DECODING NEOLITHIC ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN ISLAND RITUAL

For Bronislaw Malinowski - an island man throughout

Coastal sailing as long as it is perfectly safe and easy commands no magic. Overseas expeditions are invariably bound up with ceremonies and ritual. Man [humans] resorts to magic only where chance and circumstances are not fully controlled by knowledge.

Bronislaw Malinowski (1931)

AN OFFPRINT FROM

DECODING NEOLITHIC ATLANTIC AND MEDITERRANEAN ISLAND RITUAL

Edited by

GEORGE NASH & ANDREW TOWNSEND

Front cover image: Diego Meozzi
Back cover image: Diego Meozzi

Contents

Contributors

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Dedication: Andrew Townsend

It is with great sadness that co-editor Dr Andrew Townsend passed away during the final editorial stages of the book. Among many of Andrew's interests, he had a wealth of knowledge concerning island archaeology, in particular research into Neolithic mortuary practices on Malta and Gozo. It is a fitting statement that his interests of prehistoric societies in an island context should be his last publication. Although Andrew has now gone, his legacy through publication and reputation will remain for many years to come. This book is dedicated to Andrew and the inheritance he has given to archaeology.

Moving worlds: memory, mobility and mortality in the aceramic Neolithic of Cyprus

Paula L. Lutescu-Jones

This chapter will explore the movement and (re)creation of worlds in the Early to Later Aceramic Neolithic of Cyprus (c. 8500–5500 cal BC). The mundane, everydayness of peoples lives forms the core of their existence – bridging theirs and 'others' pasts and presents. This familiar, shared past, produces a situated present, which is mobilised with(in) people when they relocate and is continually re-negotiated and re-created in line with shifting perceptions of themselves, their mortality and their inhabited world. Thus the processes of dying and death not only blur the boundaries of subject/object, but also bring into view, and 'materialise' our mundane worlds in new ways, transforming the nature and experience of places, people and 'things'. Death and the body, like material culture, can be recreated and transformed, manipulated and assigned place. Through an understanding of the temporality of death as an historically situated construct, and the emotional and mnemonic potencies of embodied practices, this chapter aims to provide an insight into the particularity of concepts of mortality, and moreover, the manner in which ideals are emanated and identities renegotiated during the Aceramic Neolithic.

The maritime communities of the eastern Mediterranean basin

'A consciousness of earth and ocean, such is the deserted island, ready to begin the world anew' (Deleuze 2004, 11)

Understanding the idiosyncratic nature of the Aceramic Neolithic of Cyprus (c. 8500–5500 cal BC) at least in part entails recognition of the impact that movement and mobilisation had upon its subsequent (re)creation and development. This 'world' was at least in part a product of its transportation across landscapes and seascapes during the Epipalaeolithic and early Aceramic Neolithic (hereafter EAN), and as such was a world which had been 'mobilised' by the people who had (re)created and sustained it over the millennia (see also Jones 2008). The way in which the archaeological remains have been approached in the past has often led to Cyprus being viewed as isolated, insular, and fundamentally 'backwards' in its development (Held 1993; Ronen 1995; Finlayson 2004; Steel 2004). However, it is

suggested here that it is the processes of mobilising worlds, of (re)creating and sustaining, that has most influenced the distinctiveness of the archaeological record, and the lives of Cyprus's Neolithic inhabitants. The initial inhabitants of Cyprus were likely to have been among the earliest maritime communities of the eastern Mediterranean basin, whose identities and ways of being had been drawn from inland to the coastlines of the Levant and Anatolia. The discovery of now submerged sites along the coastline of the Levant, such as Atlit Yam now attests to the presence of contemporary coastal communities (Galili *et. al* 2002; 2004). Hence the historical and cultural context of the individuals settling on Cyprus by the EAN and LAN appears to have been both diverse and complex.

For Cyprus, the terms 'isolation' and 'insularity' have themselves become the enemy of its understanding; the physical nature of Cyprus as an island has essentially predetermined, and indeed undermined, any further interpretation of its seemingly idiosyncratic beginnings. The presence of the sea between Cyprus and the 'mainland' has been viewed as a restrictive factor, an obstacle, which

Figure 10.1 Satellite image of Cyprus and the Levant (NASA)

