. 1987, 116). The authors speculated that these results might indicate that the Cotswold-Severn phenomenon had been much more short-lived than hitherto imagined and reflected on the composition of the tomb population. The number of bodies deposited in the chambers might have represented all of the people who

died within a small community over a period of less than a century. However, if the bones had built up over two or three centuries the 'community tomb' model became harder to sustain, and some criteria for selection must have been employed (Saville et al. 1987, 117). Once again, the principal possibilities appeared to be either an egalitarian group (or at least one with equal access to a funerary facility) or one dominated by a social elite.

Over the past quarter of a century, more of the long cairns of the Cotswold-Severn group have been dated, and more finely grained chronologies have become possible (see, for example, Smith & Brickley 2006). One of the effects of this has been to discount the suggestion of Saville et al. that all of the tombs were built over a very short period. Instead, it appears that long cairns in southwest Britain were constructed over a span of some four centuries or more, and that typological differences provide very little indication of where a given monument might fall within the overall sequence (Whittle et al. 2011, 468). However, the more substantive point

South chambered area

North chambered area

South chamber

South passage

N

North entrance

North passage

South entrance

North chamber

0   2 m
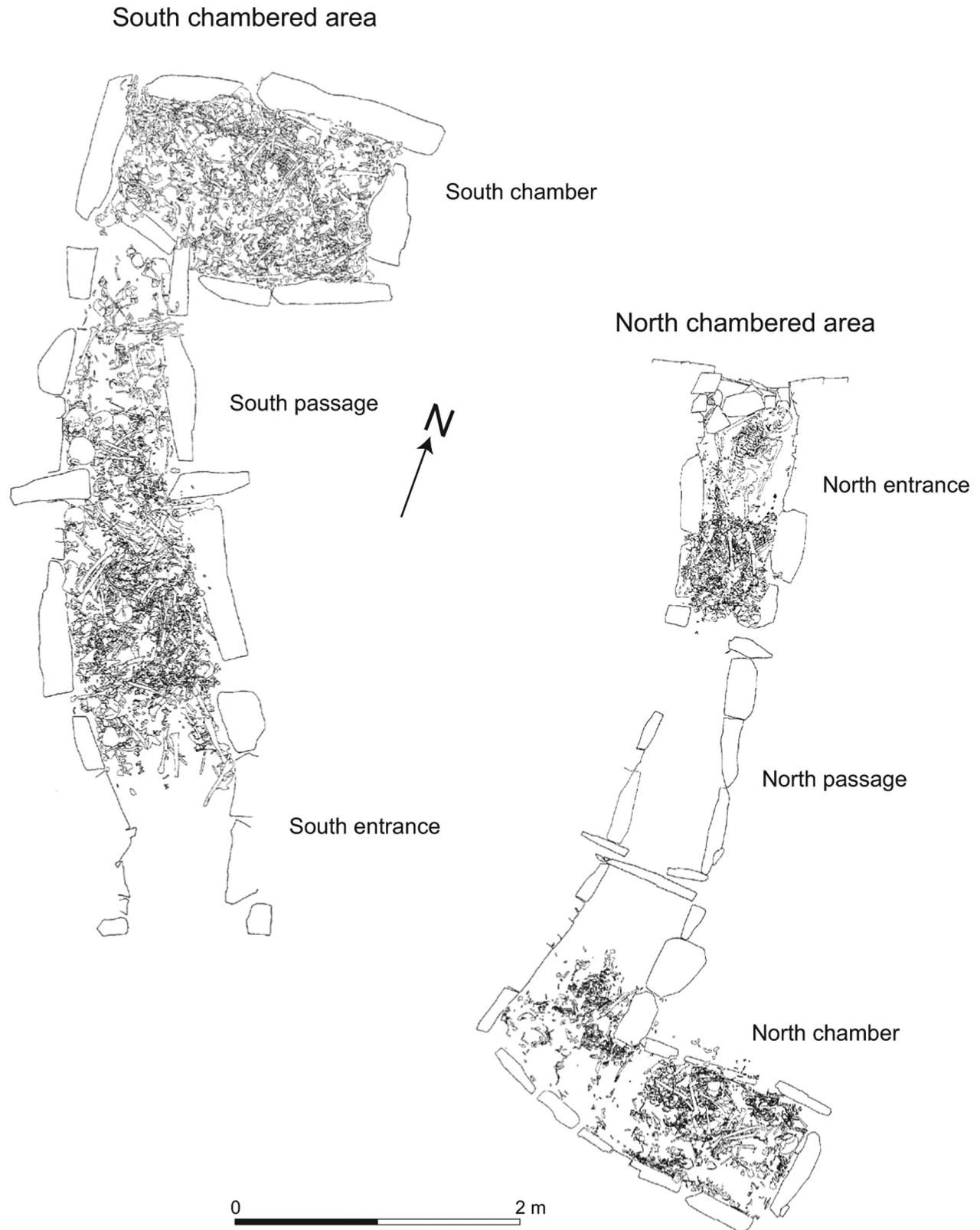
Figure 9.2. The contents of the north and south passages and chambers at Hazleton North.
From Meadows et al. (2007).

Figure 9.3. Human remains in the northern entrance of the Hazleton North long cairn, showing the virtually complete condition of the final inhumation.
Photo: author.

made by Saville et al. about the limited period during which funerary activity took place at these sites has been thoroughly vindicated. Rather than their being in use as places of burial throughout the Early Neolithic, it seems that the construction and brief use of individual sites were dispersed throughout the period.

A recent re-evaluation of the chronology of Hazleton, based on a series of new high-precision radiocarbon determinations, underlines this point. The application of a Bayesian statistical model to these results suggests that the deposition of human remains within the structure may have taken place over no more than thirty to sixty-five years (at 68 percent confidence; Meadows et al. 2007, 54). Moreover, if the possibility that some of the individual bones in the chambers were 'ancestral' remains that had been curated for a generation or two before being introduced to the tomb (although apparently not

having been in circulation for a century or more), this figure is reduced to a period of five to twenty years. However, it also appears that this very limited phase of intense use was followed by a much more protracted period during which the monument was still subject to sporadic activity. This included the deposition of animal bones: joints of meat or carcases, presumably introduced to the chambers as offerings of some kind. This irregular use may have continued for three centuries or so and could conceivably have involved the veneration of the original burials (Meadows et al. 2007, 61). The clear implication is that while Hazleton North was only used for funerary practices for a comparatively short period, the cessation of this activity did not mean that the monument had ceased to be of importance to the descendants of those who had been interred within it.

A series of other recent chronological analyses of long cairns and long barrows in southern Britain suggest that the short duration of funerary activity at Hazleton was not out of the ordinary. Depending upon which Bayesian model is preferred, deposition at Ascott-under-Wychwood in Oxfordshire probably lasted between either 65 and 160 years, or 70 and 110 years (Bayliss et al. 2007a, 37–40). The primary burials at the West Kennet long barrow in north Wiltshire were probably deposited over 10 to 30 years (Bayliss et al. 2007b, 94). At Wayland's Smithy in Berkshire, the primary monument was a small earthen long mound with burials deposited over a period of 1–15 years (Bayliss et al. 2007b, 114). Later, a much larger long cairn was constructed over this mound, and a second set of burials placed in a group of transepted orthostatic chambers. The salient point here is that funerary activity at Wayland's Smithy formed two distinct horizons, each following an episode of construction. This further underlines the point that the termination of mortuary activities at these sites did not result in any decline in their significance for the living.

FROM HALLS AND HOUSES TO HOUSE SOCIETIES

For some while, the comparative scarcity of dwelling structures of Neolithic date in mainland Britain and Ireland has been identified as a problem (Bradley 1987). For the most part, traces of habitation were confined to pits, groups of stakeholes, and scatters of stone tools and debitage held in the topsoil (Holgate 1988). A possible solution offered itself in the form of a series of large rectilinear timber buildings (or 'halls') dating to the earlier

Neolithic, whose occurrence was very infrequent before the 1990s. On the British mainland, early finds included halls at Llandegai in Gwynedd (Lynch & Musson 2004), Fengate in Cambridgeshire (Pryor 1974), and Balbridie in Aberdeenshire (Ralston 1982). Infrastructure work associated with the economic boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s in Ireland resulted in the discovery of a very large number of similar sites. But there are important contrasts: the Irish examples are relatively small, plank-built houses (Smyth 2010), and although more than eighty of these are now known, there are only around fourteen of the appreciably more massive British halls. While a few other possible sites are known from aerial photography, it seems unlikely that the numbers will grow very much higher (Brophy 2007, 79). In both regions, it appears that these sites were not distributed evenly through the millennium or so of the earlier Neolithic period. The Irish houses were all apparently built in a very short period (probably fifty-five to ninety-five years), perhaps a generation or so after the start of the Neolithic (Whittle et al. 2011, 595). In Britain the situation is a little more complex, for the Neolithic did not begin synchronously throughout the island. Rather, the adoption of domesticates and new forms of material culture commenced in the southeast of England before 4000 BC, spreading northward and westward over a period of three hundred years or more (Whittle et al. 2011, 868). But as in Ireland, the British halls always appeared a little while after the earliest Neolithic presence in any given region, as if following after the crest of a wave of change.

The earliest known example of a British hall, White Horse Stone in Kent, was relatively plain in construction, and it can broadly be compared with the very scarce contemporary buildings on the continent, such as those at Hautes Chanvières near Mairy in the Ardennes (Booth et al. 2011; Marole 1989). While comparatively irregular in construction, White Horse Stone shares the aisled plan and parallel wall-slots seen at Mairy. Yet later British structures became larger (as at Yarnton in Oxfordshire: Hey & Barclay 2007) or more massively constructed and architecturally elaborate, as with the Scottish examples. Those at Balbridie and Claish near Stirling had a series of internal partitions that served to seclude their innermost spaces whilst guiding or constraining the movement of anyone entering the building as they progressed from exterior to interior (Barclay et al. 2002; Figure 9.4). One notable feature of both Claish and Warren Field in Aberdeenshire is the presence of pairs of very large, non-structural axial posts, which appeared

to have been dug out and removed before the buildings were deliberately burnt down (Murray et al. 2009, 40). So, as the phenomenon of hall-building developed and moved northwards, the structures became progressively more elaborate and imposing, and were used for a shorter period before being wilfully destroyed. This is not to say that the halls were not inhabited, but it appears that other considerations became more important as time went on. Moreover, these buildings did not develop into a sustained architectural tradition. Halls were never replaced, and it seems that hall-building was a phase of activity that followed immediately in the wake of Neolithisation before quickly being terminated. Arguably, this might be understood as part of the process of 'becoming Neolithic'.

How, then, are we to explain the short-lived character of Early Neolithic hall- and house-building in Britain and Ireland, and how does it relate to the short duration of mortuary practice at many Early Neolithic funerary monuments? In the context of Neolithic Ireland, both Gabriel Cooney (2000, 52) and Jessica Smyth (2010, 2) have explicitly evoked the concept of 'house societies' in order to address the potential character of communities that were co-resident in substantial domestic dwellings. Here, I wish to use the idea in a slightly different way. The notion of *sociétés à maison*, or 'house societies', was originally introduced by Claude Lévi-Strauss, as a result of his attempts to understand Kwakiutl and Yurok kinship arrangements, which appeared to combine elements of both patrilineal and matrilineal descent (Lévi-Strauss 1982, 164). These were societies amongst whom the 'house' referred both to a physical structure and to a social entity. Further, these 'houses' were treated as 'moral persons', which held property and entered into exchange and competition with one another, as if they were social actors (Gillespie 2000, 22). 'House societies' are corporate social groups that hold an *estate* of material and immaterial wealth and are composed of persons who claim membership of a household attached to a physical dwelling (Waterson 1990, 142). The importance of the house as a building (and of the other material elements of the estate) is that it provides a persistent physical core that facilitates the transmission of names, goods, and titles across the generations (Lévi-Strauss 1982, 174). Moreover, a house society is a closed and bounded community, which maintains property within its metaphorical walls.

For Lévi-Strauss, house societies represented a kind of social–evolutionary stage, in which the language of kinship and affinity was used as a way of expressing the new

0   10 metres
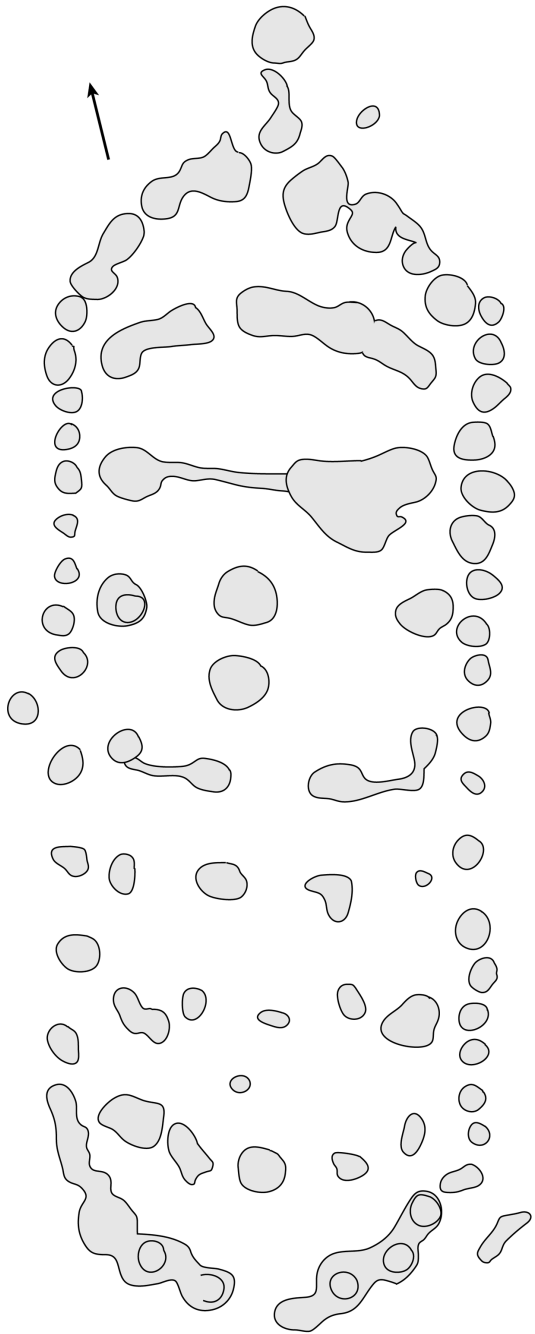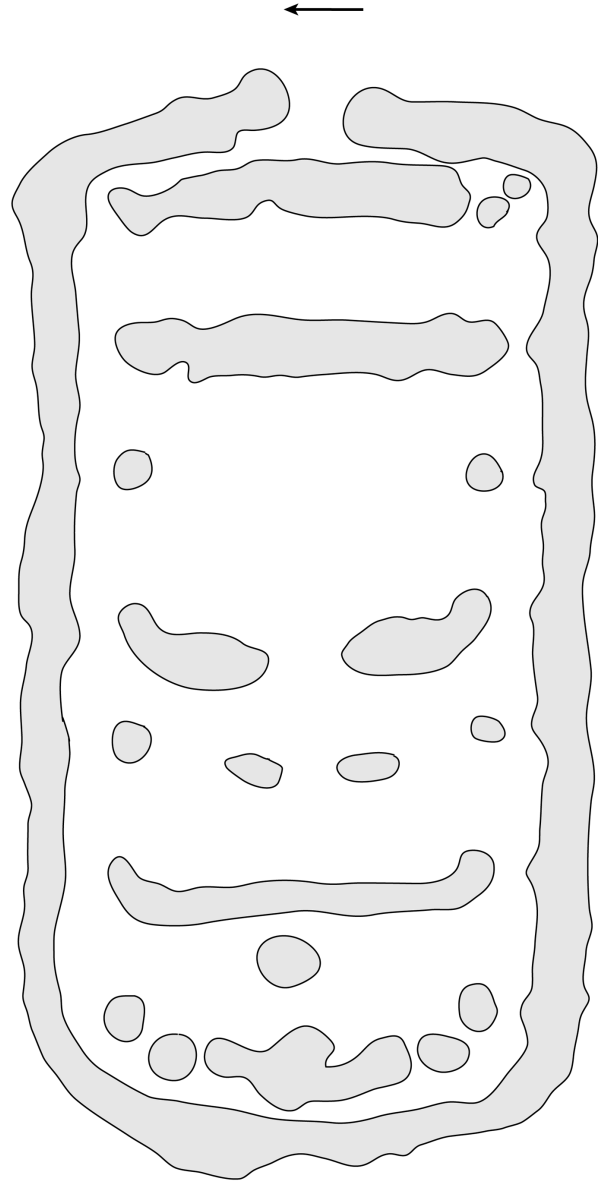
Claish Farm   Balbridie

Figure 9.4. Plans of the Early Neolithic timber halls of Claish and Balbridie.
Redrawn after Barclay et al. (2002) and Fairweather & Ralston (1993).

realities of social inequality, as more stratified social hier-archies began to develop. It is for this reason that house societies are so widespread, both geographically and tem-porally (Lévi-Strauss 1982, 186). Others, however, have argued that house societies are less of a distinct social type than a symptom or process that can overcome many different kinds of society. The common feature appears to be that houses locked in mutually competitive relations tend to emerge in periods of significant structural trans-formation (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995, 10; Waterson 1995, 54; Sissons 2010, 272). As Gillespie argues, 'there are conditions under which entire societies might transform themselves into *sociétés à maisons*, only later to become less "housey"' (2007, 30). The recurring, mutually associ-ated factors are rapid social change, the transformation of property relations, and the emergence of more bounded and competitive social formations.

In house societies, the physical structure of the house serves as both a vehicle for the transmission of property and a symbol of collective identity, and these features both contribute to the durability of the social group. The *building* of the house often takes on a very great importance, for as well as an act of labour it represents the moment in which the community is brought into being. For this reason, themes of *foundation* and constitution are often fundamental to house-building. Groups including the Ilongot of Luzon, the Iban of Borneo, the Rotinese of Timor, and the Minangkabau of West Sumatra all place great stress on the erection of the main house-posts, which are seen as the spiritual focus of the building (Fox 1993, 21; Sather 1993, 72; Ng 1993, 14). For the Nualu of Seram the house-posts are understood as sacred, and the construction of a new house requires that a human head should be taken and placed in the socket of the principal post (Ellen 1986, 10). The digging-in of the house-post is often compared with the planting of a tree, and the building itself is considered to have a life-force, rather than being composed of inert matter. The house-post is the root from which the house society springs.

While in some cases the 'houses' of house societies are actually dwelt in, in others the house is an origin-place or storehouse, maintained by a caretaker group and inhabited by the spirits of ancestors (Waterson 1995, 54). These buildings can have a range of functions: as men's houses, council houses, meeting-houses, or head-hunters' lodges (Lea 1995, 206). Because founding ancestors are of critical importance for house societies, the remains of the dead are often present in these structures, whether bur-ied beneath the floor or displayed within (Kirch 2000,

103). These remains may themselves take on a sanctified quality, as tangible traces of the collective past, and form part of the body of wealth that the society hands down to itself through the generations. James Whitley (2002, 119) has wisely cautioned against the overuse of exces-sively generalised conceptions of ancestors and ancestry in British prehistory. However, rather than simply reject-ing these ideas out of hand, it may be more productive to identify the range of different kinds of relationships that living communities can maintain with the dead genera-tions. These can be highly variable, ranging from a gen-eralised sense of kinship with an anonymous collectivity of the dead, to descent from specific named persons, while the ancestors can be located close to the living or in an entirely separate realm (e.g., Watson 1982, 181). Amongst house societies, the role of ancestors is gener-ally a much more specific one. They are the people who founded a particular bounded social group, and from whom the current household claim descent – even if this may be fictive (Helms 1998, 35). This kind of ancestry is not restricted to any particular subsistence regime and is primarily concerned with claims to shared identity and collective property.

FOUNDING THE HOUSE

It is arguable that the complex developments that fol-lowed the onset of the Neolithic in Britain become more comprehensible if we hypothesise that the period saw the foundation of house societies. Whether we consider the adoption of new economic and symbolic resources by indigenous groups or the arrival of continental migrants (and this author strongly favours the former), this was a time of profound change. One aspect of this change would have been the social transformation that would have been necessitated by the first adoption of domes-ticated plants and animals, irrespective of whether these immediately became staples that were fundamental to everyday diet or novelties that were consumed more sparingly. Marshall Sahlins (1972, 191) famously described the 'generalised reciprocity' of hunters and gatherers, in which generosity to others is the norm, while the obli-gation to repay any gift is minimal. In a later contribu-tion, Nurit Bird-David suggested that hunter-gatherers do not practise reciprocity at all, but are engaged in a 'cosmic economy of sharing', in which the environment is perceived as giving unstintingly, just as a parent pro-vides for its child (1992, 30). Accordingly, human beings should offer whatever they have to those in need and

avoid being identified as selfish or stingy. The corollary of this is 'demand sharing', in which hunters, fishers, and gatherers must willingly give up whatever they have collected or face shame and social sanction (Peterson 1993, 860). As James Woodburn points out, the ubiquity of these arrangements amongst foraging peoples is such that it often proves difficult for them to adopt agriculture (1982, 447). They will find it hard to accumulate land, livestock, seed corn, or tools if their kin and affines can simply request whatever they have, often only to consume it on the spot. If indigenous people had any role in the formation of Neolithic societies in Britain, they would have needed to find ways to extricate themselves from the demands of generalised sharing relationships, so that they could acquire cattle and plant cereals without the fear that they would be swiftly dispersed. The Irish houses and British halls can be seen as the instruments through which bounded social groups formed themselves and neutralised the traditional obligations of sharing and mutual aid, in order to concentrate on the accumulation of wealth and success in social competition. By the thirty-seventh century BC this process would result in the emergence of large-scale cattle economies, new networks of inter-regional exchange, and larger social gatherings conducted at causewayed enclosures.

However, as we have seen, the construction and use of halls and houses were short-lived. While some mortuary monuments date to the very earliest part of the Neolithic, earthen long barrows and chambered long cairns became more common during the thirty-eighth century BC and later (Whittle et al. 2011, 874). In other words, the decline of large timber buildings was matched by the increasing importance of funerary monuments. As we have seen, these contained the remains of one or two generations of the dead, and these conceivably represented the founding ancestors of a particular 'house'. Amongst the timber halls the symbolism of founding the house was very explicit in the massive, paired, non-functional posts at Claish and Warren Field. This same symbolism was also deployed in the earthen long barrows, where linear timber chambers containing the remains of the dead were bracketed between huge oak uprights (e.g., Haddenham: Evans & Hodder 2006, 89; Fussell's Lodge: Ashbee 1966; Figure 9.5). In many cases these uprights were formed from a split tree-trunk, so that the ancestral bones were contained within a single cloven entity, presumably emphasising a sense of unity, wholeness, and boundedness (Noble 2007). The insertion of these timbers into the ground symbolises the coming

into being of the social group, which is verified by the presence of the physical remains of the founding generation. A similar box-like arrangement of two or three uprights with side-slabs was also rendered in stone in the case of the Cairnholy I long cairn in Galloway (Piggott & Powell 1949, 116; Figure 9.6).

It may therefore be inaccurate to consider the chambered cairns and long barrows of Neolithic Britain to have been 'formal disposal areas', which simply continued a trend toward collective burial that had begun in the Mesolithic. The monuments were not constructed primarily as an interment facility for the dead. On the contrary, the dead were introduced to these structures in order to lend legitimacy and symbolic power to buildings that operated primarily as enduring material foci for mutually exclusive and highly competitive social groups. We might go so far as to break down the distinction between the 'construction' and 'use' of these monuments, and argue that the deposition of the deceased and the re-ordering of their remains represented part of the process through which a properly constituted structure of a certain kind was brought into being. This was less 'burial' than 'building', in other words. Moreover, it was not that already existing communities built these structures in order to lay claim to land and resources. The construction of first halls and then tombs provided a medium for bringing such collectivities into existence. Increasingly, these bounded social units would have secured a competitive advantage, by being able to accumulate wealth (especially in the form of livestock) and dispose of it in building up prestige and indebtedness, through gift-giving, feasting, bridewealth, and the acquisition of clients. This would have established a dynamic in which people found themselves compelled to form themselves into house societies, in order to avoid a position of permanent social disadvantage.

While Ian Hodder was correct to identify the symbolic connection between houses and tombs, the reference need not always have been to the long-abandoned longhouses of central Europe. In the British case, long mounds and long cairns drew constructional details from similar structures on the continent, but they also overlapped spatially and chronologically with the timber halls of the primary Neolithic. Thus Barrett's criticism that the house-tomb relationship was anachronous no longer applies. However, it may be inaccurate to say that long barrows and chambered cairns 'referred to' or 'represented' houses at all. In a more important sense they *were* houses. Hodder stresses that tombs are not houses,
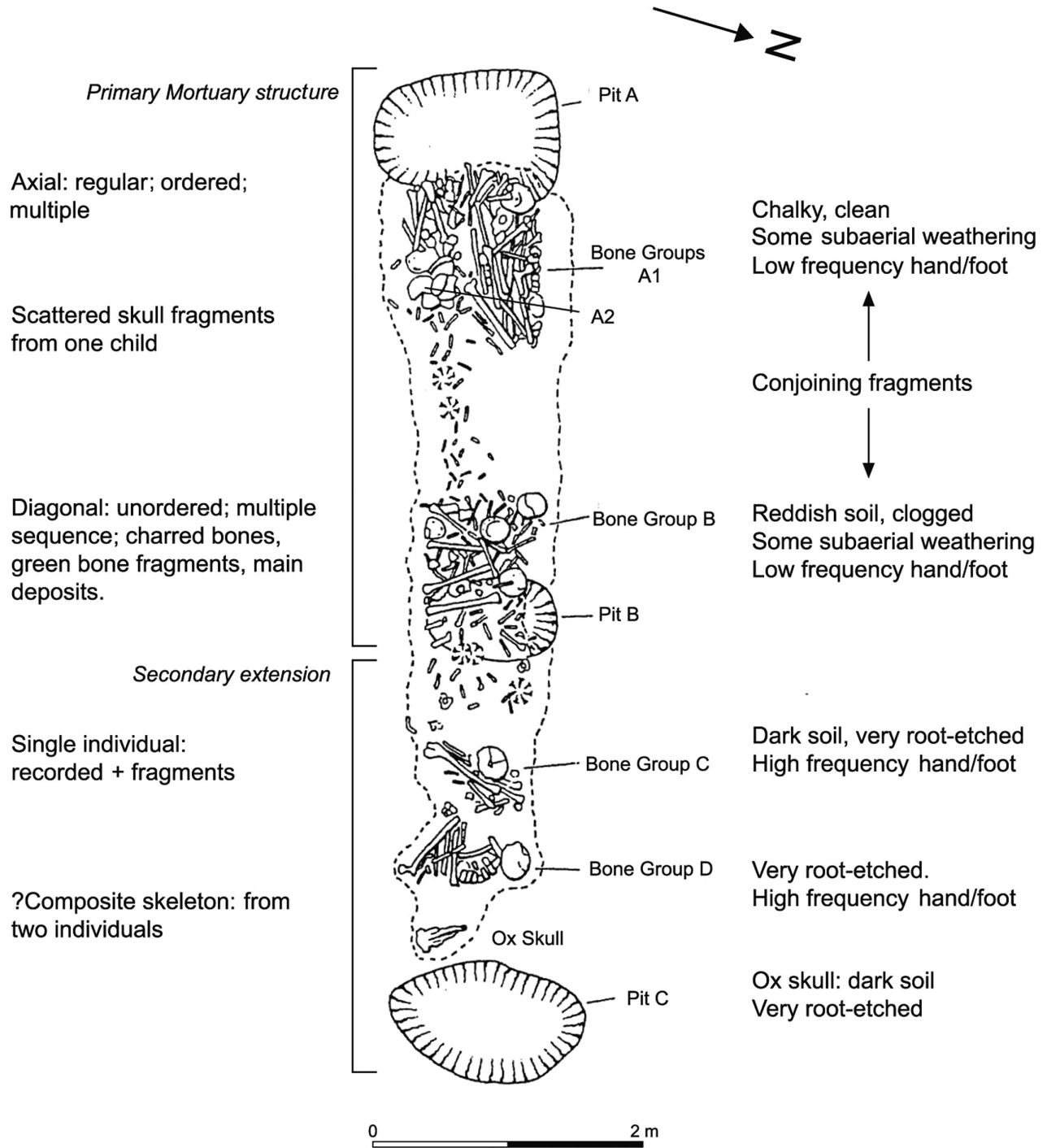
Figure 9.5. The chamber contents at the Fussell's Lodge long barrow, Wiltshire. From Bayliss et al. (2007b).

because they contain the dead rather than the living. But this presumes that houses are first and foremost 'machines for living', or dwelling structures. For house societies as described by Lévi–Strauss, this is not necessarily the case

at all. The house is the enduring material evidence of the community's genesis, around which it coheres and that provides the guarantee of its survival into the future. People may often inhabit such structures, but this is not

Figure 9.6. The chamber of the Cairnholy I long cairn, Galloway.
Photo: author.

always the case. Long cairns and long barrows stripped away any domestic role for the house, replacing it with a more durable material form, which was lent further symbolic power by the physical presence of the founding ancestral generation.

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Constructing the Ancestors

Constructing Ancestors in Sub-Saharan Africa

Timothy Insoll

> The dead have something to do with the living.
> (Muller 1976, 270)

INTRODUCTION

The vagueness of this quote, made in describing Rukuba funerary practices in Benue-Plateau State (Nigeria), encapsulates the degree of generalisation that can be inferred about the relationship between the living and the dead in sub-Saharan Africa. Beyond this, great diversity exists, in how the living and the dead interact, in the concepts surrounding these relationships, and in the form and materiality of funerary practices and associated rituals that can assist in creating immortality. The agents of immortality, where such concepts were relevant, were often ancestors. 'Ancestors' are phenomena that have been over-used in some aspects of archaeological interpretation (Whitley 2002; Insoll 2011a), yet they were of primary importance in understanding after-death concepts in sub-Saharan Africa, and it is impossible to consider death in Africa without acknowledging their primacy. However, this statement also belies considerable complexity both in the categories of ancestor and related ascriptions of personhood, and in the mechanisms through which ancestor status was achieved in Africa.

The approach employed in this discussion is to utilise examples from both African ethnography and archaeology. In so doing there is no implication that the present is analogous with the past or that the examples are generally applicable. This is merely a mechanism employed to indicate the diversity and complexity found. The problem of ethnographic timelessness is also addressed by using the past tense throughout so as not to create false images of continuity of practices unverifiable in the present. Emphasis is also placed on African indigenous religions. Syncretic traditions that have developed to incorporate ancestors within, for example, Islamic and Christian frameworks of belief are not addressed here (cf. Blakeley et al. 1994; Insoll 2003).

It is also necessary to stress that thinking of ancestors as discrete religious phenomena in many African indigenous religions, past and present, is perhaps incorrect. Ethnography suggests (e.g., Fortes 1983) that ancestral veneration was probably 'bundled' with other concepts, potentially, but not necessarily, linked to metaphorical relations with animals and plants, sometimes simplistically referred to as 'totemism' (Lévi-Strauss 1991; Fortes 1987), the ascription of animate properties to materials and locations, belief in a high God, and earth and medicine cults related to fertility and healing (Insoll et al. 2013). Equally, thinking of African indigenous religions out of context is also slightly problematical for they related to, and were structured by, other concepts and referents surrounding, for example, landscape, technology, perceptions of bodies and identities, and plants and animals (Insoll in press).

ANCESTOR CONCEPTS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Attempting adequately to summarise and generalise as to why ancestors were (and are) important in many African societies is difficult, for there is no single meaning. What

is clear, even if it is a worn interpretive route, and simplistic to state, is that ancestors did serve to reincorporate the deceased within society. Relevant here is Van Gennep's (1960) three phase rites of passage model, which serves, famously, to indicate how these rites move through phases of separation, liminality, and reincorporation. In essence, death separates, funerals and associated rituals relate to liminality, and ancestors reincorporate (Metcalf & Huntington 1991, 32–3; see also Creese, this volume).

Anthropological perspectives on the meaning and role of ancestors in Africa vary. Fortes (1987, 66) notes that there is general agreement that ancestor veneration 'is rooted in domestic, kinship and descent relations, and institutions'. On the basis of his Talensi (northern Ghana) studies (e.g., Fortes 1945, 1949), he suggests that where it was strictly defined, this presupposes 'geneonymy', that is, 'the commemoration of ancestors by name' (Fortes 1987, 67). These were usually exemplars for good social behaviour, and models for morality. Turner, who worked on the other side of the continent among the Ndembu (northwestern Zambia), indicates how ancestor concepts could be variable (e.g., Turner 1957, 1967). He describes how among the Ndembu the ancestors did not embody or represent the moral order, 'so much as continue after death to interact with their living kin, in terms of their human likes and dislikes' (Turner 1967, 293).

The relevance of the whole concept of ancestors in Africa has also been critiqued. Kopytoff (1971, 140) argued that the term 'sets up a dichotomy where there is a continuum', and the ancestors are better configured as 'elders'. This argument is invalid. It is obvious that living elders have to be conceptually separated from dead elders even if recourse is made to an alternative descriptor such as 'forefather', rather than 'ancestor', to describe the status of the reincorporated deceased. Also as Muller (1976, 258) notes, stressing continuity between the living and the dead in the way Kopytoff does ignores the fact that elders die and do take on different qualities than when they were alive.

This need not, however, deny either complexity or inequality in how ancestors were configured. Ancestor status could be unequally ascribed, and not everyone necessarily became an ancestor, and such selectivity was evident in the Grassfields of Cameroon (e.g., Jindra 2005, and see later discussion). In contrast Yoruba (southwestern Nigeria) belief was that every adult who died automatically became an ancestor, whereas children were excluded (Abimbola 1973, 75–6). Great

subtlety and variety, based on various criteria, could be manifest in ancestor status, conceptualisation, and veneration. Unfortunately, whether ancestors were only male, only female, male and female, androgynous, or lacking gender is not always stated, and thus far from clear. This is unfortunate, for differently engendered ancestors had different qualities, temperaments, and personalities sometimes ascribed them. For example, Apentiik (1997, 25) notes how among the Bulsa (northern Ghana) female ancestors were perceived as more tolerant than male ancestors.

It also has to be recognised that beliefs in concepts of ancestors were not found in all societies in sub-Saharan Africa. Baeke (1995, 61) describes how the Wuli (central Cameroon) used collective tombs but had no ancestor cult and instead attempted to break communications with the dead. Similarly, La Fontaine (1959, 48) describes how, traditionally, the Bagisu (Kenya/Uganda) did not bury the dead but exposed them for wild animals to eat. Whether this also implied the absence of all forms of ancestor veneration is not clear, for reference is also made to the skulls of circumcised men, and women who had borne children, being placed in the lineage shrine (La Fontaine 1959, 48). Clearer in this respect was the overall absence of burial practices amongst the Samburu (Kenya), where the body was exposed under a tree for scavengers, except for infants, who were buried under the sleeping hides in the hut (Spencer 1973, 107), the lack of burial perhaps being linked to what Spencer (1973, 108) describes as the Samburu denial of 'a positive belief in any existence after death'.

In various hunter-gatherer societies in Africa burial practices were also often minimal or non-existent. Woodburn (1982, 202) notes that among, for instance, the Hadza (Tanzania), Baka (Cameroon), and Mbuti (Congo), these did not go 'very far beyond, the directly practical requirements for getting rid of a rotting corpse'. Ancestors seem of lesser or no importance, and their inclusion within systems of belief in Africa would generally have seemed to be a correlate of sedentary, agricultural societies. This does not, however, indicate an absence of concern with the dead or 'under-developed' concepts of personhood in hunter-gatherer societies and is not found in all instances. In the Cape Folded Mountains (South Africa) Walker (1994, 99) indicates how the strong correlation in the Late Stone Age among graves, living sites, and rock art 'suggests that ancestors may have become important in ritual activity, which is atypical of traditional San practice'.

'GOOD' AND 'BAD' DEATH

Recurrent in creating ancestors of all forms were concepts of 'good' versus 'bad' death. To become an ancestor the deceased must have died a good death; conversely its absence could preclude this status. 'Good' death has been described as 'one which suggests some degree of mastery over the arbitrariness of the biological occurrence by replicating a prototype to which all such deaths conform' (Bloch & Parry 1982, 15). Good death could include, for example, some natural deaths, some deaths by accident, some deaths in warfare, some sacrifices. It is not possible to be unequivocal about the defining criteria, for these varied, and definition could be further dependent upon post-mortem diagnostic divinatory or oracular practices (e.g., Evans-Pritchard 1937, 73; Devisch 1991, 118).

To a certain extent 'good' death and the acquisition of ancestral status were dependent upon 1) defining the cause of death and 2) possessing the corporeal remains of the deceased. The utilisation of substitute burials could attest to the conceptual importance of the latter. Plug and Badenhorst (2009, 191) describe how the Shona (Zimbabwe) and Venda (South Africa) used these where someone had either died at a distance and the grave was known or the remains could not be traced. For the former, a stone or soil from the distant grave would be interred in another grave in the home area along with the body of a sacrificed fowl. Where the remains could not be traced, animal bones found in a forest, which had to include a goat or baboon skull and goat legs, would be similarly buried, wrapped in a blanket. These substitution practices can be evident archaeologically. Excavation of 1,021 graves (undated) in advance of dam construction in Eastern Venda, Limpopo Province (South Africa), recorded 106 graves containing sheep, cattle, and goat burial substitutes; 13 containing only soil; and 12 with only non-faunal material (Plug & Badenhorst 2009, 191). Similarly, the presence of four empty burial jars in the cemetery of Houlouf (Cameroon), dated to AD 1500–1600, was interpreted as indicative of 'symbolic tombs for those who died elsewhere or in foreign lands' (Holl 1994, 138).

'Bad' deaths are perhaps easier to define. These could include, for instance, suicides, witches, deaths in childbirth, executions, some sacrifices, deaths from some diseases, and, perhaps, some anomalous people such as twins, or those who deviate 'from the chromato-biologic norm' (Zahan 1975, 103), that is, albinos. Active processes

of disposal could differ considerably to those surrounding good deaths. Attempts might be made to destroy the remains of bad deaths rather than curate or substitute them when missing. At Isoya, south of Ife (Nigeria), in contexts dated to the first half of the nineteenth century AD, the remains of a body cut into two parts, missing the phalanges of the feet, and with three pointed stones found, one in front of the ribs, one inside the ribcage, and the other in front of the skull, were interpreted as those of a witch. The burial was also described as lacking a proper grave in comparison to the others recorded, and the three stones as possibly 'missiles thrown at this individual' (Eluyemi 1977, 109).

Cremation is also generally rare in the literature on African funerary practices, perhaps because it destroys the body if completed effectively, thereby removing the direct or indirect reference point for ancestor status. Where found, cremation seems generally to correlate with bad death, as with Sundi (Congo) litigants who had died after eating *nkasa* poison: these were cut up as an animal would be and the pieces burnt or thrown away (Laman 1957, 95). Likewise, suicides in the kingdom of Buganda (Uganda) were cremated at a crossroads, using as firewood the tree where the suicides had hung themselves (Roscoe 1911, 20–1). Significant here is also the context of disposal, a crossroads. These recur as an important focus in the landscape in parts of Africa (Insoll 2015), and crossroads were places for deposition and ritual activities such as burying protective medicines in the pre-colonial Akan kingdom in Ghana (McCaskie 1995, 296) or as deposition foci for some of the personal possessions of the recently deceased, as with the Bambara of southern Mali (Zahan 1974, 31–2).

Repeatedly, context is particularly significant, and it can be seen that bad deaths were disposed of as waste beyond domestic space, be it settlement, shrine, or agricultural land. Hence the Kalabari (southern Nigeria) disposed of the bodies of witches in the *si-piri*, or 'bad bush' (Tasie 1977, 53). Similarly in the Grassfields kingdom of Mankon, witches' corpses were left where they had fallen after the poison ordeal, outside the city limits for the scavengers (Warnier 2007, 193).

These examples seem to indicate that 'bad' deaths will enter the archaeological record less frequently than good deaths, being dispersed by scavengers and destroyed by anthropic or natural processes. Contrary to the curation of the corporeal remains of 'good' deaths primarily within the earth, it appears that those from 'bad' deaths were dispersed materially to deny immortality. This is

generally correct, yet possible exceptions exist. In south-ern Nigeria, Talbot (1927, 53) describes an example of an area of bush that was the place 'for reception of the corpses of the unburied dead'. Although burial was again denied, the area was strewn with cowry shells, lengths of cloth, bones of the deceased, and pots, 'broken that their astral forms might be set free for the use of the shades' (Talbot 1927, 53).

The potential for immortality of less auspicious intent must thus also be recognised, but this was usually con-tained. The generic category of 'bush', representing the wild, was often the dumping ground for those people whose mortality challenged social norms and space. Even where burial was used, the 'bush' context was often pre-ferred, as with Bobo (southern Burkina Faso) women who died in childbirth and who were buried in the bush after a post-mortem cesarean section with the foetus 'placed between her legs in the normal delivery position' (Abasi 1995, 451).

Being sacrificed might also constitute a 'bad' death. Klapwijk (1989) describes two undated pot burials and one pit burial from Magoebaskloof Rest Camp in the Transvaal (South Africa), whose genders are unfortu-nately also undescribed. These are interpreted on the basis of ethnographic and historical parallels as 'the remains of human sacrifices used in rain-making ceremonies' (1989, 68). This is a convincing interpretation, but more can be potentially inferred from the evidence for significant effort was seemingly invested in 'containing' these indi-viduals. For instance, besides the pits and pots that serve this purpose, in one of the pot burials (MK K1), a small pot was found beneath a larger pot with a skull between the two weighed down by a rock. The small pot rested on another stone, and underneath were further fragmented disarticulated human remains. Conceivably this small pot could have been filled with medicine as an additional 'containing' agent. In the pit burial (MK K2), besides the skull being packed into a stone compartment, parts of the thorax were described as being covered in a 'black-ish sandy material' (Klapwijk 1989, 66), perhaps also the residue of a containing substance. Potentially these were dangerous, angry, or errant spiritual entities who had been subjected to a 'bad' death.

It is impossible, however, to state that all sacrifices were necessarily 'bad' deaths. Emic and etic perceptions of this could have varied. On the death of an Akan ruler human sacrifices were made to accompany the deceased. Some of these were volunteers, as from the king's wives; oth-ers 'did not seem to have any say in the matter' (Rattray

1927, 109), such as various holders of offices at the court, prisoners of war, and criminals. The concept of 'good' and 'bad' death in this context was very subjective. Interpreting such subjectivities in archaeological con-texts could be difficult. For instance, at Kerma (Sudan) in the Kerma Classique period (ca. 1750–1550 BC) large numbers of people linked to the royal court were sac-rificed and placed to accompany royal burials in a sac-rificial corridor leading towards the funerary chamber in the grave tumuli (Bonnet 2004, 72, 76–7). The link-ing element behind both these examples is that though these sacrifices might have been 'good' or 'bad' deaths, they were probably not destined to be ancestors in their own right, but served others who were, that is, the ruler.

MIDDENS AND 'POT' CHILDREN

Bad deaths could thus also relate to notions of persons and matter out of place, and potentially polluting and dangerous 'waste' needed categorising and containing (cf. Chapman & Gaydarska 2007, 78), as within the 'bush'. A further context for containment could be provided by the midden, which was frequently perceived as a limi-nal space, sometimes within the domestic context (Insoll et al. 2013), sometimes beyond it (Junod 1962a, 312–15), but neither wild nor domestic.

Middens sediment and accumulate memory within the landscape (Figure 10.1), in Africa as elsewhere (Insoll in press), and were frequently the location for foetus, neo-natal, and infant burial or disposal (e.g., McCulloch 1950, 45). These are categories difficult to generalise about but were usually considered as not fully formed persons, not capable of being ancestors, yet potentially spiritually troublesome, and both feared and missed, and thus emo-tionally charged entities. Midden usage for the deceased could be either more or less structured. Thomas (1920, 393, 402) refers to the latter, with small children being thrown onto the midden at the Benin (Nigeria) settle-ment of Idwa and babies being similarly treated at Soso.

Greater structure is provided by the concept of 'pot children'. In South Africa 'pot children' have been recorded in various archaeological midden contexts. At KwaGandaganda in KwaZulu-Natal, the remains of a thirty-two to thirty-six-week-old baby had been placed in a pot at the base of a midden dated to AD 650–750. Similarly, at Ndondondwane, also in KwaZulu-Natal, a large inverted globular pot was recorded in a midden containing the articulated skeleton of a three-month-old baby dated to the eighth to tenth centuries AD (Boeyens

Figure 10.1. Midden (at rear) with in the foreground a cluster of ancestral shrines, Bonchiig Section, Tong Hills, northern Ghana. Photo T. Insoll.

et al. 2009, 222). The concept of 'pot-children' used here is one derived from Akan (Ghana) terminology for children called after the vessel in which they were buried, also within middens. These are, as with many middens found in other Ghanaian societies, inviolate, precisely because of the powerful, personal material, including dead children, they contain. However, Rattray (1927, 161) excavated (and desecrated) one Akan midden, an act only possible as he was a colonial officer in the then-British colony of the Gold Coast, and found 'many skeletons, not only of infants in pots, but bones of children of maturer years'.

Thinking of these dead infants and their midden contexts as cognate with 'bad' death is almost certainly erroneous. Their containment beside or in proximity to the domestic space suggests that they were not akin to the more dangerous categories of potential immortals discussed previously. Abasi (1995, 468) describes the midden

among the Kasena (northeastern Ghana) as constituting a 'paradoxical domain: it contains waste, yet its size demonstrates the age, vitality or importance of the house'. Conceived thus, although dead, these infants were also testimony to the fertility of the lineage; they contributed to the net family or lineage unit that cannot be conceptualised as solely comprising the living but also the dead – ancestors – and more ephemeral parties such as the infants and children only fleetingly alive.

CONSTRUCTING ANCESTORS

The processes by which the dead were treated constitute a primary stage in constructing ancestors. These were varied, including, for example, burial in myriad positions, configurations, and contexts; desiccation; exposure; secondary treatment in several ways; and curation by various means. These can only be selectively considered here

with emphasis placed on those pertinent to constructing ancestors and potential concepts of immortality. The evidence discussed is also sometimes difficult to interpret as regards gender significance, for this is not necessarily clearly stated. There is certainly potential for a dedicated gender-based study of the archaeology and materiality of ancestors in sub-Saharan Africa.

Burial

Grave form could evoke the house, accommodating the deceased in a similar way to the living. Abasi (1995, 456), for instance, notes the structural resemblances between the Kasena grave and house form, the grave being round and narrow at the top entrance, like the most private room in the family house, which also has a narrow entrance but is spacious inside. Similar analogies could be suggested for other tombs. The grave form of the Uduk of the Dar Funj area between the White and Blue Niles (Sudan) is described as having comprised a pear-shaped chamber, a little more than 1.50 m in depth, with skins on the floor on which were placed recumbent corpses of an unspecified number lying on their right side, accompanied by grave goods such as beads, hoes, spears, snuff, and red oil, and a few handfuls of earth, the whole covered with skins. The tomb entrance was sealed with a stone, and only the shaft above filled with earth, leaving the tomb hollow (Cerulli 1956, 34).

The form of the Uduk house would have to be compared to strengthen such analogies. However, the emphasis on leaving and maintaining space for the deceased, and excluding the earth, except perhaps for a few symbolic handfuls, is more common – hence, perhaps, appropriately housing the ancestors. Such a concern is also evident in the grave dug for the rainmaker of Nyembara in Mongalla Province (Sudan), who was buried lying on a string bed, on the right-hand side if male, or left- if female, in an underground recess ca. 2 m in length by 1 m width and 0.70m height. This is less spacious than the Uduk grave but exhibits the same concern, being sealed with large slabs of stone, wooden stakes, and sacking, 'so that no earth shall fall on him' (Beaton 1932, 88).

Maintaining an empty space in graves for the deceased is also repeatedly evident amongst many of the mountain societies of northern Cameroon (e.g., Langlois & Bonnabel 2003, 39; David 1992, 191). The form of the grave was frequently like a flat- or round-bottomed vessel with a narrow neck that was sealed with a stone slab, for instance, Kapsiki and Gemjek male tombs (Langlois

& Bonnabel 2003, figure 4). This physical form of the tomb was significant as the act of manipulating the corpse through the narrow tomb entrance was perceived as marking the passage to another existence – an ancestral one (Langlois & Bonnabel 2003, 43). Furthermore, one of the symbolic meanings ascribed such tombs was as a uterus, others being granaries, huts, or pots, aptly described by David (1995, 89 cited in Langlois & Bonnabel 2003, 44) as 'all appropriate abodes for the process of ancestralisation through processes that include germination, gestation and possibly fermentation'.

The position of the deceased at the time of burial was also often significant in creating ancestors. Sitting upright is described by Langlois and Bonnabel (2003, 42) as 'une attitude active' and was found among the Mafa, Wula, and Mofu-Diamaré of northern Cameroon. For the same area David (1992, 193) refers to sitting as a position of superiority, or at least equality, and it was thus associated with chiefs and elders. Furthermore, the use of this posture in the tomb could also serve as another inversion of reality, for both male and female elders were often buried in a seated position, 'negating at the end of life the gender distinction that is so fundamental during it' (David 1992, 193). Holl (1994, 139) ascribes similar elite status to the burials recorded in a seated position at the Houlouf cemetery.

Seating as a position of power in the grave is clearly also indicated in an unusual burial dated to the first half of the nineteenth century at the Mabyanamatshwaana site (South Africa). Here, a young male of seventeen to eighteen years of age had been buried sitting upright within the central workspace of a group of blacksmiths. An anvil was placed between his legs and the body had been put within a *sesigo*, a plaited grass container used to store grain. This evidence is merely described (Pistorius 1995), not interpreted. Yet significance in relation to how this young man was being transformed into an ancestor is potentially manifest here in several ways: first, as noted, the seated position; second, the iron-working association, as a material and technology of power; third, the use of a granary as the container for burial, granaries being linked practically to the storage of grain, but symbolically to ideas of germination and fertility. Multiple metaphors and transformative associations could thus be proposed with the ultimate purpose of ensuring immortality in various ways.

Another burial described but not interpreted from Mtemankhokwe in southern Malawi (Juwayeyi 1991) suggests power, status, and ancestral creation, partly through grave posture but also via context and associated grave goods. Here a double burial was recorded: dated

to the late eighteenth–early nineteenth centuries AD, one individual had been buried sitting on another lying on its back in an extended position. Unfortunately, the gender of neither individual is specified, but the sitting burial had a range of associated grave goods including three pots, an ivory bangle, twenty-six arrowheads, and a large 'spear-like object' (Juwayeyi 1991, 30) with a blade length of 564 mm and a shaft of 700 mm. In contrast, the prone burial only had 157 beads found around the neck. This suggests a good death potentially accompanied by a human sacrifice, with power and authority manifest in the dominant posture and, for instance, the spear-like artefact. Alternatively, both might be ancestors, but this seems less likely.

However, communal burials are also found that could indicate linkages with ancestors en masse. At Monk's Kop (Zimbabwe) an 'ossuary' in a cave was excavated containing 'some hundreds of individuals' (Crawford 1967, 378), whose number is otherwise unspecified. These were C[14] dated to the late thirteenth–early fourteenth centuries AD, and in most instances the corpses had originally been placed in an upright, seated position surrounded by pots.

Desiccation

Desiccation could also be used as a precursor, alternative, or adjunct to burial, usually in relation to elites. Such attention was focused on a chief's body amongst the Edo of southern Nigeria where the corpse was dried for three years before 'real' burial commenced (Basden 1938, 487). The chief was dried in a dugout canoe in a small shed with a lit fire. When the three-year desiccation period had elapsed the canoe was used as the coffin for the chief, who was buried in a grave dug in a room, the location of which is unspecified (Thomas 1920, 405). Similarly, at Muhambwe, northeast of Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika (Tanzania), renowned chiefs were buried in a cave near the summit of the sacred mountain of Mwariye (Bagenal 1925). Prior to this the corpse was dried on a platform with a fire lit underneath. When dry it was folded and sewn inside an ox skin, and then transported to Mwariye, where it was placed on a platform high up in the cave. Here, it would seem, veneration and curation of ancestors in a portable and durable form are evident.

Exposure

Central to the process of desiccation was transformation from wet body to dry corpse. Yet desiccation could preserve skin, and dry skeletal remains might instead be the required transformative state. This could be achieved through burial under the ground, allowing decay processes to take their course, or through exposure. Both processes could serve to transform mortals into immortals by altering their physical state.

The corpses of Akan kings were transformed through exposure. This occurred at the 'place of drippings', where for eighty days and nights the body lay in a coffin on supports above a pit. The decomposition fluids dripped into the pit and on the eightieth day the corpse was removed; the remaining flesh scraped off, greased with buffalo fat; the long bones re-articulated with gold wire; and the *suman*, the amulets or power objects, put back on the skeletal remains where they had been worn in life. The remains were then replaced in a coffin and conveyed to the mausoleum at Bantama, the centre of the royal ancestor cult (Rattray 1927, 117). Transformation was certainly crucial here, but the application of grease indicates that neither a purely 'dry' state, nor a form fully disconnected from the previous one (re-articulation, re-attachment of amulets) was necessarily always desired.

Transformative States

Desiccation, exposure, and embalming produce different transformed states that correlate with varied understandings of personhood, emotions such as grief, and concepts of separation and reincorporation of the deceased. Surma (Ethiopia) funerary practices seem to have partially functioned to delay putrefaction via holes burnt in (unspecified) parts of the body using a red-hot iron. Prior to this the corpse was bound with creepers and smeared with ash; subsequently it was wrapped and sewn into a cowhide and hung from the central post of the hut until burial at the next harvest time. Cerulli (1956, 50) seems to be referring here to male burial but does not indicate whether or not creating ancestors was a correlate of this process. Such a connection would not appear unwarranted considering the effort invested, but the significant point is that transformative states varied and a simplistic generalised wet to dry logic is inappropriate, as is clearly also indicated by Kaulicke's discussion of Middle Archaic transformative funerary practices on the Peruvian central coast in this volume.

In certain instances, the germination of the corpse was the desired symbolic state, analogous to millet germination, as perceived in northern Cameroon (Langlois and Bonnabel 2003, 42). The symbolic linkage between tomb

Table 10.1. *Colour use on corpses in southern Nigeria*

Location or ethnolinguistic group	Colour, substance, and usage
Igbo (Abadja and Nkanu)	Red cam wood dye smeared on the corpse
Igbo (Abadja and Nkanu – Obolo Division)	Chalk spots also put on the corpse
Igbo (Abadja and Nkanu)	White chalk circles drawn round the eyes of a 'man killer'
Igbo (Ishielu)	Red and yellow dyes rubbed on the corpse and chalk circles also drawn around a man's eyes
Ibibio (Efik)	Powder from ground coral beads rubbed over the face of a dead man
Anang	Red and black dyes painted on the corpse and chalk also put on the faces of men
Boki (Uge)	Red and yellow dyes painted on the corpse and chalk marks drawn from the forehead down the nose and back to the corner of the eyes

Note: It is not known whether colour uses mirrored or differed from patterns of colour and substance usage in life.
Adapted from Basden 1938, 505, 507, 513, 519, 523.

and granary sometimes made would fit within such a conceptual scheme (David 1992, 193), as would the literal use of a grain container for burial purposes described previously at Mabyanamatshwaana. Could it be suggested more generally in relation to archaeological materials that ancestors germinated in the grain bin, or gestated in the earth? Or that ancestors fermented in their pot-like tombs, or literally in pots where these were used for burial? The latter is frequently found, as with the Sao (twelfth–fifteenth centuries AD, Chad and Cameroon) burials utilising two large jars with the openings facing each other, and the corpse placed within in a foetal position (Jansen & Gauthier 1973).

Transformation could also be achieved through substances applied to the corpse. Zahan (1975, 101) has referred to a 'tegumentary language' of body adornment and body painting in pre-colonial Africa. Such a language could be perpetuated or reversed in relation to the deceased, perhaps where reversal could entail using different substances, patterns, or 'language' to those of life. The substances of transformation could be various: oils, clays, chalk, ochre, wood dyes (Table 10.1). Ochre usage in funerary contexts has been recorded archaeologically in numerous contexts in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, at the Iron Age Farm St Clair site (South Africa; precise dates unspecified), two skeletons, one in a sitting position, were recorded with red ochre encrusted grindstones, as was a third burial with traces of specularite on the skull and red ochre around the skeleton (Humphreys 1982, 68–9).

Secondary Treatment

Yet thinking of ancestor creation as solely involving the primary treatment of the deceased, even if such treatment could be for extended periods, also limits understanding. Ancestors were to a lesser extent created, but more usually maintained, venerated, and 'socialised' by secondary treatments of varied forms. This could include exhumation of remains. Madden (1940) describes the re-opening of the grave of a Latuka Rain Queen in south Sudan. All the skeletal remains were removed and placed in a large pot and the earth was carefully sifted so none were missed. The pot and its contents were then conveyed approximately fifteen kilometres southeast to the sacred hill of Logurren, their final resting place.

Another unusual instance of possible secondary treatment was recorded in contexts dated to the early to mid-first millennium BC in Porcupine Cave in the Laikipia Highlands (central Kenya). It was noted that the bones in burials 2 to 6 had been baked. For example, burial 2 had a small stone cist associated with it that had served as an oven, with the fire set on top. The body had either been tightly tied or fragmented to fit into the oven or baked 'in a secondary funeral ritual after the soft parts were totally decomposed' (Siiriäinen 1977, 168). The Rukuba, whose ancestor and soul concepts were mentioned previously, linked these concepts to secondary treatment of human remains and the physical state of these remains. Souls were not believed to reincarnate until the dry bones were left and the 'cadaveric odour has disappeared' (Muller 1976, 261). Graves were re-used, leaving time for decomposition before re-use. Bones were feared, and during this process if a skull with teeth still inside was found, the teeth were chopped out with a stone, as it was believed they chewed people in the grave (Muller 1976).

The skull as a focal point of ancestor creation, propitiation, veneration, and secondary treatment is a widely found phenomenon (see Croucher, this volume,

for further examples) and recurs in sub-Saharan Africa in both archaeological and ethnographic contexts. The Ovimbundu (Angola) removed the head of a chief, which was then buried for a year. It was subsequently exhumed, was kept in a box in the tomb, and was consulted in times of stress, such as droughts (McCulloch 1952, 47). Apparent in many aspects of secondary treatment is considerable anatomical knowledge and autopsy skill. This is rarely considered or commented on, but an exception is provided by Volavka's (1998, 74) reference to the *banganga ngó*, members of the *ngó* male society of the Upper Ogooué Basin (Gabon and Congo) who were autopsy specialists and provided 'skeletal relics of the deceased'.

Not all skulls need, however, to have been related to ancestors to be the focus of ritual action. For example, in the Meta Chiefdoms of Bamenda (Cameroon), heads that were taken during war were cleaned in an anthill, then had camwood dye applied to them and were stored in a lodge (Chilver 1965, 15). Skull veneration could refer to controlling ancestor status, perhaps through withholding such a status to one's enemies by possessing such a powerful relic, as might be suggested by the Bamenda example. It could also relate to legitimisation of authority, with recourse to the ancestors. Law (1989) has considered the role of skulls in political and ritual legitimation in the pre-colonial kingdom of Dahomey. The head was seen as a power object and as such was appropriated by the ruler, but hierarchies of skull importance existed and were manifest in how skulls were utilised and displayed. Hence skulls of kings were preserved in brass pans, skulls of chiefs and headmen in calabashes, and skulls of soldiers used to decorate roofs and to pave the floor of the king's sleeping apartment in the Abomey palace.

In other areas special treatment of the skull was related to the re-use of tombs. David (1992, 196) describes how in northern Cameroon, the skull was generally given special treatment when a tomb was re-opened; the skulls of earlier burials might be reburied in a pot (Cuvok) or replaced between the legs of the new corpse (Mafa). Less respect might also be shown. Gufler (2000, 356) relates how the Yamba (Cameroon) re-used communal graves, but if the spirit of the deceased continued to bother the living, the grave was opened and the skull removed 'and unceremoniously thrown into the river'.

Alternatively, the articulated skull could be the focus of deposition and veneration in the grave itself. Looking at the data presented by Fagan (1969, 64–8), this is what is suggested by the central burials dated to the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries AD at Ingombe Ilede

Figure 10.2. Complete anthropomorphic figurine from Yikpabongo, Koma Land, northern Ghana.
Photo T. Insoll.

(southern Zambia). For example, burial II/1 had bundles of iron and copper bracelets beside the cranium, and the head of burial II/2 was covered with a heap of broken potsherds, the largest of which contained a goat horn core, perhaps remains from a sacrifice. Burial II/3 had a variety of tools used for wire drawing under the skull and an ox maxilla to its north. Burial II/8 also had copper ingots and wire drawing tools deposited by the head, and burial II/10 had a large pot covering the skull with another smaller pot inside.

Ancestors could also be secondarily treated and fundamentally transformed by fragmentation processes. Chapman and Gaydarska (2007, 4) suggest that 'bonds predicated on material culture' can be used to create and maintain 'lasting bonds between persons or groups' via deliberate fragmentation 'and the use of fragments in enchainment processes', as Malafouris describes in this volume in relation to Mycenaean prehistory. This seems to be also what is represented in some of the mounds of Koma Land in northern Ghana dated to between the sixth and twelfth centuries AD (Kankpeyeng & Nkumbaan 2009; Insoll et al. 2012). Excavations in one mound in the village of Yikpabongo (YK10–3/YK 11) recovered 251 figurines and figurine fragments comprising 7 complete figurines (Figure 10.2), 6 largely complete figurines, and 238 figurine fragments. The majority of these represented often stylised humans or, if fragmentary, human body parts such as heads, eyes, and hands, and 221 were classed

as gender unknown or not applicable on the basis of the elements present. Seven males (including two possible males potentially represented by stylised beards), three females, and twenty androgynous or genderless identifications were made (Insoll et al. 2012).

The possible use of the figurines for libations or the insertion of substances is suggested by the cavities sometimes pierced into the figurine singularly or in combination, from the mouth, ears, nostrils, or top of the head. Selectivity in what accompanied the figurines and fragments was evident in the mound, and besides iron objects such as razors, quern stones, and copious pottery, a single fragmentary human skull was recorded, with fragments of human long bones placed to the southwest and southeast of the skull, the latter in association with a human jawbone. A pile of human teeth had also been placed directly east of the skull, and these were from two individuals, a younger adult of about twenty years old and an older adult (Insoll et al. 2012).

It is apparent that the figurines and figurine fragments seemingly served multiple purposes relating to medicine and healing (Kankpeyeng & Nkumbaan 2009, 201), ritual practices, power, protection, personhood, identity construction and maintenance, and, indirectly, memory. Yet these could all be subsumed within an interpretive framework centred on ancestors, and rather than merely being the detritus of accidental breakage of ritual objects placed together, perhaps the fragments represent, in part at least, deliberate processes of fragmentation and breakage, linking individuals and kin groups through ancestors represented by the figurines, or where fragmented after an individual's death, enchaining (cf. Chapman 2000) the living and deceased to ancestors through figurines (Insoll et al. 2012). Boddy (1998, 271) has made the point that it was not uncommon in Africa for a person to be viewed as 'composite, multiply sourced, and constituted through reciprocal engagement in a recursively meaningful world'. Together the human remains and the figurines and figurine fragments from Yikpabongo could tie into such frameworks and seem to make powerful statements about ancestry.

Curation

Curation is another theme that must be acknowledged in how ancestors were created, and, more importantly, sustained in sub-Saharan Africa. Perhaps the most famous examples of curation of funerary remains and certainly the most widely used for purposes of analogy amongst archaeologists working in prehistoric Europe (cf. Parker Pearson & Ramilsonina 1998; Whitley 2002) are those of Madagascar. In particular, interpretive emphasis has been given to the *famadihana* rituals of the Imerina (Bloch 1971; Graeber 1995). It is not possible to summarise the diversity and complexity of these comparatively well-known practices here, but it is pertinent to highlight just one relevant curation process, wrapping. This is multi-dimensional and multi-layered involving the physical use of many substances that function in many ways. Feeley-Harnik (1989, 103) encapsulates this in her description of wrapping amongst the Sakalava of the west coast as drawing on combinations of 'soft and hard materials like cloth and sticks, trees and stones, cores and bark, trunks and leafy branches, analogues of shrouds and corpses, tombs and bodies, the bones and flesh of human beings, both female and male'.

Wrapping is of course not a curation practice unique to Madagascar: its utilisation at Mwariye, for instance, has already been mentioned. The Bembe of the Ogooué Basin made ancestral cloth figures in which selected skeletal relics were wrapped in cloth. In the same region, bark basket reliquaries containing the skulls and bones of important ancestors were 'carefully wrapped in cloth' (Volavka 1998, 52). The incorporation of bundles of cranial and long bones has been recorded in archaeological contexts. At the Neolithic Kadruka cemeteries in the Northern Dongola Reach of the Nile (Sudan), dated to the sixth to fourth millennia BC, it was apparent that from the earliest period of use graves frequently cut each other. Special attention was often given to cranial and long bones from the earlier skeleton being 'selected and placed in a bundle, on one side of the pit' (Reinold 2001, 6).

The acquisition, display, veneration or propitiation, and curation of skulls have already been described. Teeth form another element that can be similarly treated. Why teeth form such a focus is unclear. They are personal, but no more so than other skeletal remains. However, what might be significant is that when found, some had occasionally been modified ante-mortem and thus perhaps functioned as durable signifiers of personal identities. At Broederstroom in the Transvaal in levels dated to ca. AD 500, six teeth were found deposited in an ash heap (van Reenan 1977). Of these five were human (one maxillary and four mandibular incisors) and one from a baboon (first maxillary premolar from *Papio ursinus*). Of the human teeth one mandibular incisor had a swallowtail modification chipped into it, so named for its

resemblance to the inverted 'V' shape of the swallow's tail. The context is also unusual and they were not charred, suggesting deliberate deposition in the ash heap (van Reenan 1977, 532). Similarly, two of the teeth associated with the skull at Yikpabongo (upper right and upper left lateral incisors), mentioned previously, showed evidence for tooth filing (Insoll et al. 2012). In the Kapanda Tumuli in the Middle Kwanza region (Angola) there was an under-representation of teeth and hand and foot bones. This was interpreted as possibly a correlate of selective funerary rites (Gutierrez & Valentin 1995, 166), but could also be linked to the removal of elements such as teeth for curation elsewhere.

ANCESTORS AND THE LIVING

Besides elements from bodies, earth, place, landscape, and settlement could reciprocally bind ancestors to mortals. This is very clear in, for example, Thomas' discussion of the interplay between ancestors and the living in Early Neolithic Britain in this volume. Hence to begin to understand immortality it is necessary to include the dominion of the living. These linkages can be direct, for example, via graves that reference houses and granaries, as discussed later. Middens can also link into this. They are places of decay, as is the grave, but this should not be necessarily considered a terminal process. Abasi (1995, 465) notes how the grave is 'like the rubbish heap or the process of fermentation that transforms decay into new life'. Waste, including the dead, is implicitly linked with the living and the cycle of life. Metaphorically, this can be repeatedly seen in the funerary context.

Ancestors can also relate to medicine and healing and thus to the direct continuation and sustenance of life (Insoll 2011b). An ethnobotanical survey of Talensi medicine (northern Ghana) found that it was 'difficult to wholly divorce any aspect of Talensi medicine from a ritual dimension or, indeed, a link with shrines' (Insoll 2011c, 193). This linkage was maintained with both the ancestors and the earth as empowering agents via practices such as sacrifice, and therefore further tying ancestors to the living. In Uhero (western Kenya) the linkage between plant medicines in particular and ancestors was much more specific, for 'when they are ingested, inhaled or absorbed into the body, plants do not just *symbolise* ancestors: they bring living and dead in touch' (Geissler and Prince 2009, 608).

This discussion has thus far privileged links between the living and remains of the deceased, how they were transformed into ancestors, and how these were remembered or treated by the living. However, physical links between the corporeal remains of the dead and the living need not be a prerequisite of ancestor status or memory. Graves and the dead can drop from the memory of the living, and as Whitley (2002, 122) notes in relation to ancestors in more general terms, graves and shrines 'are ritually and often spatially distinct'. Evans-Pritchard (1949, 57) records that the Nuer (Sudan) soon forgot graves, and they were not places of cult, where ancestors seem primarily to have served to distinguish lineages and clans (Evans-Pritchard 1956, 92, 114).

The mnemonic role of material culture rather than graves or corporeal remains as linking agents between the deceased or ancestors and the living could also have been significant, and again this is a theme considered in other contexts by contributors to this volume (again see, for example, Malafouris). It is again impossible to generalise about what these relationships might have been. Objectification processes are complex amongst the living, as Ntole (1996, 136) indicates in discussing Mbala (Congo) classifications and the role of objects as 'critical agents in the conceptualization of self and in defining one's relationships with others', let alone in relation to the dead. Material culture might not only represent the deceased but could be the deceased, with either good or bad connotations. Junod (1962b, 165) describes how a man's grave was dug, 'and all his mats and clothing are buried in it. These objects which he was in the habit of using every day, and which have been soiled by the exudations from his body, are *himself*'.

The shrine can provide the context and focus for objectification processes linked to ancestors. These might circumvent midden, grave goods, or inheritance 'disposal' routes, but are not necessarily simple in what they signify, as they frequently have polysemic qualities (Insoll 2008, 395). Material culture can, along with all aspects of death ritual, be used 'for the construction of "persons" that never were' (Garwood 2011, 269). Shrine histories have also to be recognised, for shrine forms, including ancestral ones, are clearly linked to historical, political, and economic circumstances and are not static (cf. Dawson 2009; Insoll et al. 2013). Amongst the Talensi, objects associated with ancestors are frequently enshrined, and these shrines rather than graves are the focus of ancestral veneration (Insoll 2008). An example of such a shrine is provided by the male Yin or Good Destiny (personal) shrine (cf. Fortes 1983). The Yin ancestors serve to provide a biography of the individual through their close links with his
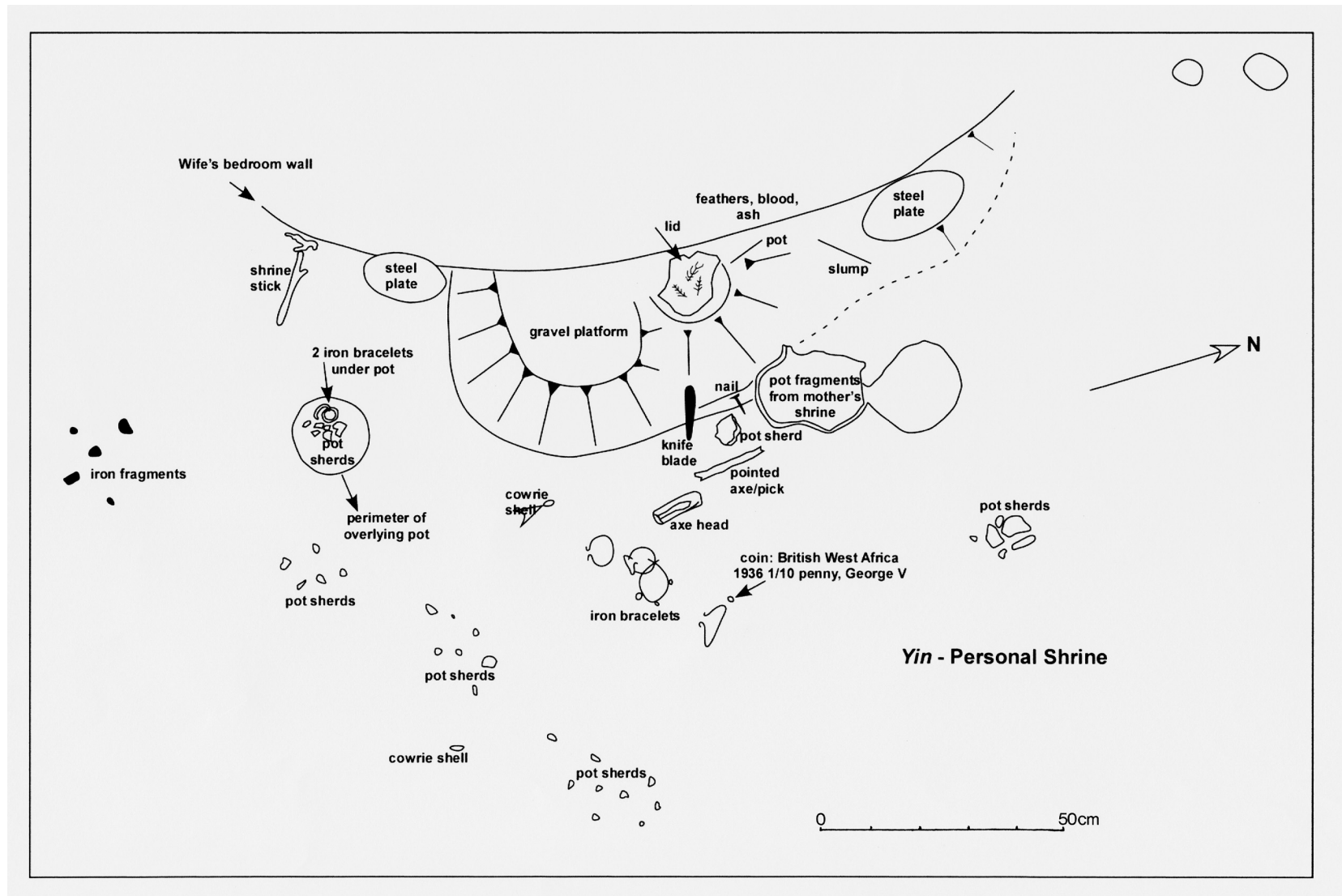
Figure 10.3. Plan of a Yin shrine in an abandoned compound, Bonchiig Section, Tong Hills, northern Ghana.

destiny and in so doing are represented materially in the shrine (Insoll 2008, 383; Figure 10.3).

These household shrines may be formed of objects linked with the shrine holder's biography, usually specific objects with precise associations: for example, the material relics of events such as illness, success in hunting for the first time, or doing well in farming (Fortes 1983, 21) – a hoe or a skull, for example. Alternatively, more pertinent to ancestors, objectification via items associated with the ancestors themselves, such as a razor blade holder and bracelets recorded on a father's shrine in the Tong Hills (Insoll 2008, 392). These objects fit within the framework of Talensi concepts of personhood and the notion of *sii*, described by Fortes (1987, 267) as 'the focus, one might almost say the medium, of personal identity which is objectively represented in possessions characteristic of a person's sex and status'. Exploring this in archaeological contexts is one of the challenges posed in exploring how ancestors are linked to the living.

CONCLUSIONS

As the ancestors can be fickle, so are the living, and ancestors, funerary practices, and associated beliefs can change and be forgotten, and this is perhaps where one of the strengths of archaeology lies, in attesting to the transformative diachronic nature of these processes, as Lau also convincingly indicates for the ancient Andes in this volume. For instance, previously it was suggested that the engendering of ancestors might be the focus of further research. It is of relevance here that over time memory seemingly erases gender. The active biography of ancestors, beyond that perhaps of very significant individuals, generally declines so that they become more and more amorphous, immortal but personally indistinct. Included within these identities that might be forgotten is gender so that whereas women might frequently be precluded a ritual role and importance when alive, and have a lesser ancestral status, if any, after death, time could erase such distinction. Materially change could also occur. Graeber (1995, 263) relates how among the Imerina, ancestors became combined as their names were forgotten, and materially they reduced in size through repeated wrapping and handling so that ultimately they 'resembled wrapped bundles of red earth'.

Relevant changes in funerary practices could also be profound. Although not described with reference to how this might relate to changing beliefs (such as the presence or absence of ancestors) or body treatment below

ground, a salient example from the Zande (Sudan) of such changes over what was seemingly a period of not more than a century is provided by Evans-Pritchard (1971, 115). The Zande were then (mid-twentieth century) burying the dead in a side niche in a rectangular shaft grave over which was initially erected a low hut with a ridged roof (*ngongombara*) and following a secondary ceremony was replaced by a high heap of stones. This was ultimately of Bongo (Sudan) origin and was the culmination of a chain of cultural borrowings and adaptations in relation to funerary monuments being preceded by 1) the earth being beaten hard over the grave and then covered with a layer of straw, 2) the erection of a low hut (*kata*) over the grave, 3) the replacement of the hut by a low clay structure (*kanda*) made of three layers of beaten clay, and 4) the funerary monuments already described. The grave form had also changed from a circular shaft with a side niche to the rectangular form.

Following such sequences in the archaeological record might also allow inferences to be made as to how beliefs also changed in relation to constructing ancestors. The ethnography might indicate the complexity that existed in how ancestors were conceptualised and constructed in sub-Saharan Africa but time and taphonomy do reduce interpretive possibility. Ultimately, it has to be recognised that immortals need not mirror mortals, and archaeologically, the fragmented relics, the skulls, and other complete corporeal remains; the graves; the shrines; and their associated material culture can ultimately draw together all 'good' deaths as ancestors over time.

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Different Kinds of Dead: Presencing Andean Expired Beings

George F. Lau

This essay broadly concerns how some Amerindian peoples knew the past. If 'the history of things is about material presences which are far more tangible than the ghostly evocations of civil history' (Kubler 1962, 82), it is notable that the primary mode of reckoning the past for many ancient Andean cultures was through things in their mortuary practices. The practices privileged the living's engagement, both physical and cognitive, with the dead, and consisted of the treatment, disposal, and veneration of expired beings. Many of the most singular buildings and artworks ever made in the native Americas oriented human engagements with the dead.

Andean practices often sought to curate the dead near the living, so they could be accessed, sensed, and felt. They generally favoured techniques of stabilisation (e.g., mummification, desiccation) over techniques of disintegration (e.g., defleshing, cremation, disarticulation). People typically located the contexts for funerary cult *close* to the living, so as best to care for and access the dead on a regular basis. Unlike many peoples who wish to dispose of their dead by eradicating or forgetting them, therefore, Andeans optimised their presence. We can surmise that many groups saw the dead as intrinsic to not only ritual and cosmology, but social life in general.

This contribution examines a range of ancestral effigies, found in Peru's north highlands, and associated with the Recuay cultural tradition (AD 1–700). By effigies, I mean physical images, constructed or depicted, that stand in for the original, or prototype, for certain kinds of human-object actions. My case study centres on the making and use of mummy bundles, effigy pots, and figurines and raising of stone monuments. I am especially interested in accounting for why there was so much effort in diversifying forms of the dead.

I wish to explore several propositions that emerge from juxtaposing the Recuay record against insights revealed through ethnohistorical texts. First, the many effigies were instantiations of different kinds of ancestral dead: recent and older ones, replacement ones, vital and less vital ones. The second point relates to the protean, partible nature of the Recuay dead. I will suggest that cultural forms of the dead were not necessarily conceived as being finished, complete, and separate. Rather, death occasioned adding onto enduring, larger corporate structures (chiefly ancestors and kin collectives). At the same time that such objects enhanced and built on the whole, they served to renew it by affirming its vitality and stability. Finally, the dead, because of their fundamental role in group well-being and social identity, were ways to presence the past. Like most kinds of cultural production, the dead were highly contingent sorts of social beings, subject to and active in the pushes and pulls of history. The dead constituted the long-term process of creating continuity with the past.

ANDEAN DEATH: TEMPORALITIES AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Before describing the Recuay record, it is important to contextualise Andean death practices, especially as related to ancestor ritual and the temporality of the dead. Ancestors refer to those honoured deceased who continue to have an active role in the social life of the community. It is descendants who recognise ancestors and find them worthy of veneration, because they reciprocate something desirable for the descent group. They have the capacity to affect critical resources and general well-being: land and water, fertility in crops and animals,

health and knowledge, social capital and legitimacy, success and luck. And by temporality, I mean a group's perception of time – how it is imagined, constituted, and practised. We know that ancestors were of great importance to Andeans and to their understandings of the past, not least for the Inca and the groups they conquered – for whom noble genealogies served as history (e.g., Julien 2000; Salomon & Urioste 1991; Zuidema 1973). This is beyond the common role of ancestors in economic production and overall community well-being (Bloch & Parry 1982).

A rich archaeological and documentary record exists for the importance of the dead for Andean societies (e.g., Isbell 1997; DeLeonardis & Lau 2004; Salomon 1995; Kaulicke 2001; Gose 2008; Ramos 2010). These data are especially pertinent for examining ritual and social organisation, ethnic boundaries, mythic traditions, and the cosmology of death. It is also notable that instructive ethnohistorical data exist for the same region where Recuay culture and closely related groups flourished – the highlands of north-central Peru, in particular Ancash and Lima departments (e.g., Duviols 2003; Polia 1999; Hernández Príncipe 1923).

Unlike for other New World regions, notions of time for ancient Andeans are relatively little known. For example, various groups of Mesoamerica sought to understand time and society through native calendars, monuments, and books – for performing divination, observing astronomical phenomena, and predicting auspicious moments. Also, despite a shared interest in rituals celebrating temporal durations and the cyclicity of ages (Millones 2005), especially over decades and generations, Andean groups showed much less outward emphasis and cultural elaboration on these kinds of knowledges. Andean modes of historical reckoning and narrative also differ from lowland Amerindian counterparts, which emphasise personal moods and motivations of actors in social relations and causation, as much as events or genealogies (Fausto & Heckenberger 2007). Rather, major kinds of temporal reckoning in the Andes, especially of the highlands, had to do with the physical setting (environment, climate, resources), agrarian cycles, and those beings seen as crucial in their management – namely, ancestors and supernaturals associated with seasonal rituals (Doyle 1988). Where certain historicities of Mesoamerican, lowland, and highland South American groups might be most similar is in charting time and pasts embodied in high-ranking persons (e.g., Houston & Cummins 2004; Fausto & Heckenberger 2007).

The inexorable cycles of the rainy and dry seasons, not to mention periodic catastrophic disasters associated with seismic activities, make for uncertain living in the Andean highlands. The environmental setting also strongly colours worldview and associated cultural production (Gade 1999; Mayer 2002). The contrasting seasons in the highlands are marked by alternating verdant and sere landscapes, the rising of river and lake levels, the growth of icecaps – and the varied work and activities associated with this yearly round. Another kind of momentous change, felt more episodically but equally associated with temporal cycles, is perceived through cataclysm and the re-creation of worlds, what the Inca called *pachacuti* (Urton 1999, 40–1; MacCormack 1988, 966–9). Such tumults and their indigenous theorisation cannot be underestimated. Ancestors might be appeased, especially as they are associated with rain and crops, but major upheavals due to invasions or environmental cataclysm (e.g., El Niño, earthquakes, avalanches, bursting lakes, and mudslides) were seen as largely unpredictable and unavoidable – the will of tremendous forces. These overturn worlds, or regular orders. And when they occur, such as the 1970s earthquake in the Callejón de Huaylas, which killed an estimated ninety thousand people and displaced more than a million others, they put an indelible stamp on local memory and history (Bode 1989). Many catastrophes have occurred in the past; most were probably not as extensive and destructive in size, but the many smaller scale events, we can surmise, marked local passages of time for each valley, its people, and their historical traditions (e.g., Salomon & Urioste 1991). Perhaps not coincidentally, time and the natural environmental processes of the high Andes also tend to erode the region's rich archaeological history.

For ancient Andeans in this dynamic and unpredictable setting, there seems to have been less appeal in recording or predicting time than in theorising key past events and stabilising their physical presence. And to accomplish this, people made, did, and named things – all fundamental elements of a social process of history-making that results in what I will refer to as a *descent-scape*. This was a local symbolic order that recognised aspects of the lived world as having basis in ancestral persons, their activities and social relations. This materialised through monuments and buildings, but also their physical representations and local topographic features. All these elements were worked into (and out of) local systems through ritual practice, and they were ordered hierarchically. Thus, ancestral elements of one collective (e.g., lineages, descent group)

were ranked against others, internally and in contrast to neighbouring communities. What the current archaeological record presents, in rather piecemeal fashion, are the traces of many such orders. We find a collective tomb here, a mummy and an effigy pot there, of whose position we can really only guess, but that at any given time, were parts of local descent-scapes. Through their constant reinvention, the different kinds of dead formed one of the main modes, I believe, by which many Andean groups reckoned the passage and 'shape' of time (Kubler 1962, 99–100) – by collectively negotiating the durations of people and their evidence.

A much better sense of descent-scapes is furnished by the 'idolatries' documents of Central Peru. These were mainly administrative and court texts of religious persecution in the centuries following the downfall of Inca Peru. As Christianity spread, the Spanish collected systematic documentation to condemn natives as idolators, especially in the highland regions surrounding Lima, the seat of Peru's viceroyalty and the Catholic Church. It is in these documents that we can see the convulsions in Andean faith and society after 1532, but also the resistant core of pagan religious traditions: ancestor cults. Heathen beliefs were evidenced by *malquis* (mummified humans); *ydolos* (or false 'idol' images, including small stones, masks, wooden figures, carved sculptures, and stone uprights), *ofrendas* (vessels, drink, food, camelid fat), and other ritual instruments, in addition to the various practitioners and cult places. Despite the great difference in time as well as the processes of colonialism and missionisation that gave rise to the accounts, the idolatries evidence holds important comparative insights. Notably, the texts are especially rich and pertinent for describing cult practices in the north-central highlands, where ancient Recuay culture developed. What is particularly salient in the documents, but only vaguely indicated through the archaeological record, is the great emphasis that Andeans placed on funerary cult to make sense of and historicise social life and the world around them.

The Recuay tradition (ca. AD 1–700) is almost entirely known from its mortuary practices and their associated material culture, especially stone sculptures, funerary ceramics and textiles, and special funerary buildings. All these media are essential elements in marking and preserving the material traces of the past. Elsewhere I have detailed how these media intervened, mainly, in two principal domains: chiefly display and ancestor cults (Lau 2011, 2013). As in other Amerindian political systems (Ramírez 2005), health, stability, and abundance appear to have been important underlying concerns of Recuay ritual practices and leadership.

In this context, the media (sculpture, monuments, pots, textiles) facilitated the social relations that constructed what the anthropologist Michael Herzfeld has called *monumental time*, which 'is reductive and generic. It encounters events as realizations of some supreme destiny, and it reduces social experience to collective predictability. Its main focus is on the past — a past constituted by categories and stereotypes'. This contrasts with *social time*, 'the grist of everyday experience … the kind of time in which events cannot be predicted but in which every effort can be made to influence them. It is the time that gives events their reality, because it encounters each as one of a kind' (Herzfeld 1991, 10).

Many of the materials I consider here were for 'monumental time'. With their focus on ancestors, they narrated a conservative worldview that emphasised the existing social order as the perpetual destiny and cycling of the mythic past, what has also been called 'pattern history' (Nicholson 1971), hence the common mantra in ancestor-centric societies – 'it is how it has been, as it ever shall be.' Ritual was reiterative but also predictive: the imagery depicted past events, but also prescribed similar actions for the present and future. Recuay imagery does not appear to have stressed individuality or individual histories: rather, there was a great emphasis on group ritual and proper attire, gestures, and wealth objects that denoted ranks and statuses of persons, occupied by different people as parts of long-lived corporate structures over generations (Gillespie & Joyce 2000). Special members of society, usually leaders and nobles, fuelled the ideology by impersonating divine ancestors or, perhaps better, instantiating their facets and qualities (Alva & Donnan 1993; López Austin 1988; Houston et al. 2006; Helms 1998). Overall, fancy objects were implicated in perpetuating existing modes of practice and legitimacy of the corporate group, for life and the afterlife.

My final point here concerns the disposition to make durable, myriad, and protean physical instantiations of ancestors. If all living beings go through a process of change, living and maturation might occasion, indeed demand, different morphological changes: shedding of skins, expulsion of fluids and tissue, browning of leaves, whitening of hair, stiffening of joints. While we typically associate these processes with the living, this paper suggests that the Andean ancestral dead also take on the characteristics of being able to show sequential transformations over the course of their afterlives.

Recent approaches to a 'perspectivist', 'indigenous theory' about the perception of selves and others are useful in this regard (Viveiros de Castro 2004, 466; Viveiros de Castro 1998). My concern is not only the similar patterns of culture seen to connect various human and non-human, animal species. Rather, what we have are communities of humankind, but of different bodily natures (breathing or expired) and ontological statuses (living, dead, or ancestral). As social others, the dead are seen to form their own settlements, have houses and leaders, drink beer, and dance – just as the living do (Lau 2008, 2013). Here, 'perspectivism' seems applicable since it is mainly in the realm of the sensory, but especially the visual, that the dead are seen to maintain the point of view as the living do.

Morphological change in death and in life – broadly, aging – might be seen to have been integral to native understanding of the dead, as potent beings. In the Andes, both ethnohistoric and ethnographic studies indicate that death is perceived as a gradual sequence, and that biological expiration is one part of a more extended process of 'dying' (Salomon 1998), which, of course, forms part of a longer process or cycle of life. Aging across the dying phase shows a distinctive materiality: with associations and emphasis on becoming harder, slower, and drier, evacuated of fluids. The esteemed dead, as dried out things (mummies) or whose potencies become attributed to stone things, are the outcomes of this cultural project. If so, some dead and images of the dead might be seen as chronological markers, both emically and for our surveillance. They track different sorts of material careers of ancestors, following what they have achieved in death.

RECUAY CULTURE

The Recuay culture developed in the highlands of Central Peru in the department of Ancash (Figure 11.1). As one of the key cultural traditions of the Early Intermediate period, ca. AD 1–700, it emerged after the collapse of Chavín civilisation. The Recuay tradition flourished at the same time that Moche, Nasca, and Lima coalesced along the coast. Each of these developed its own corporate art style, and very distinctive ways for economic and organisational success in their respective regions. Archaeologists believe the period's cultural heterogeneity and insularity were due to highly competitive regional polities or ethnic groups (Moseley 1992; Quilter 2005).

Between ca. AD 400 and 700, the most dramatic Recuay developments characterised densely occupied demographic centres, such as Pashash and Yayno (Lau 2011). Recuay polities were almost certainly headed by native lords, akin to those known from late Prehispanic and colonial times for highland Ancash (Espinoza Soriano 1978; Cook 1977). Recuay social organisation probably consisted of multiple, nested corporate groups each headed by its own nobles and their factions. If historical comparisons hold, these were internally ranked against each other and facilitated the social relations leading to exchange, intermarriage, periodic confederation, and public ceremony. Recuay culture diminished dramatically by the Middle Horizon, ca. AD 700–1000, the time period associated with Wari state expansion and cultural influence.

Recuay's predecessors, the Chavín (first millennium BC), also made their heartland in highland Ancash. So it is notable that Recuay groups largely eschewed many of the patterns established by Chavín religion and its interaction sphere (Burger 2008). Not only was there a move away from shamanic ritual and highly esoteric religious imagery, Recuay groups also downplayed monumental platform pyramids, large plazas, and their respective large-scale pilgrimage activities. In lieu, there was much greater emphasis on local cults and cultural production centred on ancestors and chiefs – basically the ritual domains of kin-based collectivities. The new religious orientations also saw an unprecedented surge in anthropomorphic representation, which emphasised the body's capacity for distinction – through size and form, fancy apparel, weapons, and other accoutrements – and for social interaction. The imagery was especially important for depicting important individuals in public ritual with others (Lau 2010b, 2013).

Burial Places: Keeping and Embodying the Dead

Over the course of some seven centuries, Recuay tradition groups employed a range of burial spaces. The four main types were small pits under rocks, caves, subterranean tombs, and aboveground tombs, known generally today as *chullpas*. Most scholars believe that the larger tombs, especially multi-chambered subterranean tombs and chullpas, were the mausolea of collective groups and built to be used over many generations. Many of the seventeenth century inquisitional testimonies identify other native terms synonymous with collective burial places: *machayes*, *amayes*, and *colcas* (Duviols 2003). These were all repositories, where effigies and the instruments of their associated cults were kept and curated.
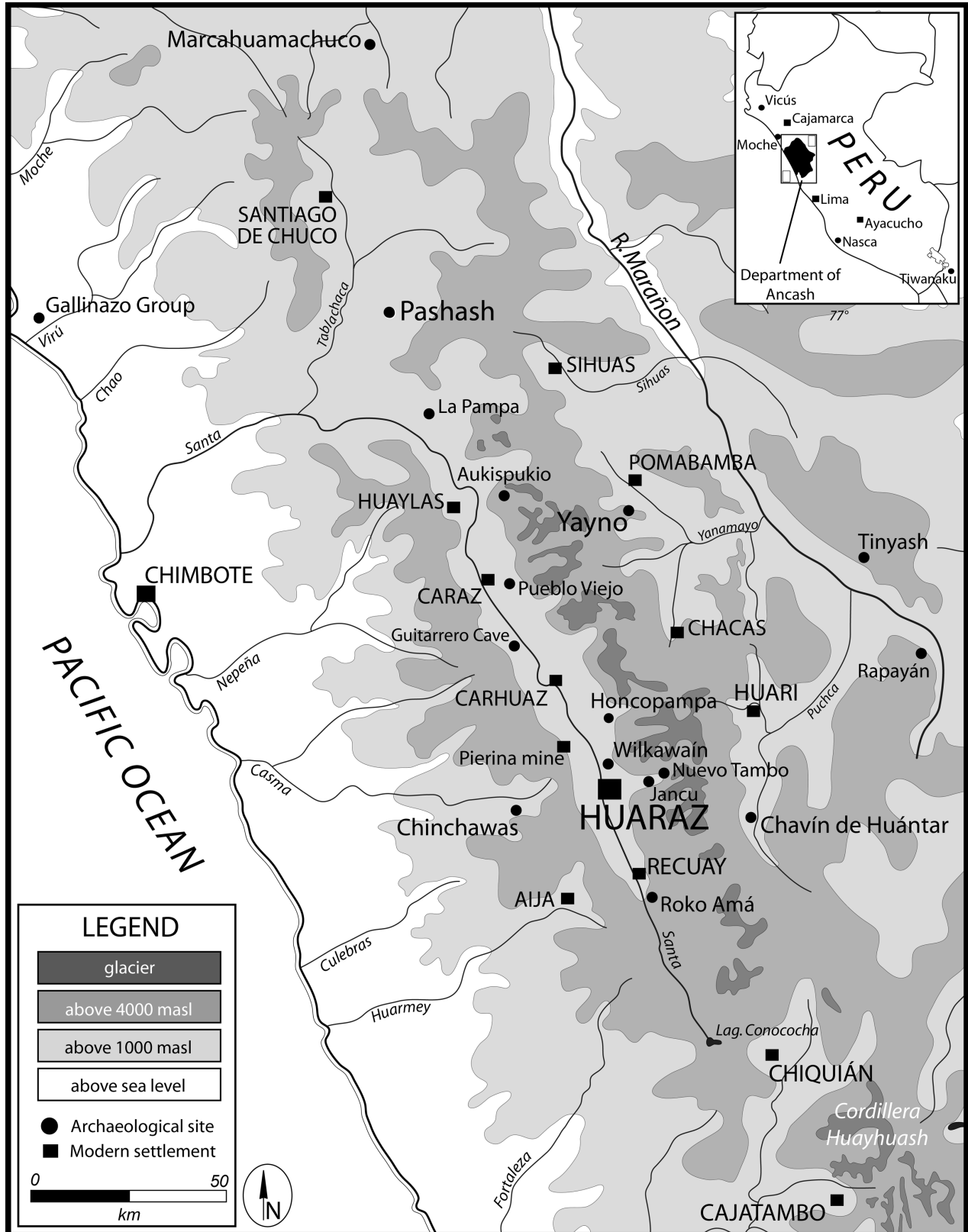
Figure 11.1. Map of north–central Andes and sites mentioned in text.
Drawing by author.

Figure 11.2. View of chullpa at Honcopampa. Note the small threshold, which looks south towards the settlement's nearby tablelands. Photograph by author.

In establishing tomb spaces, Recuay peoples certainly valued the qualities of the physical context. Probably the most important related to the capacity to contain and help preserve the tomb's interments and offerings. It is notable that 'colca' is used so synonymously with such tombs in the colonial accounts. The term is typically associated with Inca period storage buildings, especially for crops, foods, textiles, and other supplies. Yet it certainly is consistent with the mausoleum's practical purpose of keeping anthropogenically transformed items safe and ready for later use. Tomb placement for the ancient Recuay also highlighted local geological features, such as large outcrops and boulders. High locations with strategic vantages and rocky prominences of land were preferred. These were often beside or, indeed, within residential settlements or in previously sacrosanct areas (e.g., Tello 1929; Lau 2010a; Wegner 2000; Gamboa 2009; Lumbreras 1970).

Caves may have been exemplary burial spaces. Not only can caves often hold many interments; they also have, in many parts of the Central Andes, strong telluric associations as places of mythic origins. Use of caves can be documented early as well as late in the Recuay tradition (e.g., Lynch 1980; Antúnez 1923). Groups constructed built environments that may have simulated the qualities of caves. One Recuay innovation, for example, was the use of long subterranean gallery tombs, which employed large flat slabs for walls and roofs. Although galleries have local antecedents in the temple architecture of Chavín de Huántar, Recuay peoples constructed them apparently mainly for funerary purposes. Subterranean Recuay tombs also often feature multiple chambers; besides their functions to distinguish compartments, they may refer to the ramifying spaces afforded by natural caves.

As new foreign influences, such as Wari, became important by around ca. AD 600, Ancash groups began interring their dead in aboveground mausolea, known as chullpas (Lau 2002). Chullpas (Figure 11.2) proliferated over the next few centuries, during which subterranean tombs lost favour. By ca. AD 700–800, at the end of the Recuay tradition, chullpas had become the leading mode of burial.

Table 11.1. *Recuay subterranean funerary buildings*

Site	Source	Maximum dimension	No. interior spaces	Other notable features
Shankaiyan (Gallery 1H-A)	Bennett 1944	5.6 m	1	
Jancu	Wegner 1988	4 × 5 m	Ca. 12–13	Niches, door slabs, long gallery entrance, *huanca* marker
Chinchawas (ST-2)	Lau 2010a	3.5 m	1	Antechamber
Ichik Wilkawaín (gallery, site 7H-5B)	Bennett 1944	More than 20 m	1	Step

Great variability typified the elaboration of all these burial spaces. No two Recuay tradition tombs are exactly alike. For example, subterranean tombs were of different dimensions, even at a single site (Lau 2010a, 120). Galleries could be fairly long or relatively short (Table 11.1). Some have unusual features, such as niches, slab compartments, and steps. Some are located deep in the ground, while others consist of cists capped with large stones.

Variability also characterised chullpa architecture. The number of chullpa burial compartments and layout of the spaces differed widely. Some are rather large, measuring up to about fifteen metres on each side, but most are fairly small, measuring no more than three to four metres in length. Some feature one chamber, while others may have several dozen. Notably, the largest chullpas in Ancash were built in the Callejón de Huaylas (the highland portion of the Río Santa) and appeared fairly early in the sequence, by around AD 700. During the end of the Recuay tradition, many chullpas were faced with stone sculptures. Some other indices of labour expenditure include elaborate masonry or features such as staircases, built-in ventilation, or upper stories (e.g., Bennett 1944; Lau 2010a; Tschauner 2003). On the one hand, the variation was a function of diachronic change. On the other, the variability of elaboration, size, and grave offerings indicates regional preferences and a range of largely coeval collectivities, some of more means than others.

Most Recuay collective tombs do not seem to have been permanently sealed off or completely encased in soil matrix. Many subterranean tombs are entered by small doorways, which were opened and closed with large flat slabs. An antechamber often led into the main chamber; this demarcated a small transitional space, which was used sometimes for small caches and burning of offerings. Chullpa spaces were also entered by similar modest-sized thresholds. The architects created interior spaces and shared the concern for allowing periodic access, reuse of the tomb, and engagements by the living with the tombs' interments and contents (DeLeonardis & Lau 2004).

New collective tombs were often built in the same cemetery area, and we also know that some groups renovated earlier structures and built additions (chambers, galleries, compartments) to funerary structures. Indeed, some chullpas are built directly over subterranean chambers, which connected the newly deceased to existing tombs and their contents (Lau 2002; Bennett 1944; Paredes 2007; Ponte R. 2001, 227–8).

The buildings themselves saw repeated acts of modification and embellishment. There was the gradual accumulation of stone sculptures at any given building and cemetery. These mainly consisted of representations of ancestors. Analysis of the carved monoliths at Chinchawas, for example, suggests that they accumulated not during one single building programme of chullpas and stone-carving, but over many generations (Lau 2006). Some carvings were abandoned midway and re-carved on the other side. Some were defaced and some were removed from their original spots. In addition to the sculptures, many other kinds of worked stones (tenon heads, rosettes, geometric designs, stringcourses, etc.) adorned Recuay funerary buildings (Lau 2011). Such modifications formed part of a larger social programme of building that emphasised adding on to existing funerary places – in lieu of developing new tombs or burying separately.

As the resting place for its dead, the collective tomb very probably manifested qualities and preferences of the corporate group. The burial place almost certainly came to have symbolic associations with its source group, such as a dynastic mausoleum or family cemetery plot. Its design, form, and uptake might be seen as perpetual reworking of that collective group, which is reflected in the form of the built space and its contents. A small village community, such as Chinchawas, contained at least thirteen small chullpas in its main funerary sector (Lau 2002; Lau 2010a). Because of substantial reworking

during both Prehispanic and historical times, it is difficult to determine the original contents and sequences of interment. However, excavations found that some chullpas contained one or two individuals, while others found the remains of eight and nine individuals; one chullpa contained at least twenty-four. A much larger settlement, Honcopampa, contained at least fifteen much more sizeable chullpas (Tschauner 2003, 200). The chullpas very likely corresponded to the size and prosperity of their constituent corporate groups over time. Each group interred additional corpses in its respective chullpa accordingly; the corporate group and cult continued to do this, presumably as long as the progenitors within the tomb were seen to be potent.

As chullpas became increasingly prevalent among Recuay tradition groups, a special visual emphasis was given to the esteemed dead. New kinds of looking were crucial in at least two ways. First, compared to subterranean tombs, chullpas must have been seen more regularly by the living, if only because people often constructed them near or directly in residential settlements. The new preference for aboveground tombs ascribed to the dead their own buildings and necropoleis, which developed overtly side by side with those of the living. Settlements with distinct funerary sectors included Chinchawas, Honcopampa, and Ichik Wilkawaín. Thus the growth of a community was mirrored in the growth of its necropolis.

In part this pertains to the general processual view of ancestral monuments as territorial markers (e.g., Renfrew 1973; Parker Pearson 1999; Mantha 2009). But it is also true that the monuments proliferated in highly variable locations, often in locales of marginal value, very often on steep rocky tracts with little water. And rarely were they constructed in border zones, where intergroup communication might be seen to be of greatest significance. Indeed, necropoleis often developed adjacent to the residential settlement, a location that seems redundant from the standpoint of territorial-signalling or labour effort for communication.

What does seem evident, and this is the second point about the new visual programme of chullpas, is that chullpa thresholds are often oriented to furnish the dead vistas – apparently to oversee and witness – over key lands, geographical features, and ceremonial locales. Hence, at Chinchawas, chullpas open up eastward and overlook the community's closest agricultural fields (Lau 2010a). The scores of tombs at Pueblo Viejo near Caraz look westwards, and downvalley, towards its vast expanses of arable land. This is also the case with many chullpas

at Ichik Wilkawaín. Ichik Wilkawaín and Sahuan Puncu also have many chullpas whose doorways open up into enclosed patio areas, those locales for corporate ritual (Bennett 1944; Paredes 2007). At Honcopampa, the chullpas of Ama Puncu look north, towards a defensible ridgetop and its palatial civic-ceremonial buildings; others open out towards local pasturelands (Tschauner 2003). At Nuevo Tambo, above the upper limits of productive agriculture, the chullpa tombs look south and directly over the well-watered grazing lands of the Quebrada Quilcayhuanca.

Much more study could be done on viewsheds and threshold orientations, but in general, I believe that various groups at the end of the Recuay tradition began to emphasise their connections to significant local topography by way of the visual perspective of their ancestors. This almost certainly relates to Bloch and Parry's (1982, 7) prediction that funerary practices focus on 'that resource which is *culturally conceived* to be the most essential to the reproduction of the social order'. That an entire settlement, such as Honcopampa or Chinchawas, oriented its ancestors' gaze to certain features suggests a consensus stance taken by the coexisting groups in that settlement. But it is also clear that the key matter, whether it was directed to agricultural fields, grazing land, sacred topographic features, or public ceremony (all paths to economic success), differed from community to community. To a certain extent, then, the model of territorial monuments holds for the tombs, but not necessarily because they signalled this land versus that land to others. Rather, the tombs delimited by providing ancestral vantage over the productive activities occurring internally, within its field of vision.

The idolatries testimonies also indicate that the burial spaces stood for their collectivities. It is noteworthy that collective tombs were known publicly by name and were associated with their respective source- and descent-groups. One testimony (Table 11.2) for the Otuco community of the Cajatambo region of highland Lima shows how different tombs serviced particular groups belonging to larger collectivities known as *ayllu* (Duviols 2003, 184). The inquisitors were especially interested in how many burials of Christianised Indians were removed from the church cemeteries and returned to the pagan tombs of the forebears.

As indicated by this very brief example, the idolatries documents, in general, may be instructive for Recuay patterns (see also Isbell 1997). First, highland Central Andean social organisation was arranged according to

Table 11.2. *Burial spaces and group affiliations, Otuco, Cajatambo*

Name of collective tomb	*Ayllu* affiliation	Burials found in tomb (★denoted Christian)
'Carua Apamachay'	Allauca	18
'Chanco Machay'	Otuco	23★
–	Chaupis	33★
'Guaca Machay'	–	35★
'Tisi Machay'	Allauca	33★
'Acha machay'	Xulca	32★
'Oyri Machay'	Oyos	removed/hidden
'Yrca Machay'	Xulca	14★
'Ychimachay'	Chaupis	25
'Racac Machay'	–	removed/hidden
'anchaque machay'	Xulca	31★

Note: The proceedings describe the illicit removal of burials (of Indians) from Christian churches, and the return of the corpses to the ayllus' collective tombs, including those still in Christian dress and despite being riddled with worms and decomposing bones (e.g., Duviols *2003*, 182–6).

nested affiliations articulated at different levels (family group, descent group, community, regional group). Second, because of the great emphasis on these affiliations, funerary practices most probably followed the social arrangements. Thus the arrangement formed a larger community, which itself related to other communities and identity categories. Finally, corporate groups identified with specific burial places, or collective tombs, and vice versa: the places stood for the collective.

Overall, the physical spaces in Recuay funerary practices appear to have been sites of accretion, identity, and negotiation. Some sites feature scores of funerary buildings, each representing the modest corporate commitment (and ritual centre) of its respective descent group. In all likelihood, these consisted mainly of small, coexisting collectivities. Architectural changes very likely responded to the vicissitudes of ancestral reckoning and social reordering occasioned by the death of key members of society (Huntington & Metcalf 1979). The net effect was a dense world of the dead: the collective body politic (of the dead), built up and reimagined by its source community. In this descent-scape, the necropolis and its individual buildings might be seen as specific kinds of dead, each embodying its respective cult group.

Mimetic Effigies

Other kinds of Andean dead took smaller, more explicitly mimetic forms. The key purpose of the burial structures

Figure 11.3. Flexed interment, from Mashconga, Cabana region, Ancash.
Photograph by author.

enumerated earlier is that they were engineered to curate the effigies and articles of the ancestor cult.

The primary effigy forms were the desiccated and bundled corpses, or more colloquially, mummies (Figure 11.3). These incorporated the transformed physical remains of the corpse, which included bones, dried skin, and tissue. The bundles are made by drying the corpses through the diurnal warming and freezing conditions of the high Andes. Most bundles do not survive today, but there are a few examples of undisturbed flexed and mummy interments; more evidence of mummified remains survives from later periods. Many tombs today in highland Ancash, both subterranean and aboveground, often contain exposed, disarticulated, and well-preserved bone elements (Figure 11.4), most due to natural decomposition but also to anthropogenic acts by looters, visitors,

Figure 11.4. One of the large interior interment chambers of Katiamá, a large chullpa near Caraz, Callejón de Huaylas, Peru. Photograph by author.

and religious persecution. Recuay imagery has the virtue of occasionally depicting interment bundles, in carved stone (discussed later) as well as in modelled funerary vessels (Figure 11.5). Bundles are often shown seated, frequently cross-legged, and arms tightly tucked near the torso or legs. On ceramics, great emphasis was given to the body completely enveloped in cloth, except the head and eyes. The wrapping of the mummies with new textiles was one of the main annual activities during seasonal renewal rituals.

Preparation of the bodies probably employed common highland procedures for preserving organic products. Freeze-drying potatoes and meat jerky, for example, relies on repeated exposure to great temperature fluctuations, including overnight frosts. The process dries out the tissue, making the item hard, shrivelled, light, and portable. It was at this point that the preferred body positions − flexed, seated, and foetal − probably became fixed. The precise process is not clear for the Recuay, but historical accounts suggest that formal recognition of

esteemed ancestors occurred mainly after the process of mummification and her or his formal installation into the tomb was complete (Salomon 1995; Doyle 1988). Spanish priests encountered mummies said to be some two to three hundred years old (Polia 1999, 419).

As in many funerary traditions around the world, the symbolism behind Recuay burial practices concerned resource renewal, especially of crops (Bloch & Parry 1982). Many have already noted that *mallqui* (also *malqui, malki*) ancestor mummy bundles also meant 'young plant', 'seedling', or 'tree' (Sherbondy 1988; Sillar 1996, 282; Duviols 1979, 22; Salomon 1995, 328, 340; Polia 1999, 123−4). The various funerary buildings of the Recuay tradition appear to have been contexts to shelter and cultivate the vitality of ancestral beings. It is not coincidental therefore that the tombs assume cave- and womb-like forms, have cellular compartments, or have discrete spaces linked by galleries or passageways, since these were probably seen as places for emergence and group origins, what later Andean groups called *pacarinas*
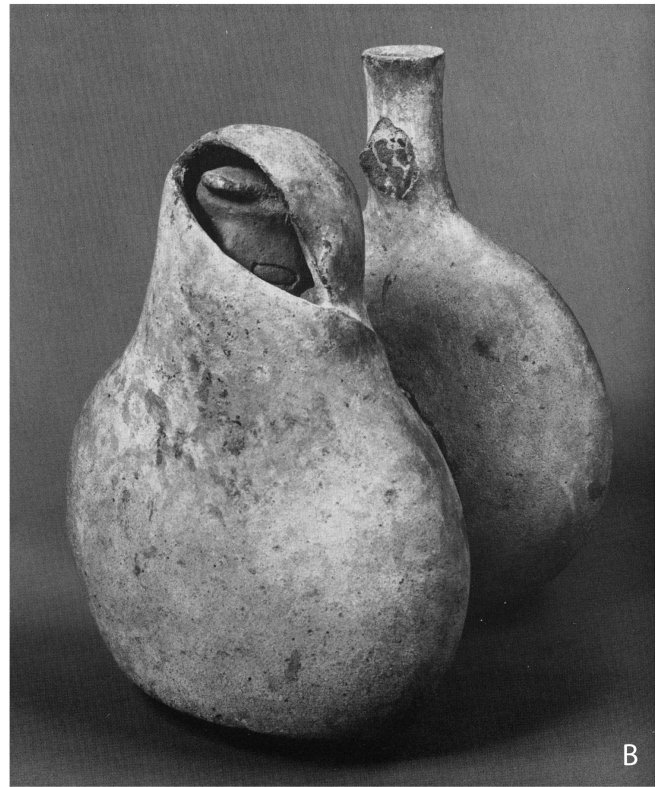
Figure 11.5. Photographs of ceramic vessels, representing ancestor bundles: A) pouring bottle showing bundle offering liquid through the spout (held as a cup) (Caraz collection); B) double chambered bottle, showing wrapped bundle (Berlin collection). Photographs by author.

(Doyle 1988, 71, 241; Salomon 1995, 322; Polia 1999, 181–2). Many ancestors identified by the Spanish inquisitors were named malqui (young plant, bundle) or *runto* (egg), and supplications to them during cult addressed them as *yaya*, an honorific also meaning 'father', 'progenitor', or 'lord' (e.g., Duviols 2003, 246, 326–67). I suspect that the organic metaphor of funerary spaces and images, centred on directed growth from ancestors, was a fundamental part of Recuay descent-scapes, precisely because it networked relationships among members of the tomb collective over time.

Besides mummified bodies, many other kinds of effigies prevailed in the Recuay world. Stone, in particular, was a vital material for ancestor images. The Recuay developed perhaps the most prolific stonecarving traditions in the ancient Andes. Most carved monoliths depict anthropomorphs (Figure 11.6) and were meant to stand freely or decorate high status tombs and buildings (Grieder 1978; Lau 2006; Schaedel 1948; Schaedel 1952).

During colonial times in the central highlands, many standing stones, often with carved or natural anthropomorphic features, were seen as potent ancestors (Duviols 1977; Duviols 1979; Doyle 1988).

Stone sculptures most commonly depict human persons as bundles or standing frontal figures, mainly of men but also of women (Figure 11.7). A pair of sculptures, perhaps a primordial male and female pair, was found at Chinchawas, as the jambs to the doorway of a high status building (Lau 2006). Colonial accounts describe that sculptures were erected near tomb environments as physical instantiations of their lithified actions and achievements; they were also placed where ancestors did remarkable things, such as conquer an enemy, open a canal, or establish a field or village. Many of the idolatries testimonies also indicate that Andeans stood stone images in their fields to watch over crops and their nearby communities (e.g., Duviols 1977; Duviols 1979).

Figure 11.6. Photograph of stone sculpture effigy of mummy bundle, ca. 0.90 m tall (Huaraz collection).
Photograph by author.

Much as for offerings and built spaces, the raising of a given stone monument appears to have been a commemorative act by the descendant, venerating group. As episodic acts of corporate devotion and labour commitment, Recuay stone monuments accreted in certain places over time. For example, at Chinchawas, a small village and ceremonial place in the Recuay tradition, more than forty sculptures were identified in a site no larger than four hectares; there must have been many more. Most were found in the cemetery sector, adorning and immediately around chullpa structures (Lau 2006). The strong variability in form and quality of work is consonant with the notion that new sculptures and buildings were added by descendants when necessary over roughly three centuries: renovations, making new spaces, the ascension of new ancestors, and so on. A similar, but much larger and prolific sculptural programme, with some of the finest stonecarving in the Andes, occurred at Pashash, in the northern Recuay area (Grieder 1978). Thus, small and large scale communities alike developed their own sculptural programmes, which periodically modified local descent-scapes.

It is worth noting that other types of hard, metal, or mineral things could presence the ancestral. We know from colonial documents that pebbles, crystals, boulders, and interestingly shaped rock outcrops acted as instantiations of ancestors. Mountains were perhaps the most

s20   s9   s8   s10
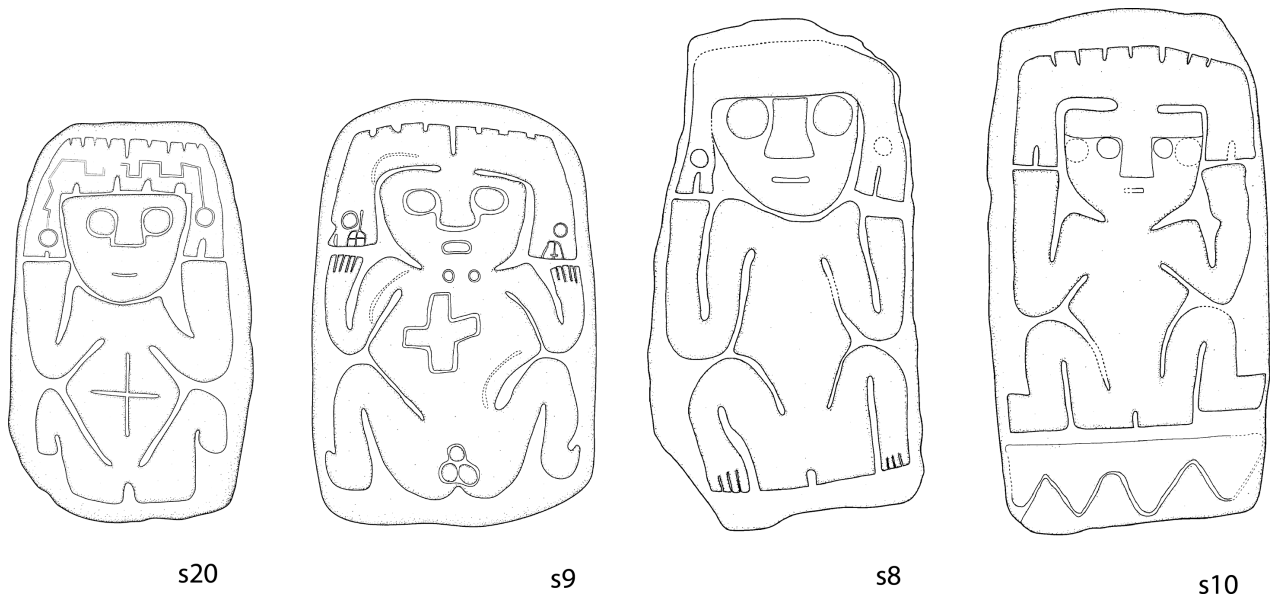
Figure 11.7. Four vertical slab sculptures documented at Chinchawas. These forms, representing splayed and frontal ancestor figures, were most common near chullpa structures in the site's main cemetery sector. Sculpture heights: s20 (0.86 m), s9 (1.02 m), s8 (1.23 m), s10 (1.27 m).
Drawing by author.

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Figure 11.8. Small figurine, depicting a seated ancestor bundle, found at Chinchawas; measures 64 mm tall.
Photograph by author.