Figure 10.2 Epipalaeolithic–Late Aceramic Neolithic sites in Cyprus

people were forced to overcome. Hence, the sea, rather than being a part of the landscape, has been seen as a boundary. Interpretations of the 'colonisation' of Cyprus have focused on the differences visible between sites on Cyprus and their mainland contemporaries, and from these comparisons it has often been deduced that the island status of Cyprus was to the detriment of its inhabitants, leading them ever further away from the 'advancements' of their contemporaries. As suggested by Rapports arguments for a post cultural anthropology – seeking only the *differences* has produced an exoticised fiction. Furthermore, Rainbird (1999, 231–232) argued that models, which emphasise the bounded landscape, at the expense of the broader seascape, have stemmed from long-standing Western views of islands as isolated, exotic and insular locales. Despite these critiques, the archaeological remains of mainland communities in the Levant have often been referred to as a backdrop into which Cyprus is expected to fit, and as such the mainland has grown to represent the Neolithic *norm,* although it is notable that the same assumptions are seldom held for the majority of modern island societies; there seems little expectation for them to precisely 'mimic' their mainland associates, as Cyprus itself has often been expected to do.

Hence, in the case of prehistoric Cyprus, this understanding of the significance of fundamental human choice is all too frequently lost and neglected. Of course, for the people of the Aceramic Neolithic, knowledge of Cyprus was combined with a far more intimate knowledge of where they had come from, memories of home, and familiar land and seascapes. Hence the 'settlers' of Cyprus, as part of the earliest maritime communities of the eastern Mediterranean basin, came with their own historical, cultural and ideological 'baggage', which needs to be addressed in order to understand what followed their arrival. As Chateaubriand aptly stated: 'Every man carries with him a world which is composed of all that he has seen and loved, and to which he constantly returns,
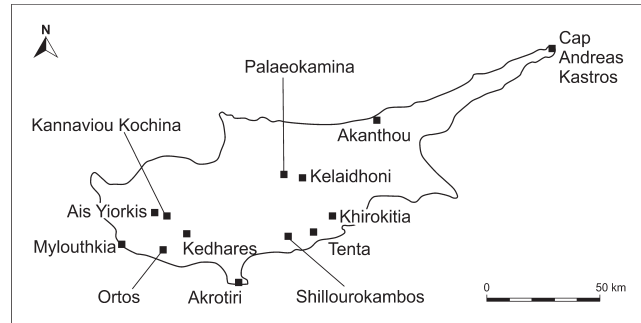
even when he is travelling through, and seems to be living in, some different world' (Chateaubriand, cited in Sutton 2001, 73). This chapter will therefore consider specifically the roles of memory, materiality and movement in relation to mortuary practices throughout the Early and Later Aceramic Neolithic of Cyprus in order to illuminate the humanistic processes behind the unique archaeological manifestations witnessed within this particular island context.

(Re)creating worlds and identities

One of the major stumbling blocks in understanding the Cypriot Neolithic has been the perceived architectural stagnation, the emergence of rectilinear forms on the mainland by the PPNB (see Rollefson *et al.* 1992, 10, fig. 5). Hence, the continuation of circular forms on Cyprus has frequently been questioned and taken as a signifier of 'cultural retardation'. The existence of circular architecture long before the colonisation of Cyprus makes this particular style of construction a long-standing tradition, one which is continued rather than discarded, most famously at Khirokitia and Tenta, but also earlier at Shillourokambos. These are already ancient forms, attested at Natufian Ain Mallaha, and Hayonim cave (Valla 1988; Belfer-Cohen 1988; 1992; 1995). Such structures are associated in the Natufian with mortuary practices and the deposition of human remains. In Cyprus it has long been argued that these monumental structures are domestic dwelling places; however, as I have argued elsewhere, these sites are the exception rather than the rule, and Khirokitia, once the quintessential 'village' and Aceramic Neolithic typesite, can be better understood as a necropolis or a monumental mortuary site (Jones 2008, 123–126). Hence the continuation of these architectural traditions in Cyprus is part of an enduring association between these particular places and the dead, and represents the embellishment of tradition. Thus people chose what to take with them, and what to leave behind; they adapted what they needed to, and left other traditions unaltered to endure the millennia.

People had existed in the Levant as mobile hunter-gatherers since the Middle Epipalaeolithic, and are later

Figure 10.3 Monumental circular tholoi at Khirokitia (photo: P. Lutescu-Jones, 2012)

thought to have become the earliest 'agriculturalists' in the world (Cauvin 2000). Hence the Levant has been at the centre of discussions regarding the 'origins of agriculture' and concepts of 'sedentism' for decades, despite the questionable nature of such constructs and the call for more nuanced approaches (Boyd 2005). At the point in which Cyprus enters this equation, people's 'mode of subsistence' was on the cusp; 'domestication' of plants and animals had already begun, and the general layout of 'settlements' was undergoing alteration (Peltenburg & Wasse 2004; Colledge 2004). Potentially the people who chose to stay and live on Cyprus were fully aware of these changes taking place, but were choosing not to follow the same course. Perhaps it was unnecessary, undesirable or maybe even irrelevant. The significances we assign to these 'events' and transitions are obviously part of our own concepts of social evolution, and of our terms of practicality and advancement. They are ultimately the result of our archaeological discourse.