Figure 11.9. Camelid figures from Recuay tradition site of Chinchawas: (A, B) ceramic examples, maximum dimension 40 mm; (C, D) stone examples, maximum dimension 20 mm. Figure by author.

prominent presences of supreme ancestor divinities; those supernaturals who were the oldest were regionally venerated with the greatest or widest field of potency. Some small items, such as pebbles and figurines (repeating the form of a mummy or ancestor sculpture; Figure 11.8), probably functioned along the lines of lesser supernaturals, known from historical times as *conopas* and *chancas* (Mills 1997).

Other related small items were fertility objects for camelids and crops, respectively. These often took mimetic forms (e.g., llamas, maize, beans) or were concentrated products (e.g., hair, bezoar stones) and were worshipped as ancestors of particular *kinds* of living things (Salomon 2004). Figurines known as illas were charms used to enhance the fertility of the animals and the herds (Figure 11.9).

Both ancient and historical groups in highland Ancash also venerated standing stone uprights, known as *huancas* or *wankas*. These are usually large stones that have little or no modification. Some are found together with others, while some stand alone and isolated. Occasionally, they have platforms of various sizes that raised them above ground level and helped to stabilise their positioning

(Figure 11.10). Many were seen as tutelary monuments that overlooked and protected key locales. Huancas have been erected since the Late Preceramic period in coastal Peru and they are known in highland Ancash by at least the Early Horizon (Bazán del Campo 2007; Bazán del Campo & Wegner 2006; Doyle 1988; Falcón 2004). Their use continued into colonial times, when their veneration as ancestral instantiations was often cited as evidence of worship of false idols (Duviols 1977; Duviols 1979). During the Recuay tradition, huancas also occasionally marked the location and entrance of burial constructions, such as at Chinchawas (Lau 2010a, 118–19; Mejía Xesspe 1941) or Jancu (Wegner 1988). Large stone uprights,

Figure 11.10. Three huancas overlooking the city of Huaraz (middle ground). One has tumbled over. Photograph by author.

which served as jambs, lintels, and or other architectural members, were also very common in Recuay stonework, especially in the lower, basal positions. These may have been seen as symbolic and physical foundations of the collective.

In presencing the sacred, the essences of ancestral things were apparently vital. They very often oriented kinds of making and cultural elaboration, as seen in many Andean cultures (e.g., Lechtman 1980; Dean 2010). This was because any thing or place could embody the ancestral, and once embedded in that new site, became a source for potential reinvention. A constant flux, it seems, was at the heart of the different kinds of Recuay dead. For native Andeans, ancestral essences and their agency could be transferred and distributed and become potent elsewhere. Perhaps the most famous cases of this concern the public destruction and burning of mummy bundles and cult objects as acts of faith and power during the various campaigns against idolatry (e.g., Arriaga 1999; Hernández Príncipe 1923; Duviols 2003; Polia 1999). Spanish priests observed that the Indians would salvage

the remains – whether it be hair, nails, or ashes – and would remake new effigies or enshrine and curate them as replacement cult objects in their own right. If an idol had been stone or wood, chips and splinters would be sought after. Hair was often kept and was venerated in its own right with offerings during regular celebrations (Polia 1999, 431).

One of the richest founts of this sort concerns the trials against the 'idolatrous' leaders and villagers of San Pedro de Hacas (Duviols 2003, 323–476). Earlier visits by priests had scoured the village for mummies and idols, which were destroyed. But testimonies in the 1650s revealed that many of the images had been replaced and their cults renewed; without the originals, new images were found and fashioned using sundry materials (e.g., Noboa, in Duviols 2003, 307, 353, 363). In response to questioning why a burnt ancestor effigy continued to be worshipped even though it had been confiscated and burnt, one testimony reasoned, 'although it [original idol named 'macacayan'] was burnt, the spirit of the idol lived on, and came down to the sacrifice and received it' (Noboa,

in Duviols 2003, 381). In 1618, there was another case of what the priests called a 'relapse' in Pampas, near Pallasca, northern Ancash: a small crystalline stone, dressed in women's clothes, was worshipped as the 'spouse' of an idol that had been seized earlier (Alvarez, in Polia 1999, 414). The new idol was serviced by a female attendant, who was charged with maintaining the idol and its great collection of finery.

The historian Sabine MacCormack (1991, 408–9) observed that, for highland Lima ancestor cults, 'identity could be conceptualized as continuous even when its expression or representation changed.' Ancestral objects acted as sacred relics, in this case not of saints but of apotheosised forebears. The continuity of identity did not network only objects or representations of people, however. I have already mentioned that many burial places were perceived as 'pacarinas' or origin places for the collective group. Even at places where sacred idols were removed, descendants would go back and venerate those spots (Noboa, in Duviols 2003, 363). In other cases, where clerics buried the ashes and remains of mummies and idols, or washed them down a river, they were surprised to see the places of disposal become new locales for veneration (Arriaga 1999). In the religious fervour of seventeenth century highland Lima, provided there were descendants to make sacrifices, it appears that just about anything that grew from, touched, or had connection with venerated ancestors provided sources for their distributed agency.

The great diversity and mutability of expired beings relate to native Andean understandings about the process of dying. Using contemporary and colonial era data, Urioste (1981, 15–18) and Salomon (1995, 328–34; see also Salomon 1998, 9–11) have discussed native beliefs about dying not necessarily as a single moment of expiration, but as a 'death continuum' associated with the Quechua term *huañuy*, a word meaning 'to die', but which encompasses either side of biological death (the moribund near dead status, to the recently biologically expired). Salomon (1995, 328) explains, 'Being *huañuc* marks passage from vital and fresh, but also formless and mutable, existence to the immutable existence typical of very old beings.' Crucially, dying and its movement are marked by physical qualities of the subject: from the softer, fleshy recently dead (moribund to cadaver, usually glossed by the Spanish as *cuerpo, cadaver,* or *difunto*) to the harder, dry and fixed status of esteemed dead (*aya*) or 'enshrined' mummy (*mallqui*). A range of colonial Quechua terms and phrases associated with 'aya' indicates a semantic field

emphasising the process of thinning, becoming progressively slower and lazier, and lacking sensation (González Holguin 1989, 39).

In 1618, the extirpator priest Diego Alvarez noted 'they also venerate movable stones of particular workmanship with which they tell various myths, and also the bodies of their gentile ancestors, which they call mallquis, and they say they are the children of the stones' (Polia 1999, 418, translation mine). I argue that the formal diversity of ancient Recuay effigies of the first millennium AD may have marked different kinds of deceased in a long-term temporal sequence, from mummified images to stone ancestors. Tom Zuidema observed different native terms for ancestral beings in colonial period Recuay: *mallqui > huaca mallqui > huaca* (Zuidema 1978). Colonial groups apparently used the term *huaca* to distinguish those objects furthest removed in terms of genealogical distance and time; for being founding progenitors, they had been turned into stone.

Over time, what ancient Recuay funerary practices resulted in was a series of juxtaposed descent-scapes by which people manifested their ancestors variably through places, monuments, effigies, and action. Yet it was like neither a 'forest of kings' associated with dynastic stelae of Maya cities (Schele & Freidel 1990), nor an eternal and unchanging 'sacred landscape' (Townsend 1992) as much as materialised oral traditions, a lithified world nevertheless perpetually contested and imagined (e.g., Gose 2006). Like all landscapes, this was constantly worked, changed, eroded, acknowledged, and added onto; materialised histories and time thus become sedimented, but always with the changing local experience at their centre (Ingold 1993; Heckenberger 2007).

Optimising Ancestral Presences

Why bother going to the trouble of making different kinds of dead? First and foremost, they were to be engaged with periodically, for intensive physical contact. It is easier to sense them – see, smell, touch, and hear – if they are nearby.

Their physical presencing facilitated many of the key practices in the ancestor cults, which are related to offerings made by the living. First, there were new clothes and wrappings for the ancestor image. Many ethnohistorical texts describe annual celebrations, marking the sowing and harvests, that saw bundles retrieved from their repositories; they would be displayed in open areas, dressed in new or temporarily worn special apparel, and then,

upon return to their tombs, re-wrapped in new cloths (Duviols 2003; Doyle 1988). The veneration acted at once to appease the needy divinity and to make reference to renewal and production of the agricultural calendar.

The presence of expired beings was also fundamental to another core practice in ancestor cult: feasting. Archaeology and iconography reinforce the ethnohistoric picture of feasting as one of the main activities in ancestor veneration (Lau 2002; Mantha 2009; Herrera 2008; Ibarra 2003; Lau 2000; Carrión Cachot 1955). Food offerings and other items were made to the dead; the most common offerings described in the historical texts were camelids and guinea pigs, maize cobs and flour, marine shells and their powdered forms, and coca leaves. The blood of sacrificed animals was commonly scattered on the ground and splashed on the effigies and buildings. Offerings were left with the bundles when in the repositories. Many of the animals and offerings were also burnt and the ashes scattered.

There was also great consumption of food by the living. The idolatries testimonies note that dancing was common practice, as were consultations, conversations, and songs, accompanied by flutes and drums. Ancestors also communicated advice and prognosticated through their priests (e.g., Doyle 1988; Duviols 2003; Polia 1999, 405).

The most crucial practice, however, required that ancestor effigies be central in the flow of maize beer, or *chicha*. As the priest José de Arriaga (1968, 41) observed, 'The principal offering, the best and most important part of Indian sacrifices, is chicha. By it and with it, the festivals of the huacas begin. It is everything.… It is a common saying with them that when they go to worship the huacas they are giving them a drink.' Chicha was usually prepared by women and then taken to the places for libation and public festival. Many of the Recuay effigy vessels are funerary in nature, and it is very likely that they held quantities of maize beer. It is important to note that some depict women carrying jars, while high status males are shown either dispensing or receiving drink, or in the company of others holding cups. As can be inferred from the Recuay ceramic scenes of dance and merriment, chicha played a key role as a social lubricant in funerary celebrations (Lau 2013, plates 10, 11). Ethnohistorical sources tell us that a plentiful supply was seen as a host's obligation and the favour of ancestors (and their earthly representatives, chiefs), a sign of the bounty of resources made possible by their goodwill and intervention. Thus well-being was seen to flow throughout the collective social body, living and ancestral.

In short, the presencing of expired beings enabled those physical interactions that allowed descendants to engage with their deceased. This was not only to remember them, but to honour and celebrate them together and in public. At the same time, the presence of ancestors legitimated the effort publicly with their kindred around them (Lau 2008). They experience the drink, they receive the offerings, and they hear their music and prayers. And for all this, what the priest Arriaga (1999) termed 'devotion', they respond in kind.

CONCLUDING POINTS

In summary, this chapter has explored the presencing of expired beings, the ancestral dead, in the Recuay tradition (ca. AD 1–700) of ancient Peru. Stone effigies, mummy bundles, and funerary buildings and necropoleis were surveyed as material forms of the dead. The analysis drew comparisons to historically documented practices, especially of north highland Peru, to complement the archaeological evidence, and discussed local commentary, indigenous and colonial Spanish, that rationalised the diverse forms of Andean dead and their veneration. Despite the uneven evidence available to us at present, it is possible to draw a few provisional conclusions.

First, ancient Andeans made the ancestral dead tangible and accessible. The long duration and the great heterogeneity in forms demonstrate a sustained concern for presencing them. This was to engage them in a range of social interactions first at the level of cult, but more generally as part of social life.

Second, there were different kinds of ancestral dead. We cannot say much about pebbles and small unmodified stones, occasionally identified by sixteenth to seventeenth century writers as heirloomed ancestral objects. Small carved stones with human or bundle features are known. More reliable evidence is gained from the remains of bundled interments, and their representation. Related to this category are the built spaces that housed the dead, at the level of both the individual tomb and groups of tombs. The latter were small communities themselves, but they were much more. The necropolis (or necropoleis) stood for the collective and, to no uncertain extent, for its being.

A series of interrelated axes helped to differentiate these kinds of dead, and this is largely informed through comparison to the idolatries evidence. The first concerns the materiality of aging – which sees the expiring form as increasingly desiccated, immobile, devoid of fluids, hard,

and stony. The older ones tend to be of stone. The second related axis concerns the scale of potency of the ancestor, which is basically reliant on the size and cult commitment of the descendant group. Hence some ancestral dead, say a mallqui, may simply be acknowledged by a small extended family or lineage. Others, say a mountain like Pariacaca, might serve entire provinces. The third axis concerns the replacement of ancestral figures under local contingencies. The iconoclasm, modification, and creative reworking of ancestral manifestations were not limited to Spanish colonialism, but seem to have characterised earlier times as well. These speak to a mutability of ancestral form, with an array of potential succedanea and pathways for new being.

Thus, the ancestral dead, often noted for their fixed stable forms, might be conceptualised in perpetual creative process. A series of forms was discussed and the general record shows an emphasis on the transforming character and context of each. The ancient groups very often centred on periodic practices of varied commitments and actions of descendants on or in the proximity of the ancestral bodies. Many kinds of elaborate Andean material culture – whether a mummy bundle or tomb – were small, episodic enhancements and parts of larger projects. They were, in general, individual acts of renewal (offerings, libations, dedications), but they were also deliberate corporate acts and procedures that built on or formed larger wholes, a very common Andean way of doing things.

Finally, the esteemed dead were fundamental parts of social reproduction. The dead were integral to what I referred to as descent-scapes – the perpetual materialisation of the dead and the past by corporate, kin-based groups as a way to renew and understand their lived world. For Andean peoples who knew no writing, descent-scapes were the most palpable mode of inscribing ancestral biographies. The ancestor objects and buildings tracked time, effort, and genealogies and were the outcomes of local prerogatives. New connectivities manifested through the jostling of buildings and sculptures, removing and piling on layers of cloth, and filling and emptying of pots.

Given the correspondences with ethnohistorical patterns, for the Recuay, ancestrality *was* history, and I would argue their main form of reckoning the past. This was one reason why so many forms related to each other – entangled, as it were, in an ancestral intermediality and social chronology. All these forms were local strategies to maximise opportunities for ancestral flows. Referencing the cyclical and largely formulaic (typical of monumental

time), they objectified ancestral beings as key agents of myth. The virtue of descent-scapes – in trying to fix the past and mobilise one's connection to it through the lived environment – had special resonance in a setting prone to climatic instability, environmental disasters, and social tumult. The different kinds of dead promised to anchor the uncertainties of the Andean world, at least for a while.

The story of Andean funerary practices provoked a last thought about social relations during colonial encounters in general. We know by now that European interventions across the world – in Africa, the Pacific and the Americas – frequently occasioned the dramatic loss of people, which affected the social fabric and doing of society more generally. I think of, especially, the tragic depopulation in many Northwest Coast groups, for example, during the nineteenth century. Disease, resettlement, migration, and conversion took a terrible toll as key persons died, along with the varied roles and knowledge they held. Social relations irrevocably transformed. In the Andean case, however, it seems clear that the ones dying off and in dire need of replacement were not only the living, but also the already expired. The permanent disappearing of the dead – for Andeans, their source of life and centres of local faith – was one of the primary causes of the ensuing tumults of mid-colonial times.

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Putting Death in Its Place: The Idea of the Cemetery

Anthony Snodgrass

However loosely we use the term 'cemetery' in our professional writings, we all really know what a true cemetery looks like: we have only to go to the edge of the city where we live, or to an urban or village churchyard, to see. It is a clearly designated area set aside, by some kind of communal decision, exclusively for burial use, with some degree of formality, and normally with few explicit criteria for exclusion or inclusion. We do not expect whole groups of people to be excluded, beyond such arguably obvious cases as convicted murderers; although, as we shall see, matters may have been very different at certain times in the past, even when the principle of an official cemetery was universally accepted. Its most familiar form is the 'flat cemetery', where one can walk freely between the graves to locate a specific one. The grave itself may be 'a fine and private place', but the cemetery is not. This paper will consider the implications of the 'flat cemetery', taking mainland Greece, over a period of several millennia, as its main test case.

This whole issue is simply too basic to have received much recent discussion from archaeologists, who have long since moved on to the internal analysis of cemeteries – whether of the variation between individual burials, the implications for social structure, or, for traditionalists, the grave goods in their own right. Yet it seems to me more important, at any rate socially, than these latter questions – more significant for social organisation than differential treatment of age-groups or sexes, more reliable as a status indicator than wealth differentiation in burial (since it involves no element of self-projection), transcending also the overworked dichotomy between intramural and extramural burial (compare Morris 1987, 63, who prefers to speak of 'reserved' and 'unreserved' burial spaces). Only one issue cuts deeper – potential exclusion from formal burial of *any* archaeologically recoverable kind – and this too will come in for mention later on.

To us today, the whole notion of the community and the communal suggests a fairly stable, settled group, one that would locate its burial grounds in a relationship of controlled proximity to a zone of habitation nearby. This makes it the more surprising to find just how far back in time the idea of communal burial, in a space designated exclusively for that purpose, goes. In Mesolithic Europe and elsewhere, hunter-gatherer societies were already implementing it as early as the sixth millennium BC, with groups of graves laid out in neat rows (see, for example, Vedbaek in Denmark: Chapman 1981, 75) – surely a testimony to the depth of feeling that was already being invested, quite independently of such advantages as a settled community would later obtain from keeping its ancestors under its watchful eye.

Let us at this point recall the Saxe-Goldstein no. 8 hypothesis, once famous in archaeological theory, which claimed a correlation between a lineal descent system and entitlement to property, on the one hand, and use of a formal, bounded area for the dead, on the other. I do not wish to contest that correlation, but the fact remains that, in such cases as these Mesolithic cemeteries, we have already found a partial exception to it: no hunter-gatherer community, surely, can have had much notion of landed property. That was still to come. What I shall be arguing is that, in certain circumstances, the property factor was to become so strong as at times to override the attachment, however deep seated, to burial in a formal, communal cemetery.

I think it is best to begin at the later end, with instances from the historical Classical world where there is near-certainty about the entitlement to burial
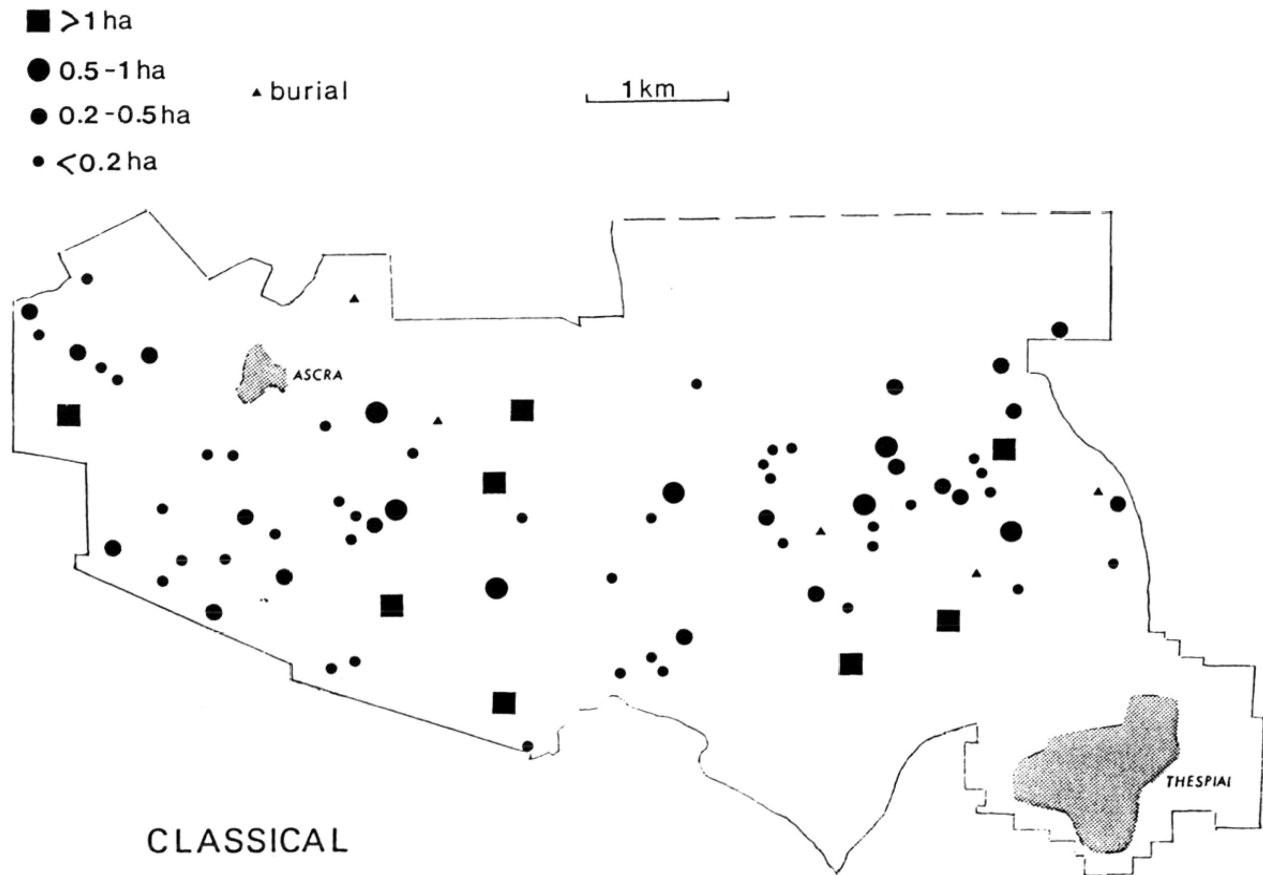
Figure 12.1. A sector of the Boeotia survey, including two nucleated settlements and the intervening scatter of small rural sites (squares and circles), with occasional burials (triangles) in the interstices between these.
After Snodgrass 1998, 42, figure 1.

on one's own property on the part of the burying group. In that major legal compilation, the late Roman Imperial *Digest*, this right is taken as a given, in order to engage with secondary legal questions, such as whether one could sell a property and retain the right to bury on it, or when one might dig up a corpse that someone else had buried on one's property (Mommsen et al. 1985, 350; translated from the Latin edition published in 1870). This involved frequent use of a phrase meaning 'consecrated ground', *locus religiosus*, because in Roman law a piece of private property, once used for burial, automatically became 'consecrated'. This usage is more notable, however, for its legal than for its spiritual connotations.

Moving back in time to the third century BC, we find an interesting case of a frontier dispute between two rather obscure Greek border-cities, Gonnoi in Thessaly and Heraclea in Macedonia. In the inscription recording this dispute (Helly 1973, 100–7, no. 93), it is assumed that

the property belonging to a city is the sum of the properties of all its citizens: in this case (at least according to the city of Gonnoi), the fact that a couple of its citizens had been buried in the disputed frontier zone proved that they, and therefore their city, owned the piece of land in question. So individual property rights could act as a criterion to determine the line of partition between two cities and even (in this case) two whole regions.

We must now be in the general field of *rural* (rather than urban) property and its use for burial. It was in fact the occasional discovery of isolated burials of the fifth, fourth, and third centuries BC, in an agricultural landscape dotted with farmsteads in Boeotia, central Greece (Figure 12.1), that first alerted me to what now seems an obvious inference: that at times it had been perfectly legal, as well as being easier and perhaps also a source of assurance in case of possible future litigation, to bury one's dead kin on the family farm rather than in the city cemetery, or even in a more accessible rural

cemetery (Snodgrass 1998). There is in fact at least one Classical inscription, from Crete, displaying a law that prescribed when one might, or might not, cross some-one else's land in order to bury a corpse on one's own property (Guarducci 1950, 47, no. 46B). Here again, we are surely dealing with the rural sector, and quite cer-tainly with burial outside any formal cemetery. Yet in this as in many past eras, contemporary formal ceme-teries also existed.

A similar conclusion could anyway have been drawn, without this written documentation, from purely archae-ological evidence. A few years after our rural survey experiences in Boeotia, Hans Lohmann surveyed a con-trasting Greek landscape, not very many miles away but very different in that it was less fertile and, as a result, had apparently been intensively farmed only for a short period of a couple of centuries or so in the entire human past. This made for infinitely better preservation of agri-cultural structures than was available in the continuously cultivated landscape of neighbouring Boeotia. Lohmann was able to recover, from surface investigation, not only the walls and ground plans of his farmsteads, but the asso-ciated agricultural installations and even the boundary walls between properties. What is relevant here is that a number of the individual farms also had their own family burial-plot, located in most cases between 40 m and 200 m from the farmstead (Lohmann 1993a, 165–6, 188–93, 359–60; 1993b, 414–15, 513–15, among other cases). Dating is once again concentrated in the fifth, fourth, and third centuries BC, the same era as our surface finds in Boeotia.

So far, all that we have seen is that a handful of soci-eties, big and small, but confined to a restricted span of time and space, tolerated the practice of 'private' burial on land owned by the burying group, alongside the more prevalent use of formal cemeteries. But private property, if hardly as primeval in origin as we have found cemetery burial to have been, had presumably been in existence for several millennia before this. The question is, when it gave rise to this secondary practice of burying the dead on one's property, with its challenge to the use of a for-mal, communal cemetery.

A few general suppositions and exclusions may be in order here. First, there can be no assumption of a high degree of social stratification, as a necessary precondition for this development. On the contrary, the Classical Greek régime of small farmers prevailed in relatively egalitarian societies, while the Roman Imperial law code was prob-ably at least as stringently enforced on the poorer as on the richer subjects of empire. Property ownership at any level, however humble, was enough.

With the problematic issue of intramural *versus* extra-mural burial, a central difficulty is the distressing ambi-guity of both those terms, especially when settlements were loose knit and unfortified. On any definition, the concept of private property must cut right across this distinction; yet such features as burials under the floor of a still occupied dwelling-house remain useful, among other things, as extreme examples of the funerary use of private property. A separate issue, one that I think we can again afford to set aside, is the differential treatment and location of child burials. These are all aspects dear to the hearts of funerary archaeologists, but we should concentrate instead on the much simpler question of the presence or absence of any alternative to the communal cemetery.

I now wish to extend this approach by jumping back in time to later prehistory. In prehistoric Europe, there had been a long, deep, and perhaps unbroken tradi-tion of Gräberfelder, running over millennia on end. In Aegean Greece, the mainland especially, I am not so sure. There are long periods in which the funerary evidence is too thin, either to generalise about practices, or even to speak of substantial formal cemeteries: as far as my limited knowledge extends, this fairly describes both the Neolithic and the Early Bronze Ages in mainland Greece, though the Cyclades, especially, tell a different story. Only with The Middle Bronze Age – the Middle Helladic era in mainland Greece – when we at last have a sufficiency of cemetery evidence, does this picture change.

The Middle Helladic picture is a contradictory one, suggesting a long-standing coexistence of conflicting alternatives. There is no question as to the prevalent burial *form*, at least for much of the period: crouched inhumations with few if any grave goods, in cists, pits, or other single graves, were common almost everywhere. In a number of cases, these are arrayed in big extramural flat cemeteries of canonical type: I would choose the West Cemetery at Eleusis, located well clear of the settlement and with at least ninety-two Middle Helladic interments as well as some later ones, as an emphatic example of a true cemetery (Figure 12.2). Mylonas, in excavating this site (Mylonas 1975, 318), was able to detect family groupings within these austere, monotonously uniform groups of graves; others have identified the same feature in contemporary burials at sites such as Prosymna. They are doubtless right, but this does not disqualify a site from
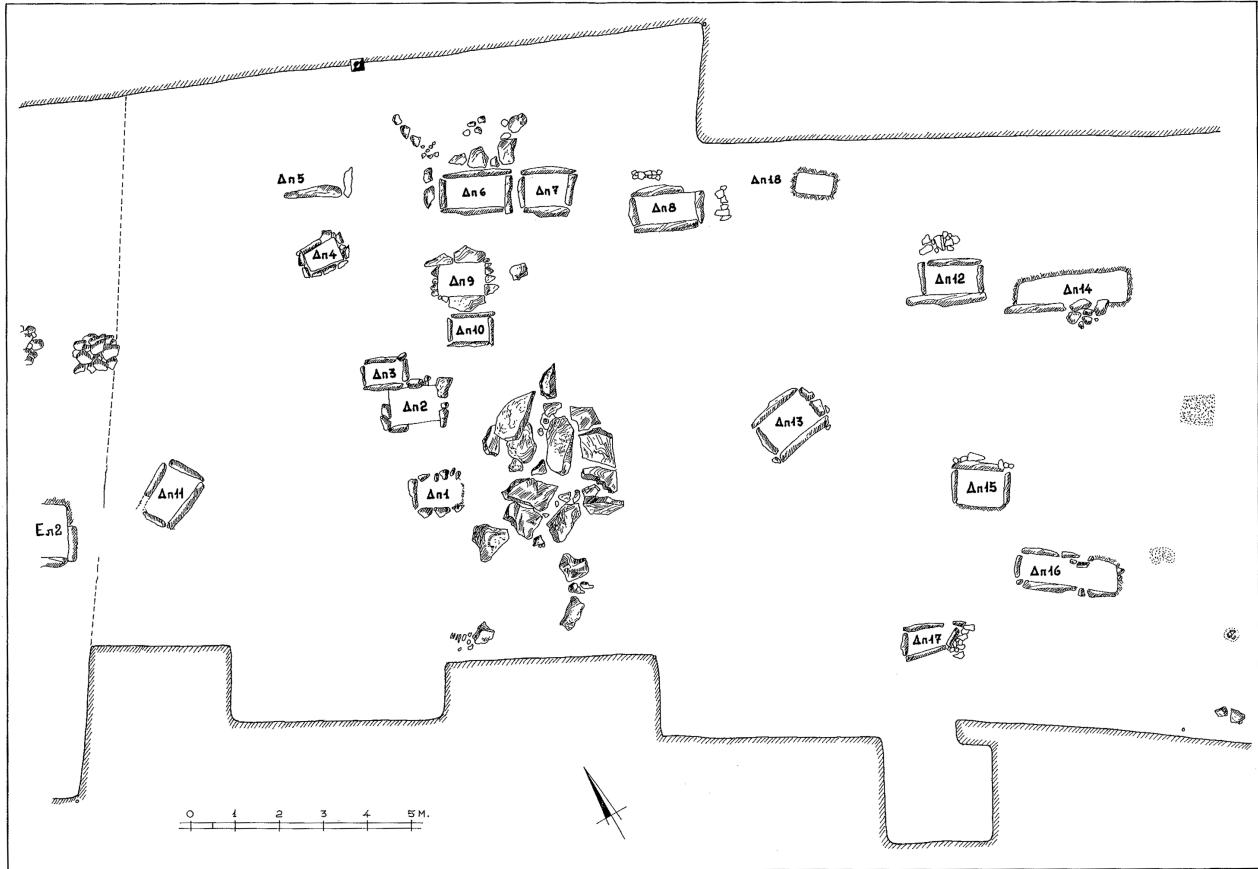
Figure 12.2. Sector Δ of the West Cemetery at Eleusis. Redrawn after Mylonas 1975, Γ, plate Δ and reproduced by permission of the Archaeological Society of Athens. The cist tombs (Eπ2 and Δπ 1-17) all date to the Middle Helladic period or just afterward.

classification as a formal cemetery, which can accommodate such groupings without diluting its essentially public function.

Yet, probably from the very beginning of the period, Middle Helladic Greece also offered quite different approaches to the treatment of burial. For a start, there were variant burial forms (tumuli, shaft graves, enlarged cists), whose incidence increased as the period went on, but above all there was irregularity in location. Single burials of the standard type are found under house floors, often for children but also for adults; the houses in question are sometimes abandoned (on this practice, see most recently Milka 2010), but at times still occupied. This feature seems enough on its own to show that the contrasting idea, of using one's property for a burial, was also acceptable in Middle Bronze Age Greece.

Quite separately, burials of all age groups can be scattered in the spaces between the houses: this feature seems especially prominent in the region of the

Argolid, destined for special prominence in the ensuing period. One site with an especially high frequency of these intramural scatters within settlement layers is Lerna, where Middle Helladic graves are repeatedly referred to in the preliminary reports as being widespread (Caskey 1955, 27–8; 1956, 155–8; 1957, 149) – too widespread, apparently, for them to be marked on the published plans. A better-documented case is Asine, where parts of the 'Lower Town' were used as a Middle Helladic burial ground, areas that 'at the time of burial may have been used as waste land or grazing areas within the settlement' (Nordquist 1987, 95). This latter instance, in all its ambiguity, may be as close as one can be to the category of a true cemetery located within the settlement area. Claims made for other occurrences at nearby sites, such as the 'Prehistoric cemetery' to the west of the citadel at Mycenae (Wace 1950, 209, figure 2), are more questionable: the Mycenae example does indeed look like a cemetery, but one that surely lay

well clear of the settlement area, especially in Middle Helladic times.

The heterogeneous pattern from Middle Helladic Greece seems enough to show that the rules then governing burial were either very permissive or else non-existent. In particular they combined, without any obvious or consistent differentiation of status, the practice of burial in collective cemeteries with the use of domestic property for the same purpose. Neither of these practices, of course, is new: it is merely that this is the first period in mainland Greece with a sufficient body of evidence to demonstrate their frequency. The burials that lay in outdoor areas but within the settlement, as at Asine, we may set on one side as rarities, ambivalent between the two previous categories: neither demonstrably on private land, nor strictly deserving of the name cemetery. The new burial forms, often of large and multiple types that required both recurrent access and a considerable amount of space, were mostly to be found, along with the true cemeteries discussed earlier, outside the settlements.

The sequel to the Middle Helladic period is the Mycenaean Age, when the more elaborate burial forms just mentioned continued to prevail, along with a whole array of new ones – including the *tholos*, or 'beehive', tomb, which has become emblematic of the period, and the much more common chamber tomb. The funerary field overall, notwithstanding the powerful arguments that exist for essential continuity from the Middle Helladic to the Mycenaean culture, shows a profound and fairly rapid change from predominantly single and contracted, to predominantly multiple and extended burials. This, in turn, from the very nature of the Mycenaean chamber and *tholos* tomb, entails a wholesale adoption of extramural burial, which changes from being a sporadic phenomenon to becoming a heavily prevalent one. Burial within the settlement is from now on normally restricted to infants and children, as it had been on certain Middle Helladic sites.

Of the multiple tombs, we should first note an obvious feature shared by many *tholoi* and almost all chamber tombs, namely, that they are topographically governed by the slope of the ground (Figure 12.3), and by the desire to avoid the harder limestone outcrops in favour of more tractable rock. Next, we should note a repeated observation by Cavanagh and Mee (e.g., 1990, 55) that groups of chamber tombs by no means observed the 'least effort' principle, often lying at a distance of more than a kilometre from their associated settlement, in a landscape where suitable sites were available much nearer. This might

suggest an intention to distance the dead from the living, along with the regular orientation of chamber tombs with their doors facing away from the settlement, as emphasised by Berit Wells (1990, esp. 128). But that, as we shall see, is not the only possible explanation open to us.

We now arrive at the most fiercely debated issue of all: how inclusive or exclusive was burial in Mycenaean chamber tombs? Over the last generation, there has been a progressive shift in expert opinion, away from earlier views that chamber tomb burial was socially restricted, whether to 'the nobility and wealthier classes' (Taylour 1964, 86); to 'court retainers, royal relatives, and perhaps to the most prosperous commoners' (McDonald & Rapp 1972, 138); to 'the middle classes' (Bintliff 1977, 289), or to 'a fairly affluent sector of society' (Alden 1981, 19). Later, both Dickinson in his specific study of the problem (1983, 62–4) and Cavanagh and Mee in their synthesis (1998, 78–9) drew a very different conclusion: that chamber tomb burials, in the first place, comprised too large a proportion of the surviving Mycenaean funerary evidence; secondly, too often contained few and unexceptional grave goods; thirdly, showed too steady an increase in numbers through time, although with a concomitant decline in the quality of their cutting; and finally, too palpably survived the collapse of the palace system with which they had for so long been associated, for the 'exclusive' model to form a convincing account of their use, except perhaps in the initial stages. For these scholars the chamber tomb became, rather, the default form of disposal for the bulk of the population, increasingly widely adopted, generally predominant by Late Helladic IIIA (very roughly, the fourteenth century BC), when it starts to attract child burials too, and still retaining its predominance through much of the post-palatial Late Helladic IIIC (roughly the twelfth century BC).

Dickinson, Cavanagh, and Mee have all studied Mycenaean burial much longer and more intensively than I, and I should perhaps gracefully defer to their considered judgement. What prevents me from doing so is our awareness today of a new potential factor: that of exclusion, not just from chamber tombs but from formal burial of any kind, to which Ian Morris alerted us in the context of the Early Iron Age (Morris 1987, 97–109). Not all the arguments in his book may have carried conviction, but on this point I think his case is unanswerable. If we are prepared to consider the possibility that some Mycenaeans did not receive archaeologically traceable burial; if we add to these the single graves that continue to occur, even in the Mycenaean
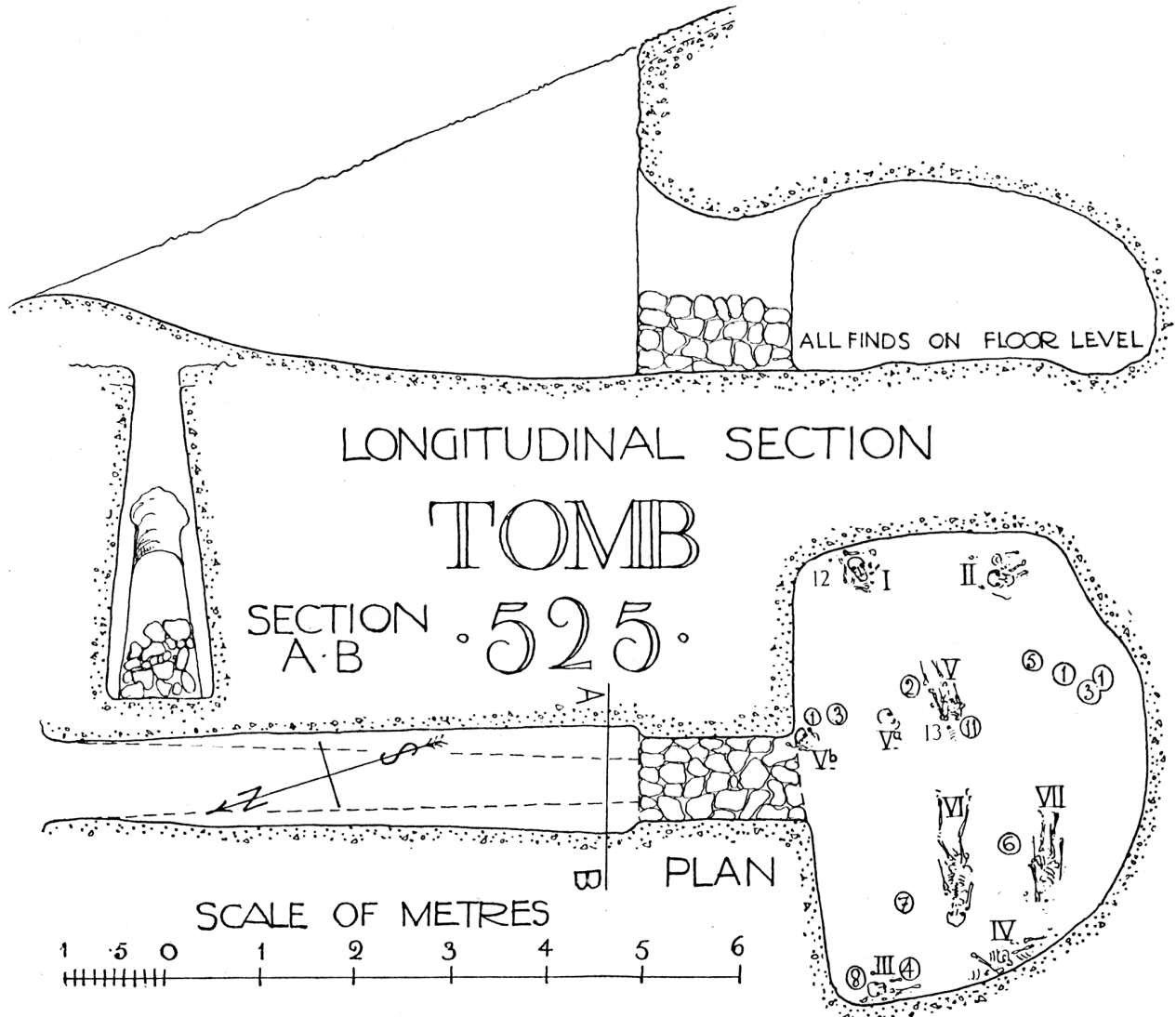
Figure 12.3. Plan and cross sections of a typical Mycenaean chamber tomb (tomb 525 at Mycenae). After Wace 1932, 90, figure 37. Reproduced with permission of the British School at Athens.

heartland of the Peloponnese and central Greece, not to speak of areas beyond where they apparently predominate, then it seems likely that it is indeed a restricted sector of Mycenaean society that we find buried in the chambers. But I should prefer the broader designation 'middle classes' to the more socially exalted groups that were once suggested.

We may be able to reinforce the link between burial and property by glancing back at the Middle Helladic period, when the minority who used tumuli, shaft graves, and enlarged cists – all more labour-intensive forms than the plain single graves – presumably belonged to lineages with a larger share of the community's land. But they

can hardly have had an exclusive share of it, reducing the vastly more numerous buriers in cists, pits, and pithoi to a landless class. More attractive today, in the light of Morris' conclusions, is the idea that, even with these latter, the totality of the population is not represented: that the single buriers embody the category of society, perhaps a large majority, who either possessed land-holdings, however small, or were tenants of the larger land owners, and that the truly landless (and, a fortiori, the slaves) did not qualify for formal burial at all, even of this relatively humble kind.

Following several earlier scholars' arithmetical calculations, I infer that each chamber tomb was used by
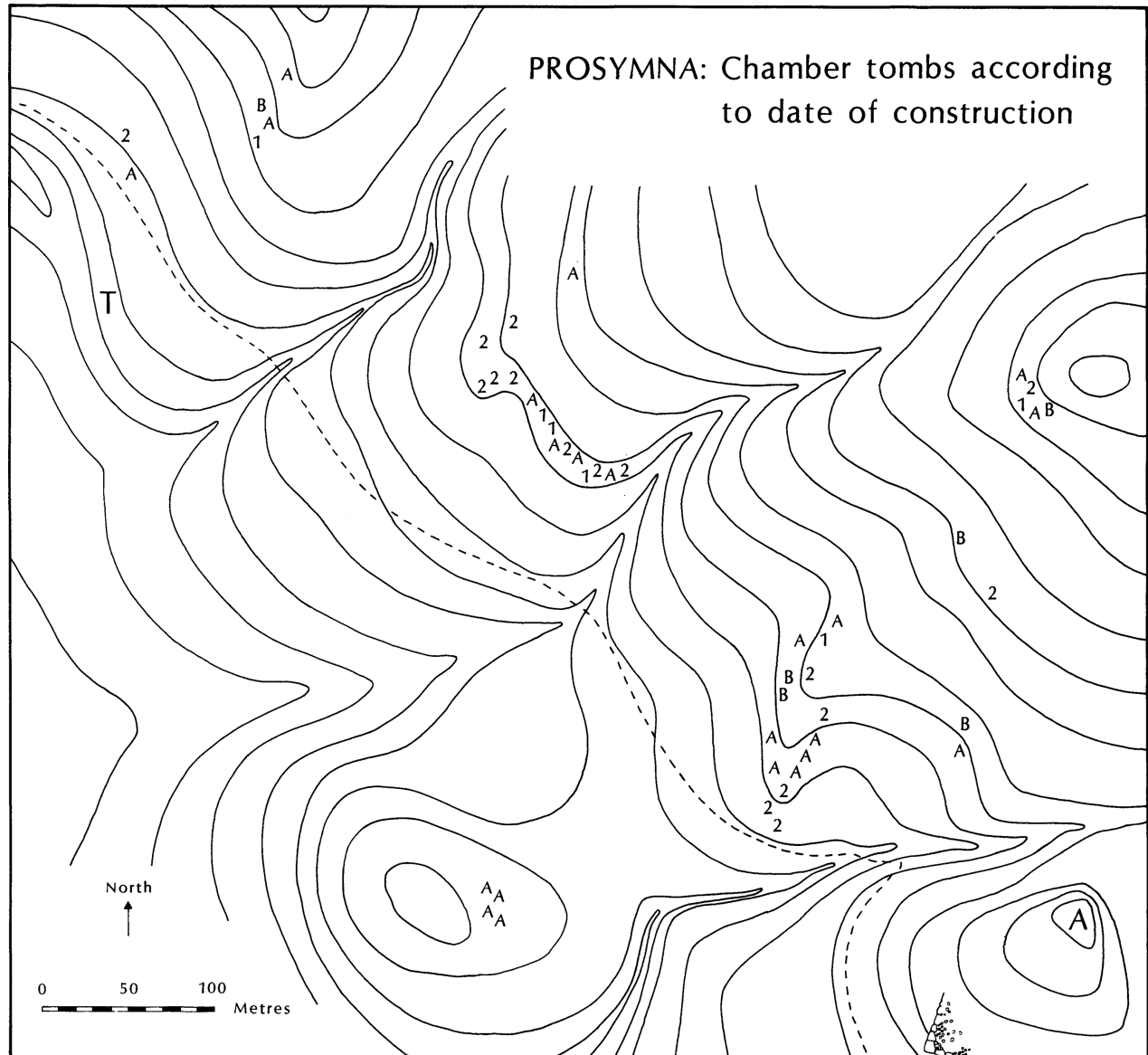
Figure 12.4. Distribution of the Mycenaean chamber tombs at Prosymna by period of construction. 1, 2, A, and B represent LHI, II, IIIA, and IIIB, respectively; T, tholos tomb; A, Acropolis.
After Mee & Cavanagh 1990, 226, figure 1. Reproduced with permission of the British School at Athens.

a nuclear family, and that each cluster of tombs represents a larger kinship group, an extended family or clan (*genos*). Such clusters are readily recognised in many a scatter of chamber tombs, as they had been with Middle Helladic single graves: Cavanagh and Mee (1990, 58–9, figure 3) use them freely in their analysis of the site of Prosymna (Figure 12.4). Elsewhere, notably at Mycenae itself (Cavanagh & Mee 1990, 60, figure 2), these clusters show an even more extensive spread.

But I do not think that we can treat such groupings as a series of formal and bounded areas – that is, of real,

separate cemeteries. Instead, we should scrutinise a different potential explanation. From the time – whenever that was – that it had become necessary to own any location, outside the community's cemetery, that was used for burial, there had been an immediate and direct link between burial and property. With this in mind, we may ask whether the clusters of chamber tombs could instead illustrate the quite different factor of *land ownership*. Could each cluster have been located on the land holdings of a family, perhaps the dominant one, within a given clan? Is this why chamber tombs constantly flout

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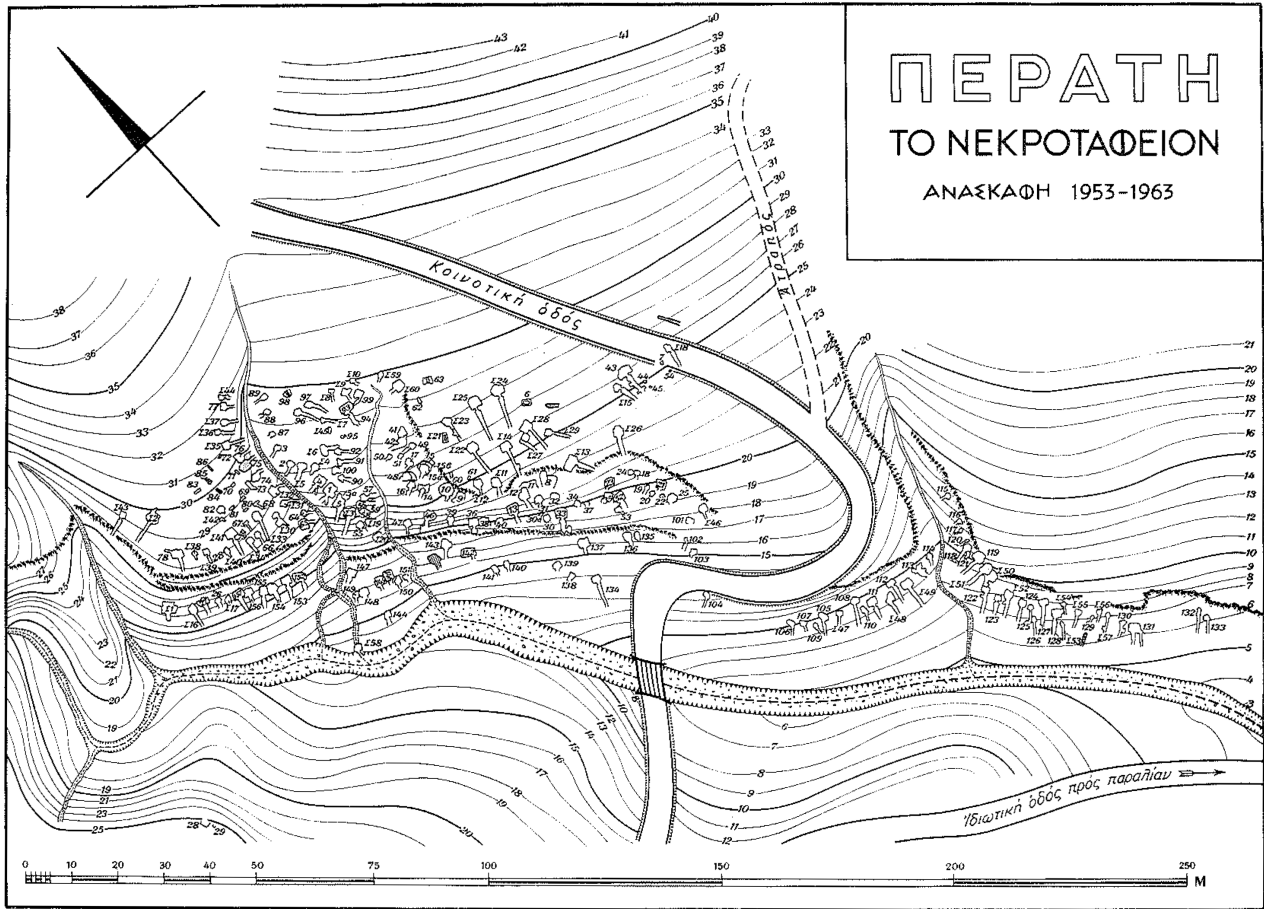
Figure 12.5. Plan of the Late Helladic IIIC chamber tomb cemetery at Perati.
After Iakovidis 1969, A, 12, plan 1. Reproduced by permission of the Archaeological Society of Athens.

the 'least effort' principle, by being dug a kilometre or more away from the settlement?

Such a possibility was considered, in general terms, in a different joint paper of the same year by Mee and Cavanagh (1990, 230). It was tentatively rejected because the chamber tomb clusters were 'not widely distributed over the landscape', though the point was conceded that, had a pattern of fragmented land holdings then existed in the same way as it probably did in Classical antiquity, under the operation of partible inheritance, this might change that conclusion. A clan's chamber tombs might then be permanently located (always subject to the pres‐ence of a topographically suitable site) on the nearest piece of land belonging to one of its member families, out of a much more extensive and scattered mosaic of holdings. For the *tholos* tomb, widely seen as the attribute of a ruler, at least in the Argolid, the analogy would pre‐sumably be that it would be built on the nearest part of the ruling family's own estates. In Messenia, where *tholoi*

are more frequent, this might mean the lands of a mere local chieftain. Those still buried in single graves, I would again argue, were not the landless, but the smaller prop‐erty owners. The radical change from Middle Helladic times, however, is the reduced proportion of such single burials, relative to the multiple tombs, reflecting perhaps the increased prosperity of the high Mycenaean age.

If it is objected that the form of the Mycenaean mul‐tiple tomb, especially of the chamber type, made such stringent topographical demands (steep slopes, tractable rock) as to make it unlikely that any 'formal, bounded area', large enough to constitute a true cemetery, could be found, then there is an easy rejoinder: look at Perati (Figure 12.5: Iakovidis 1969, 12, plan 1). This is a very late Mycenaean cemetery whose 192 chamber-tombs are densely spaced, so densely as to make it difficult, though not impossible, to make out the kind of internal group‐ings that we saw before. By any definition, this is surely a real cemetery, yet it is almost entirely composed of a type

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of tomb that had been characteristic of the preceding four hundred years of Mycenaean culture, but had not been used in this way before. It seems more than likely that new influences are at work.

There are plenty of other outward signs that they are. This – roughly the twelfth century BC – is a time when the canonical types of multiple tomb persist only in a reduced form: the chamber tombs become fewer, less carefully cut, and above all smaller; the *tholoi*, where they survive at all, are even more conspicuously shrunken. The single forms of burial, by contrast, become steadily more frequent: in appearance, they often closely resemble those of their earlier heyday in Middle Helladic, centuries earlier. Most important of all, the standard flat cemetery is about to make a return, in unprecedented strength. None of this yet puts a stop to the practice of intramural burial, especially for children, which lingers on for several centuries.

Probably overlapping in time with the Perati cemetery, two intriguing groups of Late Helladic IIIC intramural single burials occurred at Lefkandi in Euboea (a dozen examples: Musgrave & Popham 1991) and then, in more than forty cases, in the Lower Citadel at Tiryns (Kilian 1980, 176–7 with figure 5). They were closely associated with individual contemporary houses, under their floors at Lefkandi, more often between them at Tiryns; they covered all age groups; they almost entirely lacked grave goods; and almost all of them were placed in simple shallow pits. Whoever these people were, their burials at Tiryns overlapped with the latest local use of chamber tombs: Klaus Kilian concluded that they belonged to the lowest social class, who had been excluded from those tombs. Their location distinguishes them from what is to follow, just as sharply as from the common past practice of the Late Bronze Age. A sea change was under way.

We have arrived at the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age in the Aegean. Several features in the funerary sphere mark it out. First, in a direct reversal of the earlier change at the transition from Middle Helladic to Mycenaean, there is the resumption of single burial, in force and with some rapidity. But although the types of grave echo those of the Middle Helladic (so closely that, in default of grave goods, many excavators have been at a loss to assign the burials between the two eras), there is no real precedent in the Aegean world for the flat cemeteries that are about to confront us. They are mostly located on virgin sites, away both from the Mycenaean burial grounds and from the contemporary settlements. The Gräberfelder of Central Europe show that,

elsewhere, this pattern had long since been a familiar one. What is striking about these new cemeteries in Greece is how long-lived their form was to be, here and elsewhere, outlasting even the Classical age and in some cases retaining the very same cemetery location; and, as a result, how closely they match our expectations of a cemetery today.

These features have their beginnings in the so-called Submycenaean period, whose restricted geographical spread and apparently fleeting duration hardly earn it that title. A glance at the Submycenaean burials in the Athenian Kerameikos (Figure 12.6; Morris 1987, 119, figure 37) and especially the earliest group (indicated there as hollow rectangles), shows what I mean: there is a compactness and a regularity in their alignment, even though these qualities were presently to be diluted. We have no plan of the contemporary cemetery on the nearby island of Salamis, excavated more than a century ago, but we know this much: that it contained about one hundred graves arranged in seven separate rows. For the community using each of these cemeteries, Ian Morris calculated a synchronic burying group of about one hundred adults. These were sub-divided into groups, using the smaller plots that can be identified within each cemetery, each with five to eight adults in a short-lived period of use (that is, something more than a nuclear family). Similar plots can be detected within at least three smaller groups of Submycenaean graves, found elsewhere within the later city of Athens, but always lying outside the settlement area at the time in question. Farther afield, there are few comparable cemeteries of this period but at Lefkandi in Euboea, not very much later in date than the burials under house-floors described just now, there is a proper cemetery with twenty-two Submycenaean graves (the Skoubris Cemetery: Popham et al. 1980, 109–34). These too could readily be grouped into family plots. The adoption of cremation in preference to inhumation, which in many areas happened a little later, did little or nothing to modify the new principles: the first cremation burials, often using the same cemeteries, were as homogeneous and regular in their arrangement as the single inhumations that preceded them.

In the short run, there was to be some back-sliding from these principles, with selective exclusion from burial reappearing – this was indeed a central theme of Ian Morris' book (Morris 1987) – even while the idea of the dedicated cemetery continued to prevail. But in the much longer term, this blueprint for a cemetery was to remain valid, geographically vastly more widely and temporally far longer than any of the earlier burial fashions
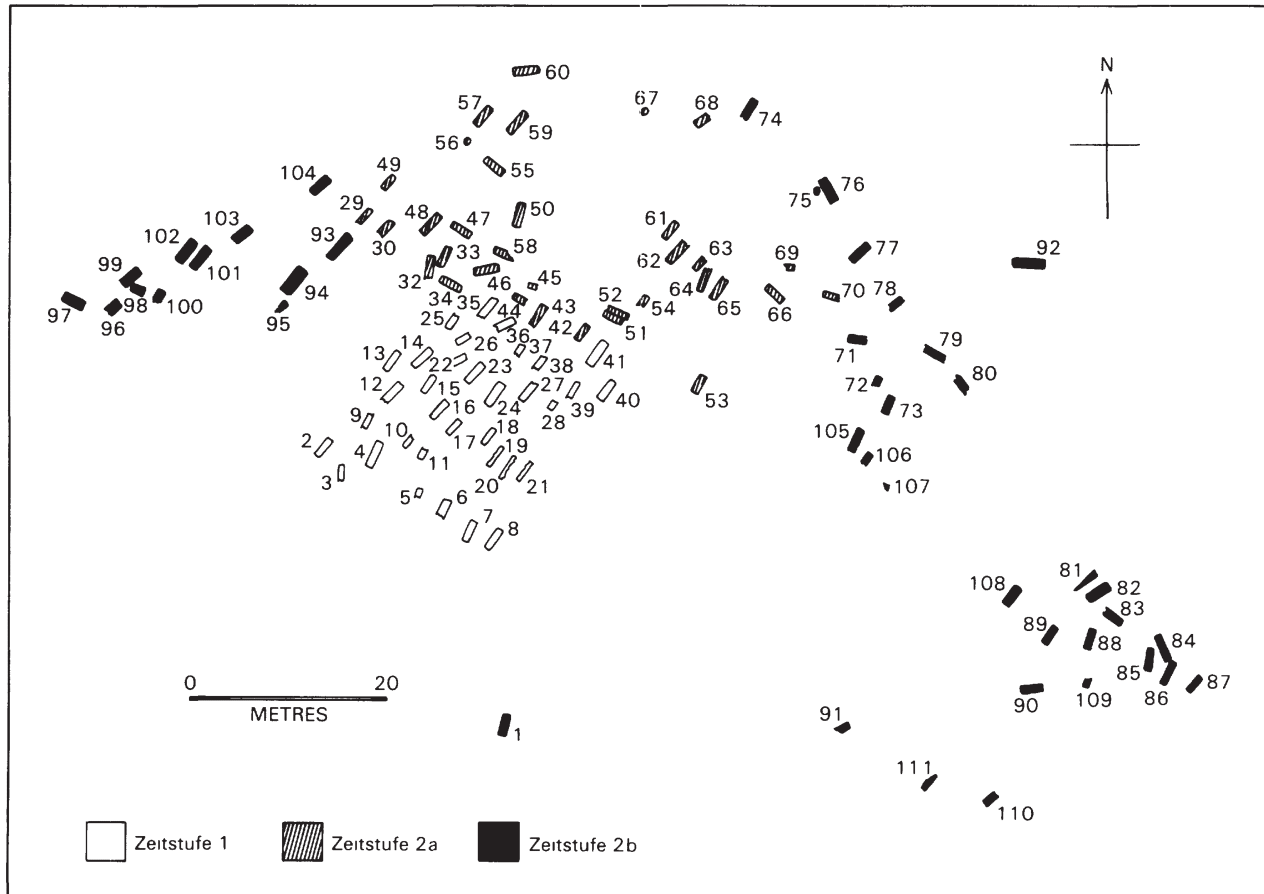
Figure 12.6. The Submycenaean 'Pompeion' cemetery in the Kerameikos at Athens. The graves are divided into three chronological phases.
After Morris 1987, 119, figure 37. Copyright Cambridge University Press, reprinted with permission.

we have considered. As we move downwards in time, through the entire Greco-Roman period and beyond, it becomes clear that this change was for good: irrespective of religious affiliation, regardless of burial rite – inhumation, cremation, exposure – and over the whole gamut from a plain pit in the earth to a built family vault, the permanent tendency will be to dispose of the dead in special and defined locations. Burial on private land holdings in the countryside, even under or between houses in cities, will continue to be tolerated as long as it does not become the dominant practice.

How much did this radical change in funerary behaviour add up to? The salient feature, in the eyes of most archaeologists, has always been the revival of single burial. It is also the aspect on which something closest to a consensus has been reached. Mee and Cavanagh sum this up by suggesting that 'that sense of permanence that the construction of chamber tombs implies' had been brought to an end by 'demographic decline and cultural

disintegration' (1984, 57, 61). They thus reject (along with most scholars today) the notion of external intrusion or invasion as lying behind the new wave of single burial, instead endorsing a general idea that I had advanced earlier: that the surviving population may have had 'little reason to suppose that [their] descendants would still be settled in the same place. A family vault may have come to appear an irrelevant extravagance' (Snodgrass 1971, 187).

From this point on, however, consensus is harder to achieve. For example, does the revival of the very same, single tomb types that had prevailed long before, in the Middle Helladic, with cists predominating over pits and vessel burials, betoken the resurgence of a social group that had been partly submerged throughout the Mycenaean age? Or are the differences between those two periods more important, for example, in the arrangement of the body (with crouched inhumations prevailing in the earlier case and extended in the later)? But I would propose setting these questions aside, to return

to the central issue: the growing acceptance of the designated, flat cemetery as the proper way to deal with the community's dead.

All these innovations at the end of the Bronze Age show the same precepts in force: choose a new cemetery site; locate it well clear of the current built-up area; adopt single burials; arrange them tidily; abandon rich grave goods; admit everyone to burial; allow family groupings. Several of these precepts appear to run counter to Mycenaean practice, though the lurking presence of lineage groups is something that we have detected at every stage. More elusive, though, is the operation of private property. If I am right that it was the principle of heritable ownership of landed property that had lain behind the distinctively Mycenaean pattern of groupings of chamber tombs across the rural landscape, then this was a pattern that, after prevailing with increasing success for some four centuries, now vanished almost without trace.

This conviction in part depends on my (nowadays dissident) view that chamber tomb burial was not the 'default option' for Mycenaean society, but was instead the prerogative of a restricted class. I doubt whether even the admirers of Mycenaean culture (of whom there are many) would accuse it of egalitarian tendencies, and I see the establishment of a chamber tomb cemetery as a conspicuous statement of private, inherited wealth, in the firm expectation that the continuing hereditary process would justify the labour needed for the initial task of excavation. A dominant family would initiate a group of tombs, having chosen a site on its own land for the first one. Thereafter, if the orthodox view on the nature of the burying groups is correct (earlier), it gave related, land-owning nuclear families an opportunity to express their solidarity with the larger kinship group, by adding their own tomb to a cluster, even if it was at a distance from their own nearest property. No one else would be allowed to cut a tomb nearby, much less bury their dead in one of the group's chambers.

But a community that sets aside a formal burial ground has taken a radical step away from this principle, limiting or blocking its operation by the appropriation of communal land for burial purposes. We may see here an inkling of that conflict between private and public interests that continues to dog Western cultures (our own included) down to the present day. This issue had apparently begun to be negotiated by some Middle Helladic communities, but I have suggested the possibility that the Mycenaeans reneged on that partial solution to it. Whether or not they did so, the decisive period emerges

as being the close of the Mycenaean age and especially the brief and localised Submycenaean phase, when we can detect with certainty the formal, bounded area and see communities, all of whose members were evidently buried together in a flat, extramural cemetery, mostly in single graves.

Like the very earliest known specimens from Mesolithic times, these cemeteries seem to reflect some deep, otherwise hidden initiative of social organisation. But do they also embody some more spiritual concerns, of the kind that is suggested by the title of this volume? The most obvious instance that one might put forward, the concern with pollution, turns out to be only indirectly relevant: the avoidance of pollution, by establishing a distance between the dead and the living, was primarily a factor in a different issue, the dichotomy between intramural and extramural burial. In the choice between formal cemetery burial and the funerary use of private land, by comparison, it could not be decisive, since either option in itself offered some possibility of providing against pollution. In any case, anxiety over pollution surely relates more to fear of the dead than to fear of death, which is a quite separate matter. So, too, with any postulated communion of the dead with the earth itself, in which we know the early Greeks had an interest: the 'spirits of the underworld' could operate regardless of the presence or absence of cemeteries.

A more interesting debate arose, within this general issue and with specific application to the period after the end of the Aegean Bronze Age, in the context of the theories expounded by Philippe Ariès in his once-famous work on death in medieval France, *L'homme devant la mort* (Ariès 1977, translated as *The Hour of Our Death*, 1981). Ariès had detected a long-standing set of attitudes to death, which he classed together as 'Tame (or Tamed) Death'. These, he believed, had prevailed in many societies from the remotest antiquity; they expressed an acceptance of death, as an unhappy but inevitable feature of human existence, the common destiny of all, to be faced with composure. They incorporated context-specific attitudes, such as that towards honourable death in battle. Death was to some degree 'familiar'. But in the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries of the Christian era in France, he saw signs of the weakening of these time-honoured attitudes. In place of 'Tame Death', there grew up the more personal, more anxiety-ridden 'Death of the Self'. From now on, death increasingly became something deplorable: an affront to the individual, a lonely fate, associated with suffering and decomposition.

Certainly we today are accustomed to reading words like 'horror' or 'obscenity' in the responses to a premature death. This radical change of attitudes was eventually to affect much of Europe, but it took time: it began in the circles of the rich, well-educated, and powerful and was much slower to penetrate the mentality of the masses (Ariès 1981, 138). This last point could prove to have some relevance to the ancient world too.

The debate in the ancient context, initiated in two papers by Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (1981, 1983), did not in the end lead very far: partly because the documentary evidence for the ancient world does not match that for medieval Europe, partly (at least according to Ian Morris: 1989) because the archaeological evidence adduced by Sourvinou-Inwood could not really exert sufficient 'bite' on the issue of a change in attitudes to death. That evidence embraced the growth of family grave-plots, the differentiation of adult and child burials, and the distinction between intramural and extramural burial (so, once again, omitting the simpler issue of the presence or absence of the true cemetery). And we have already seen, in the recurrent alternations and changes over a millennium or so, how chronologically indecisive each of these chosen criteria turned out to be.

Sourvinou-Inwood wanted to see a move away from 'Tame Death', parallel to the much later one detected by Ariès, in the Archaic age, beginning only after the composition of the Homeric poems, in which the older attitude is still repeatedly affirmed. This is the age of the rise of the *polis* or citizen-state in Greece; it is also the time of the huge intellectual advance represented by the pre-Socratic philosophers in Ionia – each of them a process that would make a credible motor for change in spiritual attitudes. In particular, the potential role of the intellectuals and the privileged in spearheading changes calls to mind Ariès' observation about medieval France. But the surviving evidence from the pre-Socratic texts shows little sign of innovation in, nor even of pressing concern with, attitudes to death. Intellectual and spiritual changes there undoubtedly were, but there is really no adequate case for thinking that this was one of them.

A more solid observation is that made by Morris (1989, 319–20): that the move to demarcate a formal, dedicated space for the dead is matched by a (roughly simultaneous) move to separate off the sanctuaries of the gods from the domestic habitat. Both exemplify a strong new tendency to draw and emphasise boundaries; neither had been a regular practice in the prehistoric Aegean. The growing popularity of the formal cemetery

did not, of course, imply an eclipse of all posthumous expressions of the social standing of the dead in their lifetime; they continued to be celebrated. It merely meant the near-abandonment of one of the more obtrusive of the ways of transferring a social attribute from the living to the dead, the use of their private property as the location for their burial.

But the demarcation of a cemetery and the demarcation of a sanctuary, in my view, shared no closer resemblance than the purely physical parallel of a boundary on the ground. With the cemetery, there was no intention to assimilate ancestors to deities: on the contrary, separating a family's dead from their private estate may have diminished rather than enhanced reverence for them. It certainly did not imply anything resembling a cult of the dead. In the same way, the use of the phrase *locus religiosus* in Roman law probably had no greater spiritual impact than what is reflected in our own uses of 'consecrated ground': we too may visit a churchyard to put flowers on a grave but, if and when this action prompts spiritual reflection, we probably move on into the church. The designation of an official cemetery was the result of a secular, civic, or communal decision: it may even represent a step in the process of secularising attitudes to the dead. That is why this paper, too, has turned out to be (perhaps disappointingly) secular in nature.

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Becoming Mycenaean? The Living, the Dead, and the Ancestors in the Transformation of Society in Second Millennium BC Southern Greece

Michael J. Boyd

A SYMBIOSIS OF FUNERARY AND WIDER SOCIO-POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS?

It is generally agreed that toward the end of the second millennium BC in central and southern Greece state-level social and political structures were in operation in many, or most, areas. The nature, or natures, of this (or these) apparatus remain a matter of keen discussion (Galaty & Parkinson 2007; Shelmerdine & Bennet 2008; Galaty et al. 2011), as is the extent of their reach beyond the confines of their most apparent physical manifestation, the so-called palace complexes (Lupack 2011; Kvapil & Wolpert 2006; Small 2007). Even less clear is the long emergence and development of the palaces and the social institutions that underpinned them (Wright 2006a, 2008; Maran in press; Nelson 2001; Barber 1992). Although much recent work has focussed on developments in society around the Middle–Late Bronze Age transition (e.g., Voutsaki 2010; for chronology see Table 13.1), there is a fundamental disjuncture between such studies, based primarily on mortuary data, and studies of the social structures articulated or projected through the later palaces, based on entirely different evidentiary strands (though see Murphy 2014 and Bennet 2007). It is this disjuncture that I wish to re-examine in this chapter.

The evidence available when considering the nature of the late Mycenaean 'palace' complexes includes written evidence (mainly accounting documents, though rich in circumstantial detail), architecture, iconography, and the accumulated finds from the sites. Beyond the borders of the palace complexes, funerary evidence, road systems, and 'second and third order' sites need to be considered.

Table 13.1. *Phases and dates in the second millennium BC Aegean*

Phase	Simplified calendar dates BC
MHI	2050–1950
MHII	1950–1750
MHIII	1750–1680
LHI	1680–1600
LHIIA	1600–1520
LHIIB	1520–1445
LHIIIA1	1445–1400
LHIIIA2	1400–1300
LHIIIB	1300–1180
LHIIIC	1180–1070

Note: The table simplifies many points of controversy and adopts the 'high chronology' (see Shelmerdine 2008, figures 1.1 and 1.2; and Manning 2010).

In a series of papers in the 1980s dealing mainly with Minoan Crete, John Cherry set forth a definition of the state, which, he suggested,

can be defined as a powerful, complex, permanently instituted system of centralised political administration; it exercises sovereignty in carrying out basic political functions (e.g. maintaining territorial rights and internal order, or making and executing decisions regarding group action) and its authority in these matters is buttressed by sovereignty in the use of force within its jurisdiction.

(Cherry 1984, 23)

He also, with Colin Renfrew, set forth the concept that the early state should normally appear in small groups (the peer-polity model: Renfrew & Cherry 1986; Cherry 1986). He suggested a series of 'inter-polity homologies' for the suggested polities of Crete, in palace design, peak sanctuary ideology, writing systems, and elite pottery styles: a comparable scheme of development for late Mycenaean Greece might substitute 'elite burial practices' for 'peak sanctuary ideology'.

The kind of state envisaged by Cherry is more all encompassing than many would now imagine for the Mycenaean centres. The problem with the mainland evidence however is that – unlike in Crete – prior stages in the developments of the palace complexes have been very difficult to define. Recent work within the late Mycenaean period is very exciting: at Tiryns the megaron sequence within LHIII has been clear for some time (Maran 2010); and the potential second order palatial site at Iklaina is revealing successive building phases, the earliest pre-dating LHIII (Petrakos 2011, 24–8), and significant areas remain to be excavated (Boyd forthcoming b). The development and role of the major new site at Ayos Vasilios are still unclear (Smith 2013, 31; Cavanagh 2011, 23). However we know little of the use of the great centres at Mycenae and Tiryns in LHII, and even less in LHI. The situation is rather better at Pylos and improving as work continues in the excavation archive there (Stocker & Davis 2014), but an answer to the specific question of what pre-dates the megaron will not be forthcoming, as no excavation took place under the megaron floor (Nelson 2001, 44–5).

With so little evidence from the palaces themselves for the early Mycenaean period the attraction of the funerary evidence is therefore understandable. At Mycenae there is an unbroken sequence of burial data from MHIII to LHIIIC (Boyd in press); at Pylos the situation is comparable (Murphy 2014; Boyd 2002, 147–52). Moreover there is a wealth of evidence from other sites. The early Mycenaean funerary evidence offers the riches of the shaft graves and other rich burials, as well as the architectural innovations of the chamber and especially the tholos tomb, now emblematic of Mycenaean culture. It is here that the genesis of Mycenaean leadership and hierarchy has been sought: each generation of scholars has turned to the shaft graves and contemporary burials to illustrate the rise of the elites that would soon be responsible for the construction of the great palaces. The excavation of Grave Circle B at Mycenae in the 1950s, and its detailed publication some twenty years later (Mylonas 1973), provided much impetus, as it seemed to illustrate, generation by generation, the increasing wealth and aristocratic poise of a group – a dynasty – who exuded power at the place where in the later period many would locate the centre of the Mycenaean world.

These approaches were first formalised in Dickinson's *Origins of Mycenaean Civilisation* (1977). In a series of papers Voutsaki (1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2010) has developed the notion that elite status was not merely reflected in rich burials, but actively created through the rituals enacted, and especially through the deposition ('consumption') of choice materials. This approach has faced some recent criticism (Papadimitriou 2011; Boyd forthcoming c).

These differing approaches have in common the underlying assumption (sometimes made explicit: Dickinson 1983), at least in the shaft graves and rich tholos tombs, that social structure has some direct relationship to burial practices: that extravagant events must reflect the upper echelons of society. While this may be true, it has very little explanatory force. With a significant chronological remove between the rich burials of the MH-LH transition and the first scraps of evidence for the 'Mycenaean state' around LHIIIA, the former carry all the weight in our understanding of the development of the Mycenaean world. However, these practices came about not to prefigure later developments, but within specific spatial and chronological contexts, as a result of conditions and intents borne of those contexts and no other. We can only assess early Mycenaean burial practices in their own contexts, and not in the light of what was to follow. The promotion of an elite may not have been the only, or even the main, aim of such practices. It is this question that this paper seeks to address, and in doing so consider other aspects of the social arenas enacted, foregrounded, and reproduced at these events.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MYCENAEAN BURIAL PRACTICES

Although there is much variety in Mycenaean burial practices, key developments during the MH-LH transition form a core set of new (or much enhanced) practices that are maintained through all subsequent developments. These are the introduction of tripartite architectural spaces (tholos and chamber tombs) with occasional variants, the use of collective burial practices, the introduction of secondary treatments of funerary contexts, the occupation of landscape areas for funerary purposes, and the development of specific uses of material culture in mortuary rituals (see Papadimitriou forthcoming for a slightly different set of developments). These developments, although set out here under five headings, are interrelated; it can be difficult to show that one preceded the other, or that the development of one facilitated the development of the other. The development of the entire package was rapid, and quickly established itself as the dominant paradigm, though with plenty of areas for innovation and local developments.

Funerary Architecture

Whereas it is widely agreed that stone-built tholos tombs first appeared in Messenia in MHIII (Boyd 2002, 55 and especially note 36), the first mainland rock-cut chamber tombs seem more dispersed: none are certainly dated to MHIII (though some of the earliest tombs at Volimidhia may be: Boyd 2002, 144), but in LHI the form can be found in the Argolid and Laconia as well as Messenia. Both tholos and chamber tombs have been separately argued to have been derived from Cretan prototypes: the Messenian tholos tomb from the synonymous type known in central Crete (Hood 1960) and the chamber tomb from the multi-chambered variety known from Knossos (Dickinson 1977, 61), perhaps via Kythera.

While there is no strong reason to accept a simple Cretan transference for the tholos tomb form (Boyd 2002, 55–6; Voutsaki 1998, 43) it remains possible that the distant burial forms of Crete (and their nearby manifestation on Kythera) were drawn on rather freely in the re-imagining of possibilities in the burial field that characterises the MH-LH transition in Messenia (Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 44). Both Cretan types share certain characteristics with the mainland forms: the establishment of an enclosed, reusable space whose entrance may be opened and closed, wherein activities can take place involving a number of persons in an area suitable for multiple burials.

However, the main impetus in developing new architectural forms was not in imitating Minoan Crete. Changes in funerary architecture may in fact be traced within an unbroken mainland chain. In Messenia (Boyd 2002, 218, table 4), as indeed more widely on the mainland (Pelon 1976; Müller 1989; Cavanagh & Mee 1998), the burial tumulus constituted the principal monumental funerary form. Tumuli are characterised by their architectural variability, exhibiting differences in height and diameter, construction method and material, and complexity of architectural history. Few have been excavated and well reported, adding to the haziness of this category. Some, such as the excavated mound at Ayos Ioannis Papoulia (Marinatos 1954, 1955; Korres 1978, 1980, 1988; Boyd 2002, 119–23; Figure 13.1) have a clear phasing demonstrating architectural (and practical) development. In its earlier phase the Papoulia mound was smaller and built around a single, central 'grave' (found empty on excavation). The grave was open to the east, giving the otherwise undifferentiated mound a specific line of focus. In the later phase the expanded mound came to play host to multiple burials, many of them ranged around the periphery in pithoi. Set so as to remain partly visible after insertion, the pithoi reimagined this funerary space as multi-focal.

The level of excavation and publication is too poor to ascertain whether other sites follow the pattern established at Papoulia, transforming a single, central grave into a multiple burial monument (this may be the case with some of the mounds at Vrana: Marinatos 1970). But by the later part of the Middle Bronze Age large numbers of tumuli are known from Messenia, and a good number from elsewhere in southern and central Greece. It was within these tumuli that a degree of architectural experimentation was to take place that led in a very short space of time from the initial conception of the tholos tomb form to its remarkable proliferation throughout Messenia in LHI and then throughout central and southern Greece in LHII.

Tholos tombs overlap chronologically with the tumulus phenomenon. Their impressive corbelled design requires external pressure for stability (Cavanagh & Laxton 1981), and although in a few early cases this is provided by building the structure underground, in most cases this is provided by means of a tumulus. On this basis alone the tholos can be seen as a development of existing practices (Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 45). However, closer examination of the early evidence suggests a more specific line of development.

Some of the earliest tholoi[1] are grouped together in burial mounds. At sites such as Gouvalari (Korres 1974, 1975a, 1975b; Boyd 2002, 108–12), Kaminia (Korres 1975a, 1975b, 1980; Boyd 2002, 116–18), and Nichoria (Choremis 1973; Boyd 2014a), groups of small tholoi have been noted in one or more burial mounds. The best known of these sites is Kaminia (Figure 13.2), and it is perhaps here that architectural developments are clearest. Middle Helladic pithoi were found here, two in a secondary position near the summit of the mound, and two built into the fabric of a later tomb. Five small (chamber diameters 2.1 m to 3.4 m) tholos tombs were ranged round the mound. With their narrowed mouths facing outward, the place occupied by the tombs in the mound clearly echoes that of the preceding pithoi (Korres 1996, 2011; Boyd 2002, 54–6), and it may be argued that these small tholoi were partly envisaged as a development of the pithos form (the largest pithos at Papoulia was 2.18 m in length). The circular plan of the tholoi, and their domed interior, recall the oval and rounded aspects of the pithos' shape, and as noted, their stomia recall the mouths of the pithoi and occupy the equivalent place

Figure 13.1. Tumulus at Ayos Ioannis Papoulia, Messenia.
Photo J. Myers. Courtesy G. S. Korres.

in the mound (Korres 2011; see also Papadimitriou 2011, 473–4).

The suggested development from the pithos to the tholos as a funerary device *within* the existing concepts of the tumulus is not to underplay the significance of the new form. Aside from the technical difficulty of building a corbelled tomb competently (the small size of these early tholoi makes them a suitable testing ground for the perfection of the technique: Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 45), these constructions are significant in introducing permanent architectural spaces that may be entered and within which activities may take place. This is feasible with even the smallest tholos tomb, but not with even the largest pithos, and marks a fundamental expansion of the possibilities for activity at the mound.

Once perfected, the tholos tomb form was widely and rapidly replicated in Messenia. Beyond the tumuli with multiple tholoi already mentioned, at Voïdhokilia a tholos tomb was built into an existing Middle Helladic tumulus; elsewhere new mounds were constructed to house individual tholoi. Many of these were still located in the vicinity of existing tumuli: the complex at Gouvalari, for example, not only included two multiple-tholos mounds, but also two other mounds with one and two tholoi, respectively; new tholoi at Routsi, Englianos (Spencer 1995), and Peristeria were all close to existing tumuli.

Figure 13.2. Multiple-tholos mound at Kaminia, Messenia.
Photo J. Myers. Courtesy G. S. Korres.

After having perfected the technique of construction, it became possible to build larger tombs occupying an entire mound, so that the type underwent a secondary adaptation, from being one funerary space among others in a larger monument, to being the single such space available in a mound now secondary to the tholos itself. The impetus behind the invention and perfection of the tholos form was rooted in the creation of funerary spaces within burial mounds, but the technical ability to build larger tholoi prompted a new vision, originally unintended: the creation of single-tholos burial mounds. The fourteen MHIII-LHI tholoi of Messenia not located in multiple-tholos mounds average 5.8 m in diameter[2], significantly larger than those in multiple-tholos mounds, though much smaller than what was to occur in later periods.

Beyond Messenia, tholos tombs are almost unknown before LHII (see Dickinson 2014 for potential exceptions, and Kasimi 2013). The tripartite form of the tholos is however replicated in the early chamber tombs, examples of which from LHI are known at Epidhavros Limira in Laconia (Dickinson 1977, 63–4; Boyd 2002, 206–8;

Gallou 2009), several sites in the Argolid (Boyd in press, note 38), as well as Volimidhia in Messenia (Boyd 2002, 138–47). In many ways these tombs are a simple adaptation of the tholos form, from a stone-built structure within a mound to a rock-cut underground location. Most early tholoi are prominent in the landscape through the use of a mound, and mound groupings might suggest processional routes through a known landscape. Chamber tombs, however, may be less visible, but more often grouped closely together. In this regard the earliest chamber tombs at Volimidhia perhaps draw more inspiration from nearby multiple-tholos burial mounds than from the larger, individual tombs.

Other forms occasionally appear during MHIII-LHI: several sites boast unusually large or complex cist or built tombs (Papadimitriou 2001a). These are sometimes associated with a tumulus, and sometimes grouped together. Chief among this disparate group are the shaft graves of Mycenae (Mylonas 1973; along with those from Lerna: Caskey 1955, 32–4; 1956, 155–7). Other important tombs, often with a lateral entrance (Papadimitriou 2011), are located at Argos (Papadimitriou

2001a, 17–20; 2001b; forthcoming), Sparta (Papadimitriou 2001a, 29; Smith 2013, 28), and Eleusis (Papadimitriou 2001a, 65–85; forthcoming), while elsewhere in Attica the tumuli of Vrana (Marinatos 1970), with complex and large burial constructions, and the tumulus of Thorikos (Servais & Servais-Soyez 1984), might all be constructions of MHIII-LHI. Similar elaborate graves are also known in Messenia at this time, for example, at Nichoria (Papadimitriou 2001a, 37–42; Boyd 2014a). These 'elaborate simple' graves perform different functions closely associated with their local context. The Akones group at Nichoria are in some ways analogous to the adjacent Tourkokivouro multiple-tholos mound, in that their entrances face radially outward from the centre of a (probable) mound. The graves in the tumuli at Vrana and Thorikos function as enlarged and modified cists within the tumulus tradition, associated with smaller and simpler graves. The 'gamma graves' of Eleusis are placed in a 'normal' cist grave cemetery, and this is also the setting for the Argos graves.

Around the LHI-II transition, the tholos tomb type was transformed again, in this case to a significantly larger and more elaborate architectural form (Figure 13.3), including, as has recently been argued, more emphasis on the now longer dromos (Papadimitriou 2011; forthcoming). At the same time, tholoi – generally in this more elaborate format – began to be constructed outside Messenia. The earliest examples of large tholoi are those at Englianos (IV) and Psari (1) in Messenia, but others were soon constructed at sites such as Mycenae, Marathon, Thorikos, Kokla, Kazarma, and Vapheio. During LHII chamber tombs also became much more common, and individual tombs or small clusters began to develop into extended cemeteries. At Mycenae chamber tombs and tholos tombs were in use in growing numbers, and the shaft grave sequence came to an end (Boyd in press). The construction of other forms of built graves became notably less common, with the impressive exception of tomb Rho at Mycenae (Papadimitriou 2001a).

In LHIII fewer tholos tombs were built, though those in existence continued in use, perhaps less frequently after LHIIIA. However, the real innovation of the era is the explosion in chamber tomb construction. In LHIII these can be found in great numbers in cemeteries small and large throughout the central and southern Greek area and far beyond. Their increase in numbers had certainly begun in LHII, but throughout LHIII (including the post-palatial period) the rise is exponential. This means that while during LHII numbers of chamber tombs and tholos tombs are broadly comparable, during LHIII tholos tombs were far outnumbered by chamber tombs in most places. This change in numbers will have been reflected in understandings of the two types.

Association and Collective Burial

Some burial tumuli may have been built around an initial feature, such as a large grave. Later, additional burials would take place in the mound, both emphasising the centrality of the original feature, but also diluting its attention-focussing properties. This applies to Papoulia, and perhaps also to nearby Routsi (Boyd 2002, 153–7). Given the lack of properly excavated and published tumuli, it cannot be shown that this was the most common sequence in burial tumuli. At Vrana in Attica tumulus 1 contains multiple burials ranged around what may have been an original burial monument, whereas in tumulus 2 the single burial space was expanded but other peripheral burial spaces were not added. At Vrana another probable tumulus contained a built central grave reminiscent of that at Papoulia (Marinatos 1970; Boyd 2002, 120 and note 66; Papadimitriou 2001a).

If some tumuli were built around a single, central burial space (with perhaps a specific inhabitant), these represented only a short-lived exception to the general phenomenon of the clustering of burials throughout the second millennium. In the Middle Helladic period, such clustering may be seen not only in funerary mounds, but also elsewhere. So-called intramural burials are in fact often placed in then-disused parts of settlements, as may be the case for the disparate burials of the so-called prehistoric cemetery at Mycenae (in fact not a cemetery in the organised sense of the word: Boyd in press), including Grave Circle B, as well as at many other sites (Nordquist 1987, 95; Dietz 1991, 275; Maran 1995; Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 24–5; Boyd 2002, 33–6; Milka 2010). Burial amidst the detritus of former habitations is not limited to simple pit or cist burials: both tumuli and later tholos tombs have been built directly into areas previously used for settlement. Some Middle Helladic mounds such as Voïdhokilia (and perhaps Papoulia and Routsi) were built on the ruins of EH settlement (Boyd 2002, 37), and Late Helladic tombs such as the Akones group at Nichoria (Boyd 2014a) were built on disused Middle Helladic settlement. The LHIII tholoi at Mycenae of course involved considerable remodelling of the existing topography, as must their immediate predecessors near the acropolis (the Lion and Aegisthus tombs).
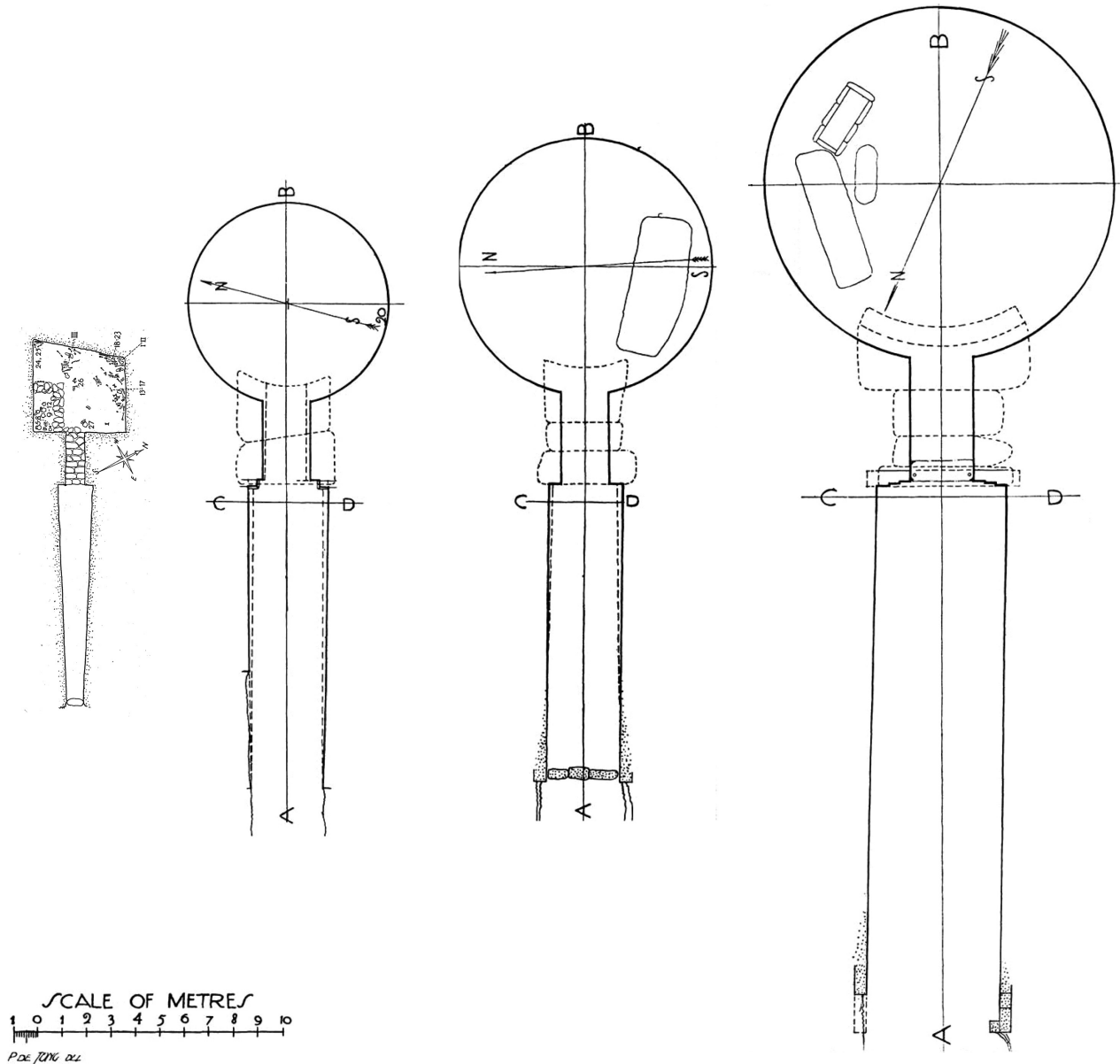
Figure 13.3. Scale in chamber and tholos tombs at Mycenae. Chamber tomb 502 with the Panayia, Kato Phournos, and Lion tholoi, shown to scale.
After Wace 1932, figure 2, and Wace 1923b, figures 59 and 61, and plate 53, respectively.

The clustering of burials together (whether or not in monuments), as well as the attraction of disused settlement areas for burial, are both factors highlighting the importance of *association* in choice of burial location (cf. Cavanagh et al. forthcoming). At this very general level, this importance of association is both widespread and long lived. This association is not just that of new burials to prior burials, but more generally an association between present and past practice. Often it seems locations with an ancestral resonance, an aura of the past

more distant or recent, were chosen and then maintained for burial. Although the tumulus monumentalised and formalised the aspect of association, the principle can be seen in operation with many other burials.

The difference between the Middle Helladic desire for association and Late Helladic collective burial in tholos and chamber tombs is a fine one. On the one hand, graves clustered in tumuli or in specific, disused areas of settlement were already being maintained in close association with each other and with their specific locale.

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But on the other hand, even though burials in tholos and chamber tombs advanced this associative aspect towards the collective, strategies of differentiation were often as much in play in these burials as strategies of association. This is seen not just in the use of pit and cist burials sometimes seen within chamber or tholos tombs, but also in the process of the production of context (Thomas 1996, 171) of any given burial within a tomb, whereby during burial material culture is deployed in certain ways that (quite apart from the individual motivations for each action) ultimately result in the production of a new context contained within and utilising the wider resources of the collective tomb, which nonetheless, at that moment, emphasises the unique and individual aspects of the funeral that has just taken place. However, these acts of restructuring available resources to accommodate new burials also emphasise the collective aspect of the tomb, drawing in and reassociating material previously otherwise disposed. They also presage other activities described in the next section.

The enabling development in forms of association from the clustered burials of the Middle Helladic to the collective burials of the Late Helladic is the innovation of the chamber within which multiple burials may be located. Despite the occasional use of pits and cists, 'burial' is usually a misnomer – bodies were often placed within the chamber on the floor or sometimes on a bench, and were not covered or otherwise inaccessible to those who had gained access to the chamber. The use of the chamber for multiple burials renders the form collective: new burials are performed within the same space as those that went before, and the preparation of the chamber and the burial itself usually involved rearrangement of existing contexts, on which more later. The development from multiple tholos mounds to single, larger tholos tombs may in part have been driven by the desire for all of the dead of a given monument to be collected within a single space, and thus accessible without having to open and enter into multiple chambers.

Secondary Treatments of Funerary Contexts

Closely related to the preceding discussion is the development of secondary treatments of funerary contexts within collective burial chambers. Tholos and chamber tombs, although varying in size, generally represent (with the exceptions of the very large tombs) relatively compact, enclosed spaces (cf. Boyd in press, table 2). If for no other reason than the merely practical, after one or two funerals it would be impossible to continue using the restricted space of most tombs without some strategy for rearranging the contents of the interior. The requirements of space not only to accommodate incoming burials but also to enable circulation of mourners within the tomb would require periodic rearrangement of the interior.

These activities cannot, however, be reduced to mere expediency: they were underpinned by complex motivation and logic. I have argued elsewhere (Boyd 2014a), using Julian Thomas' helpful term 'production of context' (referred to previously; Thomas 1996, 171), that the contents of Mycenaean tombs represented an endlessly redeployed resource in an ongoing production of context in the tomb – the endless reordering of material and restructuring of locale in order to present certain practices within a curated and idealised context. The key difference between this approach and others that regard the interiors of Mycenaean tombs as often the product of looting or 'disrespectful' practices such as 'sweeping aside' (Boyd 2014b, 7 and note 1) is that I hold the contents of Mycenaean tombs – however disordered to our first glance – as the result of multiple *meaningful* practices – and not as the meaningless result of unthinking intervention in the archaeologist's idealised pristine context. Although it is clear that practices did vary widely from tomb to tomb, site to site, and time to time, on a basic level two repeated meaningful elements in the practices of reorganisation in Mycenaean tombs may be recognised.

The first of these is the production of context as part of the activities of a funeral. Before the funeral, or possibly just before interment, as part of the procedure of introducing the corpse into the chamber, the contents underwent initial rearrangement so as to design a space for the presentation of the corpse within a specific material context. The detritus of past funerals might be arranged so as to call past activities to mind and set the current process within a mnemonic framework. Once deposited in place, during activities involving material taken into the tomb (described later), material already present within the tomb, as an available resource, might be used, leading to further rearrangement and thoroughly embedding the new interment within the existing content of the tomb. Numerous small acts led to the eventual closure of the ritual, by which time the corpse and the accoutrements of the present funeral had been set in the most appropriate manner amidst and between the existing content of the tomb. Thus in these small acts of placement and rearrangement, the association of the dead with those who

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had gone before, and of the acts of the funeral with past acts, was made manifest and highlighted as a significant aspect of the meanings being implied and created.

However, beyond the events of a funeral, it is clear that secondary rites were practised in many Mycenaean tombs (sometimes called the 'second funeral': Cavanagh 1978; Wells 1990, 135–6; Voutsaki 1993, 151–3; Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 76; Boyd 2002, 84–7; Gallou 2005, 113–14; Lagia et al. forthcoming; Smith et al. forthcoming; Cavanagh et al. have recently reviewed the evidence for developments in the Middle Helladic period: forthcoming). On excavation, tombs often have no intact funerary contexts or articulated skeletons, but careful arrangements of skeletal and other material may be noted. Skeletal material is often completely disarticulated and may be gathered in specific areas of the tomb, perhaps on the floor, or placed less visibly in pits, cists, or niches. Selection and redistribution of skeletal material can lead to concentrations of particular bone types (most obviously skulls) and separate redepositions of different types. This process can involve breakage. Material culture is also redistributed. Funerary contexts may be entirely dismantled and items gathered and redeposited elsewhere. This can again involve breakage, and sometimes the gathering of specific types. Less visible archaeologically is the removal of material from the tomb, but this will also have been a factor, perhaps occasionally evidenced by recoveries from stomia and dromoi (but complete removal to other tombs, or to other contexts, may also be a significant factor).

Not all these activities occurred in a predictable manner, but represent the full range of possible practices available in different funerary contexts. Rather than a set of specific, codified secondary rites, we see repeated, often small-scale interventions within tombs drawing on the range of broadly understood practices outlined here, hedged about as much by local (and small-group) tradition as by broader regional understandings of mortuary practice. Rather than being closed, 'other' spaces visited only rarely (and perhaps closed for many years at a time), many Mycenaean tombs were regularly visited and host to frequent activities involving the detritus of past funerals and other interventions, within certain parameters.

We have seen that in assembling the funerary context use was made of the existing material content of the tomb in order to situate the new interment in a material nexus embracing past action in the tomb. The effect of secondary rites was further to confirm the association of the dead with those already interred, by producing new contexts in the tomb where the individual dead could

no longer be recognised either as a complete skeleton or through a coherent set of material used in the funeral. These rites transformed the dead from individuals to a materially more amorphous group whose individual characteristics were no longer highlighted within the chamber, but who were referred to in activities involving their amalgamated remains. This is one of the most significant developments in the transformations around the MH–LH transition, and is considered further later.

The Development of the Funerary Landscape

The clustering of Middle Helladic burials in disused parts of settlements and in tumuli has already been noted. In the former case, burial was situated within the settlement orbit, whereas in the latter case, tumuli – although sometimes situated on top of disused, often Early Helladic, settlement – were not situated within current settlement areas. They may not have been situated in relation to specific settlements (Boyd 2002, 37; see also Korres 2011; Galanakis 2011; Merkouri & Kouli 2011; Papadimitriou forthcoming). Moreover, there is some evidence of the grouping together of tumuli – within a short walking distance, though not necessarily in immediate proximity. Some tumuli are located in relation to landscape features such as transitional zones between higher and lower ground (Boyd 2002, 40), and most are in any case in prominent, raised positions, an aspect accentuated by their shape, protruding from the landscape (though not necessarily widely visible: Galanakis 2011; Korres 2011).

The clustering of tombs in what we might call cemeteries is another development with roots in the Middle Helladic period that becomes an important part of Mycenaean funerary practices (Papadimitriou forthcoming). The multiple-tholos mounds are themselves part of larger funerary landscapes, as are most of the earliest single-tholos tombs. Distinct clustering of tombs in MHIII–LHI and into LHII is noticeable at sites such as Gouvalari, Nichoria, Englianos (Pylos), and Peristeria. At Gouvalari, up to eight mounds are reported, clustered in close vicinity beside a prominent landscape feature (a gorge impassable at that point). The minority excavated all contained two or more tholos tombs. At Nichoria (Figure 13.4) tombs were grouped at four elevated points overlooking a probable crossroads (Boyd 2014a). At Englianos Spencer has highlighted the distribution of widely spaced burial mounds of the Middle Helladic period surrounding the site of the later palace (Spencer 1995, figure 4a, based on McDonald & Hope Simpson
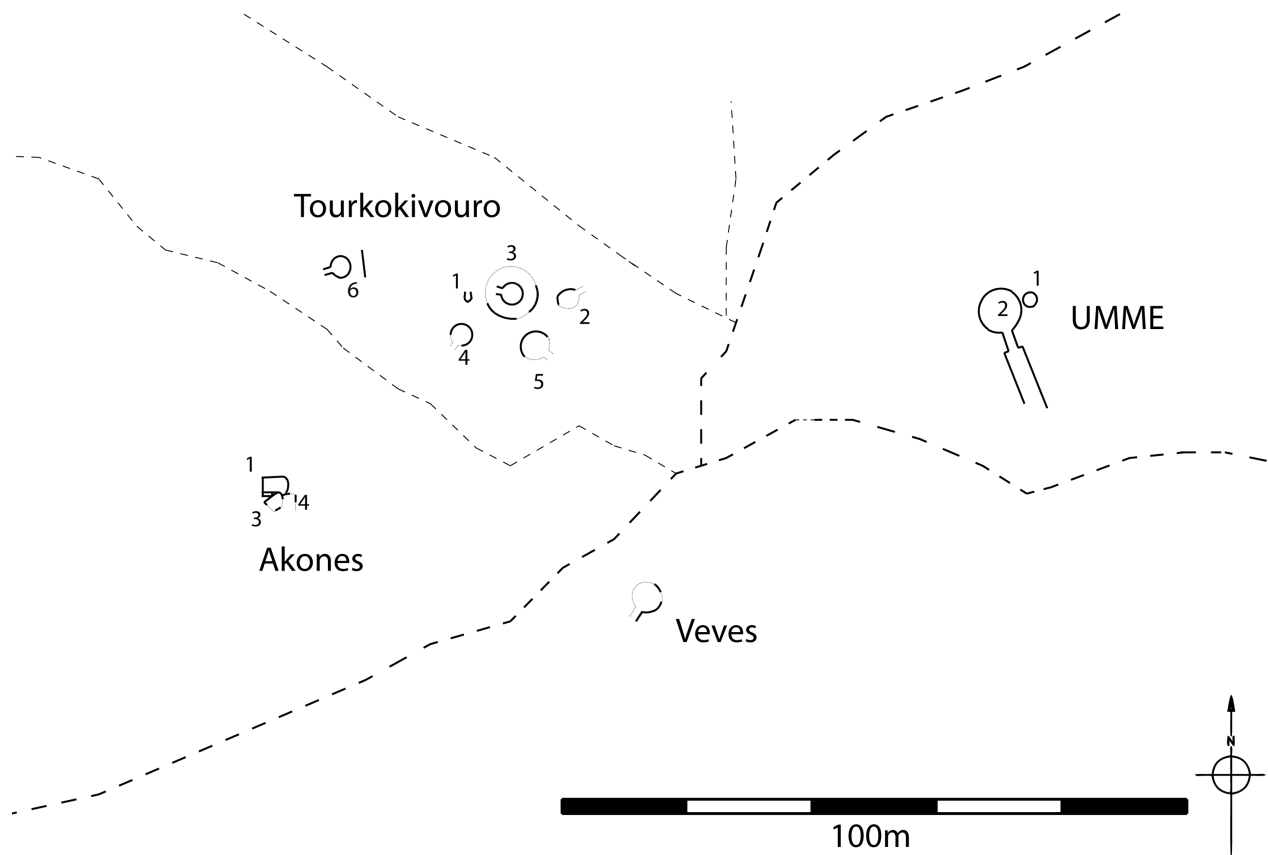
Figure 13.4. Clustering of tombs at Nichoria, Messenia.
After Boyd 2014a, figure 151.

1972, figure 8.13). From the MH-LH transition, however, tombs were also situated in the immediate vicinity of the palace: two tholos tombs during MH-LHI, a third probably during LHII, with the construction of one or two chamber tombs from LHIIA, and others following in LHIII (Boyd 2002, 147–52; Galanakis 2011; Murphy 2014). Similarly at Peristeria, five tholos tombs are clustered at the site beginning from the MH-LH transition, the latest probably being constructed in LHIIA. In LHII tholos tombs are clustered at sites such as Mycenae (six tombs) and Kakovatos (three tombs), though isolated tombs were also constructed. By LHII chamber tombs also began to be more commonly constructed and by LHIII are found widely distributed. Some were built in groups that included tholos tombs (for example, at Mycenae or Kokla in the Argolid, Portes in Achaia, or Englianos in Messenia); some are found singly or in small groups, while others began to be clustered in definite cemeteries. In LHIII some very large chamber tomb cemeteries were in operation, although smaller clusters perhaps remained the norm.

The positioning of tombs in proximity (or short walking distance) to each other and to important landscape locales is one of the key developments in Mycenaean funerary practice. These tombs – especially the large and impressive tholoi, but also in many ways including the smaller tombs – constituted an embellishment of landscape, routes, and locale of a very particular nature. The repeated choice to enhance the experience of moving through the landscape near important locales using funerary monuments – with very little evidence of similar embellishment using other devices – is an indicator of the emphasis laid on the funerary experience and its visible and permanent presencing in the everyday routine of moving through the landscape. At Mycenae, for example, the ongoing inscription and advertising of lives and histories through the construction and maintenance of funerary monuments led over an extended period to the construction of multiple cemeteries (twenty-seven known so far: Shelton 2003) located, in many cases, along routes of access to the site from many directions

(Boyd in press). The everyday experience of moving through the Mycenae landscape would have been hedged around with whispers of the past and inscribed claims of ancestry and association, with different zones around the acropolis recalling group histories and their claims of association with and moulding of the changing institutions represented there.

Mycenae is an unusual example, its 'reach' over the centuries forever drawing in people and groups whom we can now faintly recognise through their tombs in the surrounding landscape. But other important sites also underwent a process of funerary embellishment in their immediate surroundings. The approaches to and environs of Englianos, for example, were from the end of the Middle Helladic period altered to include funerary structures at significant locations (Galanakis 2011): the monumental tholos IV, for example, situated so that its entrance would face in a straight line the staircase of the main entrance in the enclosure wall of the site, some seventy metres distant. At Peristeria, the number of tombs is limited (five tholoi found so far, with no chamber tombs as yet located), but their striking monumentality dominated the acropolis area. Although other structures were built there, there can be no doubt that routes of movement and lines of sight would have been dominated by the tombs.

While tombs clearly became an important part of the everyday experience of movement in many places, they also played a significant role during funerary ceremonies (Boyd forthcoming a). Procession – the act of moving in an organised group while transporting the corpse and the accoutrements of the funeral to the grave – was accomplished by negotiating the route from startpoint to endpoint through the landscape of memory that was the Mycenaean cemetery. Nodes on the route, defined by tombs as well as other features, were opportunities for action, for individuals or groups to assert their presence through their claimed association with different tombs. More than one tomb may have been visited en route to the final destination of the procession. The processional route was created through inhabiting the cemetery, and the cemetery grew with the notion of future processions in mind. The importance of the procession is also highlighted by the architectural design of the tripartite Mycenaean tomb: tombs were in part designed to facilitate the separation of groups at the end of the procession and to allow filtered movement between the interior and exterior in a controlled manner (Boyd forthcoming a).

The Roles of Material Culture in Funerary Contexts

Material culture is found within funerary contexts throughout the second millennium. Prior to the Middle-Late Helladic transition, however, few graves are found with more than one or perhaps two items, and some contain none. At the transition, however, yet another significant aspect of the development of Mycenaean funerary practices is the marked increase in quantity of material associated with funerary activities (Dickinson 1977, 59; Papadimitriou forthcoming). This material has often been seen as a passive indicator of wealth or status, its role in the funerary process reduced to elite signification, conspicuous consumption, or the presumed material requirements of the dead in the afterlife. Recent approaches to material culture suggest that meaning is always 'actively and meaningfully constituted' (Hodder 1982; Shanks & Tilley 1992, 121–33; Shanks & Tilley 1987, 107, 114), is ascribed to an object by an agent in a moment of observation or action, is dependent on memory and context, and is constantly open to revision in the light of the actions of self or others. The explosion in material culture use during the development of Mycenaean funerary practices is significant in revealing 'the nature of specific practices' (Barrett 1988, 32).

There are three broad modes of deposition in Mycenaean tombs: direct, consequential, and transformational (Boyd 2002, 32). The first and third directly evidence activities in the tomb, while the second more usually references activities in the preparation of the corpse. Direct deposition refers to the meaningful deposition of material directly in the tomb where the meaning of the action is expressed in the deposition itself. This applies most directly to the deposition of the corpse, but could also apply to any material taken to the tomb primarily for the purpose of deposition. Consequential deposition refers to the deposition of material in consequence of some other factor. Primarily this refers to material adorning or attached to the corpse before the funeral and then deposited in the tomb in consequence of its being attached to the corpse. In this case the actions involving this material precede the deposition phase of the funeral. Finally, transformational deposition refers to the use of material by mourners during the funeral whereby the meaning of the material is reshaped in relation to the funeral and thus the object is incorporated into the funerary tableau, which, at the end of the funeral, acts as a material record of the activities that have taken place (Boyd in press; 2014b).

All of these types of deposition contribute to the meaningful production of context within the tomb; however, objects deposited through transformational deposition play some other role in advance of deposition. The production of the funerary context is a multi-phase process, with action in differing spheres contributing to its culmination: the preparation of the corpse, which may well happen away from the tomb, before the procession, though it may be completed at the tomb, is a central aspect of the production of context, as is the preparation of the tomb before the arrival of the corpse, and the rearrangement of material therein; the gathering of material to be used in the tomb and its transport there, probably during the procession, and perhaps involving interventions in other tombs in order to gather additional choice material; and finally the funeral itself, utilising all these carefully procured and curated resources.

The categories of material recovered from Mycenaean tombs are principally items of decoration for the corpse (such as bead items, sealstones, and gold leaf decorations), items such as swords and knives falling under a broad category of martial culture (Harrell 2010), and vessels of pottery and sometimes metal. The vessels usually relate to pouring and drinking shapes, though larger shapes such as palatial jars (Kalogeropoulos 2011) are common in LHII, and shapes such as alabastra and stirrup jars, thought to be associated with unguents and perfumed oil, are also very common. Metal vessels, when found, may often be drinking shapes, and occasionally large bronze open shapes are found. In LHIII small clay figurines are often found, and sometimes ivory furniture fittings and other ivory items (see also Papadimitriou 2011, 471). This is in fact a rather restricted range of material (and of course exceptional items are sometimes found), which allows us to suggest a coherent range of activities mediated by material culture. Items adorning or adhering to the corpse refer to the dressing and preparation of the body, and the presence of the stirrup jars and alabastra allows for the possibility that some anointing ritual might take place in the chamber (Cavanagh 1998). The weaponry, if worn or otherwise affixed to the corpse, may also relate to the preparation phase, though these were often deposited beside the corpse within the chamber as part of the production of the funerary context. The drinking and pouring vessels suggest a long-standing drinking ritual, evidenced throughout the Mycenaean period (and the few items of material culture found in graves of the preceding Middle Helladic period are often drinking vessels, usually of restricted shape such as kantharoi). In contrast

to drinking, which is very commonly attested, sacrifice and eating of animals, while not unknown (for instance, at the shaft graves), are not often attested (and virtually no tombs have been examined for archaeobotanical evidence: Margaritis 2014; for exceptions near Nemea, see Wright et al. 2008, 643; Smith et al. forthcoming). The vessels used in the toast are usually of normal, domestic shapes (though occasionally made of precious metal), but having been used in the tomb they are then incorporated into the tableau at the end of the funeral, their physical presence among the other detritus of the tomb attesting to the completion of the ceremony.

On later occasions, as noted, these objects continued to play a role (Boyd 2014b). In different instances activities such as gathering, burying, stacking, smashing, and removing represent repeated instances of engagement with the material past. As with the anthropological material, these activities tended to de-emphasise and obscure the individual pristine burial context in favour of understandings of material based on the commingled mass. This general tendency does not prevent the curation of specific items with understood and maintained histories, which might often be removed from tombs, moved from tomb to tomb, displayed, reused, and ultimately perhaps reincorporated in new burial contexts. One likely instance of this behaviour surrounds the early-style swords of Messenia, found in later contexts (Harrell 2010; see also Harrell 2014 for the shaft grave swords).

THE LIVING, THE DEAD, AND THE ANCESTORS

The foregoing account has sketched the development of the basic principles of Mycenaean funerary practices, mainly during the Early Mycenaean period. It must be emphasised once again that different sites and tombs have their own histories and these general principles are intended as an interpretative framework within which diverse bodies of evidence can be understood. Variation is to be expected, and one of the most obviously divergent pathways is the shaft grave sequence at Mycenae, where the aim of secondary rites was most conspicuously not to de-emphasise the individual, and an attempt was made to maintain original contexts during episodes of reuse (Boyd in press).

These principles, taken together, show first that by the placement of tombs in the occupied landscape and by their visibility and accessibility in the routines of movement, the dead – through the naming and knowledge of locales, the memory of action, and regular encounters

with tombs and their contents – were presenced (if only in the background) and made apparent in the everyday routines of life.

Second, they show that association was one of the key principles structuring most aspects of dealing with death. Tombs were most often sited in association with others, perhaps in many cases as a result of some expressed relationship between groups. This association could be performed during the procession through the cemetery landscape. Tombs and cemeteries were sited in the landscape often in association with major sites or routinised routes of movement. The dead were associated in the tomb with those previously interred there, and the funerary process involved the production of a particular context for the interment utilising the existing resources within the tomb, making those associations explicit. Later rituals dissolved the context of the funeral and advanced the place of the dead from association to amalgamation with others within the tomb. During the funeral and other interventions, the associations between the living and the dead were expressed through material culture (among other media), some of which, by the various modalities discussed, could be incorporated into the material within the tomb.

Third, they show that death was conceived of as at least a two-stage process, and that there were at least two kinds of dead[3]. The newly dead were conceived of primarily through their erstwhile participation in the social group and were treated individually. The initial phase of mourning was represented materially through the preparation of the corpse, the procession to the grave, and the interment. However, the choices made during the funerary process prefigured the transition from recently deceased, lately active member of the social group, to a longer-term status where individual identity is evidently less important than membership of corporate groups of the dead, both in a particular tomb and in the wider cemetery (see also Insoll, this volume: ancestors become 'amorphous, immortal but personally indistinct'). This transition occurred after the funeral and was marked by the return to the grave to disassemble the context of the funeral and to mingle the remains of the most recently interred with those of the older dead.

The use of the term 'ancestors' has recently been criticised as often uncritically applied (Whitley 2002; discussed widely in this volume). However, in this case it seems clearly apposite. The physical remains of funerals – including anthropological remains – were curated within tombs over several generations by users who found

meaning in the material through the activities they carried out using it. The conspicuous mixing and gathering of material strongly suggest that it was understood primarily in a group sense rather than as the remains of individuals. The incorporation of the dead into the group of the ancestors was achieved by the 'second funeral' rituals of dismemberment and comingling. The ancestral group were then called on to participate in the transition of the dead into their membership in that group through the use of the mixed material in the tomb in the production of new funerary contexts.

The principle of association – between the living and the newly dead, the newly dead and the ancestors, and the living and the ancestors – can be seen in operation in all of the developments in funerary activities throughout the second millennium BC. Agency in all this lies undoubtedly on the part of the living, but the newly dead and the ancestors were supremely meaningful media to which relationships could be claimed and onto which agencies were no doubt projected through the agency of the living. Both during periods of funerary and other mourning activity, and during the routines of daily life, the dead as a corporate group (presenced in the cemetery) and as smaller ancestral groups (presenced in individual tombs) were a powerful concept whose negotiation was a principal part of the funerary process and a consistent backdrop of everyday life.

LEADERSHIP AND ELITE STATUS

The discussion so far has avoided questions of hierarchical social structures and their reflection – or not – in funerary practices. It has recently been perceptively remarked that while 'status differences *were* reflected in LH burials', 'to suggest that the transformation of burial customs was *stimulated* by the desire to express such differences is … unwarranted' (Papadimitriou 2011, 483, emphases in original). The discussion so far has similarly given no cause to suggest that status differentiation was a primary motivator in the development of Mycenaean funerary customs. However, in trying to trace developments and motivations over a long period, I have thus far underplayed the exceptional or obviously enhanced aspects of the evidence. Traditional accounts, on the other hand, tend to begin with the wholly exceptional shaft grave sequence at Mycenae, and proceed from there. To what extent then did the concerns of elite groups, competitive display, or conspicuous consumption manipulate, co-opt, or undermine emerging and established funerary practices?

The funerary process involves the consignment of an individual to the grave and her staged incorporation – initially through association and the construction of an inclusive context, and latterly by mingling and destruction of the funerary context – into the ancestral group represented within the tomb, and more widely in the cemetery. These activities emphasise group identities: the group carrying out the funeral, and the group of ancestors to which reference is being made. However, different groups may be involved: narrower groups representing claimed inheritors or those otherwise identifying themselves closely with the deceased, and wider groups, perhaps occasionally drawn in from elsewhere, or simply representing the local community. In ancestral terms, too, different groups might be claimed to have an interest, from specific named individuals and lineages, to wider sub-groups or the entire body of the ancestors. The composition of these different groups, and the opportunities of moving among them, offer one avenue for the foregrounding (or perhaps creation: Voutsaki 1995) of differentiation between individuals and groups.

It is perhaps possible to detect some tension between the aggrandisement of the individual and the pre-eminence of the group. I have recently argued that the shaft grave sequence at Mycenae, which includes considerable emphasis on the position of the individual, came to an end when the shaft grave practices no longer seemed tenable in the face of new customs adopted by competing groups that more effectively emphasised corporate and ancestral groupings (Boyd in press). It is remarkable that at Mycenae, which in LHIII is widely thought of as the *primus inter pares* of the Mycenaean world and was already in LHI a site with great reach, it was felt necessary to abandon well-established funerary customs glorifying the individual for new group-oriented practices that situated the dead within a wide ancestral tradition, rather than venerating them more specifically as individuals. However, this change can nonetheless be understood as a late instance of the transition from clustered to collective burials outlined for the MH–LH transition previously, and the accompanying ideological shifts need have been little different than those at other sites where this transition took place.