It had long been assumed that people would adopt farming as a way of life as soon as it was made available to them, by whatever means the techniques came to them, and this has persistently been seen as an *inevitable* change. According to Held (1993, 28) 'ignorance' was the cause of 'technological inferiority' in Cyprus, and was the direct result of its isolation. Hence, whilst the ways in which the Mesolithic–Neolithic transition has been approached is perhaps most influential in the region of the 'fertile crescent', here it has perhaps also been the most fixed.

The move from mainland to island was not a singular event which took place 'overnight', as a far more complex and long-term process of moving worlds had already begun by the time of Akrotiri, around 10,600 BP. Before this site was ever utilised by people, the locale itself may have already existed within social memory and mythology. It is famed for its large quantities of fossilised pygmy hippo and pygmy elephant bones, and has become central in discussions of megafaunal extinction within the Mediterranean islands (Simmons 1999). The island of Cyprus was not entirely an unknown; it was almost certainly 'new' in many respects, but it no doubt had a history, which involved the interaction of people with particular places over millennia. This history, producing the equivalent to a Heideggerian 'preunderstanding', meant that decisions could be made regarding movement to Cyprus on a more permanent basis. There is an intentionality involved, a deliberate and conscious choice to move and to re-create place and the movement of people is only one aspect of a much wider movement of 'worlds'. This movement of worlds is not a process which reaches a finite end, but is rather a continuous process of re-evaluation, re-establishment, and involves re-invention and peoples' creativity. Crucially, much of this world is constituted by the mundane – peoples 'everydayness'. This is very different to a 'Noah's Ark' scenario where a 'Neolithic Package' was up-rooted and transported wholesale from mainland to island, and which later suffers and diminishes due to the inherent forgetfulness of the sea-farers who lost their boat. Instead this is about the movement of each and every aspect of peoples' lives and all that was a part of them, their histories and memories, their 'ways of doing', and hence, ultimately their 'ways of being'.

Figure 10.4 The coastline of Akrotiri-Aetokremnos, Cyprus (photo: P. Lutescu-Jones, 2004)

According to Connerton (1989, 6) there can be no 'absolutely new', since the new always needs grounding in the past. At this point in time, it is also clear that people were experienced enough in their involvement with animals and plants to enable the transportation of both wild and 'domestic' species, and to ensure their survival and proliferation in a new environment (as exemplified by the presence of pig and deer during the Aceramic Neolithic levels at Akrotiri; Simmons 1999, 31, 166, 332). These other living-beings were not simply transferred in order to sustain the human population; they formed a crucial part of their existence and way of living, and as such it would have been impossible to leave them behind (Jones 2009). Raw materials such as obsidian were also transported to Cyprus, and equally formed such a valued part of peoples' worlds that the investment of time and energy into their transference was deemed worthwhile. Intention and choice are clearly visible in these decisions; Cyprus lacked in large endemic megafauna and 'domestic' crops prior to these introductions, but it was still capable of sustaining human populations.

Since many of the earliest sites are located near the coast it is clear that marine resources could have been exploited (and in some instances were), and the densely wooded interior of the island would have provided ample wild fruits and other consumable plants. What is evident is the preference and desire to re-establish the existing way of living (Jones 2008, chapter 6). The movement of animals, materials and crops is only a fraction of the movement which was underway, the movement of people entails the movement of ideals and preoccupations, which go beyond the physical realm. People equally moved with them their beliefs, aspirations, experiences and memories. In doing so, these facets of their existence, their everydayness, underwent transformation through their renegotiation in a new place and context.

Shared pasts – shared worlds

Memory in its collective sense is not equivalent to a shared consciousness, but is rather a *perceived* shared *understanding*; a faith that others 'share' the same understanding of the past and the same experiences as

ourselves. This in turn relies heavily on the commonality of the past, and on shared experiences. For the most part these experiences relate to the everyday and the mundane. The making of tools, stone vessels, figurines, collection and preparation of food, hunting, eating, walking, talking, laughing, sleeping – the everyday activities which make up the routine and commonplace. Whilst each individual will have a 'unique', personal and indeed embodied understanding of their own past and experiences, the past they share with others can be remembered 'collectively'. Commonality and simultaneity of experience leads to a sense of a shared circumstance– a present and a past that can be related to. This sense of commonality is essential to the maintenance of not only identities, but also to the construction of shared worlds and world-views. Thus, the sense of unity that is gained through the perception of a shared past bonds individuals together through the merging of their individual histories. In this 'collective memory' multiple versions of the past simultaneously exist, often contradictory yet coherent enough to provide a basis or point of reference which is recognised by each individual being that makes up the 'assemblage'. The shared past need not be the lived past, in that it is no longer necessary for each individual to have personally experienced this past *firsthand*. Rather, this shared past reaches beyond human life cycles and incorporates the lives of the many, and transcends time and space.

It is in this construct of 'the collective' that the persistence of memory is perhaps most visible in the archaeological record. The continuation of well-established traditions and habits, values and ideals, whether in regard to architectural designs, tool making, food, or burial practices, signals the persistence of memories which inform these actions and validate their perseverance as a 'way of doing', and hence, they also reflect the continuation of a 'way of being'. 'Change' is perhaps one of the most noticeable features within the archaeological record (for example, changes in subsistence, mortuary treatment, material culture); however, within each life, change is perceived and experienced in a very different way. These changes, which are so noticeable to an archaeologist, are likely in reality to have taken place rather more gradually, indeed in this case over millennia. As such, they relate to more or less significant events within a much longer and more complex history. In this way, the 'advent of farming' may well have been noted by the people involved in its embryonic phases, but it is unlikely to have re-shaped their worlds instantaneously or even all that significantly. It is precisely because of the shared memories that exist within and between each individual, what Karlsson refers to as 'interpretive horizons' (2000, 26), that 'life' itself has a sense of stability and permanence. Hence, when changes do occur they only occur against a constant, a preunderstanding, through which any 'new' phenomena are perceived and consumed. The 'new' needs

assimilation, practice, and manipulation to fit into the existing (the present and the past). From this perspective, the beginnings of agriculture cannot be understood as a singular event that occurred on a linear trajectory and necessitated 'change'. It occurs not as an event but as part of a continuum, embedded in the everyday, and is therefore not entirely 'new'. Furthermore, even when this 'new' component is taken into an existing world its impact upon the past 'way-of-doing' need not be so significant in ideological terms. People's faith in their own, known way-of-doing still holds a primacy, particularly with regard to their understanding and perception of their identities. Shared or collective memories are fluid in a different way to those of an individual being; they flex according to shared shifts in thinking, and involve negotiation and manipulation. Pasts can be presented differently, according to the agenda of the narrator, as has been well attested by archaeology over the last century. The people who first encountered Cyprus already had a way of living, an everyday existence, which was perpetuated at least in part through the mnemonic potency of the mundane.

Mnemonics and the mundane

Shared worlds and peoples 'everydayness' are continually perpetuated through mnemonics which either intentionally or invasively, bring the past back into the present moment. Seemingly mundane items, which act as continual mnemonic devices, are capable of sustaining and maintaining our worlds, as well as intruding into them and stimulating dormant memories. The key to understanding the role of these mundane items perhaps lies in *intentionality* – whether something is intended to be a mnemonic or acts *independently* of our intentions.

The 'everyday' is inclusive of all that constitutes peoples' worlds, which is encountered on a regular basis, engaged with and embodied as a part of whoever they are, what they do, and their 'place' in the world. Thus, the mnemonic potential of the mundane can be examined in countless ways, through material culture, places, architecture, animals, people, food, views, smells, sounds and activities. The materials which people engage with in order to fabricate and create objects are themselves capable of reminding and reinforcing memories. Memories of the source of the material, why and how it is used, and memories of the people associated with that material. Thus artefacts such as tools, stone vessels, figurines and pendants are not simply things to be utilised for a specific purpose. They are engaged with, perceived, experienced, interpreted and understood; they inform behaviour as well as facilitate it. However, tool typology is perhaps most frequently referred to archaeologically as a marker of periods in time, and regionally specific adaptations; but it is also a *choice*, a decision to make something a particular way, and it has a purpose beyond that of its use. Perceived stagnation in a tool

repertoire or architectural forms, as has been suggested for Cyprus, is frequently viewed as technological retardation, and a marker of that society's failure to advance. However, the possibilities that memory has a role to play in this have thus far been neglected for Cyprus. Creating, and indeed, re-creating a material forms in a way which has been shaped over the millennia, is in itself an act of commemoration, actively re-enacting ancient 'ways of doing', performing and re-performing the everyday – the practices and engagement repeated by people over such extended durations that they form the core traditions.