Within the collective tombs, however, and against the backdrop of the collective ideology of the tombs, we do sometimes see instances when some effort has been made to retain the splendour of an individual funerary context. We can only speculate about the Mycenae tombs, as no intact contexts remain: it would not be surprising if,

initially at least, in the Aegisthus and Lion tombs, some effort was made effectively to replicate shaft grave practices within the tholos, and to conserve individual funerary tableaux long after burial. The large chamber sizes would be helpful in this cause.

In terms of surviving contexts, the most apposite example is the underfloor burial in the tholos at Vafio (Tsountas 1899). A recent study has proposed a position of leadership for the person buried in the cist, not only on the traditional grounds of the quantity of material deposited there, but also on the basis of iconographic evidence present on seals and interpretations of some of the material in the grave as symbolic of office and of economic activity (Banou & Hitchcock 2011). The creation of this context must indeed have been a spectacular event, comparable to those of the shaft graves, involving large numbers of mourners perhaps contributing to the production of the interment context, and larger numbers filing past the grave after completion of the funeral (Boyd 2002, 90–1). The very long dromos of this tomb also contributes to the possibility of large numbers of persons being involved (Papadimitriou 2011; Boyd forthcoming a). The interment within a cist is not unusual in itself, but the preservation of the contents intact is. This may have been an aspect intended through the choice of burial in a cist, but for success this strategy required active curation – the funeral would not have been quickly forgotten – and a conscious disregard of 'normal' customs. However, Laconia is not a region with many tholos tombs[4], and the Vafio tholos is specifically of the elaborated type widely – but relatively sparsely – dispersed during LHII. This may suggest that an imported and locally unique architectural form and its associated traditions were in part reinterpreted in a local context. However, even in Messenia there are occasional hints of the maintenance of particular contexts. At Routsi tholos 2 (Marinatos 1957a, 1957b; Boyd 2014b) the final burial in the tomb lay on the floor surrounded by material as it had been left at the end of the funeral. Moreover, another burial in a pit, although damaged in its lower half, had been preserved in its upper half. Both of these burials exhibited significant amounts and quality of material culture, including inlaid knives of the type known from the shaft graves for the burial in the pit. The entire interior arrangement of the tomb is unusual (Boyd 2002, 190), and it might be possible to imagine that in its latest period of use it had been rearranged to preserve and present certain contexts. It is also conceivable that the subsequent collapse of the tomb

was brought about deliberately in order definitively to end the sequence of interventions in the tomb.

At sites such as Mycenae, Peristeria, Vafio, Englianos, and ultimately Orchomenos, we can discern the activities of local elites as they seek to operate within, co-opt, and in part undermine the prevailing ethos surrounding death. At Englianos and Peristeria in LHI-II large and impressive tholoi were constructed within or adjacent to existing central places, where previously cemetery areas had been more distant. At Vafio and Mycenae in LHII tholoi were introduced in their most impressive, fully developed form. At Mycenae the larger tholoi close to the acropolis in LHII, and the very large tholoi of LHIII, were all set within an existing and contested landscape of shaft graves, tholos, and chamber tombs. They sought to present the existing paradigm of burial within an architectural context whose meaning could be seen as both part of and extending beyond the norm. The Orchomenos tholos was constructed as a specific and close imitation of the Treasury of Atreus in a region where tombs of that size and type were unknown. In one sense all of this is trivial – groups trying to differentiate themselves, and present themselves as elite or otherwise superior, have always looked to grander versions of everyday reality. But the point is that the source of innovation has not been shown to be specifically elite groups, and that elite innovation where it exists is usually in the grander projection of widely held customs. Ultimately the underlying collectivist notions of Mycenaean burial practices were far from ideal for the projection of elite status, and as spatially and hierarchically more complex social institutions developed, those in the upper echelons chose other arenas for the projection of power and elite status.

DEATH, IMMORTALITY, AND THE DIVINE

The evidence for Mycenaean religion is limited (Lupack 2010), though in some respects remarkably informative: the unexpected richness of the written evidence continues to yield new insights, the identification of some buildings as cultic has allowed for the recognition of some aspects of ritual practice, and the limited iconographic repertoire has been widely discussed. However, during the development of Mycenaean funerary practices, at the MH-LH transition and in the Early Mycenaean period, none of this evidence applies. The adopted Minoan iconography present in the shaft graves and in a few other tombs can tell us little directly of the involvement of religion in burial practices.

The evidence from tombs is in fact rather stark: there is little that can be ascribed to religious practice. Practices of libation or toasting, while possibly invoking the divine, may equally have been addressed directly to the dead and the ancestors (Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 115, do associate this practice with elite religious practices). Perhaps the main category of evidence is the common small clay figurine, usually either female or sometimes animal, found in Late Mycenaean tombs (Tzonou-Herbst 2002; French 1971). Some observers have linked these figurines, which can be found in many other contexts, including the domestic and the cultic, with representations of divinities, but this is not a universally accepted explanation (they have even been regarded as toys). It may, however, be significant that larger figurines were in LHIII an established aspect of cult buildings. The potential role of the latter in processions has been suggested: the Cult Centre of Mycenae has been suggested to be furnished with a processional way along which the larger cult figures might be carried in procession (Mylonas 1983, 145). If procession is accepted as an important aspect of Mycenaean religious practice (in LHIII, at least), then it may provide our most significant link between funerary and other religious practices.

During the Late Mycenaean period the site at Mycenae was a warren of potential processional routes. Beyond the acropolis, many routes were marked out in the landscape by funerary monuments. The establishment of these routes stretched into the past, and the acropolis as a central node seems always to have been important, if not paramount. The embellishment of the acropolis in LHIII is most obvious through the creation and reworking of the massive enclosure wall (Wright 1987). This served to limit and define approaches to and routes from the acropolis, and to monumentalise them. It is no coincidence that the nearest comparandum for the Lion Gate is the dromos and stomion arrangement of tholos tombs, most conspicuously the great tholoi of Mycenae (Wright 1987, 2006b). The interior area was also monumentalised in relation to movement: not only the processional way detected in the Cult Centre, but also the approaches to the megaron are designed for procession and gathering (Thaler in press; Maran 2006; Wright 2006a; Cavanagh 2001). Procession, whether directed at individual shrines or the megaron itself, was an essential aspect of ritual activity within the LHIII acropolis, and procession was just as essential in the surrounding mortuary landscape (Boyd forthcoming a).

Procession may therefore provide a link between the cultic buildings of the acropolis and the tombs where

reference to the divine is otherwise lacking. People may have transported their dead from some distance for burial in a group-sanctioned space at Mycenae. Part of their journey may have included access to religious space within the acropolis. It is possible that ritual specialists may have been implicated in both citadel religious rites and funerary rituals. This is clearly speculative, but the long view of the development of procession in religious and funerary practice at Mycenae justifies the suggestion of a possible link between the two. It is also conceivable that the appearance of small clay figurines in LHIII is another link between the two types of practice. While none of the larger clay figures known from the Cult Centre has been found in tombs, it is perhaps possible to see the smaller, commoner figurines being used in funerary practices in a manner similar to that posited for the larger figurines at individual shrines.

This tenuous link between death and the divine will be discussed further in the next section. But here it is clear that even if this link is accepted, it must be seen as manifested late in the development of Mycenaean funerary practices. Processions are an established part of funerary practice long before the first evidence for their use in religious practice, making it more likely that they were co-opted from the funerary to the palatial sphere during the development of palace-based cult. The concept of immortality, as perhaps an aspect of the divine, is present in early tombs in the notion of the ancestors. However the concept of the ancestral group was actually articulated (and this may have differed considerably from time to time and place to place), they were considered to have some kind of continuity after individual death – perhaps not with the permanency of existence embodied in the concept of immortality. Nonetheless, in the development of Mycenaean cosmologies, the importance of this group can be demonstrated before that of any divine entity, and this may be relevant in the development of Mycenaean religion.

BURIAL PRACTICES, SOCIETY, AND STRUCTURE

Social structures are made and remade in the routine of everyday practice. Burial practices are peripheral to this, though, as we have seen, the placement of the cemetery in the occupied landscape can make them less peripheral. The primary focus for the maintenance of differentiation and hierarchy in society could not have been burial practices, as hierarchy by definition is embedded in daily practice. The analysis of burial practices in order

to illuminate these aspects of society is therefore a questionable process.

We have seen that the basic principles of Mycenaean funerary practice in fact tell us more about the heterarchical potentials of society. The associative principle in tombs and cemeteries (and concomitantly among the mourners) implies the articulation of social groupings. These were open to negotiated or contested understandings, and rather than a simple member-non-member dichotomy, varying degrees of association are implied. Funerary and mortuary rituals drew upon and enacted these degrees of association, making them manifest for the participants for the duration of that event. The framework of these rituals offered opportunities both for differentiation (between individuals, between groups in both hierarchical and heterarchical senses) and for integration (whereby interpersonal and inter-group relationships could be articulated from specific points of view in an integrative, rather than divisive, fashion).

Funerary and mortuary rituals were therefore significant – but hardly decisive – opportunities for a whole complex nexus of relationships to be re-examined, rediscovered, and refashioned. Opportunities for differentiation were part of the process, but did not drive it. Thus strategies for differentiation in the funerary realm by those claiming elite or other elevated status or attempting to reify hierarchical divisions were a secondary – not primary – aspect of the development of both Mycenaean funerary practices and the hierarchical institutions apparent in Mycenaean society by LHIII. The integrative aspect of funerary practices, along with the tendency to emphasise the strength of the heterarchical, rather than hierarchical, aspects of society, would have tended to undermine any claims of strictly defined hierarchy in society, and thus made funerary practices as constituted a less than ideal arena for the claims of emergent hierarchical groups.

Which is not to say that they did not try! The carefully crafted hunter-warrior elite persona represented in some early graves (Harrell 2010), the rationed and contrived use of symbols in some funerary contexts, and the construction of large or architecturally elaborate tombs are all aspects of elite presencing in funerary activities. The issue of tomb scale is of particular interest (Boyd in press; forthcoming a). The construction of very large tombs, as at Mycenae in both LHII (the Lion and Aegisthus tombs) and LHIII (Atreus and Klytemnestra), refashions burial practices in two important ways. In most tombs – whether chamber or tholos – the scale is such

that the human body is facilitated: the tomb is neither too large, nor too small, for comfortable activity. In very large tombs, the scale is such that that tomb completely overwhelms the individual. Thus, although retaining the basic plan of other tombs, the mega-tholoi of Mycenae and elsewhere impress as being on a scale that significantly changes the experience of moving through the architecture. The concomitant of this is that much larger numbers of mourners could participate in funerary procedures: dozens in the chamber, hundreds in the dromos and on the slopes above. Such tombs were built for funerals where very large numbers of persons were called to participate. Thus while working within the heterarchical principles outlined previously, with these tombs hierarchy was made rather more apparent.

Nonetheless, rituals aimed at ancestral groups were too inclusive to be the main cosmological underpinning of expanding hierarchy. Rather, it is clear that at the 'palace' sites, certainly in LHIII, and perhaps earlier, hierarchy was underpinned by and articulated through religious practice that permeated the entire architectural complex, including not only identified shrines but also the main megaron complex, which was certainly itself (among other aspects) a centre of religious practice (Lupack 2010, 264–5). The pantheon of named, individual, immortal divinities partly revealed to us in written records was a far more amenable cosmological structure on which to build the hierarchical institutions of the Late Mycenaean palaces. Their influence beyond the palace complexes themselves – their reach into the periphery – is far from clear (and almost absent from funerary practices). But the ongoing importance of funerary practice in most areas is manifestly evident. Thus in LHIII we faintly discern a tension between two broad ways of understanding society: on the one hand, from the top down, a hierarchy controlling some religious and economic institutions; and on the other hand, an ever-receding heterarchy of relationships between individuals and groups that governed much of everyday life and, at times of mourning, was made manifest in the cemetery. Thus far we barely discern the outlines of these social principles in LHIII: it would be even more interesting to learn something about the initiation of this division in earlier periods.

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NOTES

1 There has been some past debate on the definition of a tholos tomb. This has classically been defined as a tripartite structure with the chamber and entrance ('stomion') built of stone (the 'dromos' or elongated passageway leading to the entrance is sometimes also stone-lined). Dickinson sought to reclassify smaller members of the group as 'smaller, less-regular stone-built tombs' (1983, 57) on the grounds that they may not have been 'domed like true tholoi', and that there ought to be a typological division between larger tombs, 'quite clearly the burial places of important personages', and smaller tombs (which are assumed not to be for important persons). It is however clear that many were corbel-vaulted. Papadimitriou (2001) proposed the classification 'built chamber tomb' to encompass both small tholos tombs and other small tombs built of stone, of disparate design (more recently he recognises 'small tholos tomb' as one tomb type among several in the early Mycenaean period: Papadimitriou, forthcoming). The position taken in this paper is that 'tholos tomb' is a technical term indicating a stone-built, corbelled chamber usually of tripartite design and that membership of this group should be based on the manifest design intent of the architects, rather than any assumption about the identity or status of any of the dead deposited within (cf. also Boyd 2014a).

2 The two exceptionally large tholoi at Englianos (IV) and Psari (1) skew this figure somewhat. Removing these from the average, it is 5.2 m. Of course, if the smaller tholoi in multiple-tholos mounds were included, the average would be even lower.

3 It is clear that in most places the overall numbers of dead represented in tombs is a subset of the numbers of persons who must have lived in the vicinity. Notwithstanding the loss of evidence over the millennia, it seems clear that other modalities of the disposal of the dead in the Mycenaean period are underrepresented in the data, and this allows for the possibility of another category (or categories) of dead: those (for whatever reason) not selected for burial in tholos and chamber tombs.

4 In LHII the nearest tholos is on the other side of Mt Taÿetos at Kambos; a few distant chamber tombs are to be found at Pellana (about 25 km) and perhaps one at Krokees (20 km).

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Death, Hierarchy, and the Social Order

Life and Death in Late Prehistoric to Early Historic Mesopotamia

Karina Croucher

INTRODUCTION

Issues of death and mortality are naturally a focus of archaeological interpretations surrounding cemetery sites. The Royal Cemetery at Ur in southern Mesopotamia, dating to the mid-third millennium BC (see Table 14.1 for chronology), is no exception. However, the site straddles the development of writing, providing an opportunity to explore the juxtaposition between accounts of death from written sources and those from interpretations of archaeological evidence. This paper offers a reinterpretation of Royal Graves from the cemetery, considering the observations of the excavator, Woolley, from the 1920s (from archival research in the British Museum). The reassessment of the material reveals insights into human practices surrounding death and burial, rather than simply accounts of social structures and hierarchies, as well as exploring the relationship and contrasts between textual accounts and archaeological observations, to provide evidence of attitudes towards death and mortality at this key juncture in our human past.

Mesopotamian archaeology includes some of the world's most intriguing and significant archaeological finds, with the earliest examples of city-states, monumental architecture, and the earliest writing, accompanied by elaborate material culture. Archaeological excavation in the region has been limited by decades of conflict. Until new fieldwork becomes feasible, the excavation reports of Woolley and his contemporaries, while dated in excavation and recording methods, remain valuable sources of information about this crucial period of human history. The existing records provide an avenue for the reinterpretation of evidence. A further avenue for evidence lies in the use of textual sources; whilst these can be illuminating, they may also skew and bias interpretations of the archaeological record, and thus should be contextualised rather than assumed to represent universal understanding of burial practices for the region. However, such valuable information as that derived from texts cannot be overlooked when considering the archaeological evidence, and this paper will therefore begin with a discussion of the textual sources relating to the third millennium in Mesopotamia, before re-evaluating the evidence from one of the most famous sites in the region, the Royal Cemetery at Ur. Finally, recent excavations from neighbouring regions will be considered, which suggest that secondary burial practices continued into the early Historic period in Mesopotamia, a

Table 14.1. *South Mesopotamian chronology*

Ubaid	ca. 6,000–4,300 BC	Extended graves, usually cemeteries
Uruk	ca. 4,000–3,100 BC	Lack of archaeological evidence of burials
Jemdet Nasr	ca. 3,100–2,900 BC	Diversity of burials, including cemeteries, and beneath floors in
Early Dynastic	ca. 2,900–2,350 BC	occupied and abandoned houses (see Pollock 1999; Vogel 2013)
Akkadian	ca. 2,350–2,150 BC	
Ur III	ca. 2,100–2,000 BC	

Note: Dates are approximate.
After Pollock 1999.

hypothesis that will be proved or disproved through future excavation in the region.

The chronology of the region uses traditional culture-historic labels, with the Ubaid, Uruk, and Early Dynastic periods evidencing increases in site size and complexity (although a straight-forward linear trajectory is flawed, see Baltali 2007; and for earlier periods in the region, Campbell & Fletcher 2010). The Uruk period at the end of the fourth millennium is understood as a period when most of Mesopotamia, north and south, was under a common leadership system that covered the whole region and was afterwards replaced by large, city-based elite leaders in the south, and dispersed village communities in the north, by the beginning of the third millennium BC (Laneri 2007, 242; Algaze 2001). By the mid- to late third millennium, a greater unity is evidenced in the archaeological record between the north and the south: 'it seems clear from the archaeological data that, due to the implementation of long-distance commercial exchanges, the mid-late third millennium represents an intense moment of social, cultural, and economic exchange and interaction among the numerous communities living in this broad area, which extends from parts of western Anatolia to southern Mesopotamia' (Laneri 2007, 259–60). For overviews of the archaeological evidence, the following sources remain valuable: Pollock (1999), Crawford (2004), Postgate (1992), Ur (2010), and McIntosh (2005); see Seymour (2012) for an accessible overview of the region and period.

Whilst city-states frequently rivalled each other and even broke into war, networks were vast, with movement of raw materials including metals, minerals and stones, wood, textile, and food stuffs (Pollock 1999, 9). At the end of the Early Dynastic period, the region was unified under the leadership of Sargon, who established the capital city of Akkad (thus the period is referred to as both the Sargonic and the Akkadian), and the language of Akkadian was introduced into written texts. The unification lasted for around a century before city-states regained their independence, in turn to be reunified under the Third Dynasty of Ur, or Ur III, at the end of the third millennium BC (Pollock 1999, 9–10).

The situation outlined in Pollock's (1999, 196–216) overview of Mesopotamian mortuary practices remains fairly unchanged, detailing a transition from the use of cemeteries, to a lack of evidence for burials, particularly of adults, during the Uruk period. At the end of the fourth millennium BC, burials are again evident, with a variety of mortuary practices, including burial within houses or cemeteries, the latter frequently located in midden areas of settlement sites, a situation that Laneri argues represents a social shift from unified leadership during the Uruk period to dispersed leadership, and whilst dominant cities emerged in both the north and south of Mesopotamia, the northern cities are argued to represent secular authority, whilst in the south, rule was based on religious temple households (2007, 243). Throughout the third millennium, a shift is seen from extra-mural cemeteries, replaced by intra-mural household tombs, a picture that becomes extremely prevalent by the second millennium BC, reflected in both palace and household architecture (Laneri 2007; van der Toorn 1996) and echoed in literary sources reflecting on the role of ancestors (Jonker 1995).

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD: LITERARY SOURCES

During the use of the Royal Cemetery in the Early Dynastic III period, literacy was predominantly used for administrative and bureaucratic purposes, rather than for documenting mythologies, stories, or accounts of daily life and beliefs. However, texts are available from later periods that are more illustrative of beliefs, ideals, and understandings about concepts such as life and death, although different scholars choose different textual sources for their comparisons to the ED period.

Cohen utilises texts written within around 350 years of the ED III period, which he sees as 'a time that shares significant cultural continuity with the ED III period' (2005, 25–30). This includes the Akkadian period, when Mesopotamia became united under Sargon of Akkad (ca. 2334–2112), and the texts from the Ur III, or Third Dynasty of Ur, a period thought to revert back to previous Sumerian traditions (ca. 2112–2000), beginning with the first king of the Third Dynasty, Urnamma. People lived in large communities, with cities frequently populated by tens of thousands of people (McIntosh 2005, 71). Despite changes in leaders, ruling political ideologies, and literary languages (from Sumerian to Akkadian and back again), the period, at least until the second half of the Akkadian period, is argued to demonstrate little social change, as evidenced through continuity in house plans, pottery use, and settlement patterns (Cohen 2005, 30–1). However, whilst this may be considered a period of relative cultural unity, the pressures and changes brought about by the

congregation of these populations would have played a role in people's lives, experiences, and identities.

However, the degree to which later sources are relevant is debated, with different scholars drawing different parameters in their choice of literary material to utilise when considering burial practices in the region. For instance, Barrett (2007) draws on the accounts of *Nergal and Ereshkigal* and *The Descent of Ishtar to the Netherworld* in her reassessment of the cemetery at Ur. These texts, however, are rejected by Cohen as too late in date for their use in interpreting the cemetery; instead Cohen uses *The Death of Gilgamesh* and *Gilgamesh and the Netherworld* – written for the Ur III court, but only known from Old Babylonian documents – and the *Death of Urnamma*, thought to have been written ca. 2095 (2005, 34–6). Texts from the Ur III court were incorporated into Old Babylonian sources (dating to around 2000–1595), which Cohen also uses as relevant material (Cohen 2005, 32).

Despite these debates over relevant literary sources, regardless of the choices of text used, the evidence arising from these accounts does not differ substantially, providing an account of a dire afterworld where the dead had to be maintained by the living. Dina Katz provides an overview of accounts of the netherworld from Sumerian sources (2003), noting that most details were likely to have been passed on verbally rather than recorded through texts (2003, xvii). Summarised by Barrett (2007), the Akkadian sources of *The Descent of Ishtar to the Netherworld*, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, and *Nergal and Ereshkigal*, and the Sumerian account of *Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld* describe the dire plight of the dead, although they attest that the living can influence the fate of the deceased through their actions, prayers, and offerings. The social structures of the living are argued to have been mirrored in the underworld, with gods, elites, and mundane occupants. This information is derived from the text of the *Death of Ur-Namma* (Barrett 2007), and from Sumerian texts, which, although written in ca. 1500–1300 BC and repeated in an eighth century Akkadian version, refer back to the end of the third millennium BC; these include accounts of Nergal and Ereshkigal, the latter seen as ruler of the Mesopotamian netherworld by the end of the third millennium BC (Walls 2001, 147; Lambert 1980, 60–4). That the underworld mirrors the real world in the third millennium BC is also described by Katz (2003, 190).

It was believed that the dead could influence the living, motivating the living to care for the dead in the appropriate manner (Richardson 2007, 203). This care involved supplying the dead with water, as the spirits became thirsty in the dry and dusty netherworld. Evidence for this is also provided archaeologically, with the pipes built into many graves, for instance, in the Royal Cemetery at Ur, providing evidence for means of libation (Katz 2003, 101; Cohen 2005, 106). In part, this motivation to care for the dead derived from a belief in the human body as composed of two elements, the body and the breath, with the latter seen as enabling life and carrying speech, senses, and emotions, tangibly existing beyond death in the wind (Katz 2003, 197). This breath, or spirit, was also perceived as retaining the same needs as the living, thus requiring attendance, including food and drink, and in turn the spirit could influence the lives of their living families, whether for better or worse (Katz 2003, 197). This concept of breath has also been described as a ghost of the dead, since it was seen to come into existence at the point of death, holding the purpose of reminding the living of the dead, to ensure their continual care and remembrance, with the dead likewise influencing the lives of the living (Cooper 1992, 27). There are also accounts of the dead providing gifts for the gods of the underworld, in addition to provisions for the afterlife itself (Tinney 1998, 26).

In addition to providing food and drink to the dead, there is a consistent message given in the textual sources that the physical dead body should not be disturbed: 'the Sumerian's perception of a proper world order did not tolerate the mingling of life with death. The realm of the dead was, therefore, separated and removed from the world of the living' (Katz 2003, 1). The dead body should remain separated from the living and should not be disturbed. From later periods, Hallo writes that 'disturbing the dead was fraught with danger… across the whole ancient Near East' (2009, 529), with the violation of the grave considered to be a form of punishment (Hallo 2009, 521). Accounts by Cooper likewise summarise sources that describe disturbing the bones of the dead as a punishment (1992, 28). This punishment was inflicted on the dead themselves, as they were left uncared for, and on their living relatives, who would suffer torment from the ghost of the deceased. Whilst citing examples from textual sources dating to around 700 BC, Cooper argues that 'the complex of beliefs they represent can be traced back to the mid-third millennium', with the account dating to 2400 BC of the Sumerian leader Emmetena of Lagash, who abandoned the bodies of his dead army: 'the ignominy of defeat was augmented by the abandonment without burial of fallen soldiers' (Cooper 1992, 28). The

firm belief was that 'the corpse must be properly buried' and the bones of the dead left undisturbed (Copper 1992, 27). However, one source, also dating to ca. 700 BC, describes Merodachbaladan, a fleeing rebel, as exhuming and taking the bones of his ancestors with him to prevent their falling into the hands of his enemies; thus there are textual sources dating to later periods that allude to the practice of moving the dead (Cooper 1992, 28). However, the moving of the dead could be seen as problematic, as the ghosts of the unburied could roam free, tormenting the living (McIntosh 2005, 224).

The overwhelming picture from the available literary sources is coherent in describing an underworld in which the dead should be respected and cared for, with intervention with the physical body of the deceased perceived as intolerable, not only for the sake of the dead, but for the living, who would be haunted by the spirit of the deceased. However, archaeological evidence provides an alternative perspective on burial practices and their underlying beliefs.

DEATH AND THE ROYAL CEMETERY AT UR

The existing interpretations of Mesopotamian mortuary practice are understandably influenced by later textual evidence, unsurprisingly so, as the accounts of Gilgamesh, Enkidu, Nergal, Ereshkigal, and others make intriguing reading. However, through taking a step back from the literary sources, closer analysis of archaeological evidence – examining the data as when studying a prehistoric site – reveals new avenues of interpretation, suggesting that the role of the dead, concepts of the underworld, and the correct treatment of the corpse may differ from those described in textual sources. To illustrate this point, I will offer a reanalysis of the Royal Cemetery at Ur. The Royal Cemetery dates to the Early Dynastic period, the early to mid-third millennium BC in southern Mesopotamia, a period that sees the emergence and growth of city-states, which were built on increasing levels of complexity from the sixth millennium BC (Weiss 1986). Traditional accounts describe primary burials and the dead left undistributed, yet a reanalysis of excavation notes suggests that secondary burial should not be ruled out and may have been practised alongside primary burial, problematising traditional accounts.

Through studying contextual data for the human remains in a reanalysis of original sources, it becomes apparent that the Royal Cemetery probably contained the interments of isolated skulls as secondary burials,

accompanying the primary interments. Woolley repeatedly observes, although does not discuss in detail, isolated human skulls and bones recovered from within the tombs; some of these are due to preservation conditions or disturbance, but some were intentionally placed within the tombs, indicating significantly different funerary practice to those indicated in textual sources attributed to the Royal Cemetery. The recognition of such secondary burials within the tombs opens avenues for further research that place the Royal Cemetery in a trajectory from its prehistoric origin; such practice may potentially refer to earlier mortuary practice in the region that focussed on the disarticulated rather than the articulated body. From a reanalysis of Woolley's notes, observations, and reports, using an archaeological rather than a textual perspective, new insights are revealed about attitudes to life and death during a complex and significant period of human history.

The Royal Cemetery forms a component of a larger cemetery complex at Ur, and various aspects of the Royal Cemetery have been the subject of recent research by Cohen (2005), who has undertaken reinterpretation of the tombs based on a substantial re-analysis of artefacts, and Pollock, who has focussed on themes such as feasting and elite status (2007a, 2007b, 2003) and gender (1991a; see also MacCaffrey 2008). More than two thousand graves were excavated and recorded under the direction of Sir Leonard Woolley in 1926–34. There were a further estimated four thousand graves that were unrecorded, and thousands more remain unexplored by archaeologists, although many of these are likely to have been robbed and disturbed in antiquity. Woolley's excavation strategy was pioneering for its time, and Woolley should be commended for his choice to delay excavation of the cemetery until his workforce were better experienced, waiting four years from its initial discovery until commencing its excavation (Woolley 1934, 5–6). Preservation conditions are variable, contrasting between excellent and extremely poor. Although the Cemetery Complex has been subject to both disturbance and deterioration, this should not prohibit a reanalysis of mortuary remains; it is notable that Woolley writes of human bodies in the cemetery that they are highly unlikely to have completely deteriorated (1934, 48).

In total, 660 graves date to the ED period. From within the ED graves, Woolley identified a group of sixteen tombs that are described as a Royal Cemetery, interpreted as belonging to a group of elites, evidenced by richer grave goods and impressive tomb constructions

(Woolley 1934). The principal occupants of the tombs were accompanied by attendants, seemingly sacrificed to follow their rulers into the afterlife. Woolley proposed that the scenes were achieved through the willing descent of these attendants into the grave, where they imbibed poison and consented to go to their deaths (Woolley 1954, 59). Whether these scenes were the results of complicit subservience (Pollock 2007a) or violent and oppressive leadership, which may also have involved ideological motivations compelling the victims (Dickson 2006), is debated. However, recent CT scanning of two skulls has revealed that these had been struck with blunt objects, resulting in death (Baadsgaard et al. 2010; see also Vidale 2011, 439). The heating of bodies has also been observed (Molleson & Hodgeson 2003, 123), suggested by Baadsgaard et al. (2010) as intended to preserve the bodies prior to their interment in the tombs, although this remains inconclusive at present (Molleson & Hodgeson 2003, 123; Baadsgaard et al. 2010, 37–8).

The royal tombs contained a wealth of artefacts, including decorated harps and other musical instruments, figures of rams, finely made vessels, and funerary furniture. In addition, the dead were adorned with ornaments, including elaborate headdresses and jewellery, and helmets of copper. The graves contained an abundance of precious metals, minerals, and stones, including gold and lapis lazuli, although frequently items were gold plated (Irving & Ambers 2002; Woolley 1934, 789), suggesting some limitation in use of precious metals. The objects of adornment have been used in the analysis of aspects of identity, including the communication of elite status, and the not-unproblematic identification of gender-specific objects (Gansell 2007). However, as Cohen (2005, 81) notes, 'not even the sex of corpses in the Royal Tomb Complex is certain, for scientific examinations were not routinely conducted'. Therefore, there are limitations in the assignments of gender-related artefacts and ornamentations. As well as discussing positions of power and elite through access to fine items, Gansell concludes that the primary occupants of the tombs were royal or priestly, in line with research by Cohen (2005), Pollock (1991b), Moorey (1977), Marchesi (2004), and others. That those buried in the tombs were of elevated status seems unproblematic, although it has been proposed that these may have been 'stand-ins', more easily disposable slaves, or short-lived rulers (Moorey 1977, 3, discussing Frankfort's suggestions; Irving & Ambers 2002, 209, discussing Finkel; substitute kings are also accounted for in texts describing events of 1900 BC, where decoy kings

were established to absorb evil, and potentially death, in place of the real king: see Bahrani 2008, 239, and references therein).

As well as an abundance of wealth, the graves contained the remains of food consumption, including cooking and serving vessels, fireplaces, and animal bones (Woolley 1934, 104), with evidence of food argued to indicate a belief in an active afterlife (Barrett 2007). Such conclusions, however, are based on a limited proposal for the function of grave goods, seen simply as items for the afterlife, rather than the multiple potential motivations behind the deposition of goods within the grave. Other interpretations of grave goods include conspicuous consumption (Pollock 1999), or items for mourners, objects used and disposed of as components of funerary activities, or symbolic of ties, or their severing, between the living and the dead. Cohen's comprehensive review of the vessels from the Royal Graves (2005, 88–9) suggests the role of the dead as participants in these scenes rather than attributing the grave goods as simply gifts for the afterworld, a conclusion taken from the types of vessels present in the graves, with a notable lack of those that were suitable for travelling (such as large, flat dishes, which were tied to back-packs or animals), as well as the scenes with the dead laid out as if participants in their feasts (2005, 88–9). The evidence from the tombs suggests a close link between food consumption and funerary events, which took place as repeated feasts within the cemetery (Pollock 2003). Evidence from textual sources further accounts for the need to provide the dead with food and drink (as will be discussed later). Such literary sources provide further insights into attitudes towards death and concepts of mortality and the afterlife, although their evidence, whilst seemingly clear-cut, may not necessarily neatly complement archaeological evidence from the Royal Tombs.

WOOLLEY'S EXCAVATION NOTES

Whilst Woolley's excavation and recording techniques were ahead of their time, by today's standards there is a frustrating lack of detail. However, Woolley did provide basic drawings of bodies, which indicate their locations, orientations, and positions, as well as showing the completeness of the skeletal remains. As Vidale has recently observed, 'Woolley may have indulged in narrative and romance, but his reconstructions of the graves' filling processes are detailed, sound and reasonable' (2011, 430). Many of Woolley's plans are available from the excavation

reports (Woolley 1934), and further information is available from Woolley's original notebooks, stored in the British Museum. These notebooks provide Woolley's detailed plans for around two thousand of the excavated graves and constitute an additional, valuable resource and further support the premise of placement of isolated skulls within the tombs. Of the sixteen Royal Tombs, six included isolated skulls in addition to primary burials; for some tombs, this is most likely to relate to preservation conditions, whereas in others, their placement as isolated remains is more secure, and observed by Woolley. Had further information been known to Woolley regarding the prehistoric remains in the region and the prevalence of secondary burial practice, the possibilities at Ur may have been more readily noted and recognised during excavation. Woolley recognises a problem with relating the evidence to later historical periods and their textual sources, asking, 'were the prospects as gloomy as later texts and the material remains of later periods suggest?' arguing, contra scholars today, that there had been a 'remarkable change' in burial customs after 2300 BC with the Third Dynasty of Ur. Woolley argues that as textual sources post-date this period, rather than relating to the Early Dynastic period of the cemetery (Woolley 1934, 42), 'the texts, themselves still later in date, must reflect the creed of their own day and would naturally give no accurate picture of what men had thought a thousand years before. Sumerian culture is so conservative, so static, that we are always tempted to argue from the better-known periods back to the unknown past, but the argument can be pressed too far' (Woolley 1934, 42); this perspective contrasts remarkably with those of scholars studying the cemetery today, and inspires a reanalysis of excavation material rather than later written sources.

Reanalysis of Woolley's Notes: Summary of Tomb Evidence

A reanalysis of excavation reports and site notebooks reveals that as many as six of the sixteen royal tombs may have had isolated skulls placed within them, and for at least three of these the evidence is compelling. Whilst these remains are few in number, they substantially alter the interpretation of the Royal Graves.

Tomb PG 789 has been described by Woolley as the 'The King's Grave' (1934, 62), with elaborate, corbelled tomb construction, as well as scenes of soldiers that include oxen and carts. However, the grooms of two oxen are represented only by their skulls, with no further

adornments or objects, whereas other bodies and skulls, even when badly decayed, are described as being adorned with beads and jewellery, decorating their hair, heads, bodies, and clothing (e.g., descriptions of the adornments in Woolley 1934, 65–7, 71). The findings in PG 789 are further supported by the sketches in Woolley's notebooks, which depict isolated skulls (Figure 14.1). Not only are there no bodies present, there is an absence of ornamentation that would have surrounded any decayed body.

In the shaft of PG 1050, where the evidence suggests a succession of activities, there are intriguing references to the presence of isolated skulls. Woolley writes of the bodies that 'one was a complete skeleton sprawled amid the pots across the middle of the room, of the others only the skulls were preserved, if indeed there had ever been more of them than the skulls. Six more skulls lay at depths varying from 0–60 m. to 0–70 m. in the second layer of the deposit, and one high in the bottom layer at 0–80 m.' (1934, 92–3). Woolley's sketches further detail the locations of skulls (Figure 14.2). Woolley describes the tomb as well preserved and in good condition, and the shaft documents the successive layers of mortuary activity attributed to the tombs. This grave provides the most compelling indication of the interment of skulls and secondary burials.

It is also feasible that a secondary burial was placed in PG 1054; Woolley describes a small box 'containing only a few bones' with a potentially associated broken skull (1934, 99). Whilst this may have been a plundered coffin, the small size and the lack of disturbance to the remainder of the burials and artefacts (this is one of the few tombs not previously looted) suggest that these bones may have been the remains of a secondary burial. Further information on Woolley's observation in this tomb is provided from the British Museum notebook entry, which depicts the remains in a sketch of the tomb (Figure 14.3). Notably, Woolley describes the tomb shafts of 1050 and 1054 as providing the most complete evidence for the later interments and activities taking place, the least disturbed of all the grave shafts (1934, 37).

The tumbled remains of bodies are described by Woolley for PG 1332 as deposited in two layers, separated by 1.10 m of earth. Those in the upper layer (twenty-three bodies) were arranged in rows, whereas the twenty bodies in the lower layer were 'less orderly', with many only represented by their skulls, teeth, or metal ornaments and beads, although many of the skulls and bodies lacked ornamentation (Woolley 1934, 124–6). Woolley, however, seems to attribute the incompleteness
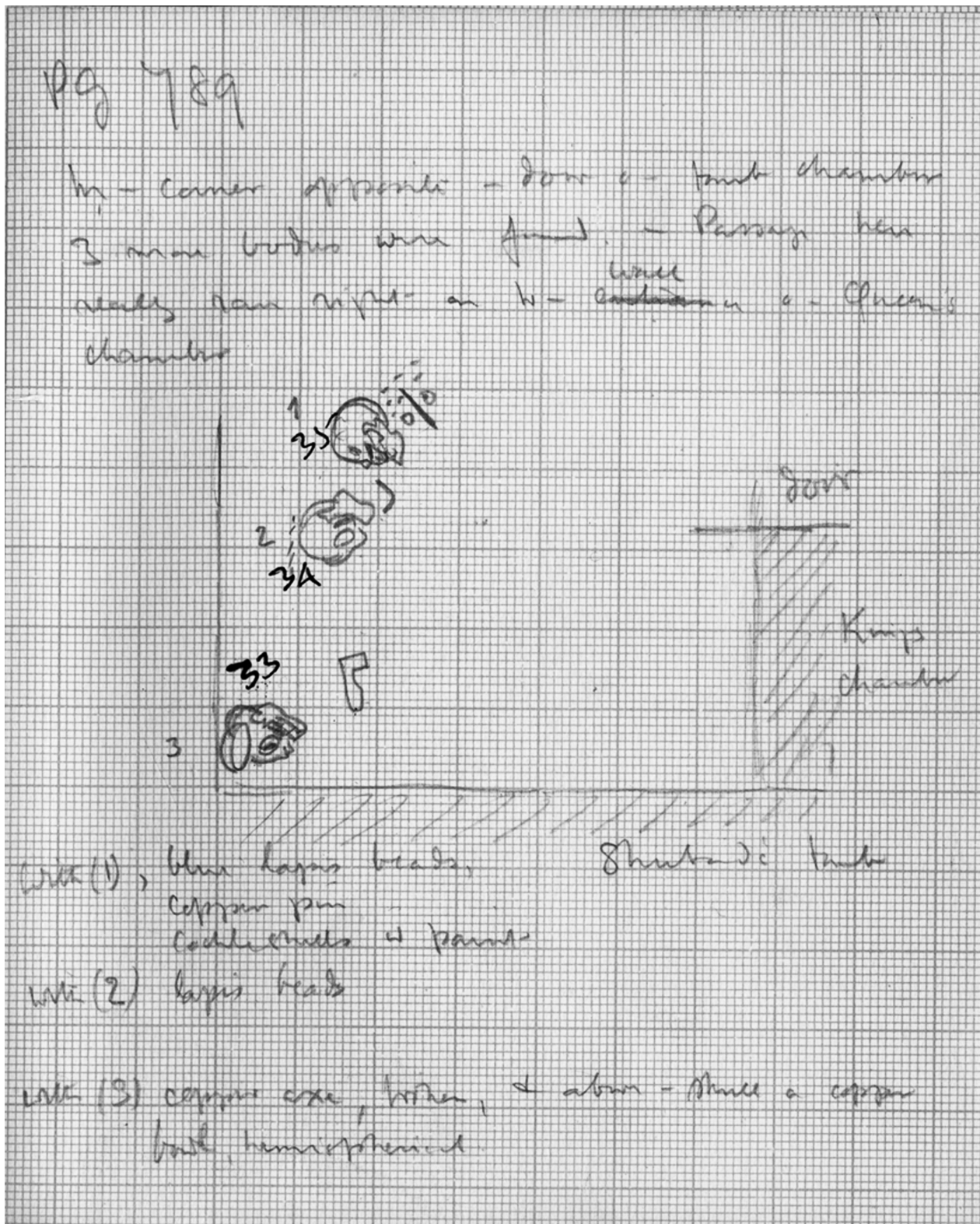
Figure 14.1. Woolley's sketch of tomb 789, British Museum.
Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 14.2. Woolley's sketch of tomb 1050, British Museum.
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to decay without mention in this case of tomb rob-bers; although the upper layers of soil at the top of the shaft were disturbed, this does not seem to account for disturbance of the lower bodies. Thus whether these bodies had been pushed aside or included those interred as skulls is debatable.
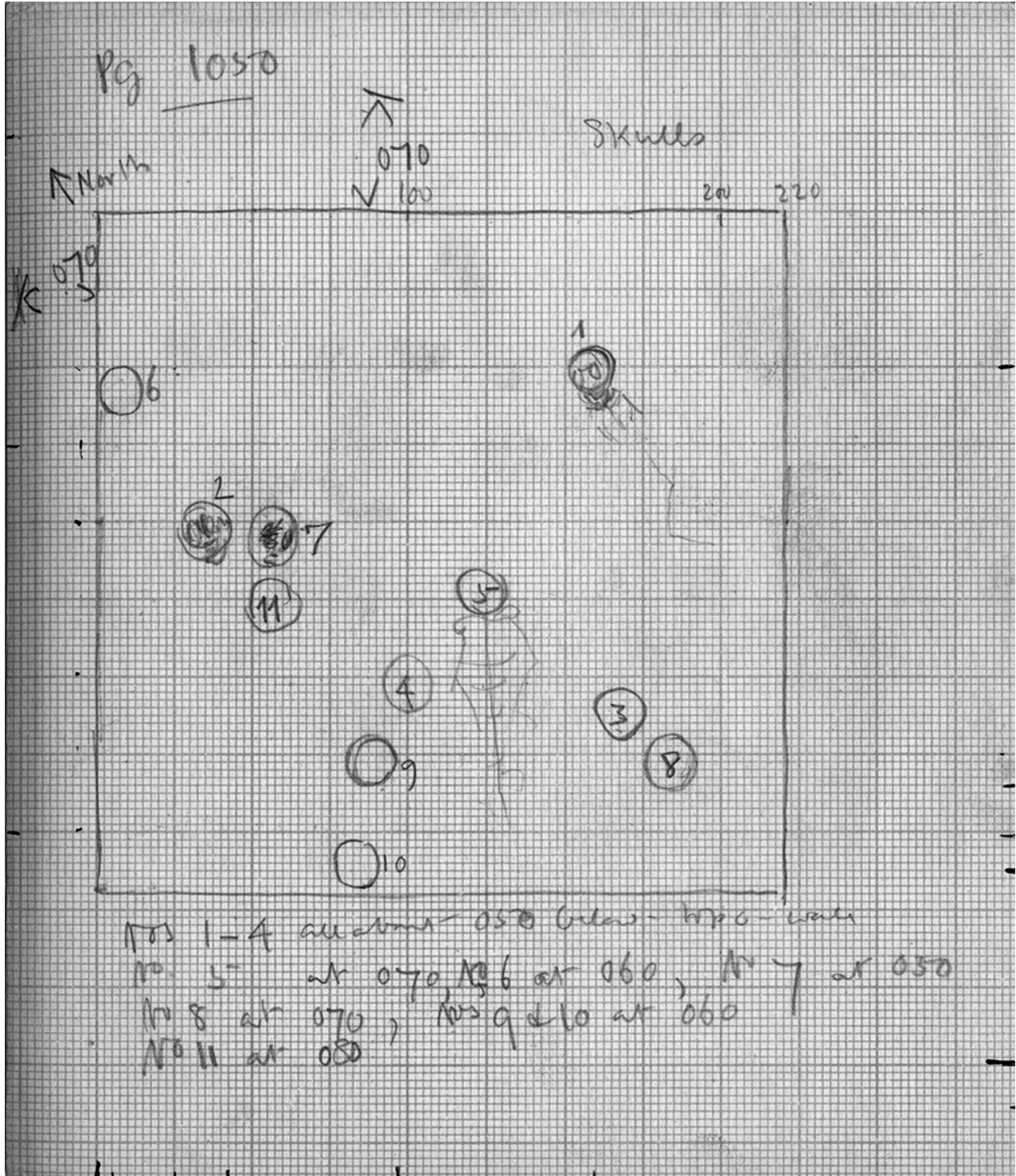
Figure 14.3. Woolley's sketch of tomb 1054, British Museum.
Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

Woolley describes tomb 777 as plundered; there the robbers, in their haste, left objects around the edges of the tomb. The tomb consisted of two chambers, the smaller of which contained skulls. There are also the remains of four human skulls and some scattered bones in the passage of the tomb, all associated with beads and decorative items (Woolley 1934, 56). Woolley assumes that, 'judging from the fact that all the human remains and virtually all the objects were bundled together at the end of the passage furthest from the entrance the robbers had been through things searchingly' (Woolley 1934, 56); it is also feasible that these remains were either interred as secondary burials with associated objects or cast aside during later reuse of the tomb. It seems that the thieves were not so thorough as to remove the lapis lazuli and silver that Woolley recovered with the bodies. However, this tomb probably represents robber activity rather than secondary burial.

For tomb PG800, according to Surenhagen (2002, 336), Woolley again describes individual skulls along with an intact, flexed skeleton and five additional bodies laid out on a bier and two rows of flexed bodies. However, there is little mention of the individual skulls in Woolley's

reports, save referring to some remains in the tomb's main chamber. Some evidence may be derived from the plans (1934, plate 36), although these appear to refer to skeletons that were mixed up with (beneath) the bodies of oxen in the outer chamber; the plans are less clear for the inner chamber, showing just skulls or showing that the bodies were covered with objects. In this inner chamber (or separate tomb, as research by Zimmerman suggests: 1998, 39), there lay the main occupant, Queen Pu-abi, along with attendants, one at the foot of the bier, another to her side, all richly adorned (Woolley 1934, 89–90). However, fragments of a skull were found without any objects (Woolley 1934, 90), unusual in this exceptionally lavish grave. We see that an isolated skull accompanies Queen Pu-abi, again missing the usual ornamentations that are so ubiquitous in the royal tombs.

Further investigation of PG 1237 also reveals probable secondary burials. Surenhagen writes that 'there is only one remaining shaft tomb, the so-called "death pit" 1237, which does not permit the immediate dismissal of a simultaneous mass burial' (2002, 339). The 'Great Death Pit', tomb PG 1237, is thought to contain the attendants of another, yet undiscovered, principal occupant. The

main chamber excavated by Woolley contained the badly preserved, articulated bodies of seventy-four people; this has been the subject of a thorough reanalysis by Vidale (2011), who has confirmed the order of deposition in this mass-burial chamber. A compartment containing two human skulls was recovered from the shaft of PG 1237 (note: these are not the skulls referred to by Vidale 2011 in his description of the main mass-burial chamber of PG 1237, where skulls may have become removed from their bodies as a result of trampling, but rather, are a separate event farther up the burial shaft). There are also human remains located higher up the shaft of the grave (the shafts were foci for later attention and further burials); Woolley writes of another compartment within the tomb, where two human skulls were placed with clay pots and saucers (Woolley 1934, 115).

SUMMARY

A reanalysis of Woolley's notebooks suggests that secondary burial is potentially evidenced at Ur; whilst small in number, these graves offer new insights into attitudes to death and the dead body in ED III Mesopotamia. The observation made by Vidale (2011, 430, 438) that the tombs were filled in relatively quickly, without being left open, and lacking supporting beams and structural supports, suggests that where secondary remains are observable they are likely to have been interred alongside primary burials, rather than at a later date (contra Surenhagen 2002). When re-use of the graves did occur, such as in the shafts of 1050 and 1054, the remains are layered up above a new floor level, rather than older remains' being pushed aside. Cohen's (2005, 141) analysis of the Royal Tombs further supports this, recognising that persons were buried as individuated primary burials. This is the case even when burial took place in a communal setting, such as the potential human sacrifice victims in tomb PG 1237: 'even in the graves with human sacrifices, the so-called Royal Tombs, there is obviously a corpse that can be called the primary interment because of its position, its adornment, and the attitudes of the people arrayed around it' (Cohen 2005, 141).

By far the most compelling evidence is from PG 1050. Not only was this tomb one of the least disturbed of all tombs, but Woolley acknowledges the likelihood that the skulls were deposited without their articulated bodies. Rather than that the tombs were repeatedly used for the burial of the newly dead, the evidence suggests that skulls were interred in the tombs as isolated remains

alongside the primary occupants. This provides an alternative understanding of the nature of beliefs in the afterlife, offering a more complex picture of funerary events than those traditionally recalled for the site, which are heavily influenced by textual accounts.

The evidence from the Royal Cemetery demonstrates the value of the reanalysis of primary archaeological data alongside textual information. Although the archaeological evidence may problematise textual accounts, new avenues for interpretation are enabled. Further to the position of Cohen, who notes that no single text combines all the elements of evidence, requiring archaeological context to provide a fuller picture (2005, 154), it seems that archaeological data can also provide evidence for that which is omitted in texts. Whether such omissions were intentional, or simply due to the demise in practice by the time that events were written down, it seems that practices were taking place that are not accounted for, indeed are indicated against, in textual sources.

For Ur, it seems that ideals around mortuary practice were heightened at a time when social relations were changing within one of the most important city-states. After the collapse of the kingdom of Kish (before 2500 BC) and the Dynasty of Sargon (ca. 2350), city-states were vying for political and military power (Cooper 1992, 21). The ED III period was therefore one of huge changes for the whole of society, with warfare, changes in settlement patterns, trade, agriculture, and craft production (Cohen 2005, 153). It is a hypothesis that the remains within the Royal Cemetery may recall earlier traditions seen in the region and period, potentially re-emerging during a time span of several millennia. Further analysis will reveal whether the evidence seen at Ur is also apparent at other sites, and whether a reanalysis of sites that pre-date Ur might suggest the continuity or re-emergence of earlier mortuary practices, manifested at times of social instability in the highly visible and performative mortuary arena (such a suggestion has also been made for Middle Bronze Age 'warrior' burials: Hallote 2002). Whilst a long-term tradition of mortuary practices wraps this argument up neatly, whether or not this is affirmed does little to alter the facts from the cemetery at Ur itself, where, if we are to believe the observations of the excavator and the contextual archaeological evidence, then the placement of isolated skulls within the Royal Tombs remains a real possibility for consideration. As well as indicating the potential long-term planning of events, through curating or re-excavating the skulls, there was a choice to include these persons, despite their incomplete bodies, within

these burial contexts, suggesting that significance was attributed to these remains without the whole, undisturbed body, whether through choice or circumstance. The changing approach to the body in death may also be related to what Bahrani describes as a 'Mesopotamian concept of the body', which describes it as composed of parts and not limited by its own boundaries, with some parts, including hair, nails, and body fluids, considered representative of the whole (2008, 77–8). Effort was expended in including these persons within these elaborate tombs, as components of the performative mortuary events taking place.

The evidence contributes to the narrative of events surrounding the burials in the Royal Cemetery. Rather than the interment of the newly dead, performances involved the inclusion of the old dead, as their skulls were placed within some of the tombs. Whether these were the remains of significant kin, the results of excavations of burials elsewhere, or indicative of those dying some distance from the cemetery, the evidence suggests a combination of practices, adding to the already complex picture of primary burial, potential sacrifice, and performative scenes of power in the mortuary domain at Ur.

Other Examples

Whilst the situation at Ur is un-provable given the length of time since excavation and lack of detail in the reports, the evidence from other sites in the region is valuable. Although inevitable differences were no doubt in existence, the broad continuity and unity of practice evidenced in the archaeological record suggest that findings from other sites can elucidate our interpretations of the Royal Cemetery. While in-depth investigation of all relevant sites represents a body of work beyond this paper, a preliminary search of the data reveals mortuary practices that, in light of common cultural and belief systems (described previously), would support evidence of secondary burial at Ur.

Laneri (2007) describes the situation at Titriş Höyük in southeast Anatolia, where, by around 2400–2100 BC (the later Early Bronze Age), extra-mural cemeteries had been replaced by burial within and beneath houses, with eventually, it seems, every house furnished with a burial chamber within the house or in the inner courtyard (Laneri 2007, 248). There was frequently a mixing of bones, as some bodies were pushed aside by later activities, whilst others were bones from elsewhere, secondary burials (Laneri 2007, 252). One burial feature consisted of a plaster basin filled with bones, where seventeen skulls encircled a dense layer of scattered bones, representing the remains of nineteen individuals, with apparent cut-marks from the secondary processing of remains (Laneri 2007, 255–6).

The mixing of primary and secondary burials is also seen at Tell Banat, a practice that Porter attributes to attempts to mask emerging elites, investigating the use of the concept of ancestors in negotiating social status through mortuary practices. Tell Banat North consists of a 20-metre-high conical mound, with a diameter of at least 100 metres, that was a mortuary structure, built in at least four phases over a time span of three to four hundred years, from 2700 BC (or earlier) until around 2300 BC (Porter 2002, 160). The remains of the dead were not only secondary burials, but physically incorporated into the mortuary structure (for a comparable argument about burial cairns in the Homs region of Syria, see Bradbury 2011).

Porter describes how disturbed burials previously attributed to grave robbers are consistent with secondary mortuary practices, with secondary burials placed directly into tombs (2002a). Aside from spectacular mortuary monuments, there were secondary burials deposited in shaft tombs and earth-cut chambered tombs, and the excavator notes that primary burials were also recovered that had been simply placed on the ground and covered with stones or placed within abandoned kilns or pits (Porter 2002, 164). It is possible that these had been intended for later secondary burial. The burials at Banat represent a prolonged period of interaction, with predominant secondary burial, and a further mixing of human and animal remains, as well as a selection of bones that has left an under-representation of human skulls. The events taking place here would not seem out of line with earlier burial practices from the Late Neolithic periods and the PPNB, where the disarticulation and mixing of human and animal remains can be seen at several sites.

At the earlier site of Tell Brak, at least four pits represent mass burials that date to the first quarter of the fourth millennium BC (ca. 3800–3600), representing the deaths of at least 150 people (McMahon et al. 2011). These include bones that had been handled and sorted, including some human bones that had been made into tools. Dating to more than a thousand years before the Royal Cemetery, the evidence from Brak appears to relate more closely to the burial pits witnessed in the earlier prehistoric periods and demonstrates the repeated evidence for secondary burials within sites from across Mesopotamia.

However, these likely represent the remains of warfare (McMahon et al. 2011).

Interpretations of the Royal Cemetery by Surenhagen compare evidence from Ur with mortuary details from the early third millennium at Tall Ahmad al Hattu in the Diyala region, where communal tombs are common, with older burials pushed aside to make way for the newly dead (Surenhagen 2002). Whilst the burial pattern is not uniform, it does suggest that secondary practices existed alongside primary burials, in contradiction to the written texts, which describe an ideology in which the physical remains of the dead should remain undisturbed and intact. In fact, there is evidence of the persistence of secondary burials within the mortuary record throughout the period; whether this is continual practice is debatable; however, the evidence does suggest that the textual sources alone should not provide the backdrop for archaeological interpretation.

CONCLUSION

Archaeological methods and interpretation provide additional evidence of mortuary practices in the early historic period in southern Mesopotamia. However, this evidence contrasts with records from textual sources. It becomes evident that dealings with the dead were more complex than those usually described in traditional accounts, as new insights reveal alternative attitudes and understandings of life and death in this region and period. It is fruitful that in this current period of limited excavation in Mesopotamia, a reanalysis of existing evidence can still provide new insights and understandings about this crucial period of human history.

Perhaps we are seeing in the archaeological record evidence for a time of transition. The dead, in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, are not meant to return to the land of the living – the netherworld is a place of no return, of suffering, where the dead eat dust and clay, and where their pain can be eased by the actions of the living, in the form of offering food, remembering their names, and tending to them. Sources describe a benevolent and belligerent dead – manipulated by the living through the ceremony of Kispu, offering of food, and reading out of names, which date back to the Early Dynastic period (Finkelstien 1966). Yet we see a disjuncture between textual sources and archaeological evidence, with the archaeology showing, at the sites of Banat and others, that remains were physically moved around, transported from grave to grave,

contrasting with the textual accounts of the worlds of the dead remaining separate, prohibited, and dangerous. It could be argued that the actual physical dealing with and manipulation of remains eventually gave way to interactions with the dead in a different way, through offerings and libations, alongside a change in ideology, promoting leaving the dead in peace and keeping the worlds separate, and a change from physical manipulation of the dead, to a more removed relationship of food, offerings, and reading of names (prayers?). Perhaps we are seeing changing understandings of the dead, and identities of the dead, from those whose bones are collected, used, and deposited, to one in which the dead needed to remain separate, and where the spirit of the dead continued in the wind.

These insights contribute to a broader understanding of changing attitudes towards death and mortality, whilst also demonstrating the contribution of archaeological evidence in providing an alternative narrative to accounts derived from textual sources. It appears that burial practices were more complex than those described by written accounts, and suggests that attitudes to the dead, and the treatment of the dead body, were changing during this period of transition, with the earliest city-states, changed lifeways, and emerging strategies for dealing with change. Perhaps inhabitants at Ur chose to refer to long-term traditional practices, particularly in the areas of belief and mortuary practice and treatment of the dead.

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The Big Sleep: Early Maya Mortuary Practice

Norman Hammond

The Classic Maya of first-millennium AD Mesoamerica are almost unique among New World peoples in that we can link some of their dead with the defuncts' past lives. Although other named individuals are known from the prehispanic period – the Aztec emperors, for example – we have no tombs with which to link them; and the elaborate burials of Mochica lords in Peru are of unnamed individuals. The vast majority of burials excavated across the Americas are similarly anonymous, from the humblest hunter or farmer crouched in a cave or grave to the clearly high-status founder burials beneath the pyramids of Teotihuacan.

The Classic Maya (and perhaps a very few Zapotec tombs in Oaxaca) present a different picture, one more similar to that of some Old World complex societies. The Maya were not as commemorative of identified individuals down the social scale as in, for instance, Pharaonic Egypt, where we know the names and abbreviated life-histories of men at the artisan level because of the deep penetration of literacy in usage (if not necessarily in comprehension), but there may be useful comparisons with medieval European societies where elite tombs are identifiable by accompanying inscriptions, while most of the non-elite remain resolutely anonymous. Surveys of Maya burial practices may be found in Ricketson (1925), Ruz (1968), Welsh (1988), and, for royal burials, Fitzsimmons (2009); Sharer and Traxler (2006) has encyclopaedic coverage for most of the sites mentioned later where no more specific citation is given, with a map (reproduced here as Figure 15.1).

The parallel is also apposite in that, when we do have an identified buried Maya person, we may then know a great deal about him or her from non-funerary records such as commemorative stelae and other monuments dedicated during that person's lifetime. As an example, Janaab Pakal, ruler of the Maya kingdom we call Palenque in the seventh century AD, was interred in AD 683 in a great carved sarcophagus in a subterranean vault beneath the Temple of the Inscriptions at the site (the ancient Maya name for which was probably Lakam-Ha while his realm seems to have been the Bak polity).

His body was adorned with armour for eternity: long strings of jade beads, jade pectorals, and curiously shaped jade objects of uncertain import; but jade, its green colour embodying fresh maize and flowing water, the two ultimate necessities of Maya life, suggests an attempt to confer immortality on the dead Pakal. The rubbing of many jades with cinnabar, the red mercuric sulphide that could be mysteriously transmuted into liquid metal but was also the colour of fresh arterial blood (versus the dark, dried-blood or venous blood tone of haematite, more common and more commonly used in Maya art), supports such an interpretation.

The vessels for food and drink found in many Maya burials seem to envisage at least a post-mortem journey, and Classic Maya vase-paintings and Maya myths such as the *Popol Vuh* (known only from Colonial texts, but from vase-paintings clearly existing for at least a millennium before that – although over-precise retrodiction of episodes to interpret Classic and Preclassic imagery may be unprofitable) show belief in an underworld of chthonic and rather nasty deities, although not one demonstrably populated by deceased humanity. The journey from life through death to the underworld was glossed by the Maya as *ochb'ih* or *ochha'*, 'entering the road, entering the water', indicating change or transformation (summarised by Fitzsimmons 2009, 31–9), a journey illustrated by two of the incised bones from Tikal Burial 116, that of Jasaw

Figure 15.1. The Maya Area, showing important sites.
After Sharer & Traxler 2006, figure 1.1.

Figure 15.2. The subpyramid burial vault of Janaab Pakal of Palenque, with the carved sarcophagus lid raised to show the inner lid of the fish-shaped cavity containing the corpse.
Courtesy G. Stuart.

Chan K'awiil, where the deceased ruler is accompanied by theriomorphic deities in a canoe propelled by the death-associated Paddler Gods (Fitzsimmons 2009, figure 19).

Pakal's vault was discovered in 1952 by Alberto Ruz Lhuillier (Ruz Lhuillier 1973), after four seasons of clearing a rubble-filled stairway penetrating the pyramid from the floor of the temple above (Figure 15.2; see also Martin & Grube 2008, 166–7). That temple itself housed three massive inscribed tablets detailing part of the history of the Palenque kingdom, both actual and legendary, and ending with the demise of Pakal, added after his death by his son and successor, Kan-Bahlam. We have been able to read these texts in outline for only the past generation or so, and in detail only within the past decade with the rapid decipherment of Maya hieroglyphic writing.

Pakal's sarcophagus lid bears an image of him in youth and ritual garb, falling into or emerging from an immense pair of mandibles usually interpreted as the maw of the world of the dead: if emergent, the image may reflect a belief in resurrection or immortality; but it is so far unique in Maya art and its value as evidence on this point therefore limited (Figure 15.3). The sarcophagus itself was adorned along its sides by carved demi-figures of six generations of his ancestors, shown as fictive portraits (like a European Long Gallery set of kings, or the North Ockendon funerary monuments in Essex). The sarcophagus lid also bears a long text outlining Pakal's recent ancestry and ending with a pair of Calendar Round (CR) dates in the seventh century. These last we have been able to read for many years – the structure of the Maya calendar was solved in the late nineteenth century by Ernst Förstemann and others – but even so, in pre-decipherment days, they were misunderstood. Ruz Lhuillier took the age at death of some forty years assigned to the skeleton within the sarcophagus to interpret the CR (which repeats every fifty-two years) to agree with this. It was not until 1973, when Linda Schele and Peter Mathews unravelled the Palenque dynasty's history from the plethora of dates on monuments across
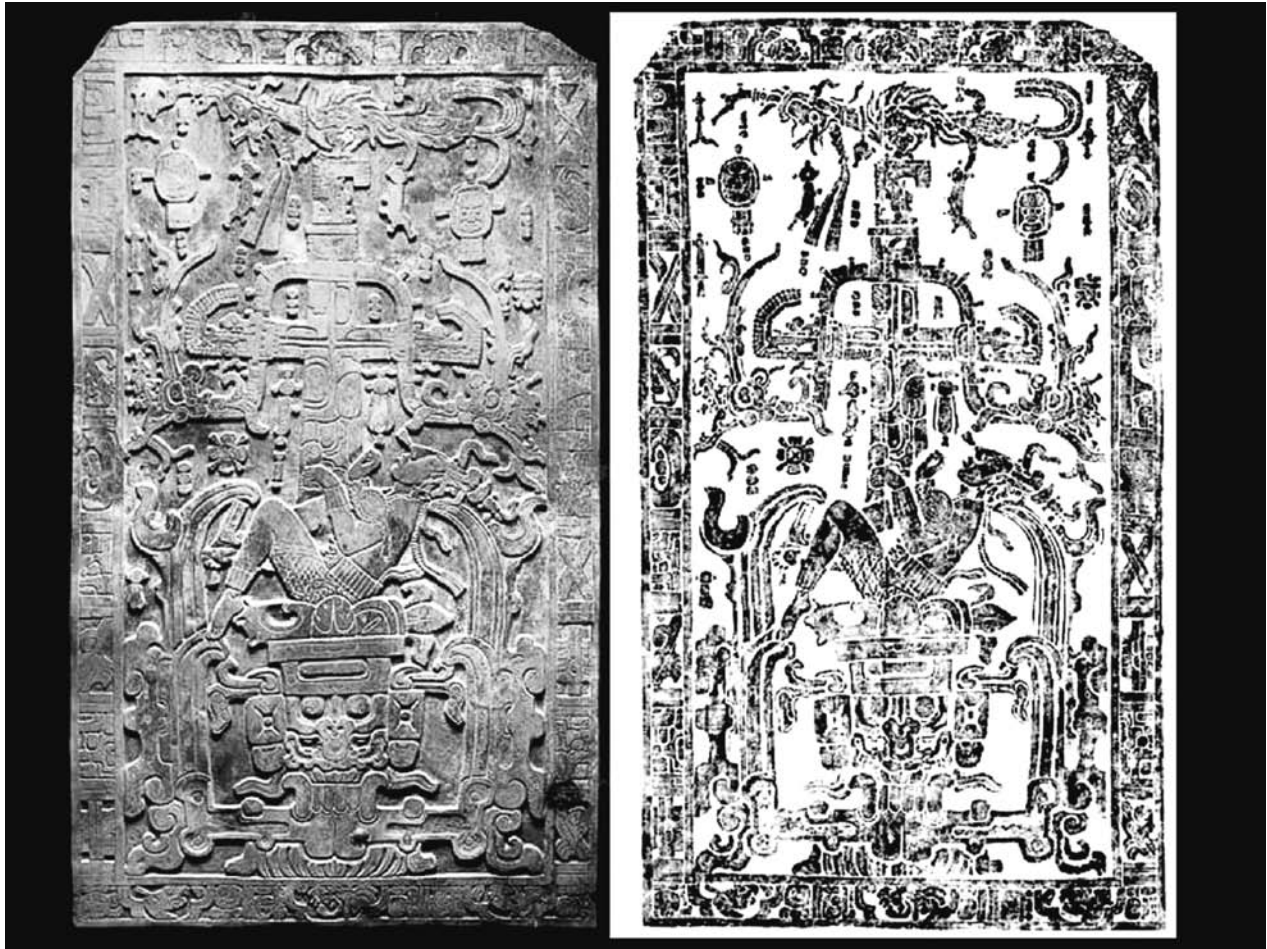
Figure 15.3. The carved lid of Janaab Pakal's sarcophagus, showing the deceased ruler as a youth rising from (or falling into) the jaws of the Underworld.
Courtesy G. Stuart.

the site, that it became clear that the first of the CR dates was in AD 603 and was accompanied by the verbal glyph describing 'birth' (known since 1960 and accepted by Ruz Lhuillier), but that the second CR had to be in AD 683, making the individual commemorated eighty, not forty, years old at death (see Schele & Mathews 1998, 95–132.

This stimulated a debate that lasted for thirty years about the apparent clash between biological and epigraphic evidence for age at death, and hence the question of overall accuracy (versus pragmatic finessing by a day or two to get an auspicious date) in Maya lapidary records. Ruz Lhuillier remained on the conservative side (1977), boosted by a second Mexican anatomist's opinion that the skeleton was of a forty-year-old. Some scholars suggested that the person in the sarcophagus was not the same individual commemorated in its text – that there

had been a substitution, either after initial interment of the 'right' person or even instead of him, given that the tomb was largely pre-prepared (although this did not account for the adding of the final date of death indicating an age of eighty for the occupant); a second view was that the Maya were liars and simply bent history to their own purposes, including a desire to have important events occur at astronomically auspicious moments; and a third view was that the skeleton had been inaccurately aged in 1952 and needed re-examination.

This was duly done early in the twenty-first century, using more sophisticated ageing methods than those available half a century before: Pakal proved to be a man in at least his late sixties, and plausibly eighty, whom a privileged life and good genes had provided with 'young bones', a skeleton that aged less rapidly than the years its owner had lived (Tiesler &

Cucina 2006b describe the entire controversy; see also Hammond & Molleson 1994). Not only were anatomy and epigraphy reconciled: the serious doubts about the veracity of Classic Maya history across the board that had been expressed by some scholars were now refuted. Other, and even older, commemorated individuals such as 'Shield Jaguar' of Yaxchilan, epigraphically apparently dead at ninety-six, could now be accepted until such time as contrary evidence presented itself; and the complex interlocking structure of Maya dynastic history in which events at one city were reflected in texts at another was shown to be durable, not an academic house of cards.

I have described the case of Janaab Pakal of Palenque at some length, because it is probably the best-known example of a life-story documented in coeval texts and confirmed by archaeology. We know more about Pakal than we do about King Arthur: we know when he was born, of what parentage and more distant ancestry. We know that he acceded to the throne at Lakam-Ha in AD 615 at the age of twelve, and we have a monument – the so-called Oval Tablet – to mark the event, still in situ in the palace adjacent to the Temple of the Inscriptions after almost fifteen hundred years. On it, Pakal's mother, Lady Zac-Kuk, kneels before him and hands him a crown; both are named, and he sits on a jaguar-headed throne. The tablet was set above his actual throne, and when the audience room was moved elsewhere in the palace as it became architecturally aggrandized throughout his long reign, the tablet remained there, artistic and archaeological testimony to history past.

This was but one of a sequence of monuments dedicated by Pakal, his sons, and their successors that give us an unrivalled history of Lakam-Ha over two centuries: several other royal burials have been found in recent excavations, but none has yet been firmly yoked with an identifiable person. The same applies to Palenque's great contemporary and ally far to the east, Tikal in northern Guatemala, where the burial of Jasaw Chan K'awiil, overlapping Pakal in at least the early years of his life, was excavated below Temple I in the 1960s by William Coe and the University of Pennsylvania project. We now know that Tikal's ancient Maya name was Mutul: Temple I – one of the most noted of all Maya buildings – was dedicated around AD 740 by Jasaw Chan K'awiil's son and successor –a ruler whose actual Maya name we do not yet read (it may approximate to Yik'in Chan K'awiil), although he was responsible for some of the greatest architecture of the Late Classic period in the eighth

century. The funerary temple atop the nine-terraced pyramid (itself an allusion to the nine layers of the Maya underworld) had doorways spanned by wooden lintels, carved from hard sapodilla and still extant, although since 1877 in Basel rather than on-site (with one fragment in the British Museum). The surviving texts, carved alongside images of the enthroned ruler, give details of Jasaw Chan K'awiil's career, including in AD 695 the defeat of the northern enemy at Calakmul (originally Kan) in Mexico, a powerful state that had for more than a century ground down Tikal in long wars of attrition, and that may have taken the city and perhaps even its king, and left earlier dynastic monuments smashed as a way of obliterating Tikal's past. The lintel text, explicit in its triumph, proclaims that 'it was cast down, his flint spear and shield, Yuknoom Yich'aak K'ahk', Holy Lord of the Kan Kingdom'; the implication is that the Calakmul ruler was captured in person, but his recently excavated tomb in Temple II at Calakmul suggests that he died in his own capital (see Martin & Grube 2008, 110–11). His naming by Jasaw Chan K'awiil may be synecdochic, both rulers symbolizing their warring polities but not necessarily participants in the actual clash of arms. Sometimes 'winner's history' may be the truth, but not the whole truth.

At Tikal numerous élite burials are known, some of which have been plausibly attributed to Early Classic rulers of known names and outline life-histories, but so far only Jasaw Chan K'awiil of the Late Classic dynasty has been firmly identified as an entombed individual: the search for others, even in the most obvious places such as below Temple II across the Great Plaza, or Temple III, the last great pyramid at Tikal, have all drawn blanks. Maya kings are still most often only pyramidally extant, their actual burials unlocated, or at many sites, looted. (It is worth noting here that the decipherment of Maya writing from the 1960s onwards occurred at the same time as industrial-scale looting began, initially of inscribed monuments, depriving sites of their history, then of burials, similarly depriving individuals).

This identification of buried individuals depends, self-evidently, on there being readable texts as well as tombs, and on a strong link being established between the two, by virtue of inclusion of text either in a tomb, as with Pakal at Palenque and Yuknoom Yich'aak K'ahk' at Calakmul, or the associated temple, as with Jasaw Chan K'awiil at Tikal. This is well illustrated by a more recent discovery, the tomb of Yax K'uk Mo', founder of the Copan dynasty and ruler there in AD 426–35, deep below the Acropolis of Copan in Honduras. He has been

plausibly identified by a combination of a text from 340 years later (Altar Q of AD 775, the veracity of which had been doubted by some), a contemporary text from AD 435 (the 'Motmot Stone' firmly naming him), and a clear 'founder burial' with a skeleton of the right age at death and exhibiting the marks of a warrior career that fit the known life-history of Yax K'uk Mo' (Bell et al. 2004).

He is one of the earliest fixable individuals in Maya history: the oldest dated monument, Tikal Stela 29 of AD 292, shows a ruler but we do not know his place of sepulture. Tikal's reputed dynastic founder, Yax Ehb Xook, has been argued to be in one of the earlier tombs beneath the North Acropolis, on the basis that this locus subsequently became the Early Classic royal necropolis. Yet other elite burials have been found in the 'Mundo Perdido' area of the site about four hundred metres away, arguably the locus of elite burial before the retrospectively official dynastic foundation (something that happens at both Copan and Quirigua, gnomic hints on early monuments suggest). So at this point, at the heart of one of the greatest of Maya cities, we have progressed back in time to a pre-textual age, when rulership is apparent from its material outcomes in the form of major buildings such as Str. 5C-54, but there are no names.

The division between the Classic period, the age of dated and inscribed monuments, and the earlier and unwritten Preclassic, was set somewhat arbitrarily, but presciently, at AD 300 in the 1930s, on the basis of excavations at Uaxactun, eighteen kilometres north of Tikal and arguably for centuries that city's subordinate. More than seven decades later, that limit has been moved back only fifty years, to AD 250, on the basis of Tikal Stela 29 and a handful of clearly inscribed, but unread or unreadable dates. The discovery of dated monuments of the early second century AD from marginally Maya sites in the Pacific piedmont such as Takalik Abaj, but in a Maya-lowland format of facing regal figures confronting a column of text (as found at Copan on the Motmot Stone of AD 435 and the similar but undated Polol Altar 1 from the heart of the Peten southwest of Tikal) suggests that potential dated literacy, and hence the possibility of associating named individuals with their tombs and monuments, could go back more than a century before this. The presence of a plain stela – a potential vehicle for such texts – at Cuello, Belize, at around AD 50–100 (on stratigraphic grounds) supports such speculation, whilst the oldest known hieroglyphic dates from Mesoamerica – AD 36 at El Baul on the piedmont in Guatemala, 31 BC at Tres Zapotes in Veracruz, and 36 BC

on the tiny slab designated Chiapa de Corzo 'Stela 2' in Chiapas – allow this speculation to run back with only modest impediment to the end of the first century BC. So the chance of human burials in the Maya Area being found associated with datable monuments and texts that might identify them as individuals with potentially reconstructable lives can be pushed back to cover the second half of the Late Preclassic period from say 50 BC to AD 250. Death's anonymising dominion is still being challenged in this sector.

What happens before this that might be encouraging? At San Bartolo, northeast of Uaxactun, a mural of ca. 100 BC (possibly as early as 200 BC) shows a ruler receiving symbols of office, including a diadem-like headdress and a sceptre-like 'ceremonial bar', while sitting on a scaffold throne (like those shown on the 'accession' stelae of Piedras Negras eight or nine centuries later). In front of him a single column of text ends with what has been identified as an early form of the glyph '*ahaw*', 'leader, ruler, lord, king'; glyphs higher up the column may name him; we do not yet know (Saturno et al. 2005; Taube et al. 2010). But textuality at San Bartolo goes back much further: in clearing a looters' tunnel through the heart of the same multi-layered pyramid, William Saturno encountered a block with another column of text, including an even earlier form of *ahaw*; again, the other glyphs are not yet readable. This block dates, from its carbon-dated context, to at least the third and probably the fourth century BC, the beginning of the Late Preclassic and the age when major cities such as Nakbe and El Mirador emerge as striking evidence of rulership in action, in terms of material and human resources focussed on a central purpose by a guiding intent.

We may thus with some confidence now place the emergence of Maya writing, as well as glyphically defined rulership, back into the Middle Preclassic before 400 BC. This in turn raises a potentially autochthonous origin for Maya script, independent of, or from an earlier common root shared by, Zapotec writing in Oaxaca, with its Middle Preclassic monuments at Monte Alban (where numeracy is also present). It moves closer the likelihood that the Olmec of the Gulf Coast, whose major *floruit* was between 1000 and 400 BC, also possessed a writing system, although from the few glyphs so far proposed, it is not clear whether this would have moved in the direction of a phonetic script like that of the Maya or one retaining a higher pictorial element as in Central Mexico (a higher degree of phoneticism is now recognized there, at Teotihuacan and Tenochtitlan, than previously). The

Figure 15.4. Aerial view of part of the Cuello site from the northwest during the 1980 excavations, showing Platform 34, centre, and Platform 39 under vegetation at upper left.

relevance of this still-simmering debate to our present concern is simply that the frontiers of Maya literacy, and hence the potential for linking burials with events and monuments, are moving backwards in time with each year's investigations.

For the moment, however, we must be satisfied with solely archaeological evidence for Maya death and its cultural associations, from the beginnings of Maya village society in the late second millennium BC down to the Late Preclassic even for the élite, and beyond that all through the Classic for those on the lower levels of the social pyramid: even though we have occasional probably non-élite individuals named along with their trades in a few cases (for instance, the Piedras Negras stelae, and notably Stela 12, where members of the sculptors' team sign their work), we do not have their homes or burials to go along with these flashes of personality.

What we do have is the patterning in burials, where several have been excavated at one site and in a single period, which can give us some collective insight into Maya society. A succession of burials from the Preclassic

community of Cuello, Belize, over a period of some fifteen hundred years, allows us to make more general suggestions. From the many seasons' work at Cuello, 199 individuals are known, some 170 of them from the Preclassic period (others are from the Classic period village that later occupied the location), mostly single interments (there are two Mass Burials of around 400 BC and 100 BC, respectively), and mostly of adults (Hammond 1991; Robin 1989).

Cuello, sited on the interfluvial limestone ridge between the Río Hondo and Río Nuevo at about twenty metres above sea level (Figures 15.4, 15.5), seems to have had an episode of Archaic occupation in the second half of the third millennium BC (when evidence from elsewhere in the region, such as Cob Swamp, shows that initial *landnam* was under way with both maize and perhaps manioc present as pollen), before becoming established as a Preclassic farming community some time between 1400 and 1200 BC.

This date is based on an AMS date (OxA-4461: 1440–1023 BC 2σ, 1397–1199 BC 1σ) from collagen

Figure 15.5. The Cuello Main Trench from the south, with the early Middle Preclassic Str. 326, ca. 900–800 BC, exposed in the foreground and penetrated by a later grave.

extracted from Burial 179, a female of twelve to fifteen years clasping an infant of fourteen to eighteen months (Burial 180) to her chest with her left arm. The burial is stratigraphically the earliest at Cuello and seems to have been made in a shallow grave dug into the land surface. It was loosely flexed or crouched, and the oldest of a cluster of semi-coeval interments close enough together to permit interpretation as intramural burials in an earth-floored house; such domestic sepulture is common throughout the Classic period and was practised into at least the early twentieth century – here is its genesis.

A second early Swasey-phase (1200–900 BC) burial (Burial 62; ca. 1150 BC: OxA-1649, OxA-2103) was supine in a rock cleft that may have been enlarged to serve as a grave; on the whole these early interments seem to have served for disposal of the body, rather than ritual burial: if there were rituals, they are not reflected on the bodies, or in any visible actions. Later in the Swasey phase there was a shift to tightly flexed burial, as though the corpse had been bound into a bundle before interment (e.g., Burials 159, 167): in later Mesoamerican prehistory, such bundling forms part of extended rather than condign funerary ritual. None of these early burials at Cuello was accompanied by grave goods.

The land surface through which they were cut continued to build up over a period of several centuries, with pottery of the Swasey (1200–900 BC) and Bladen (900–650 BC) ceramic complexes trodden into the soil in fragments. Successive plaster-floored buildings with timber frames, pole walls sealed with mud daub, and *guano*-palm thatched roofs were constructed on, and interleaved with successive layers of, this land surface (for details, see Hammond 1991); although such buildings were the loci of most burials at Cuello, this is not the place to describe or analyse them further.

The next set of Cuello burials date to the Bladen phase after 900 BC and include those dug into the existing land surface as well as those in graves cut through the plaster floors of buildings (houses, from the associated domestic refuse). Some were more formally interred than others: one woman buried ca. 700–650 BC was crammed into a grave too small for her (Figure 15.6). The uncommon semi-prone position suggests a casual, perhaps even disrespectful burial. The oldest Bladen burials have an unusual posture, being both tightly flexed – the knees drawn up to the chest – and supine. These are dated both by AMS on bone collagen (with calibrated dates suggesting a span of 850–750 BC: OxA-4458–60) and by accompanying vessels of the Bladen complex (itself carbon-dated

by association in middens: e.g., OxA-4455–4457): grave goods, usually one or two pottery bowls, are a standard part of Bladen burials, but some of them are unexpected. One burial (Burial 171, OxA-5021), of a young man suffering from a treponemal infection (syphilis or yaws), was accompanied by three cylindrical clay seals or stamps of different sizes with deeply-gouged designs, intended for rolling out a design on to textile, flesh, bark-paper, or -cloth (the presence in a midden of a bark beater fragment at this period shows that either or both of these were being made at Cuello). Analysis of pigment traces in the gouged channels indicates that a plant-based dark pigment such as pyrogallol was used. The design on the largest, of a humanoid figure accompanied by a palmate design, suggests the existence of symbolic communication in the ninth century BC: the presence of symbols on bark paper would presage by several centuries the emergence of Maya script (Hammond 2006). Whether these grave goods indicate a particular status for the man concerned, as the presence of more obvious tools of the trade has suggested for later burials in other parts of Mesoamerica, remains moot.

What is clear is that these grave goods, however elaborate their functions as signifiers or offering vessels might have been, are locally made, of Cuello clay (only one vessel from the entire sequence at the site is a certain import). Shortly thereafter, however, regionally exotic materials began to appear in graves, principally as jewellery. A good example is Burial 158 of ca. 650 BC, of a child of two to four years of age. Three pottery bowls of different forms and ceramic types were clustered over the head and chest. At the throat was a valve of the thorny oyster *Spondylus americanus*, perforated for suspension as a pendant and stripped to reveal the valued inner red layer; on the right forearm was a simple bracelet of white shell, including a bead (probably of conch, *Strombus*) with an incised 'smiling face', and others made more roughly by flaking and unilaterally perforating marine shells (species unidentified). Such shells were most conveniently acquired from the Caribbean coast, some fifty kilometres away down the local rivers or across the coastal plain east of Cuello; given the perishability of shellfish meat and its subsequent toxicity, the shells were probably brought for craft use, not as by-products of dietary supplement. The presence of shell scrap in Cuello middens from the Bladen phase onwards suggests that these pieces were locally made.

Another burial of this period, an infant six to twelve months of age (Burial 157), had a long string of shell beads

Figure 15.6. Cuello Burial 186.

at waist level, while the gracile (and probably female) adult Burial 152 in a slightly later and intercutting grave wore a kneeband of 130 shell beads and a bracelet of white shell, red Spondylus, and tiny bright green jadeite beads on the right wrist. These and similarly-equipped Bladen burials show that exotic goods, often in generous quantities, were interred with even very young children as well as with adults. If such goods are to be regarded as 'wealth', then it was spread across both sexes and all ages; if as denoting 'status', that status must in the case of infants and children have been ascribed, not achieved. A range of grave goods suggests differential wealth or status across the Cuello community, commensurate with the existence of a ranked society by at least the seventh century BC. I see nothing today to refute our suggestion two decades ago that 'social ranking marked by ascription as well as achievement was present in the Maya lowlands in the seventh century BC' (Hammond et al. 1992, 961).

One further, striking, illustration of this is from Burial 166, of a child (probably female) of around eight years of age, who wore at her throat a translucent blue jade pendant (Hammond 1995, figure 35). The object, originally sub-rectangular in shape but later cut to a fat T-shape by removal of two quadrants at the lower corners, was edge-perforated to prevent intrusion on the front face, which was concave-ground in the manner of the iron-ore mirrors of the coeval Olmec and Zapotec cultures on the Gulf Coast and in Oaxaca several hundred kilometres west of Cuello and well beyond the bounds of the Maya Area. In their regions of origin these mirrors were demonstrably objects of status. The Cuello skeuomorph is of a raw material originating in the blue jade source south of the Motagua River found in 1996 by François Gendron, but possibly worked in the Gulf Coast area, as E. Wyllys Andrews V (1987) suggests for the jade cache found reinterred at Chaksinkin in Yucatan. This pendant is striking for the exotic origin of its raw material,

emphasising the sacred nature of jade to the Maya, as well as for the superlative crafting that went into carving, grinding, and polishing the tough (Moh = 6.5) and refractory material.

Overall, it is clear that by the middle of the seventh century BC, the village of Cuello on the eastern margins of the Maya Area was well and truly integrated into Mesoamerican networks of communication and exchange: its people drew subsistence from maize and root agriculture; puppy-farming of edible dogs; hunting of deer, peccary, and other animals; and fishing in the local rivers and lagoons. They grew, or at least harvested, cacao to make into a high-status drink, and harvested copal resin to use as incense. In all of these they were typical of Maya communities across the lowlands, and these other communities were their partners in exchange.

Materials used in daily life, such as maize-processing querns (*manos* and *metates*), could be of materials such as metamorphosed sandstone, imported from the Maya Mountains 150 km to the south; and obsidian, used for its razor-sharp edge, from the San Martin Jilotepeque source in highland Guatemala, more than 500 km to the south.

Sumptuary goods were similarly imported from a distance: marine shells for making into jewellery (and also in the case of conch shells, into trumpets) were transported from at least the nearest coastline some 50 km northeast, while beads made from some species of *Spondylus* may have originated on the Pacific coast more than 600 km southwards. Jade for personal adornment was from the Motagua Valley 350 km away; both the green and the blue varieties were used in Middle Preclassic Cuello.

These sumptuary goods were presumably used in life, as markers of gender and rank, but also accompanied their owners into the grave, where they enable us to detect social gradations imperceptible from diet or from the more common grave goods of pottery vessels, with or without food offerings in them.

Cuello began as, and for centuries remained, a small and unimportant community, but during these centuries other Maya centres aggrandized themselves: the first public architecture appears at Cival in Guatemala around 600 BC, evidence of collective activity under central control that created organised ceremonial precincts in which acts of veneration – whether of deities or ancestors – took place. Such architectural complexes are known from Tikal and other subsequently major Classic period cities as well as from places that peaked early and were then abandoned such as Cival. Elaborate caches of jade and pottery demonstrate ritual acts outwith the existing sphere of funerary ceremonial, although utilizing the same materials, sometimes the same artefact forms.

In the succeeding Late Middle Preclassic period of 600–400 BC, the rise of centres in the Mirador Basin of northwestern Guatemala began, with cities such as Nakbe building the first colossal temple-pyramids on a scale that dwarfed most later Classic architecture. Unfortunately, we have little evidence so far published on the nature of funerary customs at these places.

At Cuello, the same practices continued, of burial of individuals beneath the floors of their houses. The houses themselves were larger: in the Platform 34 area of the site that has been most intensively excavated, we see buildings of twelve by six metres, far larger than the usual Maya family home, suggesting either the dwellings of the élite, or structures houselike in form but with a supradomestic function in addition. The presence of burials, as of middens behind the buildings, does not indicate that a purely ritual precinct devoid of habitation had developed at the heart of Cuello, something that makes me continue to define it as a 'village' rather than an incipient 'city'.

Around 400 BC, however, there is a dramatic transformation in both architecture and burial practice. The cluster of enlarged houses around an enclosed patio or courtyard that had evolved over a period of half a millennium was demolished: the perishable superstructures were set alight, the timber frames and thatched roof in one instance falling into the patio and leaving scorch-marks on its plaster floor. In another building, the timber posts were uprooted, leaving large gouged-out pits. On this structure and others the plaster frontages were ripped away (and in at least one case the plastered sides and rear of the building platform as well) before the entire courtyard was infilled with tons of limestone and chert rubble and levelled up to make a roughly level platform (and eventually to be covered over by the floor of a new, broad open temple platform, a shift from enclosed to public ritual space).

At this point one of the most striking funerary episodes in Cuello's history took place: a saucer-shaped depression some four metres across was left in the centre of the rubble infill, over the centre of the now-buried courtyard. Into this were placed both excarnated bundled bones and detached body parts such as a single skull or half-humerus, as well as several complete, articulated bodies, sprawled across the depression beneath the other remains (Figure 15.7; Hammond 1991, figures 10.4–10.5). None was in sufficiently good condition to confirm

Figure 15.7. Cuello Mass Burial I, ca. 400 BC, detail showing remains including a skull with unhealed frontal puncture (at right) and a partial humerus (in the pottery vessel at left) and a (probably) deer long bone carved with the woven-mat (*pop*) motif.

sacrificial death by excordiation (Tiesler & Cucina 2006a) or decapitation (Tiesler & Cucina 2007; see also other papers in Tiesler & Cucina 2007), unlike some subsequent Late Preclassic burials at Cuello, where the removed location of the skull beside the body, or its total absence, suggests perimortem head removal and arguably death by decapitation (Figure 15.8; Hammond 1991, figures 10.7–10.8; Robin 1989).

Thirty-two individuals have been identified, all adult from late teens to middle age, all those sexable being male with one ambiguous exception a gracile male or female. Such measurement of stable isotopes to detect diet as has been carried out so far indicates both a higher maize consumption and a significantly higher animal-protein intake than in the overall population of the preceding, coeval, or subsequent phases of occupation. Some kind of selection took place in choosing the thirty-one men for this burial: some were clearly dead well before deposition and present only as bundled bones; some were fresh, entire corpses; some were articulated, some detached body parts.

One explanation of this combination might be that the bundles were of revered ancestors, saved for some signal event such as this temple dedication, but the bundled bones could equally well have been those of either local or enemy warriors excarnated elsewhere and transported to Cuello for interment; and the fresh corpses those of captured warriors – hence the unusual diet – from a neighbouring enemy (the logic being that it would be odd to sacrifice one's own best men: because of the uniform geology and soils across the immediate region, strontium-isotope data do not permit men from Cuello to be distinguished from inhabitants of communities up to thirty kilometres away). Among the accompanying burial goods, not specifically associated with any one of the skeletons or bundles, were seven carved bone tubes (probably femora of deer), two with complex designs and five bearing the woven-mat *pop* motif, which was in later times a symbol of royal power (Figure 15.7). Mass Burial I seems to express both the iconography of power and its expression in terms of the disposal of human resources in public ritual.

Figure 15.8. Cuello Burial 10, 400–350 BC. Perimortem decapitation: the head stands upright facing the torso, which lies on its right side facing west.

Figure 15.9. Cuello Burial 79, part of Mass Burial II, in a semi-recumbent position with crossed legs. Bundles of excarnate long bones were removed from his lap before this photograph.

Whatever the explanation, a semi-parallel process took place some three centuries later, directly above this Mass Burial I. Mass Burial II was smaller in area; was more compactly constructed within a much smaller, sub-rectangular pit; and contained parts of approximately fifteen individuals, of whom thirteen were male, none female, and two uncertain. The pit was divided in two, each containing a semi-recumbent young adult (Figure 15.9; twenty to thirty-four years old) male, in whose lap were deposited several bundles of excarnated bones: the pattern is similar to, but simpler than, Mass Burial I (Hammond 1991, figures 10.6–10.7). The only accompanying goods were a number of large, multiple-serving or feasting pottery bowls inverted over the skeletal remains. As the large open area of Platform 34 had been raised above Mass Burial I, so the smaller, rectangular Structure 302 was built (after an intervening plaster floor) directly above the locus of Mass Burial II: the structural parallels are striking, the apparent motivation of offering-in-advance-of-construction the same, and the heavily biased selection for males of fighting age identical. Here the dead are not interred as and for themselves, with individual offerings for comfort or sustenance in an afterlife: they have become tools of policy, part of an overt display of power over the recently and more distantly defunct, and one that may have combined the power of, as well as over, ancestors with a parallel expression of power over the living, from or taken into Cuello. This was an unusual, but perhaps not a unique, event: mass burials of roughly similar, though probably slightly later, Preclassic date are known from Los Mangales in the Salama Valley of Verapaz (Sharer & Sedat 1987), and from Chalchuapa in El Salvador (Fowler 1984), but their circumstances of discovery and excavation make explication more difficult and fewer individuals are involved. Here at Cuello, it would seem that death did not dictate the event, but that the event dictated, for some of the participants at least, the time that death spread its dominion over them.

So much for death: what evidence have we for Maya concepts of immortality? This volume is explicitly designed to discuss preliterate concepts, which for the Maya, as we have seen, embraces the period before the

late centuries BC and the early centuries AD, where our knowledge of Maya literacy is creeping backwards with the advance of scholarship. For this Preclassic period, there was until recently little beyond the well-worn and widespread archaeological assumption that the provision of vessels filled with food or drink indicated a journey beyond death. The most detailed information available for potential retrodiction was in Diego de Landa's *Relación de las cosas de Yucatan* (section 33 in Matthew Restall's unpublished translation, used here by permission):

These people have always believed in the immortality of the soul, more than many other nations, although they have not reached such a high state of civilization; for they believed that there was another and better life, which the soul enjoyed when it separated from the body. They said that this future life was divided into a good and a bad life, into a painful one and one full of rest. The bad and painful one was for the vice-ridden [*viciosos*], while the good and pleasurable one was for those who had lived well according to their manner of living. The pleasures which they said they were to obtain, if they were good, were to go to a delightful place, where nothing would give them pain and where they would have an abundance of foods and drinks of great sweetness, and a tree which they call there *yaxche*, very cool and giving great shade, which is the ceiba, under the branches and the shadow of which they would rest and forever cease from labour.

The penalties of a bad life that they said the wicked would suffer were to go to a place lower than the other, which they called *mitnal*, which means 'hell', and there to be tormented by the devils and by great extremities of hunger, cold, fatigue, and grief. There was also in this place a devil, the prince of all the devils, whom all obeyed, and they call him in their language Hunhau. And they said that these lives, bad and good, had no end, because the soul has none. They also said, and held it as absolutely certain, that those who hanged themselves went to this heaven of theirs; and thus there were many who on minor occasions of sorrows, troubles, or illnesses, hanged themselves in order to escape these things and to go and rest in their heaven, where they said that the goddess of the gallows, whom they called Ix Tab, came to fetch them. They had no knowledge of the resurrection of the body and gave no account from whom they learned of this heaven and hell of theirs.

The major problem with this account is that it dates from the 1560s, a generation after the conquest of Yucatan, half a century after initial Spanish contact (although Landa may well have compiled his field notes a decade or more before the probable date of the *Relación*), and was written by a Franciscan friar: the strong Christian parallels may well stem from absorbed Christian doctrine.

Classic Maya texts give us no ideas on immortality: considering their formal and political themes as archives of events, we should not expect them to do so. Classic period iconography is, on the other hand, a potentially more informative source, as we saw from Pakal's sarcophagus at Palenque, where the concepts of continued existence of ancestors and of transition between the worlds of life and death are illustrated. The importance of ancestors both as links to the numinous and as hard-headed documents of pre-existing land tenure has been well demonstrated by McAnany (1995), and the practice of saving and venerating ancestral remains, specifically skull portions, is not only attested by Landa earlier in section 33

They used to cut off the heads of the old lords of Cocom, when they died, and after cooking them they cleaned off the flesh, and then sawed off half the crown on the back, leaving the front part with the jaws and teeth. Then they replaced the flesh that was gone from these half-skulls by a kind of bitumen, and gave them a perfect appearance characteristic of those who skulls they were. They kept these together with the statues with the ashes, all of which they kept in the oratories of their houses with their idols, holding them in very great reverence and respect. And on all the days of their festivals and celebrations they made offerings of food to them, so that they should not lack for food in the other life, where they thought that their souls lay, and where their gifts were of use to them.

but indicated more than two millennia earlier at Cuello, where a cut and perforated human frontal bone, apparently part of just such a skull mask, was recovered from an élite and probably ritual midden (Figure 15.10; Hammond et al. 2002), taking the notion of ancestor veneration – and hence ancestor presence in another domain – back to the seventh century BC. Slightly later, and more problematic, is a subcircular pendant made from a human parietal (Figure 15.11), perforated for suspension and found on the chest of a male burial of ca. 500 BC. From other grave goods present, including the earliest and least sophisticated attempts to represent the woven-mat *pop* motif on a carved bone tube (cf. Figure 15.7), the man would seem to have been of relatively high standing in the Cuello community. The design is a face, with large cut-out eyes (the iris and pupil on a bar across the orbit) and mouth with three teeth in each jaw, and a tiny triangular nose-pit. It is not human, nor yet entirely monstrous: its manufacture from a human skull may have given the pendant and its image especial potency; we could speculate that the skull had belonged to somebody in a particular – ancestral or inimical – relationship to the man who wore it so prominently.

Something of what the 'other life' mentioned by Landa embraced for the Classic Maya of the first millennium AD has been adumbrated by Taube (2004, 2006), extending Jane Hill's (1992) recognition of a Mesoamerican and
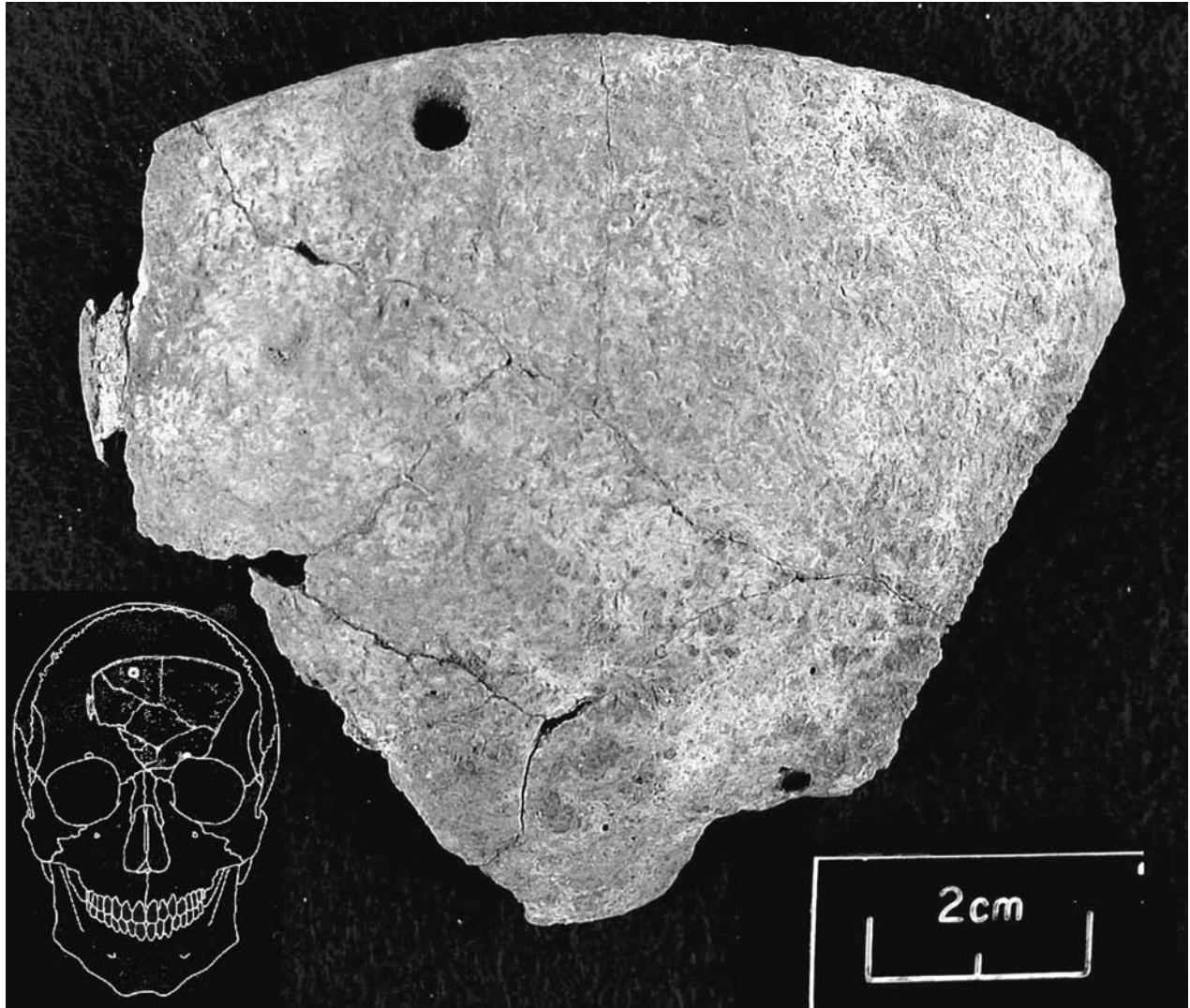
Figure 15.10. A cut and perforated human frontal bone, perhaps part of a 'skull mask' for ancestor veneration.
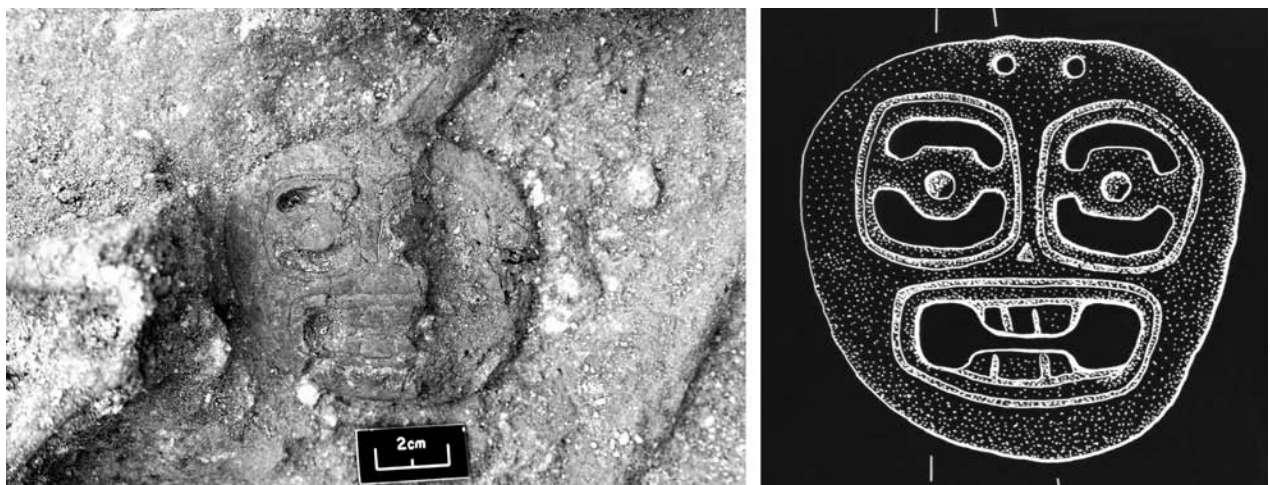

Figure 15.11. Pendant cut from a human parietal, with openwork eyes and mouth, found on the chest of Burial 160.

U.S. Southwestern native concept of the 'Flower World', a mountain abode for gods and ancestors, identified especially with the sun and maize gods and their widespread use as metaphors for death and rebirth (and perhaps identical with Landa's 'delightful place' cited previously). Taube (2004) identifies a Flower Mountain in Olmec and Teotihuacan art, and among the Maya on sculptures – both stelae and architectural façades – and in vase-paintings (most of the latter unfortunately looted and lacking provenance): it is a pervasive and hitherto-under-recognised trope (for the importance of directionality with such cosmic landscapes, see Acuña 2007). Taube notes the presence of a 'breath soul', or *ch'ulel*, represented in art 'by a carved jade or flower placed at the tip of the nose or hovering before the face' (2004, 72), which can pass between domains and is related to evanescent phenomena such as odours, music, and the evaporation and descent of water as clouds and rain. The presence of a jade bead in the mouth of many non-élite Maya burials may well have symbolized, or been placed to receive, the *ch'ulel*, and if so is an indication that soul survival, and arguably access to the Flower Mountain, was not something restricted to the upper levels of Maya society.

Taube (2006, 156) notes that 'the concept of Flower Mountain was fully present among the Late Preclassic Maya' with the most recently discovered and most spectacular portrayal being that on the north wall of the San Bartolo murals of ca. 100 BC (Saturno et al. 2005). There, 'the scene portrays a series of figures atop a plumed serpent exhaled from a zoomorphic mountain covered with flowers … the maize god and his assistants take a basket of tamales and a water gourd out of the cave maw of Flower Mountain'. The complex nature of the San Bartolo scene and its elaborate iconography suggest considerable prior development of the concept, and the idea of a Maya paradise for *ch'ulel* may well have an origin extending back into the Middle Preclassic before 400 BC. What contribution Maya ideas of immortality made to broader Preclassic Mesoamerican thought, for example, in Oaxaca, the Olmec zone of the Gulf Coast, and the central highlands of Mexico, or the extent to which the Maya were impacted by notions originating elsewhere, remains to be established.

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De-Paradoxisation of Paradoxes by Referring to Death as an Ultimate Paradox: The Case of the State-Formation Phase of Japan

Koji Mizoguchi

I

This paper concerns the deification of the dead and how it took place.

Death is a paradox; death comes to everyone, whereas no one can communicate about death by drawing upon his or her own experience. In that sense, death can be said to be something that is ordinary and extraordinary at the same time. That qualifies the dead as potential 'candidates' to become divine or transcendental; death itself is an unforeseeable, in terms of its time and manner, but inevitable destruction to the living, and hence the cause of such an unforeseeable but inevitable is often attributed to the dead. At the same time, however, each dead person has his or her own individual biography, which inevitably connects the dead to a particular group of people who have their memory about the dead, preserve it, and at times pass it on over generations. That means that the potential for the dead to be the subject of worship, or their 'use' for making sense of the unforeseeable-but-inevitable (the 'contingency' of the world), is intrinsically confined to the group of people who have ties to the dead. Such a grouping is likely to be based upon kinship, descent, or sibling relations. In order for the dead to overcome that intrinsic limitation, some specific conditions need to be met to detach the dead from such intimacy-based groupings and to make them a matter for the well-being of much wider populations. This paper will contend that such conditions arise at a specific moment in the historical trajectory of many regions across the world, and that that moment, in many cases, coincided with the emergence of the mode of social formation that can be characterised as the early state.

The following will show this by examining the historical trajectory of the Yayoi and Early Kofun periods of Japan, between ca. 600 BC and 250/275 AD, and between 250/275 AD and 400 AD, respectively, and the transformation of the way the dead were situated in the chain of signifiers that enabled people to make sense of the contingency of the world.

II

Death is the most paradoxical thing that a human being can experience: it comes to everyone, but no one knows what it is like from one's own experience. It can be compared to communication; one does not and cannot *exactly* know what one's words cause in the listener's mind (e.g., Luhmann 1994). In other words, we cannot observe in real time what is happening in others' minds. The technology of observing brain activity is being advanced by the day, but it is unlikely that the day will arrive when each pattern of brain activity is precisely connected to a specific sense datum, discursive or otherwise. However, we are at least allowed to guess what has happened and is happening in others' minds by observing how they react to our actions. Besides, we can sense whether others have comprehended our meaning, even if their apparent comprehension was in fact simulated in order to prevent upset or complicating the conversation. In the case of death, however, the *continuation* that characterises communication – the fact that one's utterance elicits a response, so necessary for the ability to guess or sense what the other is thinking and feeling – is ultimately denied.

This means that we cannot make sense of death in terms of the viewpoint of the dead, although we can make sense of someone else's death in terms of the survivors, as well as in terms of various effects and consequences

of the loss of the person. This point allows us to cat-
egorise death as one of a certain type of occurrence
that jeopardises the continuation of our lives – such as
natural disasters. We cannot make sense of natural disas-
ters in terms of 'nature's point of view'. We can only
make sense of them in terms of the various effects and
consequences that they have caused. This impossibility
of 'making sense' makes it difficult to come to terms
with these occurrences. We can variously prepare our-
selves for life-changing events that are yet to occur, but
we cannot prevent them from happening: we cannot
influence the agencies that cause them. This impossi-
bility has encouraged human beings to develop various
technologies for portraying and perceiving these agen-
cies as something that human beings can influence by
their actions, and that make people feel able to influence
them. In other words, these technologies are developed
to make unforeseeable events somehow communicable,
in the hope that they will present as small an obstacle as
possible for retaining normality in life.

For that purpose, to achieve this, three things are
needed: firstly, something different from these events;
secondly, something that has a connection to them; and
thirdly, something that may aid communication about
them, or be seen as a signifier. It is desirable that each
of these things be something with which people can
have a sense of affinity or sympathy, or something that
can be perceived as having behavioural patterns that
the community can influence. Accordingly, some liv-
ing creatures whose habits can be connected to certain
unforeseeable-but-inevitable events that people have fre-
quently encountered are chosen, and used as signifiers
for communicating about such events, in order to make
sense of, and effectively *tame*, them. We can find many
such examples in Levi-Strauss' monumental *Mythologiques*
(e.g., Lévi-Strauss 1969).

There are many examples in which the cause of harm
coming upon individuals and communities is attributed
to the dead. In comparison with living creatures, such as
certain animals and insects chosen as the signifiers of the
unforeseeable-but-inevitable, the dead have individuality.
'Individuality', here, refers to various 'biographical' mem-
ories that accompany or can be articulated in relation
to individual dead people. The inevitable involvement
of individuality in reference to dead people separates
them from living creatures as signifiers of unforeseeable
but inevitable, and often harmful, events. The death of
an individual is experienced as a loss that is comparable
to a natural disaster for the community to which s/he

belonged. However, in cases of human death this force
of loss is normally experienced by much smaller-scale
groups of people than the devastation of a natural disas-
ter. Those greatly affected might include close relatives,
residential communities, and non-residential corporate
groupings, which share the biographical memory of
the dead (e.g., clans and other types of 'sodalities'). This
implies that, in order for the dead to become representa-
tive, like the living creatures embodying various aspects
of the destructive force of nature, the dead need to be
perceived as embodying the fate of communal groupings
on a much larger scale than the groups that share the
biographical memory of the dead. Further, when that is
achieved, the individual dead would have become types
of 'deities'.

The use of the term 'deity', implying some transcen-
dental character, is deliberate. Let us recall our con-
sideration of the fundamental character of death as a
phenomenon, and the dead as its material testimony
and signifier. The paradox constituted by the universal-
ity and ultimate unknowability of death is what funda-
mentally characterises both death and the dead. On the
one hand, this makes it difficult to perceive the dead as
agents causing any specific type of disaster; in the case
of living creatures, their habits and habitats can be per-
ceived as indicating their connections to specific aspects
of the force of nature, but such attributes are not avail-
able in the case of the dead. At the same time, this can
mean that the dead can be perceived as the cause of *any*
unforeseeable and unpreventable events. Its universality
and ultimate 'unknowability' make death, and the dead
as its material testimony and signifier, an *ultimate referen-
tial point* when the living have to make sense of unfore-
seeable and unpreventable, and often harmful, events,
particularly when they come upon a particular commu-
nity. Besides, as noted, the dead were the living before
they died and left behind their biographical memories.
Further, such memories can be articulated, modified,
and commented upon in as many different ways as the
living wish. This means that reasons can be searched
for and identified in the (biographical) memories of
the dead, to which the cause of disasters can then be
attributed. These potentialities of the dead make them
transcendental beings; they are with the living both spa-
tially and perceptually, but beyond their influence, and
behind as many things and events as the living wish to
believe. The problem is how these potentialities of the
dead come to be realised, and in what circumstances
they are utilised.

With this in mind, it is interesting that the *reference* or *use* of the dead in this particular manner appears to have begun at a particular moment in the historical trajectory of many human societies. My contention is that this moment is often marked by the emergence of monumental architecture specifically for the dead, in often-vast constructions, which seem unreasonable to a modern conception of 'common sense', considering the amount of energy and time invested.

What follows will investigate the process through which this reference and use of the dead, which is materially signified by often gigantic and keyhole-shaped Kofun tumuli, began in the Japanese archipelago. This paper will also describe how this process saw the rise and decline of the pictorial representations of living creatures, and the near-disappearance of human figures from the horizon of ritual communication. This near-disappearance of human figures was followed by the brief spread of identical pictorial representations of decorated human faces with exaggerated eyes across wide areas of western Japan, in the final Yayoi V and the Yayoi-Kofun transitional periods. It will be argued that the eventual decline of the pictorial depictions of living creatures reflected the decline of the technology in which various uncertainties of the lived-world were made sense of and tamed through connecting them to living creatures, including humans as along with insects and animals, in a broad metaphorical manner, and by making them 'communicable'. During this decline, these uncertainties became instead increasingly embodied by chiefly figures and tamed by themselves. The momentary spread of identical depictions of human faces with exaggerated eyes, which took place just before the emergence of the monumental keyhole tumulus, reflected the *gaze* of such chiefly figures coming to play an important role in the reproduction of the cohesion and integration of areas larger than the domain of individual kin and sibling groups. It will be argued that the monumental keyhole tumulus was invented as the symbolic embodiment of the dead chief, and the world that both the living and dead chief embodied. The communal participation in the construction of the tumuli, and their subsequent presence in the lived-world, ensured the reproduction of communal cohesion, and the identity of its members.

III

The beginning of the Yayoi period, marked by the introduction of a technological complex of rice paddy-field agriculture from the southern part of the Korean peninsula to the northern Kyushu region (e.g., Mizoguchi 2002, 118–34), saw the emergence of a new system of metaphorical-transformative connections between various things, living and otherwise, and concepts (Mizoguchi 2013). In other words, this period saw the generation of a new *chain of signifiers*, which structured and was structured through the way people thought and acted.

Rice paddies, equipped from the beginning with sophisticated canal systems and water-level-controlling devices, opened up a totally new ecological niche in the middle of the lived-world, where fish and insects hatched and grew during the summer, and birds came to catch and eat them. Sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) and wild boar would have occasionally come down the hills, and disturbed paddies and rice plants. Rice was planted there in the early summer, grew throughout the summer, and was harvested in the autumn. Then rice grains were de-husked, cooked, and eaten, or some of them were set aside as seed grains for the next year; they died, were reborn, grew, were harvested or died, and were eaten for the sustenance of human life, or were reborn the following year. Various living creatures were also born, grew, and died there. Paddies would have been perceived as a human-made arena where the dramatic cycle of life, death, and rebirth was played out by various living beings. Furthermore, the human individuals who constructed and mended paddies, seeded there in early summer, weeded there over the summer months, and harvested there were of course mortal, too; they would have also been conceptually incorporated into this cycle.

These separate but structurally identical cycles appear to have become perceived as mutually comparable and metaphorically transformable, with interchangeable players, as is well reflected by the process through which the globular jar for grain storage was transformed into the burial jar (Figure 16.1). The globular jar was adopted into the pottery assemblage when the rice paddy-field agricultural complex began spreading to the northern Kyushu region of the archipelago. Smaller jars were often deposited with the dead and often painted red, and occasionally black. Larger jars seem to have been used for the storage of rice grains and were also occasionally painted red, and almost never painted black. A large red-painted globular jar, deliberately deposited near a sluice of the famous initial Yayoi paddies of Itazuke site (see Yamasaki 2008, 65–6), nicely suggests the following *chain of signifiers* generated around this shape-type:
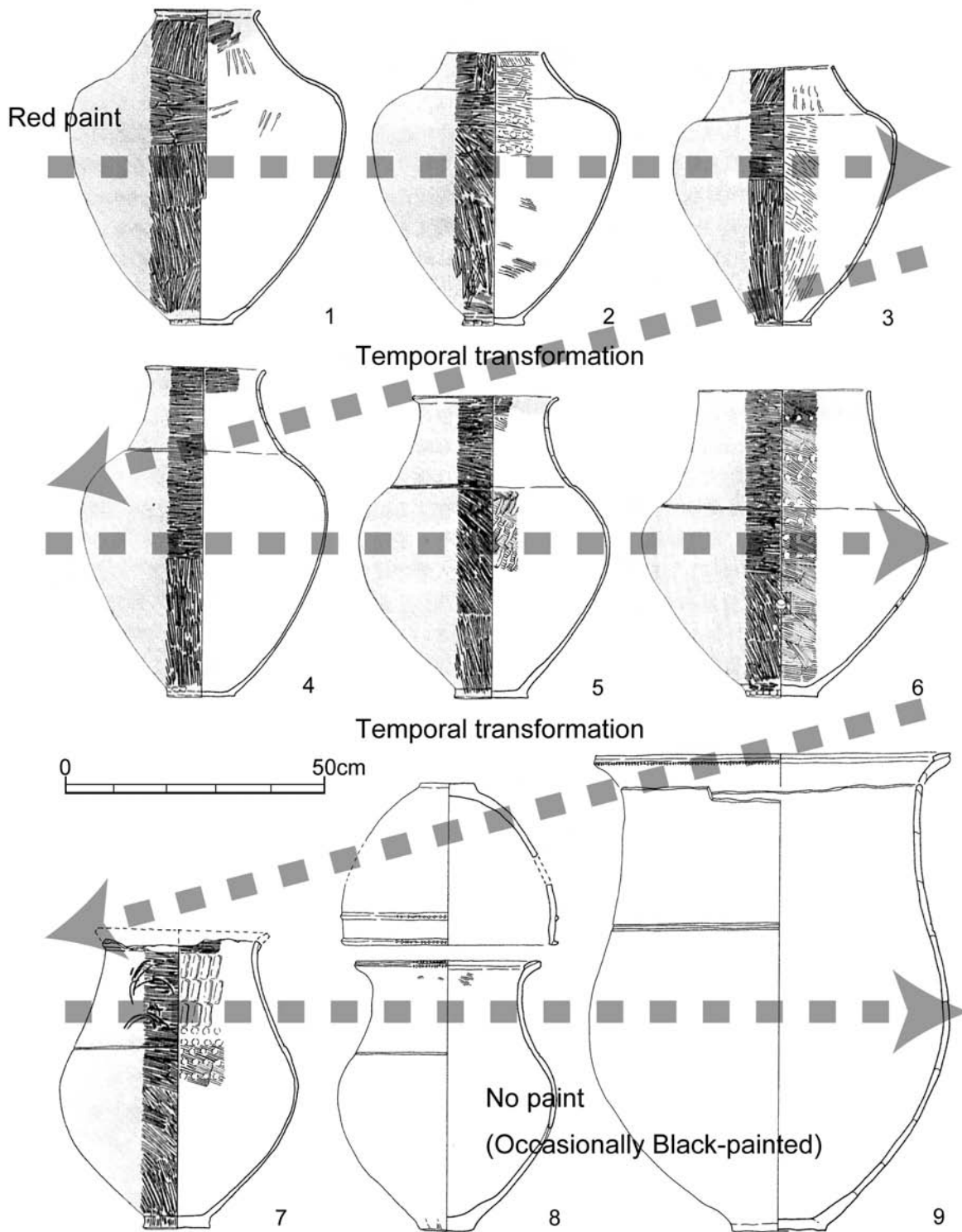
Figure 16.1. The transformation of the globular jar shape-type for grain storage into the burial jar.
After Mizoguchi 2013, figures 5–13.