Of course it is not only the *material world*, which acts upon memory in this way, but also the continual, everyday sensory, bodily experience of life, which generates familiarity and continuity in our worlds. Sensory mnemonics are experienced throughout people's lives without any deliberate intervention on the part of the individual, or indeed any desire to embark upon a recollection. A smell may be taken into the body without invitation, and is perhaps one of the most intrusive mnemonics in this way, each individual may have their own particularly reminiscent 'smells', which always remind them of a particular person, place or event in their lives. With regard to landscapes, smell is often a particularly significant aspect of the experience of a place, and there is the potential for shared as well as individual mnemonics. As an instance of this, in Cyprus the pine and cedar forests, together with the thyme- covered hills which release their scent when walked on, all form part of the sensory experience of the island today. In the Aceramic Neolithic, following a relatively mobile lifestyle, peoples' movement through and interaction with their landscape would have generated countless memories and associations, many of which would be remembered due to the mnemonic potencies of sights, smells, sounds, touch and taste.

It is here that food must also be at least noted as vital not only to sustain life, but also to create and maintain shared worlds. Food is both a personal and social experience, involving the senses on a most intimate level. It has the ability to bring home to an unfamiliar place, transform emotions, and in many respects forms the backbone of our mundane lives. Sutton (2001, 102) discussed the power of food in evoking memories and experiences, and its role in forming identities, stating 'Food does not simply symbolise social bonds and divisions; it participates in their creation and re-creation.' In this way, food, being external and becoming internal, effectively becoming part of our bodies whilst moving through them, it is in the truest sense, embodied. Moving the everyday, across seascapes and landscapes, is what enabled a 'new' world to be created.

The temporality of death

> '… historical time is a concrete and living reality with an irreversible onward rush. It is the very plasma in which events are immersed, and the field within which they become intelligible'. (Bloch 1992, 23)

Death, in the Aceramic Neolithic of Cyprus, did not occur out of time. Rather it was temporally situated and enmeshed, and it had an historical context particular to the people who embodied and (re)created a shared past, and a shared world to reside in, and identify with. This historical context, can archaeologically at least, be traced back to the Epipalaeolithic period (if not further) in the Levant, and can be witnessed tangibly through the continuity of certain core traditions and practices surrounding the dead body and its treatment pre- and post-mortem. In particular, continuation and indeed monumentalisation of circular architecture associated with burials, the placement of the body contracted and on one side (in the majority of cases), a precoccupation with the skull (decoration, removal, separate deposition), mixed human and animal burials, the

Figure 10.5 Aceramic Neolithic stone basin in situ *at Khirokitia (left) and 20th century stone basin at Evretou (right) (photos: M. Lutescu-Jones, 2012)*

fragmentation of bodies and objects, and the presence of objects clearly associated with processes of transformation, such as grinders, pounders, querns (Boyd 2005; Jones 2008).

In the EAN, at Mylouthkia and Shillourokambos, the fragmentary secondary remains of humans and animals are found deposited together in a manner roughly comparable with some of the contemporary sites on the mainland such as Kfar HaHoresh (Crubézy *et al.* 2003; Goring-Morris 2005). It must also be noted that the depositions at EAN Mylouthkia are among the first in Cyprus: and so the people buried here, and possibly in the earliest phases of Shillourokambos, represent in some sense 'foundational' burials, and it seems likely that the majority of people visiting and inhabiting Cyprus were being buried elsewhere, perhaps taken out to sea, or returned to sites on the mainland. These deposits are exceptional, and are millennia apart, and therefore it is clear that many more 'bodies' are absent from these sites. Mylouthkia and Shillourokambos thus show much continuity with mainland contemporary practices, with nuanced adjustments and particularities. Death in the EAN is itself in transition, and it's evidently an amalgamation of old and new. The particular deposition of human skulls at Mylouthkia also demonstrates continuity with ancient as well as existing practices (Peltenburg 2003b; Talalay 2004). What currently stands out as being something distinct, is the modification of at least one of the Mylouthkia skulls *in vivo*. In Cyprus people take from the mainland a preoccupation of sorts, surrounding the skull or perhaps more accurately the

head. From decapitation post-mortem, to skull decoration, plastered faces, figures and anthropomorphic figurines, this part of the body had been isolated for specialised treatment in various ways for thousands of years (Croucher 2004). Such a time span is almost incomprehensible in terms of our knowledge of our own histories, however on arrival in Cyprus people take what had long been associated purely with the dead and began to explore its potential in life. First attested at Mylouthkia around 10,000 BP on the west coast of Cyprus, artificial cranial modification became a widespread practice by 9000 BP at Khirokitia (see Jones 2008). This practice so far appears to be unparalleled on the mainland, and marks a clear expression of these peoples' identities, ideals and concerns, and is indicative of the new world they had created (see Meiklejohn *et al.* 1992 for potential data regarding cranial modification in the Near East). Through its re-design and manipulation the skull also becomes a mnemonic device, as if it were a form of material culture, and a beacon for identity in the Aceramic Neolithic world of Cyprus (Jones 2008, 94). Such embodied mnemonics appear to represent the ever-present traces of our pasts, and are one aspect of the transformation and transference of ideological components evident during this transitional period.

Death in the LAN however, is clearly a product of this EAN context. It was created within this particular 'interpretive horizon'. Notions of death and the dead were transported across space and moved to Cyprus, and through

Figure 10.6 View towards the sea, Mylouthkia (photo: P. Lutescu-Jones, 2004)

time into the historically situated 'plasma' of the LAN. From the collective depositions of (largely secondary) human and animal remains in the EAN, there is a shift in focus towards fully-articulated individual inhumations, for the most part, in primary contexts in the LAN. Certainly by 7000 BC at Khirokitia, burials are not only far more numerous, but there is a more uniform set of mortuary practices which appear particular to this Cypriot context. It is clear that the role of the body in the formation of identities is both central and fundamental, and as Merleau Ponty (1962) argued, the body is the medium through which people both perceive and understand the world. The body is also in this sense a form of material culture, something that can be modified and manipulated to attain a specific goal. The head, a particularly prominent feature in recognition of individuals, is perhaps an obvious focus for display, manipulation and expression, and furthermore, it has a long history of such engagements and association. The skull therefore has a crucial role as a mnemonic, acting internally and externally as a reminder of both current identities and shared pasts, and in doing so it transcends time and space. In the shift from the EAN to the LAN we also see the fabrication and monumentalisation of places for the dead: and the permanent experiential embellishment of mortuary locales in Cyprus. Khirokitia is not only constructed in a manner reminiscent of sites such as Hayonim cave and Ain Mallaha mimicking the spatial layout of ancient locales, but it solidifies and exaggerates them – see Belfer-Cohen (1988, 297); Valla (1988) and Boyd (2005) for details of Hayonim and Ain Mallaha. The structures themselves have become more robust in this Cypriot LAN context, and contain installations such as hearths, pillars, platforms, pits and 'thrones' no doubt associated with the mortuary rituals taking place at the site (Jones 2008, 71–75). Delimiting and defining the site further, a large stone wall with a complex entrance way was built, meeting the meander of the Maroni River as it encloses the hill (Jones 2008, 73).

Both the changes and the continuities that are attested in the mortuary record for the EAN and LAN of Cyprus, are clearly founded upon the bedrock of social or shared memories, themselves formulated from the perception of shared pasts and commonality. Only out of such foundations can changes fuelled by creativity and imagination take place whilst maintaining a secure sense of the world. From the stable groundings of tradition, new ways of doing things emerge and old ways can be questioned and re-negotiated in the changing times. Cyprus presents us with a prime example of how ways of being are mobilised, and the dynamism inherent in these human worlds. Death can be seen here as a product of its temporality – as a construct it is particular in its form and enmeshed in the lives of those who ponder its meaning. It is all-permeating in its presence, and is something already known about, and always (re)negotiated.

Processes of transformation: material culture as body – body as material culture

Death changes us. It is a moment that lasts beyond itself. Like a stone tossed into a lake, it resonates and ripples. When we look at death in archaeology, we sometimes miss the dying. The anticipation, the realisation, the sinking in, and we skip to the final acts in the performance – the moment of deposition. We do this, because of what we can see. This is what is tangible, archaeologically speaking. We can excavate a grave, but not the tears shed around it. We don't know how often someone came and sat by it, or if it was soon forgotten in the day-to-day living of life. We can though, I would argue, see much more from those tangible remains than we might have considered.