1, Miyanomae (Fukuoka prefecture) 39; 2, Shinmachi (Fukuoka) II-01 trench No. 1; 3, Shinmachi (Fukuoka) 25; 4, Shinmachi (Fukuoka) 20; 5, Shinmachi (Fukuoka) 18; 6, Shimachi (Fukuoka) II-05 trench No. 2; 7, Shinmachi (Fukuoka) II-05 No. 1; 8, Kenzuka (Fukuoka) 7; 9, Magarita (Fukuoka).
After Hashiguchi 1999, with additions; originals from respective excavation reports.

<the colour red>
|
<the regeneration of the life of rice grain (stored in the jar)>
|
<the successful agricultural cycle accomplished at the paddies>

The fact that many of the smaller specimens, deposited with the dead, were painted red suggests that they also stored rice grain and that they were placed there to generate the *chain of signifiers* as follows:

<the colour red>
|
<the regeneration of the life of rice grain (stored in the jar)>
|
<the regeneration of the life of the dead ('stored' in the grave)>

Initially, the adult dead were buried in cists, either underneath fairly large capstones (called 'dolmens') or without these prominent marking facilities, or in wooden coffins or simple pit graves; only the infant dead were buried in larger globular jars (e.g., Mizoguchi 2013, 92–6). Importantly, such jars, almost without exception, were painted red. These observations suggest that the system of metaphorical mutual transformation between entities and concepts came into being with the rice paddy-field agricultural complex, and an allied symbolic system was introduced to the archipelago:

<the *death* and the *regeneration* of rice grain>
|
<the colours *black* and *red*>
|
<the *death* and the *regeneration* of the life of human individuals>
|
<(the *failure* and) the *success* of rice agricultural cycle>.

It is interesting that initially (i.e., during the Initial Yayoi) only infants were incorporated into this chain of signifiers, which came into being effectively for the perceptual taming of two of the most significant sources of certain uncertainties: death and the failure of the rice agricultural cycle, both of which would certainly occur but no one knows when and how. The infant, as a *liminal category* in the population, may have initially been easier to link metaphorically with rice grain. Their *liminality* would also have made them more connectable to supernatural forces perceived to be behind the death and regeneration of things. However, the adult also gradually became incorporated into the system: from Early Yayoi I on, the number of adults buried in globular jars gradually increased. By the end of Yayoi I, across the Japan sea coastal areas and the southern foothills of the Seburi mountain range,

most adults were buried in jars, which were significantly modified morphologically from their original globular shape (e.g., Mizoguchi 2013, 92–6; Figure 16.1).

IV

The incorporation of the adult into this technology of *taming* the major sources of socially shared uncertainty also marked the expansion and the sophistication of the chain of signifiers constituting this technology.

In the final phase of Yayoi I, the Sika deer (*Cervus nippon*), whose male has characteristically prominent antlers that are shed and re-grow annually, began to be inscribed on a small number of burial jars (Figure 16.2). Almost simultaneously, the outside of some burial jars, now established as a unique local mortuary custom of the northern Kyushu region, began to be painted black (see Figure 16.1), and the inside red. In one unique case, Sika deer and raised floor buildings, possibly granaries, were inscribed and painted over with black pigments (at the Oki site of Chikuzen town, Fukuoka prefecture: Figure 16.2A). This latter case implies an important departure: the incorporation of the consequences of human acts into the chain of signifiers. Granaries were built, most likely communally, to store harvested rice grain (and possibly other foodstuffs) for communal consumption and communal use as seed grain for the future. The spread of the custom of burying the dead in burial jars had firmly established the incorporation of the adult individual into the chain of signifiers: the death and regeneration of rice grain and the death and regeneration of the human being. Now, however, the incorporation of the consequences of not only human labour but also human *communal* labour implied that the chain of signifiers had now become composed of

<the death and the regeneration of rice grain>
|
<the death and the regeneration of human being>
|
<the death and the regeneration of *community*>

Furthermore, at this point, some adult dead, buried in jars that were symbolically as well as morphologically and typologically developed from rice grain-storing globular jars, appear to have been chosen to be treated differently from the others, marked by the black paint, and increasingly by grave goods (such as bronze weapons and other bronze equipment, shell armlets, stone accessories, and others: Mizoguchi 2002, 129–34, 138–56; 2013, 144–59).
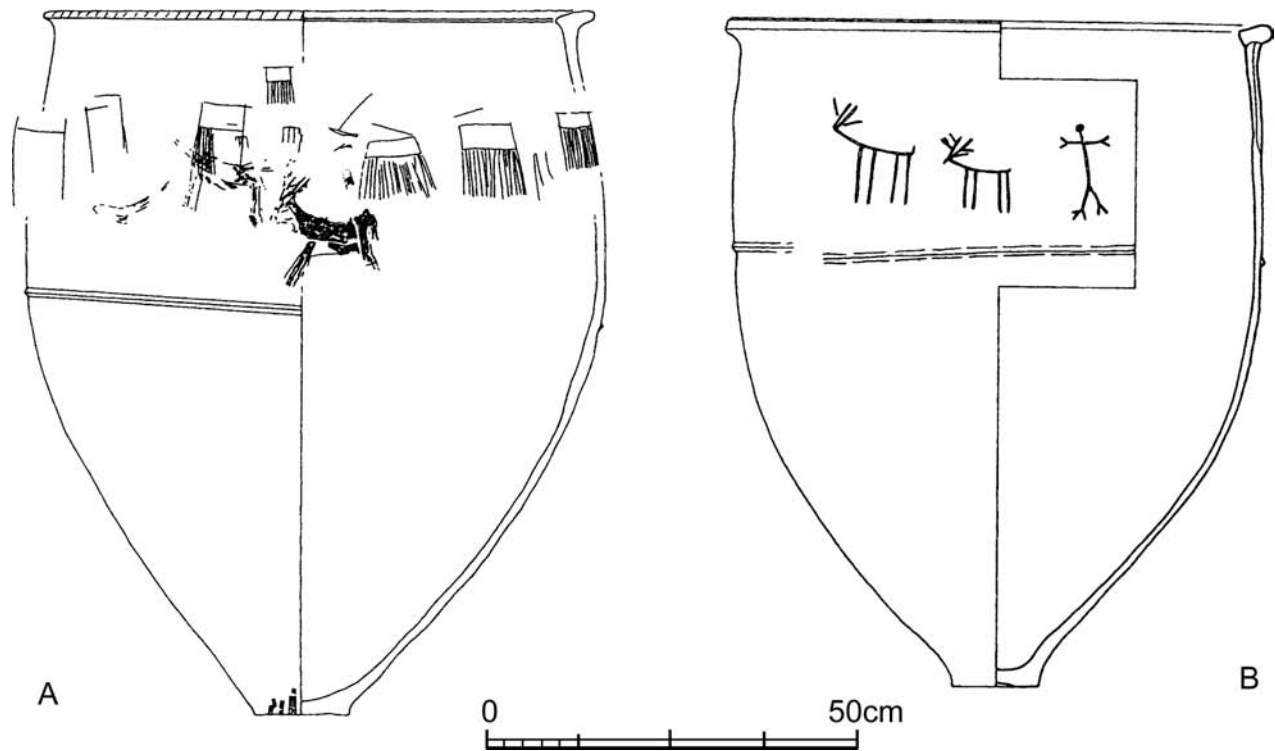
Figure 16.2. Depiction of Sika deer, granaries, and human on burial jars. A, Oki (Fukuoka); B, Hasakonomiya (Fukuoka). After Tsunematsu 2006; from the respective excavation reports.

This suggests that this chain of signifiers became increasingly *embodied* not only by human dead but also by *particular* human dead. Further, the fact that now the chain also included the consequences of communal labour in the form of granaries suggests that such chosen individuals embodied the death and regeneration, or the prayer for well-being, of the community as a whole.

V

One might be tempted to assume that, from this moment on, social stratification would have progressed smoothly, as driven by the chosen individuals, or the 'elite', who came to embody the *well-being* of the community. However, matters do not appear to have progressed in this way. Instead, metaphorical entanglements between a human being as a generic being, rather than as an individual person, and other living creatures in the technology of coping with or taming sources of uncertainty in the lived-world mentioned previously, continued to be deepened until sometime in Yayoi V. It should be added at this point that the seeming self-generative expansion of the chain of signifiers came about through a process that can be compared to *natural selection*; signifiers potentially

incorporated into the chain either were already there or constantly emerged and would have been incorporated into the chain. However, whether or not they were suitable for this role or contributed to the reproduction of social communication was determined upon trial–and–error bases.[1]

Before rushing to investigate what happened in Yayoi V, let us briefly consider the situation between Yayoi II and IV. Depictions of various living creatures, human figures, and buildings (mostly granary-like structures) came increasingly to appear in combination, mostly on pots, but occasionally on wooden and bronze implements such as bronze daggers and bronze bells (Figure 16.3). It has been argued that they represented parts of either mythological narrative-lines (e.g., Sahara 1982) or an idealised lived-world (e.g., Kobayashi 2009). More research is required to develop a widely acceptable interpretation of those combined pictorial representations. It can be said that many of the 'scenes' involve different 'categories' of insects, animals, and human beings, differentiated by gender, habitats, different positions in the food chain, and so on (cf. Mizoguchi 2013, 164–80). Some of them certainly appear to have been designed to represent the flow of time marked by different episodes, and hence
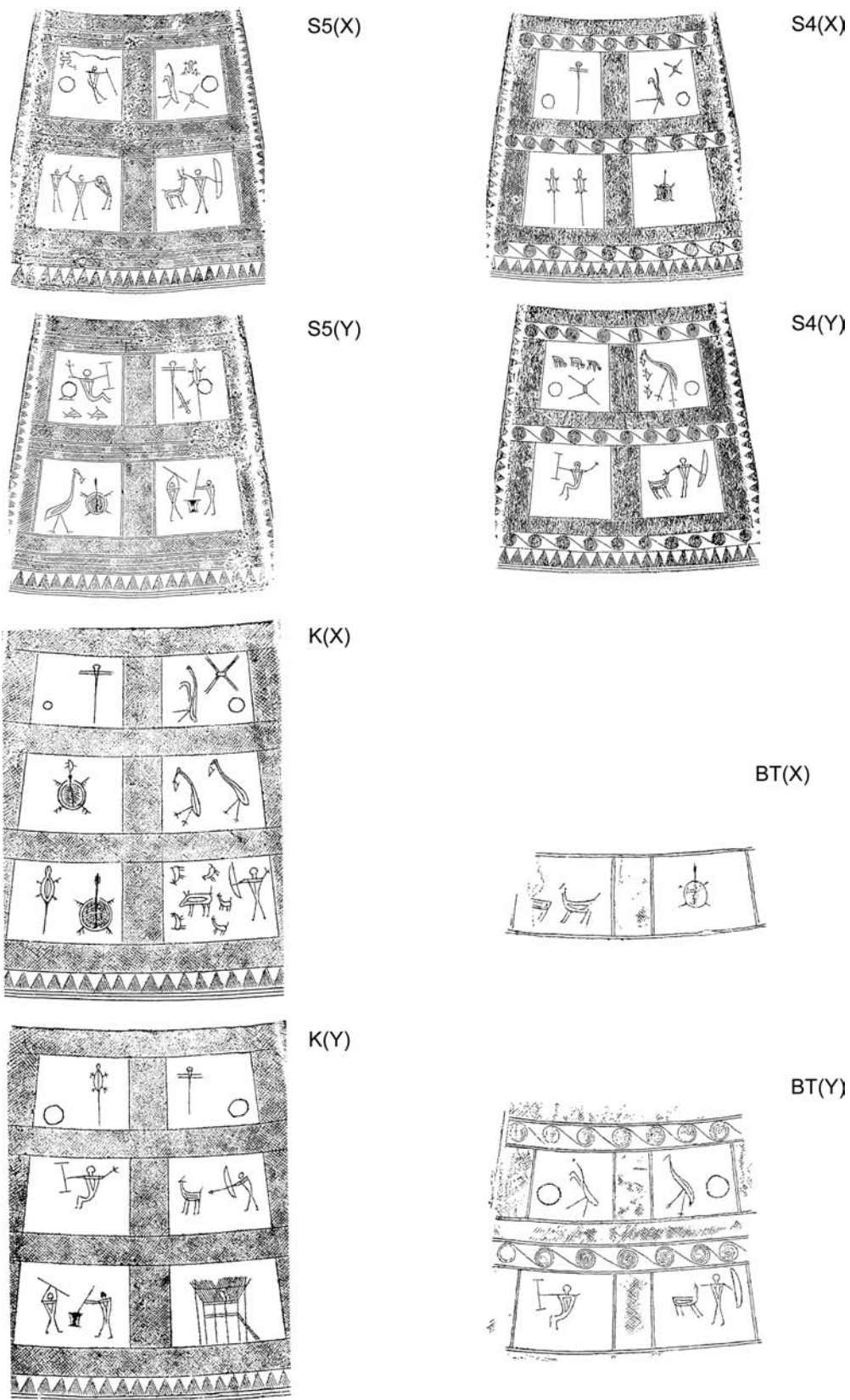
Figure 16.3. Dotaku bronze bells with human, animal, and insect depictions. S4, Sakuragaoka No. 4 (Hyogo); S5, Sakuragaoka No. 5 (Hyogo); K, from Kagawa prefecture (uncertain); BT, formerly owned by the Edo period painter–antiquarian Buncho Tani (provenance unknown).

After Mizoguchi 2013, figure 6–26, after National Museum of Japanese History 1997.

there is more than a strong possibility that they represent narratives of some sort (Figure 16.3; cf. Sahara 1982; Mizoguchi 2013, 164–80). One thing that can be said for sure, however, is that each of those apparent episodes, involving such 'different' categories of beings, suggests that the culturally constituted positions and relationships of and between those beings were explained and made understandable to people. The fact that the depictions frequently include granaries suggests that the relationships allocated to the different creatures were also connected to the death and regeneration of the rice grain and the community.

It is particularly interesting that, when depicted as part of scenes depicting combined pictorial representations, human beings are almost always 'faceless', although their back and front, and their gender, are often represented (see Figure 16.3). For instance, it has been convincingly suggested, by examining the tasks undertaken by the human figures, that those with triangular heads represent females, and those with round heads males (Sahara 1982; Figure 16.3, S4(Y), S5(X) and (Y), K(X) and (Y)). However, their facial features were never depicted. It is doubly interesting and puzzling that a small number of lone human figures from northern Kyushu did have their facial features represented (Figure 16.4). These observations suggest that these individually depicted human figures signified different meanings and implications from those depicted together with other living creatures.

The observations we have made show that the faceless human figures, often depicted with other living creatures, were situated in a mythical narrative terrain in which human beings and other living creatures were equally implicated in a narrative line, or narrative lines, related to the death and regeneration of rice grain, human beings, and the community. A good indication of the nature of this 'equality' between the human figures and living creatures is a scene depicted on a bronze bell, in which a male individual grips one of the antlers of a male deer and appears to control or tame him (Figure 16.3, S4(Y) and S5(X)). These human figures in the narrative line(s) are depicted as genuinely mythical figures *able to communicate with other living creatures.*

In contrast to them, the individually depicted figures are interpreted to be *performing* ritualistic acts of some sort (Figure 16.4). They are often depicted wearing specific types of clothes, sometimes wearing decorative gear on their head (Figure 16.4), and holding specific types of material items. They also often take specific postures or make gestures. One example of this, a figure inscribed
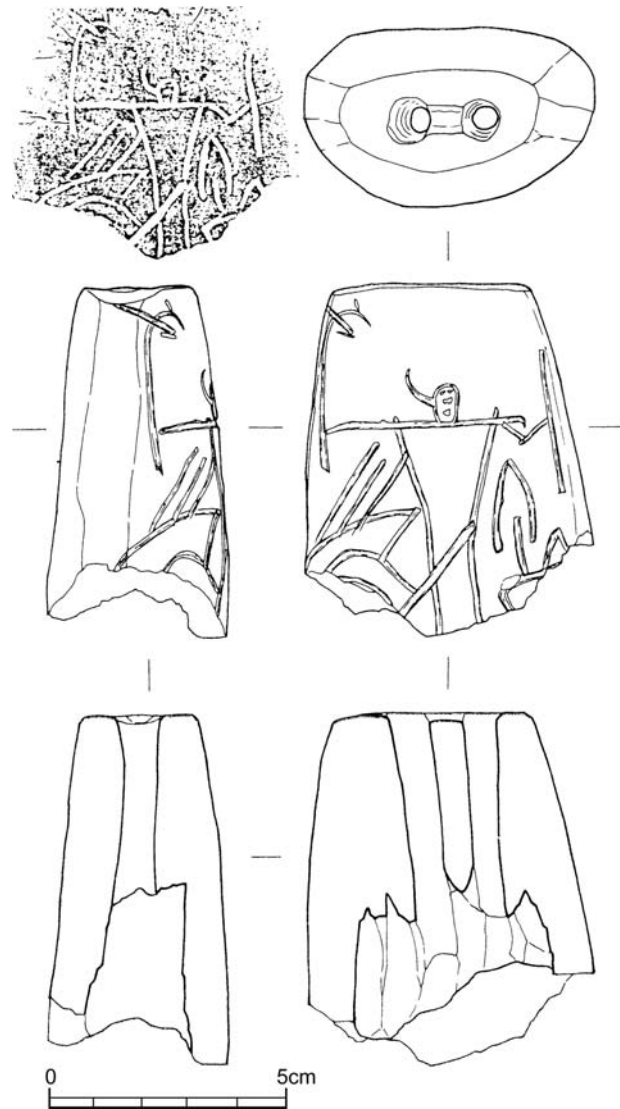

Figure 16.4. Depiction of a human figure with a head decoration and a weapon (possibly halberd) and a shield on a Dotaku bronze bell-shaped clay implement from Kawayoriyoshihara, Saga prefecture.
After Saga PBE 1981.

on a wooden plate excavated from the Jokansu site of Itoshima city, the northern Kyushu region, had its face painted or tattooed (Maebaru Municipal Board of Education 1996; Shitara 2001; see Figure 16.11, 1). These individually depicted and faced human figures emerged in the northern Kyushu region in Yayoi IV, but, interestingly, did not continue there; they disappeared in Early Yayoi V, and the depiction of human figures did not reappear again before Late Yayoi V, when the depiction of human faces with characteristic eyeball-less eyes, and inscribed parallel lines probably depicting tattooing or

painting, came to be distributed in the east-central Seto inland sea region and the Tokai region (cf. Shitara 2001; see Figure 16.11). Before moving on to investigate the implications of these latter phenomena, we should interpret the implications of the individually depicted human figures of Yayoi IV.

VI

A human figure with the depiction of facial features and some other unknown features is inscribed on a bronze bell-shaped clay artefact from the Kawayoriyoshihara site of northern Kyushu (Saga Prefectural Board of Education 1981; Figure 16.4). Another human figure with the depiction of facial features is inscribed on a small wooden plate excavated from the Jokansu site, also of northern Kyushu (Maebaru Municipal Board of Education 1996; see Figure 16.11, 1). Both of them are raising their right arm, with the Kawayoriyoshihara figure holding a pole with something attached to its top: they are widely inferred to depict a halberd attached to a wooden handle. The left arm of the Kawayoriyoshihara figure also holds something, which is inferred to depict a shield (Saga Prefectural Board of Education 1981). The upper left arm is bent down to hold the shield firmly, whereas the right arm is straightened and raised as if preparing to strike with the weapon. The fact that the right arm of the Jokansu figure is straightened and raised whereas the upper left arm is bent down, in an identical pose to that of the Kawayoriyoshihara figure, strongly suggests that the latter also depicts a person armed with a halberd-like weapon and a shield. They both also have characteristic J-shaped gear attached to their heads, also suggesting that both figures depict a person performing a specific act in similar attire.

In contrast to the human figures depicted with other living creatures, situated in a narrative terrain on fairly equal terms with the animals and insects, these figures with facial features are seen alone, with the representation of weapons a source of force and violence. At times, the human figures depicted with other living creatures are also 'armed' with bow and arrows, but they are for hunting for sustaining human life, not for potentially eliminating human life. In that sense, the depiction of human forms with concrete facial features is meant to portray socially constituted figures able to *control* fellow human beings, and hence, other living creatures as well.

I would argue that it is very significant that the depiction of facial features appears to be inseparable from a 'show of force'. To consider the implications of this connection, lines drawn around the eyes and underneath the mouth of the Jokansu figure are extremely suggestive (see Figure 16.11, 1); if they are the depiction of tattooing, as Hiromi Shitara suggests (2001), it would mean that the figure endured pain to be socially marked as someone special, and the occasion of that endurance is most likely to have been public, such as a rite of passage. On such an occasion, the person would have been marked with a specific social identity under the gaze of the community to which s/he belonged, and the community also would have imagined sharing the pain, and internalised the perception that the person who became marked and differentiated under its gaze was indeed special. The person, effectively, would have become the *embodiment* of a communally constituted category.

VII

So far, human figures depicting facial features dating from Yayoi IV have only been found in the northern Kyushu region, where a small number of elite burials in rectangular low earthen mounds with rich grave good assemblages also have been found, including Han Chinese imports such as bronze mirrors and green glass discs (e.g., Mizoguchi 2002, 2005, 2013, 154–9; Figure 16.5). At the Mikumo-Minamishoji, for instance, two jar burials were found to contain around fifty-two Early Han Chinese bronze mirrors in total, a number of bronze weapons, eight gilded bronze ornaments, at least eight Heki green glass discs, about fifteen glass comma-shaped beads, numerous glass cylindrical beads, and other items (Fukuoka Prefectural Board of Education 1985; Figure 16.5). There were also those who were buried with one or two Han Chinese mirrors, and other indigenous prestigious items, such as iron daggers or halberds, shell armlets, and similar items (Figure 16.5). These people were also often buried in low, rectangular mounds (e.g., Shimojo 1991). It has been suggested that a hierarchical order was marked by the differential contents of the grave good assemblages (Figure 16.5): roughly, a combination of Han Chinese and indigenous items, including a large number of Han Chinese mirrors, Han Chinese green glass discs, and indigenous bronze weapons and jade comma-shaped beads, would have been situated at the top, followed by a combination of items such as two to six Han Chinese bronze mirrors, indigenous bronze/iron weapons, and occasionally reworked glass discs fashioned from original
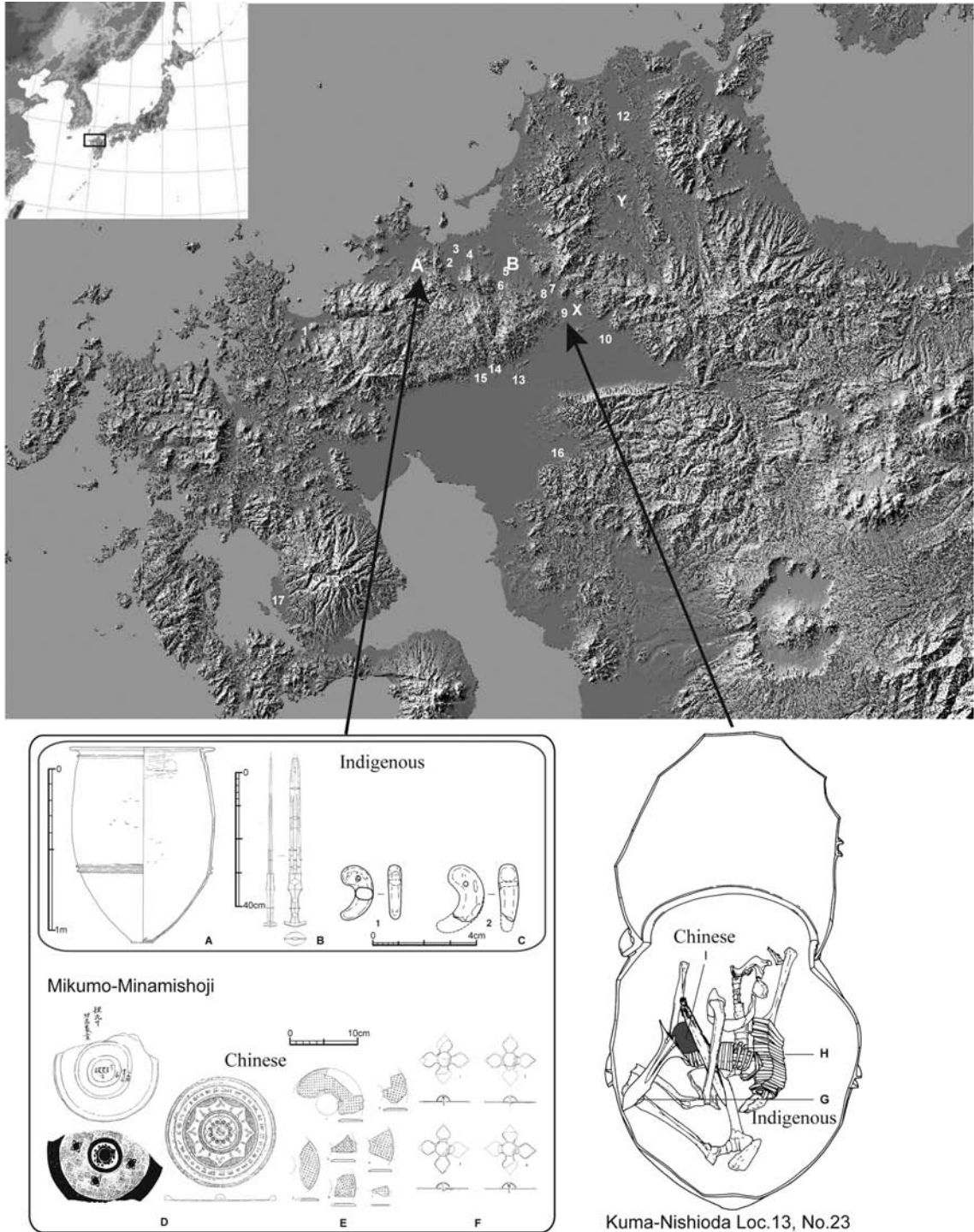
Figure 16.5. Top, Distribution of jar burials with Chinese grave goods or iron weapons. A, Mikumo–Minamishoji; B, Sugu–Okamoto (both with more than seven Early Han bronze mirrors and other Chinese and indigenous artefacts); X, Higashioda–Mine; Y, Tateiwa–Hotta (each with more than two Early Han bronze mirrors and a small number of Chinese and indigenous artefacts); 1, Kashiwazaki and Nakabaru; 2, Yoshitake–Hiwatashi; 3, Arita; 4, Maruodai; 5, Monden–Tsujibatake; 6, Antokudai; 7, Futsukaichi–Mine; 8, Dojoyama; 9, Kuma–Nishioda; 10, Kuriayama; 11, Fuchibaru–Umenoki; 12, Noboritate; 13, Rokunohata; 14, Futatsukayama; 15, Yoshinogari; 16; Chanokinomoto; 17, Tominoharu (with either one Early Han bronze mirror and indigenous artefacts or indigenous artefacts including iron weapons); 16 and 17, dated early Late Yayoi, but containing late Middle Yayoi material. After Mizoguchi 2013, figure 6–4.

Bottom, material from Mikumo–Minamishoji (left) and Kuma–Nishioda Loc.13 (right). A–F, after Fukuoka PBE 1985, G–I, after Chikushino MBE 1993.

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Han Chinese green glass discs. Then followed a combination that included one or more items from the Han Chinese bronze mirror and/or an indigenous iron weapon and/or shell armlet categories (e.g., Shimojo 1991; Mizoguchi 2013, 154–9). The top-tier burials have only been found at the Mikumo-Minamishoji and the Sugu-Okamoto, the two largest central settlements of the Japan sea coastal area of the northern Kyushu region, and the second- and third-tier burials have been found in the central settlements on individual floodplains surrounding these extra-large settlements and their territories (Figure 16.5). These observations suggest that the Yayoi IV period saw the integration of each of those floodplain-scale communities and the hierarchisation of their mutual relations in the northern Kyushu region.

It is of particular relevance to the present argument that bronze and iron weapons were significant components of the grave good assemblages (Figure 16.5). Interestingly, iron halberds show a particularly conspicuous presence in the second- and third-tier assemblages. As has been mentioned, the human figures with facial features from northern Kyushu hold handled halberds in their right arms. This suggests that the figures depicted here were also in positions of leadership, probably of individual floodplain-based communities. Further, as inferred previously, they would have been considered the *embodiment* of communal concerns, wills, and prayers, at times having to be forcefully defended.

Were they also perceived to embody the *fate* of the entire community? I would argue this perception would at least have begun. We have some examples from the Karako-kagi site, and some other sites near the Nara basin, in the Kinki region, of human figures depicted without facial features, but apparently with a handle-attached halberd and a shield held in their hands, inscribed on pots, and dating from Yayoi IV (e.g., Fujita 2006). In one case, two such figures are inscribed together with an arrow-wounded deer, four fishes, a raised-floored granary, and an unidentified figure (Fujita 2006; Figure 16.6). Deer and granaries, as illustrated previously (see Figure 16.3), are important elements in the chain of signifiers connected to the communal prayer about the death and regeneration of the life of rice grain and human beings. This suggests that the figures depicted with a halberd and a shield were perceived to be related to, or even to *embody*, the death and regeneration of the life of rice grain and human beings, as well as the fate of the community, which needed to be forcefully protected.
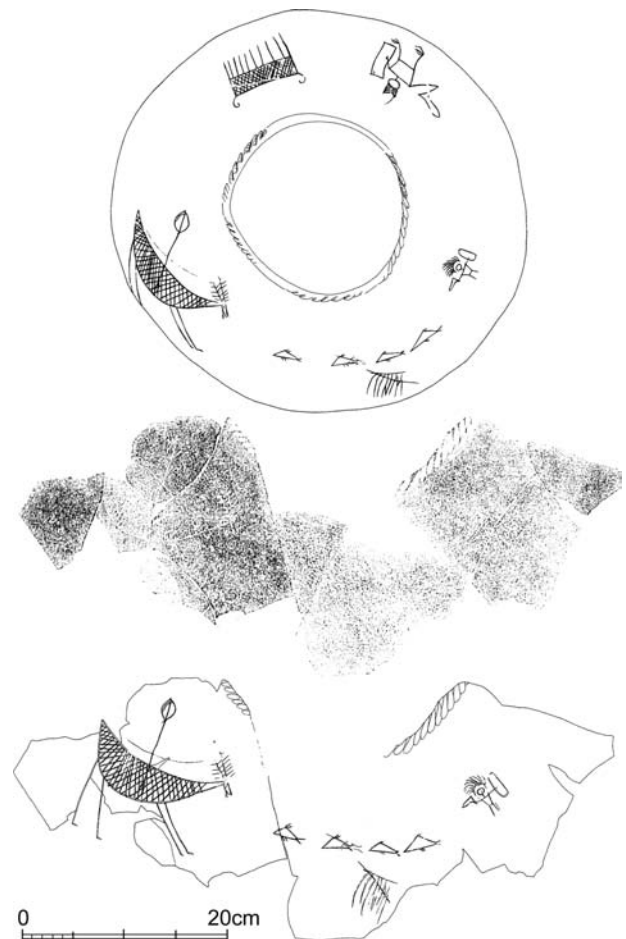

Figure 16.6. Human figures depicted without facial features, but apparently with a handle-attached halberd and a shield held in their hands, inscribed on pots, dating from Yayoi IV. After Fujita 2006, with minor alterations.

VIII

As mentioned, halberds mediate the connection between the human figures, the depiction of the facial features and the dead chiefs. However, the connection was indirect; no burial jar was found inscribed with human figures. This is in a way quite natural; the dead person was in there, and its *force* of evoking emotions and generating meanings did not necessarily need to be represented, as it were, but needed to be *directed* properly, that is, needed to be connected properly to a particular chain of signifiers. Hence, on the burial jars of northern Kyushu, only deer, granaries, and occasionally fishhook-shaped motifs were inscribed (e.g., Tsunematsu 2006). This leads to an inference that the depiction of the dead themselves would mark an entirely new situation in the chaining of signifiers for taming and controlling uncertainties in the world.

If the dead became pictorially represented or representable, they would effectively be made mobile and logically omnipresent. So would this ever happen? I would argue this did happen, sometime in late Yayoi V.

In Yayoi V, the figurative representations of living creatures, human beings, and so on, either declined or became simplified, and ended up becoming mere 'signs' (Harunari 1991). In parallel with this, the size of bronze ritual implements, spearheads, and halberds around the northern Kyushu region, and bronze bells around the Kinki and Tokai regions, on which figurative representations had been occasionally made in Yayoi III and IV, increased at a quickened pace (see, e.g., Mizoguchi 2013, 192–6; Figure 16.7). Then, in the Yayoi-Kofun transitional phase, they disappeared quite rapidly, and it is argued that their production and use had become so monopolised by the elite that once they abandoned them as their ritual items, they did not continue to be produced and used by the commoners (Iwanaga 1997, 150). This is a persuasive argument, and I would argue that the rituals conducted by using those items would also have become increasingly esoteric. I would infer that, through the process of making them more esoteric, the pictorial signifiers of the system of meanings would have become increasingly abstract. At the same time, this process would also have helped fix the elite as the *controller* of the chain of signifiers with which the community coped with uncertainties in the world. The emergence of the pictorial representation of human faces, with the depiction of its features for the first time in the elite burial context, which took place towards the very end of Yayoi V, I would argue, marked the chief figure him- or herself becoming the *dominant signifier* in the chain of signifiers with which the community coped with uncertainties in the world.

Two so-called *kotai-mon-seki* (curvilinear band motif-decorated stones), used in the burial related practices that were conducted at the Tatetsuki tumulus of the ancient Kibi province, the present-day central Seto inland sea region, are an example of this (Kondo 2002; Figure 16.8). The one is under the care of the shrine nearby, and the other was probably deliberately heated and smashed in the mortuary practice and deposited in a layer of cobbles mixed with ritual debris, including sherds of well-made pots, clay figurines, clay comma-shaped beads, clay cylindrical beads, some iron fragments, and other items (Kondo 2002). The former is intact and lozenge shaped, 0.93 × 0.88 m, and weighs ca. 350 kg (Figure 16.8). The surface is covered with curvilinear band motifs, consisting of mutually connected units, each placed around a comma-shaped hole. The

motifs and comma-shaped holes are sculpted and the detail inscribed as if wrapping up something that had a human face (Kondo 2002). The face is severely damaged, but the eyes, the nose, and the mouth can be confirmed to be detailed with fine inscribed lines.

This is the first pictorial depiction of a human face in western Japan since the two pictorial representations of human figures with facial features in Yayoi IV, mentioned previously. The damage to the Tatetsuki figure makes it difficult to make detailed comparisons between it and those Yayoi IV examples. However, the fact that the Yayoi IV figures were the embodiment of a communally constituted person and category, forcefully involving itself with the cycle of the death and regeneration of the life of rice and human beings, suggests that the Tatetsuki figure would also have depicted a person *embodying* the well-being of the community. Besides, it is now clear that the figures represented were those of the chiefly person of the community. Thus, it is also likely that this *wrapped* and *protected* figure was the representation of the *dead chief*, and that it was wrapped and protected to help ensure the regeneration of the life of rice, human beings, the community, and him- or herself (cf. Kondo and Harunari 1967, 30; Terasawa 2000, 243–4). It is also apparent that 1) the dead chief had now became firmly situated in the chain of signifiers representing the cycle of the death and regeneration of the life of rice, human beings, the community, and him- or herself; 2) the figurative representation of living creatures and other items previously representing the chain had now disappeared; and 3) only the figurative representation of the chief's face remained. All of this suggests that at this point the pictorial representation of the chief's face was the *dominant signifier* in the chain of signifiers symbolically representing the cycle of the death and regeneration of the life of rice, human beings, the community, and the chief him- or herself (e.g., Kondo and Harunari 1967, 30; Terasawa 2000, 243–6).

IX

The process illustrated previously progressed as the *technology* of coping with uncertainties in the lived-world paralleled significant changes in social relations.

First, the second half of Yayoi V saw the emergence across western Japan of burial compounds in which, on average, four or five adults and a couple of infants were buried. These are often located away from communal burial grounds, which themselves became increasingly rare during the course of the second half of Yayoi V. Some of these compounds are situated on hill- or ridge-tops
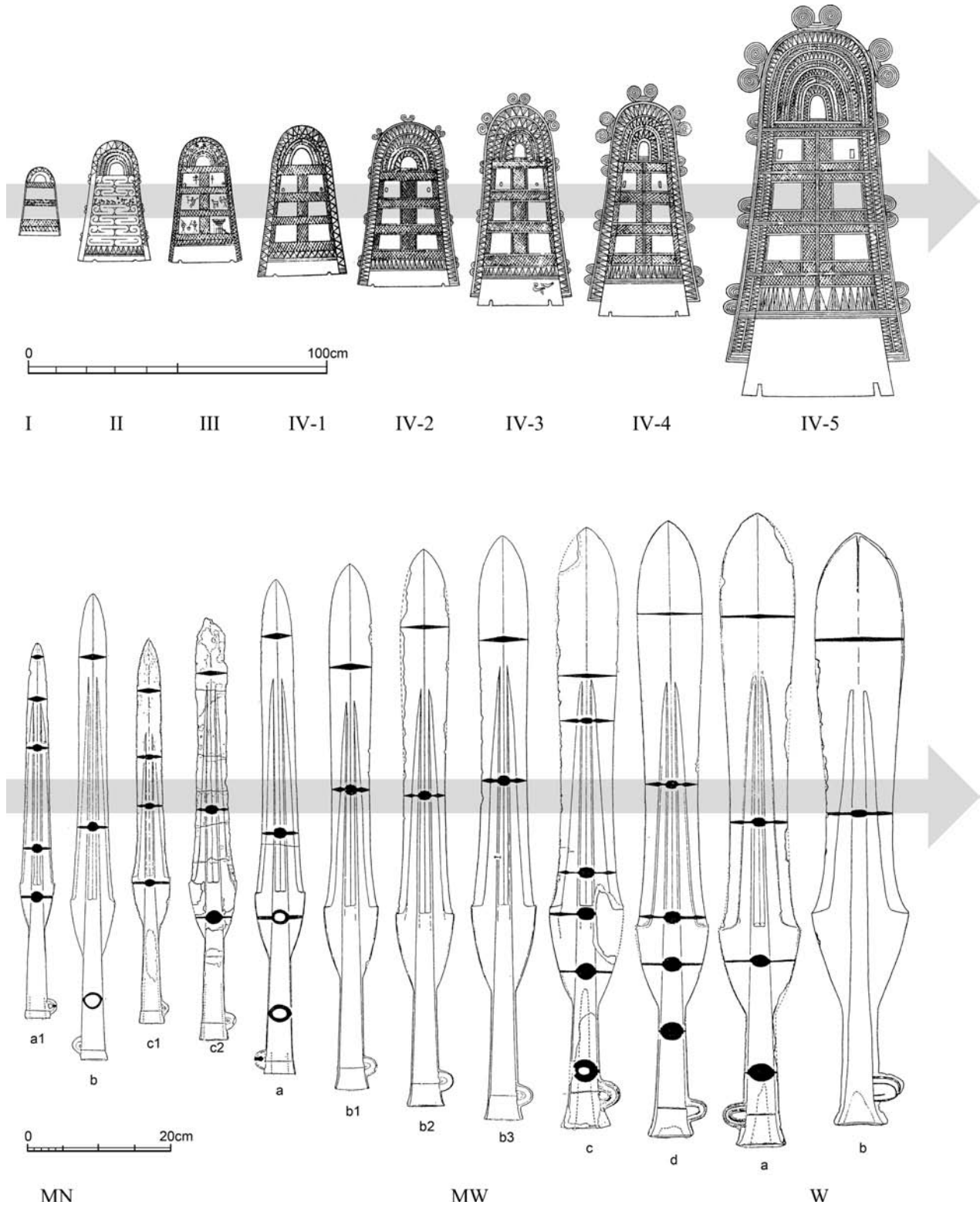
Figure 16.7. Temporal change of the *Dohoko* bronze spearhead (after Mizoguchi 2013, figure 7–5, after Iwanaga 1986, figure 3 with additions and modifications) and the *Dotaku* bronze bell.
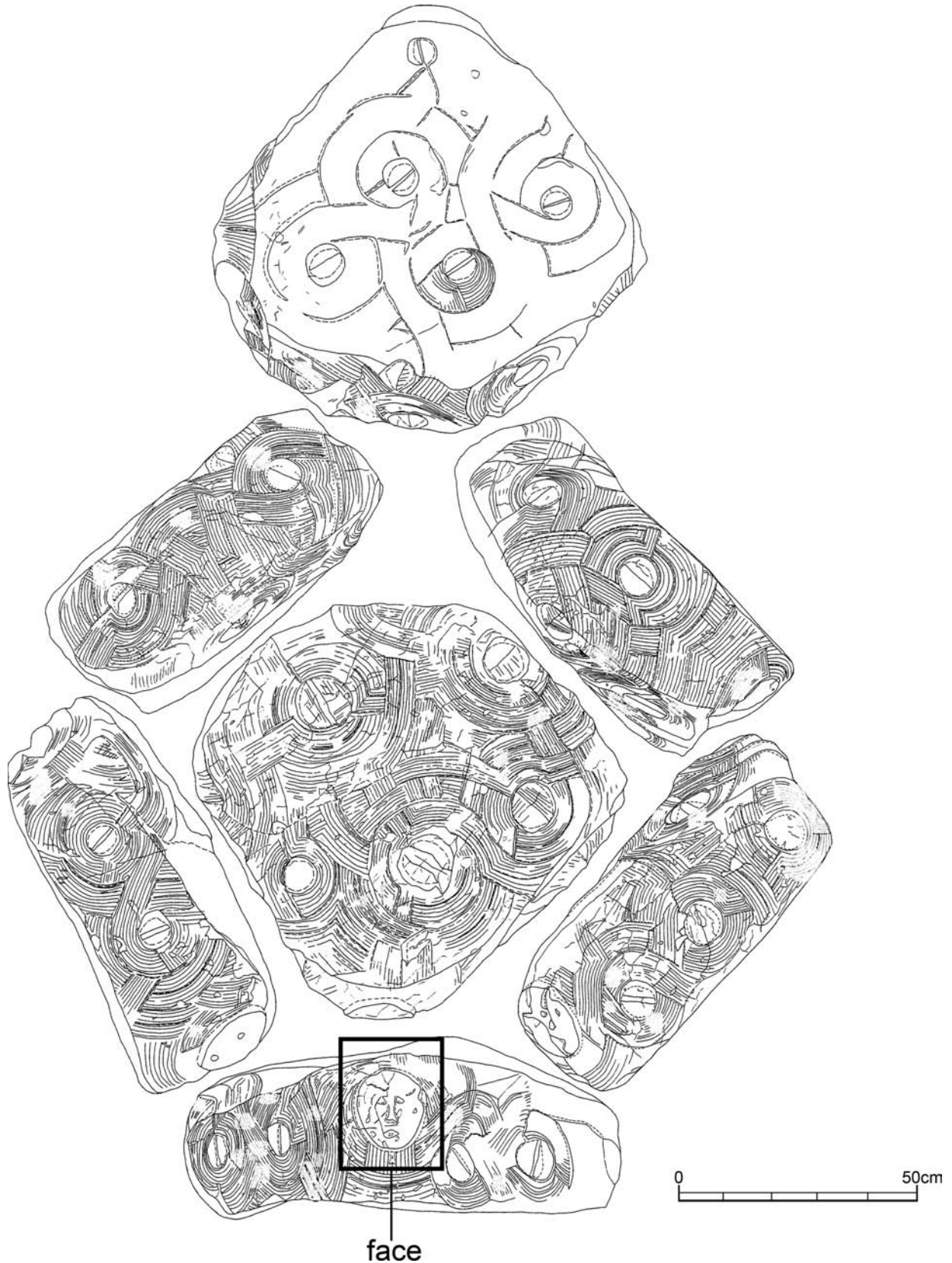Arranged after Sahara 2002, figure 13.

face

Figure 16.8. Stone artefact inferred to have been excavated from the Tatetsuki tumulus of Late Yayoi V. After Mizoguchi 2013, figure 9–10, with additions, after Inoue 2010, original Tatetsuki kanko-kai 1992.
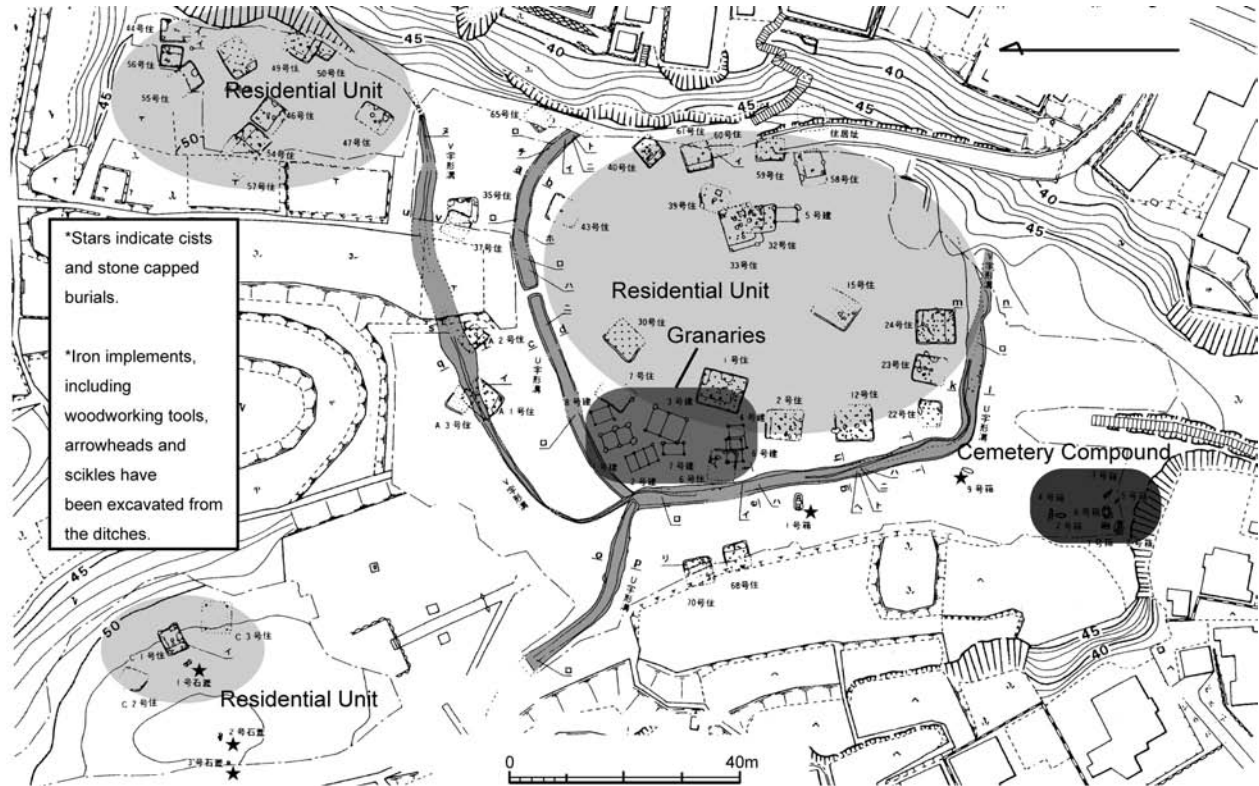
Figure 16.9. Sendoyama site and its residential segments. Individual burials distributed outside the compound are starred. After Mizoguchi 2013, figure 7–8, after Kiyama town site excavation team 1978, with additions.

(Mizoguchi 2000, 250-7). Many of the compounds are covered by earthen mounds, some of which are quite substantial. The deceased who are buried in them are often deposited with accessories, weapons, tools, and mirrors; whether these were mortuary offerings or worn items, personal possessions, or communal treasures offered to dead chief figures is difficult to specify.

Second, as illustrated, the characteristic ritual items of two epicentres of the Yayoi social development, the bronze spearhead of the northern Kyushu and the bronze bell of the central Kinki region, increased in size rapidly (Figure 16.7). Most of these were deposited in fairly large numbers, and at locations often away from the areas of daily activities. The manner of their deposition appears to have become increasingly formalised. Once the subsequent Kofun (meaning 'ancient mounded tomb') period, defined by the construction of keyhole-shaped tumuli, began, these objects rapidly disappeared. If these items had been owned and used by wider sections of the community, they would have survived, albeit in diminishing numbers, when the domain of rituals controlled by the elite shifted to the mortuary practices conducted on the tumuli without using them. The fact that this was not the

case suggests that the practices involved in their display and deposition had become increasingly exclusively controlled by the elite (cf. Iwanaga 1997, 149–50), and that they became increasingly esoteric.

Third, the period also saw the emergence of elite precinct-type compounds in larger, regional centre settlements. In many cases, these were enclosed by a ditch. At the Sendoyama of Saga prefecture, northern Kyushu, three residential groups coexisted: one of them consisted of raised floor granaries, as well as rectangular pit dwellings, enclosed by a rectangular-ditched enclosure; the other residential groups were not enclosed; nor did they have granaries (Kiyama town site excavation team 1978; Figure 16.9).

Fourth, the period saw the beginning of the interaction network covering the areas in western Japan that were later to become the core distributional horizon of the earliest keyhole tumuli, that is, the regions around the Seto inland sea (Mizoguchi 2009; Figure 16.10). This was marked by an increasing number of pots of unique regional styles or traits finding their way to remote regions. Some of these were taken in all the way from the regions where they were produced, and the others
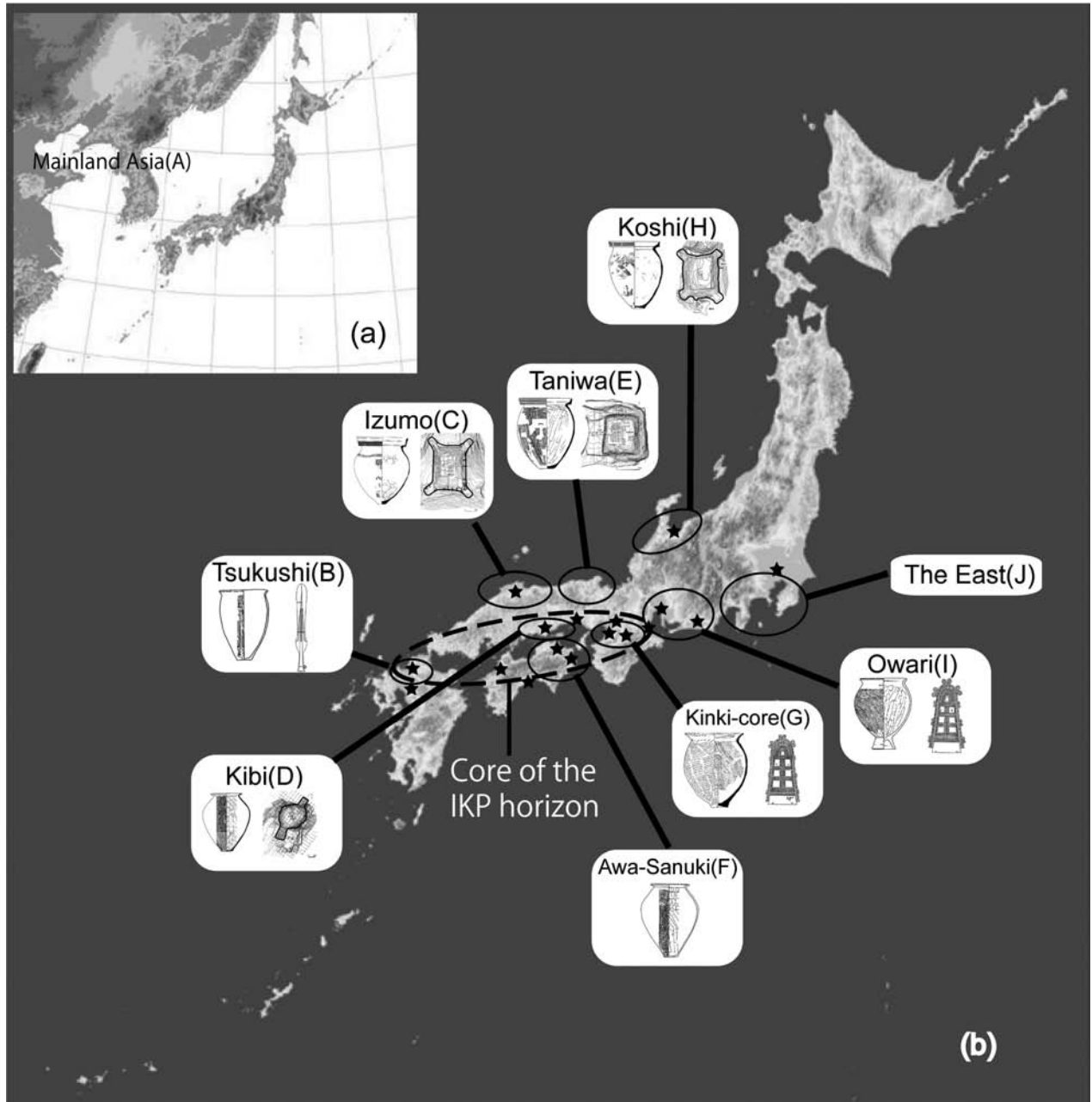
Figure 16.10. The location of the Japanese archipelago in East Asia (a) and ancient provinces as 'nodes' networked though exchange activities and interaction (b). Boxes show the characteristic mortuary mound forms, ritual items, and pots of the respective regions. Stars indicate major floodplains in and around the core of the Initial Kofun Package horizon (IKP), within which the oldest key-hole tumuli are distributed.
After Mizoguchi 2013, figure 8–6, after Mizoguchi 2009.

were either locally produced with non-local techniques or copied by local potters. In the case of the former, the potters would have migrated from their region of origin. At times, we have hybrid pots in which stylistic characteristics of both the local and non-local pottery making traditions co-existed (Mizoguchi 2009). These

observations suggest that people began to move between quite remote communities, and some of them chose to settle in their new communities. This also suggests that both those who moved in and those who accepted them adopted or emulated to various degrees formerly alien customs and alien material items and symbols. The fact

that many of these 'foreign pots' were found in the central settlements of the regions or communities further suggests that the moves were not made randomly but strategically.

All of those four factors would have mutually stimulated and accelerated the progression of one another, and they are correlated to the spread and increase of iron tools across western Japan and the eastern half of eastern Japan, and that of imported Han-Chinese bronze mirrors across western Japan (e.g., Murakami 2000). Demand for the former would have been particularly high, and constantly on the increase. That would have improved contacts and negotiations between remote communities who may have had no contacts and difficulty meeting face to face with more than a certain frequency. These factors would have increasingly necessitated the generation of a *meta-code*, which could be shared by remote communities, each of which consisted of a series of adjacent floodplains and was marked by stylistically distinct pottery assemblages (Mizoguchi 2009).

I would infer that the (re-)emergence of the pictorial representation of human faces was an attempt at creating such a meta-code. It has been well revealed in an increasing number of neuro-psychological studies that facial expressions generate innate neural reactions in the brain, which often lead to patterned emotions (e.g., Phillips et al. 1997). Besides, in the case of the pictorial representations of human faces in Yayoi IV, the meaning(s) the expression signified would have been socially internalised and shared, in that possible tattooing on the face would have been conducted on a communal occasion such as a rite of passage, and in that the experience of pain was also communally and physically shared and internalised. The Tatetsuki figure was not clearly tattooed, but some faces depicted with tattoos were inscribed on pots in the ancient Kibi province (where the Tatetsuki is located) and the Tokai region (Shitara 2001; Figure 16.11). Amongst the latter some were depicted in combination with motifs resembling the wrapping motifs of the Tatetsuki (Ishiguro 2006). It cannot be confirmed easily whether they represented the face of the chief, let alone dead chiefs. However, the coexistence between the tattooed face and the wrapping motifs in some Tokai region examples suggests that there existed at least possible connections of chains of signifiers between the pictorial representations of tattooed faces and those of the face of the chief. A pictorial representation of the face of the chief, regardless whether s/he was living or dead, would not only immediately have evoked the chain of signifiers in

which the chief was situated in the controlling position, and thus would have been the dominant signifier, but also evoked a certain patterned emotional reaction.

The emergence of those 'faced human figures' in material culture, I would argue, also marked the vast expansion in scale of the target audience upon which an *emotional panoptic regime* was imposed, or at least aimed at acceptance. Throughout the developmental process of the chain of signifiers, the group of individuals who communicated elements of their life-world by referring to the universal cycle of their death and regeneration was confined to those who attended individual mortuary and other ritual occasions: kin or descent groupings. However, the depiction of faced human figures emerged along with the vast expansion of the horizon of communications important for the reproduction of regional communities (cf. Mizoguchi 2009). The potential of the facial expression to evoke universal emotional reaction would have been recognised and become mobilised for the maintenance of infrequent but important communications involving people from across much wider areas than before.

X

Then came the emergence of the keyhole tumulus (Figure 16.12). Regarding what we have already argued, it is important to point out that it has not been confirmed that the wrapped entity with a human face is typical of something that occurred throughout the Kofun period. Interestingly, the complex curvilinear band motifs continued to be used in the Kofun period in the forms of the decoration of wooden ritual implements, those of clay cylindrical vessels (Kondo & Harunari 1967; Mizoguchi 2013, 263–5; Figure 16.13), and other items. This suggests that the meaning(s) and significance of the wrapping design were inherited in the Kofun period, but that the depiction of human faces was dropped. My contention is that what the face of the chief figure had embodied and been designated to evoke later became embodied by the Kofun tumuli.

The tumuli appear to have been designed to serve as symbolic focal points for the creation and reproduction of the order of the world. The unique mound shape, for instance, was created by combining and modifying several regional mounded burial traditions.[2] The same was true in the case of burial facilities (Hojo 2000, 87–90).

The typical grave good assemblage of the Early Kofun period was also created by combining and modifying the
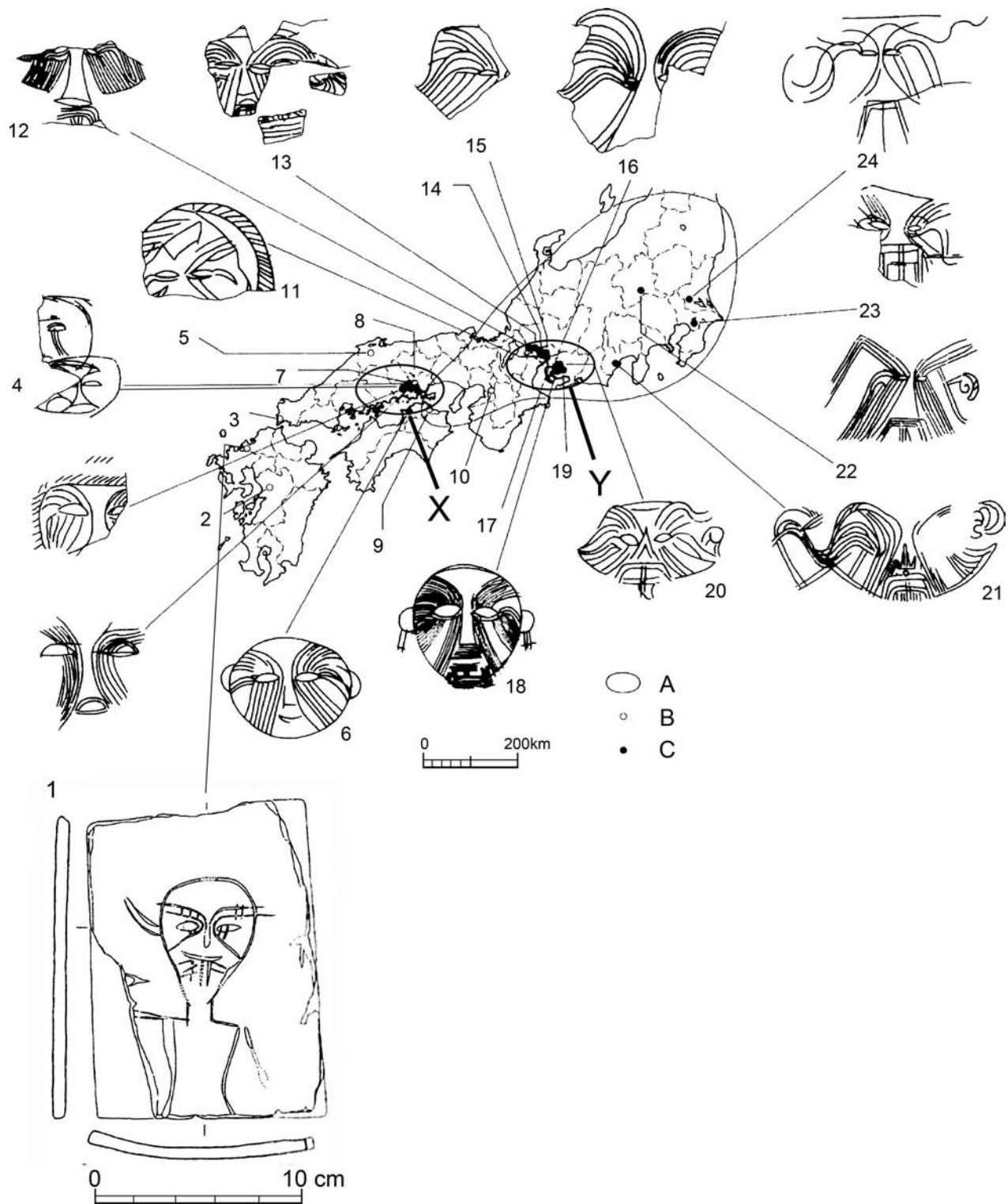
Figure 16.11. Depictions of tattooed or painted faces in the Middle and Late Yayoi and Early Kofun periods. A, Distribution of pots and figurines with representation of tattooed or painted face; B, Distribution of pictorial representations of tattooed or painted human face (Yayoi I–Early Yayoi V); C, Distribution of the pictorial representation of tattooed or painted human face (middle Yayoi V–Early Kofun). 1, Jokansu (Fukuoka); 2, Akinaga (Kumamoto); 3, Ayaragi-Go (Yamaguchi); 4, Shikada (Okayama); 5, Kamoiwakura (Shimane); 6, Sen'yu (Kagawa); 7, Tsudera (Okayama); 8, Tamasutanaka (Okayama); 9, Kamobekawata (Kagawa); 10, Kamei (Osaka); 11, Hasama (Aichi); 12, Araominami (Gifu); 13, Imashuku (Gifu); 14, Hachioji (Aichi); 15, Asahi (Aichi); 16, Awara-Jin'mon (Aichi); 17, Shakayama (Aichi); 18, Kamezuka (Aichi); 19, Kusu (Aichi); 20, Higashikamijo (Aichi); 21, Kurihara (Shizuoka); 22, Shimogo-Tenjinzuka (Gunma); 23, Osakidai (Chiba); 24, Magarimatsu (Ibaragi); X, the ancient Kibi province; Y, the Tokai region. After Shitara 2001.
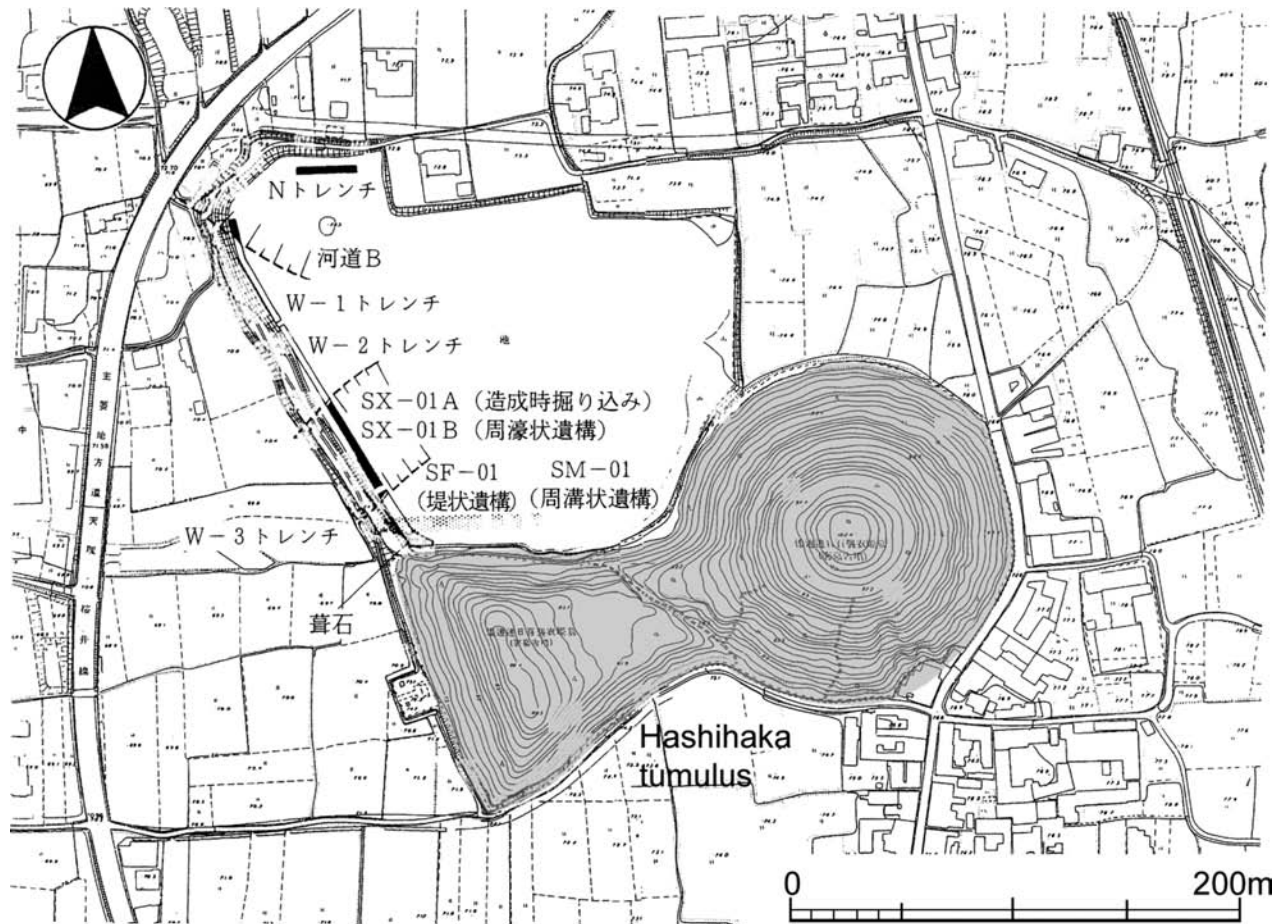
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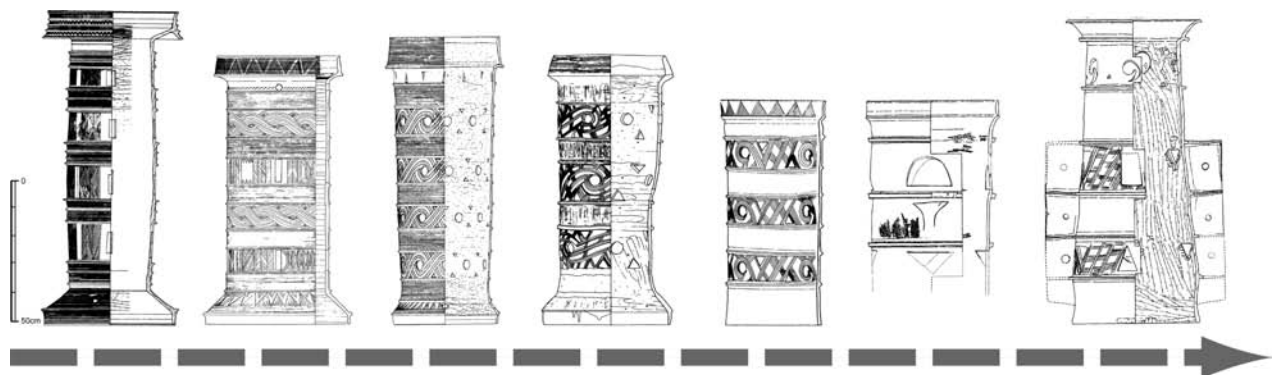Figure 16.12. Hashihaka (Hashinakayama) tumulus.
After Terasawa 2000.

Figure 16.13. Clay cylindrical vessels (*Haniwa*) decorated with characteristic complex curvilinear band motifs. From old to new: Tachisaka type (Tatetsuki), Tachisaka type (Nakayama), Mukogimi type (Yadani), Miyayama type (Miyayama), Totsuki type (classified as the oldest *Haniwa* type) (Totsuki), Early Haniwa type from the Nishitonozuka tumulus, Early Haniwa type from the Higashitonozuka tumulus.
After Mizoguchi 2013, figure 9–9, from the respective excavation reports.

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regionally developed assemblages (Hojo 2000; Terasawa 2000, 264–7). Significantly, some of the exotic items that originated in the Yayoi period were transformed by using different materials to make them; for instance, various armlets, originally made of exotic shells that could only be procured from regions around the Okinawan islands, came to be made of jasper or green tuff procured from the Hokuriku region. Shells were imported from the periphery, or even outside the sphere of normal contact during the Yayoi, and items made of rare stones were taken in from the northeastern edge of the distribution of the earliest keyhole tumuli. These might have metaphorically represented the deceased persons' control over contacts with the *edge of the world* within which the communities (and their elite) could potentially communicate with one another and beyond (cf. Mizoguchi 2002, 162; 2013, 236). If so, this would also effectively have signified symbolically that what was buried with the dead embodied *this* world.

The contents of the assemblage were of a particular symbolic and metaphorical significance (Figure 16.14): the iron tool assemblage often consisted of (a) weapons, (b) woodworking implements, (c) agricultural implements, and, albeit rarely, (d) fishing implements – an interesting component (Figure 16.14). These appear to represent the dominant spheres of social life, in terms of all the important types of labour, that is, (a) communal defence; (b) making various wooden implements, including those used for agricultural work; (c) agricultural activities; and (d) fishing activities, respectively (cf. Mizoguchi 2013, 236–7). The iron tools, in that sense, metaphorically represent significant interfaces with different sources of uncertainties in the world, that is, different types of complexities and contingencies generated by both the natural and cultural environments experienced by people. In addition, the tools classified under (b), (c), and (d) might also have represented the three components of the entire life-world, with (b) representing the mountain, (c) representing the floodplain, and (d) representing the sea.

The assemblage also often included mirrors called '*Sankaku* (triangular) – *en* (rimmed) – *shinju* (with the deity-beast motif) – *kyo* (mirror)'. At present, scholars are involved in a fierce debate as to whether the typologically earlier categories of the specimens were made somewhere in the domain of the Chinese Wei dynasty or at the centre of their distribution, that is, the present-day southern Kinki region (Fukunaga et al. 2003; Terasawa 2000, 305–16; Tsujita 2007). Regardless of where they

were made, however, we can safely say that they represented an alien system of meanings and contacts with an authority and power residing outside the domain within which the communities (and their elite) could potentially communicate. Again, the dead buried with them were signified as competent in contacting the other, and, therefore, effectively, were signified to embody and represent *this* world.

On the whole, many of the attributes of the earliest keyhole tumuli metaphorically represented the *world* – the integration, work, and history of which were symbolised by the tumulus, and by the dead chief who was buried in there. The attributes also represented the three main components of the lived-world, that is, the mountain, the floodplain, and the sea, and the distinct activities conducted in them. Moreover, the keyhole tumulus was utterly new in terms of its gigantic scale, beyond comparison with its regional predecessors, as well as its shape; hence, it was alien to even those who constructed it and buried their elite dead for the first time. In short, the earliest keyhole tumulus represented the beginning, the history of the integration, and the working of the world across which the tumulus and the mortuary custom embodied by it were adopted (cf. Mizoguchi 2013, 236–40).

XI

As we have seen, the time leading to the emergence of the earliest keyhole tumuli witnessed the formation of an extremely wide interaction network, covering the areas in which the earliest keyhole tumuli were constructed (Mizoguchi 2009; Figure 16.10). I have shown elsewhere that this was ignited by (a) the differentiation of elite lineage-scale segments in clan-type sodalities across the areas; (b) the increasing density and frequency of inter-communal contacts and the growing reliance on them by communities, and particularly their elite, for their reproduction; (c) the intensification of inter-communal competition over dominance in such contacts, and over the exchange of goods, information, and people; and (d) the rise of the Chinese empires as the ultimate source of authority for legitimising dominance (2009; 2013, 220–40). These emergent factors would have necessitated the sharing of a unified structure enabling the reproduction of an elite communication sphere, within which the increasingly differentiated and stabilised elite groups, on the one hand, competed against one another for dominance and, on the other hand, collaborated with
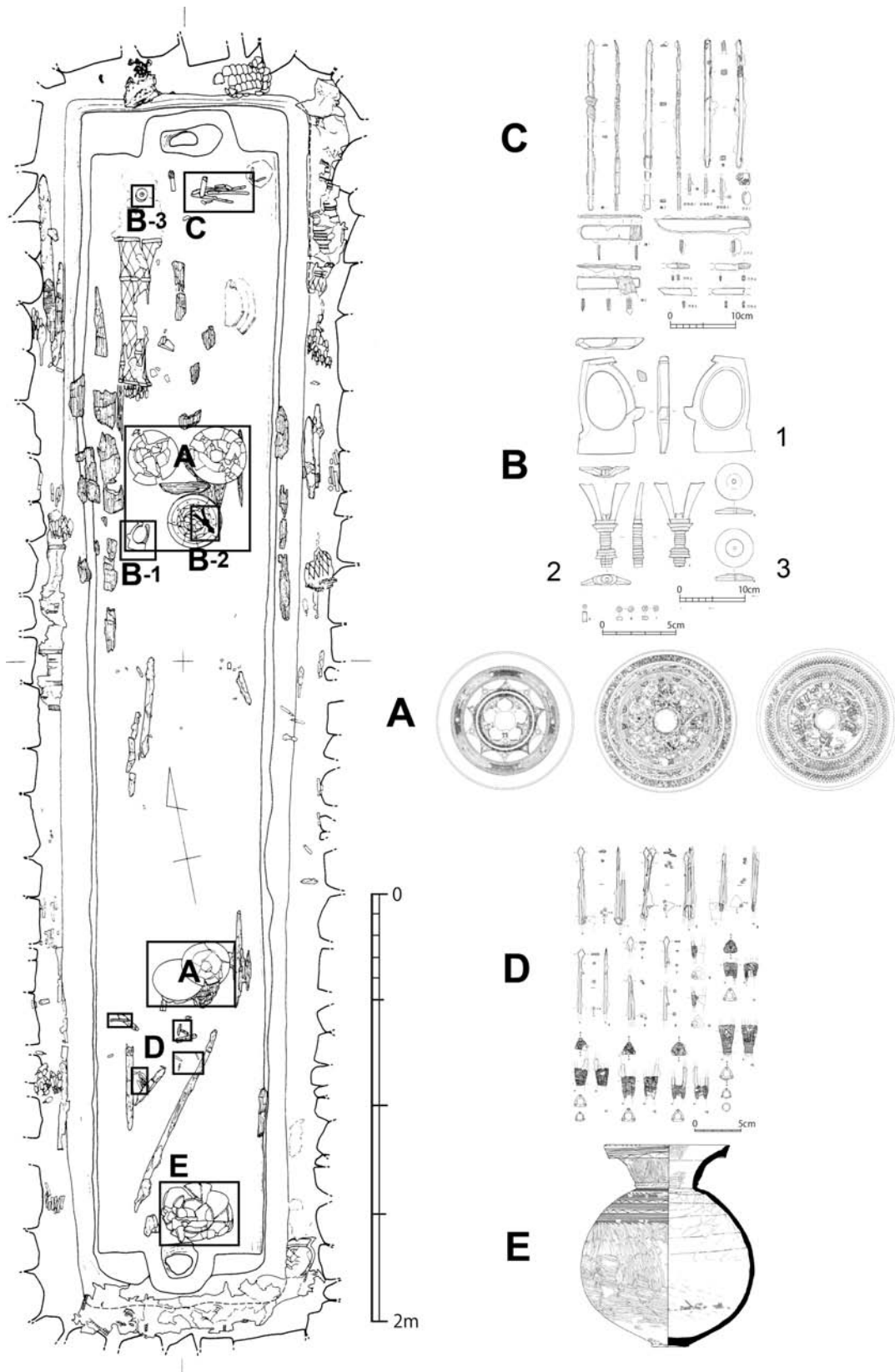
Figure 16.14. The placement of different categories of artefacts with distinct symbolic meanings: the Yukinoyama tumulus. A, Bronze mirrors; B, Stone implements; C, Iron woodworking tools; D, Iron fishing implements, E, Pottery globular jar. After Mizoguchi 2013, figure 9–5, after Fukunaga & Sugii 1996, with additions.

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each other for the constant, uninterrupted flow of goods, information, and people for the reproduction of their communities. In other words, as mentioned, a meta-code for the maintenance of a newly formed communication sphere became necessary.

This structure, ensuring the continuation of the elite communications, would have needed symbolically and metaphorically to embody traditional values, while integrating them with a totally new value, so as to represent the *order of the world*, which transcended the differences between those old value systems. In that regard, the newness and alien nature of the earliest tumulus, as mentioned, seem particularly significant. In a number of mythical narratives describing the origin of chieftainship and kingship, the first leader is supposed to have entered from *outside the domain* (e.g., Sahlins 1985, chapter 2). This *kingly* individual, in these narratives, destroyed the old order and established a new one, as if re-creating the world.

The fact that the reproduction of the sphere of elite interaction relied predominantly upon the unification of mortuary practices provides another important clue to our understanding of the social processes that occurred in the Yayoi–Kofun transitional period. The flow of goods, people, and information, as argued earlier, sharply increased in the Late Yayoi V period. This phenomenon coincided with the beginning of the movement of people across long distances: for instance, between the Kinki and the northern Kyushu region (represented by the presence of Kinki-originated Yayoi V vessels at the Hie-Naka site, along with local-styled vessels partly made using techniques originating in the Kinki region: Fukuoka Municipal Board of Education 1996; see also Mizoguchi 2009). The late Yayoi V period also saw the consolidation of a differentiation between large, 'central-place'-type settlements and smaller, 'satellite'-type sites, which as mentioned began in the Yayoi II period; the former increasingly became the nodes of long-distance interactions. This suggests that, in the central settlements of regional communities, negotiations over the exchange of goods (and possibly people) increasingly involved people from distant places, who did not share the same set of customs and expectations as the local population. The emergence of this situation would have made communications pertaining to the exchange of goods increasingly difficult and stressful. One of the most effective solutions for tackling this problem would have been to forge fictive kinship ties (cf. Kondo 1983) among those who were involved in the negotiations, regardless of their genuine

backgrounds and community affiliations. Marshall Sahlins beautifully illustrates the correlation between increasing kin-distance and a shift in the mode of exchange from sharing through gift-giving and equal-value exchange to strategic exchange (1972). He suggests that the stress and risk of the breakdown of relationships tended to increase as the kin-distance increased, and the mode and norm of exchange became increasingly strategic and profit oriented. Those involved in negotiations that occurred at the central settlements would have been mutually perceived as belonging to different tribal groupings, and Sahlins observes that exchange acts between different tribal groupings tended to be strategic, profit-oriented exchanges often resulting in the total breakdown of the relationship. In order to preclude this possibility, it would have been preferable to forge fictive kinship ties, as suggested. In this regard, ritual practices involving the deposition of bronze items, such as bronze bells, in and around the Kinki region, and bronze spearheads across the northern Kyushu and southern Shikoku regions, carried out to pray for the well-being of the living community, would *not* have been very effective in forging these fictive kinship ties. Clearly, the burial of the dead would have served as a significant occasion, wherein various kin-based social ties could have been confirmed, restructured, and newly forged. In that sense, the sudden emergence of variously shaped tumuli across western Japan in late Yayoi V, and the subsequent, and quite sudden, abandonment of the rituals involving bronze bells and bronze spearheads in the period of Shonai-style pottery, and the beginning of the formalisation of keyhole tumuli during the same period, can all be understood as correlated phenomena that were part of a unified reaction to the rising difficulties generated by the increasing long-distance interactions, and the ever-widening sphere of the exchange of goods, people, and information.

In this sense, I am tempted to speculate that the construction of the Hashihaka (Hashinakayama) tumulus, the largest of the earliest keyhole tumuli (ca. 280 m; Figure 16.12), was a massive ceremonial event that marked, and re-enacted, the birth of the world, consisting of criss-crossing (fictive) kinship ties (Mizoguchi 2013, 236–40). I would further like to speculate that the elite groups and members of their communities involved in the formation of the new order and its network might have willingly volunteered to construct the tumuli. Those who were mobilised for the construction of a monumental tumulus would not necessarily directly have known the chiefly figure buried there nor directly

experienced his or her actions. They would not have been able or allowed to participate in the elaborate mortuary ceremony that took place on the top of the mound in which the dead chief was identified as the embodiment of the fate of the world and the communities that he or she had presided over when living (Mizoguchi 2002, 207–13). In that sense, they, the majority, or the commoners, were alienated from the direct experience of the death and the mourning. At the same time, however, through their involvement in massive communal labour, they would have met people whom they had not met nor worked with before. Further, their meeting and working together were clearly meant to be for the grieving and commemoration of the dead chief, and for the prayer for the continuation of communal well-being that had been embodied by the dead chief when s/he was living. Their grief might have been engineered and artificial. However, the massive collective experience of grief itself would have made what might have been engineered and orchestrated feel *authentic* and *genuine*.

Meanwhile, designing the mound shape, and deciding how to furnish the mound and the mortuary facilities, what grave goods to bury, and how to conduct the ceremonies would have all acquired ritualistic-magical meanings associated with prayers for ensuring the well-being of the (fictive) kinship-tie-based communities involved in the network of interaction. Without doubt, those who presided over the ceremony would have assumed the position of supreme mediators and kin-based-community leaders of the network. This would have signalled the beginning, not the conclusion, of the consolidation process of inter-communal /regional community hierarchisation (cf. Mizoguchi 2013, 236–40).

XII

At this point, the fate of the world became embodied by the chief, both living and dead. His or her face now no longer needed to be represented; s/he was the embodiment of the world, and her or his presence was now signified in a truly monumental form, to be seen and experienced by the whole community, and effectively the whole community now came to feel that it was watched by the dead chief and his or her successor. The dead chief was untouchable, and his or her realm unknowable; it was everything for the well-being of the community, because it was nothing, and it was that *nothing* upon which the survival of the community depended. In this, we are witnessing the emergence of an entity that can be called an *ancient state*, and it can be said that this entity can only have been made possible by referring to death as an absolute paradox, and hence, as an absolute point of reference.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1 I am grateful to Terry D'Altroy for raising the question whether the process was driven by the strategic intent of the agent or not in the question and answer session following my presentation in the conference.
2 This can be compared to the creation of a novel cosmological order by drawing upon pre-existing principles invented locally and imposing it upon equivalent regional cosmologies as the ruling ideology in the Inca empire (cf. D'Altroy 2002).

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Death and Mortuary Rituals in Mainland Southeast Asia: From Hunter-Gatherers to the God Kings of Angkor

Charles F. W. Higham

INTRODUCTION

The archaeological sequence in Mainland Southeast Asia, following the long occupation by *Homo erectus*, began with the expansion of anatomically modern humans at least 50,000 years ago. Sites particularly for the earlier millennia are few, and many will have been drowned with the inundation of Sundaland. However, three distinct types of site are known: upland rock shelters, open sites in the interior lowlands, and coastal settlements occupied from about 2500 BC, when the sea level was a few metres higher than at present.

From about 2000 BC, Southeast Asia was penetrated along riverine highways and the coast by intrusive groups of Neolithic rice farmers, ultimately from the Yangtze Valley. They integrated with the indigenous hunter-gatherers, although some of the latter maintain their traditional ways in remote forested habitats, and settled into permanent villages. Since rice can mature in the same fields without rotation provided there is sufficient rainfall, some prehistoric settlements were continuously occupied for centuries, others for millennia. Widespread exchange carried the knowledge of copper-based metallurgy to Thailand by the eleventh century BC, heralding a Bronze Age that lasted for about six centuries, when the opening of a maritime exchange network linking Southeast Asia with Indian and Chinese state societies introduced iron technology and a wide range of new and exotic valuables, including glass, carnelian, agate, and gold. This fertile combination of indigenous aggrandizers and exotic goods and ideas was to generate rapid social changes involving the formation of complex chiefdoms and then state societies, the best known being centred at Angkor in Cambodia. This cultural sequence incorporates much mortuary data beginning with nuclei of flexed inhumations and ending at Angkor Wat with one of the world's largest mausolea, the tomb of the god king Suryavarman II.

HUNTER-GATHERERS

Since inland rock shelters were occupied briefly, burials are rarely encountered. Between 8000 BC and 13,000 BC, graves at Tham Lod and Ban Rai in northern Thailand (Figure 17.1) comprised a shallow scoop, and burial either in a tightly flexed or an extended position (Pureepatpong 2006). The four burials at the former site were accompanied only by a hammer stone. In southern Thailand at Moh Kiew, a single flexed and three extended burials were found, dating to about 25,000 years ago (Oota et al. 2001). Again, the only mortuary offerings were flaked stone tools and quartz pebbles. Moving north to Guangxi province in southern China, the cavern of Zengpiyan, occupied between 10,000 BC and 5000 BC, contained eighteen burials in a flexed or seated position, six of whom had artificial perforations in the skull, while some graves contained red ochre (Pearson 2005). Sites in the interior plains, particularly when adjacent to rivers, had the potential for longer occupancy. Recent excavations in Guangxi have uncovered extensive areas of hunter-gatherer settlements dating to the fifth to third millennia BC with associated cemeteries. Two tightly flexed burials from Gexinqiao were accompanied by river cobbles, and the cemetery at Chongtang involved a group of twenty-six flexed interments. Niulandong in Guangdong province, occupied between 7000 BC and 6000 BC, contained two burials in a seated, flexed
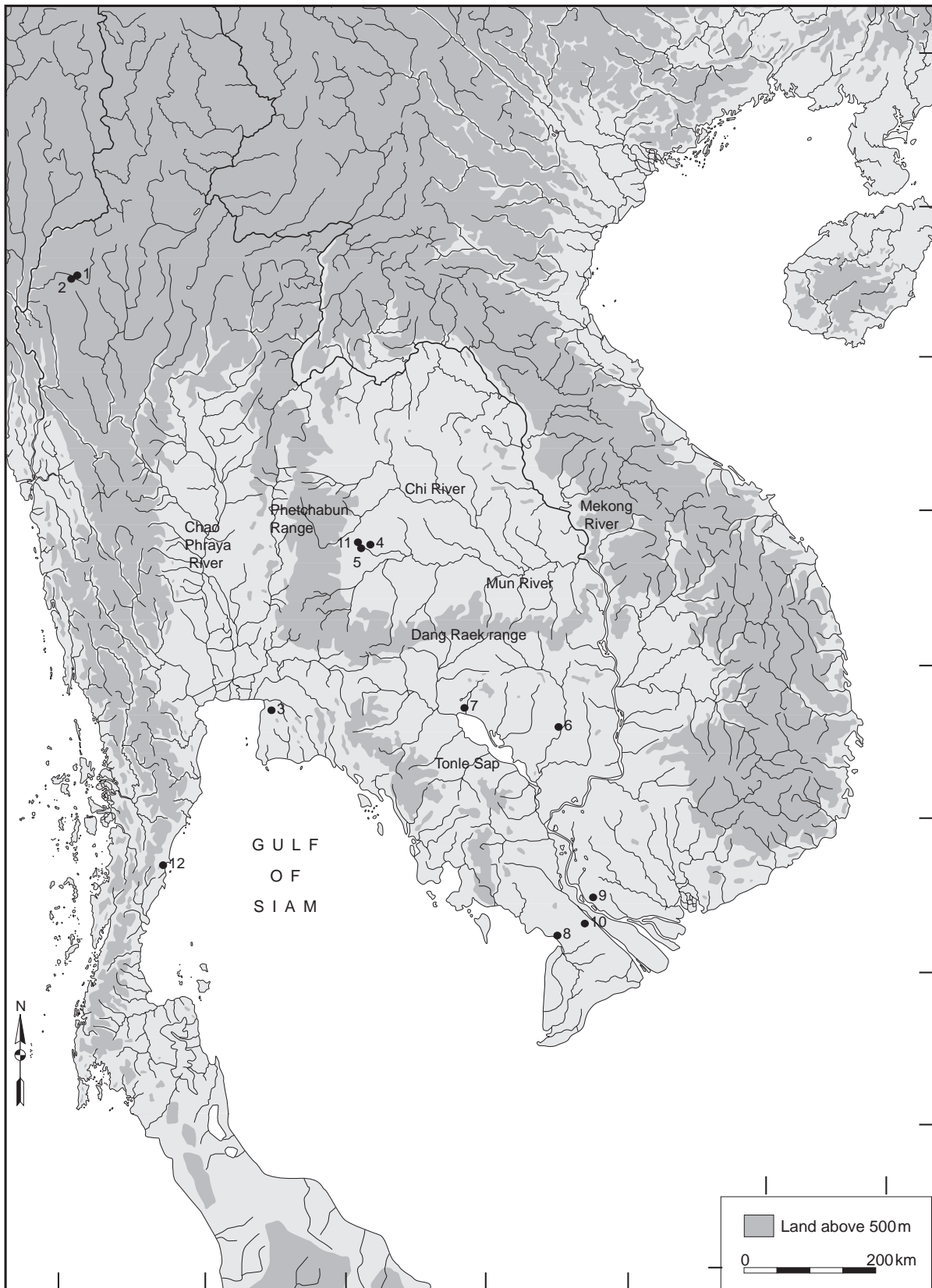
Figure 17.1. Map of Southeast Asia showing the location of the sites discussed in the text. 1, Tham Lod; 2, Ban Rai; 3, Khok Phanom Di; 4, Ban Non Wat; 5, Noen U-Loke; 6, Isanapura; 7, Angkor; 8, Nen Chua; 9, Go Thap; 10, Go Xoai; 11, Non Ban Jak; 12, Khao Sam Kaeo. Guangxi sites are to the north.
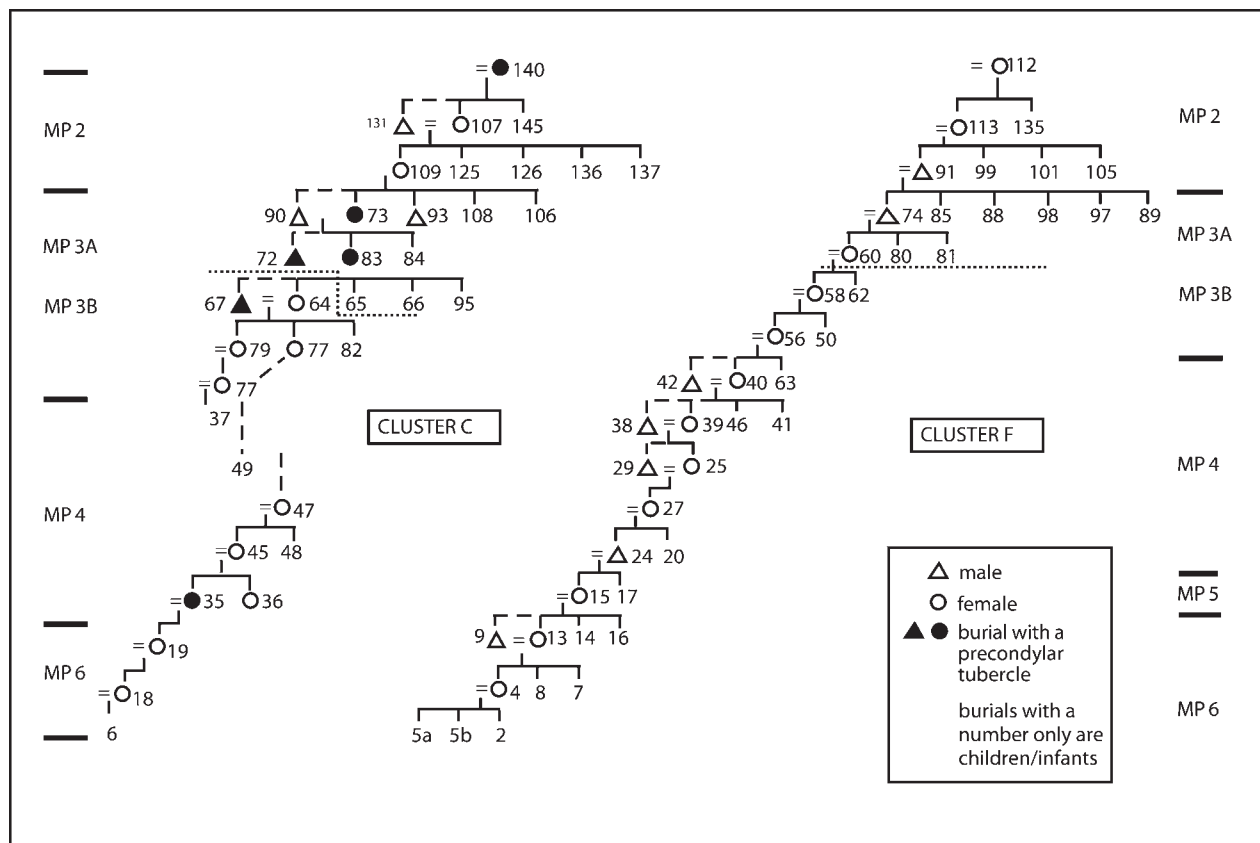
Figure 17.2. The reconstructed genealogy of two descent groups at Khok Phanom Di, showing individuals with a precondylar tubercle.

position, one of whom had two bivalve shells placed over the cranium (Higham and Xie Guangmao 2011).

Such sites are very rare in the inland riverine plains of Southeast Asia, where deforestation and sedimentation have covered early landscapes. At Ban Non Wat in the upper Mun Valley, a cemetery of flexed burials has been uncovered. Dating to the second millennium BC, it has some individuals who were interred with no mortuary offerings and others buried wearing shell ornaments. One woman carried a pig's cranium; there was also one stone adze, a pottery vessel, and, as at Niulandong, large bivalve shells. The graves were scattered across the excavated area, but in two cases there was clearly a relationship between those interred: a woman held an infant in her arms, and a man and woman were found in close proximity.

There is a consistent pattern in the mortuary practices of inland hunter–gatherers over a period of at least 25,000 years. The dead were usually interred in a flexed or foetal position, aggregated in cemeteries. Grave goods and evidence for ritual were minimal. Bivalve shells,

which were to figure prominently in later periods, and red ochre are the only hints at the notion of immortality, or at least rebirth. It is evident that the anatomically modern humans who populated Mainland Southeast Asia, and indeed the islands beyond and Australia, introduced the practice of ceremonial disposal of the dead.

Khok Phanom Di is located on a former shore on the eastern margin of the Gulf of Siam. It commanded the mangrove-fringed estuary of the Bang Pakong River, one of the richest of natural habitats in terms of bio–productivity. Ancestral coastal sites are presumed inundated. Over a period of five centuries from approximately 2000 BC, the mound accumulated to a depth of twelve metres in a mortuary sequence divided into seven phases (Higham & Thosarat 2004). The rapid accumulation of cultural deposits reflects the presence of thick shell middens. This has caused the dead to be buried superimposed. The analysis of cranial abnormalities and patterns of tooth evulsion suggests that the burials contained people related consanguinally. Figure 17.2 shows the reconstructed genealogies of two proposed

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descent groups. These are the basis for reviewing a mortuary sequence that allows one to chart mortuary rituals over an estimated seventeen to twenty generations within the context of changes in the social and physical environments.

MP1 comprises six graves, presumably early, if not the initial people to occupy the site. One was in a flexed position, the others extended with the head to the east. As with their contemporaries in the interior, mortuary offerings were minimal: a neonate had red ochre and the remains of a fabric shroud, and a man wore twelve shell beads. The others had nothing. The ensuing three mortuary phases present a clear structure: the dead were interred in tight clusters on a chequer board pattern (Figure 17.3). Two clusters were enduring; the others did not last the course. Each comprises the graves of men, women, a few children, and many infants, most of whom died at or soon after birth. MP2 included six such clusters, each revealing a notable amount of energy expended on mortuary rituals. Bodies were wrapped in a shroud of bark cloth or asbestos, covered in red ochre, and laid on a bier in individual graves. Pottery vessels placed with the dead were expertly made, brilliantly burnished, and incised with complex designs. One man wore thirty-nine thousand shell disc beads, a cowrie shell that was probably exotic, and bangles that were fashioned from fish vertebrae. Other grave goods included rhinoceros teeth and burnishing stones used in decorating pottery vessels. No differences have been identified to distinguish the treatment in death of men and women, but some individuals stand out on account of their quantity of shell beads. Many pits were found in the vicinity of the graves, containing unopened shellfish, and thick shell middens suggest that mortuary feasting took place.

With MP3A, the clusters of graves directly above the ancestors were demarcated by a thick shell midden that followed straight lines and turned right angles. This can only have occurred if the shells accumulated against a structure, and we have suggested that there were mortuary houses for the members of different descent groups (Higham & Thosarat 2004). Further pits containing shellfish are compatible with feasting and food for the dead. Each building contained men, women, infants, and children placed alongside and over each other in a dense grouping of graves. The same range of mortuary offerings as during MP2 continued, but one man was differentiated on the basis of a set of unique items: a rare and exotic nautilus shell, a fish skeleton, a shark's fin spine, and a small stone chisel.

MP3B involved significant developments. Some women who went to the site had been raised in a different environment (Bentley et al. 2007); pottery vessel forms changed and were made from a different clay source. Granite hoes and reaping knives were now being made, and the stomach contents of one woman contained domesticated rice. Significantly, this phase saw the first distinction in the treatment of men and women, which was to strengthen in time. A man was interred with a turtle carapace ornament, and a woman with the anvil used to fashion pottery vessels.

With MP4, there is compelling biological evidence for the advent of fresh water conditions, and the number of shell reaping knives surged. The distinction between men and women was maintained, the former being associated with large turtle carapace ornaments that were deliberately broken over the corpse. The number of shell beads declined quite sharply. Indeed apart from red ochre being dusted over virtually every corpse, grave goods were sparse: one or two pottery vessels, accoutrements for making pots with women, and broken turtle carapaces with men.

All this changed dramatically with MP5. In terms of the environment, there was a reversion to saline mangrove conditions as the sea level edged higher. Hoes and shell sickles were no longer found. There was a sharp increase in the manufacture of large storage vessels thought to have been destined for exchange, and burial in clusters ceased. Instead, one woman was found associated with two infants and one man. The woman was interred in a grave larger than any other (Figure 17.4). She lay under a pile of clay cylinders thought to have been preforms for fashioning pots. Her skeleton was thickly coated with blood red ochre, and she had been interred wearing at least two garments covered in reflectant shell beads: there were 120,787 disc beads and a further 950 large I-shaped beads in the form of necklaces. Two horned shell discs lay over the upper chest, and she wore a shell bangle and shell ear ornaments, all the exotic shell being from a clean coralline sea. By her right ankle, there lay a shell containing two burnishing stones and a clay anvil. Her wrist musculature was strongly developed, as would be the case for someone habitually kneading and working clay. Ten fine pottery vessels accompanied her. A contemporary burial in a narrow and precisely adjacent grave contained the headless skeleton of a man with just two pottery vessels.

Beside these, again in a grave far larger than necessary, lay a fifteen-month-old infant again covered in red ochre
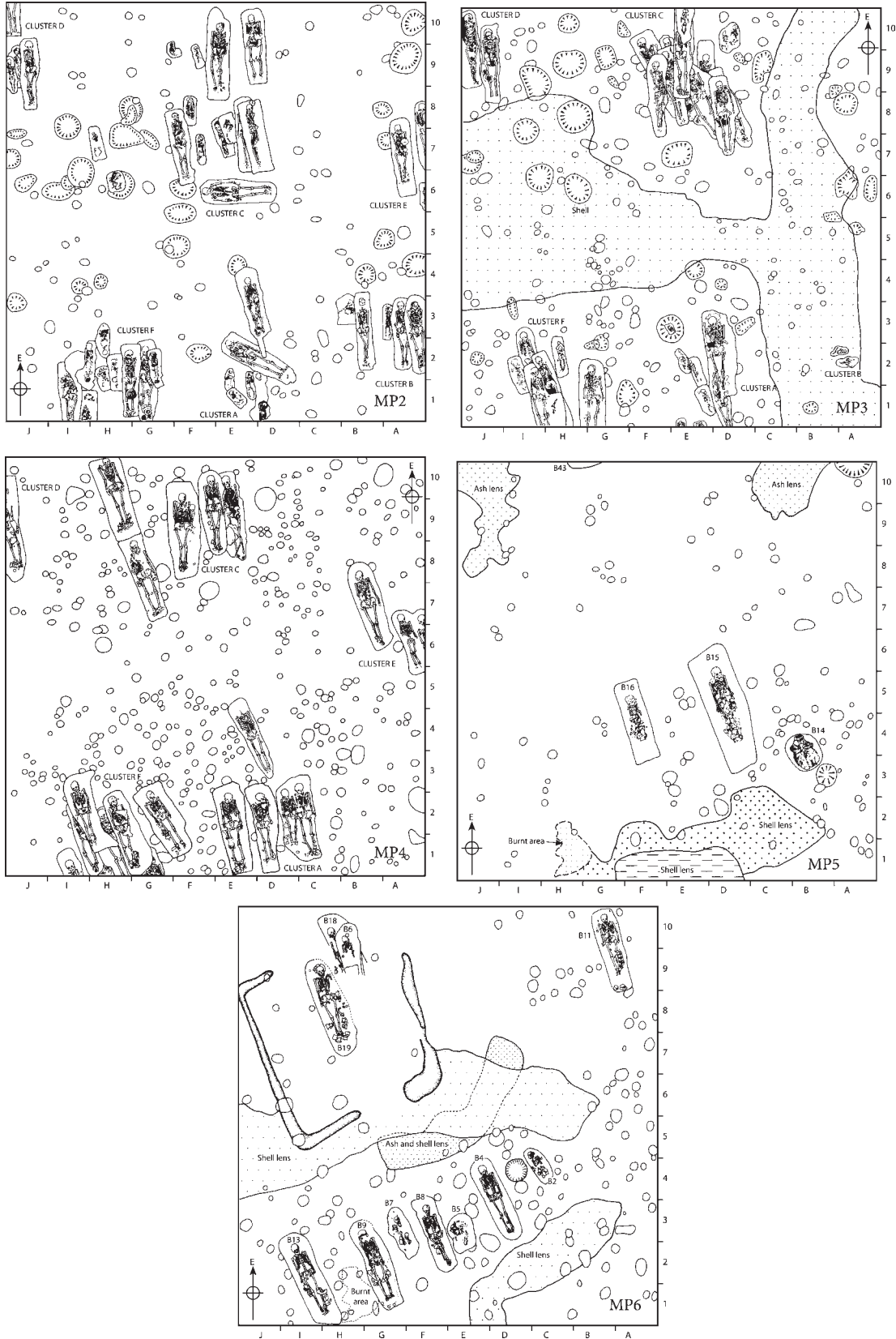
Figure 17.3. The second to the sixth mortuary phases at Khok Phanom Di.

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Figure 17.4. Khok Phanom Di, burial 15, a woman wearing more than 120,000 shell beads.

with a clay anvil, and one had two burnishing stones. In front, there was a wooden structure enclosing a row of adult, child, and infant burials with markedly poorer offerings. The three individuals in the raised structure were associated with thirty thousand shell beads, whereas the two men, two women, and four infants in the wooden building wore only fourteen. Both women had the tools for making and burnishing pots.

The mortuary record at Khok Phanom Di covers about seventeen to twenty generations over a five-century period in which we can trace intimate details of environmental change (Higham & Thosarat 2004). Continuity in patterns of tooth evulsion and cranial abnormalities supports the conclusion that each of the clusters included successive members of the same descent group. The evidence from isotopes indicated that the initial settlers travelled to the site from a different environment, followed by continuity save for the introduction of some women into the community during MP3b. Within a sequence in which coastal hunting and gathering dominated subsistence, with a brief interval of lowered sea level that permitted rice cultivation, it is possible to trace threads of both continuity and change. We have proposed four possible social interpretations of this sequence, but will stress common features (Higham & Thosarat 2004).

The ancestors were remembered and recognized as anchors to the settlement. Death was accompanied by established rituals: the body was wrapped in a fabric or asbestos shroud and interred on a wooden bier or probably in a coffin. Adults and infants were sprinkled with red ochre. Ceramic vessels were placed with the body, and the corpse often wore shell or bone ornaments. From at least MP3B, men and women were distinguished by turtle carapaces with the former, and the tools for making pottery vessels with the latter. Associated pits and shell middens may well have accumulated during mortuary feasts as the dead were placed within chambered collective tombs. Breaking objects was part of the ritual: mens' carapace ornaments, large enough to cover the chest, were fractured; pots were often broken; rims of pots were removed. Some individuals wore more than an ordinary wealth of ornaments during most mortuary phases. This rose to a zenith with MP5, at a time when the quantity of pottery produced showed a marked increase, and exotic shell ornaments were worn in quantities not seen before or since at this site or any other in Southeast Asia. This was followed by the interment of two groups, one rich, the other poor.

wearing 12,247 shell beads. A shell bangle lay over the infant's wrist, many clay cylinders covered the corpse, and a miniature clay anvil lay beside the ankle. A second man, found just within the excavated area, died when aged about thirty and was also very richly endowed. He wore about 57,000 shell beads, two large shell discs, a shell bangle, and the usual turtle shell ornament.

The sixth phase saw further changes. There were two structures. One, a raised chamber with clay wall foundations and floor contained two richly endowed women and a child (Figure 17.5). Both women were associated

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Figure 17.5. The mortuary building from Khok Phanom Di, mortuary phase 6.

It is concluded that taking advantage of its nodal estuarine position for exchange, the women of Khok Phanom Di, those who made the pottery vessels for exchange, were critically important to the aspirations of their society: we see this in the treatment of an infant of fifteen months who was interred with clay preforms and a miniature potters' anvil. Several other infants were found interred in women's arms. The consistent employment of blood-red ochre and provision of pottery vessels suited to contain food and drink hint at a belief in immortality by rebirth beyond death. Distinguishing particular individuals through interment with on occasion unusual, even massive, quantities of exotic shell jewellery is seen as reflecting their success in making and trading desirable items, just as is seen among women and men in Melanesia to this day (Battaglia 1983; Lepowsky 1983). Life as a hunter-gatherer-fisher was no impediment to social aggrandizers seeking and obtaining prestige.

THE NEOLITHIC

Ban Non Wat and Noen U-Loke are located in the upper Mun Valley of northeast Thailand. They provide the anchor chronology for the period spanning the initial Neolithic to the end of the Iron Age (Higham & Higham 2009). In addition to data bearing on industrial and economic activities, these sites have yielded nearly one thousand human burials divided into twelve successive phases. They will therefore be the principal vehicle for exploring the treatment of death over an unbroken sequence of about one hundred generations covering later prehistory.

The initial Neolithic settlement of Southeast Asia involved farmers who cultivated rice and millet and maintained domestic pigs and cattle. Originating in southern China, they introduced an established mortuary tradition of interring the dead in an extended supine position associated with a range of grave goods. Burial of adults in pottery vessels was less common.

At Ban Non Wat, such a group settled in the seventeenth century BC (Higham & Kijngam 2011). Their cemetery contained at least seventeen adults and thirteen infants or children. Two adults had each been inserted into a lidded pottery vessel in a seated, crouched position, the man accompanied by a small pot and a bivalve shell (Figure 17.6). The woman was also found with five cowrie shells, while the pot of the man was intricately decorated with red-painted and incised designs. An imaginative interpretation would conclude that the pots are womb
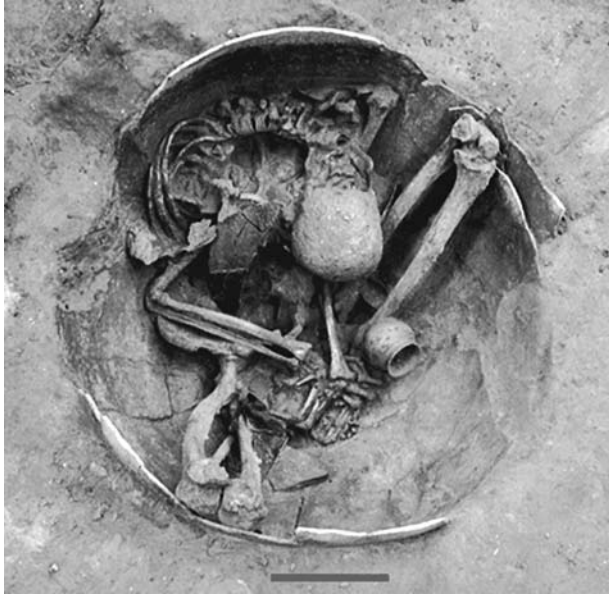
Figure 17.6. Ban Na Di, burial 28, a male jar burial from Neolithic phase 1. Scale 0.20 m.

shaped. Infants were buried in matching but smaller lid-ded pots in a foetal position. The interior surface of the lids was often painted with parallel red lines forming a stylized design often referred to as human-like. Most adults were found inhumed in a supine position, accom-panied by pottery vessels again bearing complex incised and painted designs. Bivalve shells were not uncommon in these graves, and pig bones or fish were also present with some adults and children. Some corpses had been covered in a layer of shellfish. Orientation with the head to the north was preferred, and there was no nucleation of graves, or pattern suggesting more than one group.

The same situation applies to the cemetery of the sec-ond Neolithic phase (1250–1050 BC), when pottery ves-sels were no longer ornamented. Compared with those of the hunter-fishers of Khok Phanom Di, graves were poorly endowed: bivalve shells were rare, there was no red ochre, and only a handful of individuals were accom-panied by fish or pig bones.

THE BRONZE AGE

This situation changed dramatically with the early Bronze Age (Figure 17.7, Higham 2011a). The continuity of ceramic forms from the late Neolithic suggests that the properties of copper were introduced to this commu-nity without any break in occupation. The seven burials of Bronze Age (BA) 1 (1050–1000 BC), however, reveal

much more complex behaviour during mortuary rituals. Graves were cut deeply into the substrate, and the dead were contained within a wooden coffin, one of which had a pointed end resembling the prow of a boat. Whereas late Neolithic people were buried with one or two pots, those of the early Bronze Age had up to seventeen, some containing pig bones. Red ochre made its appearance for the first time. Bivalve shells were now more common and located with some care relative to the body. Exotic shell ornaments included hundreds of beads – more than two thousand with one young woman – and marine trochus shell bangles. Two skeletons lay under a carpet of gas-tropod shells. The burials themselves were confined to a small part of the excavated area.

It was, however, with BA2 that the fullest expression of wealth and ritual behaviour was encountered within the Bronze Age sequence. The dead were now interred in a series of rows containing men, women, infants, and chil-dren. Graves were constructed that were far larger than was necessary to contain a coffin. The spaces round the body were filled with rows of up to seventy or eighty pottery vessels. Red ochre was now liberally employed (Figure 17.8). Bivalve shells increased in both frequency and numbers. Copper axes, bells, chisels, and awls were encountered. Exotic marine shell beads numbered in the tens of thousands; tridacna, trochus, and marble bangles abounded. Many pottery vessels were painted with com-plex red designs, one showing a frieze of dancers, another bearing red imprints of human hands. Infants who sur-vived even for a few months were interred with lavish offerings including copper axes, exotic shell jewellery, and pottery vessels, one of them in the form of a fruit bowl painted with a human face with penetrating eyes. Neonates were found in large lidded and decorated pot-tery vessels. Some of these were embellished with a raised cordon resembling a snake (Figure 17.9). When describ-ing the later Dian chiefdom of Yunnan, Chinese accounts record that a snake, in that it sloughs its skin, represents rebirth (Ti & Dadao 1983). These same vessels were reg-ularly punctuated with small holes, and the lid of one was painted with a design that could be seen as the act of parturition. Perhaps the most significant characteris-tic of this BA2 cemetery, however, is that three men and two women were partially exhumed after primary burial, before being reburied. The limb bones of one young man were carefully arranged with the skull placed on top, fac-ing the rising sun.

The interpretation of this unique assemblage in the Bronze Age of Southeast Asia is that the mortuary
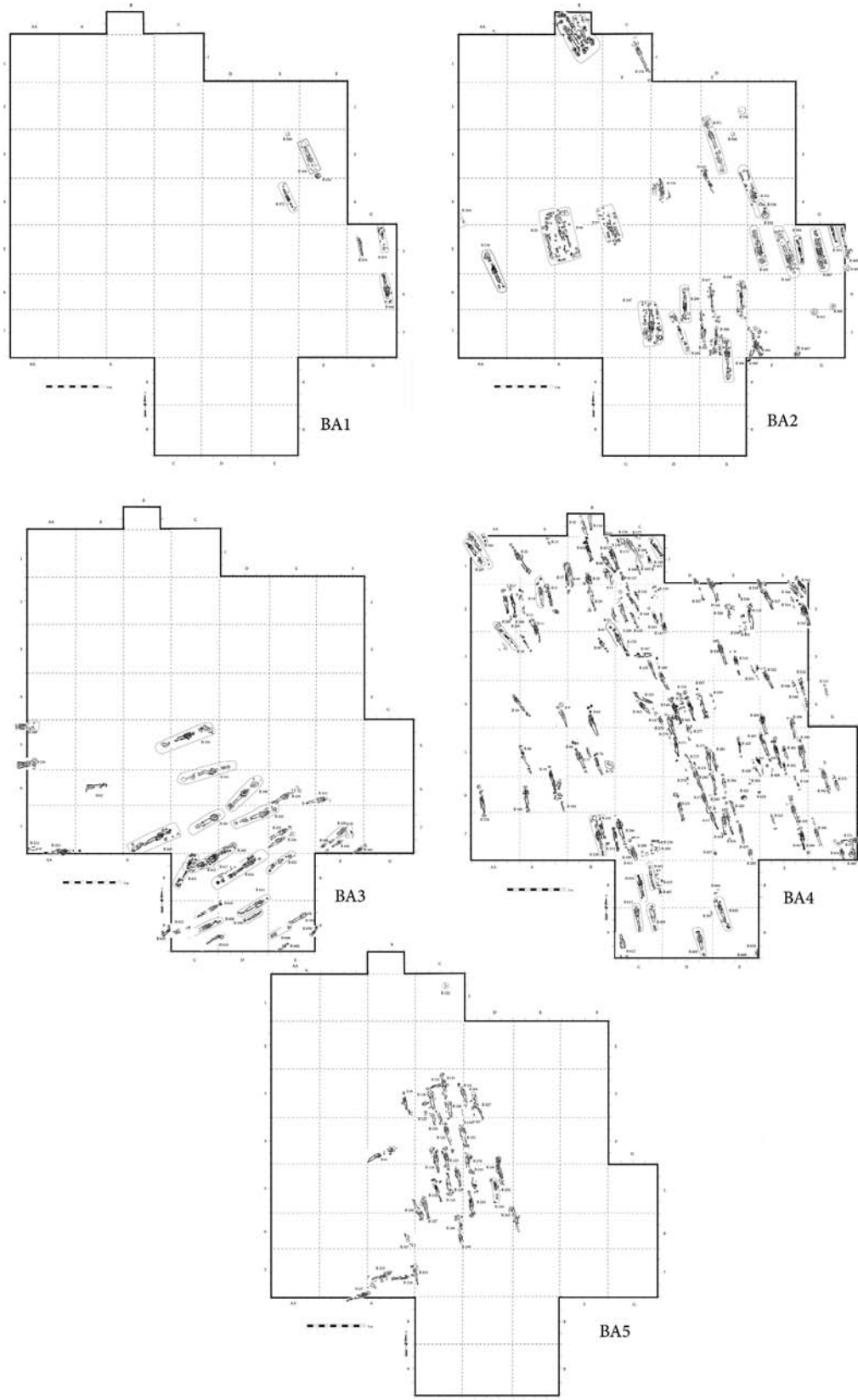
Figure 17.7. The layout of the Bronze Age cemetery of Ban Non Wat over the five phases, 1000–420 BC.

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Figure 17.8. Ban Non Wat burial 106, BA2, showing reburied human bones and a pool of red ochre. Scale 50 mm.

Figure 17.9. Ban Non Wat burial 532, BA2. An infant mortuary vessel embellished with a snake-like raised cordon.

behaviour was generated by a lineage of aggrandizers who controlled the ownership of the new range of exotic valuables then entering exchange routes and expressed their new-found status in lavish mortuary feasts. Hence, the range of ceramic vessels designed for food and liquid containment, and the quantities of fish and pig remains in the graves. The exhumation of the particularly rich may well have been done to involve illustrious ancestors in further ritual events.