Within the vast majority of burials of the LAN period in Cyprus 'grave-goods' have repeatedly been found. These items consist largely of stone vessels, ground stone implements, un-worked stone boulders, animal bones and shell necklaces; in the past, these items have been interpreted most frequently in terms of provisions or markers of sex, age or social status (see for example Niklasson 1991, and Le Brun 1993). Whilst these may be deemed valid avenues, providing explanation for the totality and nature of grave assemblages, they appear however to 'skip' the quintessential 'messiness' and fluidity of human existence. It is apparent that 'items' that are associated with an individual take on a 'new' potency or significance after they die. These need not be objects that were considered important or special in any way whilst the individual was alive. The little things that previously went unnoticed, come crashing into view, made perceptible through their entanglement in memory with these deceased individuals. The material world is transformed in our experiences of grief and mourning as we look to it for comfort, and it delivers a barrage of intrusive mnemonics. Grieving relatives often attribute greater significance to small and seemingly mundane objects, such as a shopping list they had written, a pen they had chewed, a mug they had used or their favourite chair. These objects somehow start to embody and emanate the 'essence' of the deceased, and they act fundamentally as a mnemonic device. The effect of these items may be positive, in that they may stimulate 'happy' memories and provide comfort through their ability to 'reanimate' the deceased and bring them into the present. Equally, for the same reasons, these items may be seen as undesirable, causing discomfort by inducing a form of involuntary remembrance. People therefore make choices during the grieving process; these choices allow them to move from one emotional state to another and manipulate their memories, creating a sense of control during a time when all control has been taken away (ultimately by the removal of an individual from their lives). Many people leave houses, rooms and furnishings unaltered after an individual dies, in order that their memory may

be sustained, or perhaps because these places and objects are simply too profound to touch. Others find this option the more painful, and are inclined to immediately alter and adapt these spaces to accommodate 'forgetting', and the emotional relief that can be found by removing (or staying away from) highly potent spaces and objects.

These objects and places are capable of taking on the identity of the deceased; things that people made, used, touched, loved or hated; places where they spent their days and nights, worked, walked and talked; all become part of the person through their association with them on a psychological level. Through their potency on an emotional level, these places and objects become 'active', and are no longer a 'passive prop' or backdrop. As the person dies, everything that can be attributed to them in itself becomes 'alive' and materialises in our conscious worlds. When people die they leave behind traces which can either be maintained in real physical terms to sustain memories, or removed immediately into the realm of memory to allow temporary 'forgetting'. This particular kind of forgetting is seldom born out of a desire to forget the deceased, but rather out of a desire to ease the grief felt by being continually reminded. The desire instead is to choose when to remember, and when to be free from remembering. Memory cannot be wiped clean and 'erased', but it can be manipulated both internally by the individual, and externally by others and by their surroundings.

Spaces and places are equally influential upon human memory. A house, a room or a favourite spot can, not only induce memories, but also be used to aid the conjuring of memories. A deceased person's presence can be felt in places where they always were, or places they were associated with, and this too can be manipulated. These places may allow a living individual to 'visualise' the deceased (the 'I can see them standing there now' scenario), which once again may be seen and experienced as either comforting or distressing. These spaces and places can also be created following a death in order to become appropriated formalised areas for commemoration, such as, for example, cemeteries. In such cases the deceased are removed from the realm of the living not only by their death, but also by their physical exclusion from the 'living space'. This allows the living to exercise control over visitation, and creates a socially and religiously sanctioned mode and place of grieving.

Interestingly, this seems to do little to destroy the potency of the places they were originally associated with; when the dead are remembered, they are seldom pictured as being in a graveyard. This is rather a place which can only be associated with the end of their life, and is thus potentially the least desirable setting in which to picture them. For the people living in Cyprus during the Neolithic, particularly anyone living around Khirokitia, the dead were present beneath their feet, layered, and sealed by plaster floors. The people who built and maintained these monumental structures, and performed these rites, may have walked, talked, worked and slept over the dead daily. For them, the dead were ever-present. This creates a completely different situation, where visiting the dead is replaced by always being accompanied by them. This allows for a different kind of 'remembering', because essentially it allows for a specific type of 'forgetting'. These are not 'empty spaces'; rather they 'held' accumulated memories of deceased individuals, generations of bodies accrued, making these so-called 'houses of the living' concurrently the 'houses of the dead'.

A 'tomb-stone' would not be necessary to mark the place of a grave; it was instead marked by living memory, and by the monumentalised site itself. Thus the physical and metaphysical boundaries of the living and the dead were obscured, and instead continuity could be created through the continual layering of bodies and memories. In this respect, whilst the body of an individual may have been 'biologically' dead, it was kept in the place of the living by keeping the memory very much 'alive'. This may indicate, albeit quite simplistically, that the dead were being kept close by in body and in mind, alleviating the need for active commemoration.