This complex protocol of burial continued into BA3A. Again, burials were found in rows within a defined part of the excavated area although on a different orientation. The weight of exotic stone and shell ornaments may be seen in the fact that one man wore sixty-five shell bangles, and the arms of another were covered by fifty-four trochus, eighteen tridacna, and two marble bangles. An infant wore copper-based anklets to which thirty bells were attached. However, this outstanding wealth fell dramatically with BA3B, a trend that continued into BA4 and 5.

Elite status expressed in mortuary rituals at Bronze Age Ban Non Wat was not easily maintained. The BA3B

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and 4 burials reveal just the same characteristics as their forebears. There was the same provision of pottery vessels, the wearing of exotic shell and marble ornaments, the incorporation of food remains, and the placement of the dead in neatly arranged groupings in which the graves formed columns and rows. However, the numbers of pots, quantities of jewellery, and sizes of graves all fell away. Within each of four groups of BA4 burials, only one or two individuals stand out on the basis of mortuary offerings, and none approached the wealth associated with even the poorest BA2 person. One man was interred with twenty-nine clay moulds for casting axes and bangles. Apart from these items, he was poorly endowed. As at Khok Phanom Di, special skills were acknowledged by the interment of a person's personal tools.

Slight changes in pot forms and the superposition of graves signal the fifth and final Bronze Age phase. The dead continued to be interred as their ancestors had been, but now we find that some pots contained several fish skeletons as well as pig and cattle bones. Again, the artisanal skills of individuals were recorded in the death rites: adults were now often accompanied by spindle whorls and caches of grey clay. The former indicate a community involved in weaving; the latter can used as a dye or mordant. Symbolic items continued to include bivalve shells. Red ochre now was in the form of moulded pellets, one man being interred with twelve of these, some placed over the head, others in pottery vessels. Clay artefacts moulded into the form of a phallus were found with two men and a woman; these remain enigmatic objects.

THE IRON AGE

Any consideration of the Iron Age in Southeast Asia must take into account the changing social scene that resulted from the establishment of maritime trade routes. These linked the region with China, India, and beyond to Iran and the Mediterranean world, and came to be known as the 'Maritime Silk Road'. By at least the fourth century BC, Indian craft specialists were present at coastal port settlements such as Khao Sam Kaeo in peninsular Thailand, manufacturing hard stone and glass beads to satisfy local patrons (Bellina & Silapanth 2006). It is possible that it was through this exposure to new ideas and people that knowledge of iron smelting also reached Southeast Asia. No burials have been identified at Khao Sam Kaeo, but at Ban Non Wat and Noen U-Loke, it is possible to examine the impact of this sea-change through Iron Age

cemeteries. Four phases have been recognized, covering the millennium from 420 BC to about AD 600.

At Ban Non Wat, the transition into Iron Age (IA) 1 (420–100 BC) can be traced seamlessly as the BA5 cemetery expanded eastward, incorporating graves with the earliest iron offerings (Higham 2011b). There are two groups of graves, laid out one with the head to the north, the other with the head to the south (Figure 17.10). Each contains the remains of men, women, infants, and children. They were interred cheek by jowl in hollowed tree coffins, but as one proceeds through time in an easterly direction, individual graves dominated. Again, there was continuity in the ancestral protocols around the dead. Similar pottery vessels were placed in the coffin, often filled with fish skeletons. Pellets of red ochre and bivalve shells were placed with the corpse. As with BA5, spindle whorls and clay caches acknowledged individual skills. However, the availability of novel ornaments signals the beginning of a major change. Iron was used for making bangles. There were very rare glass ear rings, and a handful of individuals were buried with a carnelian or agate bead. Iron was also forged into weapons and tools. There were bimetallic spears, with an iron blade on a bronze socket, as well as spears of iron alone. Socketed hoes were forged, and some adults were interred with kits of small iron tools, including knives and awls, contained within a cloth bag to judge from the surviving pseudomorphic fabric. Compared with the late Bronze Age, there was a distinct but not overwhelming increase in the quantity of bronze ornaments, in the form mainly of bangles. Two infants were found with intricately decorated bangles and anklets, respectively, cast with considerable expertise by the lost wax method. However, the application of multivariate statistics to the complete assemblage of Iron Age burials has failed to identify any significant differences between the two groups, or over time. A handful of adults stand out as being relatively, but not overwhelmingly, richer than the rest, but only by having more of the same range of goods, rather than any that are qualitatively different.

Tracing the further development of Iron Age society in the upper Mun Valley now involves moving to Noen U-Loke, a large mound ringed by five moats and banks just 1.80 km west of Ban Non Wat (Higham et al. 2007). Here, there are only six IA1 burials, but while having the same forms of pottery vessels, the same fish and pig bone offerings and iron spears, they also differ (Figure 17.11). A woman, for example, wore decorative iron neck rings as well as iron bangles. Two men interred beside each
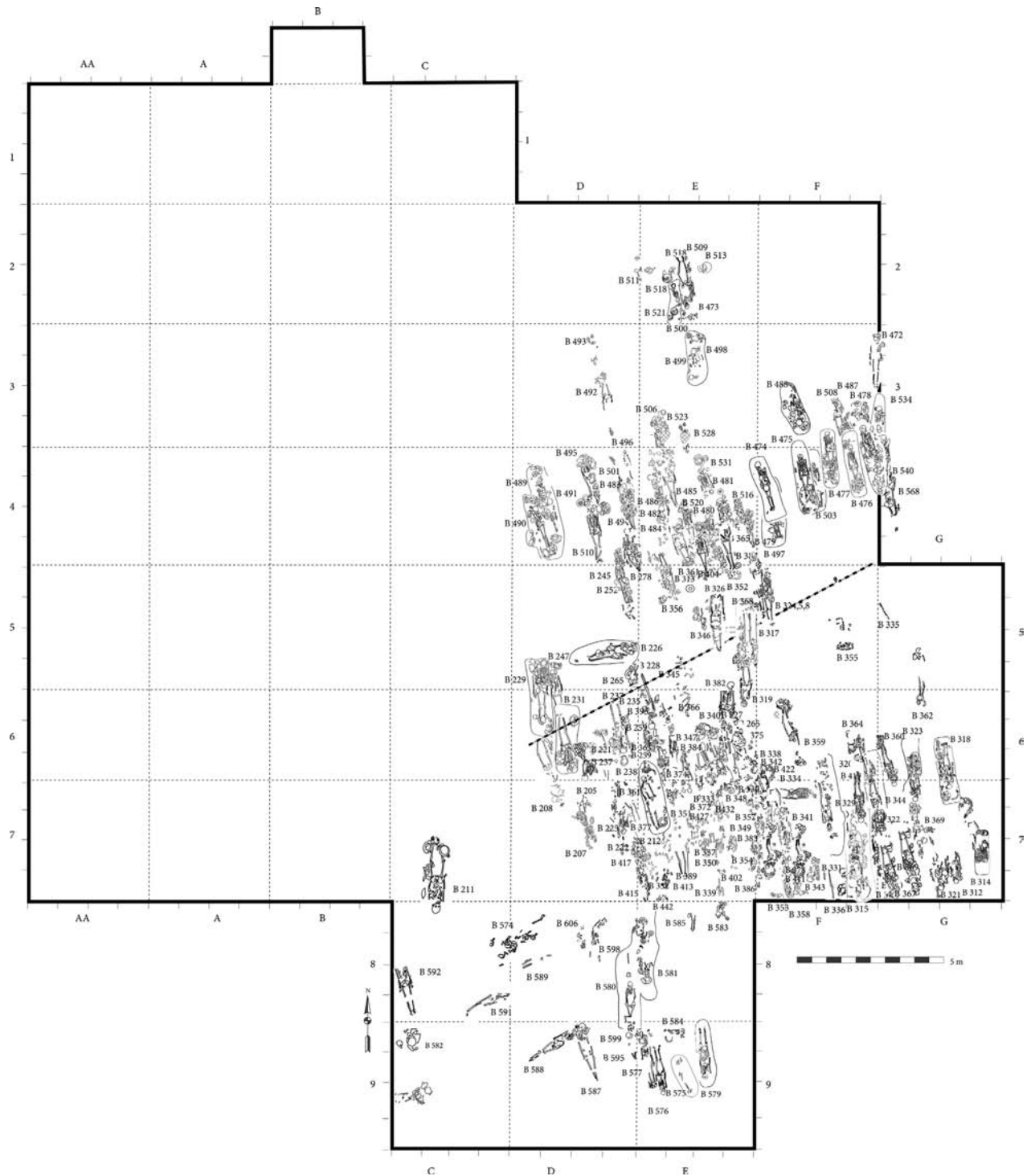
Figure 17.10. The layout of the Iron Age phase 1 cemetery of Ban Non Wat.

other wore necklaces, one of tigers' canines, the other of boars' tusks. The former had bronze bangles, socketed spears, an iron hoe, a massive iron spear, and shell ear discs. One young man, buried prone, had suffered from leprosy.

There are two tightly nucleated groups of graves in IA2 (100 BC–AD 200). One may be earlier than the other, but this is not established. This group contained the earliest agate pendant and glass beads, and pig bones, including a complete skeleton, accompanied the dead. The second

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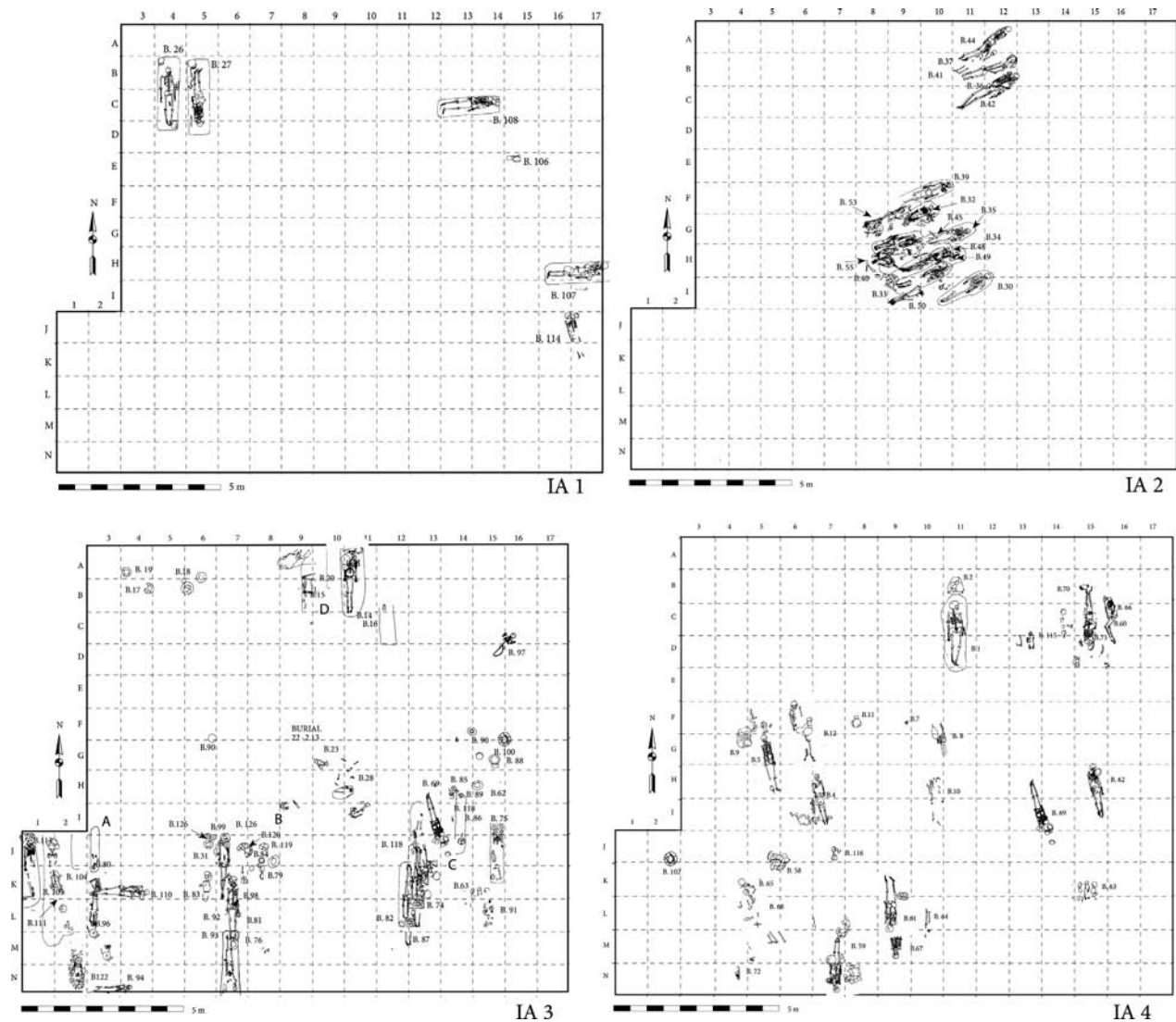
Figure 17.11. The layout of the four Iron Age mortuary phases at Noen U-Loke.

group was far the richer and death rituals incorporated a significant new development in that the graves were filled with rice that had been subjected to considerable heat. Strings of glass beads were worn as necklaces, embellished with beads of carnelian and agate. Bronze ornaments include finger and toe rings, bells, bangles, and a large spiral attached to the side of a young man's head. It was also at this juncture that the first evidence for residential burial was identified, where some graves were sealed by a floor that had been severed by a late interment (Higham & Thosarat 2007, 162). Hitherto, the Neolithic to Bronze Age burials seem to have been confined in cemeteries within the bounds of the settlement. A change to residential burial has significant implications for the rise of competitive descent groups (Adams & King 2010).

During IA3 (AD 200–400) at Noen U-Loke, mortuary rituals reached the height of complexity (Figure 17.12). Again the dead were interred in tightly nucleated groups, on a chequer board pattern, although there is no clear evidence for associated house structures. Each contained the graves of men, women, infants, and children. Rice filled the graves, some of which were walled and capped with clay. Even infants in burial jars were covered with burnt rice. It is considered likely that each of these groups comprised individuals related consanguinally or affinally and represents social divisions in the community at large. The single most significant finding is that there was a remarkable surge in mortuary wealth, with at least one person in three of the four nuclei being outstanding. In cluster A, for example, a woman wore 2 agate pendants,
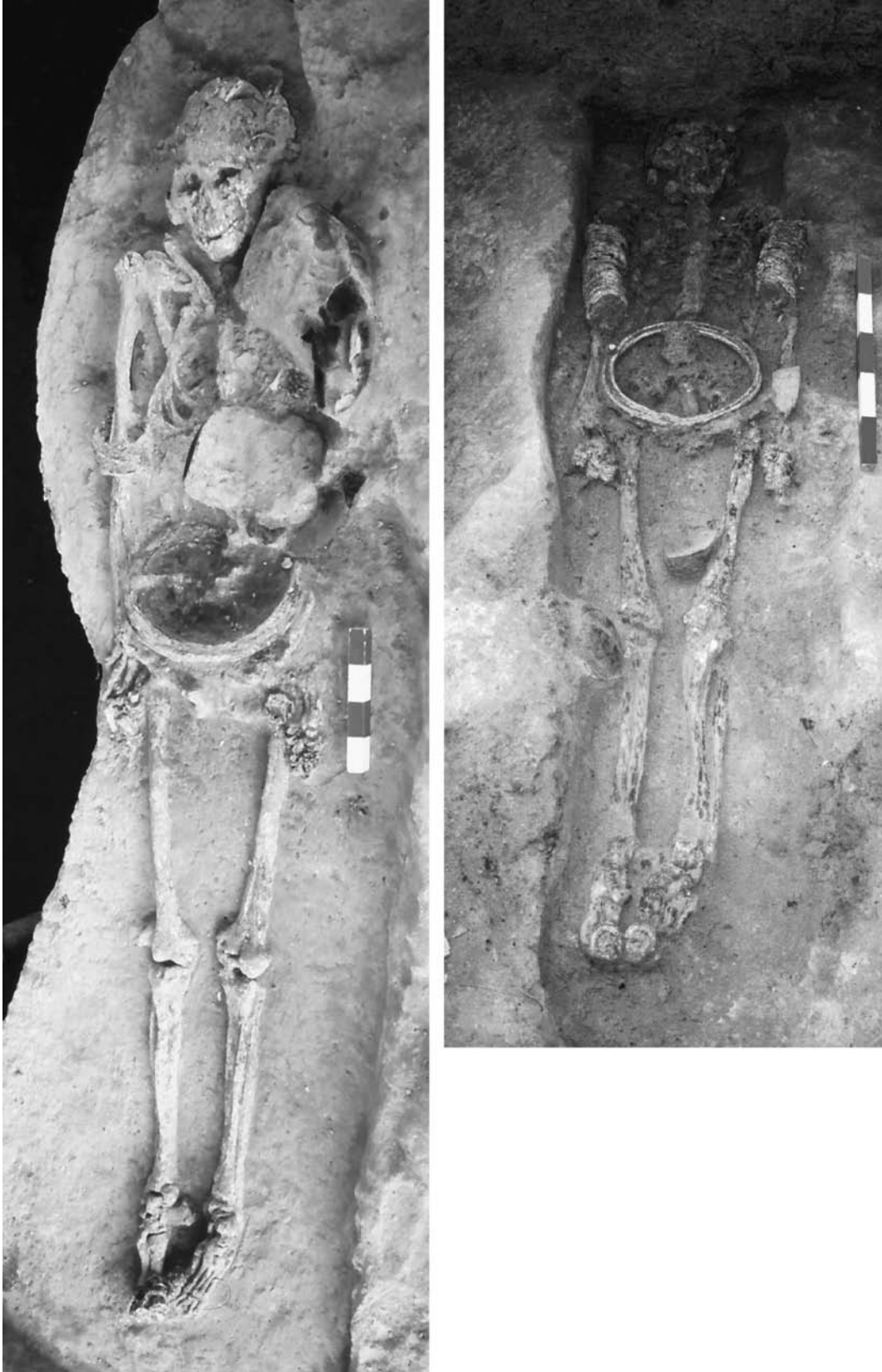
Figure 17.12. Two elite males from IA3 Noen U-Loke: burial 69 on the left has four bronze belts; burial 14 has three, together with 150 bronze bangles.

a necklace of gold and agate beads, and many bronzes including 64 finger rings, 9 toe rings, 38 bangles, spirals in each ear, a silver ring on a finger, and another on a toe. A man in cluster C wore 4 bronze belts, 124 bronze finger rings, 33 toe rings, 20 bangles, 2 ear discs, and 4 rings of bronze and iron. Another man in cluster D was the richest of all, with 3 bronze belts, 150 bangles, 45 finger rings, and at least 2 novel finger spirals on the left hand and 16 rings and 4 spirals on the right. There were also 2 bronze toe rings on each foot. This man wore 2 ear coils made of silver covered in gold foil. There were also 2 agate pendants and 2 bimetallic bronze rings in the area of the neck (Figure 17.12).

Cluster B contrasts with the other three in that no individual was interred with similar wealth: the central figure was a woman whose skull had been cleaved with a heavy weapon. This cluster also included far more spindle whorls than its contemporaries. One find unique to this cemetery was a complete egg placed as a mortuary offering.

Infants in each of these clusters matched adults in terms of relative wealth, but one burial is set aside from these groups. It contained the skeleton of a child who died when aged about two to three years. Interred distant from any cluster, the child had suffered from cerebral palsy and was interred wearing ivory bangles and no other offerings. Rare medical conditions were, it seems, acknowledged with modified treatment at death: we have already seen a leper interred prone, and with IA4, we will find that a young man killed by an arrow was also interred alone in a prone position.

A man in cluster C was interred with a pot filled with rice, within which lay a socketed iron ploughshare. This directs attention to the surrounding banks and moats, which must have entailed the organization of a large labour force, followed by regular maintenance of the channels in controlling the ingress and reticulation of water. Moreover, the broad moats would have greatly increased the value of the land they covered by providing a large and ready supply of fish and shellfish. New evidence from contemporary sites in Cambodia suggests that rice was now cultivated in bounded permanent fields (Hawken 2011), and the moats might well have also been used to supply irrigated water. The radiocarbon dating of the banks shows that they were in place during the span of IA3–4.

With IA4 (AD 400–600), the nucleation of graves gave way to a more dispersed pattern, and the degree of wealth declined. One man wore fifty-nine bronze bangles and twenty-two finger rings, another had fifty-nine gold beads, but the others were modestly endowed in death. There was at this juncture a marked increase in iron weaponry in occupation layers, and a large tanged arrowhead had severed the spine of a young man.

The sequence at Noen U-Loke is unique in Southeast Asia in that it involves a single community in which the dead were interred over the ancestors for the entire span of the Iron Age. Any interpretation of the reaction to death in this community must involve several environmental and cultural factors. The site was one of many, crowded into a strategic exchange node that benefitted from inexhaustible deposits of high quality salt and iron ore of sufficient quality to exploit. Settlements were located along the same rivers from which water was tapped into extensive reservoirs. New exotic valuables entered the exchange network: agate, carnelian, gold, silver, glass. Ethnographic analogies are unanimous in identifying such a situation as being charged with competitive emulation (Alpers 1969; Ekholm 1977; Brenner 1988). Competition by aggrandizers both within and between communities for land, production, and status, it is suggested, would have encouraged the rise of social elites and tended to generate friction, and warfare. The hint that this was also a period with interment within houses has been confirmed at the site of Non Ban Jak. This site was occupied during IA 3–4, and from the earliest contexts, men, women, and infants were interred within residential structures. As Laneri (2010) has demonstrated in Mesopotamia, such a practice may be linked to the growing social prominence of wealthy families during a period of increasing competition over improved land, long distance exchange, and conflict.

The surviving evidence suggests that large mortuary feasts were held, surplus rice was burnt and filled graves, whole pigs were placed with the dead, fish filled mortuary pots, red ochre and bivalve shells fulfilled ancestral customs favouring an afterlife, and the elite leaders, men and women, were interred weighed down with prestigious valuables. Talbot (2007) has plausibly suggested that where the nucleated burials of IA3 indicate competition between different groups in the community, the dispersal of graves from AD 400 reflected a reduction in social tension. Fortunately, IA4 partially coincided with the advent of early written records, which document the early historic sequel.

THE MARITIME SILK ROAD

From at least the fourth century BC, Southeast Asia entered as a participant into a maritime trading network that linked it with both India and China. Most cultural influence emanated from the former, including the Sanskrit language, Hinduism, Buddhism, and associated mortuary practices. There was then a move away from inhumation into cremation, together with a new ideology that affected the rituals of death. Temple sites and associated cemeteries in the nodal Mekong Delta involved brick chambers containing the ashes of the deceased. At Nen Chua, brick and stone temple foundations as well as a stone linga have been uncovered (Le Xuan Diem et al. 1995). The linga, a phallic object, is a central cult object of Hinduism and was widely adopted as an object of veneration in Southeast Asia. Small brick chambers incorporated into this structure contained cremated human bone and offerings of gold leaf decorated with images representing Shiva and Vishnu, both central Hindu deities. Dating to the fifth and sixth centuries AD, these burials show how Hinduism, associated with the practice of cremation, had taken root in this part of Southeast Asia. The same evidence occurs in Go Thap, where a Funan burial site covered a prehistoric settlement. More brick-lined chambers here contained cremated human bone, while offerings included glass and semi-precious stone beads, and gold leaves decorated with Vishnu in his avatar as a turtle. An entire sacred Buddhist text was found impressed into gold at the site of Go Xoai on the delta, dating probably to the seventh or eighth century AD. The ritual importance of the linga as an object of veneration was deployed as a means of projecting royal status. These stone phalluses were placed within unicameral brick temples, named after the god and the monarch. Their symbolic role in projecting fertility and continuity has serious implications for the process of the deification of rulers as immortals, stages of which may be traced in the succeeding period known as Chenla.

CHENLA: FROM ELITE LEADER TO LIVING GOD

Chenla is the name given to the period AD 500–800 in Cambodia and the Mun Valley. The introduction of Hinduism and Buddhism into Southeast Asia led to a radical change in mortuary traditions in which cremation was preferred to inhumation. The archaeological record for burials during this seminal period in the

development of state societies is virtually silent. However, the inscriptions set down in Sanskrit and Old Khmer illuminate relevant social, political, and economic issues (Vickery 1998).

The archaeological record for the late Iron Age at Noen U-Loke dovetails neatly with the epigraphic record of early Chenla. Relevant inscriptions describe communities centred on their temple, under the leadership of a man with the title *pon*. The *pon* had authority over reservoirs, and settlements included metal casters, weavers, potters, and rice field workers. Temples were a focus for not only the worship of exotic gods and ancestral spirits, but also economic transactions and the accumulation of wealth expressed in surplus production. Chenla was divided into many polities, some of which show all the signs of the transition from complex chiefdoms into early states.

It is in the titles ascribed to elite humans and gods that we can identify the progressive deification of rulers during this period (Vickery 1998). Thus, while a *pon* was a chiefly leader, a *kpon* was a god. As Vickery has noted, this 'suggests that gods and human elites were ranked in a single hierarchy'. Titles present an unbroken continuum between kings and gods. By the early seventh century, successive kings at the major centre of Isanapura were accorded the hitherto divine title *vrah kamratan an*. This text might have been describing dead, deified kings. In AD 664, the first use of this divine title by a living king is recorded in an inscription in the reign of Jayavarman I (protégé of victory). It does not unduly stretch the available evidence to conclude that the passage from an elite leader of IA3 at Noen U-Loke to a living god at Isanapura took place over a period of eight to ten generations.

ANGKOR, CITY OF THE GOD KINGS

The foundation of the kingdom of Angkor is traditionally placed in the year AD 802, when Jayavarman II was consecrated supreme ruler. We know little of this king and his successor, but the survival of the court centre of the third king at Hariharalaya, Indravarman I (protégé of Indra; reign AD 877–89), opens a window on the image his monuments and inscriptions were designed to project. This centre comprises a reservoir of unprecedented size from which water was reticulated south to feed the moats round three major temple complexes. The first, known as Preah Ko, had at its centre a raised platform

Figure 17.13. Temple mausolea of Angkorian kings. 1, The Bakong, Indravarman I (reigned AD 877–89); 2, Koh Ker, Jayavarman IV (AD 928–41); 3, Pre Rup, Rajendravarman II (AD 944–68). 4. Ta Keo, Jayavarman V (AD 968–1001); 5, Angkor Wat, Suryavarman II (AD 1113–1150); 6, The Bayon, Jayavarman VII (AD 1180–1220).

bearing six brick unicameral shrines formerly decorated with sacred scenes in painted stucco. The front three were dedicated to Jayavarman II, and the father and maternal grandfather of the king, the back three to their respective consorts. The name of each ancestor was combined with that of Siva, indicating their deification. The much

larger Bakong temple lying to the south had as its focal point a linga (Figure 17.13, 1). The contemporary record noted, 'In 881, the king, like a god, dispenser of riches, has erected a linga named Indresvara here'. This name combines that of the king with the god Siva (Esvara), indicating a submergence of the king with the deity into a

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single object of devotion. Eight smaller sanctuaries round the base of the temple were dedicated to and employed for the worship of the king's male and female ancestors. For the first time, access to the monument involved a naga bridge. The Naga, a mythical serpent and guardian of earthly wealth, represented the threshold from the profane world of men to the sacred realm of the gods. It is highly likely, but not certain, that the king's ashes were interred in this temple mausoleum, and that he was worshipped thereafter as an ancestral god. Certainly his son, Yasovarman (protégé of glory), had a new island temple constructed in the centre of his father's reservoir, the four shrines of which were dedicated to the new king's father, maternal grandfather, mother, and maternal grandmother.

It is important to appreciate the symbolism of the succession of temple mausolea constructed from the ninth to the early thirteenth century at Angkor (Figure 17.13). A god king, being immortal, was transported on corporeal death to heaven. Each sovereign therefore set in train the construction of a suitable heavenly abode, his temple and mausoleum, representing Mount Meru, the home of the gods. This is seen at its apogee in the monuments constructed by two sovereigns of the Dynasty of Mahidharapura. Suryavarman II (protégé of the sun, reigned 1113–50) was responsible for the temple known as Angkor Wat (Figure 17.13, 5). He is the first Angkorian king for whom we have an image, seen on the bas reliefs of this monument, reliefs that also depict scenes from his court, Hindu epics, and perhaps of the greatest relevance, the churning of the ocean of milk, in which demons and angels spin Mount Mandara to extract *amrita*, the elixir of immortality. The walls and the five central shrines of Angkor Wat, symbolizing the peaks of Mount Meru, carry reliefs that include at least one thousand *apsaras*, celestial dancers. We read that Suryavarman, on death, was accorded the posthumous name Paramavishnuloka, 'he who has entered the heavenly world of Vishnu'. A stone container recovered from the central tower with a hole at its base provides a hint of the rituals associated with the king's translation from earth to heaven. Southeast Asian royal burial traditions retain the practice of placing the body in such a container for many months prior to cremation. Placing the ashes in the main sanctuary before a statue of the king would then animate the image, rendering it an object of worship and devotion. Within this mortuary tradition, Angkor Wat should be seen as the preserve of the immortal sovereign merged with Vishnu, in a heaven populated by celestial *aspsaras*.

JayavarmanVII (reigned 1181–1215) was a Mahayana Buddhist. His reservoir, known as the Jayatataka, had in its centre a temple known as Rajasri in which water gushed through the mouths of a horse, lion, elephant, and human. This represented Lake Anavatapta, the sacred Himalayan lake imbued with miraculous curative powers. We read of pilgrims crossing the water to this shrine to remove the slime of their sins. This reflects the king's status as a bodhisattva, one who assists others in their path to Nirvana. He is portrayed on his temple mausoleum, the Bayon, known originally as Madhyadri, in the form of massive heads gazing benignly over his realm (Figure 17.13, 6). Ancestor worship is documented in the foundation inscriptions of the king's other foundations. Preah Khan contained an image of his father in the form of Bodhisattva Lokesvara. This text also lists twenty-three locations in the kingdom favoured with statues of Jayabuddhamahanatha, a name indicating that the king was represented as a Buddha. Special rituals were also established in favour of Jayarajacudamani, the deified mother of the king. This woman was the issue of a long royal line, and the foundation stela of the Ta Prohm temple traces her ancestry back generation by generation to the mythical founding ancestors of the state. Her image in the temple is said to represent the mother of the Buddha. She was not the only god ancestor to be worshipped at Ta Prohm, for subsidiary temples were dedicated to the parents of court grandees whose names incorporated the term *-isvara*, indicating the incorporation of the qualities of a bodhisattva.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the central facts about Southeast Asian prehistory is that the pervasive warmth, regularity of the monsoon rains, and naturally high bio-productivity make possible sedentary settlement by hunter-gatherers. While this does not apply to all the varied environments, particularly the dense tropical rain forest, proximity to a river or estuary does favour long term settlement. There are, thus, several sites that reveal how early anatomically modern humans were familiar with death and its consequences by at least thirty thousand years ago. They interred the dead in a flexed foetal, extended, or seated position, with a limited range of offerings. From the third millennium BC, when the sea level rose higher than at present and raised beaches formed behind the present coasts of Thailand and Vietnam, hunter-gatherer-fisher settlements included cemeteries in which the dead were

interred in kin groups. This is most clearly expressed at the site of Khok Phanom Di, located on a former estuary behind the present Gulf of Siam. This site presents the opportunity to explore, in a detailed manner, mortuary rituals in a largely marine hunter-gatherer context over a period of approximately twenty generations, five hundred years, beginning in 2000 BC.

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of this cemetery was the practice of interring the dead, be they adults, infants, or children, in tightly nucleated groups within mortuary structures. Because of the rapid accretion of the cultural deposits, we find that successive generations were placed over the graves of their ancestors. The corpse was given ritual treatment by being wrapped in a fabric or asbestos shroud and interred on a wooden bier or in a coffin, within a collective tomb structure. Blood red ochre was placed over the body, symbolic perhaps of rebirth or life after death. Pits containing food remains might indicate mortuary feasting.

The passing of the generations produced changes in the mortuary rituals but always to the same basic protocol. Pottery vessels were regularly placed in graves, and individuals wore shell and fish bone ornaments. However, from the fourth mortuary phase, men and women were increasingly distinguished from each other, the former being associated with broken turtle carapace ornaments, the latter with anvils used to fashion pottery vessels. Khok Phanom Di was a major pottery manufacturing centre, and after a brief interval when rice cultivation was undertaken locally with a temporary fall in the sea level, marine conditions returned at the same time as a break with the long term burial in collective tombs. We find instead a woman interred in a large grave with extreme wealth, associated with two unusually wealthy infant burials, and a headless man with virtually no mortuary offerings at all. The energy expended in this group suggests strongly that the woman had achieved high status within the community and was seen as a special individual, perhaps reflecting her expertise in manufacturing fine pottery vessels, for both she and the infant beside her were accompanied by their necessary tools. A marked disparity in wealth continued into the next phase, seen in the raising of a mortuary building in clay to contain a second richly endowed woman whose grave contrasted with the relative poverty of a row of burials in front of her tomb. This hunter-gatherer community was deploying the rituals of death not only to fulfil the basic obligations of kinship, but to project the elevated status of their place in the community. Covering the corpse in

red ochre may also be seen as symbolic of the blood of life, with implications for a hereafter. Moreover, the long duration of this cemetery of a community that controlled a key, rich nodal trading location endowed with predictable natural food resources suggests that the presence of the ancestors was a confirmation of territorial ownership.

From about 2000 BC, intrusive Neolithic groups introduced their long-established mortuary customs, which involved the placement of both adults and infants in lidded ceramic vessels embellished with complex incised, impressed, and painted designs. Most adults, however, were interred in an extended, supine position associated with pig bones, often a carpet of shellfish, and pottery vessels. This set the stage for continuity at the site of Ban Non Wat, with minor variations, for the next eighty to one hundred generations over at least two millennia. Within this period, which encompassed the adoption of both copper-based and iron metallurgy, we can identify social changes. There were rises and falls in the wealth placed with the dead. Particularly rich Bronze Age aggrandizers were partially exhumed, and symbols of rebirth, of fertility, and of blood were employed. The superposition of burials over a depth of many metres and the few instances of disturbance affecting earlier graves suggest that the location of the ancestors was recorded.

Details of the Bronze Age protocols for interring dead infants provide some insight into the cognition of those responsible. They placed the infant at the base of a womb-shaped lidded ceramic vessel, the interior of which was coloured red. The exterior of the pot was often embellished with a snake-like cordon. When the Han Chinese began to describe the Dian chiefdom of Yunnan in the second century BC, they noted that the snake rituals involved the notion of rebirth, since the snake sloughs its skin to re-emerge anew. The lid of one vessel bears a painted scene that looks like the process of parturition. Again both with infants and adults, bivalve shells that might well have been fertility symbols were placed with the dead throughout the one hundred generations of this cemetery.

In my interpretation of this Bronze Age cemetery, together with its Neolithic predecessor and Iron Age successor, I have stressed the provision of mortuary feasting in both securing and maintaining the social status of the relatives of the deceased. This may be seen in the placing of lidded pottery containers in graves with fish, shellfish, chickens, eggs, pigs, cattle, and water buffalo bones in graves. In this manner, the dead served the living elite, a practice that might have been enhanced when

the bones of particularly rich Bronze Age grandees were exhumed perhaps to participate in post mortem rituals, and then carefully reinterred.

A further aspect of the Bronze Age mortuary tradition at Ban Non Wat lies in the fact that the cemetery plans reveal sharply defined boundaries. The rows identified during BA2 contain the graves of adult men and women, infants, and children. They are uniformly orientated, placed with clear relationships to the contemporary graves, and are all particularly wealthy in terms of jewellery and other mortuary offerings. To find a poor grave in this grouping would be jarring. It is almost self-evident that this was a reserved space from which poorer members of the community were excluded.

Similar exclusivity, evidence for mortuary feasting, and oscillations in the relative wealth or poverty of social components of the community continued in this longue durée of mortuary behaviour. At Noen U-Loke, where we have a millennial Iron Age sequence divided into four superimposed phases, the community was exposed progressively to new exotic goods – carnelian, glass, agate, iron, gold, and silver – which were deployed in death to project the social achievements and status of the living. The second and third phases again saw the dead clustered into tight groups, almost certainly protected by wooden or clay structures that, at least at Non Ban Jak, take the form of residential dwellings. Feasting the dead saw graves filled with burnt rice, while animal bones, eggs, and other food offerings may be considered in conjunction with butchering floors where buffaloes and cattle were slaughtered and dismembered. This was a period when several lines of evidence point to an agricultural revolution: large-scale engineering works ringed sites with banks and broad moats and iron ploughshares linked with animal traction would have greatly increased rice production. Salt was being produced on an industrial scale, and settlements were foci for a wide range of manufacturing for cloth, iron, bronzes, and ceramics. Again, the tight clustering of similar burials suggests that there were restrictions of access to kin-based segments or lobes of the cemetery.

With the opening of the Southern Maritime Silk Road, exotic goods and ideas reached Southeast Asia. The established elites found in the esoteric Hindu religion an ideological pathway to elevated social status that progressively moved them closer to divine status. By the seventh century, just two centuries after the last Iron Age leaders were interred at Noen U-Loke, a Khmer king was accorded a title hitherto employed only for gods. With the foundation of the Kingdom of Angkor in the early ninth century, texts inscribed for royal temple mausolea accord the rulers divine titles. Ancestors likewise were worshipped. The construction of increasingly massive temple mausolea, such as Angkor Wat and the Bayon, engaged armies of stone masons, sculptors, architects, priests, goldsmiths, and labourers in a common endeavour whereby merit was gained through contributing to the tomb of a god. In this manner, it is possible to identify in the Angkorian monuments the physical evidence for the exploitation of the populace by the ruling line. One of the particular features of this behaviour is the stress placed upon legitimacy through descent from the divine ancestors. The temple of Preah Ko at Hariharalaya, for example, has six shrines, each dedicated to the worship of King Indravarman's male and female ancestors.

Many village communities and the surpluses they generated were assigned to the maintenance of these temples. In 1186, the foundation stela of the Rajavihara temple mentioned more than eighty thousand people to sustain a temple dedicated not only to the king's mother, but also to the ancestors of grandee court families. A key to understanding this ideology is that on death, the deified ruler moved seamlessly, under a new name, to his temple mausoleum built to represent the home of the gods.

As anybody who witnessed the mortuary rituals of the Thai Queen Somdet Phra Nang Chao Ramphaiphanni Phra Borommarachini in 1985, or observed people praying before an image of King Phra Bat Somdet Phra Poraminthra Maha Chulalongkorn Phra Chunla Chom Klao Chao Yu Hua will know, the tradition forged at Angkor continues to this day.

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PART V

Materiality and Memory

How Did the Mycenaeans Remember? Death, Matter, and Memory in the Early Mycenaean World

Lambros Malafouris

I

Matter and memory are two concepts made for each other. For the archaeologist this should come as no surprise. Understanding the inextricable links between matter and memory and searching for their material traces in the past have always been a great challenge (Jones 2007; Van Dyke & Alcock 2003; Kwint et al. 1999; Connerton 1989; Mack 2003). Recently the inseparability of matter and memory has emerged as a major research trend in philosophy and cognitive science, notably through the influential work on the distributed science of memory by John Sutton (e.g., Sutton et al. 2010; Sutton 2008, 2006). Sutton, drawing on the general theoretical frameworks of extended and distributed cognition, develops a new science of memory grounded on the recognition that the processes of remembering 'are spreading into the world as hybrids of biological and non-biological resources' (2006, 283). This view opens the way for a new productive alliance between memory research and archaeology, one that recognises the important role of materiality, objects, and artefacts in the process of memory. Drawing on Appadurai's work on the social life of things (1986), Sutton has used the term 'cognitive life of things' to describe the context-sensitive and culture specific mnemonic dimensions of material culture (Sutton 2002). This notion of 'the cognitive life of things' has been developed further in the context of Material Engagement Theory (MET) to describe the enactive properties of the constitutive intertwining between the mind and the material world (Malafouris & Renfrew 2010; Malafouris 2013; Malafouris 2004; Renfrew 2001, 2004). But what is so special about the intersection between matter and memory?

For one thing, the more time one spends searching for memory traces in the archaeological record the more

that one comes to realise that the distinguishing feature of human remembrance, from the Palaeolithic to the present, is not to be found either in the storage capacity of the human brain or in the intriguing wirings of the human hippocampus. Rather what makes human memory special is our unique ability to construct material signs, scaffolds, and artefacts and to use those material resources and practices not just to compensate for the limitations of our evolved biological memory system but to extend, re-organise, even transform the nature of memory and its role in human evolution (Malafouris 2013). For thousands of years now, through the varieties of cognitive ecologies and niches we humans have made for ourselves, we continue to promote, re-use, and select for our distinctive talent to grow our minds and extend our bodies, often by making 'the world smart so that we can be dumb in peace' (Clark 1997, 180). Remarkably, this ability did not come about because of the way we have obeyed as a species the rules of Darwinian natural selection, or their neo-Darwinian re-incarnation in the domain of culture. Rather it was our creative and persistent disobedience of these rules that made the difference; it still does. Humans are probably unique among other species in transforming their bodies and the 'peripersonal space' surrounding their bodies to a site of memory. Meanwhile, if remembering is without doubt one of the skills at which humans have excelled, forgetting is even more so. For do we not write something down so that we will not have to remember it? A commonly held mistake is to perceive remembering as a virtue and forgetting as a failing. That is far from true. Forgetting and remembering are equally necessary and co-dependent processes (see Forty & Küchler 1999). One important question for archaeology then is about the cognitive life

of things and their role in the shaping and constitution of the 'extra-neural' cultural memory recourses.

It is precisely this premise for the gradual externalisation and materialization of memory that has been placed in its evolutionary dimension by such scholars as André Leroi-Gourhan, pointing out 'the uniquely human phenomenon of exteriorization of the organs involved in the carrying out of technics' (1993, 258). More recently, Merlin Donald (1991) explored the implications of external symbolic systems for the structuring and organization of biological memory. Many scholars studying the role of the so-called exograms in human cognitive evolution have also proposed a similar approach. Goonatilake's 'exosomatic information' (1991) and Francesco d'Errico's detailed examination of what he defines as artificial memory systems (AMSs) – 'i.e. physical devices specifically conceived to store and recover coded information' (1998, 20) – are good examples of the point. To be sure, the preceding studies underlined the importance of understanding the role that early systems of notation such as the famous Palaeolithic engraved antler from La Marche (d'Errico 1995, 1998) may have played in the evolution of human cognition and memory in particular. Yet, an argument can be made that moving away from the representational logic of modern and ancient information encoding systems, the concept of 'storage' and 'representation' offers little help in letting us understand the complex relationship between materiality and memory (see also Malafouris 2004, 2008a). As a result a strong preoccupation with 'exographic storage' may leave us with a restricted and often distorted view of the dynamic and associative character of the relationship between memory and material culture. I am not disputing the role of exographic storage as a possible technique for strengthening and stabilising our inherently fragile and context-sensitive biological memory; I simply want to raise a note of caution about the generalisations that can be drawn from such an observation with respect to the archaeology of human memory.

In what follows I will try to illustrate these points using the case of early Mycenaean culture. More specifically, I shall be looking at the cognitive ecology (Hutchins 2010) and ontology of Mycenaean memory in the context of funerary practice. Focussing, primarily, on the case of the Mycenae Shaft Graves I will be exploring the different types of material signs and the ways those signs have been used to enact Mycenaean social memory. I will argue that those material signs do not contain memories in the form of codified discrete items of information. They rather engage memory according to the interactional properties that they afford to particular actors in particular settings. Emphasis will be placed on the agency and affective power of funerary display and deposition. Moreover, the links between self-projection and distributed cognition will also be discussed. The temporal depth and the extreme diversity of material culture available from this period offer unique opportunities for studying the retrieval pathways of the Mycenaean past. They also facilitate a large-scale comparative and culturally situated framework of analysis for the questions of extended and distributed cognition involved.

II

Already from its early transitional phase the Mycenaean culture embodied a strong 'sense' of the past. This 'sense' of the past, however, should not be thought of as something abstract or mental in the intracranial sense of the word. Instead it should be seen as the emergent property of embodied action, enaction, and above all commemoration. This element of commemoration is particularly manifest in the material culture of the Early Mycenaean period, encompassing different media, material, and practices. As Casey remarks, 'whenever commemorating occurs, a community arises' (Casey 1987, 235), and the unique assemblage of artefacts deposited in the two Mycenaean Grave Circles A and B offer plenty of evidence for this. The so-called Mycenaean Shaft Grave phenomenon is the funerary constellation that archaeologically marks the transition between the Middle and the Late Helladic period and the emergence of Mycenaean civilization (e.g., Schliemann 1880; Dickinson 1977, 1994; Graziadio 1991; Rutter 1993; Voutsaki 1997; Vermeule 1975; Mylonas 1973). More important for our purposes it offers one of the best preserved and recorded locales of collective commemoration, a site at which we could see Mycenaean social memory in the making. The materiality of the shaft graves points indeed in many directions, not only spatially but also temporally. The placing of those graves within a Middle Helladic cemetery epitomizes this conscious attempt to construct some elementary form of 'collective memory'. No doubt the shaft graves are an area of primary commemorative significance as the locus of both ceremonial activity and ancestral presence, as well as of a long-term dynamic cultural biography. However, it is obvious from the start that engaging the past in the past was a process of active reconstruction rather than passive recollection. The enaction and re-enaction of the Mycenaean past always incorporates something new. It is an ongoing process that unfolds always with an eye to the needs of the present.

The change from contracted to extended inhumations, as well as from single to collective burials, that took place between the Middle and the Late Helladic periods in the mainland should be taken also into consideration An extended corpse provides more area for display than a contracted one. Thus the depositional choices of material arrayed around the dead body were expanded. A new network of somatic extension and predication emerges. This development should not be understood, however, in a cause and effect manner, but as an unfolding creative play that draws upon and explores the possibilities of engagement that the new material conditions of this transitional period afford. This new materiality provided concrete source domains for the construction of new embodied cognitive schemas and categories of valuation and at the same time presented new demands as to how those categories will be objectified and incorporated into the Mycenaean cultural process.

In this connection, it can be argued that instead of the aesthetic heterogeneity that has been proposed as the characteristic of the early Mycenaean period, we should speak of a creative tension, if not anxiety, to explore the 'range of biographical possibilities' (Kopytoff 1986, 66) of this new variety of material mediational means. The massive displacement of things from their everyday settings that characterizes the depositional practices of this transitional period, as well as the selection, creation, and modification of artefacts specifically for funerary purposes, imply and embody the emergence of a novel awareness about the properties of materiality and of material engagement. As the material categories extend and diversify, so does, and in a relational manner, the cognitive and social landscape of the early Mycenaean person. The Mycenaeans are now forced to make important decisions and choices between tradition and innovation.

As far as funerary deposition and display are concerned, this can be understood in a two-fold manner: first, the newly established technologies and symbolic media enabled hybridity through the integration and institutionalisation of different or even exogenous elements, such as the appropriation and redefinition of the Minoan *rhyton* in the context of Mycenaean funerary deposition, contrary to the established Minoan use of that vessel (Koehl 2006). Secondly, Mycenaean funerary ritual, being integrated with pre-existing categories that defined the structures of the Middle Helladic period, offered the necessary substratum of identity and continuity that would enable the social embodiment of the new elements. To give an example, although the small pit that was used to accommodate the contracted Middle Helladic body and

its traditional cup and jug grave good associations would be transformed to an elaborate shaft in order to afford the extended and variously predicated body of the shaft grave warrior, the agency of the clay cup and jug will not be denied but will continue to inform all the later phases of the Mycenaean funerary assemblage.

We should note finally that this new aesthetic logic behind expanding depositional practices cannot be dissociated from what we see in other domains of the Mycenaean social universe. Central in this respect are important changes in the depiction of the human figure. In this domain of the Mycenaean cognitive landscape a similar preoccupation with the warrior's body is also prevalent and has been described as 'the most revolutionary of all the changes in this enigmatic period' (Crowley 1989, 206). The limited and schematic representations of the human figure from the Middle Helladic period indicate that the Middle Helladic social habitus lacked the motivation necessary for the warrior's image to become visually narrated and commemorated. Consequently the emergence of the human figure in the shaft grave period signifies important changes for the category of the Mycenaean person. As Crowley correctly observes, 'the human is now important enough in the scheme of things to take the center stage and this has not been so before' (Crowley 1989, 211). More importantly for our purposes in this section, at the basis of this unprecedented – at least in the mainland – engagement in pictorial practices one can trace elements of an aesthetic disposition privileging the visual modality of the sensory system. This from a cognitive perspective indicates a significant transformation in the perceptive capabilities of the mainland population, which from a previous pictorially innocent phase became pictorially sensitive, expanding and exploiting their intrinsic biological capabilities of visual aesthetic appreciation. McLuhan's argument that 'if a new technology extends one or more of our senses outside us into the social world, then new ratios among all of our senses will occur in that particular culture' (1964, 41) may be of increased relevance here. Without denying the importance of other senses[1] it is safe to suggest that the growing interest and prominence that various techniques of visual representation and iconic figuration appear to have in this period point to the rapid development and cultural salience of a new visual experiential mode. This signals also the construction and social appropriation of a new sensory environment emphasising certain properties, media, and themes of representation with a crucial bearing on the cognitive operations active in that period.

The *icon* has been proposed as the compositional imperative in Aegean representational art with important mnemonic functions (Crowley 1989, 1992, 1995; see also Younger 1988; Laffineur 1992). The proposed parallelism between the concepts of the 'oral formula' and the 'visual formula' is certainly a useful way to describe the possible role of those icons in the formation of Mycenaean social memory. Nonetheless, the parallelism also embodies some problems that we need to underline. In particular, whereas the oral formula may hardly be conceived of as a separate entity – meaning divorced both from the rest of the sentence and from its performance context – the Mycenaean icon as a material object is capable of taking on a separate life (cognitive or social) of its own. What I mean more specifically is that while in the case of the oral formula the memory trace does not persist beyond the immediate context of its actual performance, in the case of the visual formula – as is also the case when the oral formula is written – the memory trace endures beyond any particular performative context. This ability of the visual formula or icon to persist in time is precisely what makes it a better mnemonic device than the oral formula. However, this is also the property that makes the icon a medium of active rather than passive recollection. What I mean by that is that whatever information might have been initially stored in the icon will be recovered or recalled according to the perceptive affordances of the practices that surround this icon at the time of recall and that would not necessarily be the same as those active at the time that this information content was initially stored. More simply, even if we accept that information can be stored in the icon, ways of seeing cannot be stored. These ways of seeing, and as such of remembering, are constituted and re-enacted anew each time in the context of practice. There is an important difference between reading a script and reading a visual narrative that we need to take under careful consideration. For example, the code that underlies the structure of a Linear B tablet determines that once a word is inscribed on the tablet it is fixed in time. The way you read the word remains the same as constrained by the structure of the script. Moreover in this context the combination of icons, numerals, and logograms provides extra stability to the process of identification and recall. However, in the example of icons or pictorial formulas being embedded in larger visual narratives (e.g., a fresco) such an underlying visual code or structure is usually non-existent or in any case far from sufficient to secure a constancy of recall. The place of iconography in memory is not that of external visual storage of information. Iconography is

not concerned about the accuracy of transmission, but with providing a visual locus for engaging the past in the future.

Moreover, especially in the hybrid early Mycenaean period, it would be more appropriate to speak of an emerging process of iconicity instead of an established iconic repertoire. 'This seemingly minor shift in terminology', as Herzfeld observes, 'actually makes a large difference' (Herzfeld 1997, 57): it reminds us that when we are speaking about icons we are not speaking about a fixed and permanent set of relations but instead of the processes whereby permanence is achieved. 'Iconicity does not exist; it is called into existence' (Herzfeld 1997, 57). As the anthropologist Edwin Hutchins also observes: 'Cultural practices shape active sensing and ways of seeing the world by highlighting what to attend to and what to see when so attending' (2011, 441). An important point about the role of Mycenaean icons thus emerges: far from a neutral feature of an artistic representational language they can be exploited as a crucial structuration medium of major socio-political significance, especially in this transitional phase. This also means that our approach to the mnemonic properties of those inscriptive technologies cannot be restricted to an iconographic analysis, but has to investigate how those properties are physically realised and socially embedded in various networks of material engagement. Or as Küchler has pointed out, our interpretive concern with the possible meaning of imagery should 'be replaced by an inquiry into the possibility of its reproduction' (Küchler 1987, 239).

When the icon of the Mycenaean warrior starts to become visually narrated and emblematized, it embodies the power to construct concrete prototypical imperatives of a heroic lifestyle. The phenomenological self-as-subject is transformed to a social self-as-object. Being narrated and commemorated are thus objectified. This new embodied as well as gendered awareness of the Mycenaean self is constituted in a dialectical relationship with a novel aesthetic of funerary deposition, where the body's physical condition is in a crucial *liminal* stage. Indeed, 'for the late-bronze age warrior, an aesthetic of male beauty appears to have been central in life as well as in death, the two states mutually constituting one another and together the individual's self-identity' (Treherne 1995, 125).

III

For most archaeologists the mnemonic significance of funerary *stelae*, as is usually the case with most funerary monuments of this familiar type, is taken for granted.

However, the precise nature of the cognitive processes involved remains unclear, and they embody a great deal of unresolved questions. Conventional stylistic and iconographic studies of the shaft grave *stelae* have failed to consider those artefacts as mnemo-technical signs (e.g., Younger 1997). G. Kopcke, to give one characteristic example, stylistically comparing the shaft grave *stelae* to the inlaid daggers from the same context, raised the following question: given that 'in terms of aesthetic judgment the two products are as opposed to each other as day and night', how are we to explain the fact that (a) they were found in the same context, and (b) it was the inferior ones that we found above ground as public monuments made for display (Kopcke 1981, 39)?

At first glance, the question seems indeed legitimate and may well occur to any contemporary observer trained in a particular Westernised aesthetic tradition and probably conditioned by what Renfrew (2003) refers as the 'tyranny of the renaissance'[2]. Hood, for example, characterising the shaft grave *stelae* as a whole uses the phrase 'crude and native, not Cretan, in style' (1978, 100). The problem is, however, that such an evaluative stance implies a Kantian universality of aesthetic judgement that leaves no place at all for a different aesthetic evaluation, not to mention for other non-aesthetic forms of interaction that can be argued as equally effective and valid responses to art, and that those objects may have been successfully designed to bring about and promote. As Kopcke makes clear from the start of his discussion, were it not for a number of arguments that see the fine inlaid daggers from those graves as executed by the same hands that fashioned some of the stone reliefs, his 'concern with the Shaft Grave *stelae* would be near-obsolete' (1981, 39). His problem is that from an aesthetic perspective he cannot envisage a common origin for those two categories of materials. This conviction led him to the conclusion that the Mycenaeans could never have produced the inlaid daggers and that they also lacked the necessary aesthetic categories to appreciate these imported objects: 'There is no need to obscure the fact by calling them Mycenaean. … We should probably resist the temptation to believe that these exquisite masterpieces were appreciated by their new owners for their aesthetic value, much as we appreciate them' (Kopcke 1981, 40). Indeed, the lack of homogeneity and consistent aesthetic standards in early Mycenaean culture is one that has puzzled many scholars in their attempts to build a genealogy of descent for the Mycenaean beautiful object from its established Minoan or Helladic forebears. E. Vermeule gets to the heart of the matter in her monograph *The Art*

of the Shaft Graves: 'there is experiment which sometimes fumbles, sometimes succeeds in creating models for later Mycenaean art. … It mixes the rich and the tawdry, the miniature and the monumental, naturalism and abstract heraldry, intricacy and primitive coarseness–it is both eclectic and original' (1975, 90).

However, the point I am after here is not so much to critique Kopcke's understanding of Mycenaean aesthetic sensibilities. My point is that because as Kopcke himself recognises at the end of his paper, 'there is always the danger that we lose our critical perspective and omit to draw the line between our own contemporary sensibilities and those which may or may not have existed then' (1981, 40), I believe if we are to speak about Mycenaean aesthetics it has to be done on a different basis than that in common usage. My understanding of Mycenaean material culture and aesthetics is that of an inseparable and cognitively functional component of early Mycenaean social habitus and not that of an independent and specialized field of activity. If contra Gell's suggestion to become 'methodological philistines' (1985, 1998) we want to retain the notion of aesthetics in the archaeological vocabulary, then it is necessary to expand the meaning of this notion in a manner able to accommodate the complex social biographies and cognitive dynamics that constitute what I want to call the *aesthetic of agency*, or else *the affective logic of engagement*. As C. Gosden points out, the notion of aesthetics can be productively extended to include an appreciation of 'objects as a creative part of social life, but which focuses on the effects of objects in creating or subverting the values attached to human relations, as well as the means by which human aspirations and values are carried by objects, which can be seen as prosthetic extensions of ourselves' (Gosden 2001, 164). In other words, Kopcke's inability to appreciate the aesthetic dimensions of the shaft grave *stelae* lay in his failure to see that maybe the aesthetic appeal of those artefacts emanates from their ability to operate as technologies of memory rather than as objects of aesthetic contemplation in the conventional sense. For indeed, a mnemo-technical sign intended as a visible and durable public monument does not have to be beautiful in order to accomplish its purpose. It certainly has no obligation to meet our contemporary aesthetic criteria in order to be effective. As such, I want to suggest that from the perspective of memory Kopcke's aporia does not arise, as both the funerary *stela* and the elaborate dagger are equally effective mnemo-technical signs although they operate in a different manner: the former operate as a durable and conspicuously visible

public *sema*, while the latter removed from circulation and deposited in the grave becomes a memory in its absence. Indeed, once the framing effect of conventional aestheticism is removed, what were previously conceived as vertical surfaces upon which the 'primitive artist's first essay' had been written (Schliemann cited in Vermeule: 1964, 91), now seem a sculptural assemblage of primary limestone structures that in the extreme reduction of their solid shapes emerge as minimal mnemo-technical presences, objectifying one of the most dynamic nodes in the extended system of Mycenaean memory. From such a perspective and as far as the category of art is concerned, enfranchising the sculpted examples and disregarding the unsculpted ones make no real sense. One may even suggest that it is in the examples with restrictive solid geometry and reductive shape that one may recognize the element of respect for the material properties that utilize the plastic qualities of limestone in a more direct sense. As a result, whether, following, for instance, Vermeule, we see the 'horsey' *stela* VI as a 'proper memorial for a horse trainer' (1975, 18; or, following, Mylonas [1973]), we argue that *stelae* IV and V represent chariot races in honour of the deceased, we are missing the essential question, that is, how does a block of limestone operate as an agent of remembrance and how is it implicated in the dialectics of social memory?

Trying to answer that question the first thing to note is that the commemorative efficacy of the *stelae* does not lie in their capacity for representation or for their specificity of reference. It resides rather in their ability to effect *consubstantiality* and attachment, what Rowlands refers as 'a fetishized form of duration' (1993, 154). They do not reflect or represent the *commemorandum*; the *commemorandum* is immanent in their material substance. The Mycenaean *stelae* provide an active technology for '*remembering-through*' (Casey 1987) as extended mnemo-technical knots. They remind you to remember without disclosing the exact content of what is to be remembered. At the same time the *stelae* also provide attention-grabbing devices for the active construction of dynamic *associative mnemonic enchainments*. At a basic level this associative enchainment takes the form of a spatial index; that is, it refers to the actual positioning of the *stele* on top of the grave. However, as I will describe later there are also other more complicated ways that this mnemonic associative enchainment can be understood.

It is in that capacity that they have been chosen as public signs for eternal display and not as aesthetic objects in the usual sense of the word. The *stelae* are not plane surfaces upon which a message has been inscribed. If there is a message, they are the message. They are not simply an external stimulus for remembrance, but coextensive or, following our hypothesis of extended cognition, *consubstantial* with remembrance (Malafouris 2008a, 2004; Clark 1997; Sutton 2006, 2008). They activate and shape commemoration in a primary sense, through their very material and conspicuous presence. Even in the case of the later historical period the importance of the materiality of the *stela* per se has a certain priority over inscription. As a recent study by Steiner has well exemplified, despite the new possibilities of specification that the use of literary inscriptions opens up, the text remains dependent on and even subordinate to its material support: 'Many of the texts not only name the physical artefact, but call the viewer's attention toward it, enjoining him to stop and look and highlighting and spelling out the merits of the object to which it directs his eye' (1998, 255).

The *stelae* were placed there to operate as enactive signs. Iconography is secondary and has a mnemonic rather than aesthetic efficacy (if such a differentiation would have made any sense in its original context). It is there to call the attention of the viewer to the artefact rather than to deliver any clear message. In this sense the motifs on the *stelae*, far from purely decorative, should be perceived as mnemonic cues carefully selected to activate the recollection of a salient category or event. The running spirals, for example, far from being a filling-ornament engraved to embellish the stone, are a cognitively significant feature. This can be understood in a double sense: on the one hand, organising the picture in parallel bands and framing the figured scenes the spiral relief panels reinforced their spatial qualities by imposing a kind of framing effect on the perceptual system of the viewer. This type of framing enhances the commemorative efficacy of the artefact by schematising the observer's visual field. On the other hand, the running spirals enable connections to be drawn with a variety of other categories of material that incorporate this characteristic motif, thus effecting a conceptual link between past and present. Seeing the framed spiral on the *stelae* evokes a reaction similar to that of smelling a perfume years ago associated with a significant event or person; visual experience can be equally embodied. Encountering the spiral on the *stelae* evokes the memory of the spiral on the cup, the mid-rib or pommel of the sword, which in turn evokes other memories so enacting an *associative mnemonic enchainment* (Figure 18.1).
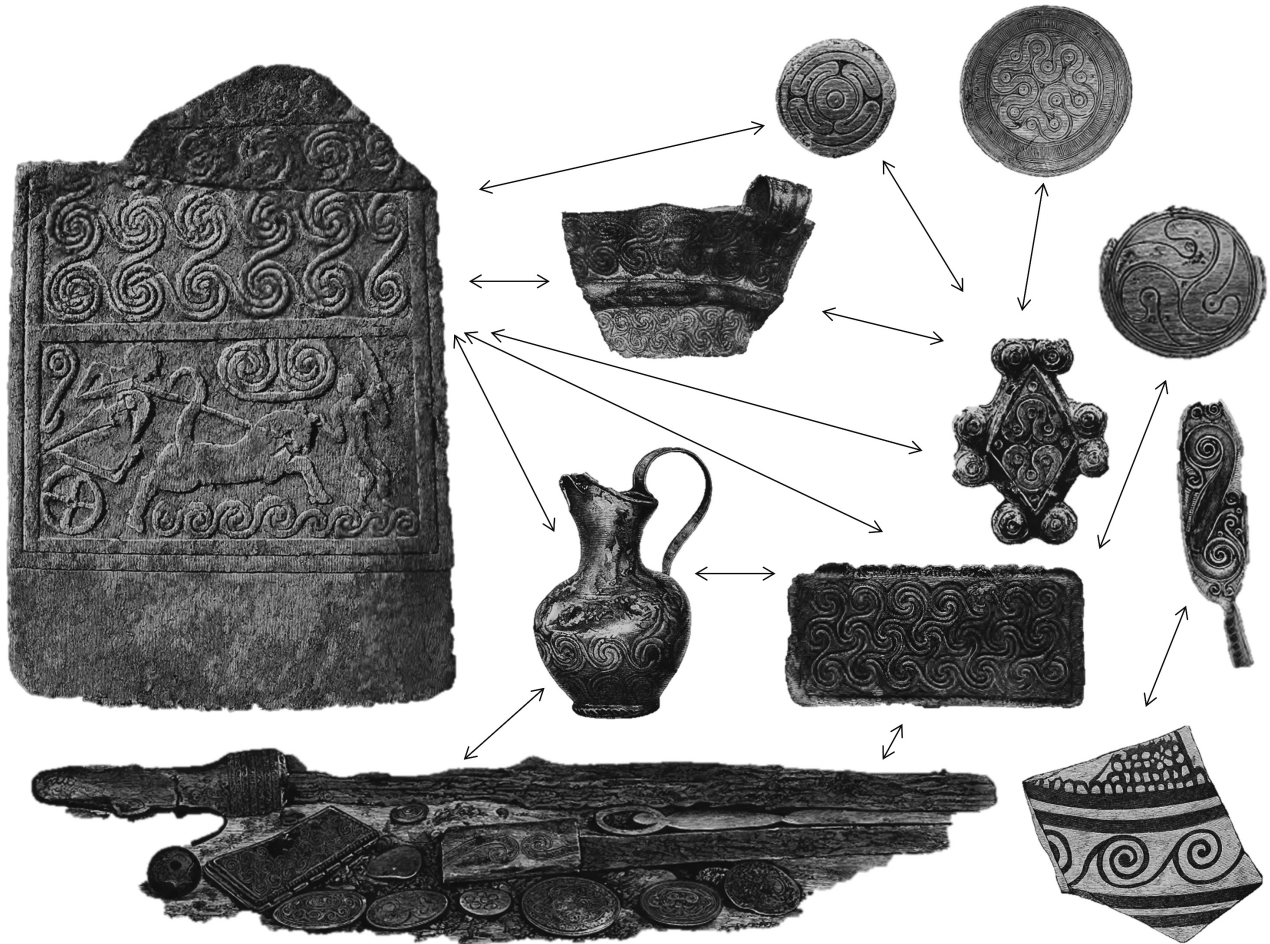
Figure 18.1. Associative mnemonic enchainment.

It should be borne in mind here that one of the most important limitations in approaching these *stelae* is paradoxically our familiarity with them. We immediately identify them as grave markers, projecting our familiarity with funerary monuments of such a kind. Yet I want to suggest that in their original context they would probably have elicited a quite different reaction. The fact that they appeared for the first time[3], associated with a specific funerary context, would have rendered them uncanny and dissonant, ambivalent for the contemporary viewer, who would have been in all probability perceptually naïve to such an experience. This would have made them even more effective as a mnemonic mediation as it would have enhanced evocation, which implies an open dialogue between the object and the person (Kwint et al. 1999, 3).

A final important feature that I wish to emphasise is that the *stelae* were implicated in the irreducible tension between remembering and forgetting. The *stelae* either speak the language of the warrior or remain unsculpted and mute. Indeed, the diacritic element of all commemorative artefacts is that they permit only certain things to be remembered, and by exclusion cause others to be forgotten (Forty & Küchler 1999). Specifically for the *stelae*, their dynamic life-histories and collective organic evolution as monuments embody a constant dynamic tension that can be seen to characterise both the period of their actual usage as well as their subsequent cultural biography in the course of Mycenaean prehistory. The broken *stela* from Grave Circle B (Mylonas 1973, 50–1) seen as an iconoclastic gesture can well exemplify this dynamism. Transfigured, in a manner that does not, however, break directly with the existing custom but draws on it, it is able to construct a powerful statement. The *stela* is not discarded but used as a base. It was not 'killed' and removed; it remained visible and conspicuous, yet devalued from a different angle.

IV

As the example of the sword deposition also indicates (for a detailed discussion of the agency of the Myceanean sword see Malafouris 2008b), objects can have mnemonic efficacy following a different path. 'Killed' or simply removed from social circulation via the avenue of funerary deposition or deliberate breakage, objects become 'a memory in their absence' (Rowlands 1993, 146). And as Mack remarks, 'in absence memory finds its most impassioned and most fertile ground' (Mack 2003, 115). The careful folding of metal in cloth as in the case of the spearhead from Grave N Circle B or of the metal jugs wrapped in silver-decorated linen from the same context (Mylonas 1973, 172) point to active considerations about materiality that extend beyond what is necessary in order to construct a simple visual statement. The same can be easily seen to apply to various other acts, as, for example, the case of burnt offerings, especially gold and glass beads[4], or the deposition of memorabilia such as the pyxis of the Keros–Syros culture from Circle B Grave N (Mylonas 1973, 176). The *affective logic* and *aesthetic agency* of those acts of transformation (be they that of context or of substance) cannot be accounted for in terms of formal deposition as they carry with them and objectify intentionalities of a strictly conceptual nature incorporating anticipation, perception, and memory.

Deliberate transfiguration and fragmentation are far from foreign practices in Mycenaean prehistory, and it is worth considering their possible role in the making of Mycenaean memory. The example of the Mycenaean kylix can be introduced here to exemplify this point, although admittedly we are describing a Late Mycenaean vessel. Objectifying the Mycenaean drinking vessel per se it also embodies the Mycenaean ritual activity per se, that is, libation (Hägg 1990). The 'ritual killing' (smashing)[5] of the drinking vessel in the dromos of Mycenaean chamber tombs is a well-attested phenomenon, especially in the Argolid, usually interpreted as the culmination point of the funerary ceremony[6]. Any kylix could be transformed from a utilitarian vessel to a ceremonial object through an act of transformation of an undeniable conceptual character. What was manufactured with the simple purpose of holding liquids is drastically transformed through a simple gesture to a complex and highly effective ceremonial instrument. The liquid is poured on the ground and the kylix smashed or 'killed' at the blocking wall of the chamber tomb, transposing

the object to a new ontological state and transgressing the fuzzy boundaries between the mundane and profane. It is indeed very difficult to reconstruct the social and psychological impact of such an act. Reviewing the anthropological literature on intentional breakage or the so-called ritual killing of objects one would be amazed by the multiplicity of meanings and symbolic associations as well as the fine distinctions that one can draw among the various manifestations of this phenomenon (Fossey 1985; Grinsell 1961, 1973; Hamilakis 1998). An object can be broken in selective parts, some of them discarded, some of them carefully preserved. In other cases the parts can be distributed as tokens of a certain transaction or completely destroyed, never to be used again. Breakage can create powerful relations of substantive participation, networks of 'enchainment', but can also dissolve them (Chapman 2000). Although in the case of the kylix, the context of this practice and the nature of archaeological evidence and ethnographic analogues point towards the latter, it is always possible that a sherd from the broken vessel was picked up from the dromos of the chamber tomb and kept as a relic of remembrance. Indeed, by smashing a kylix at the blocking wall of a Mycenaean chamber tomb the participant in the funerary ceremony was implicitly constructing an artificial 'flash-bulb' effect (Neisser et al. 1996), enhancing the conditions of retrieval and recollection via the emotionally loaded act of conspicuous destruction. Such emotionally charged associations, which are often enacted in equally emotionally charged contexts of ritual action, can be regarded as powerful mnemonic devices. As many anthropologists have pointed out, 'religious rituals in non-literate cultures often approximate the kinds of circumstances and manipulate many of the variables that the experimental literature indicates *do* make for accurate flashbulb memories' (McCauley & Lawson 2002). This holds particularly true in the case of initiation rituals, where it is vital that the experienced event endures in memory.

V

So how did the Mycenaean remember? Obviously, and returning to my initial critique of representationalism at the beginning of this paper, the role of such intentional or non-intentional mnemo-technical artefacts and practices is far more dynamic and dialogic than the one implied by the notion of a passive external 'long-term' store. We have seen that the formulaic character of the Mycenaean

iconic repertoire, which often points to a mnemonic function not dissimilar to 'the repetitive phrases and standard epithets in oral poetry' (Crowley 1989, 211; 1992), embodies a dynamic cognitive biography that the notion of storage cannot fully accommodate. Moreover, we suggested that it makes little sense to speak about information storage in the case of a funerary *stela* erected on top of a Mycenaean shaft grave or in the case of the elaborate swords deposited in it. As Rowlands observes: 'Objects are culturally constructed to connote and consolidate the possession of past events associated with their use or ownership. They are there to be talked about and invested with the memories and striking events associated with their use. The link between past, present and future is made through their materiality. Objects of a durable kind assert their own memories, their own forms of commentary and therefore come to possess their own personal trajectories' (Rowlands 1993, 144).

The complex associative enchainment between the 'internal' and 'external' elements of remembering that such objects embody might be better expressed with the metaphor of a handkerchief knot than that of a computer hard disk. Each of them can be argued to actualise and constitute multiple associative networks of recollection. They remind you, sometimes even force you to remember, without including the content of what precisely is to be remembered. There is no linear stimulus–response situation here but a process of active discovery spanning the monumental and the minute, the conspicuous and the commonplace, iconicity and iconoclasm.

Even in the case of the Linear B script (Ventris & Chadwick 1973; Chadwick 1976) where storage seems undeniably to be the case, understanding the role of this unique technology in the shaping of Mycenaean memory is not simply a matter of postulating the representational states being created inside the head of the Mycenaean scribe using those tablets. It is also a matter of postulating the dynamic interaction between that person and the physical properties of the medium of representation as a material thing, *that is*, a clay tablet (Malafouris 2013, ch. 4)

More specifically, I believe that the various kinds of external media, material anchors, and scaffolding structures that support and to a large extent substantiate Mycenaean memory processes, already from the formative early Mycenaean period, cannot easily fit into the generalized mould of information storage. All of these cognitive artefacts and technologies, from the simple engraved stone *stelae* to the elaborate monumental structures and rituals, embody different mnemonic

properties and affordances that cannot be reduced to the notion of passive information storage (see also Knappett 2004, 2005).

To take a final example, the carefully constructed entrance passage (dromos) that leads to the stomion of a Mycenaean chamber tomb is not simply an external architectural feature, that is, a pathway (Wace 1932). It is also a cognitive feature, that is, a retrieval pathway. The chamber tomb, seen as a tripartite spatial structure (dromos-stomion-chamber), embodies and objectifies the performative logic of the ritual process in a manner that makes possible the transmission of this logic in the absence of conscious or explicit recollection from the side of the Mycenaean person. Whatever specific meaning this spatial structure might have had in the context of Mycenaean cosmology and in the course of the Mycenaean becoming, it was above all a cognitive artefact. By that I do not mean to imply that, for example, the dromos should be understood as some sort of purely symbolic construction. On the contrary, what I mean is that in this case to differentiate between function and symbol makes no real sense. In the case of the dromos what we primarily see is a concrete example of what David Kirsh, from the perspective of the distributed cognition approach, refers to as 'the intelligent use of space' (1995). In this sense the dromos may well be perceived as an active extended part of Mycenaean memory. This is not so because the dromos contains explicit information that the Mycenaean person needs to interpret or even attend to consciously in the course of ritual. The dromos is active simply by *being there*, directly shaping the immediate landscape of Mycenaean memory. From an existential angle, this long and narrow pathway is not simply crossing the boundary between life and death, but also the boundary between phenomenal and absolute space and time. Remembrance in such a space is not a matter of recovering internal or external traces frozen and fixed in time, but of how those traces become densely coupled in action.

My suggestion, in other words, is that understanding material culture in its capacity of mnemo-technical mediation cannot be reduced solely to an analogue process of encoding-storage-retrieval, which, we should bear in mind, represents the basic structure of the computational account of human memory – far from the natural state of things. What would be missed by such a reduction is, on the one hand, what the sociologist of memory Maurice Halbwachs in 1925 called the 'social frameworks of memory' (Halbwachs 1992), and, on the other, what Endel Tulving encapsulates in the notion of 'synergistic

ecphory' (Tulving 1983, 12–14; Schacter 1996, 56–71). The first of these notions refers to the socially embedded and distributed character of human memory. It points in other words to the crucial fact that the cognitive potential of any single technology and mnemonic device needs to be realized and appropriated within a given social matrix. Turning to the second notion, that of 'synergistic ecphory', this refers to the flexible and dynamic character of long-term storage. More specifically, it is used to underline that neither the engram nor the exogram should be considered in itself as identical with memory. 'Synergistic ecphory' means that both the internal and the external traces of memory are merely potential contributors to the act of recollection. Moreover, it means that remembrance is not solely determined by the nature of encoded traces (internal or external) but is substantially affected by the context of recollection. Indeed, as the developmental psychologist Susan Engel points out, for memory 'context is everything' (Engel 1999). This is a point that Casey's phenomenology of remembering has well exemplified:

The "through" of commemorative remembering-through signifies such things as: through this very vehicle, within its dimensions, across its surface. For the past is made accessible to me by its sheer ingrediency in the *commemorabilium* itself. … the distance and the anonymity does not matter, thanks to the immanence of the *commemoranda* in the vehicles that sustain them. … The mystery of the matter – but also an insight into its inner working – resides in the way I remember the commemorated past through various commemoratively effective media in the present. It is as if this past were presenting itself to me translucently in such media – as if I were viewing the past in them, albeit darkly: as somehow set within their materiality.

Casey 1987, 218–19

NOTES

1 The central role of oil and perfumes as testified by the wealth of unguents and stirrup jars and the later Linear B evidence (Cavanagh 1998, 106) certainly points to the *syn-aesthetic* experience of Mycenaean beautiful death.

2 As Vermeule characteristically observes: 'Their style used to be thought appalling. Even Schliemann, who was fond of them, felt that they were "made as rudely and in as puerile a manner as if they were the primitive artist's first essay to represent living beings". Perhaps they were, at least in stone' (1964, 91).

3 Although examples of grave stones have been reported from elsewhere in the Middle Helladic, e.g., Lerna (Caskey 1954, 14, 19), Argos 'Tumulus Gamma' and Eleusis (Protonotariou-Deilaki 1980, 33–4, 164–6), they are rather sporadic and need not be confused with the grave circle *stelae* as sculptural monuments.

The Mycenaean *stelae* are much more than a simple device to mark the location of the grave.

4 The practice is rare but has been reported from tombs in Argolid, Boetia, and Thebes (Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1987, 157). It is usually interpreted as a form of fumigation or purification; however, the usual association in most cases of the ashes and charcoal with gold leaf as well as glass paste and beads may indicate an intentional act aiming to alter the material state and properties of those substances.

5 Soles differentiates between the ritual 'killing' of pottery and the ritual 'breakage' of it, arguing that while in the latter case we have the termination of the ceremony and the final act in the social biography of the vessel that is destroyed, in the former the vessel is broken only in part, with the bulk of the vessel carefully preserved (1999, 787).

6 Blegen long ago interpreted the numerous fragments of broken kylikes and goblets found in the entrance passage of the tombs at Prosymna as the 'final act' of a funerary ceremony where the participants used 'to drink a toast in farewell to the dead, or to pour a libation and then to shatter the goblet against the door of the tomb' (Blegen 1937, 238). The practice is well attested in all the major cemeteries of Mycenean Argolis (Argive Heraion, Dendra, Asine, Berbati, and Deiras), with most characteristic probably the case of tomb 13 at Dendra, where as many as 40 kylikes have been reported from the dromos of the tomb (Persson 1942), as well as the case of tomb 10 at Prosymna, where 34 kylikes were recovered from the entrance of the tomb (Blegen 1937). Voutsaki in her extensive examination of Mycenean burial practices reports broken kylikes in 67 of 232 chamber tombs (1993, 86). It is important to mention that with the exception of Volimidia in Messenia, some kylix fragments were found in the Voidhokilia and the Englianos IV stomia (and Vafio cup fragments – not kylikes – were found at Routsi 2 and Psari 1; thanks to Michael Boyd for pointing that out; see also Boyd 2002). Thus the custom is less frequent outside the funerary contexts of the Argolid, and its chronological margins overlap with the palatial period (Cavanagh 1998, 107). The iconographical counterpart of this practice may be seen in a larnax from Tanagra where two female figures are depicted, one in the traditional mourning gesture and the other raising a kylix (Cavanagh & Mee 1998, 50; Immerwahr 1995, 115).

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Eternal Glory: The Origins of Eastern Jade Burial and Its Far-Reaching Influence

Li Shuicheng

Death as a philosophical topic has haunted us throughout history. According to archaeological finds, building tombs for the deceased, conducting funerary rites, and placing food, tools, and decorative objects within tombs had already begun to take place 100,000 years ago. Such finds even include behaviours that seem to reflect certain modern mentalities, such as placing flowers in tombs or sprinkling ochre onto the body (Leroi-Gourhan 1975; Solecki 1971; Hovers et al. 2003; Zilhão, this volume). By the Neolithic period, funerary rites were already undergoing gradual standardisation, and distinct regional and ethnic differences began to take shape.

China has enjoyed a reputation as the 'Land of Jade.' Because of jade's hard yet refined texture, warm and glowing lustre, as well as the difficulty in quarrying it, in China it has always been regarded as an elegant, noble, beautiful, and mysterious substance, and jade objects are considered to possess a special kind of supernatural power. In ancient times, the Chinese regarded jade as 'the fair one among the stones, possessing the Five Virtues' – the Five Virtues referred to here being Humanity, Righteousness, Wisdom, Courage, and Purity (Xu Shen 1978).

Not only can we trace the Chinese tradition of jade worship back into antiquity, 'jade burial' (*yulianzang* 玉敛葬), the custom of using jade objects to constrain the body with the hope of eternally preserving the souls of the deceased, is found from very early on. Two complete sets of jade suits were first excavated in 1968 in the Han dynasty multiple burial for Liu Sheng, Prince Jin of the Zhongshan state, and his wife and consort, discovered in Pingshan prefecture of Hebei province. The shape of these suits follows that of the human body, separable into parts such as head and torso coverings, sleeves, gloves, trousers, and shoes. This type of jade suit

was built from tiny cut and polished jade pieces that were threaded together with golden threads; that is why they are also called 'gold thread jade suits' (*jinlü yuyi* 金缕玉衣). Liu Sheng's jade suit is 1.88 m in length and consists of 2,160 jade pieces threaded together by gold threads that weigh 1.1 kg in total (see Figure 19.1). The consort's jade suit is 1.72 m in length, using 2,160 pieces of jade and 0.7 kg of gold (Zhongguo & Hebei 1980; see Figure 19.1). According to Han dynasty ritual, jade suits are burial clothes specifically intended for the emperor and empress, although the emperor could bestow them on his royal relations. Nevertheless, the jade suits of the latter can only be threaded together with silver or copper threads. This is why jade suits are ranked into three categories: gold thread, silver thread, and copper thread types.

Jade burial contrasts sharply contrasts with Western burial culture, and for this reason it has become a burial ritual representative of East Asia. From what period, then, did jade burial originate? How did it evolve?

According to archaeological discoveries to date, the earliest jade artefacts within the present-day borders of China are dated to the later Palaeolithic period (Liu Junyong 1989). Around eight thousand years ago, crafted jade decorative objects, serving as grave goods, began to appear. For instance, a small number of tombs with jade *jue* 玦 pendants, jade cicadas, and jade tubular beads were used in the Xinglongwa Culture (ca. 6200–5400 BC) of the Great Wall region in the northeast, including some examples where stone or jade beads were placed in the mouth of the deceased (Zhongguo 1992, 1997). In the Xinglongwa Culture of Inner Mongolia, at the Baiyinchanghan site, the earliest known jade cicada has been discovered (Figure 19.2; Neimenggu 2004). This
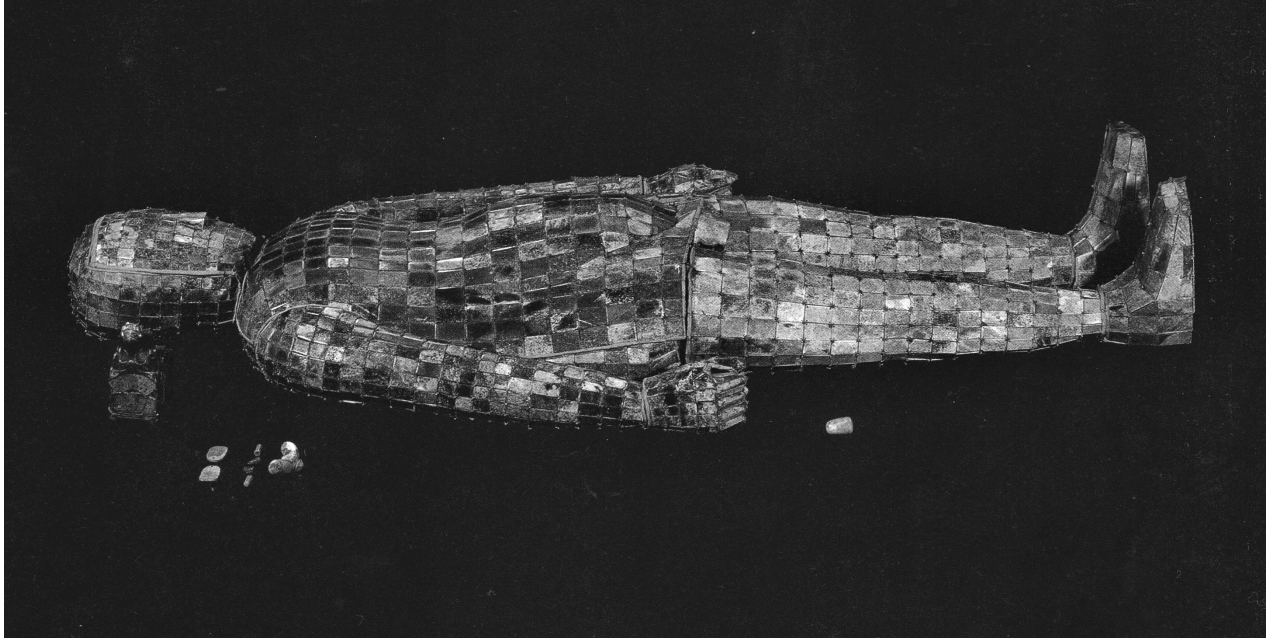
Figure 19.1. Gold thread jade suit (jinlü yuyi 金缕玉衣), Han dynasty, from Mancheng, Hebei province.

Figure 19.2. Jade cicada (*yuhan*) in the Baiyinchanghan burial of the Xinglongwa Culture, Inner Mongolia.

may be the origin of what is later known as *yuhan* 玉含 ('sucking jade'). In Han dynasty textual records, such a *yuhan* in the mouth of the deceased is said to be able to keep the corpse intact for eternity[1].

Nor was Xinglongwa a lone phenomenon. In the Hemudu Culture (ca. 5300–3300 BC) and the Majiabang Culture (ca. 5400–3900 BC) of the Lower Yangzi region in a slightly later period, a small number of tombs with

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jade grave goods are also found (Hemudu 1980; Guojia 2002), and some include *yuhan*. Even though these *yuhan* exhibit many shapes and forms, they are mostly small decorative objects, revealing the earliest state of the *yuhan* practice (Huang Xuanpei 2006).

In summary, around seven thousand years ago, the concept of jade grave goods possessing a perpetuating function had already appeared in China and is reflected in distinct funerary customs from both the north and the south.

Upon entering the Late Neolithic period, jade artefacts were even more widely used. Several centres for jade production and consumption appeared, such as the Xilamulun River region in the northeast and the area surrounding Lake Tai in the south.

The Xilamulun River region runs through southeastern Inner Mongolia and the western Liaoning province, an area with an extensive history of jade-making. By the time of the Hongshan Culture (ca. 4200–2900 BC), this area had already become the most important centre for jade production and consumption in the north. Using the famous Niuheliang site cluster as an example, we may observe a complete set of ritual loci including a sacrificial altar, temple, and stone-built burial group within a 50 km² area. This site provides an early precedent for China's tradition of sacrificial temple ritual architecture. At the same time, within this wide area, not a single residential settlement has yet been discovered. This shows that this region was a special sacrificial precinct exclusively intended for the burial of elites, as well as for conducting large-scale religious activities.

More than ten stone burial mounds built of massive boulders were discovered at the Niuheliang site. They are either square or circular, with large chambers built in the middle. Large numbers of painted sacrificial clay vases and arrays of standing stones were placed around the side. Smaller stone burial mounds were also found spread out around the big tombs. What is interesting is that in these stone cists, none of the grave goods were vessels used for daily activities. Instead, strangely shaped jade artefacts are the most common object types, including jade dragons (Figure 19.3), turtles, animal faces or masks, standing anthropomorphic figures, eagles (or phoenices), owls (or other birds), cicadas, horseshoe-shaped cylinders, *huan* 环 rings, beads, hooked cloud-shaped ornaments (Figure 19.4), bracelets, a three-hole pendant showing twin humans (or twin bears), awls, comb-frames, and more (Chaoyang & Liaoning 2004). It seems that the jade objects in Hongshan Culture burials already

Figure 19.3. Jade dragon, Hongshan Culture, Sanxingtala site, Chifeng, Inner Mongolia.

possess the characteristics of the later jade burial practice (Figure 19.5).

In the Lower Yangzi, great tombs with orderly planning emerged from the early periods of the Songze Culture (ca. 4400–3300 BC). Among the abundant burial objects, jade or stone *yue* 钺 battle-axes, symbolic of power and rank, were placed on the body, indicating that the tomb owner was of high rank and had military power. Such great tombs opened up the chapter of southern jade burial (Jiangsu Zhangjiagang Shi Dongshan cemetery 江苏张家港市东山墓地: Figure 19.6). Around the same time, at Lingjiatan at Mount Han in Anhui province, rare cases of jade burial appeared. An example is Tomb 23, excavated in 2007. Not only is this tomb large, its floor was covered with jade and stone objects, and the corpse wore an assortment of jade decorations and was wrapped and covered with jade and stone objects. In addition, in the earth fill of this tomb excavators discovered an 88 kg jade sculpture of a wild boar. This tomb contained more than 330 grave items, 217 of which are jade objects (Figure 19.7). Aside from the common battle-axes, discs, rings, bracelets, *huang* 璜 semi-circular pendants, and *jue*, three turtle-shaped jade objects with jade awls were placed on the lower abdomen of the tomb occupant, suggesting his role as a shaman (Figure 19.8; Guojia 2008). Similar religious and divination jade objects are found in other elite tombs with jade burial at this cemetery (Anhui 2006a, 2006b).
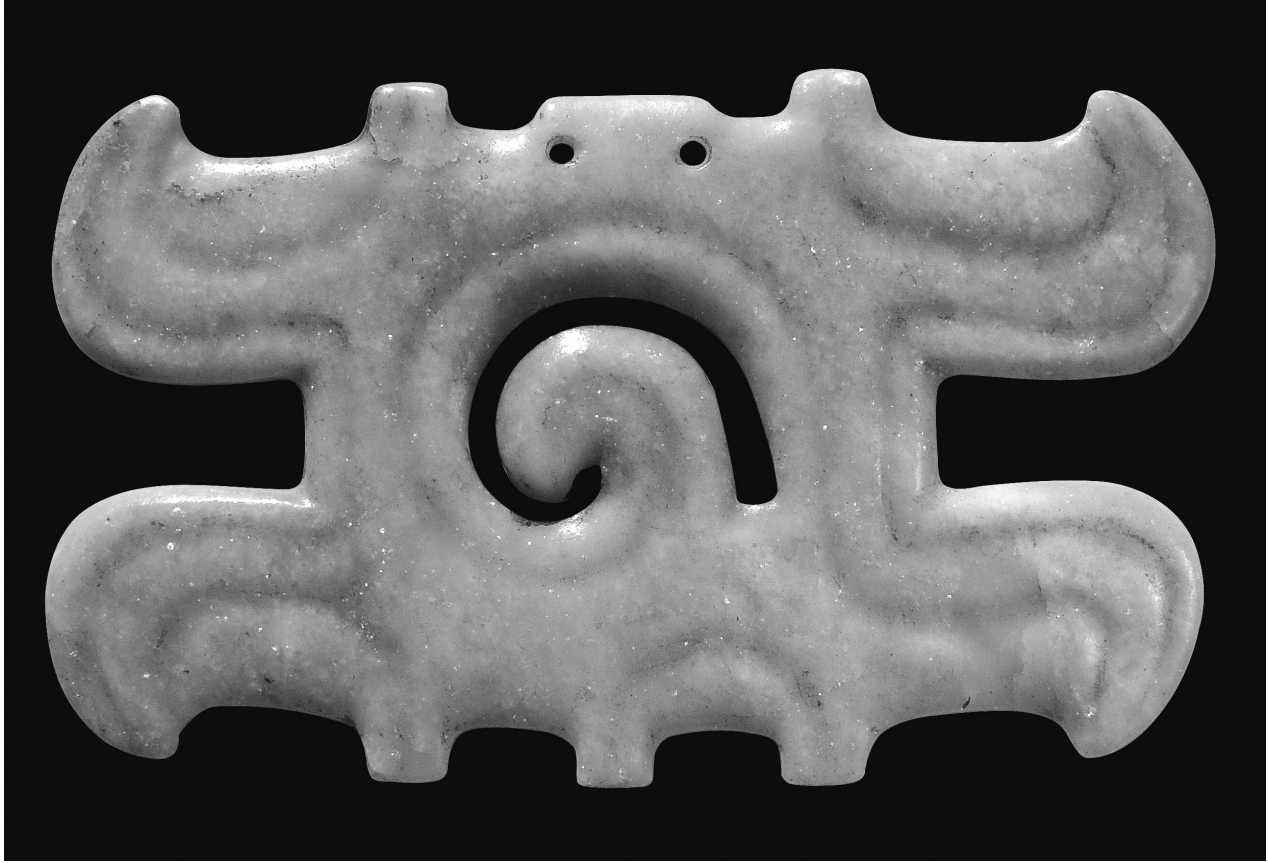
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Figure 19.4. Jade hooked cloud-shaped ornaments, Hongshan Culture, Narisitai site, Balinyouqi, Inner Mongolia.

By the time of the Liangzhu Culture (ca. 3300–2300 BC), thriving jade production and consumption surrounded Lake Tai, and jade burial was spreading rapidly in elite society and was becoming increasingly lavish. The Yaoshan site at Yuhang, Zhejiang province, for instance, was originally a hilltop shrine built with red, grey, and yellow-beige coloured sediment and paved with stone facing. It was later rebuilt into an elite cemetery, where twelve large tombs have been excavated, all of which contain jade burial goods. Some contain several hundred pieces (Zhejiang 2003).

At the Fanshan elite cemetery, not far from Yaoshan, the tombs were covered with uniform surface mounds and contained coffin supports and lacquered wooden coffins. The largest tomb, Tomb 20, included 547 burial goods, with jade objects alone amounting to 511 pieces (Figure 19.9; Zhejiang 2005). The jade burial of the Liangzhu Culture features primarily jade *cong* 琮 cylinders and jade *bi* 璧 discs, but precious lacquer objects with jade inlay were also found. The surfaces of these jade objects have exquisitely carved designs of supernatural

figures with beastly faces, demonstrating an incredible level of technical sophistication: some of these designs have already achieved the effect of relief carving (Figure 19.10). This type of artificial elite burial mound was widely found during the Liangzhu period, seeming to indicate that it was already the established burial procedure for local elites. This type of jade burial forms a stark contrast with the small, humble tombs of commoners, sufficient to indicate a significant degree of wealth disparity and hierarchisation.

The No. 3 Tomb at Sidun in Wujin, Jiangsu Province, is a typical Liangzhu Culture elite jade burial. The tomb occupant was male, aged around twenty, and buried in an extended supine position. The bones were partly singed. The majority of grave goods in this tomb are jade *cong* (fifty-seven pieces) and jade *bi* (twenty-four pieces), covering the tomb owner from head to toe. Among them, the best two pieces of jade discs were placed on the abdomen of the body, while a small number of clay objects were placed above the head and below the feet. The excavators infer that an elaborate ceremony must have taken place

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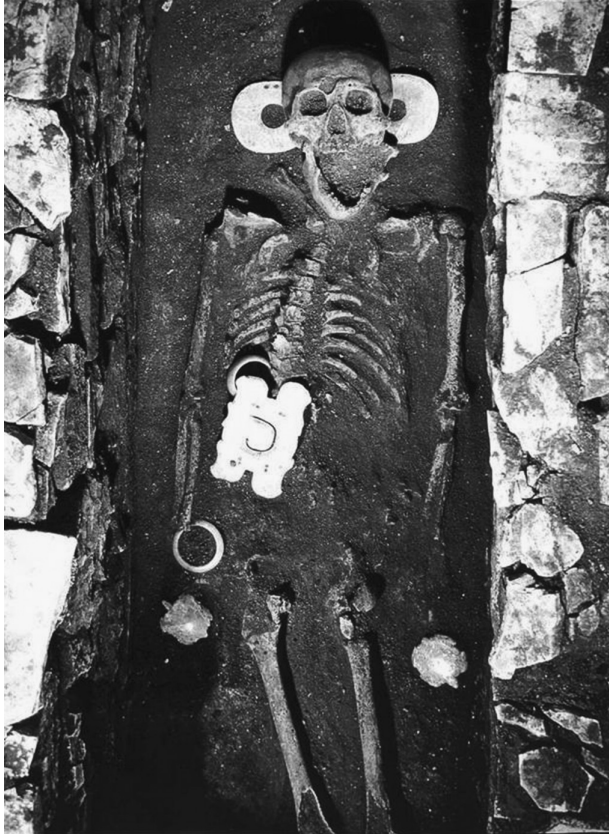
Figure 19.5. Jade burial of Hongshan Culture, No. 1 tomb of the No. 1 stone mound at the No. 5 location at the Niuheliang site, Liaoning province.

during the funeral: the tomb floor was first covered with jade discs, after which the tomb was set on fire. When the flames died down, the body was lowered into the grave, and the large number of jade objects was spread on top to cover the body (Nanjing 1984).

The phrase 'the sky is round and earth square' (*Tianyuan difang* 天圆地方) embodied the embryonic form of cosmology found in ancient Chinese philosophical thought. The round shape of jade discs and the square shape of the jade tubes represent the vast firmament and the immense earth. The type of jade burial that employed a large number of jade objects corresponds with the records found in *The Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli – Dianrui* 周礼 – 典瑞): 'Spread out jade tubes and discs in order to deck the body' (*shu bi cong yi lianshi* 疏璧琮以敛尸). Archaeological evidence demonstrates that the idea of 'using grey jade discs to worship heaven, using yellow jade tubes to worship earth' originated in the prehistoric period. Using jade discs and tubes to cover the deceased expresses the wish to preserve the body eternally through

jade's supernatural power, as well as the desire to rule over the next world with such divine powers. However, since the shape of the jade tubes is square on the outside and circular on the inside, some scholars also hypothesize that jade tubes were ritual objects employed by shamans in ancient religious ceremonies for the purpose of communing with divinities and spirits of heaven and earth. What jade tubes represent is a period when the elite stratum combined the shamanistic religious power with political power (Zhang Guangzhi 1999).

At present, the earliest jade burial goods discovered in the Yellow River region date to the early Yangshao Culture (ca. 5000–4000 BC) and include tools such as jade axes and jade shovels (Shaanxi 1990). By the middle Yangshao period (ca. 4000–3500 BC), jade *yue* battle-axes, symbolic of royal and military power, began to appear in some large, high-rank tombs, foreshadowing major social transformations and the development of social complexity (Zhongguo & Henan 2010). A significant number of buried jade objects dating to the second half of the third millennium has been found in the elite tombs at the Qingliangsi cemetery in Ruicheng, Shanxi Province. Grave goods include jade *yue* battle-axes, jade discs, tubes, *yabi* 牙璧 toothed-discs, rings, perforated knives, tiger-head pendants, and others. This site is currently the earliest case of jade burial found in the Central Plains area of China. Aside from jade objects, some elite tombs also include luxury goods, such as crocodile drums, pig mandibles, and painted ceramics, as well as examples of human sacrifice (Figure 19.11; Shanxi et al. 2011).

During the Longshan period, at sites such as Jufeng in Quxi, Shandong Province; Shimao in Shenmu, Shaanxi Province; Taosi in Yangfen, Shanxi Province; Shijiahe in Tianmen, Hubei Province; and even the Upper Yellow River region in China's northwest at sites such as Huangniangniangtai in Wuwei, Gansu, elite tombs or special urn burials with burial goods began to appear. These examples show that jade burial was also wide-spread in the Yellow River region, although the scale of jade consumption was not yet comparable with that of the Lower Yangzi region.

By the beginning of second millennium BC, the highly developed prehistoric cultures in both the north and the south were rapidly declining, while the political, economic, and cultural centre of a new type of empire began to shift toward the Central Plains area. The Xia and the Shang as the central dynasties needed to develop a new system of rituals that could serve their rule. With this as the background, the material and craft of jade

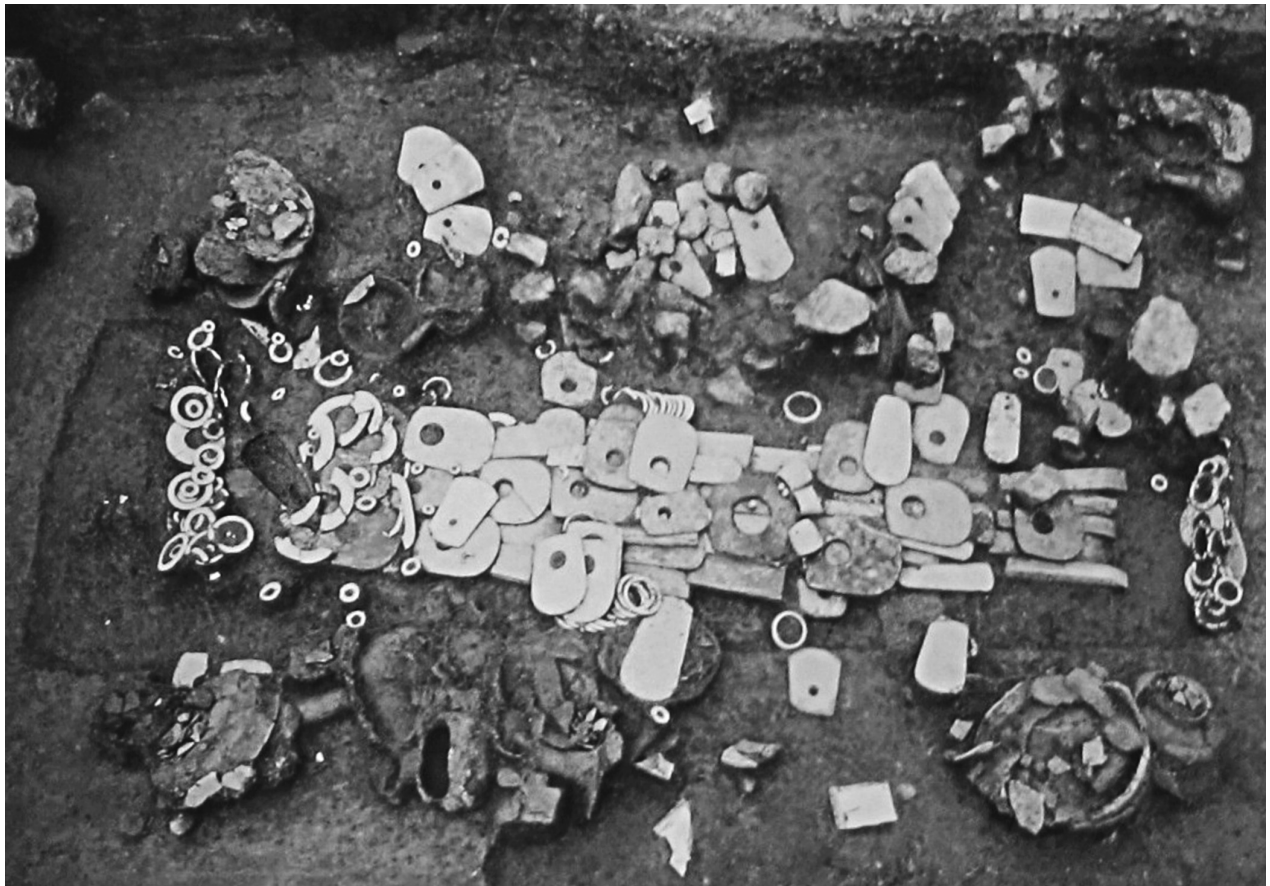Figure 19.6. Jade burial of Songze Culture, No. 90 tomb, Dongshancun site, Jiangsu province.

Figure 19.7. Jade burial of *lingjiatan* cemetery, No. 23 tomb, 2007, Hanshan, Anhui province.

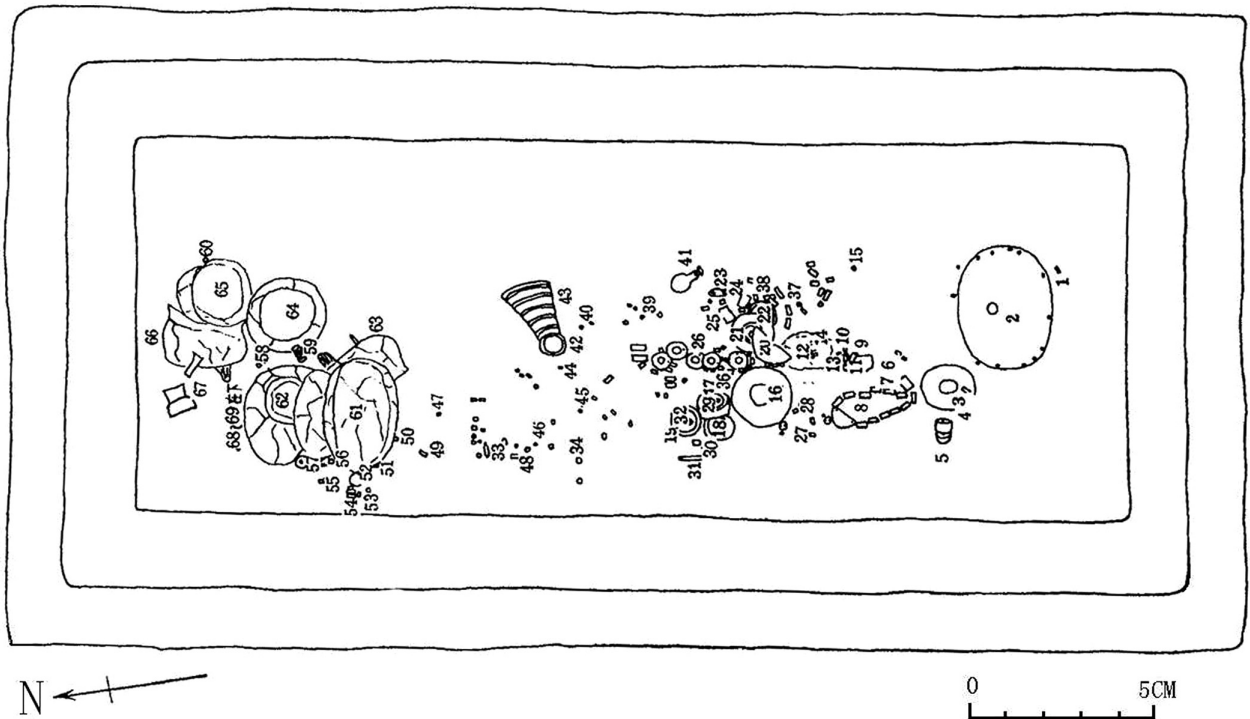Figure 19.8. Turtle-shaped jade, No. 23 tomb, 2007, Hanshan, Anhui province.

Figure 19.9. The No. 20 tomb, Fanshan, Zhejiang province.

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Figure 19.10. The largest jade *cong* with carved designs of supernatural figures with animal faces, Fanshan cemetery, Zhejiang Province.

Figure 19.11. Jade burial found in the Central Plains with human sacrifice, Qingliangsi Cemetery, Ruicheng, Shanxi Province.

ritual objects became increasingly refined, with types and forms undergoing further standardisation. Among them, the jade discs, tubes, dagger, *yazhang* 牙璋 forked-blades, *biqi* 璧戚 axe-shaped objects, knives, and handle-shaped objects (*bingxingqi* 柄形器) from Erlitou reflect brand new designs and are endowed with new meanings (Xu Hong 2009). At the same time, the ruling elites still

cherished and continued the jade burial tradition from the prehistoric period, as the large volume of excavated jade objects from Tomb No. 5 at Xiaotun, Anyang, well illustrate. Aside from an astounding number of bronze ritual vessels, the queen named Fuhao buried in this tomb was accompanied by 755 exquisite jade objects, not a few of which are made from the Hetian jadestone from the distant western region (Figure 19.12; Zhongguo 1980). Within the limit of current archaeological discoveries, however, our understanding of jade burial in this period is so far rather restricted.

In the Western Zhou period (ca. 1050–771 BC), jade burial appeared in the form of jade face covers (*yufumian* 玉覆面) (Zhongguo 1986; Zhang Changshou 1993). The so-called face cover is also called the 'eye mask' (*mingmu* 瞑目) in some contexts[2]. Jade pieces, fashioned into the shapes of eyebrows, eyes, mouth, nose, and ears, are sewn onto silk material, which is then used to cover the tomb occupant's face upon entombment. The jade pieces on such a jade mask correspond to the eyes and nose of the deceased, symbolizing that the orifices of the deceased are blocked, and the body is protected from decaying (Figure 19.13). The aristocrats and elites of this period also commonly fill the inside of the coffin with a large supply of jade objects. The funerary clothes covering the body may also have a large number of jade pieces sewn on, which, together with the 'jade face cover,' constitute the jade burial practice of this new period (Figure 19.14; Sun Qingwei 1999).

During the Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD), jade face covers and inlaid jade funerary clothes began to develop toward the jade armour suit, which wraps around the entire corpse. The jade suit is also referred to as a 'jade case' (*yuxia* 玉匣) and is the most characteristic of Han dynasty funerary jade. The jade suits of early Han only include head covers, gloves, and shoes. Only by the time

Figure 19.12. The No. 5 tomb at Xiaotun, Anyang, Henan Province.
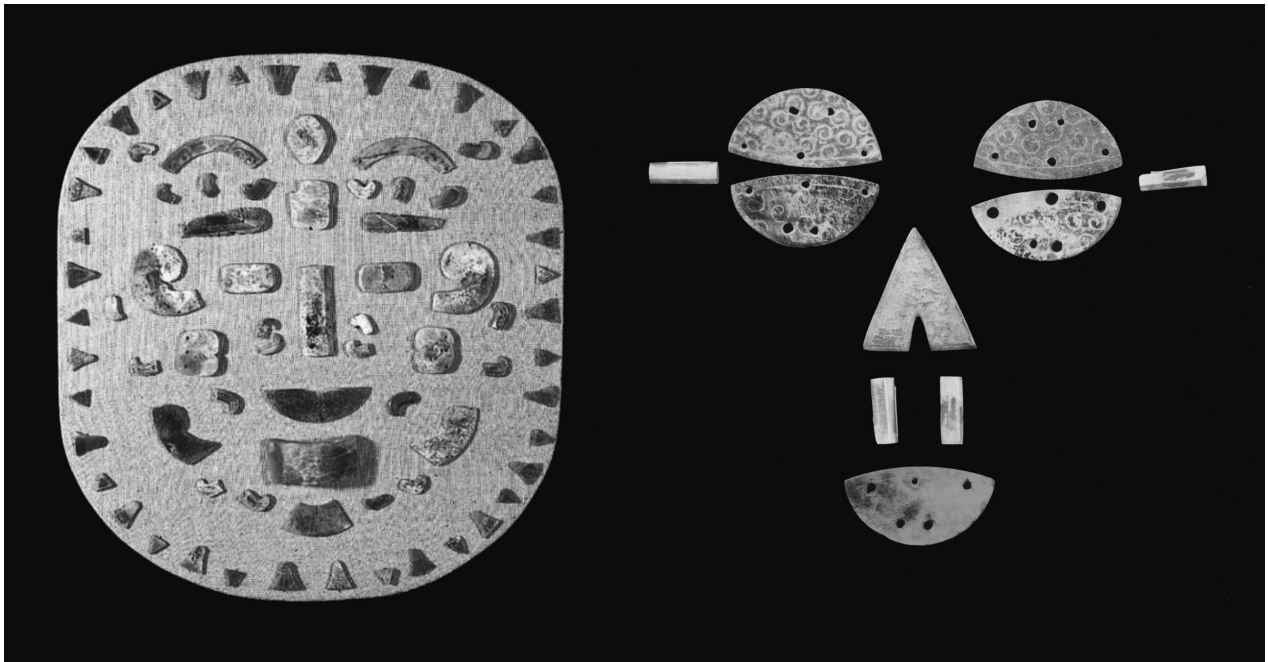
Figure 19.13. Jade face covers (eye masks). Left, No. 31 tomb, Qucun, Shanxi Province; right, Han dynasty 'jade suits', Pingshuo, Shanxi Province.
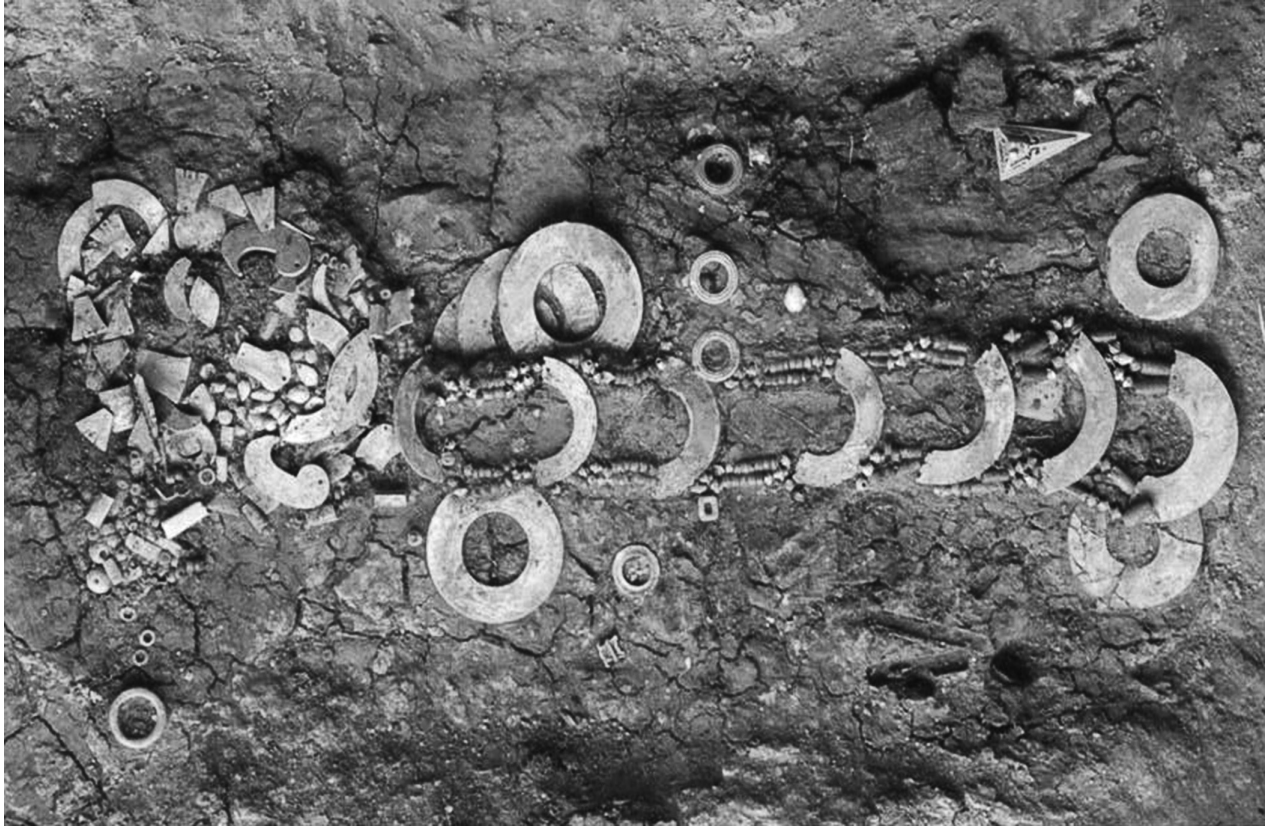
Figure 19.14. Jade burial in the Zhou dynasty, Tomb No. 2001, Sanmenxia, Henan Province.

of Emperor Wen (Wendi 文帝, r. 179–157 BC) and Emperor Jing (Jingdi 景帝, r. 156–141 BC) did the fully formed 'jade suits' appear. These are the 'gold thread jade suits' of the Han period aristocratic couple buried at Zhongshan, Liu Sheng and his wife, whom we introduced earlier.

The Han dynasty 'jade suits' are accompanied by 'nine orifices seals' (*jiuqiaosai* 九窍塞), *yuhan*, and *yuwo* 玉握. The so-called nine orifices seals are placed upon or inserted into the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, anus, and penis or vagina (Figure 19.15). Because of the superstition surrounding jade, the ancients believed that if 'metal or gold and jade are placed upon the nine orifices, then the deceased will not perish.' Because of this, only if the nine orifices of the deceased are sealed with jade can the everlasting existence of the corpse be guaranteed. *Yuhan* are small jade objects placed in the mouth of the deceased, as we previously discussed. Such a funerary custom appeared from very early on, but the form and shape of the *yuhan* were not yet fixed. By the Han dynasty, all *yuhan* are carved into cicadas. This is because the ancients thought of cicadas as having the unique life process of

eternally cycling between life and death – they wished to adopt cicadas' supernatural ability to revive the dead. *Yuwo* are jade objects held in the hands of the deceased. In the Han dynasty they are shaped as pigs. There are many interpretations of this modification of the ritual, but its function probably does not extend beyond preventing the deceased from perishing.

The insatiable pursuit of jade objects by the upper class fanned the fervour for jade burial during Han dynasty, which became a blind obsession with rich burial that ran through the whole society and generated bad social influences. In 222 AD, the first Wei emperor (Wei Wendi 魏文帝, r. 220–6 AD) decreed a banning of jade suits in order to turn away thoroughly from the damaging custom of rich burial.

During the Sui–Tang period (581–907 AD), social custom was once again drastically transformed. As exchange between the East and West was reinforced, gold and other precious metal became the new favourite of the upper class and quickly trickled down into the funerary rites of the time. Nevertheless, jade objects, conceived to be the crystallization of the essence of heaven and earth,

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玉眼盖

玉鼻塞　　　　　　　　　　玉耳塞

玉珨

玉肛塞　　　　　　　　　　玉阴塞
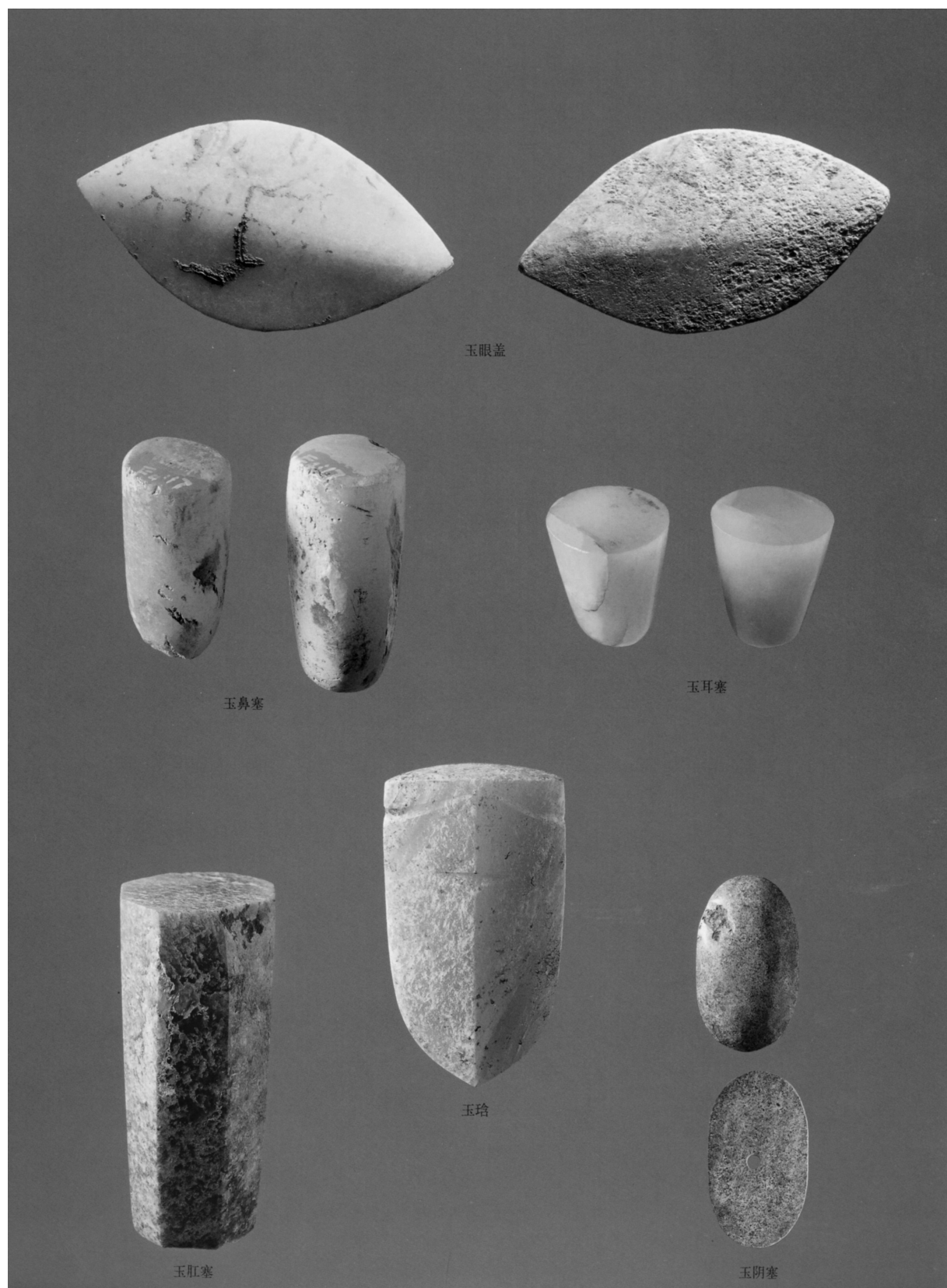
Figure 19.15. 'Jade suits' (nine orifices seals), Han dynasty, tomb of Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province.

continued to occupy an important position in traditional Chinese culture. Having experienced revival during Yuan (1271–1368 AD), Ming (1368–1644 AD), and Qing (1616–1911 AD) dynasties, jade objects not only persisted in funerary rites, but also became objects of collection and appreciation for the living. Jade's robust, vital force had long since taken hold of the soul of the traditional Chinese culture.

A FEW OBSERVATIONS

The use of jade burial goods as a means of preserving the physical body is a traditional concept that can be traced back for seven to eight thousand years. Jade burial practices took shape five to six thousand years ago, then experienced a long period of development, until they reached their pinnacle during the Han period.

Early jade burial appeared around Lake Tai in the south and along the Xilamulun River in the northeast and influenced the Central Plains from both directions. The influence from the Lower Yangzi region was especially strong.

In the Hongshan Culture and the Yangshao Culture, the obsession with jade objects, as well as the supremacy of religious power, greatly influenced and held back economic development and led to their downfall. On the contrary, the Yellow River valley made royal power supreme and sought steady development with a pragmatic spirit and thus eventually reached ascension. These two each represent different trajectories of civilisation.

Around 4000 BC, people of the Near East and Black Sea had already mastered copper production and entered into the Chalcolithic. The Chinese of the same time, on the other hand, were fanatically obsessed with jade objects, wishing for immortality. The dire consequence of the excessive preference for jade is the delay of appearance of metallurgy in China. This can be proven by the role played by jade objects. As valuable commercial objects, jades have always been used as decoration and are representative of power, status, and hierarchy. But in the West, such roles are fulfilled by metal objects. This seems to show that the special role and status associated with jade were to some degree hindering the development of metallurgy. This perspective continued into the Xia, Shang, and Zhou periods, when large bronze vessels became the main vessels for religious ceremonies. Comparing the use and function of early bronze vessels in East and West will allow us to understand this even more profoundly.

Jade burial and its evolution in ancient China indicate the cognitive abilities of the Chinese in different historical periods, as well as the conception of ancient cosmology and the lasting vitality that has been given to jade, which clearly is an interesting topic for cognitive archaeology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1 'Holding a piece of jade in your mouth, about to transform but does not, congealed into dry wax. Thousand years later, only when the coffin falls apart, does the body begin to corrupt. Then is the body returned to earth, and entered upon its true abode.' See Yang Wangsun biography in the *History of Han*《汉书·杨王孙传》:"口含玉石, 欲化不得, 郁为枯腊, 千载之后, 棺椁朽腐, 乃得归土, 就其真宅"。

2 Liji – Shi sangli 仪礼-士丧礼 [Classic of Rites – On burials for officials]: "瞑目用缁, 方尺二寸, 赪里, 著组系"。郑注:" 瞑目, 覆面者也"。

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Eventful Deaths – Eventful Lives? Bronze Age Mortuary Practices in the Late Prehistoric Eurasian Steppes of Central Russia (2100–1500 BC)

Bryan Hanks, Roger Doonan, Derek Pitman, Elena Kupriyanova, and Dmitri Zdanovich

INTRODUCTION

Various studies of Bronze Age mortuary evidence in the southern Ural Mountains of Russia have highlighted an apparent similarity with religious rites described in the *Rig Veda* and *Avesta* (see papers in Jones-Bley & Zdanovich 2002). Indeed, late prehistoric populations in this region have been discussed critically with regard to the emergence and spread of Indo-Iranian languages and Aryan migrations (see Anthony 2007 for detailed overview). Although the use of ancient texts to interpret prehistoric religion and death practices is tantalising, their relevance to the primary funerary contexts discussed in this paper remain, at best, quite generalized and may constrain both method and interpretation of this diverse body of evidence. It is argued here that there is significant scope in the archaeological evidence to develop more nuanced understandings of how specific elements of material culture were valued in life and incorporated in rites of death.

Light spoke-wheeled chariots and associated artefacts (cheek pieces, sacrificed horses, weaponry) recovered from middle Bronze Age (MBA) cemeteries in this region have been the focus of discussion and debate over the relationships among mortuary evidence, warfare, and socio-political organization. In this paper, however, we focus more intently on recovered metal grave goods and their compositional analysis. Evidence recovered from recent archaeological field research indicates that the selection and placement of specific metal objects changed through time in the context of life, death, and the burial event. This paper examines this new information as an important component of funerary practices, social memory, and the broader context of metal production as connected with the use and deposit of metal objects. Evidence discussed will include the detailed analysis of metal objects, key shifts in the nature of metal deposits in burials, and new evidence on the scale of copper metal production in the broader region (Figure 20.1).

ANCESTRAL LANDSCAPES

The *kurgan* (tumulus) form of burial has left an indelible trace across the vast expanse of the Eurasian steppes. It has been argued recently that this first appeared in southeastern Europe in the second half of the fifth millennium BC (Chalcolithic) and was connected with the Proto-Yamnaya culture (Korenevskii 2012, 114). The further diffusion of this form of mortuary practice is connected with the Yamnaya culture (Pit Grave culture) pastoralists in the western steppes in the third millennium BC. This conspicuous form of burial diffused eastwards across the northern Eurasian grasslands and was intertwined with the movement of populations and novel social and economic traditions. Yamnaya settlement evidence is sparse (Malutina 2010) in the southern Urals region, but numerous burial complexes have been investigated and Yamnaya groups are linked to the earliest evidence for copper metal production in this area (Merpert 1974; Shilov 1975; Anthony 2007). Middle Bronze Age Abashevo and Sintashta culture traditions (Table 20.1) appeared in this same region by the late third to early second millennium BC, and many Sintashta cemeteries appear related to new forms of nucleated, fortified settlements (Gening et al. 1992; Zdanovich & Zdanovich 2002; Hanks, Epimakhov & Renfrew 2007). In many cases, kurgan burials are represented by the middle and
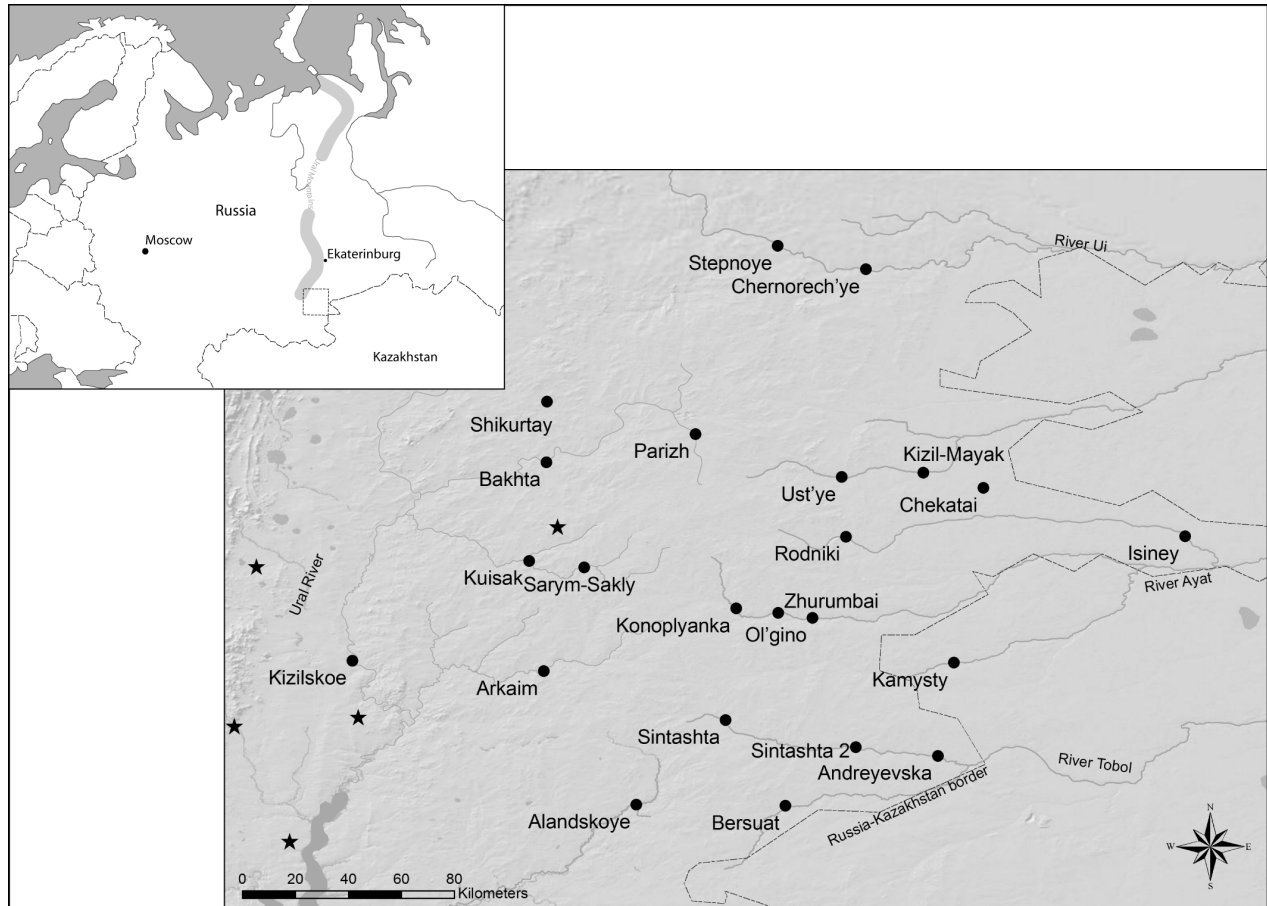
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Figure 20.1. Map of the southeastern Ural Mountains showing location of middle Bronze Age fortified settlements (black dots) and identified late prehistoric copper mines (black stars).

late Bronze Age (LBA) phases – covering a period from ca. 2800 to 1400 BC.

One of the most remarkable cemeteries in this region is Solntse II. This site is situated two hundred kilometres south of the modern-day industrial city of Chelyabinsk in the Russian Federation. This mortuary complex is situated on the upper terrace of the Nizhnii Toguzak River and is surrounded by a broad grassland landscape punctuated with areas of forest cover (Figure 20.2). The topography of the cemetery reveals twenty-seven visible earthen burial mounds (kurgans) and covers an area approximately fourteen hectares (Figure 20.3). Nine of the kurgans have been excavated and date to ca. 2100–300 BC. Several of the excavated kurgans date to the middle Bronze Age and contained Sintashta culture burials, including evidence of light spoke-wheeled chariot technology (Epimakhov 1996; Bersenev et al. 2011). The significance of the cemetery, however, easily transcends the temporal duration of the Sintashta period as

several burial mounds were constructed during the later Iron Age with some placed directly over earlier Bronze Age constructions. This diachronic appropriation did not only occur in prehistory, as a contemporary Muslim cemetery has been constructed and incorporates several of the prehistoric mounds within its fenced boundaries (Figures 20.2 and 20.3).

As one stands within this unique mortuary complex, surrounded by vast grassland steppe, connections form firmly between the practices of people in the distant past and the meaningful ritual practices of the present. And, as one ponders the remarkable strategies and choices employed by these different communities through time, it becomes increasingly clear that in a landscape seemingly homogeneous and devoid of significant topographical relief, the decision over where to bury the dead may actually have been more restricted than one would first imagine. These temporal connections, particularly as we envision them over the longue durée, compose a historical

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Table 20.1. *Table illustrating regional chronologies and archaeological culture phases*

Period	Dates (BC)	Cis-Urals (western)		Trans-Urals (eastern)	
		Steppe	Forest-Steppe	Steppe	Forest-Steppe
Early	3200			Tersek	Surtandy
	3100	Yamnaya				
	3000		Early Bronze Age			
	2900		cultures			
Middle	2800					
	2700			Yamnaya		
	2600			Poltavka?		
	2500					
	2400				?
	2300	?				
	2200			?	
	2100		Abashevo		
	2000	Sintashta		Sintashta	
	1900	Petrovka		Petrovka	
Late	1800	Alakul'	Srubnaya	Alakul'	Petrovka
	1700	Srubnaya	Alakul'	Fyodorovo	Alakul'
	1600	Fyodorovo			Fyodorovo
	1500			Sargary	
	1400		Mezhovka		Cherkaskul
Final	1300	Sargary			Mezhovka
	1200				
	1100				
	1000				
	900				

Adapted from Koryakova & Epimakhov 2007, 16, table 0.4.

Figure 20.2. Aerial photo of Solntse II cemetery showing fenced contemporary Muslim cemetery and prehistoric kurgan mounds surrounding it (photo taken from the north, looking south).

string of events – one building on the other and anchored through clearly expressed ancestral ties to the landscape and socio-cultural understandings of place, social practice, and memory. What is even more remarkable in this respect is how funerary practices and monument construction tethered communities to such specific locales and a sense of *place* – even though patterns of greater mobility through specialized pastoralism emerged by at least 1200 BC. Such mobility and ways of life, emerging by the late Bronze Age, can also be connected with the appearance of Islam in central Eurasia, as Turkic peoples, including Tatars and Bashkir ethnic groups, settled in the southern Urals during the early historic period. Such is the history of this vast steppe region and such are the connections that are constructed and rearticulated through the placement of the dead within the landscape.
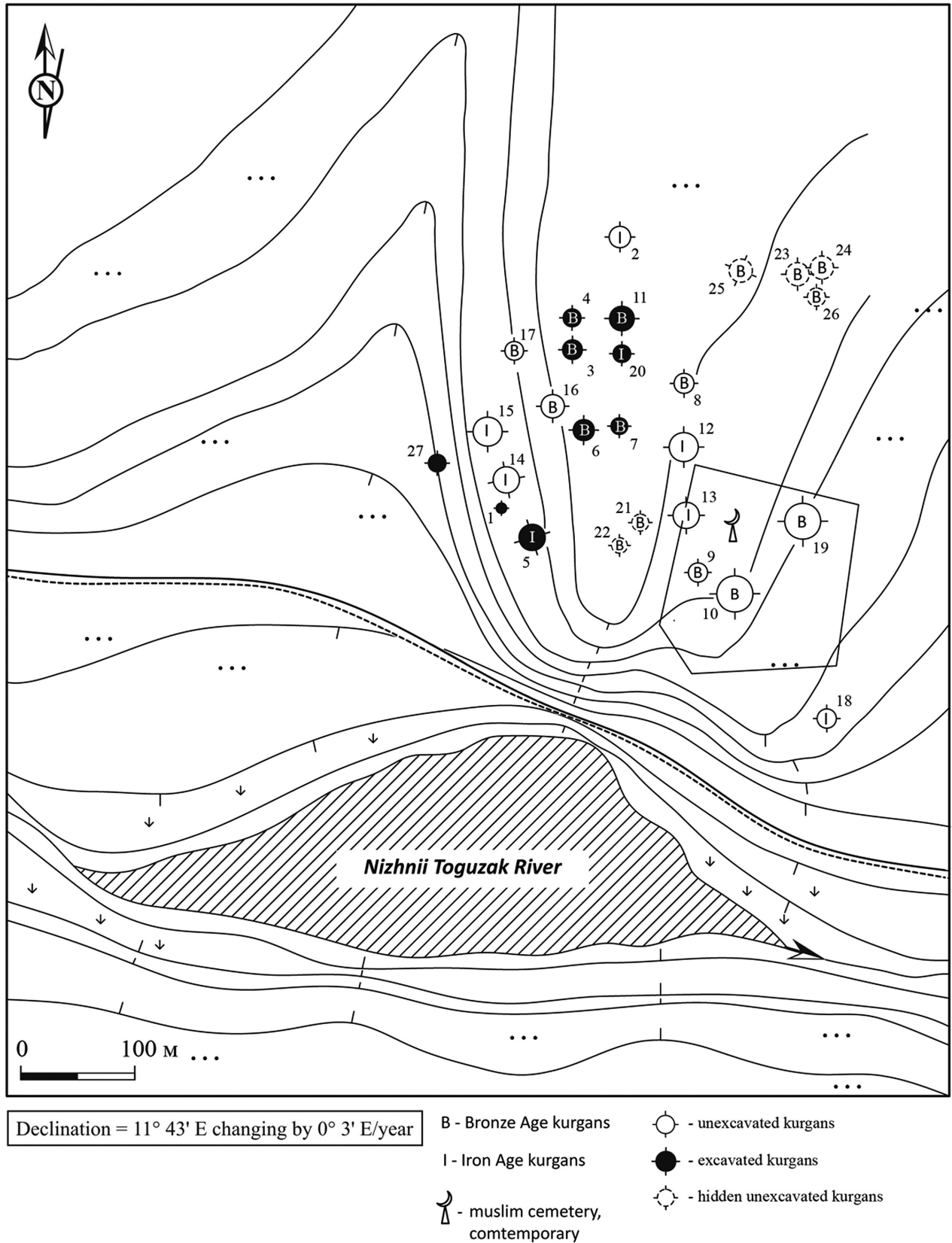
Figure 20.3. Plan of Solntse II cemetery complex.
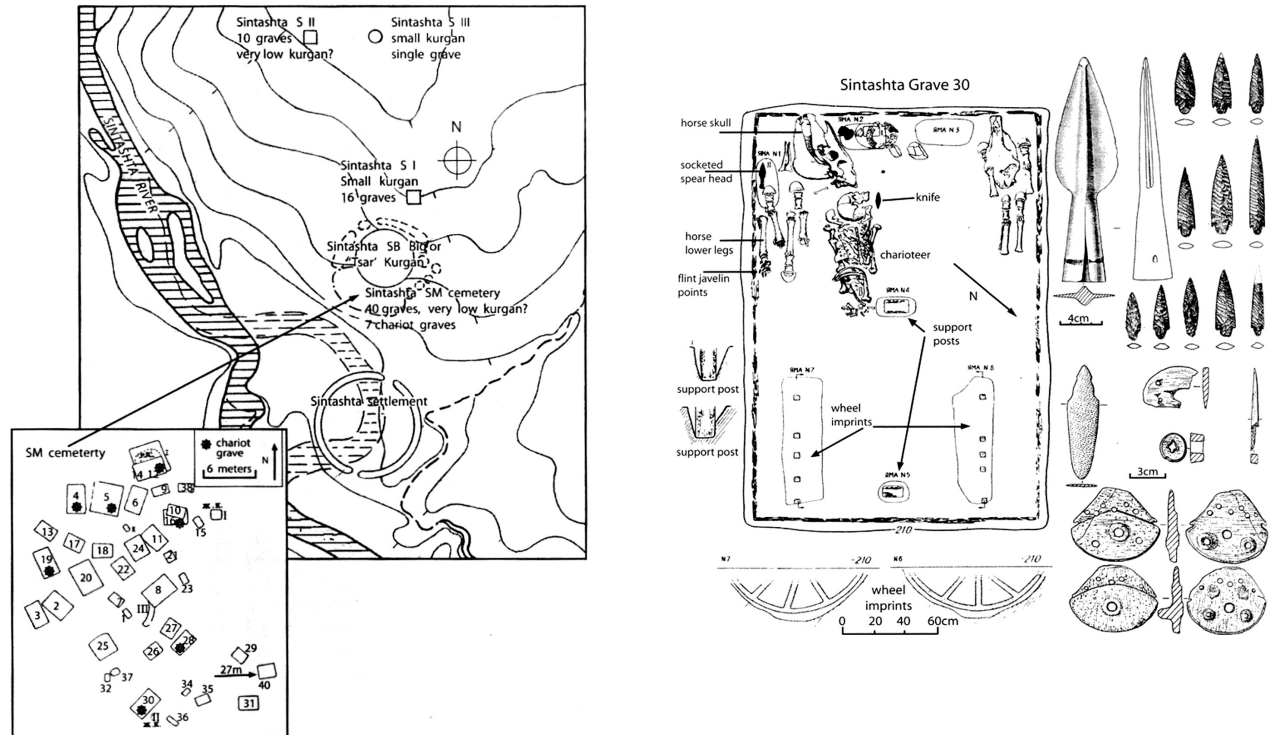
Figure 20.4. Left, Eponymous Sintashta settlement and Sintashta Mogil'nik (SM) mortuary complex indicating graves with evidence of chariot vehicles. Redrawn after Anthony 2007, 373, from Gening et al. 1992, figures 2 and 42.
Right, Grave 30 from SM cemetery showing wheel impressions of chariot vehicle, cheek pieces, and associated weaponry. Redrawn after Anthony 2007, 374, from Gening et al. 1992, figures 111, 113, and 114.

The objective of this chapter is to examine some of the key characteristics of mortuary practice connected with the Sintashta culture development during the Bronze Age. Mortuary patterns indicate substantial change in burial treatment by approximately 2100 BC (Figure 20.4). As introduced previously, new forms of warfare technology emerge at this time, including the spoke-wheeled chariot, new types of stone projectile points, and a new spearhead form made of heavy bronze or copper with a socketed base for hafting to a wooden spear (Anthony 2007, 395). This new warfare complex, with the inclusion of copper alloy objects in the form of weaponry (battle-axes and spear heads) and personal adornment in burials, provides a unique view of the contrasting values that surrounded specific object types, the nature of materiality, and social identities as they were constructed through life and into death. A preliminary study of some of these metal objects by the authors has identified new forms of alloy procurement and selection and a greater sophistication connected with the colour and acoustic characteristics of ornamental objects. Concurrently, the composition of metal weapons shows less enhancement and development over time. This patterning indicates specific choices by these early communities in the procurement of non-local metals, new forms of alloying and metal fabrication, and how metals were employed in new fields of social discourse. Such patterning and associated *value* reflect importantly on our perceptions of death and the afterlife as they were possibly understood by these late prehistoric communities in the Eurasian steppes. Nevertheless, as Shennan (1998) has argued for Bronze Age Europe, in order to gain some understanding of the concept of prehistoric *value* surrounding metal objects, it is necessary to understand the wider socio-economic context of ore procurement, metal production, and related patterns of circulation and consumption.

THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE OF THE SOUTHERN URALS

The Bronze Age Sintashta culture, represented by numerous sites in the southern Ural Mountains region of present-day Russia and Kazakhstan, has drawn

considerable attention in recent years. Discovered in the 1970s by Soviet archaeologists, the eponymous site of Sintashta produced several rather startling discoveries (Figure 20.4). These included evidence of spoke-wheeled chariot vehicles in grave pits with accompanying horse sacrifice and the partially preserved remains of a fortified settlement excavated a few hundred metres from the cemetery complex (Gening et al. 1992). Since these early discoveries at the site of Sintashta, an additional twenty-two fortified settlements dating to the Sintashta period have been identified through the analysis of Soviet period air photos and ground survey (Zdanovich & Batanina 2002; Batanina & Hanks 2013). The distribution of the fortified settlements occurs primarily within the southeastern zone (Trans-Urals) of the Ural Mountains along the tributaries of the Tobol and Ural Rivers. Several settlements have been partially excavated; they include Sintashta, Arkaim, Alandskoye, Ust'ye, Stepnoye, Ol'gino, and Bersuat. To date, no detailed monographs have been published on these excavations and the original volume by V. Gening et al. (1992) remains one of the best sources for information on Sintashta settlement organization and construction characteristics.

Excavations at Sintashta cemeteries are better represented through publication, and several monographs have been produced (Sintashta: Gening et al. 1992; Kamennyi Ambar 5: Epimakhov 2005; Bol'shekaraganskogomog il'nika: Zdanovich 2002; Krivoe Ozero: Vinogradov 2003). A detailed comparative study of the mortuary evidence from these cemeteries has also been published (Epimakhov 2002). Additional cemeteries have been excavated in Kazakhstan, the Cis-Urals, and the Volga basin area. As Koryakova and Epimakhov (2007) have recently summarized regarding Sintashta mortuary archaeology, six cemeteries comprising approximately three hundred burials have been excavated in the Trans-Urals, one cemetery containing twenty-eight burials has been excavated in Kazakhstan, and two cemeteries with thirty-three burials have been excavated in the Volga River basin (2007, 68; see also Tkachyov 2007). Because of the disparity in publication between mortuary and settlement excavations, scholars have focussed more intently on burial data to support various theories about Sintashta social complexity and organization. However, with more recent settlement excavations at the sites of Kamennyi Ambar, Stepnoye, and Ust'ye this is beginning to change (Batanina & Hanks 2013; Krausse & Koryakova 2013).

Vivid Interpretations of the Sintashta Culture

It is important to note that great hyperbole has surrounded interpretations of the Sintashta development. At the extreme end of this are publications that have focussed, in particular, on the site of Arkaim as evidence of a Proto-Slavic 'homeland'. These interpretations have clear connections to the sharp rise of nationalist archaeologies that appeared after the collapse of the USSR and therefore represent an important historical moment in the (re)articulation of ethno-nationalistic connections to the past (see discussions on this topic in Chernykh 1995, and for Arkaim in Shnirelman 1999).

Unrelated to these extreme hyper-nationalistic views, and situated more within mainstream archaeology, are the arguments by several scholars that middle and late Bronze Age mortuary evidence in the southern Urals reflects a similarity to religious rites described in the texts of the *Avesta* and *Rig Veda*. Such perspectives support a view of the Sintashta development and later Andronovo cultures of the late Bronze Age as connected with the emergence and diffusion of Indo-Aryan and Indo-Iranian speaking peoples in the broader central Eurasian region (see various contributions in Jones-Bley & Zdanovich 2002).

Some regional scholars have argued persuasively that the Sintashta development represents the emergence of a rather high degree of social complexity in the form of chiefdoms or proto-urban developments. G. B. Zdanovich (1997), for example, has suggested that the twenty-two fortified settlements represent a 'country of towns' with an economy based on agropastoralism and copper metal production. Zdanovich and colleagues have also emphasized important symbolism associated with the spatial shape and layout of the settlements: in square, circular, and rectangular arrangements (Zdanovich & Batanina 2002; Zdanovich & Zdanovich 2002). Interpretations by foreign scholars have frequently reinforced the idea of high levels of social complexity among Sintashta populations, for example:

The highly organized, proto-urban settlements demanded the production of an agrarian surplus, while large herds of cattle and sheep were grazing the grasslands, organized from the many smaller outlying settlements, some of them probably seasonal. In the fortified settlements metalwork was a major concern, as was the production of chariots, and the training of horses, warriors and charioteers by the ruling elite. The metallurgical activities demonstrate the importance of mining and metalwork, being under the control of the fortified settlements.... From here, the latter were able to establish far-reaching lines of trade and

exchange towards the south-west, soon followed by conquest migration.

<div align="right">(Kristiansen & Larsson 2005, 174, 177)</div>

Such perspectives highlight several key issues connected with the emergence of the Sintashta pattern including i) agrarian subsistence, ii) significant scale of copper metallurgy, iii) regional *control* exercised by fortified settlement centres on hinterland populations, and iv) long-distance trade networks and subsequent conquest migration. It is important to stress here that very few archaeologists working in the southern Urals region share the view posited by Kristiansen and Larsson of developed chiefdoms and territorial control and migration. This also includes the distinct lack of empirical evidence for the ubiquity of agriculture (Hanks & Doonan 2009), the lack of evidence for settlement hierarchies (i.e., fortified centres and smaller contemporaneous hinterland settlements: Epimakhov 2002, 142; 2009; Johnson & Hanks 2012; Batanina & Hanks 2013), and a high scale of copper metal production (Grigor'yev 1999, 128; Zdanovich 1997, 19; Hanks 2009; Hanks & Doonan 2009; Doonan et al. in press). Two recent publications also suggest a more conservative view of Sintashta populations and their socio-political and economic organization with each providing up to date detailed summaries of Sintashta archaeology (Koryakova & Epimakhov 2007; Kohl 2007). Whilst each of the issues noted deserve further treatment, this paper seeks better to understand the roles of metal in mortuary practices through the transit of this pivotal material from the domain of the living to that of the dead. In so doing, our discussion will emphasize the context, organisation, and scale of Sintashta metal production alongside an analytical synthesis of the total metal grave goods from cemetery complexes associated with the middle Bronze Age Stepnoye settlement.

Sintashta Metal Production – Debating the Evidence

The nature of Sintashta metalworking has been debated by a number of scholars in recent years (Chernykh 2004; Grigor'yev 1999; Zdanovich 1997; Hanks 2009; Hanks & Doonan 2009). Evidence for metal production in the form of furnaces, slags, and other debris is frequently recovered from domestic house structures within the settlements. For example, Kuzmina has suggested that not only were Sintashta communities characterized by metallurgy but it was fundamental to their development (2000, 2008). Beginning with the collapse of Chernykh's model of a 'Carpatho-Balkan Metallurgical Province', Kuzmina

argues that early Bronze Age communities, such as the Yamnaya, had to 'master local metallurgical' deposits, a process that subsequently led to early Sintashta developments in the southern Urals region (Kuzmina 2000, 119). Kuzmina argues that such developments in metallurgy, coupled with a rise in warfare, were the driving factors behind proto-urban development in the region, suggesting that 'the struggle for ore deposits in the Urals resulted in the construction of fortresses in areas where large-scale metalworking took place' (2000, 119).

Anthony (2009, 47) also proposes that a number of factors led to the development of Sintashta settlement, including a climate shift leading to cooler and drier conditions, subsequent competition for valuable grazing land, increased warfare, and exchange networks with Central Asian communities. Anthony argues that a large increase in the value of metal was a central factor in the formation of Sintashta socio-political authority and regional networking (Anthony 2009, 67) and Sintashta communities may have produced metals at a significant enough level to stimulate inter-regional trade of ores and metals with the Bactria Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC) in Central Asia (Anthony 2009, 64–7). Estimates of the scale of such broader trade networks are startling. As an example, Anthony (2009, 391) draws attention to the connection with the BMAC providing a 'bottomless market for copper', supporting this hypothesis with reference to an Ur text (1822–1763 BCE) that records the receipt of 18,333 kg of copper in a single shipment! Such markets are thought to have stimulated trade in copper metal and horses from the Urals region to Central Asia – with textiles and non-local prestige goods (raw materials such as lapis lazuli and lead) being traded from Central Asia into the Urals (Anthony 2009, 65).

Considering the scale of metal production and trade that Anthony, Kuzmina, Kristiansen and Larsson, and others have suggested, it is rather surprising that actual evidence for copper mining in the Sintashta region is so elusive. Several late prehistoric mines have been identified (Vorovskaya Yama, Bakr-Uzyak, Sokolki, Ishkino, and Ivanovka Dergamysh); however, survey and small-scale excavation at these sites have not produced any indisputable evidence of Sintashta period activities. In fact, some, such as Vorovskaya Yama, indicate primarily late Bronze Age mining activities. This is a very important consideration as Anthony (2007, 393) in particular has used estimates of the amount of copper ore removed from Vorovskaya Yama to support a model of large-scale metal production by Sintashta groups. For example, it has

<div align="center">334</div>

been estimated that a total of 6,400 tons of ore with a 2 percent copper concentration was removed from the Vorovskaya Yama surface pit mine (Anthony 2007, 393; Zaikov et al. 1995). However, trench excavations at this site revealed a few pottery sherds, approximately twenty domestic animal bones, and stone tools (Zaikov et al. 2002). Recovered pottery sherds represent the late Bronze Age cultural types of Alakul' and Kul'sko-Srubnaya. The recovered artefacts probably reflect the remains of a temporary work camp at the site. Whilst it is possible that such late Bronze Age mining activities disrupted evidence of earlier Sintashta ore exploitation at the site, there is no possibility of estimating how much ore may have been removed in the middle Bronze Age prior to late Bronze Age open pit mining at the site. To date, no Sintashta artefacts have been found associated with the identified prehistoric mines in the southern Urals region.

Problems surrounding the available evidence for Sintashta period mining in the southern Urals have previously been addressed in detail (Hanks 2009; Hanks & Doonan 2009). In the context of this paper, it is sufficient to say that no clear evidence currently exists for Sintashta period copper mineral exploitation of copper ores at a level inferred from Anthony's reference to the scale of copper trade recorded in the texts from Ur. Certainly, Anthony (2007, 2009) and Kuzmina (2000) provide persuasive arguments for intensive copper production in the Sintashta region, and it is true that metallurgical artefacts have been recovered from all seven Sintashta settlements thus far investigated. However, aside from the *presence* of slags, moulds, tuyères, and furnaces, published quantitative data on such materials or features are completely lacking. This problem is most vividly expressed in a published comparison by Chernykh of metallurgical evidence from the prominent Bronze Age site of Gorny, situated in the southwestern Urals, to known or published data from the excavations at the Sintashta period settlement of Arkaim (Table 20.2). This lack of published data for Arkaim is unfortunate when one considers that nearly 50 percent of the entire enclosed area of the Arkaim settlement has been excavated. Presently, one can say virtually nothing about the total amount of slag recovered from Arkaim or the distribution of such materials across the site area. A similar situation currently exists for most of the other settlements as well.

In contrast to the publications on Arkaim, Vinogradov has noted a total of more than twelve hundred objects connected with metallurgical production at the Sintashta period settlement of Ust'ye, which includes copper ore

Table 20.2. *Comparison of archaeological materials from the middle Bronze Age settlement of Arkaim and the late Bronze Age settlement of Gorny*

Comparative items	Arkaim (MBA)	Gorny (LBA)
Total site in hectares	1.7–1.75	3.5–4.0
Excavated area (square meters)	8,055	892 (main site)
Ceramic vessels: reconstructed vessels	9,000: 304	~11,000: 755
Copper samples: objects	?: 15?	3,131: ~400
Casting moulds	?	172
Stone hammers	~40	1,184
Slag (pieces)	?	4,416
Animal bone fragments: artefacts and half-finished items	11,834:?	>2,250,000: 18,000

After Chernykh 2004, 235.

pieces, slag, metal droplets, and copper ingots (2004, 267). These remains were recovered through multi-year excavations of a three-thousand-square-metre area. We will return to a more detailed discussion of Ust'ye later. Suffice to say that, unfortunately, more detailed accounts (context, counts, and weights) of metallurgical artefacts recovered from Sintashta settlements are lacking.

Deposition of Metal Objects in Sintashta Cemeteries

Of equal importance to evidence of mining and metal production is the fact that metal artefacts have been recovered at many cemeteries associated with Sintashta settlements (Epimakhov 1996; Vinogradov 2003; Zdanovich 2002). Such objects include bronze spear tips, knife-daggers, battle-axes, awls, and various personal ornamentation including headdress pieces (rare), bracelets, rings, and small fasteners.

Published data from the Krivoe Ozero cemetery excavation of six kurgan features (associated with the Chernorech'ye settlement) indicate that a total of thirty-five metal objects were recovered from kurgans dating to the Sintashta period (Vinogradov 2003). Of the six kurgan complexes excavated at this cemetery, the recovered metal objects included fairly standard tools such as knife-daggers (nine), adzes (one), awls (six), small objects in the form of staples (seven) and rivets (five), and, to a lesser extent, jewellery in the form of bracelets (two) and pendants (five). In addition to these finds, metal objects dating to the later Petrovka period included four metal items: a spear tip, adze, awl, and small hook (Vinogradov 2003). Concentrated metal finds within the
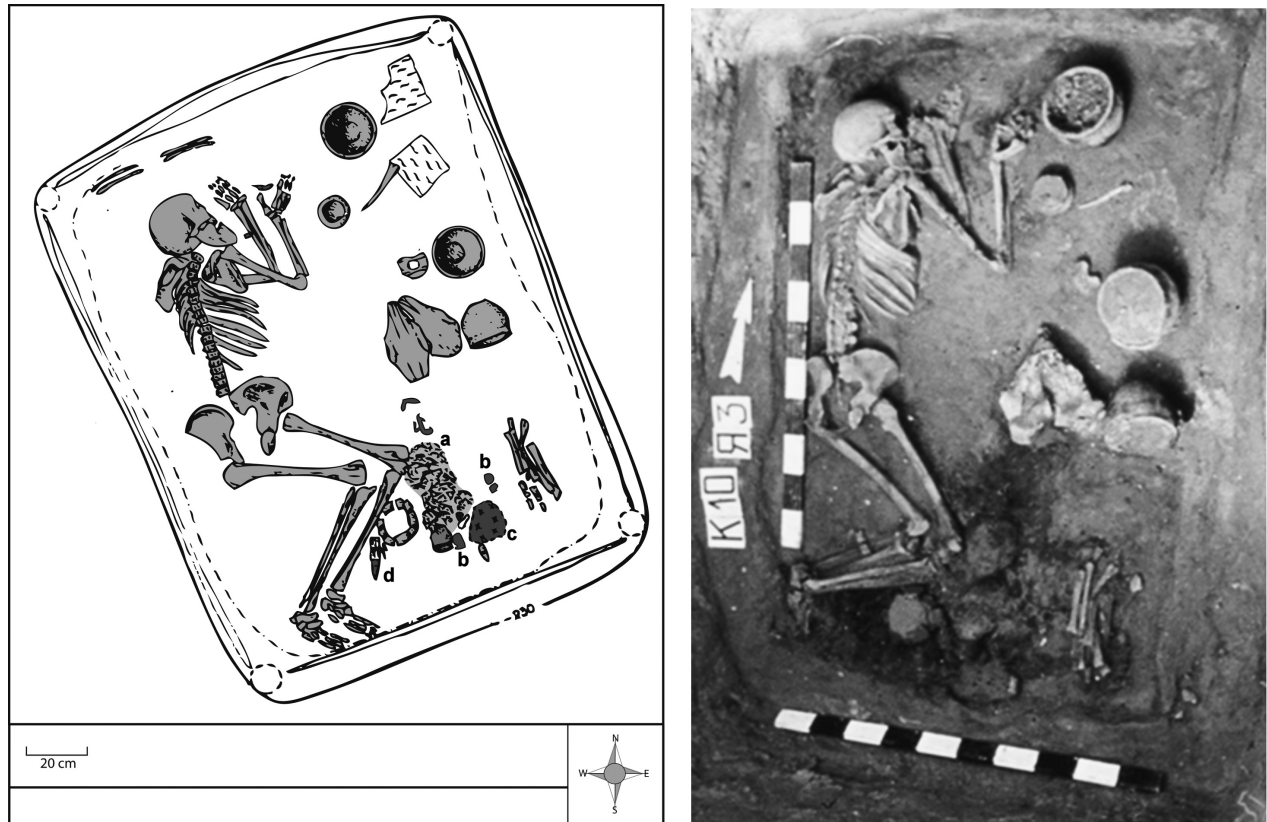
Figure 20.5. Burial of adult male (estimated at 50–55 years of age) from Krivoe Ozero cemetery, Kurgan 10, Burial Pit 3: a, Ochre; b, Slag and copper ore;c, Charcoal; d, Bronze knife placed near shin of left leg.
Redrawn after Vinogradov 2003, 351.

grave pits were only noted for Burials 6 and 13, both of which were associated with Kurgan 10. In Burial 6, four knives were recovered, two bracelets, and several staples. In Burial 13, a knife and two awls, five rivets, and two staples were recovered.

Several of the burials at Krivoe Ozero had been looted, and so it is possible that greater deposits of metal items existed in these grave contexts prior to disturbance. However, of the burial contexts recovered intact, the scale of metal deposits is markedly low. One particularly interesting burial at Krivoe Ozero (Kurgan 10, Grave Pit 3) is that of a male aged fifty to fifty-five years interred with ochre, slag, and copper ore, charcoal, and a bronze knife (Figure 20.5). This individual also appears to have suffered from a number of maladies including arthritis, bone tumours, and a pituitary gland problem (acromegaly) leading to an enlarged mandible. The combination of artefacts interred with this adult male suggests an emphasis on metal production. Burials with such components (slags, charcoal, ore, etc.) are infrequently found but are

encountered, and further discussion of these will be provided in the context of our recent field research at the site of Stepnoye.

As we have outlined, very little published information exists from settlement excavations to substantiate estimates of Sintashta copper metal production. Clearly identifiable evidence of substantial copper mining from the Sintashta period is lacking as well. Reasons for this are manifold; high on the list is the important point that we still lack detailed understandings of the relationship of Sintashta fortified settlements to local catchment zones. As a result, copper production and consumption strategies employed by Sintashta communities remain poorly understood. In order to develop a better understanding of these issues, new approaches to field research and the analysis of artefacts must be undertaken (Hanks & Doonan 2009). Our own recent work has only just started to shed some light on these matters and has produced some intriguing results. For the remainder of this paper we turn our attention to summarizing recent results of

our project work in the southern Urals and discuss how this is helping to build a more realistic and substantiated perspective on Sintashta metalworking and its relationship to social organization and patterns of metal use.

RECENT RESEARCH AT THE STEPNOYE SETTLEMENT-CEMETERY COMPLEX

Since 2007, a joint Russian-American-British project (the Sintashta Collaborative Archaeology Research Project – SCARP) has been undertaking a regional study of one such Sintashta community at the settlement site of Stepnoye (Figure 20.1). This is an interesting site in that it is not only is the most northerly of the Sintashta settlements but also is associated with two important Bronze Age cemeteries (Stepnoye and Stepnoye VII) that have been investigated for several years by D. Zdanovich and E. Kupriyanova. The Stepnoye cemetery is located adjacent to the settlement and the Stepnoye 7 cemetery is approximately two kilometres downstream. These sites have produced burials connected with the middle to late Bronze Age phases in the region and Sintashta, Petrovka, and Alakul' traditions (Figure 20.6). This makes the Stepnoye settlement and adjacent cemeteries ideal locations with which to explore important social, economic, and ritual transitions over time and the biography of metal as material and artefact as it travels from the domain of the living to that of the dead.

As discussed, the issue of *scale* is of paramount importance when assessing the role of metal artefacts in Sintashta graves and the place of metallurgy in Sintashta communities. The work of SCARP to date has focussed on addressing this problem through the following activities: i) characterizing the technical aspects of the copper production process and ii) locating elements of practice in the landscape at both regional and site scales. Taken together, the data gained from these objectives can be used to infer not only the patterning of specific copper production practices but also the scale or intensity of the practices of metal production. In order to achieve a better estimate of the scale of metal production associated with specific Sintashta settlements, a programme of in situ geochemical surveys was undertaken employing hand held portable x-ray fluorescence (HHpXRF; Figure 20.6). This analytical method has been developed over several seasons by our team beginning initially with low resolution (25 m) transects of about 1 km to test geochemical visibility of copper across the site. In order better to understand the distribution of copper within and across the settlement at Stepnoye, subsequent work focussed on targeted higher resolution (2 m) survey. Finally, a wider area survey based on a 10 m grid was undertaken to characterize zones well outside the enclosed settlement area in order to understand the distribution of copper in soils across the entire site (Figure 20.6). The programme of geochemical survey was combined with a campaign of test pitting designed to evaluate the character of any geochemical anomalies identified. Results from test pitting revealed that high levels of copper were indeed correlated with the recovery of archaeometallurgical materials – especially copper smelting slags (Figure 20.7).

The targeted excavation of several copper anomalies has allowed for a quantity of slag to be recovered and recorded from each test pit and trial trench at Stepnoye. These results have made it possible to establish a correlation between slag concentration and soil copper levels as determined by geochemical analysis. Indeed, it has proved possible to estimate the quantity of slag recovered from a test trench with an accuracy of about 60 percent (this has been further tested at the settlement of Ust'ye: see later discussion). The realisation that such correlations hold, coupled with the results for wide area geochemical survey, permits one for the first time to produce an estimate of the scale of Sintashta metallurgy linked to site-specific metallurgical production. By equating the results for geochemical analysis with inferred concentrations of slag in the soil it is possible to estimate the total amount of residual slag at a Sintashta settlement (Figure 20.6). A detailed discussion of these estimates is published elsewhere (Doonan et al. in press); the figures calculated for Stepnoye indicate the residual slag sums to be an estimated 9,266 kg.

The post-excavation analysis of excavated slag fragments has identified the consistent presence of an impression on the underside of slags that corresponds with the presence of a copper ingot (Figure 20.7). Conveniently, these impressions allow a relationship to be established between the relative weights of copper and slag. Detailed metric analysis of slags and subsequent calculation establish the slag: copper ratio to be 1.0:0.9 or approximately 1:1. We estimate that a single Sintashta smelt would have produced approximately one slag plate measuring 100 mm to 180 mm in diameter (Figure 20.7). Such a slag would weigh between 400 g and 900 g with an apparent bias towards the lower end for most fragments

Figure 20.6. Top, Soviet period air photo of Stepnoye settlement and associated kurgan cemetery; centre, bubble plot of copper readings (measured in parts per million through HHpXRF analyser) across Stepnoye settlement area based on a 10 m grid; bottom, grid sampling with HHpXRF analyser.
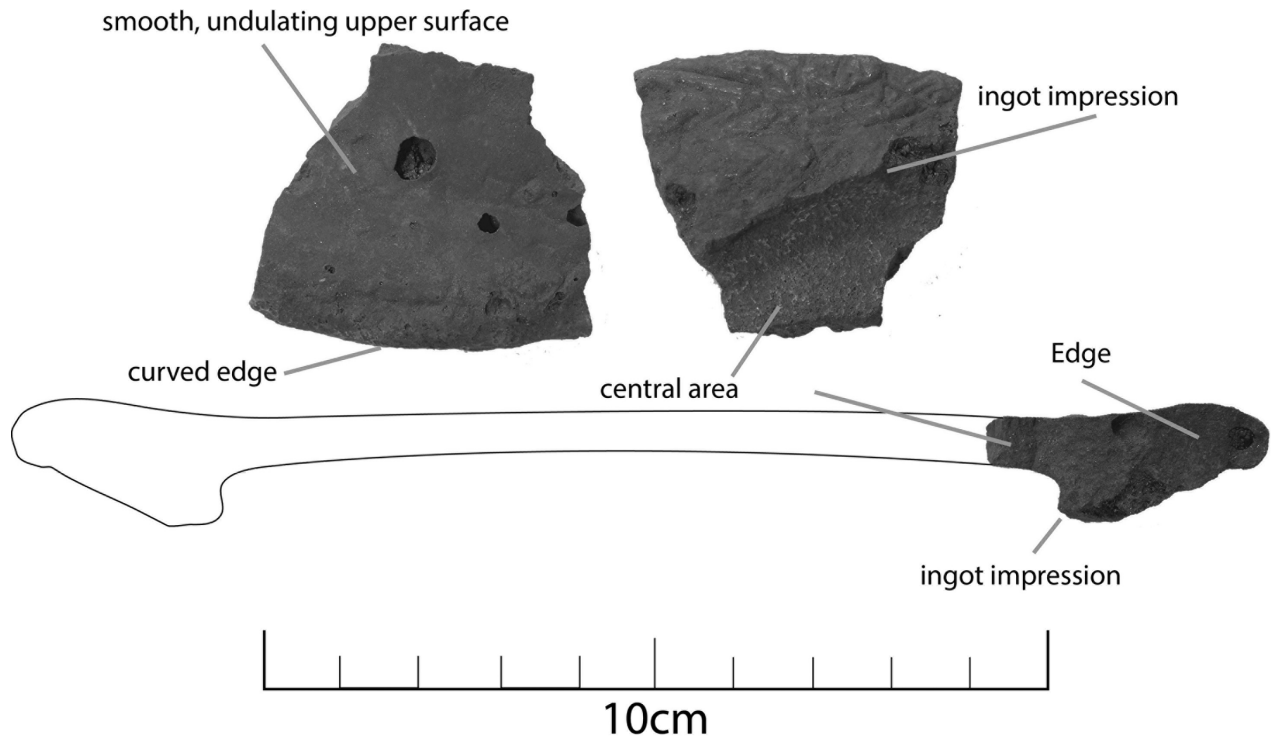
338

Figure 20.7. Sintashta plate slag showing form and underside impression made by copper ingot.

examined. From this we would therefore suggest that Stepnoye was the scene of approximately 15,000 smelting operations over the duration of its occupation. Scholars have estimated an average of 150–200 years of occupation for Sintashta fortified settlements. Our test excavations at the site of Stepnoye have only produced middle Bronze Age period pottery to date. If we consider our proposed 15,000 smelting operations over a conservative 150 year period of occupation, then this would represent an average of 100 smelting operations per year. This would equate to one household smelting a couple of times a week for the year. The indication then is a scale of production that is considerably lower than suggested by others and is not consistent with *intensive daily practice*, being more suggestive of *seasonal or episodic practice*. Even if we consider that these data are a substantial underestimation, although they are likely not, a ten-fold increase would still only represent an average of 1,000 smelting operations per year and suggest a scale of production that is considerably lower than that presumed for the region.

Funerary Practices at Stepnoye

Excavations conducted over the past decade by co-authors Dmitri Zdanovich and Elena Kupriyanova

at the Stepnoye and Stepnoye VII cemeteries have produced a wealth of new information on Sintashta mortuary practices. A comprehensive publication of these studies has not yet been produced; however, collaboration with SCARP since 2007 is leading toward publication that will include a synthesis of the mortuary and settlement data. The Stepnoye cemeteries are particularly important because they indicate a remarkable continuity of use from the middle Bronze Age Sintashta period to the late Bronze Age Petrovka and Alakul' periods and therefore provide important information on changing mortuary practices over nearly five hundred years. As part of SCARP, a detailed study of 112 metal objects from the Stepnoye cemeteries was carried out between 2010 and 2012, examining objects ranging from simple tools to complex composite body ornaments. Investigations included standard metric analysis, typological study, and technological characterization as well as examination to record evidence for hafting for tools and use wear and suspension strategies for jewellery and body ornaments. In addition, a campaign of compositional analysis was undertaken using HHpXRF, resulting in a data set with a total of 251 analyses. The data cover all accessible and recorded metalwork for the Stepnoye cemeteries and can therefore be considered the entire assemblage of metal

goods recovered from the cemetery excavations. This work was done to determine elemental composition of the metals and to investigate how this changed over time (Table 20.3).

The Stepnoye cemetery assemblages contain a variety of artefacts including tools, weapons, and personal ornamentation, and clear trends were noted in composition (Tables 20.4 and 20.5; Figures 20.8–20.9). The presence of tin in metal objects was the clearest of all compositional trends with Sintashta period metalwork being characterized by an absence of tin in virtually all artefacts with the exception of a bead from K4 Pit 12. It is apparent that the mainstay of the alloying tradition in Sintashta metalwork from the Stepnoye cemetery is arsenical copper with concentrations ranging up to 12 percent. The majority of Petrovka period metalwork from Stepnoye is characterized by the presence of tin with some high tin bronzes noted, especially in the ornaments class. However, some Petrovka artefacts (18 percent) were found to have no detectable tin. Arsenic levels are low in most Petrovka metalwork, with the exceptions of five ornaments and one tool. This may suggest the exploitation of different ores or the continued and vigorous recycling of metalwork. The highest arsenic concentration in Petrovka metalwork occurs in an awl (6.5 percent), a finding that suggests that it may have been recognized as a suitable alloy for this purpose or possibly that it represents residual Sintashta material. All Alakul' material contained tin at significant concentrations. The concentrations of tin in late Bronze Age Petrovka and Alakul' material appears high, although tin is known often to be overrepresented in corroded surfaces (Constantinides et al. 2002). Elevated tin concentrations were noted primarily in the ornament class of artefacts. These alloys would be notable for their particular properties and would probably stand apart from other copper alloys. High tin bronzes would be recognizable by colour and their acoustic properties, as they have a characteristic 'feel' and sound when handled.

Compositional analysis of the Stepnoye assemblage has shown that a wide repertoire of alloys is represented in burials including unalloyed copper, arsenical copper, low tin bronze, and high tin bronze (Tables 20.4 and 20.5; Figures 20.8–20.9). The variation in composition across artefact types suggests that definite alloy types were used for specific artefact types, although these conventions were not always strictly followed. The analysis of other material from the Stepnoye cemetery contexts also supports the contention that colour and sound were important considerations when using metal in the sphere of

Table 20.3. *Metal artefact inventory recovered from the Stepnoye (MBA) and Stepnoye VII (LBA) cemeteries analysed with HHpXRF instrumentation*

Object type	Stepnoye / Sintashta culture	Stepnoye VII / Petrovka culture	Stepnoye VII / Alakul' culture
Knives	7	6	0
Battle-axe	1	3	0
Chisel/axe	4	2	0
Sickle	1	1	0
Awl	6	2	0
Spatula-tool	1	0	0
Pin	1	0	0
Needle	0	1	0
Tweezer	0	1	0
Fish hook	1	1	0
Ornaments			
Ring	*4*	8	0
Beads	1 set	0	0
Bracelet	0	8	4
Spiral	0	0	1
Double spiral	0	8	0
Bangle	0	1	0
Loop	0	2	2
Small gold twist	0	4	0
Cross	0	9	4
Clasp	0	4	0
Medallion	0	8	0
Sheet	0	4	0
Wire	0	2	0
Totals	*26*	*75*	*11*

Table 20.4. *Mass (g) of the metalwork from the Stepnoye cemetery excavations by dominant alloy and by relative cultural phase (metal objects noted as 'Bronze Age' from burial contexts where relative dating was not established)*

Alloy	Sintashta	Petrovka	Alakul'	Bronze Age
Pure Cu	191.4	128.3	0	3.4
Arsenical copper	227.2	1061.7	0	0
Tin bronze	5	1763.3	65.1	151.6

Table 20.5. *Data showing the consumption trends of different alloy types at the Stepnoye cemetery split among ornaments, tools, and weapons (g)*

Alloy	Ornament	Tool	Weapon	Total
Pure Cu	3.5	199.4	119.1	322
Arsenical copper	12.3	122.6	1153	1287.9
Tin bronze	304	298.3	1378.7	1981
Au	5.9	0	0	5.9
			Total	**3596.8**
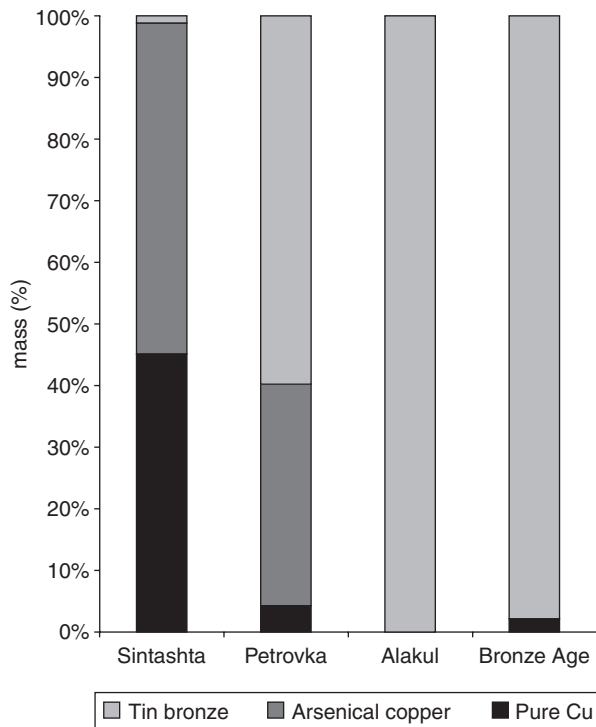
Figure 20.8. Relative abundance of alloy from the Stepnoye cemetery by alloy types and chronological periods.
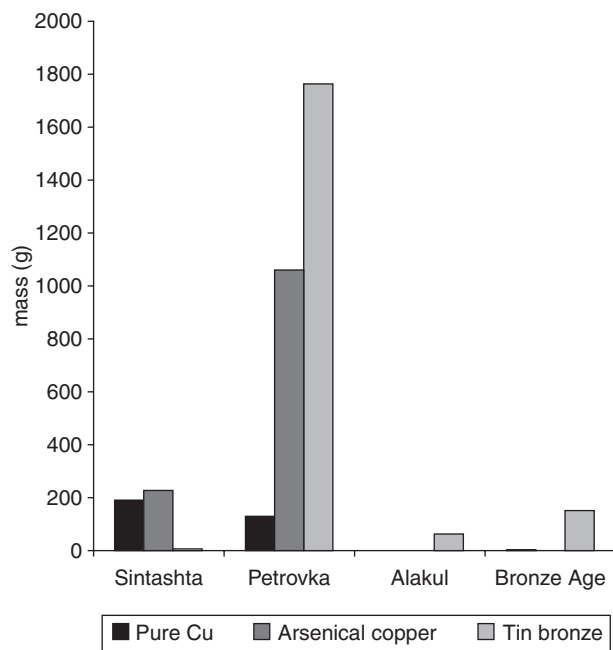
Figure 20.9. Relative consumption trends of each type of copper alloy in mass (g) at the Stepnoye cemeteries.

personal ornamentation. The analysis of an elaborate 'headdress' and 'necklace' from Burial 17 in the Stepnoye VII cemetery has revealed an unexpected sophistication

in the selection of alloy types (Figures 20.10, 20.11). Such composite artefacts, which are rare, employ a number of metallic components yet corrosion tends to obscure any visual contrast intended by the smith. The schematic in Figure 20.11 shows an interpretation of the appearance of the artefact based upon the results of compositional analysis. The analysis revealed a range of alloy types including unalloyed copper, tin bronze, high tin bronze, and leaded copper. It is apparent that different alloys were selected for different aspects of the headdress with some sense of symmetry being developed in the arrangement of alloy pieces. The facial ornament (Figure 20.11) again shows a range of alloys being used in the fabrication of this composite piece. An appreciation of symmetry is not so evident, but it is clear that deliberate alloy selection has been made to allow a colour contrast between the discoid pendants and the spacer beads that separate them. The spacer beads are of very high tin bronze and resemble compositionally, and to some degree functionally, the spacer beads encountered on the central feature on the headdress. The upper right disc is notably different to other discoid pendants used in the artefact. All others are fabricated from unalloyed copper, a reasonable choice for such a component, as it would have been fashioned into a thin sheet. The choice of tin bronze for the upper right component would have made it more difficult to form and may well relate to a repair event. Likewise the spacer bead on the left-hand side adjacent to the first left-hand-side disc is of tin bronze, as is the circular bead located adjacent to it. The discovery that a similar alloy is used together in a single joint of the necklace could suggest a repair or perhaps the selection of such materials for reasons other than function.

At this stage of the SCARP research programme, we have focused on understanding material choice and variation rather than attempting to elaborate exchange networks and provenance. Currently, it appears that alloy choice and metalworking technique change from the Sintashta period to the subsequent Petrovka and Alakul' phases. The Sintashta period is characterized by arsenical copper and lighter two-dimensional tools and weapons. By the later Bronze Age it is apparent that percussive techniques are employed widely in the production of repoussé sheet metalwork, seen in the proliferation of medallions used in composite ornaments along with a wider range of alloy types becoming accessible. This indicates that late Bronze Age populations were drawing on a wider geological environment, which in itself corresponds to more extensive zones of interaction
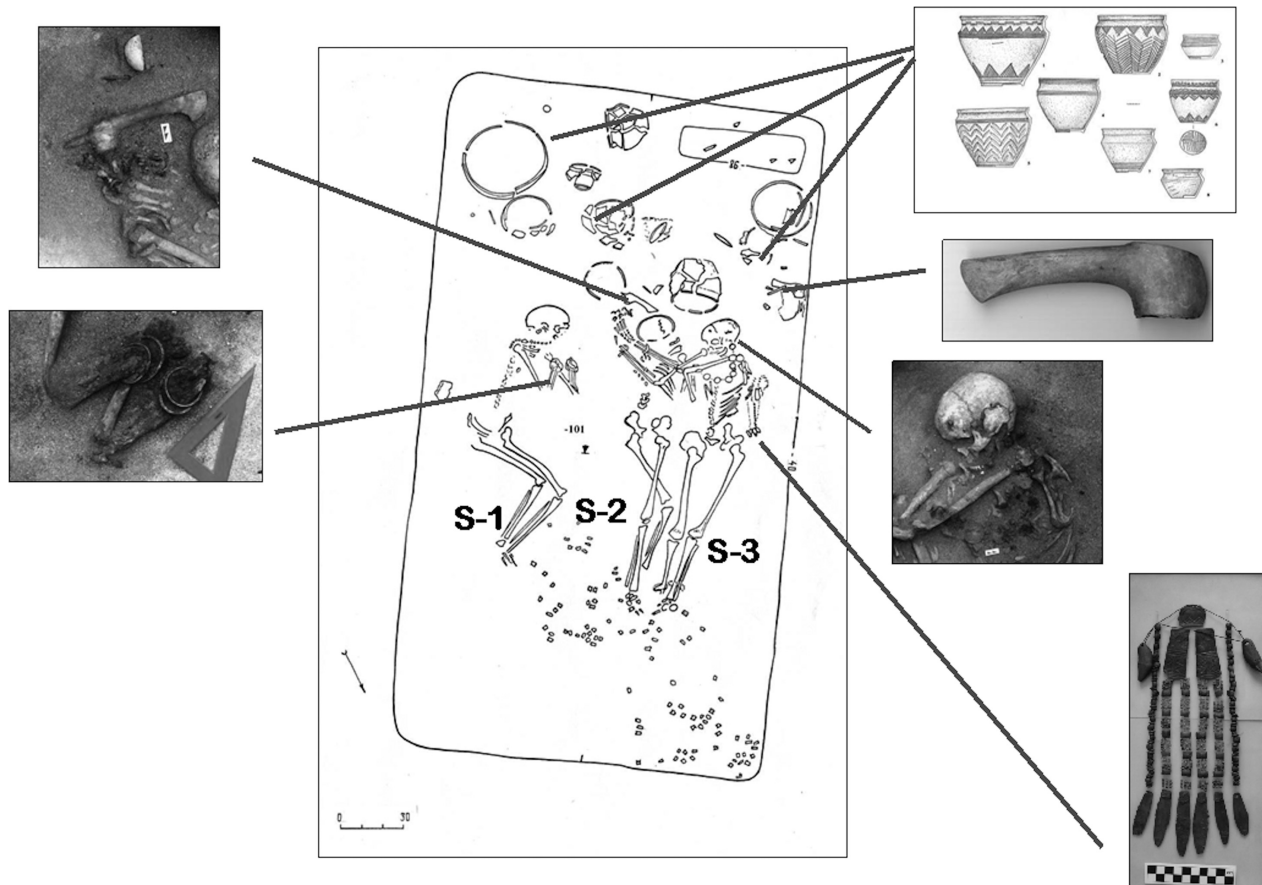
Figure 20.10. Stepnoye 7, Burial 17, illustrating 'face to face' burial of male and female (S-2 and S-3) with additional female skeleton (S-1) and grave goods including copper battle-axes, 'necklace', headdress, and pottery.
Adapted from Kupriyanova 2008.
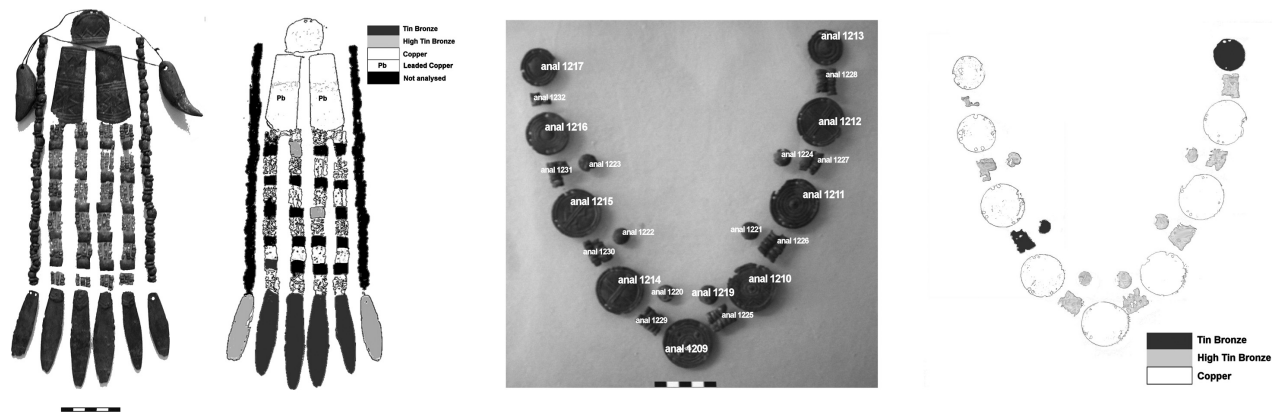
Figure 20.11. Left, composite headdress from Stepnoye 7, Burial Pit 17; right, composite ornament, perhaps to frame the face.
Kupriyanova 2008.

for both trade and resource procurement. This is especially important in regard to the availability of tin, as tin deposits are unknown in this area of the Urals during prehistory. It is perhaps not insignificant then that the

occasional outliers that are noted amongst the Sintashta material anticipate the expanded exchange networks that seem to have been developed more effectively by Petrovka communities. Whether ornamentation such as

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the headdress and necklace was being produced locally or was the personal possession of individuals of non-local birth remains only an intriguing line of speculation at the moment. Nevertheless, the appearance of such objects in late Bronze Age graves does signal a distinct change in metalworking and the categories of artefacts placed in graves between the middle and late Bronze Ages.

These views do seem to align well with a recent survey published by Kupriyanova (2008) on the deposit of female ornamentation during the Sintashta, Petrovka, and Alakul' phases in the southern Urals and northwestern Kazakhstan. On the basis of these comparative data, there appears to be a broader regional trend whereby an increase occurs in the deposit of ornamentation (and in object types) with females. This trend also appears consistent with the metal objects recovered from the Stepnoye cemeteries. It is important here to note that our analysis of the grave goods from Burial 17 indicated that complex alloying, especially including tin, was primarily restricted to the composite ornaments such as the 'necklace' and 'headdress'. One of the battle-axes from this burial context, shown in Figure 20.10, was also analysed with HHpXRF. Surprisingly, the metal composition of this object indicated the use of unalloyed copper. Therefore, while the appearance and use of tin in some objects at Stepnoye indicate non-local exchange in some form, the actual scale of tin use is remarkably low and clearly did not influence the smithing of some objects that may have benefited from its use.

Precious metals are rare in Sintashta burials but appear with more frequency by the later Bronze Age. Such finds are not common and do not occur in bulk, being limited to small spiral twists most likely for adorning parts of the individual rather than being placed as significant grave offerings. Compositional analysis of gold spiral twists has indicated that silver is always present in gold and is found in concentrations up to 10 percent, yet no individual silver artefacts have, as yet, been noted at Stepnoye. The fabrication technique for gold objects seems to have involved working the gold to a foil and then burnishing this to a piece of copper alloy.

Overall, the total mass of metal artefacts recovered from the Stepnoye cemeteries is not vast. Together the entire assemblage weighs 3.3 kg, a surprisingly low figure and hardly supportive of a community engaged in the intensive production of copper alloy as has been suggested by some scholars (see earlier discussion). The scale of production that we have already suggested for the Stepnoye settlement, based on geochemical survey, test pitting, and slag analysis, seems to be more in keeping with the quantities of metal that we are recovering from burial contexts. This suggests that whilst Sintashta communities were skilled in metallurgical practice, they were not at this point in time engaging in the organized and intensive exploitation of local resources.

Funerary Practices at Solntse II

We return now to where the paper began with a brief discussion of the evidence from the Solntse II cemetery, which is associated with the Ust'ye settlement (Figures 20.1, 20.3). Since 2011, the SCARP team has been undertaking geophysical prospection and HHpXRF geochemical surveys at the site of Ust'ye in order to complete a comparative study to the similar research undertaken at Stepnoye. The preliminary results of this research will not be detailed here; a comparable scale of metallurgy has been estimated for Ust'ye on the basis of HHpXRF, geophysical, and test pitting activities. The Solntse II cemetery has also produced some interesting evidence, although few metal grave goods have been recovered there. Excavations undertaken by Epimakhov in 1989, 1991, and 1992 focussed on the excavation of six kurgans with a combined total of ten grave pits (1996). Three of the kurgans each contained evidence of a chariot burial with associated cheek pieces and shallow pits in the floor of the graves for the wheels (Kurgan 4, Burial 1; Kurgan 5, Burial 2; Kurgan 11, Burial 2). Unfortunately, nearly all of the burials were disturbed through looting and recovered artefacts were minimal. For example, metal objects were restricted to two copper alloy strips, an awl, and two fish hooks. Of particular interest, however, is an apparent association between artefacts connected with 'warfare' (chariots and stone arrowheads) and 'metalworking' (Epimakhov 1996, 38–41; Bersenev et al. 2011). The combination of these artefact categories within single grave pits was found in Kurgan 4, Burial 1, and in Kurgan 5, Burial 1. The former included cheek pieces, indications of a chariot (parallel depressions in grave pit floor), stone arrowheads, and copper ore fragments. The latter contained arrowheads made from stone and bone in addition to a clay tuyère, slag (representing a 120-mm-diameter plate slag: Epimakhov 1996, 35), metal droplets, and copper ore fragments.

The recovery of these artefact 'sets', which appear to represent two very different forms of social activity or identity, is very important. Such actions reveal intentionality in the selection and placement of grave goods

that does not easily fit into the preconceived categories of socio-political control and organization often envisioned for Sintashta groups. The burial discussed earlier, of the male accompanied by slag, charcoal, and copper ore (Figure 20.5) from the Krivoe Ozero cemetery, also suggests the ordering of grave goods in connection with metal smithing. A similar (unpublished) burial was encountered in the Stepnoye cemetery (Kurgan 2, Grave Pit 2), where slag remains (137 g) were found in association with animal bone and mineral fragments within a decorated ceramic vessel presumed to be a crucible (L. Gaiduchenko, pers. comm.). Such associations not only serve to highlight the connection between metals and death but also show how metallurgy has the capacity to provide a framework of meaning for diverse practices including perhaps even death itself. Burials such as these may also be meant to place particular emphasis on the value of metal production and its relationship to specific individuals and their social identity. This obviously takes on new meaning if one considers the model of a much lower scale of metallurgy, where, presumably, only certain individuals within the community were involved in the production of metals at certain times.

CONCLUSION: CONNECTING PRACTICES IN LIFE AND DEATH

To date the study of life and death of Bronze Age Sintashta populations has not been considered holistically from the perspective of varied practices converging around specific materials, namely, metals. Yet, the proximity of metal production to contexts of death and burial coupled with the widely acknowledged presence of significant metal production debris in funerary contexts should be seen as clear evidence of important connections. Whilst the spatial proximity of metal production and funerary practice is apparent, the downsizing of production estimates suggests that the temporal rhythm of production was different to what many scholars have suggested. From our analysis of copper production it appears that copper metallurgy was, like death, an episodic event rather than a continued and permanent feature of daily life.

Whilst our compositional and typological analysis of metal artefacts has indicated definite trends in production and consumption, detailed observation of metal artefacts has given some information regarding how the living used these objects. Despite the proximity of metal production to funerary contexts it seems highly unlikely that metal production was geared towards the production of grave goods. Almost all artefacts examined, especially tools and weapons, showed extensive evidence of re-sharpening, edge damage, and repair. Furthermore, body ornaments also exhibited evidence of repair and wear with several medallions showing numerous episodes of re-suspension. It seems that all metal objects had led eventful lives before entering the grave, and this was an enduring feature of Sintashta, Petrovka, and Alakul' metalwork – extending over a five hundred year period.

With evidence for metalworking being present at a number of Sintashta sites it is tempting momentarily to consider the contrary scenario to the intensive production model that has so frequently been favoured by scholars. We might well ask why, if Sintashta communities had mastered the techniques of metallurgical production, did they not seek to increase their output in the manner suggested by scholars such as David Anthony (2007, 2009)? The evidence we have presented suggests that metallurgical production was low and this idea seems to be confirmed by the relative scarcity of copper in funerary contexts. It is then likely that unbridled production was mitigated by specific values held at the core of Sintashta ideology. Such schemes of value may well have been institutionalized through taboo (Mauss 1967) and controlled by specific individuals, perhaps those we see represented in the grave as metal smiths. It is pertinent, though, to remind ourselves that while burial removes metal artefacts from their eventful lives and takes material out of circulation (Bradley 1990), it also serves to stimulate new production. This is not to propose that metallurgy was geared towards death; in fact the opposite, it was clearly directed towards renewal and life, as our evidence from grave goods indicates that objects led full and meaningful lives before interment. Although suggesting that the link between metals and death is meaningless without a life first lived, it indicates that it was ultimately the temporality of death and burial that dictated the temporality of metal production, as it was in taking material out of circulation that needs emerged for new production.

To come to such understandings of the meaning of grave goods and funerary practices, it has been essential to look at the context of life and to establish the early biography of these artefacts. Without the ability to understand the prominence of metallurgy by being capable of making reasoned estimates of scale we lack any ability to comment on important issues regarding the value of metalworking and concomitant practices surrounding the use of metal objects in life and in death.

Table 20.6. *Models used to characterize the nature of Sintashta metal production and use*

Model	Social organization	Craft production	Trade	Metal "value"	Consumption
Centre-hinterland	Chiefdoms/ proto-urban developments	Specialized: metallurgy for export	Inter-regional, large-scale	Raw material (ingots), status/ wealth of elites	Primarily elites
Essentially Autonomous	Local communities & networks	Local production – local needs	Local & regional, opportunistic inter-regional	Warfare related but also utilitarian and ornamentation	Elites, gender specific, craft specialists

The apparent similarity in settlement form and planning, along with common traits associated with funerary practice among Sintashta groups, has been used to suggest that this region represents a distinct social, economic, and political unity through shared material culture, architecture, social practice, and presumably ideology. From this perspective many studies have sought both to understand and to speculate on the organization of Sintashta societies. Current proposals vary from Sintashta communities being a loose network of autonomous settlements connected by a common cosmology (Zdanovich & Zdanovich 2002) to there existing a single political authority that coordinated many aspects of Sintashta life from the distribution of materials to the spiritual welfare of communities and individuals within the region (Anthony 2007, 2009; see also the recent review in Koryakova & Epimakhov 2007). Whilst the investigation of settlements and cemeteries has contributed much to the debate on social complexity, there has been a presumption by many scholars that craft practices such as copper metallurgy were central to Sintashta communities and that this was interconnected to significant socio-economic developments in the Bactria–Margiana Archaeological Complex and beyond. It is then surprising that despite the significant studies that have focussed on characterizing Sintashta communities from a number of perspectives, few have sought better to understand the relationships between the central strands that seem to be so significant in defining the Sintashta development, namely, metal production and death, which seem to take place in close proximity to settlements and cemeteries.

We have presented evidence that would argue against Sintashta communities participating in intensive metal production as a means to engage in extensive trade networks. This stands in stark contrast to the scale of metallurgy envisioned by some scholars and suggests that Sintashta metallurgy was oriented more towards serving domestic and local uses rather than supplying metal commodities to service 'bottomless markets' (Anthony 2007,

391). In general, we propose a contrasting model that suggests that populations at Stepnoye and Ust'ye were *essentially autonomous* in terms of metal production within localized settings. This contrasts quite sharply with a *centre-hinterland* model that favours higher levels of social complexity and specialized metal production for external trade (Table 20.6).

Of course, in reality, both of these models are overly simplistic, but they can provide an important heuristic means by which to explore relationships between production and use of metals and their *value* across social and economic contexts as represented among the living and the dead. We suggest that in order to provide any meaningful understanding of death one must undertake a careful analysis of everyday life and associated patterns of the lived experience. We have attempted to provide more substantial evidence and, where possible, actual data to inform our interpretations and understandings of such practices. Our studies indicate that the selection, placement, and value of specific metal objects changed quite dramatically through time in the context of life, death, and the burial event. While much of this may be connected with changing patterns of warfare (decline in fortification, chariot burials, and weaponry deposits in the late Bronze Age) longer-term trends appear to reinforce the importance of metals used for ornamentation and more gender specific categories of social practice (Figures 20.10, 20.11). Much work is still needed to understand these developments more fully; nevertheless, a richer and more diverse understanding of the Sintashta middle Bronze Age, and related aspects of social practice, is beginning to emerge.

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Intimations of Immortality: Glimpsing Other Worlds

Northern Iroquoian Deathways and the Re-imagination of Community

John L. Creese

INTRODUCTION

If the first chapters of this volume are concerned with identifying when, how, and under what conditions early humans cognized mortality and immortality, this chapter shifts focus to the question of how such understandings are, for modern humans at least, inevitably caught up in the generation of social structures and power relations. The latter theme is taken up in a variety of ways in other chapters of this book, from Thomas's linkage of British Neolithic long barrow construction with the emergence of 'house societies', to Mizoguchi's consideration of mortuary practices in Japanese state formation, to Stevenson's account of changing spatial performances in early Egyptian cemeteries and the advent of divine kingship.

In the same spirit, this chapter is aimed at analysing how, during the Late Woodland period of southern Ontario, Canada (ca. AD 900–1650), a new kind of community was articulated through changing relationships between the living and the dead. In what follows, I argue that this was achieved through developments in mortuary practice that built upon pre-existing ideas about the ideal relationship between an individual's unique life-course and bodily death-course, but that knit them together in new ways, and at new scales and temporalities. By 'death-course', I mean the specific pathway, or *chaîne opératoire*, of bodily treatments and transformations that could be undergone by a deceased person, as well as beliefs about the existential nature of those transformations. A progressive drawing-together of individually unique death-courses to form wider collective programmes is observable over the Late Woodland period in southern Ontario. These shifts conjured up, as Stevenson

(this volume) puts it, a 'sense of immortality' that was increasingly lodged in a communal order focussed on the semi-sedentary longhouse village and its characteristic cycles of construction, decay, removal, and reconstruction. This new understanding of community rebirth and collective immortality was, by early historic times, glossed in terms of a belief in a 'village of the dead' to which the souls of most deceased village inhabitants would retire after a great 'feast of the dead', held about once in a generation. The consequence was the production of a community that was, compared to what had gone before, relatively transcendent and alienable from specific sites on the landscape, histories of inhabitation, and indeed living descendants; a community that could at once be dead – mourned, interred, and left in peace – and yet live on beyond its physical instantiation in a particular material and social environment.

THINKING THROUGH DEATHWAYS

'Deathways' include actions and social performances attending the death, mourning, disposal, and remembrance of deceased individuals. They tend to invoke and articulate a wide range of spheres of social action and belief (e.g., cosmology, power-politics, bodily ontology, purity and pollution, memory, appropriate grief) within a highly charged sequence of events tied to an individual's death and its aftermath. Consequently, there is a multitude of functions, meanings, emotions, and intensions that can be traced for any given burial event or mortuary programme.

In the face of such complexity, scholars have often focussed on a single such dimension in order to make sense of a specific set of practices. Various schools of

archaeological thought have, accordingly, had their special preoccupations – such as processual archaeology's interest in status-signalling (e.g., Binford 1971; O'Shea 1984; Saxe 1971; Tainter 1978, 1975), interpretative archaeology's engagement with memory and the relationship between the living and 'the ancestral dead' (e.g., Chapman 1994; Jones 2007; Parker Pearson 1993; Tilley 1994), and feminist interrogations of gender-construction (e.g., Ehrenberg 1989; Sørensen 1987). These are all very productive lines of inquiry, none of which can claim privileged access to the 'ultimate' significance of deathways.

However, there are two main limitations to such approaches that I wish to explore in this chapter. The first is that, by focussing primarily on a single dimension of mortuary practice, we risk overlooking one of its principal activities, which is to make analogous connections between disparate fields of action, meaning, and affect – such as linking burnished wares to elite bodies, death to the winter solstice, or affective responses to a 'good' or 'bad' death. Hence, a fuller appreciation of what is accomplished in a mortuary rite depends on considering how such diverse factors as gender, memory, and institutional authority are mutually implicated in a given performance. A common thread running through many of the chapters of this volume, for example, is an interest in how political power and 'ancestors' frequently come to be bound together in various material performances associated with death and burial.

The second limitation, which follows from the first, is that while thematic approaches focussed on gender, prestige, and so on, tend to do a good job of explaining the proximate intent of a given mortuary act or funerary performance within an established system of material symbols and social structures, they do a poorer job of explaining how such acts emerged as meaningful in the first place, or how they might have influenced or altered similar actions in a historical sequence. The result can be a rather static, conservative view of mortuary practice that fails to apprehend its socially transformative potential. For instance, the classic processual model of mortuary ritual as elite power-legitimization arguably underestimates the ability of mortuary ritual to act from the 'bottom up', not simply as an ideological tool for maintaining the status quo, but as a field for the generation of the very schemes of knowledge and power in which 'elite' or 'commoner' action is intelligible as such. It is to this power of deathways to shift the discursive field in which certain intentions can be formulated in the first place – what Althusser has called the

problematique (Althusser & Balibar 1979) – that I should like to turn.

In pursuit of this goal, my analysis draws together three major themes in the study of mortuary ritual to illuminate a particular regional history of mortuary practice. Broadly, these themes are

1) deathways as an active field for the negotiation and consolidation of social power through what Bell (1992) has termed 'redemptive hegemony';
2) the intersection of mortuary systems with ideas about the life-course and bodily ontology (Robb 2007);
3) the symbolic association of deathways with world-renewal (Bloch & Parry 1982; Parker Pearson 2003).

By tracing these three themes and plotting their intersections through a diachronic case study, I seek to move beyond a preoccupation with a single dimension of burial practice by paying attention to what may be mortuary ritual's most salient attribute – its ability to relate and homologize a wide variety of social distinctions within a seemingly coherent, naturally ordained narrative. The powerful consequence, as Geertz (1973) has commented, is that, 'in ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turns out to be the same world.'

RITUAL PRACTICE AND REDEMPTIVE HEGEMONY

Deathways are a thoroughly ritualized human activity, so it can be helpful to consider them from the perspective of ritual theory. Catherine Bell's important work on ritual emphasizes its role in the construction of social worlds and its activity in generating meaning structures and knowledge systems. Bell has argued persuasively for treating ritual as a field for the ongoing generation of the schemes of knowledge and power in which social action is intelligible – Althusser's *problematique* (Bell 1992). Her work breaks down the taken-for-granted distinction between 'theory' and 'action' that underlies much existing thought about ritual. In archaeology and the social sciences more generally, these terms are implicitly opposed in a pervasive discourse that contrasts ritual (as action) with belief (as emic theory). She asserts, by contrast, that ritual and theoretical discourse are united by their mutual work in the distinction-making processes through which knowledge schemes are produced. Consequently, Bell

suggests that theorizing is in fact an active, embodied, material process – one of continually assembling contrasts in an endlessly deferred sequence of signification (following Derrida's process of 'free play' or *différence*: 1978), which is in fact the work of ritual itself. Ritual, in this view, is integral to the process of knowledge generation. It is theory-making 'in-play'.

Bell's recognition that belief (theory) is generated in practice (ritual) may be particularly helpful for understanding the socially transformative possibilities of mortuary rituals. Arguably, her approach reveals a greater potential for slippage between past and present action than that entertained by either Bourdieu's (1977) more conservative notion of *habitus* or Giddens' (1984) emphasis on the reproduction of social order in *structuration*. If ritual can be thought of as theoretical action, that is, as an active front for meaning-making, it need not be seen as inherently conservative. Taking Derrida's (1978) recognition of the impossibility of 'fixing' meaning seriously, ritual action is revealed to hold the potential for radically shifting the field of action itself (the *problematique*) through the 'free play' of *différence*.

To understand how mortuary ritual could be involved in such a shift, it is helpful to turn to Davidson's account of metaphor (e.g., Davidson 1984, 1986). According to Davidson, when a metaphor is first used, it does not have a fixed referent – it does not express something that already exists. He repudiates 'the thesis that associated with a metaphor is a cognitive content that its author wishes to convey and that the interpreter must grasp if he is to get the message' (Davidson 1984, 262). This view entirely misses the point of metaphor, which is to admit the 'unsuitability of any … familiar sentence for one's purpose' (Rorty 1989, 18). Metaphor, in Davidson's view, arises at precisely the point at which what one wishes to say cannot be said using an existing stock of 'literal' terms. Because it cannot be placed in an existing language-game, the metaphor cannot be assessed as true or false: 'one can only savour it or spit it out' (Rorty 1989, 18).

We might suggest, applying Davidson's insights to Bell's, that mortuary ritual's persistent deployment of metaphor reveals its work at the creative knife-edge of distinction-making. Ritual action does not simply seek to 'represent' or 'communicate' a message that people already know; that would obviate the special task of ritual itself. The 'free play' of metaphorical distinction-making in ritual must rather be seen to provide a special context for the re-imagination of the

social. While Derrida and Davidson both take strictly linguistic perspectives, their insights have significance for the kinds of material practices that concern an archaeology of deathways. In much the same way that verbal metaphors appear vital prior to their literalisation, material symbols must first emerge in practices in which their meaning has yet to be fixed as an 'institutional fact', as Colin Renfrew has observed (Renfrew 2001). Deathways, as a certain kind of ritualized practice, are always materially engaged, embodied, present to the flow of events in time and space, and consequently sit at the crux of theoretical meaning-making in action. Their meaningfulness derives from their participants' ability to take advantage of the poetic ambiguity of material metaphors in the generation of new social facts. Simply put, new social facts emerge through defining acts.

All this suggests that mortuary rituals hold the potential to help shift pre-existing frames of reference and meaning via their implicit poetic re-descriptions of the world. But how is such 'ritual poesis' involved in the production of new forms of institutional authority? Bell uses the term 'redemptive hegemony' (1992, 83–8) to describe this quality of ritual practice. The redemptive hegemony of ritual lies with its ability to bind up the reproduction of power relations with people's sense of their place in an ordered world, and their ability to formulate effective actions within that world (Bell 1992, 84). Bell suggests that one of the main ways that ritual does this is by analogizing a series of distinctions or oppositions, such that some are subordinated to others. In this way, 'ordinary physical movements generate homologies and hierarchies among diverse levels and areas of experience, setting up relations among symbols, values, and social categories' (1992, 103–4). While Bell's contemporary focus leads her to emphasize relations of dominance and subordination, the essence of redemptive hegemony is the notion that power relations – however they may be ordered (hierarchically, heterarchically, communally) – are bound up with particular bodily and material performances. Hence, non-hierarchical institutions may have their own redemptive hegemonies, characterized by more egalitarian or communally oriented modes of power legitimization. This is particularly relevant to the Late Woodland case, where the development of a group-oriented secondary burial rite seems unrelated to the emergence of social hierarchy, but rather to a new form of collective institutional authority – the semi-sedentary horticultural village.

RITES OF PASSAGE, COSMOLOGIES, AND BIOGRAPHIES

It has frequently been observed that one of the principal functions of deathways is to effect a change of states – from life to death, or this world to another – and to mark its significance for the living (Bloch & Parry 1982; Parker Pearson 2003). Whatever specific beliefs concerning the soul or afterlife may be involved, this change of states is one of the obdurate facts of death with which people must grapple. As ritual processes concerned with this change, deathways are frequently structured according to ideas about an appropriate narrative progression from one state to the other (e.g., a shift from profane time to sacred time or timelessness; cf. Robb 2007).

Following this a step further, we can observe that the narrative structure or plot of the mortuary programme as rite of passage often invokes a series of metaphors related to world renewal. For instance, Bloch and Parry have traced a number of underlying themes in funerary ritual associated with death as an opportunity for rebirth and the regeneration of life, mediated by concepts of fertility, nature and culture, male and female, sacred and profane (Bloch & Parry 1982). These broadly cosmological themes situate an individual's death within a wider, universal truth. One way to achieve such a transformation is through the narrative progression for rites of passage traced by Victor Turner, from structure to anti-structure, and back to structure. In this way, the world as *known* from everyday experience, *transcended* in anti-structure, and *reborn* in a return to structure, can be linked to the life-cycles of the cosmos (Hertz 1960).

While many scholars have been concerned with the connection of deathways with the ordering of society and the cosmos (e.g., Durkheim 1965; Hodder 1990; Richards 1995; Thomas 1991), relatively little attention has been paid to their relationships to the deceased person's biography. As John Robb has observed, funerary practices are in fact highly preoccupied with cultural ideas about the ideal life-course: that is, with ideas about the kind of life a particular sort of person should live, when and how major life events should take place, and what makes a 'good' or a 'bad' death (2007). He notes that such 'cultural biographies effectively provide understandings of what goals are appropriate for different kinds of persons at different points in their lifespans, they motivate action and structure social relations, and, critically, they provide evaluative standards for judging and acting' (Robb 2007). In practice, such ideas affect which

treatments of the dead body are deemed appropriate or fitting for particular individuals depending upon how they cohere with or transgress these cultural biographies. The bodily interventions that ensue are accordingly mediated in and through culturally specific ontologies of the body, as has been explored in a number of recent case studies (Appleby 2010; Borić & Robb 2007; Hughes 2010; Tarlow 2002).

HOMOLOGY AND HEGEMONY

These three elements of mortuary ritual – the rite of passage, world renewal, and personal biography – joined to triangulate a powerful new understanding of community among the Late Woodland inhabitants of southern Ontario (members of the wider Northern Iroquoian linguistic and cultural family of the lower Great Lakes region) – a redemptive hegemony in Bell's terms. This particular redemptive hegemony was based on a two-stage homology. In the first stage, the 'narrative pathway' of the ritual treatment of dead bodies varied according to aspects of the personal biography of the deceased individual, and perhaps according to the particular wishes of close kin or familiar spirits as revealed in dreams. In this way, aspects of the peculiar history of an individual's life and death seem to have been linked to diverse choices about how a person's body would be treated (such as whether to cremate, expose, or inhume; whom to exhume for secondary burial and which elements to take or hold back; where cremations and burials should take place; how they might be dressed; and so on).

In the second stage, the homology between the treatment of the body and the individuals' personal biography and unique place within a specific network of kin, allies, and enemies, was further homologized to a relationship between the collective treatment of bodies in secondary burial rites and the metaphorical biography or life-course of a foundational institution in Iroquoian life: the longhouse village.

Critically, however, this relationship was not merely a static reflection of the articulation of persons within the wider social structure of Ontario Iroquoian societies at the time. By reviewing its diachronic development, it becomes clear that the second stage – the homology of the individual's biography and body with the community's biography and body – was one that emerged at a particular juncture in history, and that involved a creative re-imagination of the first that served to establish a new vision of community via a sort of metaphorical

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'appropriation'. This second stage – encapsulated in the great 'feast of the dead' complex that emerged around the turn of the fourteenth century – was a relatively simple way of drawing together the highly disparate and heterogeneous practices of burial treatment that had hitherto predominated, and subsuming them in a master-narrative about the ultimate coincidence of these pathways with that of the village community as a whole.

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY WENDAT DEATHWAYS

Firsthand accounts of Ontario Iroquoian deathways were recorded by French missionaries who established missions among the Wendat from the early 1600s. In keeping with what might be called the 'customs and manners' ethnographic genre of the time, these writers tend to present a normative picture of Wendat burial practices as essentially static and uniform for the vast majority of individuals (e.g., Tooker 1991). As we shall see, such a homogeneous picture is not well supported by archaeological evidence for the same period and even less so for earlier periods (Spence 1994; Williamson & Steiss 2003). Nonetheless, these accounts, and particularly those of Jean de Brébeuf, who witnessed a mass collective reburial event or 'feast of the dead' at the village of Ossossané in 1636, are invaluable for understanding the relationship between Wendat burial practices and other aspects of their society.

The normative programme presented by these writers is one of a sequence of feasts, bodily treatments, and prestations that involved serially expanding social groups or networks at each successive stage. If an individual knew that his or her death was imminent, he or she would hold a 'farewell feast' (Thwaites 1898, 267). Immediately after death, the body would be placed in a flexed posture and a ten-day period of intense mourning would commence (Thwaites 1898, 267). At this point an appointed person would care for the deceased person and arrange for the interment ceremony, which normally took place on the third day. It is unclear exactly who was responsible for these offices; however, linguistic evidence indicates that members of paired moieties reciprocally cared for each other's dead (Steckley 2007). Before the interment, another feast was held, in which the deceased's soul was said to take part (Wrong 1939, 205). After this, the corpse was dressed and carried to a village cemetery located nearby and placed on a wooden scaffold to facilitate excarnation. At this stage, gifts were made to the family of the deceased, including

kettles, axes, beaver coats, and wampum. A minority of these objects might be used as grave goods: 'Sometimes a porcelain necklace is put around his neck, and nearby a comb, a gourd full of oil, and two or three little loaves of bread and that is all' (Thwaites 1898, 173). Food offerings were made to sustain the dead, who were thought to be perpetually hungry. Mourning for spouses continued for the rest of the year. Additional village-wide 'feasts for the souls' were periodically held at which the names of the deceased might be taken by living persons in a 'resuscitation' ceremony (Thwaites 1898, 175).

The next stage was initiated by preparations to move the village. Northern Iroquoians practised shifting cultivation of maize, beans, and squash and accordingly relocated their settlements every one or two decades as soil fertility and local resources became scarce. This move generally instigated the 'feast of the dead', or 'great kettle', as it was metaphorically known. In preparation for the feast, the remains of members of the village who had died since the last 'kettle' (locally or while visiting or living at neighbouring villages) were exhumed or collected on behalf of their family members and taken back to their respective longhouses. Where possible, the bones were then defleshed and bundled with a mat or beaver robe and dressed with 'many little ornaments, with necklaces, bracelets and other things, to carry on their backs' (Tooker 1991, 136). The recently dead were cleaned of putrid matter, washed, and dressed. All this was done, to the Jesuits' admiration, with extreme tenderness and an outpouring of emotion, and without any apparent abhorrence at the sight or stench. After these treatments, all the 'souls' were assembled in the longhouse of a village chief, where another feast was held. At this feast, presents to be given away at the 'great kettle' on behalf of certain individuals were put on display in the house, and the house chief sang the personal song of the deceased chief (Tooker 1991).

Over a period of seven or eight days, guests and mourners – bearing with them bundled bones 'sometimes arranged in the form of a body, decorated with porcelain necklaces and elegant strands of long red fur' (Thwaites 1898, 182) and packages of gifts – converged on the site selected for the 'kettle' itself. This took the form of a great, slow procession from village to village. A series of villages appears to have 'hosted' the procession along its route (Thwaites 1898, 291). At the burial site, a large pit was excavated and lined with beaver skins, and a scaffold was erected around it (Figure 21.1). Feasting and dancing were 'continuous' for ten days (Tooker
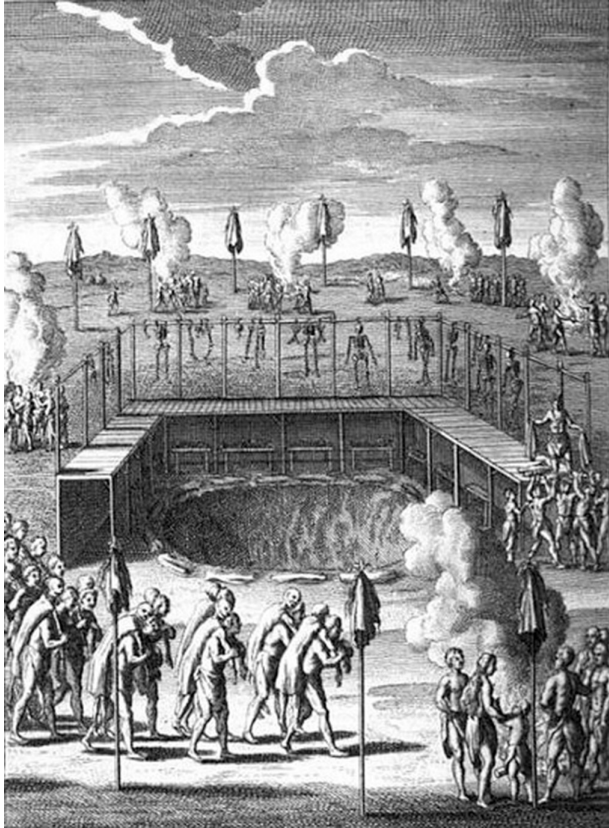
Figure 21.1. The Wendat 'feast of the dead'.
After Lafitau 1724, plate 41.

1991). When the time arrived for interment, the people grouped themselves around the pit according to 'family' (probably clan) and village affiliation. Present bundles were then suspended on poles attached to the scaffold, and 'as many as 1200 presents remained on view for 2 hours' (Thwaites 1898, 184). After this time, the presents were removed and replaced with the 'packages of souls', and someone appointed as 'master of the feast' would announce each of the presents that had been made in the name of the dead to particular persons (Tooker 1991, 138). Finally, the suspended bodies and bone bundles were removed and placed in the pit along with a portion of the gifts. Most of the beaver robes that had held the bones were torn to pieces and thrown into the crowd, where people vied with each other to snatch a fragment. The bones of the dead were arranged with poles and permitted to commingle or mixed intentionally (Figure 21.2). At Ossossané, three large copper kettles were placed near the centre of the pit, and gifts of food were added before the pit was filled with earth (Thwaites 1898).

Interpretations of this mortuary programme have primarily focused on its apparent function in the 'social integration' of villages and tribes, and as a context for chiefly aggrandizement. A well-considered argument by Varley and Young (n.d.) has interpreted the early Contact Wendat 'feast of the dead' as a 'tournament of values' – a venue for the competitive display of wealth and prestige at a series of scales (by individuals, lineages, villages, and tribes). Such approaches, while valuable, tend to accept implicitly the normative picture of a uniform programme presented by French observers, and they almost exclusively focus on the final stage – collective secondary mass burial. Hence, a great deal of ink has been spilled by regional archaeologists in attempting to define 'true ossuaries' (e.g., Jackes 1996; Johnston 1979; Spence 1994; Varley & Young n.d.; Williamson & Steiss 2003). This debate ultimately revolves around anxiety over clearly identifying and defining the archaeological attributes of a normative 'feast of the dead'. However, the difficulties they have found in doing so, which are based on an unanticipated degree of heterogeneity in excavated Iroquoian 'ossuaries', 'mass graves', and 'cemeteries' in the region (Williamson & Steiss 2003), suggest that in fact each such event was the unique product of a historically contingent convergence of local deathways that both cited ancestors' and neighbour's practices and set itself off from them.

Thinking through Ontario Iroquoian deathways in terms of Bell's 'redemptive hegemony' leads to shifting from a focus on a normative programme and its final stage to thinking about the entire system as a series of alternative ritual 'pathways' traversed by the dead – not all of which led to burial within a 'great kettle'.

Body and Biography

Diversity in the ritual pathways and bodily treatments given to particular deceased individuals can be tied to the concept of the cultural biography or life-course and its relationship to the body, as discussed by John Robb (2008). Robb notes that French observers reported numerous exceptions and exclusions from the 'normal' Wendat burial programme. These tended to include individuals who had died in unusual circumstances or those considered too weak to make the journey to the village of the dead. For instance, drowning victims were taken to the cemetery, where the corpse was defleshed and the flesh and entrails burnt in a fire to appease the 'Sky' or 'Lake' (Tooker 1991). Similarly, those who died by violence or froze to death were cremated or buried immediately, and their bones were excluded from the

Figure 21.2. Moatfield Ossuary, late thirteenth century AD.

'feast of the dead'. Infants below the age of one or two months were sometimes buried along pathways, so they could enter the wombs of women who were passing by (Tooker 1991).

If we read the Jesuits' sweeping statements of exception critically, it becomes apparent that any number of factors about a person's biography, and particularly about his or her age, health, and manner of death, might influence decisions about the necessary feasts, gifts, and physical treatment of their remains. Jesuit observers noted that Wendat rituals involving specific songs, dances, gifts, feasts, games, and so on, were very often performed in accordance with the 'desires of the soul' as revealed in dreams. Brébeuf wrote that 'they have a faith in dreams surpassing all credibility.… The dream is the oracle that all these poor people consult and heed … the dream is the most absolute master they have … it prescribes their feasts, their dances, their songs, their games – in a word, the dream does everything' (Thwaites 1898, 126). Given the place of dreams in shaping all forms of ritual practice, it seems very likely that dreams were critical in determining the sort of bodily treatments a dead person

would receive, and whether he or she would be included in secondary mass burials.

Archaeological evidence from the late pre-Contact (AD 1500–1600) and early Contact periods in southern Ontario supports the notion that numerous distinct bodily treatments and parallel ritual pathways were simultaneously practised, not only between different village communities, but within them as well (Jackes 1996; Williamson & Steiss 2003). A major class of burials not directly reported by the Jesuits were interments beneath the floors of longhouses within villages. No consistent set of criteria such as age, biological sex, or status can clearly account for decisions about who should be buried within the house. There may be a slightly disproportionate number of burials of infants within Late Iroquoian longhouses, which has suggested to Kapches (1976) a desire to promote their rebirth within the same lineage via reincarnation. However, the patterns she noted in 1976 have not been well supported by reconsiderations and new data (Knight & Melbye 1983). The choice to bury infants along pathways or within the house seems to have been ad hoc rather than systematic, as infants were

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Figure 21.3. Intact bundle within the Moatfield Ossuary.

also included in ossuaries. Conversely, Late Iroquoian intra-mural graves included both primary and secondary burials, and primary graves from which bodies had been exhumed, presumably for secondary burial in the 'feast of the dead'. At a more general level, consistent kits or sets of grave offerings are absent, and there is no evidence for significant recurring differences in the treatment of males and females in either primary or secondary contexts.

Within secondary mass graves and ossuaries, a great deal of variation has been recorded in terms of the elements selected for bundling and inclusion, whether individuals had been cremated, the extent of intentional disarticulation and de-fleshing, the degree of mixing and intermingling of the bones (Figures 21.2, 21.3), patterns in the spatial grouping of elements such as crania, and the presence or absence of specialized features (crematory, scaffold, fur or bark linings, and so on; Williamson & Steiss 2003). Some of these differences can be explained by the amount of time a body had to decay prior to the collective reburial event. However, the dispositions of

articulated bodies show variations in posture and spatial ordering that are unrelated to degree of decomposition.

Finally, there is some evidence that whole bodies or body parts may have been kept in the house for long periods. Brébeuf observed that some of the bodies assembled for the 'feast of the dead' appeared to have been smoke-cured (Thwaites 1898). The Attiwandaron nation, neighbours of the Wendat, were also said to have kept the dead in their houses as long as possible, rather than burying them quickly. At the sixteenth century Parsons site, two complete human skulls were found in a pit near the palisade, facing east (Robertson & Williamson 1998). Similarly, certain artefacts made from human bone, such as parietal bone rattles, might have been derived from remains excluded from reburial (Williamson 2007; Rainey 2002).

Figure 21.4 is a flow chart that represents a very simplified series of choices that might be made about how a dead person's body would be treated. Each box in the flow chart indicates an activity that might take place in or across a number of different contexts (the house, the village cemetery, a crematory beside an ossuary pit, etc.). It is easy to see that hundreds of unique 'pathways' could be improvised from this basic scheme. A sample of non-ossuary burials reported from Early and Middle Iroquoian settlements (Tables 21.1 and 21.2) provides support for the hypothesis that these individuals were not treated according to a narrow normative programme. Both sexes are evenly distributed across house and outdoor burial contexts and received a variety of treatments and burial positions, as did children and adults. Whilst the majority of the Middle Iroquoian community's dead were eventually included in a secondary mass reburial event or 'feast of the dead', there was in fact no certainty about the specific *chaîne opératoire* through which a person's remains might travel to arrive there. On the basis of the ethnohistoric record, variations in the pathway seem to have been connected primarily to age and manner of death, but even these generalizations seem poorly to account for the diversity of pathways and treatments observed archaeologically.

My central contention here is that a specific pathway was selected for each individual from a rather wide horizon of possibilities according to a set of biographical and personal contingencies – the 'desires of the soul' as revealed in dreams, assessments about the cause of death, and so on. What these diverse practices seem emphatically to resist is clear paradigmatic classification according to the usual dimensions of gender, age, wealth, and

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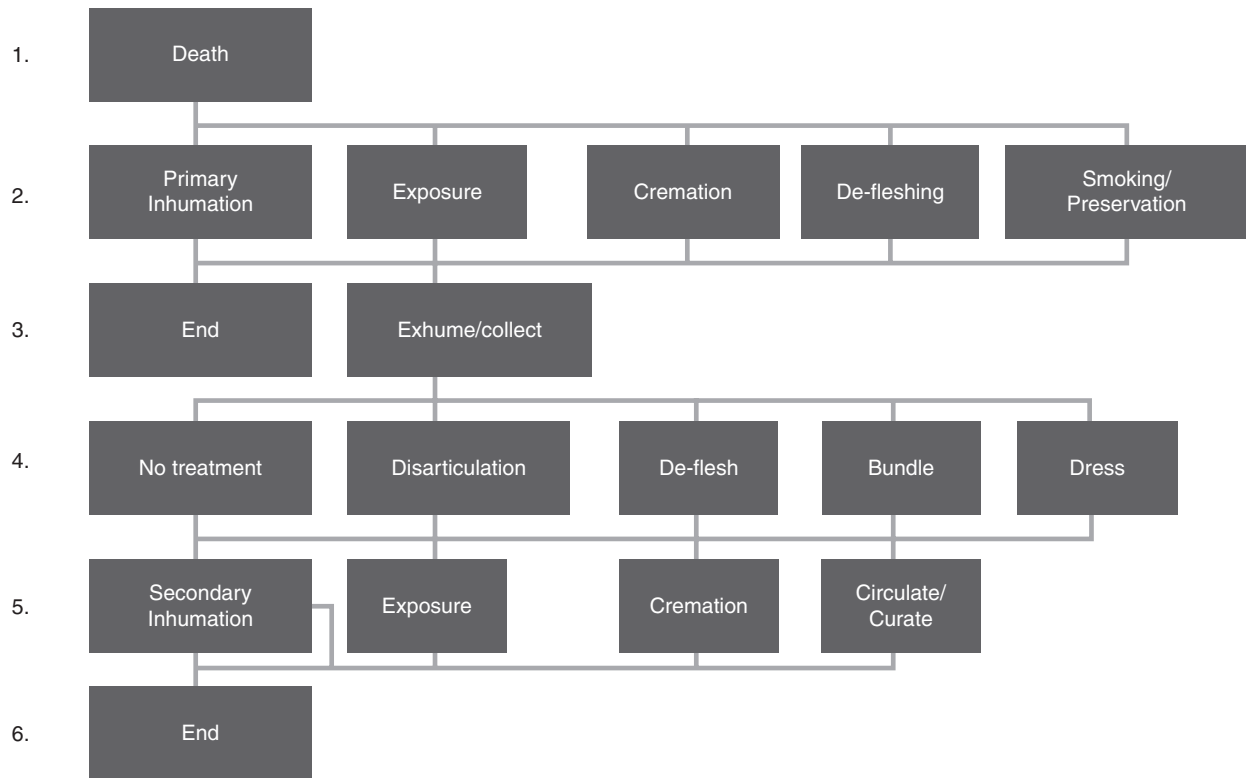
Figure 21.4. Flow chart for a *chaîne opératoire* of post-mortem bodily treatments.

status with which archaeologists are typically preoccupied (Figure 21.7). What they do, in fact, is recapitulate a sense of a unique biography or life-course through a unique death-course via the medium of bodily treatments. What is expressed in such treatments is intensely personal and intimate, as is so well conveyed in Brébeuf's account of a woman tearfully preparing and dressing her husband's bone bundle with objects of biographical significance: his set of mnemonic 'council sticks' (Thwaites 1898, 183). To summarize my argument so far, one of the principal metaphorical relationships established through these practices was a homology between an individual's singular biography and personhood, perhaps understood emically in terms of 'soul fulfillment', and the singular treatment of his or her body in the death-course.

Rites of Passage

These highly variable death-courses were, nonetheless, generally situated within a wider narrative scheme consisting of primary (usually individual) and secondary (usually collective) burial stages. Viewed at this scale, the extended ritual structure of the mortuary system can be seen as a rite of passage. This took the form of a move from 'structure' to *communitas* (Turner 1969). In general, the successive stages discussed previously move from an emphasis on the named individual and his or her unique position within an extended family, to his or her identity within a corporate longhouse or clan segment headed by a house chief, to his or her membership in a village, and finally a tribal network participating in reciprocal 'kettles', or feasts of the dead. At each level, individual identity seems to give way to the nested collective identities of house and village.

This transition, and its culmination in *communitas*, is particularly evident in the sequence of events leading to the 'feast of the dead'. After exhumation, the deceased were returned to their respective houses for intimate preparation and dressing by family members. The mat and robe used to bind the bones were particularly salient metaphors for the person here, as they were the archetypal personal belongings. The mat was associated with a person's enfranchised membership in a longhouse and its associated clan – each individual had a woven reed mat that denoted his or her 'place' in the house. The highest form of punishment in Wendat society was ostracism from the house, which was expressed by the phrase 'on,endata8e,indi', literally meaning, 'they close up

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Table 21.1. *Non-ossuary interments from Late Woodland southern Ontario from Early Iroquoian (AD 900–1280) sites, demonstrating variation of burial contexts, stages, and positions with individual age and sex*

Early Iroquoian sites AD 900–1280	Burial–Individual ID	Context	MNI	Stage	Type	Age	Sex	References
Miller	2–1	Village periphery	3	Secondary	Bundle – complex	Adult	Female	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	2–2	Village periphery	3	Secondary	Bundle – complex	Adult	Male	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	2–3	Village periphery	3	Secondary	Bundle – complex	Child	?	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	3–1	Village interior	4	Secondary	Bundle – complex	Adult	male	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	3–2	Village interior	4	Secondary	Bundle – complex	Adult	?	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	3–3	Village interior	4	Secondary	Bundle – complex	Child	?	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	3–4	Village interior	4	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Child	?	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	4–1	Village interior	4	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	Female	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	4–2	Village interior	4	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	Male	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	4–3	Village interior	4	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	4–4	Village interior	4	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Child	?	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	5–1	Village periphery	3	Primary	Flexed – complex	Adult	Female	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	5–2	Village periphery	3	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	5–3	Village periphery	3	Exhumed primary	Fragmentary – complex	Child	?	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	6–1	Village interior	3	Exhumed primary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	6–2	Village interior	3	Exhumed primary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	6–3	Village interior	3	Exhumed primary	Fragmentary – complex	Child	?	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Miller	7–1	House subfloor	1	Exhumed primary	Fragmentary – simple	Adult	?	Kenyon 1968; Spence 1994
Kraus	1–1	House subfloor	1	?	Fragmentary – simple	Infant	?	Esler 1998
Bennett	1–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	?	Child	?	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	2–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Child	?	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	3–1	House wall/post	1	Secondary	Bundle – simple	Adult	male	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	4–1	House subfloor	1	Secondary	?	Adult	?	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	5–1	House subfloor	2	Primary	Flexed – simple	Adult	?	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	5–2	House subfloor	2	Primary	Flexed – simple	Adult	?	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	6–1	House wall	1	?	Fragmentary – simple	Adult	Male	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	7–1	House subfloor	1	?	Fragmentary – simple	Child	?	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	8–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Adult	Female	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	9–1	House subfloor	2	Secondary	Bundle – simple	Child	?	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	9–2	House subfloor	2	Secondary	Bundle – simple	Adult	Male	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	10–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Child	?	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	11–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Child	?	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	12–1	House ssl	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Adult	Male	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	13–1	House subfloor	2	Primary	?	Adult	Female	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Bennett	13–2	House subfloor	2	Exhumed primary	Fragmentary – complex	Adolescent	?	Wright & Anderson 1969; Spence 1994
Elliott	283–1	Village periphery	4	Sorted deposit	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Fox 1988
Elliott	283–2	Village periphery	4	Sorted deposit	Fragmentary – complex	Child	?	Fox 1988
Elliott	283–3	Village periphery	4	Sorted deposit	Fragmentary – complex	Child	?	Fox 1988
Elliott	283–4	Village periphery	4	Sorted deposit	Fragmentary – complex	Child	?	Fox 1988
Roeland	1–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	?	?	?	Williamson 1985; Williamson & Steiss 2003
Praying Mantis	1–1	Village periphery	1	Exhumed primary	Fragmentary – simple	Adult	Female	Spence 1994
Praying Mantis	2–1	House subfloor	7	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adolescent	?	Pearce 2008
Praying Mantis	2–2	House subfloor	7	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adolescent	?	Pearce 2008
Praying Mantis	2–3	House subfloor	7	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adolescent	?	Pearce 2008
Praying Mantis	2–4	House subfloor	7	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adolescent	?	Pearce 2008
Praying Mantis	2–5	House subfloor	7	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	Female	Pearce 2008
Praying Mantis	2–6	House subfloor	7	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	Female	Pearce 2008
Praying Mantis	2–7	House subfloor	7	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	Male	Pearce 2008
L Ski Club	1–1	Village interior	1	Primary	?	Adult	Female	Spence 1994
Warbler Wds	1–1	off site	1	Primary	?	Adolescent	?	Spence 1994
Bruce Boyd	1–1	Village interior	1	?	Fragmentary – simple	Adult	?	Spence et al. 1978
Bruce Boyd	2–1	Village interior	2	Secondary	?	Adult	?	Spence et al. 1978
Bruce Boyd	2–2	Village interior	2	Secondary	?	Adult	?	Spence et al. 1978
Bruce Boyd	3–1	Village interior	5	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Spence et al. 1978
Bruce Boyd	3–2	Village interior	5	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Spence et al. 1978
Bruce Boyd	3–3	Village interior	5	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Child	?	Spence et al. 1978
Bruce Boyd	3–4	Village interior	5	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Child	?	Spence et al. 1978
Bruce Boyd	3–5	Village interior	5	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Infant	?	Spence et al. 1978
Stafford	1–1	Village interior	2	Secondary	?	Adult	Male	Spence 1994
Stafford	1–2	Village interior	2	Secondary	Fragmentary – Complex	Adult	?	Spence 1994
Force	1–1	House subfloor	1	Secondary	?	Child	?	Spence 1994
Macallan	1–1	Village interior	2	Secondary	?	Adult	Male	Woodley 1994
Macallan	1–2	Village interior	2	Secondary	?	?	?	Woodley 1994
Tara	2–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	?	Adult	?	Warrick 1991
Richardson	1–1	House subfloor	1	Secondary	?	Adult	Male	Pearce 1977

Note: 'House ssl' refers to burial within an intramural semi-subterranean sweat lodge; 'complex' type burials are those in which remains of multiple individuals were mixed or commingled

Table 21.2. *Non-ossuary interments from Late Woodland southern Ontario from Middle Iroquoian (AD 1280–1400) sites, demonstrating variation of burial contexts, stages, and positions with individual age and sex*

Middle Iroquoian sites AD 1280–1400	Burial–individual ID	Context	MNI	Stage	Type	Age	Sex	References
Nodwell	1–1	House subfloor	1	Exhumed primary	Fragmentary – simple	Adult	?	Wright 1974
Crawford Lake	1–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Child	?	Esler 1998
Crawford Lake	2–1	House ssl	2	Primary	Flexed – complex	Infant	?	Esler 1998
Crawford Lake	2–2	House ssl	2	?	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Esler 1998
Crawford Lake	3–1	House ssl	1	Exhumed primary	Isolated articulated limb	Adult	?	Esler 1998
Crawford Lake	4–1	Village interior	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Adult	Female	Esler 1998
Crawford Lake	5–1	House post	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Child	?	Esler 1998
Crawford Lake	6–1	House subfloor	2	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	Male	Esler 1998
Crawford Lake	6–2	House subfloor	2	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adolescent	?	Esler 1998
Crawford Lake	7–1	Village ssl	2	Primary	?	Infant	?	Esler 1998
Crawford Lake	7–2	Village ssl	2	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Esler 1998
Crawford Lake	8–1	Village interior	1	Secondary	Bundle – simple	Adult	?	Esler 1998
Crawford Lake	9–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	?	Infant	?	Esler 1998
Myers Road	185–1	House subfloor	1	Secondary	Bundle – simple	Adult	Female	Williamson 1998
Myers Road	187–1	House subfloor	1	Secondary	Flexed – Simple	Child	?	Williamson 1998
Myers Road	278–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Adult	Male	Williamson 1998
Myers Road	341–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Infant	?	Williamson 1998
Myers Road	385–1	House subfloor	1	Exhumed primary	Isolated articulated limb	Adult	?	Williamson 1998
Alexandra	F196–1	House subfloor	1	Exhumed primary	Isolated articulated limb	Child	?	Archaeological Services Inc. 2008
Alexandra	F346–1	House ssl	1	?	Fragmentary – simple	?	?	Archaeological Services Inc. 2008
Uren	1–1	House subfloor	1	Exhumed primary	Fragmentary – simple	?	?	Wright 1986
Uren	2–1	House Subfloor	1	Exhumed Primary	Fragmentary – simple	?	?	Wright 1986
Uren	3–1	house subfloor	1	exhumed primary	fragmentary – simple	?	?	Wright 1986
Uren	4–1	house ssl	3	secondary	fragmentary – complex	adult	female	Wright 1986
Uren	4–2	House ssl	3	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adolescent	Male	Wright 1986
Uren	4–3	House ssl	3	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Child	?	Wright 1986
Bonisteel	1–1	Village interior	1	?	?	Child	?	Pengelly & Pengelly 1987
Bonisteel	2–1	Village interior	3	?	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	Male	Pengelly & Pengelly 1987
Bonisteel	2–2	Village interior	3	?	Fragmentary – complex	Child	?	Pengelly & Pengelly 1987
Bonisteel	2–3	Village interior	3	?	Fragmentary – complex	Infant	?	Pengelly & Pengelly 1987
Olmstead	1–1	Village periphery	2	?	?	Adult	?	Welsh & Williamson 1994
Olmstead	1–2	Village periphery	2	?	?	Infant	?	Welsh & Williamson 1994
Hutchinson	F92–1	funerary processing	1	?	Fragmentary – simple	Adult	?	Robertson 2004
Hutchinson	B1–1	Funerary processing	1	?	Fragmentary – simple	Adult	?	Robertson 2004
Hutchinson	1–1	Funerary processing	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Adult	Female	Robertson 2004
Hutchinson	2–1	Funerary processing	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Adult	Female	Robertson 2004
Hutchinson	3–1	funerary processing	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Child	?	Robertson 2004
Serena	1–1	House subfloor	2	Cremated	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	Female	Williamson 2004
Serena	1–2	House subfloor	2	Cremated	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Williamson 2004
Tillsonburg	1–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Infant	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	2–1	Village interior	1	?	Fragmentary – simple	Adult	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	3–1	Village interior	1	Sorted deposit	Fragmentary – simple	Adult	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	4–1	Village interior	1	Primary	?	Child	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	5–1	House ssl	1	?	Fragmentary – simple	Infant	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	6–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Adolescent	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	7–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	Flexed – simple	Child	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	8–1	House subfloor	1	Primary	Flexed – Simple	Child	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	9–1	House subfloor	1	Exhumed primary	Fragmentary – Simple	Adult	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	10–1	House subfloor	1	Sorted deposit	Fragmentary – simple	Adolescent	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	11–1	Village interior	2	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	Female	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	11–2	Village interior	2	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	Male	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	12–1	Village periphery	1	Sorted Deposit	Fragmentary – simple	Adult	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	13–1	Village periphery	1	Sorted deposit	Fragmentary – simple	Adult	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	14–1	Village periphery	3	Sorted deposit	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	14–2	Village periphery	3	Sorted deposit	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Spence 2011
Tillsonburg	14–3	Village periphery	3	Sorted deposit	Fragmentary – complex	Adult	?	Spence 2011
Antrex	1–1	Village periphery	1	Secondary	Bundle – simple	Adult	?	Archaeological Services Inc. 2010
Antrex	2–1	House subfloor	3	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Adolescent	?	Archaeological Services Inc. 2010
Antrex	2–2	House subfloor	3	Secondary	Fragmentary – complex	Child	?	Archaeological Services Inc. 2010
Antrex	2–3	house subfloor	3	secondary	fragmentary – complex	?	?	Archaeological Services Inc. 2010

Note: 'House ssl' refers to burial within an intramural semi-subterranean sweat lodge; 'complex' type burials are those in which remains of multiple individuals were mixed or commingled

my mat' (Steckley 2007). The next stage, a feast in the longhouse of a chief, emphasized the position of families within lineage segments or clans that held chiefly offices. These rituals appear aimed at reaffirming the connections between the longhouse and the dead person's legitimate social place within the village community. The procession to the burial site was a ritualized gathering of the tribe as a whole, and the arrangement of mourners and bodies according to clan and village about the burial pit reiterated these nested institutional identities again in spatial form.

The display of bundles of presents (the accumulated personal effects of the deceased and their relatives) followed by the display of the corpses and bone bundles, marked the beginning of a shift to *communitas*. At this point, the presents were announced and distributed. These were not generic presents exchanged between families; each was announced as a gift for a specific living recipient from the deceased person whose body bundle it was pointedly replaced with. Hence, an important metaphorical relationship was established between the individual's body and his or her gifts for the living. As the bodies were placed in the communal grave, bundles were broken and commingled, as were most of the beaver robes that had been used to bundle the bones (Thwaites 1898, 213; cf. Kidd 1953). In the final collective interment, the articulations of the skeletons, the robes that bound them, and the accumulated personal effects that defined the enfranchised member of house, clan, and village were sundered. In this event, one of the person's two souls was also understood to have been released, permitting travel to a 'village of the dead' (Seeman 2011; Tooker 1991). This soul seems to have been linked to an individual or at least ego-centric kind of personhood, one associated with accumulated belongings, a mat in the house, a network of kin, a personal song, and a name. The soul that remained in the bones was generic and collective, the homogeneous soul of the community in its entirety.

Community Biography and World Renewal

The timing of the 'feast of the dead' with the cycle of village removal and reconstruction linked its narrative structure directly to ideas about the rebirth of the village, both as the 'village of the dead' and in its new incarnation in the physical world. For the dead, the structural position of persons within a network of kin and house was transcended in the *communitas* of the 'village of the dead'. For the living, these structures were renewed through the

'resuscitation' of the names of dead relatives and through the receipt of their personal effects after their removal from the scaffold – the village was reborn in two worlds.

It might at first seem as though the two major aspects of this total mortuary system I have discussed – the individual biography and village world-renewal through a rite of passage – are directly at odds with one another. The first emphasizes the uniqueness of an individual biography, while the second emphasizes the sublimation of the individual within collective institutions, especially the village. In fact, however, both trace a biographical narrative through the sequence of bodily treatments. Hinging the 'feast of the dead' on the cycle of village regeneration analogously connected the community's biography with the individual's biography through the mediation of bodily treatments; ossuary burial became body-bundling writ large. Accordingly, the real significance of secondary mass reburial derives from its metaphorical appropriation of the relationship between the life-course and the treatment of the body in a death-course. Consequently, the unique pathways taken by individual bodies to reach the 'kettle' remain critical; they essentially legitimate collective reburial by describing the ultimate convergence and transcendental singularity of personal and communal destinies.

A LONG-TERM PERSPECTIVE

A consideration of the long-term development of Ontario Iroquoian deathways helps to reveal how the relatively homogeneous programme observed by the French among the seventeenth-century Wendat came into being. Large collective secondary burial rites (involving several hundred individuals) rapidly spread across much of southern Ontario in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Before this time, there was much more variation in local deathways (Spence 1994; Williamson & Steiss 2003). While secondary multiple burials were not unknown before AD 1250, they tended to involve relatively few individuals, and to occur within houses or village limits (Figures 21.5, 21.6). Early examples of reburial traditions (ca. AD 1000–1250) on the Norfolk sand plain, for instance, were tied to a settlement-subsistence cycle that involved annual collective reburials of village members who had died over the year, a pattern that may have grown out of earlier Middle Woodland practices in the region (Spence 1994). Other contemporaneous examples include small collective secondary burials within or outside longhouses with various degrees of mixing
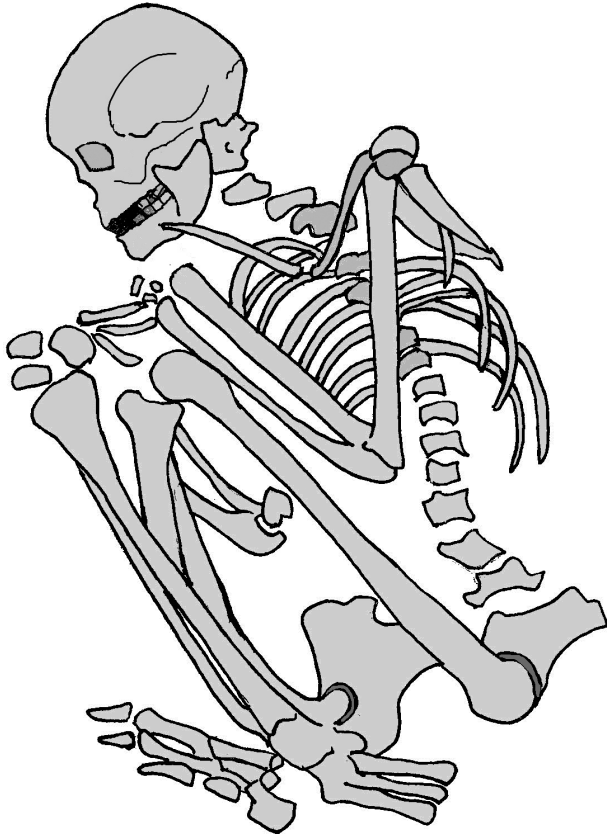
Figure 21.5. Artist's rendering of a typical Ontario Iroquoian flexed primary burial.
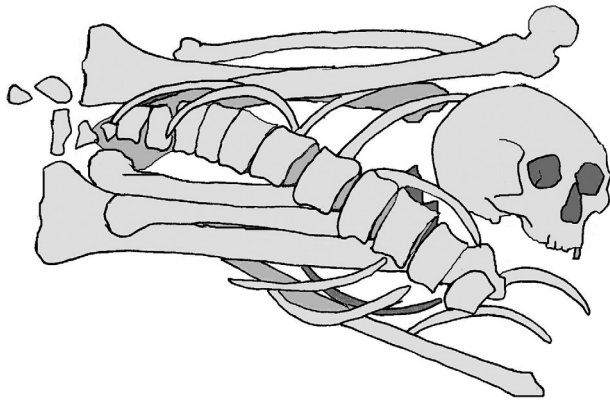
Figure 21.6. Artist's rendering of a typical Ontario Iroquoian 'complex' intra-mural bundle burial, containing incomplete secondary remains of multiple individuals.

of individuals, and treatments such as excarnation by exposure, or deliberate cutting, bundling, and even drilling elements for suspension or re-articulation (Spence 1994). Such graves range in estimated minimum number of individuals from two to twenty-eight (Williamson & Steiss 2003). Single primary (Figure 21.5) and secondary

inhumations within houses or village open areas were also common at this time. At the Early Iroquoian Miller site, a small palisaded village with six houses, seven widely scattered graves were discovered in various parts of the settlement, both inside and outside the palisade, and within a house. These graves held from one to thirteen individuals, with most including three or four secondary bundle burials (Figure 21.6). Several large secondary burial pits located away from settlements have also been recorded for the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, such as the Serpent pits in eastern Ontario (Johnston 1968), and the Rogers Ossuary (Mullen & Hoppa 1992).

A sample of fifty-eight individuals from thirty-three graves at some fourteen Early Iroquoian village sites was compiled for this study; results are presented in Table 21.1 and Figure 21.7. As in the Late Iroquoian and Contact periods, a variety of village burial contexts, treatments, and burial positions were common and available more or less equally to both males and females, and most age groups. Few infants are present in the sample, suggesting systematic exclusion or treatments in which their remains tended to be lost. There was also a slightly greater likelihood for primary inhumations within houses to contain females, and secondary inhumations to contain males, although the pattern is not statistically significant.

The mid-thirteenth century marked a sea change in burial practices across the region, as collective secondary mass interments quickly became the dominant form in central southern Ontario (Williamson & Steiss 2003). Primary inhumations, as well as secondary bundles, cremations, and exhumed primary burials from which certain elements were left behind, continued to occur within villages (now most frequently within longhouses, Figure 21.7). However, large multiple secondary burials shifted to burial pits located outside villages. These typically included more than one hundred individuals interred in a single event and appear to have been connected to village relocations, rather than annual cycles (Spence 1994; Williamson & Pfeiffer 2003). In the ancestral Wendat area, bundles were more likely to be opened and mixed (Figure 21.2), particularly in the upper layers, although there was a great deal of variation in the degree of mixing up to and including ossuaries of the seventeenth century Wendat (Williamson & Steiss 2003). Mass graves and cemeteries of the ancestral Attiwandaron in southwestern Ontario tend to lack the same degree of mixing or commingling of individuals' bones. In grave 62 at the early Contact Grimsby cemetery, for instance, body bundles were carefully laid out in two groups

Frequency of aged human remains across burial contexts, stages, and types
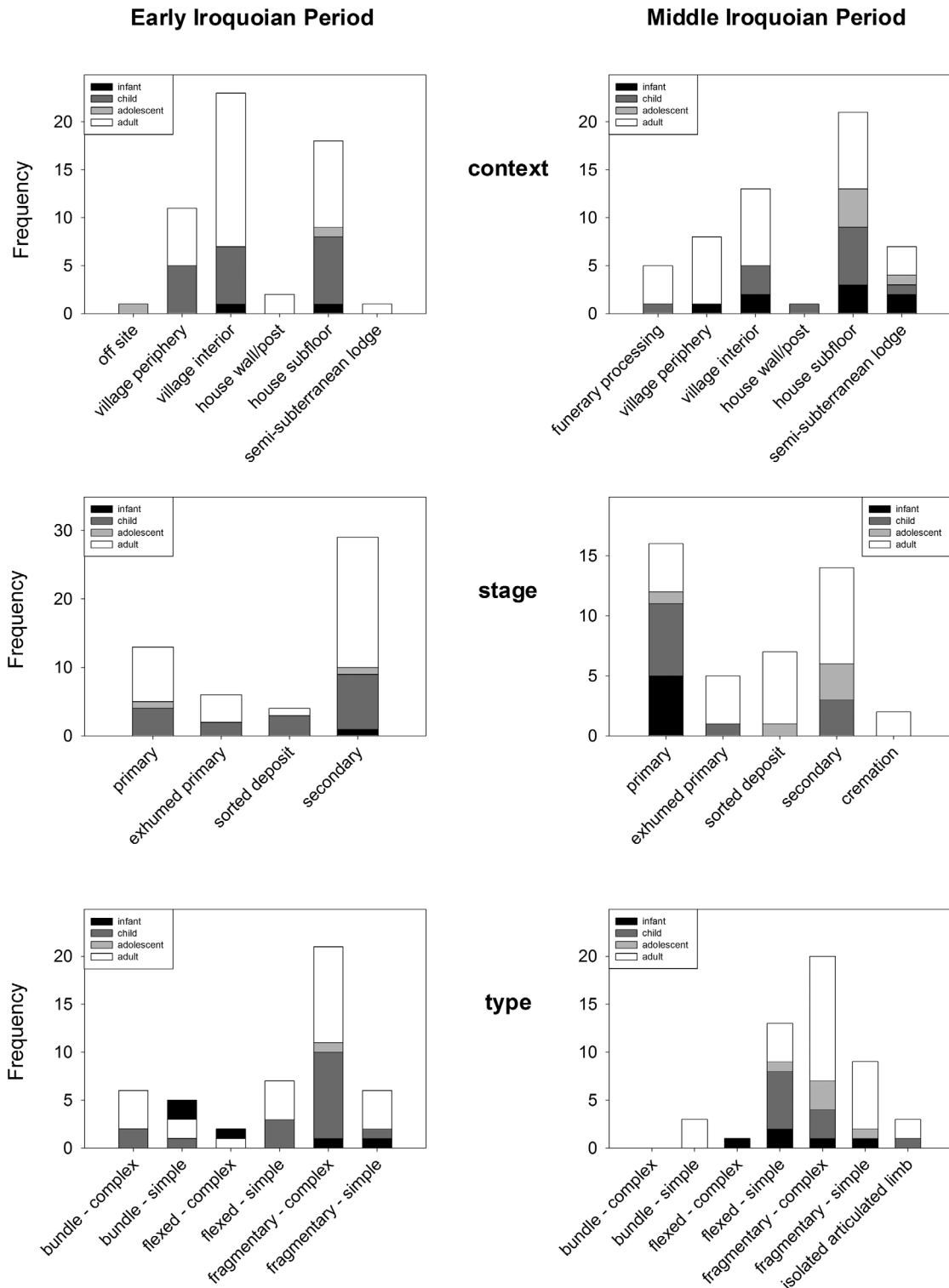
Figure 21.7. Frequencies of aged individuals interred at Iroquoian sites in southern Ontario by burial context, stage, and type.

on each side of copper kettles and other burial goods (Kenyon 1982). Other single primary and small multiple secondary burials were also present at Grimsby adjacent to the large collective graves.

While small multiple secondary burials were known in the region from before the tenth century, these rites were generally undertaken by sub-groups within villages at a variety of scales (the nuclear family, the longhouse, perhaps groups of longhouses or families within villages, or whole villages) and temporalities (annually, irregularly, or with village moves; Spence 1994). With the rise of mass reburial in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, these practices were more uniformly linked with the village as a totality, and its decadal or generational cycle of decay and renewal. In spite of this clear shift to a regionally more coherent programme for secondary mass burial, there remained huge variability in the sequence of bodily treatments that might be followed prior to inclusion in (or exclusion from) a 'feast of the dead' (Forrest 2010; Williamson & Steiss 2003).

Viewed from this developmental perspective, it is evident that the relatively rapid emergence of the 'feast of the dead' in the late thirteenth century involved a new regularization and formalization of pre-existing practices of secondary multiple burial that were until then conducted as one of a spectrum of optional death-courses by small social groups. This regularization did not, however, require that most or all individuals follow a unilinear bodily *chaîne opératiore* prior to mass reburial. On the contrary, diverse treatments not only for those excluded from but also for those included in the 'kettle' continued to be common. A sample of sixty individuals from forty-six graves at eleven Middle Iroquoian village sites was compiled for this study (Table 21.2). Summary statistics illustrate a shift in burial contexts to a focus on the house (Table 21.2, Figure 21.7), but a continuation of the open and flexible pathways available to males and females, and different age groups in terms of diverse treatments and burial positions (Figure 21.7).

Returning to my wider argument, I would suggest that the association between the individual's unique biography and his or her bodily treatment in the death-course was already established by the tenth century. Indeed, Early and Middle Woodland mortuary practices in the region had shown a similar degree of diverse treatments and pathways to primary or secondary burial within mounds and seasonal aggregation sites (e.g., Johnston 1968). Haltingly, and at a variety of social scales and temporalities, forms

of secondary multiple burial emerged in the first centuries of the second millennium. Each of these forms involved drawing together the individual biographies of the interred into a common biography of a new social entity – an institution-in-the-making. By the late thirteenth century, the house seems to have been linked to the village by selective primary or secondary burial beneath house floors, followed for most individuals by secondary burial in an ossuary or mass grave. Through these rituals, the late thirteenth-century village came to appropriate and articulate a variety of existing practices into a seemingly coherent order. The original homology between an individual's life-course and bodily treatment after death was secondarily homologized to the village's life-course and the destiny of its collective body. This move to weave the diverse strands of individual biographies into a coherent narrative of the death and renewal of the community as a whole was its peculiar 'redemptive hegemony'.

It remains to consider what purpose this new 'redemptive hegemony' served, and why it spread so quickly across the region. Who were the agents behind it, and why did they seek to connect authority with the village community in the ritual deployment of deathways? The later thirteenth century was a time of unprecedented growth in the scale of longhouses and villages. Between AD 1250 and 1350, average longhouse area quadrupled (Creese 2011). Although some of this growth was associated with endogenous population growth, much of it was the result of the widespread coalescence of small neighbouring Early Iroquoian villages into significantly larger ones across the region (Pearce 1984; Warrick 2008). These longhouse and village mergers were political events that would have challenged existing ideas of what the house and village were as institutions. They had to be creatively re-imagined as they rapidly grew in scale and internal spatial and social complexity (Creese 2011). In this context, factional interest-groups that supported village mergers seem effectively to have used the 'free play' of ritual metaphor to transfigure commonplace understandings of house and village into new kinds of authoritative institutions in Ontario Iroquoian societies.

CONCLUSIONS

I have sought here to show how deathways can be approached as ritualized practice. In particular, I have sketched a picture of how the general ritual form of

Ontario Iroquoian deathways followed a progression from 'structure' to *communitas*, and how in doing so it knit together a series of homologies between the individual's life-course and post-mortem bodily treatments, and the life-course of the village community and the treatment, including the ultimate union, of its collected bodies as one body. I have suggested that this represents a case of what Catherine Bell has termed 'redemptive hegemony'. As the long-term history of Iroquoian deathways in the region illustrates, this 'redemptive hegemony' took a recognizable form in the thirteenth century at the same time that village communities were undergoing rapid growth and frequent fusion with neighbours. The met-aphorical practices of ritual itself were deployed at this time in such a way that existing deathways were reconfig-ured in the interests of community institution-building. The seismic shift in Iroquoian social organization that was accomplished through these ritual appropriations is surely evidence of the potential for deathways to con-tribute to the profound re-imagination of social life.

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Locating a Sense of Immortality in Early Egyptian Cemeteries

Alice Stevenson

INTRODUCTION

It has often been remarked, and rightly, that there is a close relationship between the representation of the body and that of the soul. This mental connection is necessary, not only because collective thought is primarily concrete and incapable of conceiving a purely spiritual existence, but above all because it has a profoundly stimulating and dramatic character.

(Hertz 1960, 83)

Despite the passing of a century, Hertz' seminal work of 1907, *Contribution à une Étude sur la Représentation Collective de la Mort*, remains a source of inspiration for many modern interpretations of mortuary practices. Most such studies have taken Hertz' schema of secondary funerary rites as their primary focus, but it is his wider frame of reference with its emphasis on the communal, affective experience of mortuary rituals that is the theoretical stance explored further here. Notably in this vein, his ideas have wider resonance today with the more recent anthropological emphasis on emotion and embodiment (Davies 2000, 97–8) and with studies seeking to link the spiritual and the material (Venbrux 2007). Such collective representations of death can provide particularly germane departure points for the inference of prehistoric notions of immortality.[1] Instead of grappling with the thorny issue of personal belief, such representations allow the focus of analysis to be shifted to the shared, material contexts of experience and meaning-making, which are more visible to archaeologists (Tarlow 2000; DeMarrais 2011). In pursuing this line of reasoning with reference to the early Egyptian evidence, I take a position already adopted by several other scholars (e.g., Hodder 2010; Kertzer 1988, 76; Price 2008; Rappaport 1999, 119–20) that concepts of spirituality (or in this case immortality) need not entail structured belief, but rather that in

particular spaces and in particular scenarios an embodied *sense* of transcendental being can be created and encountered. In terms of the context of death, I take this to be commensurate with what the psychologists Lifton and Olson (1974) referred to as 'experiential immortality', key to which is the feeling of the reorientation of time. Yet contrary to their assertion that this experiential immortality emerges because of an individual's innate sense of his or her own perpetuity, I contend, following recent suggestions in cognitive science (Hodge 2011a, 2011b) and in keeping with Hertz' emphasis on the social, that it emerges from people's intuitive sense of the continued existence of *others*. Building on these points, I suggest here that one way in which a sense of immortality can be stimulated is through the communal experience of how others are buried and how social relationships are dramatized in burial rites and settings.

In the case of early Egypt, from the late Neolithic through to the early Bronze Age, social relationships were dramatically reconfigured over an interval of some fifteen hundred years, from seasonally mobile pastoralist communities to a state society headed by divine kingship. It is a transformation that is most visible in the mortuary realm. Within this context an extraordinary range of behaviours is evident:[2] the establishment of the first long-term, formal cemetery areas; the rapid and diverse material elaboration of display-orientated mortuary ritual; wide-ranging experimentation in body treatments including dismemberment, secondary burial, and partial mummification; theatres of human and animal sacrifice on an unprecedented scale; and, from the First Dynasty, the imposition upon the landscape of massive burial structures. The implication of this spectrum of practices is that we should not envisage one single trajectory of

cosmological development leading neatly to conceptions of the afterlife that are so well documented from later Pharaonic texts and art. Nor should we expect there to have existed formalized or codified sets of beliefs at this early time. Instead, the evidence provides the possibility of exploring how communities negotiated their confrontation with death and the arenas that may have actively shaped collective senses of immortality and transcendence. In viewing the evidence in this way what is striking is the discontinuities in the archaeological record, rather than the continuities. The most significant of these was the establishment of divine and immortal kingship. This, I argue, was achieved not primarily through the elevation of ancestors to divine status, as is so frequently invoked, but via fundamental changes in the spatial dramatization of immediate social relationships and the concomitant reorientation of time and space as materialized in the royal cemetery of Egypt's First Dynasty at Abydos.

EXPERIENTIAL IMMORTALITY

In the early 1970s the psychiatrists Lifton and Olson (1974) published a theory of symbolic immortality in order to explain how people managed their fear of death. They postulated that this found expression in five modes of what they called 'symbolic immortality': *biological, creative, theological, natural*, and *experiential* immortality. *Biological immortality* refers to continuity through progeny, kinship, and other important social groupings; *creative immortality* is the posterity that can be found through such activities as teaching, writing, and art-making; *theological immortality* references the religious construction of afterlife beliefs; while *natural immortality* links life to wider cycles of birth and death, and perceptions of the endurance of the landscape despite the passing of generations. The final mode, *experiential transcendence*, is set apart from the previous four as it is predicated upon a psychological state that can occur in relation to all of the other modes. This mode of immortality refers to the feeling of being beyond the boundaries of mundane daily rhythms, of transcending time itself: 'one feels oneself alive in a "continuous present" in which ancient past and distant future are contained' (Lifton & Olson 1974, 87). Such experiences may vary in their intensity and can be found in many different scenarios from music to sport to sexual encounters, but notably also in the contemplation of the past and in communal ceremonies. While all five of these forms of symbolic immortality are certainly documented as concerns for the ancient Egyptians

of the historic period, in the absence of written records it is the final mode that is the focus in this study of early Egyptian rites.

Lifton and Olson linked the emergence of symbolic immortality to a universal fear of death and to an individual's innate sense of his or her own perpetuity in the face of this. Recent experimental findings in the cognitive science of religion (e.g., Bering 2002, 2006, 2008) would seem to support these notions, as they indicate that human beings do intuitively believe in an afterlife. The tests upon which these assertions were based demonstrated that children from the age of four were predisposed to believe that some psychological states continued on for deceased individuals. It is a trend that persists through adulthood regardless of religious affiliation. In accounting for this, there has been a tendency to focus upon an individual's sense of his or her own immortality, which, it is argued, is then extended to others. Following Hodge (2011a, 2011b), however, and in keeping with Hertz' emphasis on the social, it is possible to argue that a sense of immortality emerges not from people's natural propensity to imagine their own survival after death, but from people's intuitive sense of the continued existence of *others*: 'the thesis that afterlife beliefs are social in nature ... suggests that afterlife beliefs are other-centered and not self-centered' (Hodge 2011a, 404). This, Hodge proposes, is a product of 'off-line social reasoning', a well-documented imaginative process that allows humans to conceptualize and plan interactions with absent third parties:

When it comes to death, human cognition apparently is not well equipped to update the list of players in our complex social rosters by accommodating the recent nonexistence of any one of them. This is especially the case, of course, for individuals who have played primary roles in our social lives, who did so for a long time, and who were never presumed to be continuously stationary when they were out of our sight ... although these automatic cognitions are probably the residue of habitual social behaviors, they also reveal something about the challenges faced by the human cognitive system when it attempts to process information concerning the truth about dead agents' *physical* whereabouts. A person who has recently died and whose body has already been disposed of may continue to be processed by an offline social system for an undetermined period of time.
(Bering 2006, cited in Hodge 2011a, 404)

This uniquely human capacity is what allows us to engage with what Bloch refers to as the 'transcendental social' (Bloch 2008; Hodder 2010, 334) – how people can conceptualize the continuation of social roles beyond the life of an individual. It allows us to imagine how social

structures can endure. As the supreme example of 'total social phenomena' (Mauss 1967, 77–8), mortuary rituals provide the cultural setting within which an embodied encounter with this transcendental social can occur, when communities are no longer simply imagined (Anderson 1983), but become, for perhaps just a fleeting moment, perceptible. How others are buried and how social relationships are enacted – especially if done in a dramatic and stimulating fashion – are two of the ways in which an embodied sense of immortality may be instantiated.

Archaeologically, such observations are significant for they suggest that it may be possible to inter-articulate the analysis of social organization – which has long been seen as the primary determinant of variation in mortuary practices and subject to extensive archaeological analysis – with the consideration of cosmologies and spirituality – which has received considerably less systematic attention (Carr 1995). In accounts that have sought to address what Carr termed 'philosophical-religious' aspects of the mortuary record, the focus has largely been on how religious constructs determine patterns of behaviour. Models such as this align with a long intellectual lineage of constructivist perspectives that have viewed symbols and rituals as a means of projecting pre-existing cultural and social codes onto the material world (Boivin 2009). Such approaches remain particularly problematic, however, if analysis is seeking to explain the emergence of practices or account for changes over long periods.

The perspective taken here reformulates Carr's view to consider how mortuary practices may not only be directed by belief, but also contribute to their very appearance and development. Going further, in the examination of the possible 'origins' of beliefs it is in fact not necessary to assume that rituals are prefigured by formalized or existing concepts (Boivin 2009, 274), for rituals are creative acts, not merely communicative ones (Bell 1997, 72–83). In this sense the use of the term 'performance' – which has for almost two decades been employed in archaeological investigations of ancient burials (e.g., Barrett 1994;

Laneri 2007; Pearson 1998; Thomas 1999) – might not be the most appropriate in cases such as this, suggesting as it does the repetition and enactment of pre-existing codes. Rather, we might consider Seremetakis' use of the term *poesis*, which she defines as 'the making of something out of that which was previously experientially and culturally unmarked' (Seremetakis 1991, 7). *Poesis* here is conceived of as an aesthetic act that makes sense of cultural forms at the very moment of their material and affective inception. Death creates the potential social space for such *poesis*, for as it punctuates daily rhythms it provides new opportunities to materialize and generate alternative realities and frameworks as individuals participate in transformative communal rituals. The settings in which some these events are played out – cemeteries – form an important part of this materialization. Significantly, they are also the contexts that are most conspicuous in our data for early Egypt. In exploring these ideas the following overview of mortuary development in the Nile Valley is necessarily selective, and I have chosen to focus principally on how the dead were located and framed relative to each other and the living, rather than attend to the variations in body treatments or the selection of grave goods.

EARLY EGYPTIAN BURIALS

The surviving prehistoric materials from Egypt trace out a potted timeline (Table 22.1). Of the early Egyptian Neolithic to the early fifth millennium BC, little is currently known. The destructive force of a once annually flooding and continuously migrating Nile may account for Egypt's lacunae in archaeological features, especially considering the exceptionally low level of the Nile in this period (Hassan 1988, 142–3). Egypt's earliest known Neolithic burial grounds are three small, densely packed cemeteries, together containing some thirty-nine graves, in the southwestern Saharan Desert at Gebel Ramlah dating to the mid-fifth millennium BC (Kobusiewicz

Table 22.1. *Absolute and relative periods for early Egypt*

Period	Description	cal. BC
Badarian	Late Neolithic	ca. 4350–3750
Naqada IA–IIB	Early Predynastic (Amratian)	ca. 3750(?)–3450
Naqada IIC–IID	Middle Predynastic (Gerzean)	ca. 3450–3325
Naqada IIIA1–IIIB	Late Predynastic	ca. 3325–3085
Naqada IIIC1–D	First Dynasty/Early Dynastic period	ca. 3085–2867

Based on Dee et al. (2013).

Figure 22.1. A Naqada IIC burial from Mahasna containing a body encircled by pottery.
Courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society.

et al. 2004, 2009). At the northern end of the country, possibly a little later in the fifth millennium, 'house burials' in what appear to be the abandoned part of settlements are known from el-Omari (Debono & Mortensen 1990, 67–77) and Merimde Beni-Salame (but see Badawi 1978; Junker 1929, 185–202; Kemp 1968). At these Lower Egyptian sites, the dead were placed in shallow pits with little in the way of material accompaniments, save for the occasional pot. From the late fifth millennium BC, larger, separate places for the dead were created in northern Upper Egypt, at Badari, Matmar, Mostagedda, and Qau (Brunton & Caton-Thompson 1928), as separate locations away from the living. In an archaeological record where substantial late Neolithic settlement vestiges remain elusive these cemeteries begin to emerge as the primary nodes of social gravity, constituting an 'urbanization of the dead' (Wengrow 2006).

It is in such mid-to-late fifth millennium Upper Egyptian contexts that grave pits also became something other than simply a container for the body. Over the course of the subsequent fourth millennium BC (the Predynastic) such spaces became the frames for

constructing increasingly elaborate material dialogues between objects and subjects (Figure 22.1) and they provided an arena for the contemplative viewing of the dead by surviving communities. The careful orchestration of such burial space is notable, and there existed an affective aesthetic in grave composition (Stevenson 2007, 2009a). The attentive furnishing of Predynastic graves in this manner has been the most frequently cited evidence for the emergence of ancient Egyptian beliefs in an afterlife. In so doing, however, the emphasis is necessarily placed upon the manner in which beliefs prefigure practice, but this explains neither their emergence nor their development.

In addition to the rich provisioning of graves, there was considerable experimentation in body treatments during the Predynastic: post-interment removal of the skull (e.g., Adaima, see Midant-Reynes et al. 1996, 96), rearrangement of skeletal parts within the grave (e.g., el-Amrah, see Randall-MacIver & Mace 1902, plate v; Wengrow 2006, 116–19), and partial mummification in the form of resin-soaked linen pressed upon the hands and around the face of select individuals (e.g., Hierakonpolis, see Jones 2002, 2007). Animal burials within cemeteries are also known (Flores 2003), the most striking of which are within cemetery HK 6 at Hierakonpolis. This latter elite necropolis is composed of large subterranean tombs and was founded at a surprisingly early date, ca. 3700 BC. With its unique evidence for organic superstructures (see Friedman 2011) HK 6 forms a starkly different funerary arena than is attested for the first rulers of the emergent Egyptian state several centuries later at Abydos (see later discussion), and this serves to underscore the complexity and uncertainly of developmental trajectories. Nevertheless, what remains consistent across this time is the intensity of social engagement with such spaces for the dead and the manner in which early communities along the Nile became increasingly entangled within elaborate funerary displays of a dramatic and stimulating character. These have previously been interpreted with reference to the formation of social memories (e.g., Wengrow 2006, 121–2), but if the creation of social memories is predicated upon an embodied sense of this past (cf. Malafouris, this volume), then these displays could be equally construed as moments when a projective 'sense of immortality' as envisioned by Lifton and Olson (1974) could also be encountered. There is the potential in the future therefore more explicitly to link models of social memory formation with discussions concerning emergent conceptualizations of the afterlife.

PERSISTENT PLACES

As noted previously, Predynastic cemeteries were particularly meaningful nodes of social gravity. This can be further highlighted with reference to survey work around the area of Abydos, which has mapped the location of cemeteries in the landscape. The pattern of Predynastic sites in this region (Patch 1991) demonstrated that if the low desert near a settlement site was not well formed, communities would select suitable areas farther from their residences to act as dedicated spaces for their dead, although it was preferable to find one as close to the living areas as possible (Patch 2004, 907–11). The burial areas themselves rarely extend more than 100 m into the low desert and are concentrated at the desert edge, ideally with ease of access from a small wadi connected to the floodplain. Such promontories provided a panoramic view of the Nile Valley, granting a vantage point that would have underscored for at least some of the funeral participants their sense of separation from the habitual boundaries of mundane life along the Nile's banks and thereby conceivably contributing to a sense of experiential immortality. The physical distancing of the living from the dead in this manner plausibly generated new cosmologies of landscape and, in turn, new ways of relating to the dead. For the living, a physical journey away from habitation zones to the desert necropolis now featured as an aspect of funerary proceedings, further providing an embodied sensation of separation and locatedness. This may not just have presaged later dynastic Egyptian conceptions of a 'land of the dead' as the concept may itself have been born out of the experience of generations of practice.

Over the course of the Predynastic period some of these cemeteries developed into particularly large necropoleis as generation after generation returned over the centuries with the bodies of their dead. At Naqada, for example, Flinders Petrie and his team excavated some two thousand graves (Petrie & Quibell 1896), while at Abydos more than seven hundred tombs (Figure 22.2) dating across the entire fourth millennium have been explored in the Umm el-Qa'ab (Hartman 2011, 918). Excavators' plans of these sites visualize these landscapes (Figure 22.2) as pockmarked with grave pits that rarely intersect, betraying the existence of above-ground structures that must once have demarcated these plots, but are now long gone. Whatever form these monuments took – conceivably simply a low mound (see Crubézy et al. 2002, 454) – these would have acted as material

'citations' (Jones 2005, 199–200) for past practices that would have constrained and enabled the arrangement of further burials (Mizoguchi 1993, 225). The result is that at several sites circular patterning in the placement of interments can be discerned (Stevenson 2009b, 182–3), such as at Mostagedda, where the excavator (Brunton 1937, 42) conjectured that tombs may have been arranged around a hearth; at Naga-ed-Dêr, where kinship groups have been inferred (Savage 1997); and at HK43, Hierakonpolis, where it was suggested that grave plots may have surrounded an above-ground monument (Friedman et al. 1999, 4). Such physical demarcations of past lives permitted these areas to accrue a visible and tangible temporal depth. For the mourners this was the stage for contemplative reflection of not just the recently deceased, but individuals who no longer had anyone in the surviving community who had ever known them personally (cf. Kuijt 2008; Wason 2010). In this manner a new kind of dead could have emerged whose presence may have aroused some sense of the longue durée as personal remembrances of specific individuals began to blend with the social memory of forgotten persons. This possibly permitted an awareness of community that transcended the generations (Cannon 2002, 194) and thereby a sense of experiential transcendence and a 'continuous present'. The landscape context of these sites, therefore, might not only have been predicated upon certain beliefs, but also actively shaped these through emotional and embodied experience (Williams 1999, 58).

It would be tempting to take these observations of Egyptian cemetery micro-traditions (Chapman 2000) a step further and infer from the patterns in the spread of grave structures continuous lineages of ancestors upon which positions in living society could be negotiated, eventually leading to the emergence of Egypt's first rulers. Such explanations based upon ancestor veneration have for the last decade or so remained prevalent in many narratives of later prehistory, despite critique (Whitley 2002). They have also been invoked as the basis upon which Egyptian religious systems could have been constructed through the elevation of certain ancestors or rulers to divine status (e.g., Edwards 2005, 124). To do so, however, is to ignore the discontinuities in the archaeological record, and it is these that are most revealing. These suggest that while encountering ancestors probably did have a role in the creation of place and in the conceptualization of continued existence beyond death, they alone are an insufficient basis for identifying the origins of an 'immortal kingship' (cf. Hocart 1954; Metcalf &
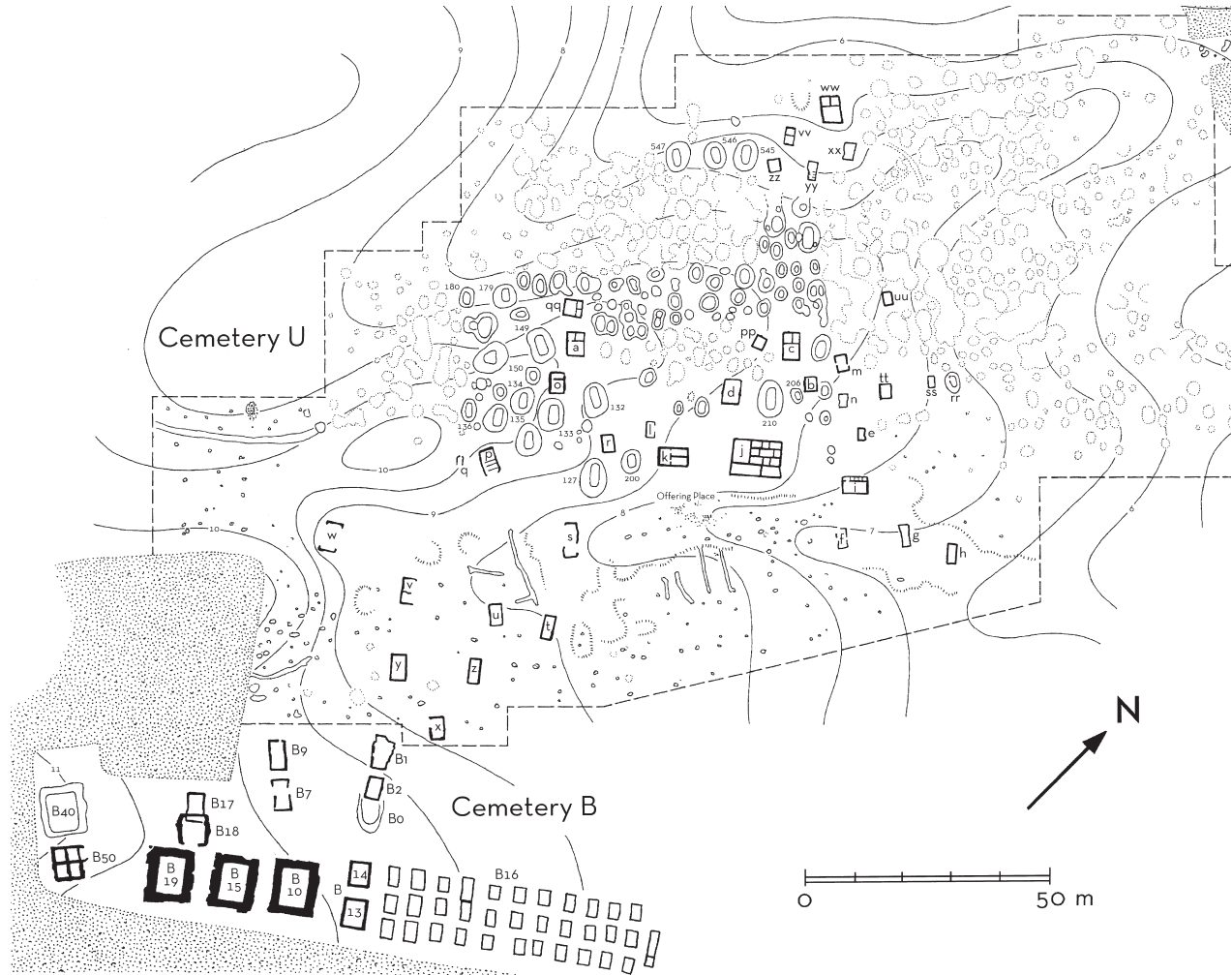
Figure 22.2. Map of Cemeteries B and U, Umm el-Qa'ab, Abydos.
Courtesy of the DAI, Orient-Abteilung, Berlin.

Huntingdon 1979, 153). The unique elite cemetery of the First Dynasty kings at Abydos can serve as a case study to explore these discontinuities and investigate negotiations of mortuary setting and practice.

ABYDOS: RE-ORIENTATING COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCES OF TIME AND SPACE

Later third millennium BC (Old Kingdom) representations of the afterlife make it clear that different forms of the hereafter were envisioned for the king, as a divinity on earth, in comparison to the rest of society. Non-royal tombs, for example, were where the dead could continue to exist in a hereafter, for which food and other material offerings were required for survival (Baines 1995, 138; see also Wengrow 2006, 266–7). Old Kingdom royal mortuary architecture, on the other hand, sought to ensure the

king's ascension to the world of the gods (Assmann 2001, 369). This gulf between king and commoner was clearly evinced at the outset of the First Dynasty in the mortuary realm, but these 'dynastic constructions of death were not simply a "logical" extension or refinement of Predynastic ones' (Wengrow 2006, 226). This schism in the developmental trajectory of Egyptian mortuary practice was arguably necessary in order to achieve a shift in the ontological status of certain deceased royal individuals. The manner in which this was accomplished, I suggest, seems to have been – at least partially – through a dramatic re-orientation of the collective experience of time and space, which was orchestrated by elite communities who sought to establish a new sense of order and, by extension, an emergent sense of alternative immortalities.

This re-orientation was played out at the end of the fourth millennium BC in the desert beyond Abydos'

alluvium, where the first rulers of the formative Egyptian state chose to construct their ceremonial heart, in the area known today as the Umm el-Qa'ab. Set against the arresting backdrop of white limestone cliffs, the Umm el-Qa'ab contains an expansive Predynastic cemetery, the graves of which extend across almost the entirety of the fourth millennium. By at least Naqada IIC this burial ground had become the exclusive preserve of elite members of society, whose social abilities allowed for their presencing in their graves through a wide range of local and exotic materials, as well as specialist craft products. Closer to the Nile, cemeteries composed of smaller tombs, with more humble and restricted grave furniture, were constructed (Stevenson 2009c). By the Naqada IIIA/B period the graves of Cemetery U had become even larger, multi-chambered structures that framed the material performances of elite culture. Included in their number is tomb U-j (Dreyer 2011), the largest and most richly endowed tomb of the so-called Dynasty 0 rulers, notable also for several hundred small ivory and bone tags bearing the earliest currently known hieroglyphs in Egypt. Although unique in many respects, this tomb was still physically situated in relation to the older graves around it. The primary arena for encountering a sense of immortality in Cemetery U, throughout the Predynastic period, was in this setting both visibly and experientially inter-generational with the juxtaposition of successive interments materially citing ancestral ties and status. Such commemorative practice is underscored by the presence of an offering area to the south of tomb U-j where more than a hundred small clay dishes, offering plates, and vessels were recovered. Several of these date to a century after tomb U-j was constructed, with some bearing the name of King Narmer, attesting to cult activity at this spot over several generations.

A short distance to the south of Cemetery U, the rulers of what became Egypt's First Dynasty chose to be buried in a cemetery constituted by tombs of a very different character. Although a continuation of Cemetery U, the royal burials of Cemetery B materialized a very different set of social relationships and they completely re-orientated the dominant temporal frame of reference. From the time of King Aha, rather than a singular burial being set directly within the wider landscape of its forebears, each ruler's tomb lay within its own complex of carefully choreographed subsidiary burials especially created to accompany the ruler to the grave. The nature of the deaths of those placed here is far from clear, although human sacrifice has become the more commonly cited

cause. Certainly the fact that from the reign of Djer subsidiary graves were created as contiguous rows, with each chamber sharing a wall with another, makes it seem unlikely that each was roofed individually, and thus king and company were probably laid out in these spaces in one massive funeral. If previous Predynastic cemeteries can be seen to have contained 'two types of dead' (cf. Boyd, this volume) – the recently deceased and ancestors – in the Umm el-Qa'ab another category of dead emerged, one that was created specifically for the occasion of the ruler's funeral.

The first of these tomb complexes, that of Aha, is unique. It comprises three discrete, large, mud-brick-lined subterranean chambers, in linear alignment with two medium-sized chambers, beyond which lie eleven rows of three individual chambers, each holding the body of a young male (twenty to thirty years of age). Finally, laid in an elongated pit at the rear, were the bodies of seven juvenile lions. The uniform demography of the human remains argues against these men having died naturally (Dreyer 1990, 67, 81–6). The complex of Aha's successor, Djer, is several orders of magnitude larger, with a central burial chamber encircled by 318 subsidiary burials (Figure 22.3). The whole complex extends across some twenty-eight hundred square metres. The placement of these retainer tombs was carefully choreographed so that the largest were beside the king's burial chamber, with progressively smaller chambers placed farther away. The funerary entourage of the next ruler, Djet, had also been attentively orchestrated, with each retainer's name painted in red ink on the southern end of his or her chamber. Above ground, crude limestone stelae with names and titles roughly executed upon them were also erected to mark the resting place of these individuals (Martin 2011; Figure 22.4). Inscribed on the landscape around the king was therefore a very rigid topography of social structure. Within both Djer and Djet's complexes there is a break in the rows of burials in the southwest corner. These align with the great cleft in the limestone cliffs beyond, often interpreted as a sacred passageway to a realm beyond (e.g., Richards 1999, 92), forming another possible example of the landscape's role in providing a focus for experiential transcendence.

The practice of retainer sacrifice diminished in scale in rulers' funerals subsequent to that of king Djer, but nevertheless, by the end of the First Dynasty the demise of eight rulers had still resulted in deaths of at least nine hundred people (Engel 2008). And this was just in the Umm el-Qa'ab. Closer to the Abydene alluvium, the associated
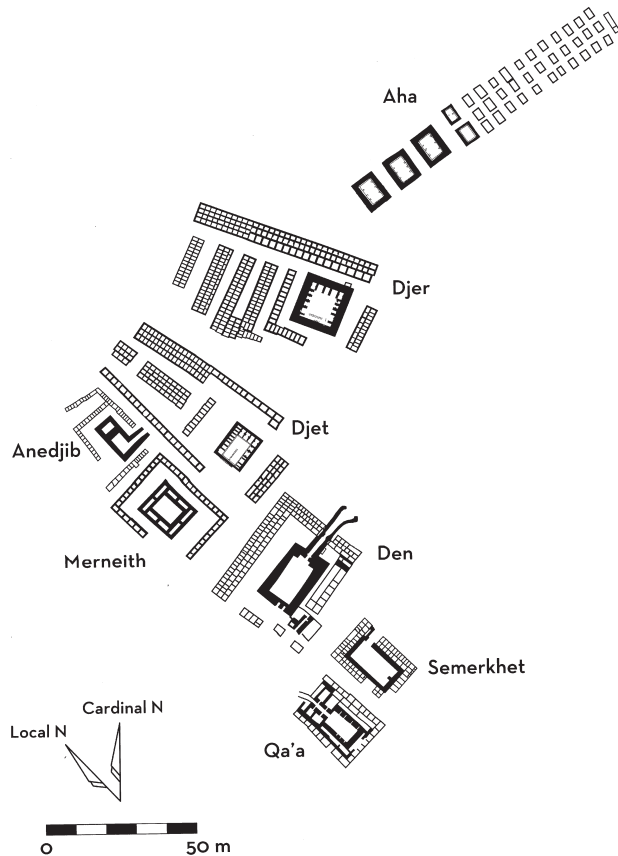
Figure 22.3. Map of the tombs of the First Dynasty rulers at Abydos.
Courtesy of the DAI, Orient-Abteilung, Berlin.

Figure 22.4. An above-ground funerary stela from around the tomb of Den.
Courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society.

royal mortuary enclosures of the First Dynasty mon-archs were similarly framed by subsidiary burials (Petrie 1925): around 511 are currently known.[3] Elsewhere in the country the top echelons of First Dynasty society also drew towards them the death of others – at Saqqara, Giza, and Abu Roash. In total, over the period of only a century, nearly two thousand people met their end with the deaths of specific individuals.

Following the lead of Susan Kus (1992), Ellen Morris (2007) has explored the sensuous and stimulating specta-cle that probably accompanied these large-scale funerals – the awe-inspiring sights, sounds, and smells that would have saturated the atmosphere of the Umm el-Qa'ab some five thousand years ago as each corpse was interred around the ruler, together with hundreds of thousands of material offerings. So massive was the scale of these proceedings that sensuous traces still haunted the Umm el-Qa'ab in the twentieth century AD when the site's most prominent excavator, Flinders Petrie, explored the area. As Petrie's workers cut through the fill of the burial

of Semerkhet he was struck by a 'scent that was so strong' as the tomb was 'filled to three feet deep with sand satu-rated with ointment' (Petrie 1900, 14). As Morris (2007, 17) has observed, later religious writings describe how the presence of a god was perceived first through experi-encing a divine scent. In this manner, sensual experience could render the imperceptible perceptible, providing a trigger for sensing the continued presence of deceased individuals.

The profoundly stimulating and dramatic character of these spectacles placed the body politic in forceful confrontation with the death of the body natural, and in so doing the body politic itself was thrust into the immediate perceptual field of surviving communities. Crucially, the effectiveness of these rituals was enhanced by the way in which they focussed emotional attention not just upon the spectacle of a ruler's death. They also centred that attention upon the loss of several hundred other named, individualized human lives, all of whom seemed to have held very specific roles and so whose demise must therefore have left gaps in the social fabric of Early Dynastic society. Thus, the passing of a single

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specific person conceivably reverberated with emotional intensity in the lives of several hundred families, thereby potentially affecting thousands of other people (contra Baines 1995, 137). Regardless then of the visibility of the actual funerals themselves (and questions remain as to the audience in the Umm el Qa'ab itself) the sovereign's death still had the potential to draw in an enormous web of social relations. The generation of a sense of immortality here truly was 'other-centred' rather than 'self-centred'. In contrast to the ritual arena of Cemetery U, the contemplative viewing of ancestors and the experience of temporal depth in Cemetery B seem to be arguably less important than the moment brought about by orchestrating the death of large numbers of individuals who had all held particular social status in life. Rather than these ceremonies contributing then to a sense of a 'continuous present' – a present that contained both the ancient past and the distant future – the sense being evoked might be better characterized as one that made a very particular present continuous. This example of *poesis*, I would suggest, brought into being a very different sense of the immortality of the ruler in comparison to the many, because the extension of social relations beyond the death of several hundred beings was inextricably entangled with the death of one single person. How this royal person was buried relative to everyone else was not simply a symbolic performance of kingship. Instead it actively accomplished a visceral sense of the transformation of social order. In the chaos caused by the death of both one and many, rupturing the flow of social life, order could be enacted, mapped out, and experienced.

CONCLUSION

The indefatigable Flinders Petrie investigated thousands of ancient Egyptian tombs in his long career. In synthesizing what such funerary evidence might mean for Egyptian conceptions of the hereafter he concluded that there 'was no possible question to his [the Egyptian's] mind as to the fact of immortality, however varied and contradictory might be his beliefs about the conditions of it' (Petrie 1924, 3). In seeking to account for the ancient Egyptians' commitment to mortuary provision, simply appealing to the minds of ancient peoples in this manner is no longer interpretively satisfactory. If, however, a sense of immortality is predicated upon the intuitive sense of the continued existence of others, then it is the embodied engagement with the material manifestations of the

dead that may be one of the ways in which experiential immortality could have been engendered and developed. This further supports Hertz' conviction that the treatment of the body can allow insight into beliefs concerning the nature of the soul, although as archaeologists we can take this further if we consider burial spaces as a form of 'extended skin' (Wengrow 2006, 166). By examining archaeologically the staging of burial rites, how the dead were incorporated into the landscape and related spatially both to each other and to surviving communities, it may be possible to begin to model the changing stimuli for ancient responses. In particular, the stimulating and dramatic character of First Dynasty royal mortuary practices provided concrete referents that allowed such ceremonies to have a coercive power and a claim to represent another reality in which one person's afterlife could become conceptually different. Rather than immanent, these rituals were conspicuously material and it is this that provides the basis for archaeologists to tackle the nature of the immaterial. Ultimately, the affective intertwining of emotion, politics, and religion that characterized the early Egyptian state is likely to have been one of the major factors that contributed to the centrality of the mortuary cult in ancient Egyptian society not just at its inception, but for the millennia to come.

NOTES

1 Jan Assmann (2001, 369) has made a distinction for ancient Egyptian beliefs between 'continuance' and 'immortality', with the former focused on surviving death in this world and somehow continuing to exist, and the latter as referring to the next world, access to which was the privilege of the gods and the king. I am using the term 'immortality' here in a generic sense to refer broadly to conceptions of human existence after death.

2 For an overview of Predynastic burial practices see Stevenson 2009a.

3 Only the enclosures of the first four rulers have so far been confirmed, those of Aha, Djer, Djet, and Merneith.

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Buddhist and Non-Buddhist Mortuary Traditions in Ancient India: Stūpas, Relics, and the Archaeological Landscape

Julia Shaw

> From its beginnings … Buddhism has been and continues to be a religion concerned with death and with the dead. Buddhist doctrines, practices, and institutions all bear some relation to this theme. Doctrinal teachings speak of death as occurring at each moment, as one causally dependent set of conditions passes away and another arises. In this sense, death is simply change, the way things are. … Since actions in this life are said to affect one's condition in the next, in a broad sense, all forms of Buddhist practice might be said to include an element of death preparation.
>
> (Cuevas & Stone 2007, 1–2)

INTRODUCTION

Buddhism and Death

The teachings of the Buddha, which recognise the omnipresence of suffering as a central pillar of the human condition, have a particular resonance for understandings of death, in that it is one of the most profound causes of suffering and despair. Buddha's Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path offer us a systematic method for the alleviation of suffering, be it psychological, spiritual, social, or environmental in nature. But how is the suffering of death dealt with by the Buddhist tradition, and how do its mortuary rituals relate to the wider history of death rites in ancient India? In particular, how does the archaeological evidence contribute to our understanding of Buddhist notions of death and the treatment of the deceased body, particularly that of the historical Buddha?

Death is central to the Buddhist perspective on life, as suggested by Cuevas and Stone's (2007, 1–2) earlier quote. The concepts of life and death are not mutually dichotomous, but rather life is seen as a preparation for death, as reflected in prescribed monastic meditations on impermanence and non-attachment to life aimed at achieving 'death without fear'. Monks' meditational practice is intimately bound up with death as a focus for death preparation, but their involvement with death rites for the laity provides an additional means of ensuring freedom from death (Cuevas & Stone 2007, 2). The preoccupation with death is further illustrated by certain, albeit marginal, meditation practices that take place in cremation grounds, with corpses providing the central focus (Schopen 1996). Archaeological evidence from Buddhist sites datable to the late centuries BC shows that *stūpas* (Figure 23.1), repositories of the Buddhist relic, were situated so as to be visually prominent within the monastic complex, and in later periods were positioned within the central courtyard of monasteries themselves (Shaw 2000, 2007). This situation may be contrasted with the orthodox Brahmanical tradition in which cremation grounds are kept away from settlement zones because of the negative and polluting associations of the physical remains of the dead. An oft-cited exception to this rule within orthodox contexts is Varanasi, which despite being known as the sacred city of the Hindus, has the main cremation ground at the very heart of its sacred and commercial centre (Parry 1994). But the evidence suggests that Varanasi did not emerge as a pan-Indian Hindu centre until at least the mid-first

Figure 23.1. Stūpa at Andher, near Sanchi (second century BC).

millennium AD with the rise of the Pāśupata ascetical tradition (Bakker 1996; Bakker & Isaacson 2004), whose own inversion of orthodox concepts of purity and pollution may in itself have been influenced by Buddhist practices. The main aim of this paper is thus to explore how and why the relic and *stūpa* cult with their direct associations with mortuary remains became so central to the spread of Buddhism. In the second half of the paper these discussions are situated within a specific landscape context, drawing on the results of the Sanchi Survey Project in central India (Shaw 2007).

BUDDHIST HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Although the precise dating of the historical Buddha is subject to ongoing debate (Bechert 1991), his life and teachings are usually placed between the sixth and fifth centuries BC. He began life as Gautam Siddhartha, prince of the Sakya clan, based around the border of the modern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and the Nepalese Terai. After witnessing a corpse on display at a funeral procession, Siddhartha renounced his royal lifestyle for the path of a mendicant. His eventual 'enlightenment', after which he became known as the Buddha, is intricately bound up with the recognition of the omnipresence of human suffering (*dukkha*), and the formulation of his own version of *dharma* based on, amongst other things, the 'eightfold path' aimed at the alleviation of *dukkha* through various modes of 'corrected' thought, attitude, and action. Although asceticism was already a recognised path within orthodox Brahmanism, the Buddha's rejection of extreme renunciation for a more humanistic and measured response to the ills of the day, whether religious, social, economic, psychological, or environmental in origin, placed the Buddha's version of *dharma* firmly within the heterodox camp.

For this early period of Buddhist history, we are dependent largely on the Pali Canon (notwithstanding problems in dating and interpretation common to oral traditions), which is purported to have been composed during the lifetime of the Buddha. In addition to providing the main framework of Buddhist theology, these texts contain incidental references to the geographical, social, and religious conditions of the time. Key urban
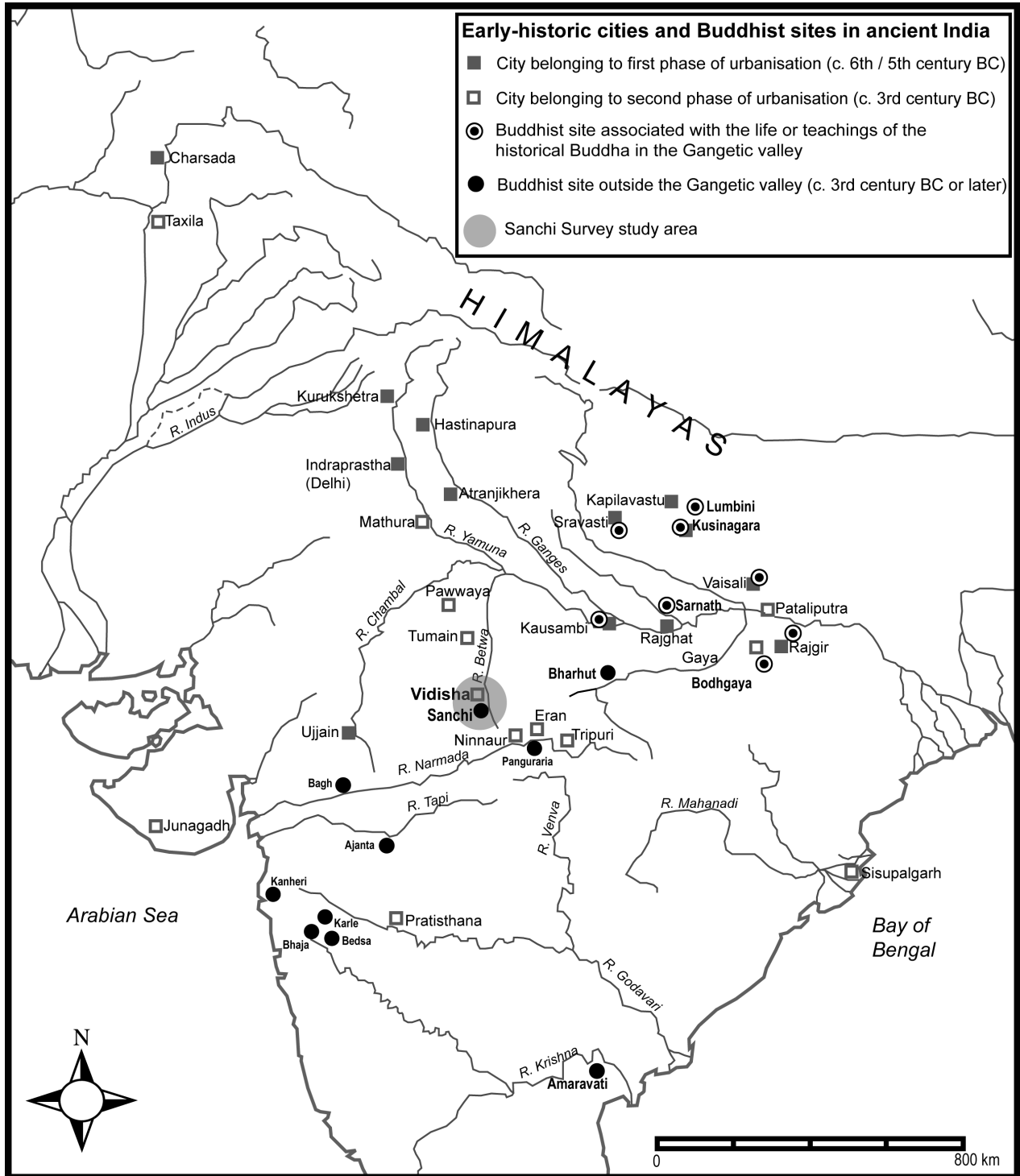
Figure 23.2. Distribution of urban centres and Buddhist sites in ancient India.

centres in the Gangetic valley such as Rajgir, Sravasti, Vaisali, and Kausambi figure as places frequented by the Buddha, or as locations for the earliest Buddhist monasteries, donated to the *saṅgha* by royalty or upstanding figures of society (Figure 23.2). Whilst monastery buildings

at the first three of these places have been identified archaeologically, they have yielded no material evidence datable with any reliability prior to the early centuries AD (Coningham 2001). The absence of archaeological correlates for earlier phases may, on the one hand,

reflect problems relating to excavation methodology in India (see especially Kennet 2004), but also point to the probable makeshift nature of monastic dwellings during the time of the Buddha, when the *saṅgha* consisted of a body of monks compelled to wander for most of the year apart from the monsoon months, when they were required to take up communal residence in temporary rain retreats (*vessana*). In time, these retreats grew into permanent monasteries, although the question of when the transition from peripatetic to sedentary monasticism took place is still debated. This transition is central to discussions regarding the 'domestication' of the *saṅgha* as it is seen as providing the basis for the formalisation of exchange networks between monastic and lay populations (Shaw 2011, 2013a).

It is not until the third century BC, that is, several centuries after the Buddha's demise, that the *saṅgha*'s activities become manifest in the archaeological record both within and beyond the Buddhist heartland. For the first time we have Buddhist *stūpas*, spherical monuments, designed to house the relics of the Buddha and other saints and monks, as well as shrines (*cetiya*) and monasteries (*vihāra*) (the earliest archaeological evidence for monastic dwellings dates to the post-Mauryan [ca. second–first centuries BC]; before this, monks were most likely living in adapted rock-shelters and simple buildings made of impermanent materials: Shaw 2007, 2011). It is during the Mauryan period, largely because of the patronage of Emperor Aśoka, that Buddhism develops from a regional sect focussed on the Gangetic valley, to a pan-Indian, and subsequently pan-Asian phenomenon (Figure 23.2). The close link between Buddhist propagation and imperial expansion is illustrated through the distribution of Aśokan edicts, many of which occur within Buddhist monastic compounds (Allchin & Norman 1985; Falk 2006). However, it is not state patronage alone that enabled Buddhism to become the first religious tradition to propel itself within a pan-Indian world view. Indeed the second, and most prolific phase of Buddhist propagation occurred during the post-Mauryan period (second–first centuries BC), with funding principally in the form of collective patronage pooled together from a cross section of society, and with royalty playing a comparatively minor role; however, sites do continue to be funded by individual wealthy patrons during the post-Mauryan period (Shaw 2011). Other factors include the spread of pan-Indian modes for visually representing the Buddhist narrative and a range of missionary functions that catered to local needs and acted as instruments of lay patronage.

These 'practical' provisions included access to medical, banking, educational, and agricultural resources (Shaw 2007, 2011, 2013a, forthcoming; Shaw & Sutcliffe 2005; Sutcliffe et al. 2011). Moreover, many Buddhist monks were also funerary practitioners, ritual experts in the 'business' of death. Schopen (1996) refers to various historical instances in China, for example, of monasteries being disbanded, only to be reinstated after the rapid realisation of the consequent absence of a professional community for dealing with the dead. The other closely related factor, which forms the focus of this paper, was the spread of the *stūpa* and relic cult, whereby, it has been suggested, each relic came to be envisaged as a part of a larger Buddha-body or corpse that upheld the Buddhist world as a whole (Walters 2002). It would not be an overstatement to say that the establishment of Buddhism across South Asia (and later Asia as a whole) was a remarkable religious and cultural feat. This paper will concentrate on the role that the *stūpa* and relic cult played in the formation of a pan-Buddhist geography and how it related to wider conceptions (both orthodox and heterodox) of death, and mortuary traditions in ancient India.

THE BUDDHA'S DEATH

The starting point for assessing the treatment of the dead within Buddhism is provided by Buddha's own death and funeral. Although the cause of his death was rather mundane (although not without its ambiguities) – prolonged dysentery followed by a final meal (a dish called *Sūkara maddava* whose precise identity is still contested, with interpretations ranging from pork to an 'entheogenic' fungus with possible links to Pūtika that figures in the late and post-Vedic Brahmanical literature as a substitute for the magical Soma of the Vedas, which seems to have aggravated further his existing condition and led ultimately to his death (*Digha Nikāya* 16: 4: 14–20; Rhys Davids 1910, 138–9; Wasson 1982) – the *process* of his death was by no means ordinary. He had for several months predicted the precise time and place of his death, and by finally reaching *nirvāṇa*, the Buddha escaped the endless cycle of birth and rebirth (*saṁsāra*) by which ordinary folk are bound. As argued by Strong (2007), the Buddha's death is not a *transition* from the realm of the living to the realm of the dead in the recognised anthropological sense (Van Gennep 1960), but rather a *transcendence* of the very cycle of life and death. The Buddha's attainment of *nirvāṇa* represents his conquest over desire and

attachment, the principal causes of suffering, but it also represents the conquest of death itself (Cuevas & Stone 2007, 2). In later, Mahayana, Buddhism, the concept of the Bodhisattva is introduced in order to deal with the theological problem caused by the Buddha's departure from this world. Bodhisattvas, unlike the Buddha, stay in this world in order to help humans in their quest to alleviate suffering. By contrast, the Buddha, having reached *nirvāṇa*, has left this world for good. However, we are presented with the fundamental contradiction that despite his apparent departure, the Buddha continues to be present in some way through his relics. This issue, which has continued to vex Buddhist theologians of the Theravada tradition, will be taken up in more detail later on, although it is important to note that problems with the definition of the term Theravada are central to recent Buddhist scholarship (Gethin 2012).

According to textual sources, after the Buddha's death, his cremated remains were distributed amongst eight polities of the Gangetic valley region, with each share deposited in its own *stūpa*. Several centuries later, the Mauryan emperor Aśoka is attributed with having had these remains disinterred and redistributed in eighty-four thousand newly built *stūpas*. Although there have been claims to the contrary, none of the original pre-Aśokan *stūpas* have been identified with any certainty, again, most probably because they were simple earthen mounds that either did not survive or were elaborated upon in later years; since the earliest *stūpa* excavation projects during the nineteenth century were aimed at the retrieval of relics, this is not a question that is easy to address from the available data. The first clearly datable *stūpas* belong to the Mauryan period, although still in limited numbers, and in most cases their original appearance has been obscured by embellishment during the post-Mauryan period (second–first centuries BC). This later period is when Buddhism truly takes root in the landscape, with *stūpas* appearing across the length and breadth of the Indian subcontinent in the kind of numbers suggested by the Aśokan legend.

With very few exceptions, the overwhelming majority of relic deposits are not those of the Buddha, but of saints, senior monks, and in some cases ordinary people. We know this because many reliquaries are inscribed with the name(s) of the person(s) whose relics they contain, some of whom can be related to a particular sect, time, and place (Willis 2000). The only evidence that has any valid claim for being associated with the relics of the Buddha himself is the Shinkot reliquary from Afghanistan, which

bears two similarly worded inscriptions referring to the relics of the 'blessed Sakyamuni which are endowed with life (*prāṇa*)'. Issued during the reign of the Indo-Greek king Menander (second century BC), it is one of the earliest known inscribed objects after Aśoka. The inscriptions are important for two reasons: they are the earliest datable references to the relics of the Buddha; and they support Schopen's (1991, 1997a) idea, discussed later, that relics were believed to contain the 'life-force' of the Buddha.

However, the vast majority of *stūpas* have either yielded no relic deposit or reliquary or else have no associated inscription. This is not to suggest that there were no other Buddha relic *stūpas*, just that we have not found any others 'labelled' as such. However, when we move away from looking at *stūpas* as isolated monuments to considering their placing in the wider landscape, one can make additional inferences about the identity of relic deposits. This is something I shall take up for discussion later in relation to the distribution of *stūpas* within the Sanchi Survey Project study area in central India (Shaw 2000, 2007). Further, at any one site there is usually a hierarchy of *stūpas* whereby the central *stūpa* acts as a magnet for smaller *stūpas*. In some cases the latter have been shown to contain actual burials rather than relic deposits. Moreover it has been argued that some of these smaller *stūpas* contained the mortuary remains of ordinary people, whether monks or laity, and placed in close proximity to revered *stūpas* through a form of 'burial ad sanctos', similar to that known in medieval Christian contexts (Schopen 1994a, 1997a).

STŪPA IN THE TEXTUAL SOURCES

The *stūpa* has received a significant amount of scholarly attention, with its architectural, artistic, and symbolic aspects having been discussed in detail (Hawkes & Shimada 2009; Dallapiccola 1980). A variety of associated inscriptions, both donative and connected with reliquaries, have shed important light on the history of patronage and the role of particular schools of monks in the propagation of Buddhism (Singh 1996; Willis 2000). Gregory Schopen (1997a–d) and Kevin Trainor (1997) have spearheaded a growing body of scholarship on the nature of the relics deposited in *stūpas* and the rituals that surrounded them. Their work has helped to dispel the idea, to some extent a product of Protestant-influenced historical analysis as well as conservative elements within the 'Theravada' tradition itself, that the veneration of

relics was the exclusive concern of the lay followers of Buddhism. Both scholars, focussing largely on textual sources of Buddhist scholarship, have broken ground by integrating archaeological evidence into their arguments. Their approach is not without problems, however, as the general lack of coordination between active archaeological research and text-based analysis, together with the uncritical use of nineteenth century archaeological reports has meant that many received models of Buddhist history have gone unchallenged. In recent years several landscape archaeology projects have enabled Schopen and Trainor's hypotheses to be assessed on the ground. These include the Sanchi Survey Project in Madhya Pradesh (Shaw 2007), which forms the focus of the second half of this paper, and Lars Fogelin's (2004, 2006) work at Thotlakonda in Andhra Pradesh.

So, where did the idea of the Buddhist *stūpa* originate? This is a question that has long interested text-based scholars of Buddhism. Lance Cousins (2003) has noted that there are very few occurrences of the Pali term *thūpa* in the Pali Canon, and then mostly in the context of its most literal meaning, 'something that is piled up'. Its earliest usage in this sense occurs in India's oldest Brahmanical text, the *Ṛg Veda* (1.24, and 7.21), in which the Sanskrit term *stūpa* is used simply to describe a top-knot of hair, the upper part of the head, or the crest, top, summit.

The canonical warrant for the building of *stūpas* as repositories of the Buddhist relic is provided by the *Mahāparinibbāṇa sutta* (v. 12), the Pali version of which deals with Ānanda's questioning of Buddha during his final weeks of life. Buddha explains that after his demise, his corpse should be treated like that of a Cakravartin ('World Emperor'). There then follows the earliest explicit reference to *stūpa* worship (however, there are problems with the dating of this passage): 'Those who offer a garland. … that will be to their benefit'. Two closely related examples occur in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (III.62; I.77), thought to have been composed during the Buddha's lifetime: the first describes the death of a queen who is about to be preserved in oil in a metal barrel by her inconsolable husband, who is then advised to cremate her instead and to have her ashes placed in a *thūpa*; and the second states that there are two categories of people worthy of being placed in a *thūpa* (*thūpārahā*): Buddha and a Cakravartin (Cousins 2003). On the basis of these examples, it appears that the particular way in which the Buddha's body was treated after death was inspired by royal mortuary rites, although it should be noted that the term Cakravartin in its earliest usage had close Buddhist, rather than Brahmanical associations. To date, none of these royal *stūpas* has been identified archaeologically, but the fact that Jain *stūpas* are known (Flügel 2010), together with an inscription at Nigali Sagar in the Nepali terai that describes a *stūpa* of the past Buddha Kanakamuni, demonstrates that not all *stūpas* should be identified automatically with Buddha Sakyamuni. Further, not all Buddhist cremations were interred in reliquaries and *stūpas*. There are textual references to simple urn burials, as well as charnel grounds, as illustrated by later Tibetan examples of bones of the dead being left out in the open (Crosby 2003; Crosby & Skilton 1998, note 8.30).

BRAHMANICAL MORTUARY TRADITIONS

Although the Buddhist practice of preserving funerary remains is usually viewed in opposition to the orthodox Brahmanical practice of disposing of ashes in a river, ideally the Ganges, references to funerary monuments also figure in early Brahmanical texts (Tiwari 1979; Pant 1985; Sayers 2006). For example, the *Vedas* describe four stages in the disposal of the dead: i) cremation, ii) collection and interment underground of the charred bones in an urn, iii) expiatory rites, and iv) construction of an overground monument known as *citi*, although this final stage appears to be optional (Bakker 2007, 15). In the later *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (13.8.1–4), we find instructions for the erection of burial mounds (*śmāśana*), which, it has been suggested, may correspond to megalithic remains in southern Uttar Pradesh (Duncan 1808; Singh 1970). The latter often contain urn burials, which may well be prototypes of the Buddhist reliquary, as discussed later. Burial or cremation grounds (*śmāśana*) in general are also known, such as the late-centuries-BC example excavated by Garde (1940, 16) at Ujjain (Bakker 2007, 34), but usually any overground monument, if there ever was one, is missing. There have been various claims over the years for the archaeological identification of Vedic burial mounds, most notably at Lauriya Nandangarh, Bihar (Singh 1970, 133; Bloch 1909), but subsequent excavations have in most cases revealed these to be Buddhist *stūpas*.

The main point is that there is a general paucity of archaeological correlates for Brahmanical mortuary monuments in any period. It appears that by the mid–first millennium BC, that is, the time of the historical Buddha, the monumentalisation of the dead within the Brahmanical tradition was being phased out and replaced largely by the practice, common today, of placing ashes in

sacred rivers (*tīrtha*). As stressed by Bakker (2007, 30), 'the Buddhist cult of the *stūpa* developed out of more general south-Asian practices of mortuary ritual and disposal of the dead, and the [later] Brahmanical or Hindu tradition evolved from the same breeding ground.' The construction of mortuary monuments was thus not restricted to heterodox traditions, but the evidence suggests that such practices remained on the 'edges of orthodoxy' (Bakker 2007, 30).

The general repugnance felt towards groups who continued to commemorate the physical remains of the dead is portrayed in an oft-cited passage from the *Mahābhārata* (3.188), whose composition is generally dated to the first or second century BC, if not later. This passage equates the end of the Kali Yuga (the current era) with the replacement of temples (*devakula*) by charnel-houses (*eḍūkas*) (Bakker 2007, 15), more on which later. It appears therefore that the kinds of mortuary traditions described in the earlier *Vedas* and *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* were not continued in Classical Hinduism of north India (although in the south there is quite a different picture, as represented by the southern megalithic tradition). The *Mahābhārata* makes no reference to the construction of monuments over the dead apart from the earlier quoted passage, which is presumably a critique of heterodox customs, and the indication is that by the time the epic was completed, earlier practices of inhumation and exposure had already been replaced by the practice of disposing of bodily remains in sacred rivers.

However, in later periods, although Brahmanical mortuary practice did not generally revolve around funerary monuments, the lack of commemoration of bodily 'continuity' after death is not entirely predictable, and Bakker (2007) warns against overstressing the distinction between orthodox and heterodox funerary customs. For example, we know that certain categories of people such as pregnant women, ascetics, or children continued to be buried according to the older tradition. Further, the Brahmanical *piṇḍa* ritual, which takes place after cremation, involves small balls containing, amongst other things, ash preserved from the cremation pyre, being fed to the ancestors by relatives of the deceased. Burials (*samādhis*) of Brahmanical ascetics (*saṃnyāsins*) or those who have committed heroic deeds (*bīr babas*) are common features of the north Indian landscape (Coccari 1989), although these usually date to historical periods, the former most probably developing under the influence of Islam from the thirteenth century onwards (Bakker 2007, 35, note 79).

Despite these exceptions to the rule, however, by the mid-first millennium AD, the majority of the limited known examples of Brahmanical mortuary monuments are 'cenotaphs' or commemorative temples such as the Vākāṭaka-era Kevala Narasiṃha temple in Ramtek or the Gupta temple at Bhitari, whose inscriptions indicate that their construction was aimed at the transference of 'merit' to a particular deceased person rather than the housing of their physical remains (Bakker 2007, 42). Bakker (2007) lists four other types of mortuary tradition within the Brahmanical world, drawing on both literary and archaeological evidence: i) statue galleries (*pratimāgṛha*) containing images or effigies of the deceased; ii) memorial stones, particularly hero stones, especially common in the Deccan, and commemorating the place of a heroic death; iii) funerary structures (*aiḍūka*), which do not contain ashes or bodily remains, as described in the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (3.84.1015)[1], possible archaeological correlates of which include structures at Ahicchatra and Mansar, though their *aiḍūka* identification remains unconfirmed and neither example is older than the mid-first millennium AD (Bakker 2007); and, finally, iv) burial mounds or mortuary monuments that contain ashes or bones of the deceased, referred to in the Sanskrit literature as *eḍūka*, the best example being the *Mahābhārata* verse quoted earlier, which juxtaposes them with temples (*devakula*). The *eḍūka* as used therein refers not only to *stūpas*, but to any pan-Indian tradition 'that involved the erection of monuments over mortuary remains' and almost always has a disparaging connotation (Bakker 2007, 33, citing Allchin 1957, 1).

The term *eḍūka* appears to be related to the Dravidian *elūka*, whose etymology may be derived from the Tamil for 'burial ground' (Bakker 2007, 14; also Allchin 1957, 3). It has been suggested that the latter may refer to the charnel houses or megaliths of south India (Allchin 1957; Cousins 2003). Unfortunately little is known about the religious or social context in which the megaliths of south India were built, but they demonstrate that orthodox Brahmanical notions of the polluting influence of death were not overarching or universally applicable in the landscape. What is clear, however, is that 'the author of the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* calqued his Hindu *aiḍūka* on a Buddhist example [but with the mortuary remains of the latter removed], but by doing this he elaborated on what must have been a monumental tradition that was common to all Indian religions, most pronounced within Buddhism, less in Jainism and inconspicuous in the Hindu mainstream' (Bakker 2007, 40; see also Roth 1980).

An interesting point here, however, is that in the *Mahābhārata* verse mentioned, the *eḍūka* is presented in opposition not to a less polluting mode for disposing of the dead, but to *devakula*, which in its literal sense means 'family seat of god' (Bakker 2007). Although the term and several of its variants occur in texts and inscriptions in the sense of 'temple', that is, with the assumption that it contains images of gods (Olivelle 2009),[2] one of the earliest known occurrences of the term is in some inscribed images of Kusana rulers at Māṭ, near Mathura. Together with a similar site at Nāṇeghāṭ in the Deccan it conforms with Bakker's first category ('statue gallery') of later Brahmanical funerary monuments listed earlier. However, unlike the latter site, which is described in the associated inscription as *pratimāgṛha* (literally 'image hall'), the use of the term *devakula* at Māṭ has caused considerable confusion, the suggestion being that the royal images at Māṭ were actually being worshipped as gods (Bakker 2007, 23; see also Rosenfield 1993, 202). Others have argued that it was simply a royal family shrine for the worship of the family's tutelary gods (Fussman 1989, 199). Whichever the case it is interesting that a distinction is being made by the authors of the *Mahābharata* verse between a monument containing images, whether of actual gods, or in commemoration of deceased mortals with a god-like status, and a monument containing physical human remains, the latter being seen as beyond the orthodox pale. All the more interesting when we consider evidence, discussed later, that *stūpas were* themselves considered by Buddhists as actual images, and that *stūpa* worship was thus akin to actual image worship of a type that does not become fully manifest in the Hindu tradition until the early- to mid-first millennium AD with the development of temple and image worship (*pūjā*; Willis 2009).

Some discussion of Bakker's second category, memorial stones, is also fitting here as it provides an example of how both Brahmanical and Buddhist mortuary traditions draw on a common pool of traditions although in ways that reflect their differing attitudes towards dead bodies. For example, the custom of erecting stone pillars (*yaṣṭi*) in memory of the deceased is unknown in the Vedic texts but appears to have been incorporated from the ancient Indian pillar cult into both Brahmanical and Buddhist traditions. The key evidence is provided by an early-centuries-AD copper-plate inscription from a *stūpa* at Sui vihar, Bahawalpur, Pakistan. The inscription refers to the erection of a funerary *yaṭhi* and the deposition of a deceased monk's ashes at its summit, thus transforming it into an object of relic worship. Bakker (2007, 42–3) suggests that this pillar was later enclosed within a brick column whose upper portion protrudes from the summit of the surviving *stūpa*. The latter dates to a later period and appears to have incorporated the brick shaft as an axial element, a commonly found feature of early *stūpa* architecture[3]. According to Bakker the Sui Vihar monument presents an important clue to the evolution of the *stūpa* and its relationship to Indian funerary traditions that lack textual sanction: 'The *yaṣṭi*, combined with bones or ashes and appropriating, as it would seem, the Vedic idea of the burial mound (*citi*), thus became the *stūpa* of the heterodox traditions; without mortuary deposits it evolved into the memorial stones of Indian folk religion. The former development is earlier than the latter' (Bakker 2007, 42–3).

STŪPAS AND PROTO-HISTORICAL BURIAL SITES

It is clear from the preceding discussion that the limited archaeological correlates available for the funerary types listed by Bakker (2007) are all datable to periods later than the earliest Buddhist *stūpas*, and to some degree all appear to be influenced by heterodox traditions. When it comes to tracing the origins of the Buddhist *stūpa* during earlier periods we are similarly hampered by a paucity of archaeological correlates for the mortuary structures described in the Vedic texts. We have a different situation in the south, where there is a megalithic mortuary tradition from at least the mid-first millennium BC. The frequency with which Buddhist *stūpas* are situated on sites already occupied by megalithic burials has been commented upon for some time. For example, early excavations at Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh revealed urn burials adjacent to and beneath the smaller *stūpa* there (Rea 1912). Similar patterns have been noted at Buddhist sites throughout south India, whilst in north India observations have been made regarding the possible pre-Buddhist mortuary associations of key sites such as Kusinara (Cunningham 1871, 79) and Lumbini (Rijal 1977, 30; Schopen 1996, 218), although there are serious ambiguities in the original reports, and question marks over the excavation techniques and the relative chronology of supposed pre-Buddhist and 'Buddhist' phases at these sites. The morphological similarities between *stūpas* and some megalithic structures have also been remarked upon. For example, the main *stūpa* at Vaddamanu, ten kilometres east of Amaravati, was constructed from massive granite boulders, reminiscent

of a 'megalithic cairn circle' (Schopen 1997b, 194, note 6), while Raymond Allchin (1957, 1–4) comments that the Buddhist relic chambers inside *stūpas* 'were no more than stone cists and were often identical to the cists of the southern graves' (see also Piggott 1943; Schopen 1996; Bakker 2007). A similar level of continuity between proto-historical burial traditions and *stūpas* has been noted in Burma (Stargardt 1990, 346).

Whilst Rea (1912) had argued that incoming monastic communities had probably been unaware of the site's prior mortuary significance, Schopen's (1996, 237) position is that the overlap between *stūpas* and earlier burial remains is too consistent to be coincidental, and that the *saṅgha* purposefully sought out places with previous funerary associations, drawing largely on the Buddhist practice of meditating on the corpse as a symbol of the impermanence of life (and also as an instructive tool in the development of Buddhist medicinal knowledge: Zysk 1996; Shaw forthcoming). Further, the *saṅgha* chose these places so as to tap into a pre-existing sacred order, and to promote themselves as 'guardians of the native dead' as a means of legitimising their presence. These points are taken up later on in relation to the landscape patterns in the Sanchi Survey Project. The spatial and morphological patterns observed in the south may be instructive as far as assessing how and where Buddhism found a place for itself in the ritual as well as economic landscape into which it spread, although Schopen (1996) does not comment on the implications of these patterns beyond a strictly ritual sphere, and thus overlooks the possibility that the *saṅgha* was also relegated to periphery zones of the social and economic landscape. Some caution is also required when it comes to inferring historical linkages between the two funerary traditions: the fact that the *stūpa* grows out of northern, rather than southern Indian traditions, means that it is less likely to show a unilinear progression from local burial forms in the south.

THE RELIC CULT AND THE PRESENCE OF THE BUDDHA

As shown by the foregoing discussion there are several morphological parallels between the Buddhist *stūpa* and funerary monuments described in the *Vedas* and later Brahmanical literature, although archaeological correlates for the latter are few and far between. Furthermore, by the time of the historical Buddha it seems that cremation of the dead had become the norm within Brahmanical circles. However, although cremation as the first step in the

treatment of the dead was a common factor in both orthodox and heterodox circles, it is important to acknowledge that the basic rationale behind cremation differed enormously between the two traditions. As argued by Strong (2007, 44), Brahmanical cremation is primarily a 'sacrificial rite intended to ensure rebirth and generally results in the eradication of all bodily remains'. As mentioned earlier, one of the categories of persons that are exempt from such cremation is the Brahmanical renunciate (*saṃnyāsin*), largely because he has already performed his own funerary ritual on becoming an ascetic in recognition of his abandonment of his former family and social responsibilities. Corpses of *saṃnyāsins* are thus buried whole or left to float down the river (Parry 1994, 184). By contrast, the fact that the corpse of the Buddha, himself a renunciate, was cremated rather than buried not only reflects his stated wish to have his body treated like that of a Cakravartin, but is also an outward statement of his rejection of extreme forms of Brahmanical asceticism, advocating as he did the Middle Path between renunciation and social integration.

Moreover, what really sets the Buddhist use of cremation apart from its Brahmanical counterpart is that its primary function is not the *disposal* of bodily remains but rather the *creation* of relics. According to Buddhist tradition, relics are not 'just' ashes, but transformative substances akin to jewels or gemstones (Strong 2007, 45). Before being deposited in a *stūpa*, these substances are placed inside a reliquary, often together with other 'relics of use' such as fragments of cloth, coins, or precious stones. The reliquary itself is usually made of stone or ceramic, following forms that were already well known from contemporary pottery vessels (Willis 2000). However whilst the practice of placing funerary ashes in a pot may represent a continuation of simple urn burials, with or without an above-ground structure, the Buddhist relic cult represents a novel departure from older Indian traditions in a number of ways: first, the practice of dividing and distributing relics between more than one monument, thus spreading their perceived influence over extended geographical space; and, secondly, in the idea that relics represent somehow the 'essence' or 'life-force' of the deceased person. It has been suggested that such ideas may have originated from outside India, with a possible source being older Hellenistic and Near Eastern practices of venerating the remains of royalty, as illustrated by the Macedonian dispute over the treatment of Alexander the Great's bodily remains and the idea that these remains would be beneficial to the areas in which they were kept (Strong 2007, 32–3, citing Przyluski 1927 and Nilakanta Sastri 1940).

However, there are also Indian parallels: for example, similarities have been noted between the division of the Buddha's relics during the Mauryan period and the Brahmanical *navaśraddhā* ritual, which takes place over ten days after death and during which ten rice balls (*piṇḍa*) are created in order to create a new body for the deceased, and to prevent him from becoming a 'ghost' (*preta*). Strong (2007, 4) points to the fact that in some Gandhara friezes depicting the division of the Buddha's relics, the latter are shaped like balls of rice, as though being made into a 'new body' for the Buddha, as in the Brahmanical *navaśraddhā* rite. Further, Walters (2002) argues that relics constituted an ever-expanding Buddha corpse that spreads out over the Buddhist world as the *saṅgha* and *dharma* moved into new areas, an idea which is discussed in more detail in relation to the Sanchi Survey Project landscape patterns.

Precisely what role *stūpa* and relic worship played in early Buddhist monasticism, however, remains a rather controversial issue. Notwithstanding recent revisionist theories regarding the historicity of the 'Theravada' tradition (Gethin 2012), the canonical view is that relic worship had no legitimate place in monastic life. Ritual and devotion are viewed as belonging to the realm of the laity whilst meditation was the exclusive domain of monks: meditation leads to enlightenment irrespective of belief, and as such devotion is useless. Relic worship contradicts Buddhist ideals of non-attachment, the canonical position being that because Buddha reached *nirvāṇa* he is no longer here, and so he cannot continue to exist through his bodily relics (Crosby 2005). This view contrasts with later Mahayana Buddhism with its array of ever-present Buddhas, hence the canonical position that relic worship represents a late deterioration of 'true' Buddhist values. Some later texts describe the relic as a manifestation of Buddha's 'essence', and the Theravadin explanation for this is that relics do not contain the Buddha in a real sense, but rather are powerful because of Buddha's intention during his lifetime. Just as Buddha lives on through his teaching (*dharma*), so too relics have power (often miraculous) because he intended it that way: Buddha preached that the *dharma* should guide the monastic community after his death, within the context of the *triratna* ('the triple gem'): Buddha, *dharma*, and *saṅgha*. The latter two terms are represented by the Canon and monks, respectively, but according to some scholars, the apparent 'absence' of Buddha in art-historical terms prior to the early centuries AD can be explained by the mechanism of the relic cult (Trainor 1996). Prior to the appearance of anthropomorphic images of the Buddha during the early centuries AD, the *stūpa* acts as the first 'image' for Buddhist worship. With a few exceptions (mainly relating to the *yakṣa* and *nāga* traditions) there appears to be a general lack of anthropomorphic representations of people and gods during this period, and for Buddhists the *stūpa* appears to fill this gap (later on, the relic contained within the *stūpa* is often replaced by the word of the Buddha in the form of inscribed tablets, or by actual images of the Buddha, the inference being that these non-bodily objects hold a similar power to that of their relic prototypes). In theological terms, thus, the Buddha may be gone, but his relics continue to represent his 'body', without which the *śāsana* (collective Buddhist teachings) could not spread. An oft quoted example (Trainor 1997, 173–4) is the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka by Aśoka's son, Mahinda, who was quick to recognise that without any accompanying relics his mission could never succeed: relics literally are the animate propellants for the spread of the Buddhist *dharma*, just as the relic altar provides the sanctifying force for the medieval Christian church.

Schopen (1991) argues that even in the earliest texts, the Buddha was seen as being 'present' in *stūpas*, and that references to *stūpa* worship were edited out of the Pali *Vinaya* because of the problematic position of devotion within Theravada scholarship. Since passages dealing with *stūpa*-ritual are scattered throughout later renditions of the *Vinaya*, it is unlikely that all such references could have been lost accidentally from the Pali version. Further, Schopen (1997c) argues that the traditional view that the relic cult was reserved for the laity is based on a mistranslation of the latter part of the conversation between Buddha and Ānanda in the *Mahāparinibbāṇa sutta* (v. 10–12), and in particular a misinterpretation of the term *śārīra-pūjā*. Buddha instructs Ānanda that his body is to be treated in the same way as the body (*śārīra*) of a Cakravartin, and that this is what the 'wise men … among the nobles, among the brahmins, among the heads of houses' are to do, and with which Ānanda should not be too concerned. He goes on to describe how the body of a Cakravartin is cremated and placed in a *stūpa* at a crossroads. Only after the funeral does the word *śārīra* come to be used in the plural (*śārīre*). Thus *śārīra pūjā* refers to the funerary rite alone, and specifically to the preparation of the body prior to the cremation and the construction of the *stūpa*. According to Schopen, the Buddha was simply advising Ānanda not to be overly concerned with the anointment of his dead body, rather than taking a

negative stance on monks' involvement in relic worship (*śañre*). But as stressed by Strong (2007, 50), the suggestion that *śañra-pūjā* may have had nothing to do with relics may have been taken too far; 'the *śañra-pūjā* may not be a "cult of relics", but it is certainly possible to think of it as a "cult productive and predictive of relics"', recognising as discussed earlier that cremation in the Buddhist context was aimed primarily at the production of relics.

Schopen (1997c) draws on two sets of material evidence to support his view based on his reading of the *Mahāparinibbāṇa sutta* verse that monks and nuns were participating actively in *stūpa* and relic worship from early periods: a) post-Mauryan inscriptions recording donations of *stūpa* components by actual members of the *saṅgha* and b) evidence for a 'cult of the monastic dead' whereby junior monks' *stūpas* were being placed in close proximity to revered *stūpas* in order to maximise spiritual benefit in a manner similar to burial *ad sanctos* traditions in medieval Christian contexts. For the latter, he draws largely on nineteenth century archaeological reports of *stūpa* deposits containing 'large bones' rather than relics. The landscape data from the Sanchi Survey Project discussed below shed further light on this matter.

CASE STUDY: SANCHI SURVEY PROJECT

The Sanchi area of Madhya Pradesh, central India, occupies a key place in the archaeology of Buddhism (Figure 23.2). Sanchi itself is one of India's best preserved and most studied Buddhist sites, with a continuous constructional sequence from the third century BC to the twelfth century AD (Marshall et al. 1940). While the earliest monuments at Sanchi were connected with the patronage of the Mauryan emperor Aśoka during the third century BC, the most prolific construction took place during the ensuing two centuries. Donative inscriptions show that construction work during this period was funded not by state patronage but by extensive programmes of collective patronage pooled together from powerful families and guilds. The reliquary inscriptions from Sanchi *Stūpa* 2 and four neighbouring *stūpa* sites (Cunningham 1854) provide a useful starting point for assessing how these sites and the surrounding landscape were perceived in ancient times (Willis 2000; Shaw 2000, 2007, 2009, 2011). These inscriptions indicate that five *stūpa* sites were linked to a group of teachers known as the Hemavatas led by a monk named Gotiputa. The Hemavatas were one of the missions sent out to parts of Asia under Aśoka, in this case to the Himalayan region, and for some reason their relics

were taken to central India during the second century BC; they took over the older sites of Sanchi and Satdhara and established new centres at Sonari, Morel Khurd, and Andher. The reliquaries show that these sites were linked and were established (or renovated in the case of Sanchi and Satdhara) in a single campaign. Although no relics have ever been retrieved from the central *stūpa* at either Sanchi or Satdhara, there are strong suggestions that originally they contained, and perhaps still do, the relics of the Buddha himself. This may be inferred from the fact that at both sites, the *stūpa* containing the relics of Sāriputa and Mahāmogalāna, the Buddha's chief disciples, is situated beside the central *stūpa*. This arrangement conforms to rules in the *Vinaya* (*Mahāparinibbāṇa sutta v.* 95.2.7), which stipulate that a monk's *stūpa* should be positioned according to his rank in life and, more specifically, that the *stūpas* of Sāriputa and Mahāmogalāna should be situated accordingly beside that of the Buddha (Roth 1980, 184–5; Willis 2000; Shaw 2000, 30).

The Sanchi Survey Project (henceforth SSP) was initiated in 1998 in order to assess the factors behind the spread of Buddhism to central India from its base in the Gangetic valley (Shaw 2007). Survey work over an area of 750 square kilometres resulted in the documentation of thirty-five Buddhist sites, together with numerous habitational settlements, ancient water resource structures, and temple and sculpture fragments from Brahmanical, Jain, Buddhist, and other Indic traditions (Figure 23.3). In the following I will focus on the distribution of *stūpas*, arguing that maximising their visual presence was a major influencing factor in the positioning of monastic complexes, not only as a proselytising mechanism, but also as a means of projecting and protecting the relic as the sacred 'life-force' of the personage which they were built to house.

STŪPA TYPOLOGIES

Stūpas in the SSP area were divided into four main morphological and chronological groups: 1) Mauryan (Phase I), as represented by the brick core of *Stūpa* 1, and closely paralleled by *Stūpa* 1 at Satdhara (Agrawal 1997; Shaw 2007, 2009); 2) post-Mauryan (Phase II), as represented by *Stūpas* 2 and 3, and similar examples at Sonari, Satdhara, Morel khurd, and Andher (Figure 23.1): these *stūpas*, often enclosed by a carved balustrade, consist of a core of heavy stone blocks interspersed with chippings and faced with a single course of dressed stone blocks (Marshall et al. 1940, 41); 3) somewhat smaller *stūpas* of the Gupta (phase
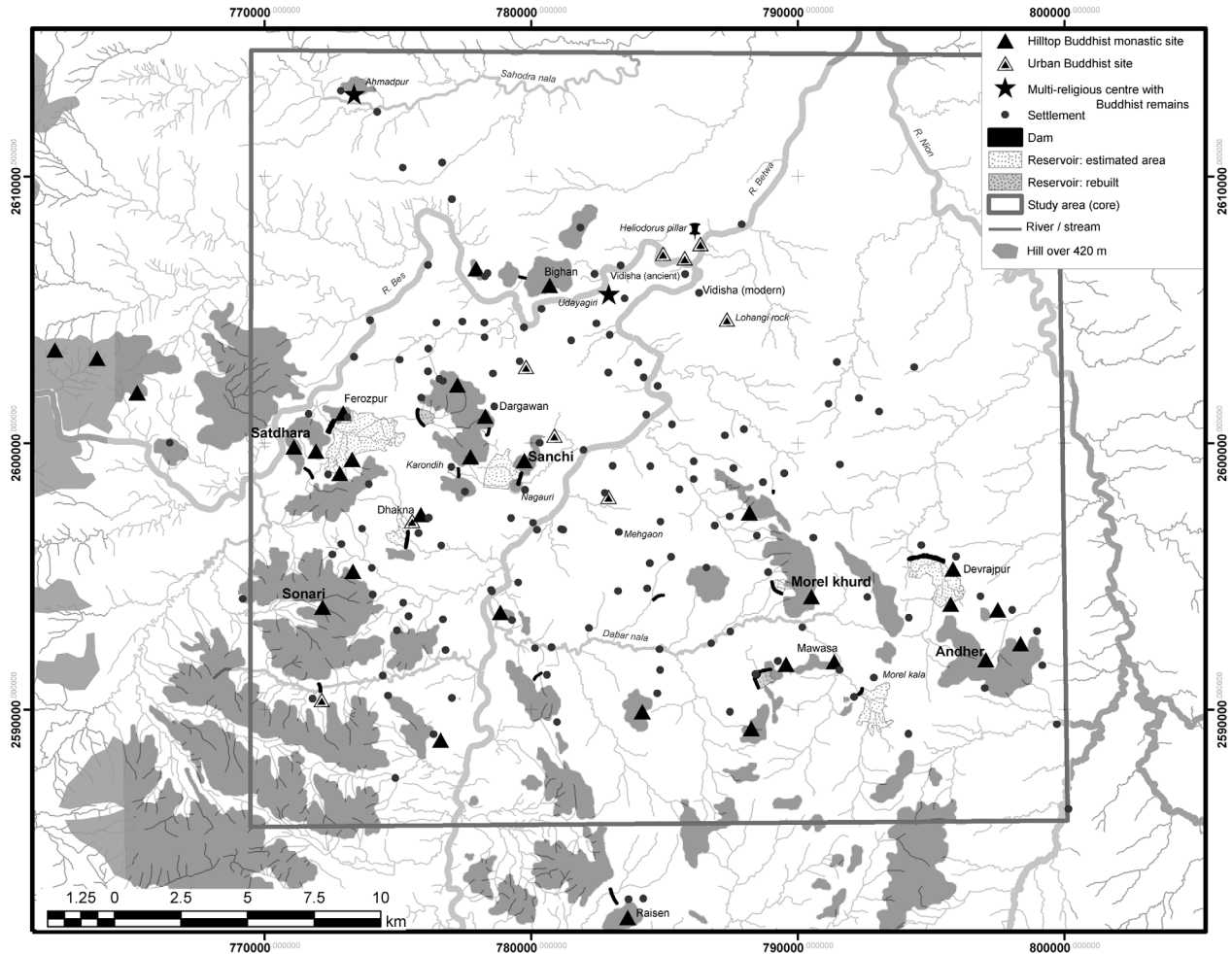
Figure 23.3. Sanchi Survey Project study area: site distribution.

IV: fourth–sixth centuries AD) and post-Gupta periods (phase V: seventh–eighth centuries) such as those clustered around Sanchi *Stūpa* 1, all set on square or circular platforms, and without railings (Marshall et al. 1940: 46); 4) even smaller *stūpas*, with diameters of one metre or less, traditionally classified as 'votive', but now regarded widely as 'burial *ad sanctos*' *stūpas* (Schopen 1997a): built to contain the mortuary remains of ordinary monks and the laity, they are positioned at a removed distance from more important *stūpas* in deference to the hierarchical structure of the relic cult. Similar *stūpas* occur throughout the study area, either within larger monastic compounds, as at Sanchi, or comprising independent burial grounds, as on the small hillock immediately to the west of Sanchi (Shaw & Sutcliffe 2005, 8–12; Shaw 2007). Burial grounds consisting of similar *stūpas* have been noted around the Buddhist monastic site of Thotlakonda in Andhra Pradesh (Fogelin 2004, 2006).

HILLTOPS: PRACTICAL, ECONOMIC, AND RITUAL ASSOCIATIONS

The majority of *stūpas* in the SSP area are situated on hilltops and usually form part of larger complexes, comprising monasteries, shrines, and other structures (Shaw 2007), although they occasionally comprise single purpose *stūpa* and burial sites, as described earlier (Figure 23.4). However, although these sites are usually by virtue of their hilltop setting situated away from settlements, they are never more than a kilometre or two from the nearest settlement (Figure 23.3). Whilst this is in keeping with mainstream orthodox notions of purity and pollution regarding zones of the dead and the living, it also reflects the dialectical position of monks in relation to society. Monks are renunciates, and yet they are connected to society through patronage networks and the services that they provide.
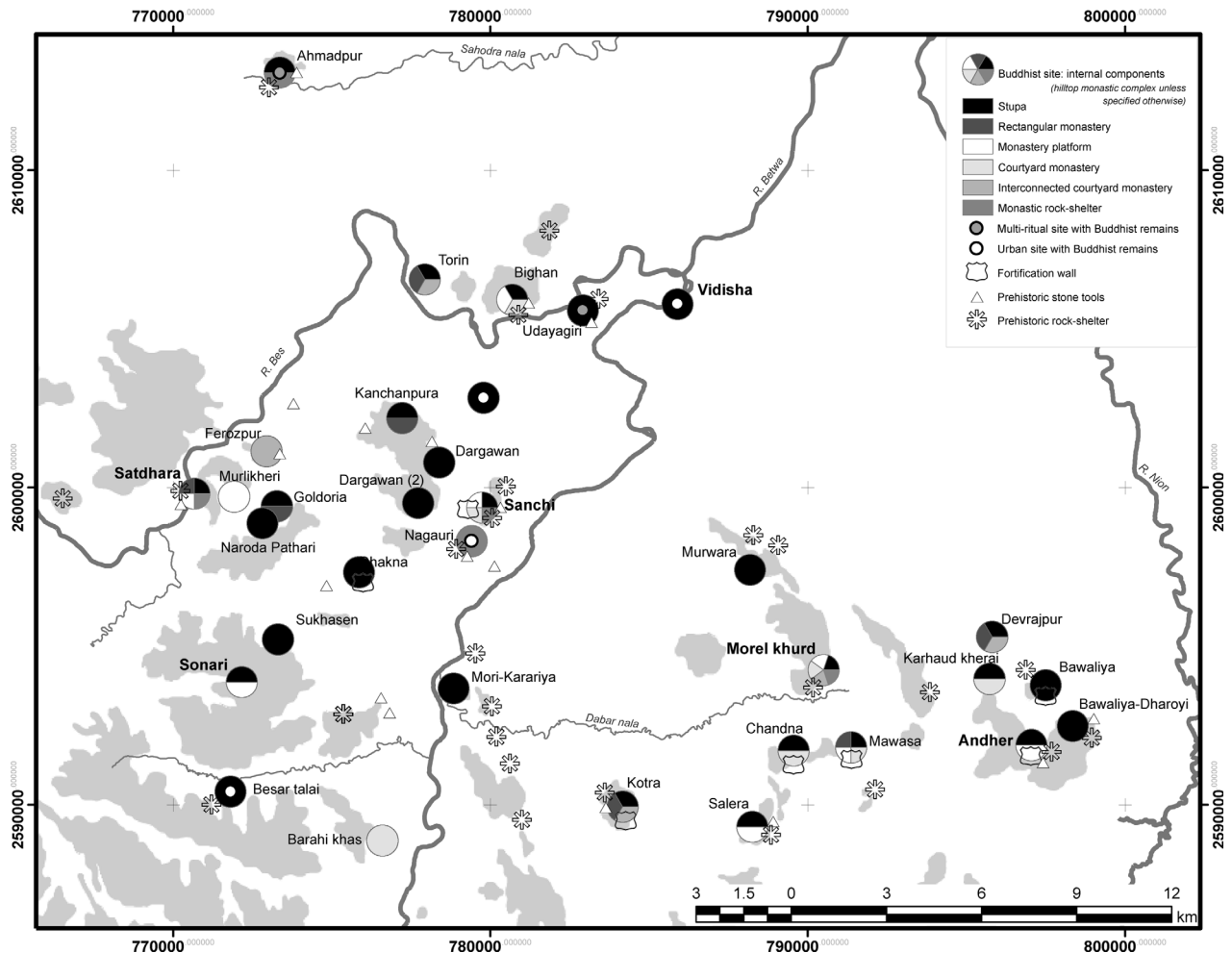
Figure 23.4. Sanchi Survey Project study area: Buddhist sites and rock-shelters.

The purpose of this section is to explore the possible practical, ritual, symbolic, and social reasons why these hilltop locations were so consistently sought out by the *saṅgha*. The most obvious advantage of hilltops is that they provided refuge from monsoon flooding. This is why so many habitation sites are situated on some form of raised ground, although very rarely on the summits of hills, possibly because of difficulties in accessibility. Hilltops also have low agricultural value and deficient water supplies and may have been considered too susceptible to siege. On the other hand, the forests which they support are a valuable natural resource for wild plants and animals. While utilised by agriculturalists too, hilly areas have, since ancient times, been closely associated with non-producing, hunter-gatherer groups. This is attested by the large number of prehistoric painted rock-shelters and microlithic scatters found throughout the hills of central India. Similar types of sites are closely associated with

other peripatetic, or 'property-renouncing', groups, such as Brahmanical *saṃnyāsins* (Jacobson 1975, 81). Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* (2.2.5), a state-craft manual traditionally attributed to the Mauryan period but now recognised as a composite text probably not reaching completion before the early to mid-first millennium AD (Trautmann 1971), also offers interesting insights into such sites. The text refers to the designation of non-agricultural land for the purposes of scholarly and ascetical activities. The level of correspondence between the kind of site chosen by prehistoric hunter-gatherers and later ascetic groups is attested in the Sanchi area by the frequency with which painted rock-shelters or microlithic tools occur at Buddhist sites. These kinds of prehistoric remains were found at fourteen of thirty-three hilltop sites that show evidence for Buddhist activity (Shaw 2007; Figure 23.4). It is possible therefore that as a 'non-producing' group, the incoming *saṅgha* had little choice when it came to

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finding a place for itself in the landscape but to occupy areas that had little or no other economic value. A similar set of restricting factors may explain the tendency for Buddhist sites, particularly in the Deccan, to overlie older, 'protohistoric' burial grounds (Schopen 1996). Being unsuitable for agricultural purposes, such locations obviously suited the *saṅgha's* 'non-producing' status, but because of their mortuary function, they may have had polluting associations for orthodox Brahmins. In both economic and spiritual terms, therefore, the Buddhists were relegated to peripheral zones of the landscape. Moreover, textual evidence suggests that certain, albeit marginal, sections of the Buddhist *saṅgha* actively sought out cremation grounds as foci for meditation on death and decay (Schopen 1996).

Although we are lacking such evidence regarding local mortuary practices in the SPP area, it is important to note that many of the rock-shelter sites that have been excavated, such as Bhimbetka, situated about seventy kilometres southwest of Sanchi, contain human burials (Misra & Sharma 2003, 40–3). Moreover, many of these rock-shelters were adapted for monastic use by Buddhist monks. The future excavation of such 'monastic rock-shelters' (Shaw 2007, 129–30, 135–6) offers much scope for filling gaps in our understanding of the history and chronology of monasteries and monasticism in central India, but in the light of the evidence at Bhimbetka, may also provide further insights into the degree to which the Buddhist landscape of *stūpas* and relics intersected with pre-existing zones of the dead.

Hilltops also hold particular symbolic and mythological associations, described in ancient texts as the abode of *yakṣas* and other place-bound spirits (Misra 1981, 50; e.g., *Dīgha Nikāya*, 41). These shrines, referred to as *cetiya* (Misra 1981, 42; Coomaraswamy 1980, 17; *Aṅguttara Nikāya* II. 550), provided the focus of hilltop festivals (*gir-agga-samajjan*) of the kind known to have been held annually at Rājagaha (Hardy 1903, 61–6). The same kind of hilltop festival is listed in Aśoka's edicts 1 and 9, as one of the events prohibited to monks and nuns (*Vinaya* II. 107, 150; III. 71; IV. 85, 267, 360; *Jātaka* III. 538). The suggestion that the configuration of the ritual landscape followed certain topographical conventions supports other archaeological and ethnographic accounts relating to the predominance of pre-Buddhist ritual practices at major monastic sites (Cunningham 1892, 40; Byrne 1995; Kosambi 1962). The fact that early *yakṣa* shrines were referred to as *cetiya* offers a gloss on the possible antecedents of the *stūpa* given that the *cetiya* and *stūpa* were used interchangeably in later Pali literature (Cousins 2003; Law 1931; Misra 1981, 91–3; Irwin 1987; Van Kooij 1995). There are also suggestions that the carved panels on the *toraṇa* gateways of Sanchi *stūpa* 1 are based on the *charaṇa chitras*, the pictorial scrolls whose public display was, according to texts such as the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, or *Arthaśāstra*, an integral component of the banned hilltop festivals (Ray 1945, 69). Whether the *saṅgha* actively sought out places already regarded as sacred is difficult to determine, especially since *yakṣa* or *nāga* worship rarely took on durable forms during the time in question: stone images of these deities do not appear in the Sanchi area until the first century BC, that is, long after the arrival of Buddhism (Shaw 2007). Further, their representation in sculptural form may say more about the Buddhist worldview than 'local' religious practices (Shaw 2004, 2007, 2013a). However, by simply occupying spaces in the landscape, which in the minds of the local populace were associated with revered local deities, the *saṅgha* was already making a statement about its position in the local religious hierarchy. This may have been an early attempt to 'localise' itself in the area; it may also have embodied an element of proselytisation, that is, by asserting the Buddha's supremacy over local deities whose precise identity remains obscure.

HILLTOP *STŪPA*S: 'SEEING' THE BUDDHA

Hilltops would have helped to further these proselytising aims by ensuring that *stūpas* were seen throughout the surrounding landscape. At Sanchi, the main *stūpa* can be seen for miles around, and at Andher, the principal *stūpa* perches dramatically on the edge of a cliff, creating a striking silhouette on the horizon (Figures 23.1, 23.5). Those living in neighbouring villages would have been very aware of the monks' presence above. This is illustrated clearly at Andher, where a Phase IV *stūpa* at the southern edge of the hill directly overlooks the village of Hakimkheri below. The other monastic sites all show a similar concern with maximising the *stūpas*' visual presence. This line of influence also works the other way round: standing on the southernmost edge of Andher hill, not only does one get a birds' eye view of the activity in the village below, but the sounds of the village are strikingly audible. Monks were apart from village life but in many instances were afforded a commanding view of its day-to-day activities; it is possible that not all people would have welcomed the feeling of being scrutinised by monks overlooking them from the hill

Figure 23.5. Andher *stūpa* from below.

above! A similar level of intervisibility is discernible in the relative positioning of the main *stūpas* at Andher and an early-first-centuryAD Brahmanical cult spot immediately below (Shaw 2004, 2007).

   The visually aesthetic dimension of the landscape setting of monastic sites is also notable. Cunningham (1854, 342) periodically commented on what could be seen from principal spots in the landscape, including the element of intervisibility between *stūpa* sites, a point that is taken up further later. But he also made reference to the visually pleasing aspect of certain Buddhist sites including the view afforded from such places. The 'picturesque' aspects of Buddhist monastic complexes and their garden-like qualities (Ali 2003) are emphasised by the terms by which they are known in early inscriptions and texts: *Vihāra* and *ārāma* are translatable variously as 'pleasure tour' or 'pleasure place', whilst the former term embodies notions of leisure and play (Schopen 2006, 487). The obvious point here is that intellectual and spiritual pursuits are not possible without an abundance of time and a degree of comfort, and that an agreeable environment would be in keeping with such aims (Shaw forthcoming). As

argued by Schopen (2006), in contrast to the traditional notion of monasteries as places of austerity, and as polar opposites of urban courtly culture, the treatment of their landscape setting conformed to contemporary notions of the garden, as the epitome of urban sophistication and the manipulation of 'nature'. Ali (2003) has argued that the sensuous, ornamental, and, in particular, 'floral' motifs in early Buddhist thought and art in fact represented an inversion of urban courtly values. Monastic grounds were highly decorated places full of ostentatious water features and other displays of the harnessed powers of nature (Ali 2003, 231), which Schopen (2006, 496) argues were intended to transport the monastic resident or lay visitor to a higher plane; in particular, he argues that the vista afforded from such places would have played a significant role in the siting of monastic complexes (Schopen 2006, 498–503). However, as discussed elsewhere (Shaw & Sutcliffe 2003; Shaw 2007), the ostentatious display of the *saṅgha*'s water harvesting skills at rock-cut monastic complexes in western India may also have been part of the *saṅgha*'s attempt to demonstrate its monopoly over the 'business of water', and its involvement in the

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management of natural resources as an instrument of lay patronage (for further discussion see Shaw forthcoming). It should also be stressed that the predominantly nineteenth and early twentieth century archaeological reports on which Schopen's arguments regarding the role of picturesque vistas at Buddhist sites are based reflect a rather arbitrary understanding of the archaeological landscape, before systematic survey methods and an interest in less visible aspects of the archaeological landscape had been incorporated into archaeological thought (Shaw 2007). It is only when Buddhist sites are viewed in relation to systematically documented archaeological data, including ritual, habitational, and land-use sites as recorded during the SSP, for example (Shaw 2007), that the implications of what can be seen from monastic centres can be placed in a historical context. Whilst Cunningham may have been looking out onto a bucolic scene of 'nature', the settlement patterns from the Sanchi area attest to a greatly more populated and urban landscape than today's largely underpopulated countryside would suggest (Shaw 2007, 2013b).

Returning to the element of intervisibility between *stūpa* sites themselves, one may note that from Sanchi, it is possible to see the *stūpas* at Morel khurd; farther in the distance are the *stūpas* at Andher; and to the southwest is a line of hills, immediately behind which are the monasteries of Sonari and Satdhara; similar observations were made by Cunningham (1854, 342). The main *stūpa* at Sanchi is visible from as far away as Bighan in the north and appears to have provided the main orientation for the smaller *stūpas* and burials on Dargawan hills to the west of Sanchi (Figure 23.3).

This level of intervisibility may have been an important way of maintaining linkages between key ritual sites. This arrangement was far from a passive network. As discussed earlier, texts and inscriptions describe *stūpas* not simply as repositories of the Buddhist relic, but containers of a 'living presence' (Schopen 1997a) that projected the power of the Buddha, senior monks, and the *dharma* into and across the surrounding space. The highly visible setting of *stūpas* highlights the importance of 'seeing' (Pali: *dassana*; Sanskrit: *darśana*) at Buddhist sacred sites. Both Trainor (1997, 174–7) and Schopen (1997a, 117, note 9) have noted the analogy between 'seeing' or 'beholding' (particularly through direct visual contact) and worshipping within the Buddhist tradition. A similar analogy within the specific monastic context receives sanction in the Buddhist Canon: in the Mahāparinibbānasutta, the dying Buddha tells Ananda that the four main pilgrimage sites connected with the Buddha's life are places that 'ought to be seen' (dassaniya) (*Dīgha Nikāya* 16: 5: 7-8; Rhys Davids 1910, 153–4). The objects of this 'seeing' are not merely sacred places, but 'relics of use' (*pāribhogika dhātu*); the places where the Buddha was born, gained enlightenment, taught, and died were transformed into 'relics' because they had been 'used' by the Buddha. Simply seeing these places, therefore, was equivalent to seeing the Buddha and paying appropriate homage to his dispensation. The concept of *darśana*, found in varying degrees in other Indian traditions, ensures that through the auspicious sight of the venerated object, a devotee gains spiritual merit (Eck 1981). These factors help to explain the importance of ritual circumambulation (*pradakṣina*) as one of the main aspects of *stūpa* worship (Falk 1977, 290; the mirroring of the *pradakṣina* of the *stūpa* and the worship of the Buddha is also discussed by Trainor: 1996).

A poignant indication of the 'life-force' of the relics and *stūpas* is provided by an inscription on the west gateway at Sanchi *Stūpa* 1. This warns that 'he who dismantles … the stone work from this [*stūpa*], or causes it to be transferred to another house of the teacher, he shall go to the [same terrible] state as those who commit the five sins that have immediate retribution' (Marshall et al. 1940, I, 342, no. 404; Schopen 1997a, 129). Inscription 396 on the east gate is similarly worded, but actually spells out the five sins (murder of one's mother, murder of one's father, murder of an *arhat*, causing bloodshed, causing a schism in the *saṅgha*), which correspond to those defined in the *Vinaya*, the Buddhist rule book; the fact that four of these five sins involve the murder or injury of a living being suggests that the *stūpa* too was seen as a living being and can be taken therefore as one of the most obvious explanations for the need to protect it from dangerous forces, both ritual and political.

These points also add a powerful dimension to our understanding of the proselytising quality of *stūpa* architecture, whose trajectory of influence could transcend its material boundaries by the very fact of its visual dominance. For the Buddhist monks, this mechanism was a means of quite literally 'presencing' the *dharma* in new areas. Furthermore, the visual prominence of Sanchi *Stūpa* 1, which as discussed earlier most probably contained the Buddha's relic, allowed the Buddha to be 'seen' by monks residing at distant monasteries. By the same logic, the efficacy of the *dharma* was being cast over the local population, whether or not they knew or wished it. The additional aims of such an arrangement were no doubt multi-faceted, providing, on the one hand, an ever-present

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Figure 23.6. Monastery platform at Morel Khurd.

reminder to monks of the proximity of death in keeping with the Buddhist recognition of life as a preparation for death, but also embodying the paradox of Buddha's attainment of *nirvāṇa* whilst enduring in the form of his relics.

A similar concern with maximising the visual presence of *stūpas* is discernible in the internal layout of monastic sites. As part of a body of evidence on the 'cult of the monastic dead', Schopen (1997d, 274–5; cf. Roth 1980, 186) has noted how the entrances to early monastic buildings tended to be orientated upon the principal *stūpa*, albeit at some distance, while later quadrangular monasteries were built around a *stūpa* in the central courtyard (Schopen 1997d); in other cases, small *stūpas* can be found distributed at various points within monastery compounds, as found, for example, in the courtyards of the post–Gupta period monasteries at Sanchi, as well as many of the outlying Buddhist sites in the study area (Shaw 2007). However, the spatial dynamics of early monastic complexes has not been fully understood, partly because

of the prevailing notion, perpetuated by text-based scholars such as Schopen (1994b, 548), that 'permanent' monastery architecture did not develop until at least the early centuries AD in keeping with the supposed 'late' institutionalisation of Buddhist monasticism. The identification during the SSP of monasteries that are datable to the late centuries BC and that survive in the form of towering platforms challenges this view (Shaw 2007, 2011; Figures 23.4, 23.6). In all cases, the monastery platforms are positioned in close proximity to, or in direct view of the central *stūpa*. Even without their superstructure, the platforms provide an all-encompassing panorama of the site as a whole. Going back to our discussion of 'seeing', this would have allowed the monks to keep the most important *stūpas* within their line of vision and therefore to contemplate the auspicious sight and presence of the Buddha and the *arhats*.

The positioning of the monuments not only allowed the *stūpas* to be admired but may also be explained as

part of the need to protect relics by regulating access to the *stūpas* and maintaining close surveillance of them. On account of its ritual status as a human being, the *stūpa* was open not only to the gaze of the devout, but also to more malevolent types of 'seeing'. The staggered gates (shaped like a *svastika*) at Sanchi *Stūpa* 1 may have been aimed at diverting the gaze of the 'evil eye', tradition-ally thought to travel only in straight lines. The ritual and political efficacy of the relic also called for protec-tion against theft (Trainor 1997, 117–35). As the reliefs on the Sanchi gateways show, relics were sources of con-tention from the earliest days of Buddhism. This was because relics lent themselves to use as instruments of political legitimacy, the spread of the *dharma* being easily appropriated by kings who sought to draw on analogies between themselves and the Buddha as *dharmarāja* and *cakravartin*. Although the use of relics as instruments of polity received its fullest elaboration in Sri Lanka, Strong (1983) has put forward convincing arguments that this mode of kingship was first developed by Aśoka in the third century BC (see also Duncan 1990). The part of the *stūpa* upon which the monasteries are most consistently orientated is the staircase leading to the upper terrace. This part was singled out not only because it offered the possibility of ascending to a higher spiritual plane[4], but also because it took one as close as it was possible to get to the relic chamber, where one could circumambulate the sacred 'traces' of the Buddha (Falk 1977, 288).

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THE FORTIFIED HILLTOP:
SURVEILLANCE AND DEFENCE

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Stūpas were also open to the threat of 'mundane' human action, which may help to explain why so many hilltop Buddhist sites are equipped with strategic mechanisms in keeping with their fortress-like location. Many of the hills are defended naturally by sheer cliffs and jagged rocks, which, as at Andher, can set them apart from the surrounding landscape in a dramatic manner; more than half the Buddhist sites in the SSP study area also include some form of fortified structure.

At Morel khurd, the early platformed monastery has towers at each of its four corners (Fig 23.6). Even with-out towers, the height of this and other platforms creates a fortress-like aspect, which would have deterred pro-spective attackers or thieves, while the internal, covered staircases, enhanced at Satdhara by a bent entrance, would have enabled effective monitoring of movement in and out of the building (Shaw 2011)[5]. Finally, the towering

superstructures not only provide all-encompassing views of the *stūpas*, they are also highly 'visible' themselves: the Morel khurd platform, when seen from Andher or Sanchi, is even now the most conspicuous architectural feature at the site; in its complete form, it would have been dou-ble the present height and would have dominated the entire monastic complex. This would have increased the level of intervisibility between sites, thus enforcing the continuous presence of the *śāsana* (collective Buddhist teachings) across the landscape. Other elements of fortifi-cation include substantial boundary walls, often provided with towers and bastions, found at ten of the Buddhist sites in the area, including Sanchi and Andher. It is dif-ficult to date these walls with certainty; the rubble-infill outer facing construction at most sites is suggestive of an early date, but the wall on the eastern edge of Sanchi hill was probably built during the tenth or eleventh century AD. Building 43, one of Sanchi's latest structures, dates to around the same time. With its four corner towers it has a distinctly military appearance, closely mirrored by the fortified *stūpa* enclosure at Bighan to the north of Vidisha (Shaw 2007). Similar military plans have been noted at medieval monasteries in eastern India (Verardi 1996). The reason for building these later defences in the Sanchi area may be related to the forces behind the eventual decline of central Indian Buddhism: there is little evidence for ongoing *construction* after the post-Gupta period at inte-rior sites, and after the eleventh or twelfth century AD at Sanchi; however it should be stressed that the traditional model of a homogenous post-Gupta Buddhist decline in central India is no longer taken for granted (Willis 2013). In eastern India, new evidence relating to the relative dis-tribution of Buddhist and Brahmanical sculptural mate-rial in the Bodh-Gaya region is suggestive not of a passive community at the mercy of Brahmanical oppression, but rather an active *saṅgha* engaged in innovative strategies for resistance to and adaptation to developments within the Brahmanical order (Amar 2012).

However, the evidence discussed earlier suggests that some sites in the Sanchi area were subject to hostile threats during earlier periods also. The post-Mauryan king Puśyamitra 'Śuṅga' seems to have been inimical to het-erodoxy, especially Buddhism. Traditions which associate him with the horse sacrifice and identify him as a staunch Brāhamaṇa lend support to his position as representative of the vigorously orthodox (*smārta*). This has led to sugges-tions that the main *stūpa* at Sanchi could have been dam-aged intentionally in the post-Mauryan era (Marshall et al. 1940, 23–4; Verardi 1996, 230–1). While there is no direct

proof that Sanchi was attacked by Puṣyamitra Śuṅga, and indeed the post-Mauryan period witnesses a profound invigoration of Buddhist construction programmes in the area, the circumstances are sufficiently compelling to see such an injury to the *stūpa* there as an assault on the *śāsana* and, quite literally, the 'body' of Buddhism. However, it was not simply a question of heterodox versus orthodox views: relic theft took place within Buddhist circles from the earliest times, and schisms appeared frequently, from as early as the Aśokan period (Willis 2000).

CONCLUSION: *STŪPAS* AND BUDDHIST GEOGRAPHIES

Sanchi's local Buddhist geography with its individual *stūpas* also formed part of a much larger Buddhist 'world map' conceived as an ever-expanding Buddha corpse (Walters 2002). *Stūpas* were not just mortuary monuments that doubled as images of the Buddha and senior monks, but were also media for extending the influence of the Buddhist *dharma* on a pan-Indian level. The creation of a pan-Indian Buddhist geography is not paralleled by developments within the Brahmanical world until at least seven hundred years after our earliest *stūpas*. For example, the rise of pan-Indian sacred cities such as Ayodhya, Mathura, or Varanasi did not occur until at least the mid-first millennium AD, culminating in the late eleventh century AD in resistance to increasing Muslim oppression (Bakker 1996, 2004). Varanasi, with its close associations with orthodox Brahmanical death rites, is of particular interest here by virtue of the fact that the Buddha's first sermon took place at Sarnath on the city's outskirts. Varanasi is now known throughout the Hindu world as the most desirable place to die and be cremated. However, it appears that during the Buddha's lifetime it was simply an important commercial, rather than religious centre, and this is probably why he chose to deliver his sermon here. Furthermore, Varanasi had no special connection with Brahmanical death rites until the construction during the fifth century AD of the Avimukteśvara temple at the Manikarna cremation ground (Bakker 1996, 2004). At that time the site lay to the south of the ancient city (Rājghat), in keeping with the orthodox view of where cremation grounds should be placed in relation to human settlements. However, presumably because of the site's close association with the Śaiva Pāśupatas, who preferred to assemble and worship on cremation grounds[6], it eventually became a pivotal element of Varanasi's ritual geography as the city shifted

southwards from Rājghat to its current location. Varanasi, together with two other Pāśupata centres, Ujjain and Pāśupatinatha in Nepal, thus became unique in the Hindu world for being sacred Hindu cities with otherwise polluting cremation grounds at their very heart.

Going back to Walter's (2002) idea of the Buddhist 'world map' and viewing it through an economic prism, the 'presencing' of the body of Buddhism through the construction of *stūpas* and the absorption of landmass into a local and pan-Indian geography was also central to the process of achieving custodianship over land and natural resources. Elsewhere (Shaw 2007) I have argued that the Buddhist *saṅgha* played a pioneering role in the spread of new agricultural and water management regimes during the late centuries BC. It is very probable that the hilltops on which *stūpas* and monasteries were constructed had first to be cleared of forest cover. Further, although monastic sites are generally situated on non-agricultural land, they are not completely disconnected from the forces of production, as illustrated by archaeologically, textually, and epigraphically attested examples of monastic landlordism across South Asia (Shaw & Sutcliffe 2005). By the late centuries BC, the *saṅgha* played a pivotal role in agrarian and economic change, coordinating the construction, management, and funding of water-resource systems which benefited local farmers and donors and increased 'well-being' on a number of levels (Shaw forthcoming), as well as enabling the *saṅgha* to pursue its 'non-producing' monastic lifestyle. The Buddhist system of monastic landlordism is appropriated in later years by competing Brahmanical institutions, specifically the Hindu temple, which by the mid-first millennium AD had acquired the legal power to own and manage land and water resources. This was effected not only through royal land-grants to Brahmins but by the newly emergent idea that images installed within temples are full embodiments (*mūrti*) of gods who not only can interact directly with devotees through worship (*pūjā*), but also have full-blown legal jurisdiction, amongst other things, to own property (Willis 2009), in ways that parallel our early developments discussed earlier in relation to the *stūpa* and relic cult.

NOTES

1 This iconographic manual dates to about the twelfth century AD and originates from Kashmir, the inherent historical problems thus being obvious when it comes to discussing material in other regions and periods.

2 The earliest Brahmanical temples in India followed an apsidal or elliptical plan and survive only in outline form as attested by third-century BC archaeological evidence from Vidisha (Madhya Pradesh) and Nagari (Rajasthan) (Shaw 2007). Despite this evidence some scholars argue that the Hindu temple tradition did not develop fully until much later (Willis 2009; Olivelle 2009).

3 For more on this issue of axiality and the influence of the ancient Indian pillar cult on the development of *stūpa* architecture see Irwin 1987.

4 Adrian Snodgrass (1985, 282–5) discusses this connection with reference to the stairways of southeast Asian terrace *stūpas*, paying particular attention to their serpent-balustrades, as symbols of the 'rainbow bridge' that links heaven and earth, but whose role as guardians of the Buddhist relic should not be forgotten.

5 The guardian figures (*dvārapāla*) that frequently flank the doors of later temples also reinforce the idea that entrances needed to be protected and regulated. They appear in about the fifth century AD, but *yakṣa* figures on earlier Buddhist *stūpas* were, it seems, already serving the same purpose.

6 For the two-way relationship between Paśupata and Buddhist esoteric practices especially as far as their association with cremation grounds goes, see Davidson 2002.

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Killing Mummies: On Inka Epistemology and Imperial Power

Terence N. D'Altroy

The past is never dead. It's not even past.
(William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*)

The simultaneous close of the last Inka dynastic war and the Spanish invasion of the Andes were punctuated by two moments of extreme iconoclasm – the incineration of two deified royal mummies. One of those acts took place during the Spanish looting of an estate of the deceased ruler Wiraqocha Inka. While pillaging the countryside a couple of years after the Spaniards seized effective power in AD 1532, Gonzalo Pizarro's troop found and put torch to the king's mummy at Caquia Xaquixaguana. The other, earlier event occurred when Prince Atawallpa's army defeated the forces massed by his brother, Waskhar, and seized the royal capital of Cuzco. In addition to massacring the royal kin groups who had sided with Waskhar, they dragged the mummy of the adversaries' mutual grandfather, Thupa Inka Yupanki, outside the city and burned it. In both cases, the bereft scions scraped the ashes into jars, which they continued to revere for decades afterward.

Neither action was wanton, but to modern eyes, the Spaniards' action is more readily explicable. The invaders saw the mummy as a mouthpiece for the devil and sought to silence him. For the Christians, any thing – object or being – that held the potential for diabolical utterance was a human and theological menace. As Sabine MacCormack (1991, 29) has put it, 'Demons were particularly fond of appearing in the guise, or under the accidents, of the dead'. Because few icons could have contained both the political and religious potency that a royal mummy embodied, it was an obvious target (Figure 24.1). The Inkas' deed begs for more exploration than the Spaniards', although on the surface it can also be

easily explained. Commentators from the conquistadores onward have known that Andean peoples revered their ancestors and believed that living people's well-being depended upon the good will of their 'beautiful grandparents' (Salomon 1995). By targeting the ancestor of great numbers of kinsmen who had opposed Atawallpa, his generals were exacting revenge on those lineages. Just below the surface of that explanation, however, lies an enormously complex set of ideas that involved life, death, vitality, time, space, being, causality, knowledge, and epistemology – in fact, the full range of ideas that underpinned the Inkas' notions of who they were and why they held a rightful position as lords of the world as they knew it.

To anticipate the argument a bit – and to see where the dead enter the picture – let me sketch out a few points (see D'Altroy 2014 for a fuller exposition). Some of them will venture off from the issue of death as recognized in western cultures, precisely because the Inkas held different views on the relationship between human life and other states of being. First, Andean peoples did not recognize death as the separation of an eternal soul from its body, so that it could make its passage to a transcendent heaven or hell. Bodies did contain a spirit, but that departed shade flew back to its society's place of origin, usually a fixed location on the landscape (Salomon 1995). Even though death was a permanent state, it did not imply the loss of vitality and the capacity to interact with the living. Within this cosmic order, mummies were just a portion of a wide array of active agents, and provision had to be made for periodic engagements between

Figure 24.1. A deceased Inka ruler being carried on a litter. From Guaman Poma de Ayala's (1936) *Letter to a King*.

the living humans and the other vital beings who populated the land.

Second, many Andean peoples of the Inka era shared certain notions about existence, across linguistic and cultural regions. In both Quechua and Aymara, the two principal languages of Tawantinsuyu (Figure 24.2), space-time was considered to be a unified entity, termed *pacha*. The past and present were also unified conceptually and grammatically in both languages, separate from the future. Space, place, and social being reinforced one another through narrative and linguistic structures, as well as through daily practice and grand rituals. The Andean view of time and space constituted in each other through language and performance thus meshes surprisingly well with Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the chronotope. As a consequence of a shared conceptual framework, when the Inkas adopted Quechua as the lingua franca of imperial

rule, most likely because its widespread distribution facilitated their dominion, they did not need to alter key ideas about the nature of reality (see Adelaar et al. 2004; Cerrón-Palomino 2015).

Just as space-time was integrated, human social existence co-occurs with place in the highland Andes. For instance, in the contemporary community of Sonqo, less than a day's trip from Cuzco, the existence of the core social unit (*ayllu*) is contingent on its occupation of a particular locale (Allen 2002). The *ayllu* must constantly renew its relationship to its place through small acts of homage such as offering coca leaves to the ancestors or to the other local beings who inhabit the landscape. Since a similar logic governed relations between peoples and their home locales at the moment of Spanish contact, we may safely infer that the social-spatial link also existed in prehistory. It follows that the Inkas did not so much live on the land as engage with it, because every notable topographic feature – mountain peak, spring, outcrop, plain, or river confluence – was a social being, with its own name, history, personality, and will (D'Altroy & Wilkinson 2009). Contrary to the Spanish misapprehension, spirits did not inhabit particular locations, as the places themselves were vital, forming a society paralleling humanity (Classen 1993; van de Guchte 1999; Allen 2002). Thus, the Andean landscape has long been both the repository of history and a social place that is constantly re-instantiated.

Third, within this framework, the Inkas recognized several kinds of time: cyclical creations and destructions of the world, as well as linear time within cycles and sequentially among epochs. They also dealt with time as a cumulative phenomenon, in the sense that the past was always present within a given *Sun* (cycle of a thousand years), so that it could be interacted with and modified. My reading is that, in many contexts, the Inkas treated each space-time moment as if it existed in and of itself. The notion of time as a continuous narrative sequence seems to have been outside conventional visions of the past. Sequences of space-times existed, but they apparently did not have to be linked chronologically to make cultural sense. What was separate were future space-time moments, which had not yet occurred and thus were inaccessible to human contact.

Andean peoples did recognize and represent a sense of temporal distance, but that point seems to have been less important than what occurred in a particular space-time. In contrast to many other pre-modern societies, the Inkas generally did not keep close track of time over the

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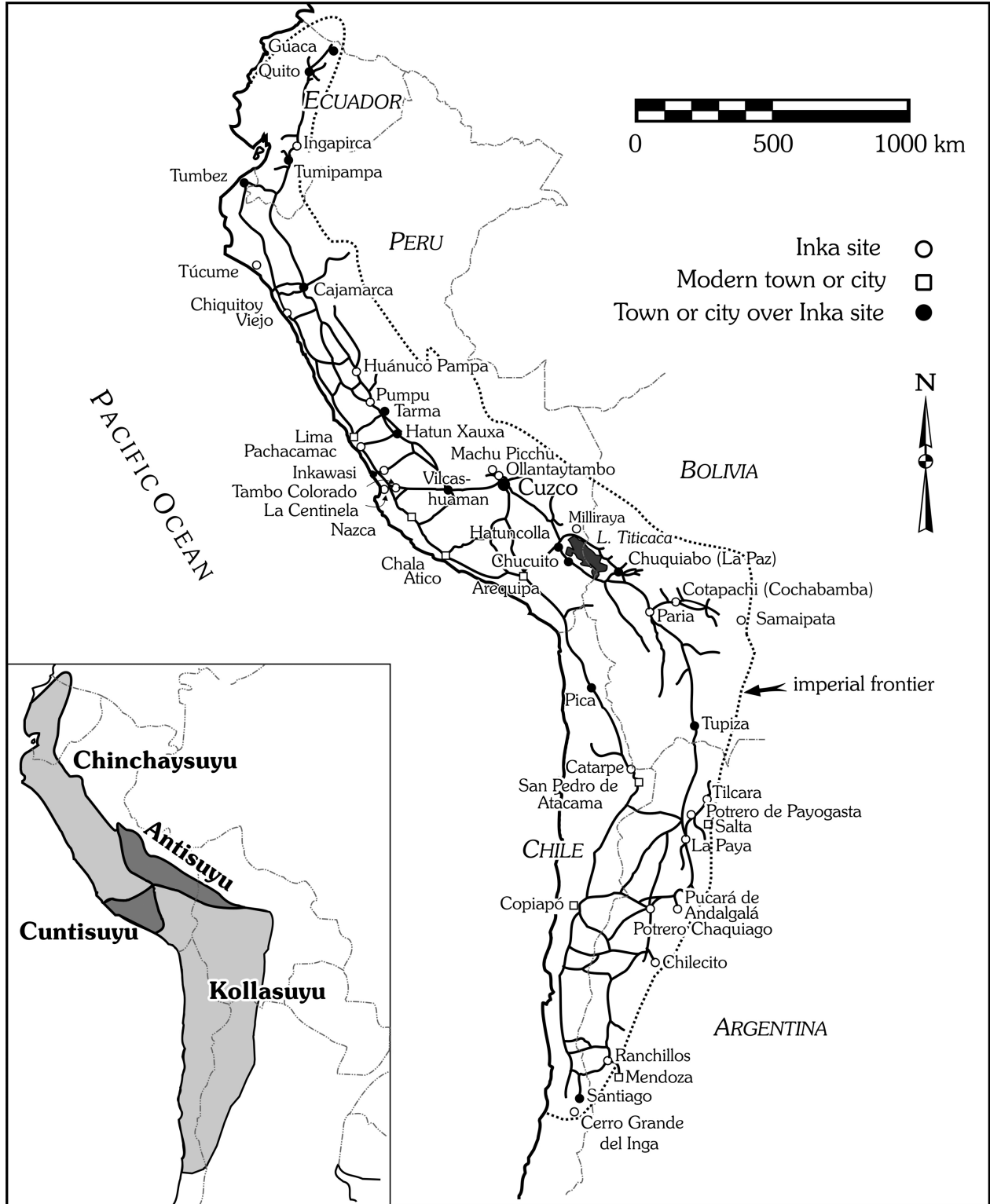
Figure 24.2. The Inka empire, Tawantinsuyu, at the time of the Spanish invasion of 1532, showing the road system, the main provincial centres, and (inset) the four parts (*suyu*).
After Hyslop 1984, frontispiece.

years, so that no one knew precisely how old he was. The Jesuit chronicler Cobo (1979, 252–3) wrote that,

> when they are asked about things of the past, if something happened more than four to six years back, what they usually answer is that the incident occurred *ñaupapacha*, which means 'a long time ago'; and they give the same answer for events of twenty years back as for events of a hundred or a thousand years back, except that when the thing is very ancient, they express this by a certain accent and ponderation of their words.

It is true that approximate periods for particular events in the biographies of rulers – potentially across several years, such as an emperor's military or building campaign – were recorded in rounded numbers (Rowe 2008). Even so, specificity and accuracy are not the same thing. The temporal details of rulers' biographies were contested by various Inka informants, so that the multiple chronological schemes pieced together by the Spanish chroniclers vary wildly as to the number of years involved (Covey 2006).

Fourth, disorder and imbalance were dangerous states that needed to be altered to a safer condition. Chaos, whether within human society or external to it, called for intervention, through either direct control or placation of potentially destructive forces. A central part of the Inka imperial mission was thus to give order – and by extension civilization – to their domain. They interjected themselves as the central agents in forming and maintaining that order, relying on their ancestors for guidance and legitimacy in those endeavours. And fifth, each one of those ideas had material, intangible, and performative aspects. Some concepts were given a material form, such as landscape modifications, architecture, and portable objects; some were left in the realm of organizing ideas and genealogies; and some were acted out through speech, ritual, and movement. Only when all three aspects were integrated were knowledge and power fully operative in the Inka realm.

THE INKA INTELLECTUAL PROJECT: MATERIALITY, IMMATERIALITY, AND PERFORMANCE

The material – or immaterial – in this paper initially arose from my nagging unease with the sharp turn to materiality in archaeology. An early stimulus for that move lay in the influential work by DeMarrais et al. (1996), *The Materialization of Ideology*, followed by a volume on materiality published by the McDonald Institute (DeMarrais et al. 2004). The heart of that persuasive argument is that ideas must be given material form to be active in power

relations. My position, conversely, is that essential features of human affairs are often deliberately not given enduring physical expression (1) because material existence may pose a threat and (2) because such expression may fix ideas in ways that are inconvenient for politics and other dynamics. An approach that assumes a parallel or mirrored relationship between things material and not strikes me as having the potential to confuse key issues. I am thinking particularly here of *thing theory* as proposed by Bill Brown (2001), the *object-oriented metaphysics* described by Harman (2005), and Latour's (2005) *actor-network theory*. I find those approaches useful in certain contexts, but their insistence on particular kinds of conceptual unity tends to obscure our understanding of Inka or Andean formulations.

In an insightful paper in a volume on the archaeology of religion, Fowles (2008) considered some of the issues just mentioned under the rubric of *the archaeology of taboo*. He pointed out that prohibitions against expression are often vested in materiality itself, not just in words or actions. Material expression has the power to pollute, to transgress cultural limits (e.g., venturing into areas appropriate only for the gods), or to expose people to malignant forces. My concerns follow on his ideas, but from a different tack. Rather than confine the topic to religion or prohibition, I am interested in how and why particular kinds of knowledge were expressed in different forms. The issues here are therefore as much epistemic as they are substantive.

Approaching the complexities of the Inka case requires integrating several lines of evidence, since none is adequate by itself to describe the world as they saw it. Material remains, early Spanish documents, ethnographic data, and linguistics can all contribute to our understanding, but each is partially contained within its own field and intersects with the others in particular ways. A central premise here is that Inkas ordered knowledge and expression in their world into the three intersecting states just mentioned. The *material* domain consisted of things that could be touched, felt, seen, heard, smelled, and physically manipulated. It provided a structure, a spatial order for movement, and a space for argument. It provided a means of relating social and cosmological orders and of communicating relations of hierarchy and power within a polyglot population whose material literacy was numerical and semasiographic, not linguistic.

The *intangible* element provided the context for dynamic argument over power, time, the past, legitimacy, and the like. It contained two core aspects. One was an

ongoing, periodically fatal, conversation among the Inka elite concerning political power, history, genealogy, and legitimacy. In the second aspect, resolutions of those arguments were used to construct a collective memory, or more accurately a propositional agreement that framed discussions for a generation or so. Those ideas were then presented to a larger imperial audience as though they were fixed truth. The *performative* element – most importantly speech acts and ritual – provided the framework and practice of epistemological ratification. I am taking the notion of performance in a broad sense here, ranging from habitus to grand spectacle, even if cycles of rituals were at the heart of the matter at hand (cf. Inomata & Coben 2006). Both the legitimacy of the content of arguments and their conformity to the principles expressed through the material realm had to be reinforced through consensual group actions.

The notion of knowledge without a material correlate is hardly new, as concern has long existed among government agencies, folklorists, anthropologists, and others, for the identification and preservation of intangible patrimony. It is true, of course, that certain things that I am treating as intangible or performative in this paper have a material expression as understood through Western science. Examples might include the waves that transmit sound and can have a physical impact on the human body and the chemicals wafting through the air that provide the substance of odours. While I take the point, my argument here concerns the way that the Inkas understood the world to work. We could also potentially distinguish between enduring and ephemeral phenomena, but then we enter into an extended conversation about temporal divisions and such, which takes me beyond the purpose of the present discussion.

The larger context of this problem concerns the intellectual transformations that occurred during the genesis and trajectory of the Inka empire. Many scholars have dedicated considerable effort to addressing the formation of the early empires. My own efforts have dealt primarily with the principles and practice of Inka politics, economics, militarism, infrastructure, and the like. More recently, I have been more concerned with the parallel intellectual project that the Inkas undertook to explain their place in the cosmos and its history (D'Altroy 2014, chapter 5). As they claimed a legitimate right to rule humanity, they asserted that they provided an irreplaceable interface between people and all other powers of the cosmos. By 1532, their intellectual life and ceremonial practices had undergone an enormous flowering, producing a much

richer life than that which they had experienced just a century or so earlier.

We may ask dozens of questions about Inka thought (D'Altroy 2014; D'Altroy & Wilkinson 2009). For example, what did the Inkas take knowledge to be – as opposed to assertion, belief, or proposition? When the Inkas thought they knew something, why did they think that it was true? How did cause and effect work in human and non-human affairs? What criteria did they use to categorize or classify things in the world? Who were the actors in the intellectual sphere and how did they gain that stature? Who could make a new proposition about the state of reality and who could judge its validity? How did evaluation occur? Put another way, on what basis of understanding and logic did the Inkas act as they created and organized the empire? And, by extension, how did expansionist, organizational, or intellectual successes interact among one another? For example, did military success figure into the sanctification of the ruler?

Similar questions have interested a number of scholars over the years (e.g., Pacheco Farfán 1994; Abercrombie 1998; Estermann 2006, 2009) and are too complicated to address fully here, but a few basics can be outlined. One core principle is that the Inkas and other Andean peoples envisioned the world in relational and active terms, not in ideals. No transcendent, otherworldly, spiritual reality existed; nor was there apparently any theory of pure truth, knowledge of it, or logic to reach it outside the practices of the world or cosmos. Instead, material and spiritual were a unified whole. Anything could be suffused with a kind of vitality, which could be manipulated, transferred, or countered (see following section). Things and people related to and affected one another through kinship, location, direction, and movement. The world thus operated according to principles of action, and human and nonhuman societies were fundamentally dependent upon one another for their well-being. In this framework, knowledge seems to have revolved around how to make things work in a world in which people, features of the landscape, and celestial beings all operated in the same space. From this distance, we may surmise that the validity of an argument revolved in large part about its ability to effect a desired outcome, not its conforming to articles of faith or employing impeccable logic.

Following on that point, a second basic principle was that all appropriate action involved mutual obligation and balance. A relationship could be strongly hierarchical, but it still needed to be reciprocal. Human and non-human actors needed the others' good will and actions in order

to experience a successful existence. A great deal of the practice of daily and mighty affairs was dedicated to ensuring that all the suitable parties in the affair – human and otherwise – were accorded their due, with the expectation that they would reciprocate. The roles and obligations of the various agents were clearly demarcated in well-defined hierarchies, and acting out of turn was a serious breach. Individuals or even non-human actors, such as oracles, could be ostracized or eliminated if they failed to meet expectations (D'Altroy 2014).

Third, moments of radical transformation (*pachakuti*) were also included in the Inka conception of things. They did not recognize constant progress or change so much as they worked with a kind of punctuated equilibrium. Change did occur, as in the four worlds of a thousand years that had preceded the Inka era, but it was rupture, not the essence of life, which emphasized continuity. Fourth, as the Inkas understood it, the dead were prominent actors in reciprocal relationships and actions, especially past imperial rulers. They were such potent figures that their mummies could threaten the living leadership. Let us now examine a few of those ideas in more detail to see how relations between the living and the dead played out in principle and practice.

LIFE AND OTHER STATES OF BEING

In the Andes, the living and the dead interacted on a constant basis. The people who lived in the Inka domain thought that the ancestral founders of each discrete society had emerged from a specific place in the landscape, to which the spirits of the dead returned. Called a *paqarisqa* (hispanicized as *pacarina*), that place could be a mountain peak, a cave, a stone, a spring, or any one of myriad distinctive features of the land. The Inkas told the Spaniards two principal stories about their creation. In one, they had been called forth by the Creator God Wiraqocha from the Isles of the Sun and Moon in Lake Titicaca. The founding ancestor, Manqo Qhapaq, and his siblings travelled underground to emerge near Cuzco, which they took as their homeland. In the other version, which became the more standard narrative in early colonial times, they had emerged from a cave called the House of Windows (Tampu T'oqo) at the Inn of Dawn (Pacariqtambo). Joined by the Maras and Tambos peoples, who had emerged from two adjoining caves, the Inkas made their way to Cuzco and seized the land for their own. By the time that the Spaniards invaded in 1532,

the Inkas had memorialized their origin at a place about thirty kilometres south of Cuzco (Bauer 1991).

Two of the four founding brothers were transformed into stone objects just as the travellers arrived at Cuzco. One became an upright monolith, called Wanakawri, who was dressed and occasionally carried into war. In the early colonial period, the Inkas built him a house in Cuzco in which he resided under the Spaniards' noses until they came to understand the ideas of vitality informing the practice and put an end to things. A second brother was said to have sprouted wings at the moment of the Inkas' arrival and flown to the founding spot, where he was transformed into a stone marker (*mojón* or *qosqo*). Manqo Qhapaq himself was thought to be embodied in a stone. Conversely, another narrative recounts that at a moment of great peril to the Inkas, the stones of the field turned to soldiers and helped to bring about the grand victory over the Chankas that triggered the Inkas' imperial ventures. Those stones (*puruaucas*) were collected and later venerated as among the holiest of the Inkas' sacred items.

Such fluidity between human and lithic being was an integral part of Inka philosophy (Dean 2010). A single kind of life force – *camaquen* – permeated the entirety of the world. Every distinct kind of thing arose from a prototype, its *camac*, which infused its likenesses with vitality (Salomon 1991, 16). For a human society, the prototype was its ancestral *wak'a* (sacred icon-being), perhaps a stone, a statue, or a set of bones, while for llamas it was a dark cloud constellation. The range of things thought to be alive, or to have consciousness and will, was enormous. Many topographic features were envisioned, named, and treated both as kin and as body parts (Bastien 1978; Classen 1993; van de Guchte 1999). Among the most powerful were the mountain peaks, called lords (*apu* or *wamani*) or the Fathers (*Tirakuna*; Allen 2002). Possessing sentience and personality, they provided the weather and owned the flocks (Reinhard 1985). Mountain run-off water, while not conscious, was the vital semen of the male peaks, which fertilized the female earth (Pachamama). Unusually shaped stones were venerated as is or were carved in geometric planes or animistic forms. As the intersection of water and rock was thought to be especially potent, a great deal of stonework in royal estates was dedicated to socializing water by channelling it through paired fountains, which carried the signature duality at the heart of Inka thinking.

The notion of vitality was extended to include a variety of other objects, not just icons or idols. Each Inka ruler, for example, had a brother (*wawqi*) image, containing his

afterbirth, which accompanied him through life and after death (Acosta 1986, 323–4, originally written in 1590). It could stand in for him in public events or could be taken to the battlefield. Cummins (1998) observes that the Inkas also viewed some materials that were used to manufacture objects as having the power of *camay*, which is the ability to infuse or transmit vitality. It does not imply an original act of bringing into being or life, which were powers reserved to the creator god, Wiraqocha (Salomon 1991, 16) Tools, such as ceramic moulds to make figurines, possessed that capacity. So the conceptual borders between animate things that were given life through birth, that were involved in manufacture, and that had existed in the landscape since creation were blurred. Bray (2009, 364) suggests that the purpose of clothing certain objects, whether iconic in form or not, was to identify and empower those things with living force. She summarizes the idea thus: 'In thinking through Andean *huacas* [here, any object with transcendent power] we may begin to understand them as objective embodiments of the idea of power, their material form enabling concepts of power to have a presence and be efficacious in the world. At the same time, they suggest alternative ontologies of being, in which concepts and things are one and the same, or perhaps interchangeable'.

Where do humans, the dead, and their mummies fit into this order of things? The topic is too rich to do more than outline here, but a few key points may be highlighted. While death was a state distinct from life, attaining death was a gradual process that took more than a year to complete, and intermediate conditions existed. Salomon (1995, 328–9) observes that there were various states of temporary or transitional death among the living, such as sickness, fainting, or being on one's deathbed. The dead walked among the living during that process and needed assistance to reach the desired permanent condition. He (1995, 325) writes that, over that year, the soft, liquid-permeated flesh was transformed into a harder or purer state that endured for all time. The spirit of the body emerged, often in the form of an insect, and flew back to the origin point of the social group to which the person belonged. The place of dead was envisioned as the 'thirsty land', where the deceased were periodically served beer (*chicha* or, more properly, *aqha*) to keep them hale and favourably disposed (Gose 1993). The bodies of the ancestors in general either were mummified or, once naturally desiccated or defleshed, were placed in special above-ground tombs (*chullpas*). In some instances, conduits were built in the tombs so that the

libations could be poured into them. In many communities, the most important tombs adjoined central plazas, while other ancestors were placed near residential units or in caves. Archaeological investigations at immediately pre-Inka and Inka-contemporary, but non-imperial, sites have found such tombs in great profusion (e.g., Earle et al. 1987). The great ashlar *chullpas* of Sillustani, on the altiplano, are the standout examples of such practice.

As noted earlier, social groups saw the blessings of their ancestors as crucial to their well-being. The guiding ethic for communities combined self-reliance, kinship, gender balance, social hierarchy, and mutual obligations. By right of their ancestors' emergence on the land, the descendant community owned productive resources as a collective – whether agricultural lands, water, pastures, or raw clay and the like – and worked the fields together. A highland community (*llaqta*) in the Andes often contained one or more *ayllu*, a flexibly constituted corporate entity that was usually endogamous across moieties. Large *ayllu* could contain several lineages and hundreds of households, and their lineages could hold statuses of different social ranks. The households themselves typically included a male head of the family, his wife, children, and unmarried or widowed adult kin. Whenever it was feasible, the *ayllu* and its member households distributed their members across the landscape to take advantage of several ecozones so that they could be self-reliant for their daily needs. If someone was absent on state duty, such as military service, the community worked his lands for him and set the products aside for his return.

In this framework, the deceased, but vital, ancestors could not have been more important. They provided the validity for the community's claim to the land, while their blessings were necessary for a propitious existence. In daily life, the ancestors and places of the land were constantly ritually invoked, to ensure the tranquillity and well-being of both human and non-human societies. On more special occasions, villagers would make pilgrimages to the peaks, praying and leaving offerings of coca leaf, chicha, and other valued items. The spatial orders for those practices were well understood. In the heartland, both Cuzco and each other community lay at the centre of its own radial array of imaginary lines. The lines (*zeq'e*) linked a series of *wak'a* – sacred places, things, or features of the landscape where important events had taken place or power inhered. When the jurist Polo studied the issue as Cuzco's magistrate in the mid-sixteenth century, he found that every one of more than four hundred towns where he inquired had such an array. Salomon (1995,

321) observes that the *wak'a* were sometimes 'imagined as the progeny of major permanent land features or natural forces such snowcapped mountains or lightning. In this fashion, ancestry could be imagined as a seamless web expanding from family organization to geographic and even cosmological order'.

Because people's identity was bound up with the land as a place of ancestry and belonging, an individual or group could not be alienated from it without suffering substantial harm. The Inkas used their knowledge of that situation as a powerful tool in their array of measures to ensure compliance, if not necessarily loyalty. As part of the vast imperial resettlement program, instituted to meet military, economic, ideological, and political goals, they displaced subject populations that had shown resistance to Inka rule, sometimes as far as two thousand kilometres from home (D'Altroy 2005). Relocation separated people from their ancestral home and could prevent them from returning to their society's origin point after death. Such a fate would consign their spirit to a permanent, unhappy state of wandering the earth. As a consequence, colonists made efforts to return home, even after death. Being classified under the status of *yanakuna*, or individuals permanently detached from the homeland and community, was an especially onerous burden.

When a king died, the implications were vast. The entire realm was in danger and was supposed to be in mourning for that year as the necessary rituals were carried out to ensure his passage to rejoin his father the Sun. A grand ceremony called the *qhapaq ucha*, which some chroniclers wrote entailed sacrifice of a thousand or more humans and vast numbers of camelids, along with textiles and other valuables (e.g., Diez de Betanzos 1996, 46; Molina 2011, 77–83), was conducted. The dangers of that moment were displayed to the oblivious Spaniards when the condemned Atawallpa chose to be baptized and thus garrotted, rather than burned at the stake. Atawallpa's choice was likely based on the notion that, were his body to be incinerated, he would not have the corporeal presence needed to return to his solar father. A number of his wives cast about for him in the following days, softly calling out his name in the hope that he would return.

The ruler himself, as a partible or multi-instantiated being, existed in several forms: his living form, his 'brother idol' (*wawqi*), his mummy (*mallki*) or a stand-in stone icon or idol, his clipped exuviae, and his innards. After his death, the mummy was kept in state, housed in either an urban residence or one of his several country estates (see Figure 24.3). When the Spaniards entered Cuzco in November of 1533, they found the mummy of Wayna Qhapaq sitting in state in a house facing the main plaza, presiding over his descendants. After the king's initial expiration, his internal organs were incinerated and the ashes placed in the belly of the golden statue of a small boy (*punchao*), which represented the Sun. It was kept in the Qorikancha (Golden Enclosure), the realm's most sacred temple in the core of Cuzco. His collected hair and nail clippings were joined with the *wawqi* or were used to form a new object (*bulto*), both of which were thought to continue as living instantiations of the ruler. The brother idol or icon of the founding imperial ruler Pachakuti, for example, was found by the Spaniards at his death house of Patallacta; it stood guard there over the ruler's mummy. Intriguingly, at the death of Wayna Qhapaq from haemorrhagic smallpox about 1528, Atawallpa's adherents kept a portion of his body (probably his heart) and fashioned a *bulto* from it. They then founded their own ancestor worship cult as a direct challenge to the authority of Cuzco (Salomon 1995, 343).

Salomon (1995, 331) argues that two instantiations of the ruler played different roles. The mummy constituted the civic presence of the deceased ruler, while the *brother* was a more personal being and was accordingly enshrined as the ancestor of the royal kin group that the ruler left behind. The dead kings and queens were regularly fêted and consulted on matters of importance.

Pedro Pizarro (1986, 89–90) recalled:

Most of the people [of Cuzco] served the dead, I have heard it said, whom they daily brought out to the main square, setting them down in a ring, each one according to his age, and there the male and female attendants ate and drank. The attendants made fires for each of the dead in front of them with firewood that was worked and cut until it was quite even, very dry, and lighting [them], burned everything they had put before them, so that the dead should eat of everything that the living ate, which is what was burned in these fires. The attendants also placed before these dead certain large pitchers . . . of gold or silver or clay, each as he wished, and here they poured out the chicha that they gave to the mummies to drink, showing it to him, [and] the mummies toasted each other and the living, and the living toasted the dead. When the vessels were full, they emptied them over a circular stone they had for an idol in the middle of the plaza, around which there was a small channel, and the beer drained off through underground pipes.

Garcilaso (quoted in Hemming 1970, 298) also remembered seeing that

their bodies were so perfect that they lacked neither hair, eyebrows nor eyelashes. They were in clothes such as they had worn when alive, with *llautas* on their heads but no other sign
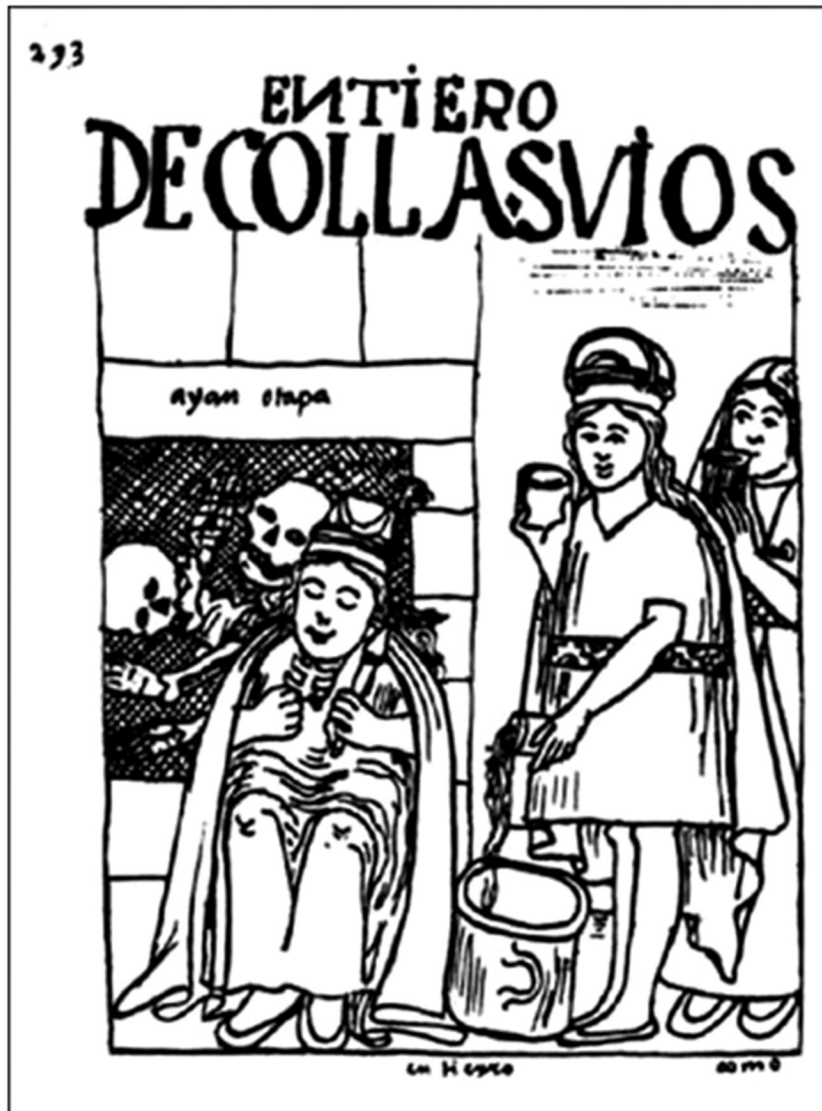
Figure 24.3. Drawing of living descendants making offerings to their deceased ancestors in the southeastern part of the Inka empire (Kollasuyu).
From Guaman Poma de Ayala's (1936) *Letter to a King*.

of royalty. They were seated in the way Indian men and women usually sit, with their arms crossed over their chests, the right over the left, and their eyes cast down. … I remember touching a finger of the hand of Huayna-Capac. It was hard and rigid, like that of a wooden statue. The bodies weighed so little that any Indian could carry them from house to house in his arms or on his shoulders. They carried them wrapped in white sheets through the streets and squares.

What happened to those mummies will be considered shortly, later.

While the ruler presided over the entire body politic, he also left behind a highly privileged royal kin group, called a *panaqa*. In 1532, there were ten *panaqa* in Cuzco's political structure, but scholars disagree as to whether that was a fixed number, a matter of historical accident, or a consequence of periodic reformation. A *panaqa* was created with each royal succession as part of a convention called split inheritance. In this custom, the 'most able' son of the deceased ruler became the new sovereign and founded a new lineage. His other descendants and those of his brothers became the custodians of his properties, usually under the leadership of one of his brothers. A *panaqa*'s duties included perpetual veneration of its ancestor and care for his assets through a cult founded around his mummy-icon. The members of those groups also provided the highest levels of leadership in the realm. The ancestors themselves sometimes played active roles outside Cuzco. They could lead their people into

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battle (the male Wanakawri) or goad the aristocracy into remaining with the ruler on campaign after they had been offended by his words and actions (the mother of Wayna Qhapaq). The *panaqa* also consulted their ancestors on such matters of state as marriage decisions. It does not take a great deal of imagination to suppose that the mummies offered opinions that were favourable to their offspring. By the time Waskhar was enthroned (1529–32), he had ample grounds to complain that the dead had the best of all there was in the empire, but his threat to disenfranchise them from their vast holdings was not well received.

Despite the weight accorded descent from a particular ancestral pair, some flexibility existed in affiliations among the various royal kin groups. Pedro Pizarro (1986) wrote that the youths of Cuzco, once come of age, could choose among the Sun, the sitting ruler, or any of the deceased kings as a lord to serve. He said that they would adopt the surname (kin group title?) of the lord to whom they were newly linked through this practice of fictive kinship. Similarly, the high priest of the Sun (Willaq umu), no matter his kin group at birth, reaffiliated himself with the *panaqa* of Wiraqocha Inka (*zukzu panaqa*) upon taking office. Whether such flexibility existed among non-royal *ayllu* is unclear, but it is true that *ayllu* fluctuated in their size, social ranking, and even existence during the colonial and modern eras. Theoretically, at least, the ancestor of the chosen kin group became the ancestor of the new affiliate, with all rights attendant. So the notion of a fixed social fabric or even structure, intrinsic to notions of hierarchy, group membership, and social geography, was apparently given lie to in practice.

THE LANDSCAPE: AN EPISTEMIC THEATRE[1]

Even if the foundation of major topographic beings was perpetual, the social landscape was constantly undergoing change. As generations passed, new events merited being memorialized, new sacred places could be recognized or created, and people made shifting claims to rights as the society reshaped itself. Space was inconstant and never experienced in the same way twice or identically by two individuals. Considering the forces at play and the range of events that could call for a place in social memory, we may therefore ask how the content and form of the remembrance were constituted. Corollary questions concern how the memory's legitimacy was secured and what role the dead played in the process.

It is now a commonplace in archaeology that claims made on or about the land often received legitimacy through a perpetually re-imagined history (e.g., Alcock 1993; Bender 2002; Van Dyke & Alcock 2003). Pivotal events are often cited ritually or re-enacted to reinforce social order. A particular locale may be seen as an origin point or ancestral home, a place where a transformative episode occurred on a mythical journey, the site of a critical historical event, and the like. In some cases, such as among the Apache, as discussed by Basso (1988), a place on the landscape may actually be understood as a moment in time. That point has been made numerous times in the anthropological literature, as Gell (1998) details in his work *The Anthropology of Time*. He cites, for example, Lévi-Strauss' (1966) argument, in *The Savage Mind*, that ritual systems relate the tangible world to origin myths. Rites align the present world with the mythic past by replaying it. Those practices often require that prescribed acts be conducted at specific places, thereby giving them both legitimacy and potency.

There is an intriguing parallel here between the Inka view of the relationships between present and past and the Australian aborigines' conception of the dream time, as analysed by Lévi-Strauss. Both the dream time and the present, which recapitulates it, are simultaneously present, so that both the living people and the ancestors are engaged in the same acts at the same moments (Gell 1998, 27). Such a view of the simultaneity of past and present is a close analogue to the Inkas' notion of a unitary past and present. While Gell dismisses the Australians' notion as a misapprehension, the crucial point for my interest is that they, like the Inkas, made choices based upon their understanding. A different base concept of space-time would almost surely have resulted in different notions of cause and effect and different actions for both societies.

Among the Inkas, however, the relationship between past and present was inverted in a crucial way from the ideas discussed by Lévi-Strauss. Specifically, ritual was intended to realign the past with the present, not to reconcile the present with the past. The re-envisioned past was then used to legitimize both a newly constituted political present and an evolving imperial knowledge. To that end, the Inkas carried out a sequence of elaborate ceremonies on Cuzco's network of 332 shrines (arrayed on forty-one to forty-two imaginary lines called *zeq'e*). The goal was to validate a history that was intentionally modified to suit power relationships

among the elite. It was reported that one thousand record-keepers were required to maintain the knowledge involved in carrying out the shrines' ceremonies (Cobo 1990, 9). The notion of rewriting history to suit the times is an old one, of course. What is of interest to me here is the creation of a series of materialized representations of that history, which were acted upon as though they were drawn from facts with a deep past (see also Connerton 1989; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1992). The constant interactions between humanity and the landscape made the latter the perfect context within which to engage in the relationships among power, time, and memory.

The Inkas' memory landscapes could be manipulated in very practical ways to shape the ongoing interplay between past and present. Each new ruler added new shrines and, potentially, could change history by removing or modifying old ones. Numerous shrines were associated with specific personages from the Inka past, such as Pachakuti or his wife, Anawarki. Waskhar's palace in Cuzco was also incorporated into the network, even though he ascended to the throne only three to four years before the Spanish invasion (Farrington 2010). The result was a negotiated and changing reality that was represented, once a moment of stasis had been achieved, as though it were a fixed structure rooted in the distant past. While the inevitability of the moment's power structure could be seen as a teleological argument, akin to what has been termed the 'Whig version of history', the notions of gradual transformation and progress do not seem to have entered into the picture. Instead, the Inkas were engaged in rearranging a world whose parts remained stable across time.

Periodically, as noted earlier, the Inkas considered the reformation to be so drastic that they called it a *pachakuti*, a turning over of space-time. Thus, Prince Inka Yupanki (or Cusi Yupanki) took Pachakuti for his title when he ascended the throne and instigated the imperial expansion, while one controversial account even claimed that there had been nine rulers named Pachakuti in Inka history (Hyland 2007). Similarly, Atawallpa's victorious campaign against his half brother Waskhar resulted in the former's adherents calling the moment another *pachakuti*. To the end of effecting the transformative goal of reconfiguring history, they killed all of the historical knot-record keepers they could find along with vast numbers of the opposition royal kin (Callapiña in Vega 1974). The arrival of the Spaniards was, by extension, also seen in that transformative light.

What epistemological principles were brought to bear when such transfigurations were asserted, and why did the dead play such prominent roles in the affair? We may approach these questions by following up on Maffie's (2005) comment that 'Jim Cheney ... argues that Indigenous North American philosophies conceive truth in moral terms such as responsibility, goodness and human well-being. This view of truth is a component of an ethical-epistemological orientation Cheney calls an "epistemology of respect" rather than an "epistemology of control"'. By analogy, the Inkas appear to have relied on what could be called an 'epistemology of balance and genealogy'. That is, the Inkas understood the principles of social order to be fixed, but the particulars of any case to be adjustable. Any solution to a large question of legitimacy or fundamental truth had to meet the precept of what Urton (1997) calls *rectification*, bringing resolutions to a balance of duality and unity. Thus, local community *ayllu* or royal *panaqa* could shift rank or potentially even moiety positions – or be partitioned, melded, or even removed from the order – so long as the balanced dual order stood. The validity of the new claims also had to meet the test of genealogical legitimacy, which is where the dead come in. In any successful solution, a plausible genealogy linking the present leadership to the past had to be constructed. All parties had to acquiesce, meaning the living and dead had to agree or run the risk of being removed from the picture.

Although the arguments had to be resolved within a framework of joint acceptance, this did not imply complete unity on the issue of truth. The *panaqa* might have agreed on a public presentation of a sociopolitical order at the heart of the empire, but they also kept their own histories; that is how the distinct versions of the Inka past were available to be passed on to the Spaniards. In the process, the Inkas were caught in the tension between the communal principle that defined humanity in terms of the social fabric and its links to the ancestors, and the goals of domination and intervention between their (potential) subjects and non-human powers. Their solution was to dress up the latter in the ideology of the former. A second kind of tension was also involved, between collective knowledge and memory, on the one hand, and individual or group agency, on the other. For the polity to continue functioning in the aftermath of the sometimes-violent upheavals at the moments of generational change, the royalty had to be willing to act together on group epistemic projects and then present the results as invariant reality. Thus, it may be less useful to talk about Inka collective

memory or knowledge than about goal-oriented joint acceptance of propositions (Mathiesen 2007; Seemann 2007). In this context, Inka collective knowledge can be seen as much as utilitarian argument as mutually held belief.

While this argument may be seen as attributing cynical or Machiavellian logic to the Inkas, it is in keeping with a considerable number of other situations in which varied positions are expressed within a group, but a single face is presented to the exterior. A simple modern example may be found in the political platforms that the major parties argue over internally, agree upon, and then present in a unified front in U.S. presidential elections. The final text of the document is a consensus statement whose individual planks are sometimes heavily contested prior to their public presentation as collective agreement. A religious institutional example may be found in the negotiations over a new pope or in the documentation resulting from the Vatican II proceedings. Much discussion is finally distilled into an agreement of unanimous consent.

From this perspective, most of the Inka heartland, while certainly a place for physical action, was also a space where philosophical and epistemological issues concerning power and history were played out. In a very real sense, it was a theatre for negotiating power and performing the history that gave the periodically reformed leadership structure its legitimacy (D'Altroy & Wilkinson 2009). When the Inkas asked the question 'How do we know that?' the answer was reached through a complex process of argumentation and performance that entailed re-enactment of histories, local pilgrimages, ritual performances, speeches, and various other kinds of collective action over and in the landscape. Once the dust had settled from a generational transition in Inka leadership, and the new social order established, the new received wisdom had to be ratified through joint participation of ritual on the landscape. It is crucial to note here that Inka kinship, and the political structure based on kin concepts, was ego-centred around the person of the king. Thus, each generational change shifted the status of every kin group among the royalty and probably rippled out to the social positioning of many of the shrines on the lines radiating out from the city. Those changes had to be accepted formally for the new order to function properly. At the local level today, the same process can be seen at the end of the year, when all accounts of internal group obligations are reckoned and transitions in leadership effected. Once everyone has accepted the outcome, the results are ratified through collective

ceremonial performances and offerings along ritual pathways. The ancestors are visited and propitiated, as their beneficence is sought for the coming year (Abercrombie 1998; Salomon & Niño-Murcia 2011).

As Wilkinson (D'Altroy & Wilkinson 2009) has suggested, in anthropological analyses, we cannot straightforwardly assume that all canons must be texts, especially given that many other forms of inscribing knowledge exist. Rather, they are statements of the principles that organize relationships and behaviour within the world, no matter the form of their expression. Cuzco's network of shrines may thus be seen as the Inka canon – the core repository of history, rules of life, and their relationships to the divine that ordered the realm. Manipulation of the canonical landscape might therefore be considered, in some ways, to be akin to the processes of exegesis. That is, the changes of and ritual performances within the shrine network interpreted and re-presented such knowledge for the political purposes of the present.

RETURNING TO THE MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL

At this point, we can return to the issues of materiality, immateriality, and performance, and their implications for an archaeology of death and beyond. The imperial material remains of Tawantinsuyu are vast and complicated, but they are also missing an array of things frequently found in other empires. The most visible remains are the capital of Cuzco and some two thousand additional provincial centres, way stations, vast storage complexes, and other facilities erected throughout the realm. Those were all joined by a road network spanning about four thousand kilometres north-south and totalling about forty thousand kilometres of roads (see Figure 24.1).

Cuzco was Tawantinsuyu's centre of power when the Spaniards arrived, even though a strong late rival to its pre-eminence was rising at Tumipampa (Ecuador), where Wayna Qhapaq erected a second capital. Cuzco's urban core was a planned settlement (ca. forty hectares), whose heart was only about six blocks long by three blocks wide. The Inkas said that their city had been built in the form of a puma, but even sixteenth-century writers were uncertain whether that was meant literally or metaphorically. Two adjoining plazas, separated by the Saphi River, lay at Cuzco's centre: Awkaypata ('Terrace of repose') and Kusipata ('Fortunate terrace'). The former was a main locale for open-air ceremonies, such as the solstice ceremony of 1535 that the Spaniards witnessed. The royal

mummies – male and female – were solemnly taken out for the event and were fêted with beer and food, as Pedro Pizarro described (see earlier discussion).

The provincial centres formed a kind of imposed urbanism and quickly fell into disuse after the Inka collapse (Morris 1972). The architecture often used local techniques and materials, but their layout, masonry, and material culture were largely foreign to the social landscape. The great storage facilities and emphasis on temporary housing underscore that they were designed to support travelling armies and part-time occupants. Tellingly, none of the centres on the main highway had a significant cemetery, indicating that even the Inka personnel felt that they were present only temporarily (Morris 1972). The centres were designed around buildings and spaces intended to order activity in very specific ways, oriented to the four parts of the realm (Gasparini & Margolies 1980, 195–305; Hyslop 1990; Coben 2006). Most centres reflect an intense preoccupation with ceremony and sacred space. Six settlements that we know of were denominated 'New Cuzcos', built in the conceptual, if not actual, image of the capital: Huánuco Pampa, Quito, Tumipampa, Hatunqolla, Charkas, and Inkawasi. The centres were laid out around immense rectangular or trapezoidal plazas in which civic-ceremonial functions were staged according to a ritual schedule set by Cuzco. The pyramidal platform that was invariably erected in the centre of the plaza or to one side of it was a stage from which officials could preside over ceremonies. The artefactual remains at Inka facilities are fairly limited in scope. By far the most diagnostic are the highly standardized ceramics, made in a particular array of forms and decorated in geometric designs. Those ceramics were dedicated to a limited set of activities, most importantly storage, and making and serving food for the grand events of commensal hospitality that formed a key part of the Inkas' statecraft.

One of the most striking characteristics of the entirety of Inka architecture and the objects that were used to provision it, whether in the capital or the provinces, is its corporate insistence (cf. Ascher & Ascher 1981). So far as we can tell, there was nothing physical, save architectural style and perhaps a small emblem or two, such as a bas-relief snake motif on doorways or exterior walls, that might have associated any specific structure or complex with an identifiable person. Perhaps that perception on our part is due to an inability to read the graphical representations with anything approaching clarity. Or perhaps the anonymity of the architecture was intentional. It was designed to convey the message of imperial order and to organize space and movement in a previously chaotic world. That is, it was essentially a civilizing backdrop for the business of Inka dominion. The ruler himself, as the instantiation of the Sun at the moment, was the focal individual with whom all such constructions were associated.

The Inkas also modified the landscape, most obviously in the form of terracing and irrigation systems. The most elegant of these are associated with the royal estates in the Inka heartland, and vast sets of terraces were built in a number of places in the provinces. For example, the unfinished array at Coctaca-Rodero in Jujuy province, Argentina, covers some six square kilometres (Albeck & Scattolin 1991). In one sense, the attention paid to the landscape was just as important as social engineering to the Inkas' civilizing mission. In numerous locations throughout the land, the Inkas carved stones and often enclosed modified and unmodified stones within buildings. Several carved outcrops near the frontier may have been markers that protected the Inkas' civilized world from the barbarity beyond. Samaipata, which lies along the eastern Bolivian perimeter, contains a remarkable worked rock, carved in planes, steps, niches, channels, and other figures. Among other things, those endeavours were intended simultaneously to venerate and contain the power of the stones (Dean 2010).

What then, is missing from this material picture? Aside from a recognizable writing system, much of whose role was occupied by the knot-records called *khipu*, the scarcity of representational imagery could not be more stark. There are no known images of Inka rulers from the prehispanic era. Those that exist (e.g., on drinking cups) were made during the early colonial period, when the graphical arts were transformed by Spanish contact. The only images of royalty that may have been created prehispanically were painted panels sequestered from public view in the Qorikancha, which were accompanied by the painted histories of subject societies. In contrast to other self-promoting rulers of other empires, there were no statues or reliefs, no obelisks, and no tapestries with recognizable human representations. There were no inscriptions extolling grand deeds nor monuments celebrating individual rulers. None of the stone carving for which the Inkas are so justly famous contains an image identifiable as, or a recognizable reference to, a specific ruler. The few human figurines that survive to this day are generic males and females, often made of gold (sweat of the Sun, male) and silver (tears of the Moon, female),

that have been recovered from offerings in high elevation shrines. Other known figures of humans or deities include the life-sized statues of herders tending their flocks and farmers their fields in the Qorikancha, all fabricated from gold. Some *bultos* of deities were made as well, of gold or cloth.

That is, just as Inka architecture was insistently corporate, so were the graphic and plastic arts. The lack of imagery may find explanation from either of two perspectives. First, the existence of imagery may have made the ruler vulnerable to sympathetic magic. The conquistador Pedro Pizarro (1986, 68), for example, recalled that all the items that the victorious prince Atawallpa had touched throughout the year were carefully stored in containers so that they could be burned at the end of the year. The other is that representing ideas in a physical sense makes them concrete in such a way that it becomes difficult to reconfigure things later. That issue will be taken up again later.

What are also missing are most of the bodies of the Inkas themselves. The great, newly discovered exception is the extraordinary cemetery at Puruchuco (near Lima, on the coast), where the mummies of some two thousand Inka-contemporary corpses have been recovered in an immense salvage operation (Cock & Goycochea Díaz 2004). Tellingly, the mummies are distinguished by their woven headgear, in keeping with comments by the chroniclers that those items were the means by which people identified themselves with a particular social group. Regrettably few cemeteries have been found intact in the Cuzco area, however, largely because of Spanish looting, and the skeletal remains that have been recovered are heavily weighted toward resettled labour cadres (Andrushko et al. 2006). The tombs at Machu Picchu, for example, contain a range of items, appropriate to age, gender, and, frequently, non-Inka ethnic groups (Salazar 2007; Turner et al. 2009).

The Inka rulers' mummies enjoyed a vital, but largely secret life after death for about twenty-five years after the Spanish conquest, until a campaign in 1558–60 by the magistrate of Cuzco, Lic. Juan Polo Ondegardo. He discovered the heretical practice and set about ferreting out the mummies and their brother images. He destroyed the latter but saved the former for limited display. The Inka Garcilaso de la Vega reported seeing one in 1561 shortly before his emigration to Spain (see earlier discussion). Ultimately, they were transported to Lima, where they were interred in sacred Catholic land adjacent to a church. Despite a variety of efforts, they still have not been located (Bauer & Coello Rodriguez 2007).

The corporate, or even anonymous, nature of Inka material culture contrasts starkly with their epic histories, which attributed Tawantinsuyu's formation and character to the brilliance of individual rulers. Julien's (2000) analysis of the narratives that made their ways onto Spanish pages, thanks to the knot-records and their masters, shows that they consist primarily of royal biography and genealogy. Three of the main accounts, by Diez de Betanzos, Cieza de Leon, and the Quipocamayos, each emphasize the accomplishments of successive rulers. Apparently, the three sets of informants told histories that favoured their own ancestors, implying that no single narrative of the past was acceptable to Cuzco's royal families. Diez de Betanzos' account (1996), which comes as close to a royal saga as any that we have, is from his royal Inka wife and her relatives. It was in some senses little more than a paean to the accomplishments of their ancestor Pachakuti Inka Yupanki. The notion of a unified history is thus the consequence of Spanish insistence and the political survival of a particular set of powerful aristocrats into the early colonial era.

The radical break in content between material and oral expression reinforces the idea that the Inka ordered knowledge and expression into distinct states. Things and memories or speech provided complementary windows into Inka knowledge. They were necessary and mutually reinforcing but did not provide the same information. That point leads us to consider how forms of knowledge were linked in practice. Although Andean peoples did not have an alphabetic writing system before the Spaniards, they did develop tools for recording and transmitting information that were remarkably precise and flexible. The best known of them were woven registers called *khipu*, although they also used painted poles and a very few panels. An individual *khipu* consisted of a longitudinal primary cord or, more rarely, a carved wooden bar to which a multi-coloured series of knotted cords were tied. The cords were twisted in different directions and a variety of knot forms were employed. They were dyed in hundreds of colours (at least twenty-four of which had names), and each shade could have a specific meaning in a particular context. When all the combinations of position, number, order, colour, and shape are considered, the possibilities for recording specific information become enormous (Urton 2003).

Two features of the *khipu* are particularly salient to the present discussion. First is that there is general agreement

that the *khipu* were not a linguistically based device prehistorically, although that remains a controversial issue. Each *khipu* had an associated oral component, memorized by the *khipukamayuq* (knot-record master), but many *khipu* were probably at least partially decipherable by any expert in the field. Leland Locke (1923) first demonstrated the decimal structure of many of the *khipu*, but about a third of known examples do not share that structure. Urton has suggested that the latter type may consist of narratives, rather than accounting records.

Scholars have not yet reached a resolution of the precise formatting of information (e.g., Urton 2001, 2003; Salomon 2004; Brokaw 2010). As Salomon and Niño-Murcia (2011) have described, three basic models of the prehispanic *khipu*'s code have been proposed: a Quechua-based syllabary, a semasiographic system, and a content-neutral coding format akin to 8-bit ASCII sequences. The first proposition was originally presented in the mid-eighteenth century but is generally rejected by academics for the prehispanic era for a variety of reasons (Hyland 2003; Urton 2003). Among modern scholars, Urton (2003) favours the 8-bit code, which he proposed, while Salomon (2004; Salomon & Niño-Murcia 2011) and Brokaw (2010) favour a semasiographic argument. Urton (1998, 409) has also argued that 'khipu signifiers contained a high level of syntactic and semantic information'. Drawing from ethnographic research, Salomon and Niño-Murcia find the semasiographic position most persuasive. *Khipu* would thus signify 'categories, acts, objects or any culturally recognized entity', but not words themselves.

Second, to judge from *khipu* formats and transcribed testimony in early colonial documents, information in many *khipu* was ordered on the basis of hierarchy and event, and less so on the basis of temporal sequence (Salomon 2004). For example, the first entry in numerical *khipu* is often the summation of all that is to follow. The Wanka *khipu*-based testimony on twenty-some years' provisions given to the Spaniards listed events sequentially, but not calendrically, and items within each event were ordered by cultural value. Thus, gold, silver, camelids, and cloth preceded foodstuffs and other supplies (Murra 1975). In the *Probanza* account (Rowe 1985) filed in 1569 by survivors of the last Cuzco massacre, conquest sequences were reported completely in each of the four parts of the empire one after another. They began with the region of highest prestige (northwest) and ran sequentially in clockwise fashion in descending order of status. Anyone assembling a European-style, empire-wide chronology would have needed more information to piece things together; that is one of the reasons that Inka history is such a mess today.

The direct relevance of those two features of the *khipu* to the present argument is that the registers used a meaning-based code to provide information in a hierarchical and performance-based structuring of knowledge. To state this in a slightly different way, the *khipu* provided the material means by which intangible knowledge could be performed as needed. The Inka leadership relied on the registers – and the knot-record masters and court savants (*amauta*) – to provide both accounts of history and accounting of imperial affairs. The role of the dead in this kind of knowledge preservation is hinted at in the discovery of the well-preserved mummies at Laguna de los Condores. One mummy, housed in his tomb early in the colonial era, was found with his *khipu* close at hand. On the basis of an analysis of the register's numerical content, Urton (2001) suggests that it contained a two-year record of the labour obligations of his administrative charges. One is tempted to surmise that should the Inkas have returned to power, his mummy may have been called on to report.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

To wrap up this discussion of Inka mummies, let us return to the two cases of iconoclasm described at the outset. When the Spaniards burnt the remains of Wiraqocha Inka, they thought that they were destroying an object that was in itself inert and mute, but that served as a potent vessel for the devil's mischief. The mummy's incineration can be likened to the casting down of the wooden idol of the earth shaker Pachacamac from his temple, which Hernando Pizarro's men accomplished early in the colonial era. Both paralleled the destruction of the *wawqi*, the brother idols of the rulers; the demolition of Wanakawri, the monolith the Inkas understood to be the transfigured body of one of their founding ancestors; and the destruction of more than two thousand shrines in one region alone by the crusading priest Albornoz. While such things could not be sentient in the Spanish view of the world, the native beliefs made the objects valuable tools in the fallen angel's efforts to thwart God's will (Molina 2011, 19). For true believing Christians, deity was transcendent, not material.

In Andean eyes, fundamentally different processes were occurring. The world or cosmos was replete with sentient beings – humans present, ancestors past, eternal places on

the landscape, and celestial, terrestrial, and marine deities. Each of those actors was physically present, interacting with the others in a complex interplay of mutual sustenance. The deceased Inka ancestors had pivotal roles in those relationships, for they provided a direct, legitimizing link between the living Inkas and the genesis of the fifth Sun of existence. The Inkas committed a notable fraction of their thought and practice to the promulgation of that idea. The worship of the Sun God Inti at temples throughout the land, the veneration of ancestral mummies by their descendant relatives, the increasingly complex array of rituals conducted at the hundreds of shrines surrounding Cuzco, the pilgrimages to the lord mountain peaks, stone carving, water canalization, and similar sorts of acts were all dedicated to elaborating the Inkas' ideas of their rightful place in the world.

To put this discussion back into a larger context, my understanding is that the Inkas simultaneously conducted two imperial projects: one that was organizational and concerned with practice and one that was intellectual and concerned with legitimacy. Both contributed to the application of imperial power. A central part of the latter endeavour entailed periodic reshaping of the canon of Inka imperial organization and attendant knowledge. To effect changes, the Inkas employed a complex mix of narratives of the origins of cosmos and humanity and their own past with public performances, which re-enacted or reinforced social relations and historical events. Those acts were performed on memory landscapes, which provided a socialized environment that could be manipulated to shape a constant interplay between past and present. Their visually distinctive built environment and material culture were designed to situate and reinforce hierarchical relations. At key moments, the dead were called upon for their approval.

Two physical means were employed to change the actors and thus imperial power relations. The first occurred when acts of group violence were set into motion. At the smallest scale, they could include palace coups, but at their most disruptive they could include events such as the years-long civil war that had riven the empire just as the Spaniards arrived, making the Inkas particularly vulnerable to overthrow. Second was to assassinate key voices in the discussion. Most significantly, they were seated rulers, competitor aspirants to the throne, and ancestral mummies. The last were crucial players in the drama, as they were powerful voices for the interests of their descendant kin and for moral behaviour. The killing of Thupa Inka Yupanki's mummy was thus a

profoundly political act, intended to remove a key actor from history and disenfranchise his descendant kin. The point was to facilitate revision of the past with a major player removed, so that a contested present could be naturalized. That act put a new twist on the notion of mortuary (mis)treatment.

In those actions, the Inkas partitioned crucial kinds of knowledge in their world into forms that were expressed in material, intangible, and performative states. In some circumstances, but definitely not all, the media of expression reinforced one another and overlapped in content. In other fundamental ways, the content was radically segregated. Broadly speaking, the material expressions provided a structure, a spatial order, a framework for argument, and a collective agreement about certain principles. They provided a means of reinforcing relationships between social and cosmological orders and of communicating relations of hierarchy and power. They also provided a means of visualizing hierarchy and vitality through objects and emblems and of shaping behaviour within Inka space.

The immaterial − including speech, memorized narratives or other accounts, and principles of order − provided the context for dynamic argument over power, time, the past, and legitimacy. Because the particulars of the political order and history were constantly undergoing revision, much of the content of their expression was reserved for the intangible realm or for performed expression through *khipu*-assisted discourse. The lack of material expression of the Inka elite dead in various kinds of media is most likely a consequence of the idea that the partible being of the rulers was both omnipresent and subject to attack. Through the physical and intangible contexts for the expression of knowledge, the Inkas created a structure for an ongoing conversation among the core elite in the heartland. The resolution of that discussion or debate was presented to the empire at large through particular material goods and performances, such as the grand festivals enacted without cease in the capital and less frequently at provincial centres and temples throughout the land. By inducing or perhaps compelling the contending or resistant parties to join in the acts, the Inkas attempted to legitimize the content of their ideology and their power.

The immediate rejection of so much of the imperial argument with the appearance of the Spaniards invites a three-pronged explanation. One factor derives from the idea that, because Inka knowledge was tied so intimately to its core institutions, it could not be sustained as the imperial

structure unravelled[2]. The second is that worship of the Sun and the Inka ruler as his earthly son incarnate had no resonance with the common folk. For them, the Moon was usually the more important celestial being, while ties to their own land and ancestors provided all the explanations they needed for humanity's place in the world. Finally, Inka ideology was inexorably tied to exploitation and, for many people, to a separation from the land of their ancestors and a peaceful eternity. Small wonder that little enthusiasm for the Inkas' ideas prevailed outside the heartland once the sons of the Sun lost their supremacy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1 This section of the paper draws from D'Altroy & Wilkinson (2009).
2 I thank Darryl Wilkinson for making this observation.

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Responses and Reactions: Concluding Thoughts

'Death Shall Have No Dominion': A Response

Timothy Jenkins

I

It is a difficult brief to comment on a series of papers in a different discipline to one's own. I was struck by many shared characteristics and borrowings between anthropology and archaeology, but also by my lack of experience in dealing with certain problems that are central to archaeology and commonplace to its practitioners. My interests as an anthropologist are primarily in contemporary societies; in particular, with the influence everyday practices such as division of property, marriage, and land inheritance have on metropolitan categories and state institutions: the feedback between local and national levels. And I have an interest too in historical continuities, with the impress of earlier solutions to dilemmas expressed in later improvisations. I have worked in France on material contained in written records that goes back more than six hundred years (Jenkins 2010a). But this apprenticeship does not readily fit me to appreciate fully the specific dilemmas of archaeology, in particular of those cases – which are necessarily the norm – in which there is a complete separation between the events being investigated through their remains and the investigating categories of the social scientists. Much contemporary anthropology works on including the investigating categories in the mix and construing them as part of the material; this by definition cannot be the case in prehistoric investigations, although there are some tantalizing cases when materials lead into historical times.

The issue may be refined in these terms: that while anthropologists deal readily in 'meaning', archaeologists are confronted with 'remains' or traces of meaning. This distinction is already present in the contrast between historical and anthropological approaches: documents are evidences of past worlds of meaning, of conflicts and strategies that have to be reconstructed (and not intuited, as if they could be read at sight); the scholar's task is to find out what were the questions the subjects were asking for these products to have been (part of) the answer. Nevertheless, given certain continuities of place and practice, ethnographic and sociological models may interpret historical materials very successfully, as well as – more questionably – supplement gaps in the materials. But prehistoric evidences harden the distinction: what is the basis of the possibility of reconstruction of meaning? In a sense, the necessary focus on material remains brings out the ease with which anthropologists presume to read the matters of 'habitus' or *problematique*, the frames of reference that allow material elements to have sense in a particular context. Anthropologists can wallow in meaning, and not only in reading the simple senses of things; events too gain their meanings from clashes between parties with their own presuppositions, so that 'events' (in inverted commas), happenings that are regarded as memorable and recorded, transmit these framings in their interactions. Framings are by nature comparative, the comparisons usually being smuggled in with scarcely a thought or care. There is a good deal of criticism within the discipline for presuming too great a coherence in the materials anthropologists describe, for instance, for ascribing 'cosmologies' as causes to what may be better understood as unrelated pragmatic events.

I was impressed, therefore, in reading the papers, both by the efforts made to read these framing presuppositions from the evidence, for a 'habitus' does not leave any obvious spoor, and by the acute making of distinctions that did not assume coherence where there was none. My first observation, then, is that comparison is both

vital for making sense of evidence – we have to assume a series of frames in practice – and potentially a pretty unreliable aid. Colin Renfrew (this volume) summed this up in his introductory remarks concerning cognitive archaeology: although we can have no direct access to the minds of earlier peoples, we can find evidence of how their categories and patterns of thought worked, though differing radically from our own. I will return to how some anthropology has approached these questions in a moment, to see how real this hope is.

These remarks should not, however, be construed as casting a dampener on the possibility of gaining reliable information. That is achieved by a constant trade in models: the steady work of interpretation, selection of evidence, and supplementation from other contexts. Archaeology, like anthropology, borrows concepts and models to assist the work of reconstruction, assuming commonalities that will be either discounted or developed on closer investigation of the evidence, engagement with new techniques, and so forth. The importation of ideas from anthropology – of simple forms of social life, for example, or models of kinship, or notions of belief in ancestors or gods – introduces in each case particular implications to be tested. To take one instance, Thomas' paper (this volume) shifts attention from reciprocal, kin-based groups as the basis of social intelligibility to territorial and property-based 'house' societies that use an idiom of kinship for wider – political and economic – purposes, in order to explain the appearance and persistence of barrows. I mention this case because I have worked on a comparable social organization. Discerning the appearance of such an institution in early modern Europe raises the question of the basis of such corporations as 'houses': their legitimacy and continuing existence. Are we seeing, in barrows, traces of something like the emergence of Neolithic law?

This kind of practice, however, introduces a note of caution. It is easy to borrow models without a sufficient feel for the context of their original inspiration and use (how else may they be borrowed or translated?). And there are always problems too concerning the basic model of man (*Anthropos*) to be employed: is it to be based on the individual, defined by need and scarcity, the pursuit of pleasure and the minimizing of effort to achieve his ends, and so forth, or is it to draw on even less secure counter-models centred on collectivities, desire, abundance, honour, and so forth?

My second observation, then, which likewise is articulated in several of the papers, is that making deductions from burial remains to cosmologies of death and afterlife is harder than one might have thought. Moreover, in cases when there are later written texts with rich cosmological accounts (Lau on Peru, Croucher on Mesopotamia, Hammond on Mayan civilization, this volume), these may be thoroughly misleading if read back into earlier materials and funerary traditions that, once identified, may be found to have persisted, unacknowledged, into the period of text production. And there are suggestions that religious cosmologies, rather than being any kind of human universal, are tied to the development of writing in the service of the state and to the interests of elites (Stevenson, Boyd, D'Altroy, this volume). For these kinds of reason, many of the papers never quite arrive at questions of mortality and immortality, and rather dissolve these questions into others, concerning the various employments of the dead to construct and maintain social relations.

On the other hand, it is clear that death, as with other biological actions and passions, is part of the repertoire available to all human populations to build into the experience of life and to employ analogically in making sense of other experiences, including those of social relations and events (cf. Hertz 1960). Just as human groups use kinship and alliance (as locally constructed and construed) in order to model all kinds of involuntary and chosen relationships, in political, cultural, economic, and religious spheres, so death too has a central and repeated role as a social model. Death – and the problem it poses to the continuing nature of life – is used to think with. Indeed, it is rather startling to see how central the metaphor of death is to a range of ancient civilizations and to wonder about its apparently reduced place in our own. Death and rebirth, whilst not universal, is a central social motif, put to all kinds of ends, and James Frazer, whose *Golden Bough* is supposed to explain this model and its universality, comes surprisingly back into focus. Indeed, if I received a lasting impression from the symposium, it was that I was led back to reconsider the importance of the history and original concerns of anthropology.

2

So while I was impressed by the overlap of contemporary theoretical interests between anthropology and archaeology, in such forms as the improvised use of material elements to create new social relations, and the distributed character of both memory and persons, not to mention the interplay of what is concealed and what is revealed,

I was more struck still with certain continuities with the long-term programme of classical sociology. Indeed, the scope of this project reminded me of the ambitious and confident nature of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century sociological mind; the founding sociologists and anthropologists asked good questions in that period, and we have not gone beyond their scope. These early minds were evidenced in the references to Robert Hertz, Arnold Van Gennep, Maurice Halbwachs, and Maurice Leenhardt. Yet contemporary anthropology has, if not forgotten these questions, at least covered them with an incrustation of more contemporary and smaller-scale concerns while, to my eye at least, archaeology has kept these larger questions in view, perhaps of necessity, in response to the issue I raised earlier, which we might call the problem of the basis of interpretation or reconstruction.

I mentioned Frazer as setting the agenda in many respects, and this name returns us to the matter of comparison, which was perhaps the central question during the development of the social sciences. In that period, there were two important questions. On the one hand, what model of comparison do we use? And, on the other, what precisely are we comparing? Or, what is the variable at issue? These questions have a bearing on the element shared by the papers presented in the symposium, and their organization.

In social anthropology, I suggest, we do not reflect enough on the question of how to make comparisons. We all know that sociology is impossible without comparison; in that way, we are still in debt to the nineteenth century sociologists. Durkheim was quite specific on the point: the British comparative method constituted a crucial advance towards the possibility of sociological knowledge because it paid attention to comparison. But it fell down, he suggested, because it carried with it certain unexamined assumptions of an individualist, contractarian, and utilitarian kind, expressed in pre-formed classifications and evolutionary schemata. Essentially, common-sense notions of comparison were carried over unreflectively into sociological description: we know what constitutes likeness and dissimilarity without thinking. Overcoming this tendency remains the challenge, identifying the scale at which human activity takes place in a particular society and at which meaning is constructed, and discovering the nature of the obligations and the force of motivations expressed in particular human behaviour. This is back to the matter of 'framings'. More or less every paper was constructed around

a challenge of this kind, identifying the implications of new techniques and the evidence they present and revising previous hypotheses in terms of scale, meaning, obligation, and motivation.

The particular interest of Durkheim's approach from my point of view is that he developed a precise and controlled theory of comparison between social forms. He laid this theory out in the *Rules of Sociological Method* (1895)[1]. He was concerned with social wholes, with the assemblage of conventions or institutions that constrain and inspire individual members, and he looked particularly to the scale of these assemblages and to transitions between forms, to the amalgamation or disaggregation of units. Archaeological investigations (to my eyes) concentrate precisely on these issues, sampling the social assemblages over time and – crucially – discerning transitions in scale, seeking at the same time to link (or sometimes to discount) the influence of different institutions upon one another in either provoking or expressing the move from one size to another.

Durkheim therefore drew up what we might call a spectrum of social forms, organized around a single variable. He conceived this variable initially in terms of a move from simplicity to complexity, depicting as we have seen complexity in terms of the assemblage of simple forms through amalgamation. Using a nineteenth century vocabulary, Durkheim set out a series of social forms that runs from the unorganized horde to the clan, from the clan to a segmentary society made up of clans, from the segmentary society to a confederation of such societies, and then on to higher scale organizations, through the amalgamation of units. From an outside perspective, a major factor in the intellectual coherence of this symposium has been that the papers have been organized loosely on a plan that reproduces this spectrum of social forms, and it is hard to conceive how else to impose order on some twenty-odd papers.

It is important to notice that this ordering is not a teleological series: there is no original society, nor a final 'perfected' social form driving social evolution in some mystical fashion. This is where we have separated from the Victorian agenda or, at least, believe ourselves to have done so. But the exclusion of teleology remains a challenge and is perhaps a particular challenge, on the one hand, to biological or cognitive approaches, and, on the other hand, to arguments identifying the emergence of individualism in the more complex societies. But it is in these papers in particular that the point is driven home, by the increasing precision of new methods that allow

us to see how each social group studied may be understood as offering solutions to specific historical problems (Zilhão, this volume). Historical study then remains the best antidote to teleology. Moreover, studies over time reveal that social groups may simplify their order as well as complexify it (something nineteenth century understandings sometimes classified as 'degeneracy'). What we are dealing in is rather a classification of what Durkheim terms 'decisive events', where elements are introduced into new social wholes, each with their own properties associated with their appropriate scale. More or less every paper deals in such an event or transition (the exception is Higham's paper on twenty-five generations, this volume).

Durkheim made considerable adjustments to this basic notion of a spectrum of social forms. In particular, he distinguished between the number of social units in any given assemblage and the density of moral ties that link them: the plurality of religious, political, economic, familial, and so forth, relationships that characterize a particular social order. He suggested indeed that population density and the development of physical infrastructure will be an expression of these morphological and moral factors. This is to give more precision to ideas of habitus or *problematique*, with which we began (explored in Mizoguchi's 'chains of signifiers', this volume). And we may remark that size and complexity of social grouping are not necessarily matched by a proportionate moral density; on the contrary, the greater the degree of amalgamation, the less there may be of density of moral ties, and their nature may change. In this fashion, Durkheim recast his earlier distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity (in *The Division of Labour*); smaller societies with little social differentiation are characterized by the overlap of their institutions and the density of their moral ties, while larger, more complex societies are characterized by the separation of their institutions. In the former solidarity is created by the multiple relationships among persons; in the latter, interdependence is created by the division of labour. These are quite distinct and, indeed, opposed forms of authority, legitimacy, and value, economic or religious.

Rather than running from simple groups to complex ones, then, the spectrum of social forms is organized around the extent to which the component institutions are condensed and overlapping or, on the contrary, separated and dispersed. In the years after the formulation of these principles in the *Rules*, Durkheim identified a series of ethnographic examples that allowed him to

construct a spectrum of forms of the kind with which we are concerned. He introduced such a series in the *Essay on Primitive Classification* (1903), using Australian, Middle and North American, and Chinese societies, and exploring the variation in degree of identity or detachment between social structure and social thought in each case. This is controlled comparison of a particular variable, through a series of social forms. It is a prodigious piece of comparative sociology. The same approach allowed him to write the *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912), and perhaps appears to its greatest effect in Mauss' *Essay on the Gift* (1924).

The payoff is this: through such a spectrum of social forms we gain the possibility of painstakingly constructing an understanding of other forms of social life by working our way back, from a form of life we understand – our own – through intermediate and overlapping forms, to the alien forms that, at first sight, we either misread or cannot understand. By working along this spectrum of overlapping forms, it should be possible to escape the dilemma of either immediate intuition or incomprehension. This dilemma is expressed in many forms, including having to attribute significant social change (decisive events) either to contingency or to the work of an inspired individual – a legislator. By this process of construction we have the possibility of overcoming the opposition with which I began between anthropological meaning, on the one hand, and the archaeological concern with remains, on the other.

I will make two observations on comparison in this approach, before drawing together some concluding remarks. First, the minimum number of instances needed to conduct controlled comparison is three, in order to know what is being compared, what is essential, and what is accidental. We tend to reintroduce common-sense distinctions through making two-term comparisons, but these cannot escape from being arbitrary. Second, in every series of comparisons made in Durkheim's fashion there is an implicit end-term: our own complex, Western society, taken to be an extreme of the dispersion of institutions. In order to construct an understanding of other societies, one has to move back along the spectrum, towards simpler or more condensed social forms. At the same time, it is worth remarking that the more dispersed societies such as our own may lack some of the appropriate categories to grasp the working of the more condensed, having recourse precisely to utilitarian and teleological accounts, or presuming forms of boundedness and notions of property and power that should

in fact be up for discussion. These have to be grasped, reformulated, and internalized through ethnography. Durkheim's approach in practice frames the entire contemporary anthropological agenda.

3

Why have I focussed on the problem of comparison, in the context of considering issues of mortality and immortality? Because the study of single societies over a long period, as archaeology can achieve, lends itself ideally to this kind of approach. Durkheim recognized this possibility in the *Rules*, but the development of archaeology in its contemporary form is largely since his time. In archaeological materials we have a spectrum of social forms (with potential reversals of size and scope) and 'decisive events' in terms of both changes in social morphology and the precipitation of new frames of interpretation.

The decisive question concerns the nature of the variable being studied. We would not expect it to be focussed in the variation of collective representations of death explicitly. As I have suggested, for Durkheim, the crucial variable concerns the degree of overlap among institutions or, conversely, the degree of their dispersal. All kinds of social qualities can be related to this single, abstract feature of the condensation or separation of the spheres of common life.

It is around this kind of abstract variable that I would like to see organized discussions of attitudes to death and the place of the dead with respect to the living. I would expect to see, in the way the various papers have suggested, distinctions of attention and mourning, and of spirits and ancestors, and the relatively rare instances of what might be defined as 'religious' forms and rituals. This is the implicit variable in the organization of the papers, and it brings out the extraordinary variety in the fate of the dead.

NOTES

1 This reading repeats material from an earlier paper (Jenkins 2010b).

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Comments: Death Shall Have No Dominion

Paul K. Wason

I. THE THEME – AND SOME BASIC QUESTIONS

This book, like the conference before it, is not primarily about the archaeology of burial itself. The archaeological study of burial, essential background for the current project, is much more complex than might seem at first, and leads now to substantially greater insight than when I first encountered burial studies some years ago. Perhaps most importantly, the mortuary study provides a small window into how people at various times and places have understood what it is to be human – our place in the universe, the nature of the social order (and any one individual's place within it), our destiny. This is the archaeology of mortality and immortality.

In his book *Consilience*, E. O. Wilson put his finger on a key element of humanness, one that is central to our topic. As an aside, this was not in his chapter on religion, which altogether was not as profound as some of his work, but in the rather more thoughtful chapter on art.

> The most distinctive qualities of the human species are extremely high intelligence, language, culture, and reliance on long-term social contacts. In combination they give early *Homo sapiens* a decisive edge over all competing animal species, but they also exacted a price we continue to pay, composed of the shocking recognition of the self, of the finiteness of personal existence, and of the chaos of the environment. … These revelations, not disobedience to the gods, are what drove humankind from Paradise. *Homo sapiens* is the only species to suffer psychological exile.
>
> (Wilson 1998, 224–5)

We are social animals and care about our fellows. We are capable of reflecting on birth, on the meanings of life, on death, on immortality, on non-corporeal life, on non-material realities like mathematics, and on imagined worlds like 'the future'.

And then we die. I will not begrudge the medical world the right to say doctors save lives; it has earned bragging rights with just my family alone. Yet we are only kidding ourselves if we decline to think carefully about what exactly this might mean. At best we can succeed in postponing death and that for a fleeting moment. I am among the great many people for whom this postponement has permitted a very important moment. But it remains that if we were, like the man in the old Maine joke, to ask the undertaker, 'What's the death rate 'round here?' we would still receive the same answer humans have always had to give, an answer both trivial and profound, 'Oh, about one per person'. This is the disjunction that Wilson draws our attention to, that we have all experienced, and that is the reason the ideas presented in the papers here are so valuable. How have others around the world and through the millennia dealt with this 'psychological exile' as Wilson calls it?[1]

How we think of our mortality and how we deal with this paradox are reflected throughout our lives. For example, if I were talking like this at a cocktail party I would surely have to apologize for being so morbid. Avoiding the issue is clearly one route – at least while all is going well. Another common approach, probably more common cross-culturally, is an emphasis on leaving a good legacy – in the form of descendants, perhaps, a good name, an overflowing publication list. It is often the case, too, that our understanding of our mortality is, you might say, balanced, by considerations of immortality or the 'afterlife'. Although I have not explored with care the literature on the subject of how cross- cultural views of death and afterlife affect everyday lives, I would expect such a study, with the questions raised by the papers here in mind, to be very useful indeed.

II. WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ABOUT DEATH AND IMMORTALITY AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL LIFE?

I offer here my own take on just a few highlights, recognizing that specialists in one region or period will probably recognize a somewhat different set of insights. These I have plucked from a very rich harvest of ideas, but not, I think, randomly. My examples are chosen for their promise in getting at the deeper issues of what it is to be human. These are ideas and lines of research that not only promise insight into how others have dealt with mortality and immortality, but may be useful for us in considering these questions more broadly for our own understanding of what it is and can be to be human.

1. In studying the period of state formation in Japan Mizoguchi (this volume) very helpfully reminded us of several aspects of human death that together present a set of paradoxes. Much as with Wilson's point, these are, at one level, nearly all things we already know. Importantly, they are true of any people we may study whether or not they explicitly draw on these points as they undertake the activities following a death, and even when, as is sometimes the case, the people in question may well not believe all of them. Consider especially the following:

- Death comes upon everyone – but,
- No-one knows from experience what it is.
- We cannot communicate with the dead and we cannot imagine what it is like to be dead. (Still, I would add, we cannot help ourselves; each of us has in fact imagined what it is like, or tried to. And this imagining has very likely had a major effect on the world's diversity of burial custom.)
- It is impossible to make sense in terms of the viewpoint of the dead.
- Other elements of belief, experience, practice, are needed to arrive at most actual ideas, such as deification of the dead.
- Death is, finally, paradoxical in that in one sense it is unforeseeable, unpredictable, but in another sense it is inevitable.

These issues and paradoxes are a reminder as well that burial customs are linked in people's minds with a range of other social practices. Divination, for example, is a view of the world and a practice meant to counter the unforeseeability of death.

2. In his fascinating book *The Buried Soul*, Timothy Taylor asks: 'At what point did we, as a species, start to believe in something like an immortal soul?' (2005, 29). This of course begs several questions hardly touched on in these papers – what is the soul and how widely is it believed in? But we can ask a slightly sanitized version of this question if we include a few additional points that are addressed in the papers. Modern apes do not practice burial, and, as Piel and Stewart (this volume) note, it is not clear they understand 'death' as a distinct state of being. And, as far as I am aware, there is no reason to think Australopithecenes were much different. But as d'Errico and Vanhaeren (this volume) point out, there are 195 known primary burials from the Upper Paleolithic, from a total of sixty-one burial sites reported in the literature. Somewhere in the temporal and evolutionary space between Australopithecenes and fully modern humans of the Upper Paleolithic, something very dramatic happened.

What was this, and when and how did it happen? It is unlikely that there was, much less that we can ever pinpoint, a moment of transition. But can we narrow the range? We know that over the same time other elements of our physical and cultural being were changing as well, and that knowledge allows us to ask this a little differently still; can we correlate the advent of primary burials with any other observed changes, physical or cultural? If Wilson is correct, I think we should not be surprised to see art (or at least symbolic representation more broadly) practised among the same places and peoples where we see burials, though likely we can imagine a dozen other possible explanations than his, even if they do appear together.

These papers present several points that might well be useful in answering these more specific questions. Indeed materials drawn together in several of the papers add up to much more than the sum of the parts.

If I understand Zilhão (this volume) rightly, claims for burial being practised during the Middle Paleolithic seem valid – at least the sceptics have some unanswered questions they need to address. This includes, very importantly, both Neanderthals and anatomically modern *Homo sapiens*. Zilhão also argues that earlier possible precursors such as the deposits in the Sima de los Huesos are more likely due to natural processes. d'Errico and Vanhaeren (this volume) see this conclusion as possible but premature; we are not ready to pinpoint 'the earliest' treatment of the dead that could indicate Wilson's 'psychological exile'. Even so we are clearly narrowing

the gap. Zilhão's case strikes me as convincing, even for Neanderthals for whom other evidence of symbolic mental capacity is also growing (Caron et al. 2011; Pike et al. 2012). Burial, it seems, was practised at least from 120,000 years ago, and there are tantalizing hints of careful, intentional treatment of the dead possibly long before this, but this is a point of disagreement.

3. It is also worth mentioning several examples of theoretical models used in these papers that are not just of value in the specific context of the study itself, but could be more widely applied for gaining insight into what is going on in certain archaeological burial samples. As in any set of models, there are elements of these that, if not actually contradictory to each other, make it unlikely that we yet have all the ideal interpretive and analytical tools. But the following are worth serious consideration:

- There are several mentions among these papers of van Gennep, whose work, it seems, still has something new to help us. Exploring the relevance of death ritual as rites of passage offers among other things a helpful reminder that the death of someone we know, or who at least is a part of our social circle, is a time when we are confronted in a particular way with the question of what it really is to be human, including our inevitable and important social nature. While we might imagine the 'separation' and 'transition' aspects to be the more obviously applicable to analysing activity surrounding a death, we may find that the 'reintegration' aspect of rites of passage can offer exceptional insight into archaeologically observed death-related activity. I would add that there is no need for this to be at the expense of understanding death in more overtly religious terms, as we often try to do in the study of mortality and immortality. Even in those cases when we can learn a great deal about a people's theological and cosmological world, the human social dimension remains of great importance.
- Creese's (this volume) use of Catherine Bell's idea of 'redemptive hegemony' in which performance of ritual gives those involved a sense of empowerment, not necessarily out of a belief that the rituals have some cosmic effect, but as an appropriate (social) response to the death.
- In studying pre-state Egyptian burial, Stevenson (this volume) makes use of the important insight that a possibly universal sense of immortality among humans can

be connected with 'social memory'. This nicely takes advantage of an idea, often expressed in these papers, and that fits E. O. Wilson's point about the importance of sociality for our species – the idea that death, immortality, and the relevant rituals are always at least partly about those who remain, and maybe are more so than we, in our somewhat individualistically oriented cultures, would expect. As Stevenson notes, 'contrary to [the] assertion that this experiential immortality emerges because of an individual's innate sense of his or her own perpetuity, I contend … that it emerges from people's intuitive sense of the continued existence of *others*'. This, I expect, would be helpful to think about far beyond early Egypt, and in addition, I do not see any particular reason it should be contrasted with ideas about personal immortality either.

- Along the same lines – and possibly one way of making use of Stevenson's ideas in other, especially purely prehistoric contexts – I found interesting the idea explored in several papers (for example, that of Creese already mentioned) that indicated a burial process involving initial individual treatment, then re-burial. This re-burial appears to involve a move toward a community event – maybe community appropriation of the one who is no longer important primarily as the former living individual. Thus transformation of (one might even say 'uses' of) the dead by the living is a major theme of the work presented here and promises great insight.

4. Once a monument is in the landscape it can be used for any number of purposes, but we still want to circle in, to the extent possible, on why it was put there in the first place. Thomas' (this volume) work on long barrows and the earlier plank-built houses helps us to understand this important transition period in prehistory. Long barrows were used periodically for ceremonies over a long period, but these apparently were not new burial ceremonies, since it appears that all the burials in them were from a short period, possibly from the same ritual 'event' as the building of the structure itself. In his interpretation, the structure and burials all help in the formation of the group itself as they re-defined who they are.

It seems possible as well that however different, it does have some overlap with older models of monuments as territorial markers – though it puts the emphasis on in-group inclusion rather than out-group exclusion. In practice these are often two sides of a coin and clearly relevant to each other.

5. As in archaeological burial research generally, many of the studies here give emphasis to the social meanings of these varied practices. Those situations that could draw on ethnographic data, historical records, or inscriptions reveal something of the varied ways in which death and 'being dead' have been conceived. One statement Lau (this volume) made – 'They track different sorts of material careers of ancestors, following what they have achieved in death' – is a particularly striking example.

In a more purely prehistoric example we could not hope to uncover such nuances of cosmological thought. But this is a social statement as well – in that the dead are in some ways still part of society, or that the people define society in a way not limited to the currently living community members. I wonder whether there are ways we can take our analyses of social meanings of the practices as hints at the prehistoric cosmologies, at the thought behind them, so that we can learn something of their ideas about the world and how it works, not just about humans and society.

III. WHERE CAN WE GO FROM HERE?

For the last decade or so I have spent a lot of time developing research support programmes rather than designing and carrying out research itself. In the process I have got into the habit of looking for good questions. Like all successful research, these papers raise a great many new questions for every one they have helped to answer. They also help to clarify not just what we now know but the important issues that remain unknown. I would like to mention a few of these unknowns and remaining questions before concluding, for they really do add up to some interesting lines of research worth pursuing.

- *What are the first hints*? Are there precursors to Upper Palaeolithic burial?
- *Ancestor worship*. Can we make progress on the issue of what ancestor worship is, what it is not, when it is useful as a descriptor, and when some less pointed understanding of ancestor valuing (or manipulation) is more helpful?
- *Immortality*. This is a useful word for the title but I am not sure the papers took us very far in the exploration of immortality. This is still wide open. Even more so than ancestor worship, this is a complicated concept. Might it help to stick our toes in the water with concepts like transcendence or spirituality rather than

taking the dive into the deep end of hard-to-pin-down ideas making up the concept of immortality?
- *Emotional responses of the living*. Here I must make reference to the original symposium and the discussion sessions, because it is an important line of thinking stimulated by, but not much worked out in the written papers. In particular, several of the students attending the symposium raised the question of whether or not we can get insight into the role of our affective, emotional responses to death?
- I have never had the chance to excavate a human burial. And, strange as it may seem, though I am approaching my own seventh decade of life, I have never attended a human *burial* ceremony either. (It is interesting that I, like many people today, think of burial as the basic, 'default' and typical way of treating relatives who have passed away, but it is apparently not so common among my family and acquaintances.)
- I did excavate a dog 'burial' once. As we thought about it, most of our questions had to do with human intentions and world views, despite the fact that it was a very different species of animal actually buried, on its side, with its head on a flat rock, which we could not resist referring to as a pillow. To be sure, it is not impossible that the people involved believed in an afterlife for dogs, a role for them in the human afterlife perhaps, but it struck us at the time as much more likely that this feature related to affection and other feelings of at least one human toward the dog. An interesting wrinkle is that the animal probably died of an arrow wound (the point having been found stuck in a bone), yet was still placed with its head neatly on a flat stone.
- Human thinking about the meanings of death seems to have varied considerably. But are there common points that can be identified? Is it possible that our emotive response to death is less variable than our cosmological or metaphysical explanations for it? Even so it is unlikely that any of us can use our own emotional response as something that can be safely generalized, meaning that there is much work to be done.
- How much of the activity surrounding a person's death can be attributed to grief, or more broadly, perhaps, a sense of personal (in this case, as distinct from social) loss? Or perhaps if not the actual emotional response in a given instance, then an expectation that people will (or should) have certain reactions is something that has

influenced the activities surrounding death. Again, this raises some questions – and possibilities – concerning the range of emotional responses found among humans, and the overlapping but far from identical range of cultural expectations to be found.

- *The potential usefulness of databases*. Would it be possible – and useful – to develop databases to help generate ideas about burial practices? Timothy Insoll's (this volume) rich compilation of ideas and customs for one area is a good model. Something like this, writ large for regions, periods, species, or ultimately even all of burial evidence, would be an invaluable resource for anyone diving into a project. A database like that which Francesco d'Errico and Marian Vanhaeren are already compiling represents another useful example – it would be very helpful to know, without repeating painstaking research, of the 195 primary burials reported in the literature of the Upper Palaeolithic. We can see the time-saving value of such resources, but even more importantly it could advance the field in other ways as well. Lowering the threshold for testing broader models and theories by, for example, not having to re-discover all 195 UP burials (and risk missing the one that could change all the conclusions) could encourage more broad thinking concerning the range and history of human approaches to mortality and immortality.

- And finally, a few quick notes – words even – that were shown in one paper or another to be elements of thought about death and its ritual that might be useful to explore well beyond the context of the paper itself:

  ° Malafouris (this volume) worked with the importance of 'memory' – death becomes a problem because we remember. Memory needs to be dealt with, but it can also be created and manipulated and can become quite selective, perhaps especially concerning the dead no longer known personally by any of the living (see also Kuijt 2008 and Wason 2010).

  ° The soul and what happens to it were mentioned a few times – jade preserving the body (in theory) so the soul could go to heaven, for example. Though it is a concept very difficult to deal with without explicit textual reference, it must surely have been (and still is) widely important, however variously understood.

  ° Stoddart (this volume) in a discussion session raised the matter of the nature of the experience, of the senses, the feel of jade. Similarly, Mithen and colleagues (this volume) suggested looking for evidence

of music. We might add, was there a sense of intimacy, of pageantry?

° Similarly, procession was discussed briefly in more than one paper. If this is involved, it must rate as a powerful element of the overall activity.

° Several scholars have suggested that we might need to be able to distinguish between symbolic connections that may have grown up organically and others created intentionally via specific philosophical or theological analyses. This raises an interesting line of questioning. How many ideas about death might have developed organically? If this can be demonstrated, then (under specified circumstances, presumably) might it eventually be possible to give us warrant for exploring them even in the absence of written records? To state this somewhat differently, we can readily appreciate the great diversity of ideas about death known ethnographically and historically, but what elements among them are widespread, and what are the parameters? The great range of ideas known does not preclude the possibility that there are some ideas that are nevertheless very widespread, or very widespread under certain definable circumstances.

° In some ways burial practices are conserved, so we do not think of burial as inspiring innovation. But this is exactly what Hanks and colleagues (this volume) propose, on the basis of a careful analysis of the metalwork included in burials. It seems to me that this is something very important to explore further. It may not help us get at mortality and immortality, but how often do we ask about the role of burial in innovation and cultural evolution?

° The theme of visibility and (or versus) hiddenness also arose several times and surely relates to what people think they are doing when performing burial rites.

° Burials helping to create a sense of history is also important, even apart from the specific issues of ancestor worship (Kuijt 2008; Wason 2010). How common is it for people to believe burials should not be disturbed – and how often (or to what extent) can this be attributed to the importance of the burial to one's sense of belonging to a place (as distinct to ideas about not disturbing the dead)?

Here are just a few of the themes raised in the papers that I believe, if explored further and considered with other examples, have the potential for enriching our understanding of the range of ideas that people have held about what it is to be human.

NOTES

1 Wilson's discussion is helpful because he is trying to connect the point to our contemporary knowledge of human evolution. However, the basic insight that our mortality influences how we understand our lives themselves was a key starting point of twentieth century existentialism, many of whose advocates thought life essentially meaningless because of this 'end'. For many people in the West, the point is even better known from the famous passage in Ecclesiastes at one time often used at funerals:

> 18 I also said to myself, 'As for humans, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. 19 Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath[c]; humans have no advantage over animals. Everything is meaningless. 20 All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. 21 Who knows if the human spirit rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?' (chapter 3 verses 18–21).

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The Muse of Archaeology

Ben Okri

It seems that death takes us to a full stop that human nature and intuition cannot wholly accept. It may be that the reality of our own death baffles us. If there is anything from the beginning of time that remains for us the greatest enigma, it is not love, nor birth, nor light. It is death. I am from a culture whose philosophy of life is shaped, indirectly, by its philosophy of death. And in this conference, rich with ideas and encounters and the evidence of passionate engagement, I have heard much about death, about cemeteries, about objects, about material culture, and about the notions by which death reveals the hidden and deliberate preoccupations of man in society.

It seems to me that archaeology is not a dead science. It is precisely a living one because it has to extrapolate, from beliefs and objects, something of the rich humanity with which, in the darkness of unknowing, we invest our lives. Our ideas about the world may change and are always changing, but at any given time we invest the world and the objects that we touch and make – we invest them with something of ourselves. It seems to me that nothing is neutral; and that we see the world through the prism of any beliefs or certainties that we happen to have at any point.

What I missed more than anything else is not the death part of the investigation; I missed the aspect of immortality. I recognise that it is a word and a concept much engaged with the numinous. We have no evidence, we have no proof, we have only the beliefs that we may or may not be able to correlate as evidence.

But it seems to me that the fact of death compels us to something larger than ourselves. Human society would not have been able to continue if we could not counter death with something in ourselves that somehow defies or transcends or endures it. Humanity meets the fact of

death as an inescapable darkness; and yet something in us makes us feel that we must go on. It may be an intuition, it may be a self-deception, it may even be consolation in the face of something that we cannot go beyond – but there is something special about the way we have dealt with death.

I have found myself in the tomb of Thutmose lll and been struck by the sheer beauty of art that was never meant to be seen by living eyes. These were works of art, wall-paintings, coffin decorations, meant to be seen by the eyes of eternity.

As a student of Homer, I would have liked to hear something about the archaeology of funeral games. I sense that games are one aspect of our response to mortality; the chequered squares of chess, the board games between a man and his wife that were found in a burial site in the Valley of the Kings, and the mysterious nature of the game hinted at in the *Seventh Seal*, have always been an indirect meditation on life and death as the ultimate game.

Archaeology is a noble discipline: it deals, whether it likes it or not, with the big questions, the great enigmas. But I wonder whether too much of the spirit of science has not contracted something of its essential wonder. I say this because I come from a universe where objects are believed to be animated by those who have engaged with them. Objects are recipients of the mute memory of our passing lives. Is it possible to regard objects with neutrality? Can objects that have accompanied us through the passion of time really be unimpregnated with our joys, our follies, our tragedies? I have had a stone shaped 2 million years ago, from Olduvai Gorge, placed in my hand and have felt from the contact a leap of images, a scream of visions, which have inspired poems.

Is there not a place for imagination, for intuition, indeed for the suggestiveness of objects? I have lain on beds in hotel rooms and been unable to sleep for the sheer fizz of energy accumulation from previous occupants. This is just a bed in a hotel room. What would one say about objects that have borne mute witness to thousands of years of memories? There is a growing science that contends, with photographic demonstration, that water has a rudimentary capacity for memory, and that water held by one who is angry reveals different photographic images from water that has been held by one in love.

You might wonder where I am going with this. Firstly, it is that death seems to inspire in humanity two broad responses: the unanswerable fact silences us, we accept its finality, we react with stoicism. The other is purely intuitive, possibly imaginative: we peer beyond it, and construct, or dream, or intuit the cyclicity of nature. We see that seeds become plants, plants die, and they fertilise the earth. We imagine for us the same cyclicity. Many cultures see death as being transitional, leading beyond a dark door either to Elysian Fields, to the Egyptian Field of Reeds, or to the African Ancestral World.

In my part of Nigeria, death is not a finality. I grew up being told that my ancestors were present. They were here, but in another realm, but accessible by thought, invocation, ritual. This might be the ultimate consolation of ancient cultures, but its prevalence seems to me to call for respect and serious study. It does not take much imagination to see the finality of death in a dead body. But to elaborate, through ritual, through dream, a continued journey beyond death is, I think, one of the great acts of transcendence of some of our ancient ancestors. I don't think we are in any position to judge which of the two positions is right, because we perceive only through the bias and the lenses of our times and the limitation of our scientific instruments. I think however it is worth examining how these two different positions have enriched our ethics, made us face death with equanimity or with stoicism, or how they have had an incidental enrichment that we call art and philosophy.

The world is not neutral: it is a mirror of our conception. To borrow a trope from quantum physics, the world, objects, yield what we have poured into them. There is a story of Borges called 'Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius' in which the relationship between expectation and discovery is tested. A group of people have it suggested to them that they might find an extraordinary object: they find a gold mask. Their expectation is part of the result.

Here is a curious sentence from *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster: 'He had known that she would pass from his hands and eyes, but had thought she could live in his mind, not realising that the very fact that we have loved the dead increases their unreality, and that the more passionately we invoke them the further they recede'.

To not invoke, to not think of the dead makes us gradually inhuman and increases our sense of unreality. We are already with them: it is our unavoidable destiny. We do not continue where they left off; they continue where we have not gone. A meditation on life is inevitably a meditation on death: and vice versa. If our imagination about death fails, ultimately so will our imagination about life. This conference has shown me more than many books just how much the dead are a mirror of the living. Our mortuary practices, our grave-object decoration, our wall-paintings depicting the soul's long perilous journey through the underworld to the Duat, our cremations, our spearheads, our glazed pottery in shallow graves, our mass cemeteries reveal our attempts to shape the world, our displaced dialogue with ourselves, by a 'commodius vicus of recirculation', to quote Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*.

I don't know which is right. The promise of the dead one becoming Osiris, if he or she passes the test of the feather of truth, or Homer's multitudinous laughter of the waves. I thought I would be depressed hearing so much about death and burial practices. But after seeing the peculiar geometry of the skeleton in the grave, in which a jade pendant has outlived this 'too too solid flesh'; after seeing the fierce grin of the naked skull, I find myself oddly exhilarated. It has been bracing knowing that all of life tends, like a force of gravity, to this place. The skeleton is not the man or woman. We are not our bones. Whatever we are has evaporated long before our moment in the fire or the grave. Maybe we need a metaphysical archaeology, a new kind of listening to material culture, that we may not only work with the fruits of excavation, but also hear the radiant speech of objects, and the unheard laughter of the dead.

Archaeology seems to me to be engaged in secrets, the secrets of time, the re-animation of the past, and the appraisal of what Fitzgerald called the human vision commensurate to its sense of wonder. There is one place where archaeology and literature meet in the same act of reconstruction. Hamlet meets the gravedigger, engages in a meditation on the democracy of death, how the earth stops the mouths of tanners and emperors. Then he is given Yorick's skull by the gravedigger. And here Shakespeare does something marvellous indeed. He

shows us Yorick, in his flashes of merriment, setting the table alight with his wit. And for a moment we no longer see the skull. We see the jester. He has come alive in our minds. He is led back from death by an act of resurrective remembrance, imaginative reconstruction. Suddenly death is conquered by humour. It is the humour of the jester, his sense of the laughter of life, that has leapt across the boundary.

The archaeologist who uncovered for us the burial temple of Abu Simbel or who unveiled the figurines of Ghana engaged in no less an act of making once lived life leap across the boundary of death to inform life with humour, with dread, and with grandeur.

The Crystalline Quartz, Olduvai Gorge, 2 Million Years Ago[1]

Fire in the riverdream
And fear in the valley.
Night and the stone,
And hunger in the sky.
We carve these stones
With the sharp teeth

Of our dreams. Upright walk
The stone makers.

War calls in the distance.
On the move in the hills.
Rocks gush with water and lightning.
Night rises from the earth.
We sing songs to the wild heavens;
The gods listen to us in silence,
Then heave the earth with fire.

We lay down and breathe and cry out
The names that are secrets.
And then we make with stones
True items of our homes.
Our future, grainy as the sky,
Who can read it, save the gods.
And they are quiet now.

(Ben Okri; 'Wild', poems
published by Rider 2012)

NOTES

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