Items placed with an individual in burial, most frequently classified as 'grave-goods', have proven to be a fruitful avenue of exploration for archaeologists. However, as suggested, the way in which these items are discussed is often limited to functional or structural analysis. If it is taken that these objects were potentially an extension of the individual, part of the subject or the body, then they take on a very different perspective. Firstly it 'makes sense' for them to be present; as part of the person they could not be separated from them, physically or mentally. Secondly, they may not only reflect the individual by association with them, but the body itself. The stone vessels occurring in burials during the Aceramic Neolithic can be described as enduring in their material quality. They are relatively robust, and also depict a relative uniformity in their designs. However, when they appear in burial contexts they are always intentionally broken, and in this respect seem to reflect the condition of the deceased. They are no longer functional and likewise the body is no longer functioning; the body and the object are equally 'broken'. These are not the only items that appear in burial context; shell necklaces at Khirokitia decorate an area of the body, which has its own special significance.

Boulders placed on the body perhaps serve a seemingly obvious purpose, pinning down the body and fixing its place, while an unfinished pendant that accompanied the infant at Mylouthkia appeared to reflect the incomplete life of the child (Croft & Peltenburg 2003, 42). This pendant may have been in the process of being made for the infant at the time he or she passed away, and its creation may have mirrored the growth of the child; materialising, changing shape, and then being fully formed, or in this case dying when the item was still 'incomplete'. Suffice it to say that

the limits and boundaries that western thought has placed between body and object are not applicable to prehistoric people living and dealing with death millennia ago; the body and the objects created by that body may have been in many ways inseparable, and one could argue they remain so today.

The manipulation of the body, its movement, decomposition, wrapping and in the EAN dismantlement, likens the body to an artefact, something which is created and can be re-created and transformed, which is made portable and which can emanate 'ideals' as much as 'realities'. The preoccupation with the skull in mortuary practices, emphasises this ability to 'make bodies', and to control to a large extent the form and meaning of that body. In this sense not only is material culture a part of the body, which creates it, but the body is also a form of material culture itself, which can equally be made and unmade. Through the breaking up of bodies and stone vessels, the material bonds were unmade, and 'forgetting' was facilitated by the destruction of mnemonics (Buchli & Lucas 2001, 80). People had been manipulating dead bodies since the earliest sites on Cyprus, and for millennia before this on the mainland. By this stage they would have had a clear understanding of the dead body and the changes it goes through; their memories informed them of how precisely to deal with this, as well as substantially affecting their experiences of these processes. The manipulation of bones can be witnessed in the vast burial pit 'Structure 23' at Shillourokambos, where successive inhumations take place, mixed with animal bones. During the Aceramic Neolithic in Cyprus, there is evidence for the wrapping of bodies prior to their interment, which clearly involves their handling and movement. This means that we can witness peoples' engagement with the dead, touching the corpses and moving their parts around in a selective fashion.

The only burials, which seem less likely to be secondary, are those of infants (particularly at Khirokitia), which are found fully articulated (for details of each grave see Niklasson 1991). Because of the nature of infant bones it seems unlikely that these were secondary, unless people preserved the body in another way, ensuring that the smaller and more fragile remains were not lost. Hence it seems that experience and knowledge gained from millennia of handling, transporting, dismantling and manipulating the dead had endowed people with an intimate understanding of the potential state of bodies after death. Firstly, Knowledge of the fragility of infant remains may have in turn made it undesirable to perform mortuary rites over long periods, and may explain the tendency for the infant remains to be discovered in primary contexts. Secondly, Infants, having spent only a short period in the world of the living, may have been connected to fewer people, and their remains may have been treated and viewed by a smaller number of mourners over a shorter period, reflecting their shorter time on earth. In Cyprus however, infants are in most respects treated in the same way as adults; it is notable at Khirokitia that where successive infants have been interred within a tholos, an adult is often buried with them. In the same way, at Tenta, where infants are buried inside the structures, the remains of adults are propped-up around their exterior walls and the site enclosure (Niklasson 1991, 175). This emphasises the potential for these adults being 'guardians' in some sense, as well as their link to the infants themselves. The potential practices that surround these dead bodies can be imagined; they may have been preserved, mummified through drying, or wrapped from their initial death. Whilst this may seem to be an archaeological 'unknown', something for which we do not have specific data, the prospects of understanding these practices are not so bleak.

There is a wealth of evidence to suggest secondary rites (at EAN Mylouthkia and Shillourokambos), wrapping (at EAN Shillourokambos and LAN Khirokitia) selective inhumation of body parts (at EAN Mylouthkia and Shillourokambos) as well as fully articulated inhumations (most frequently at LAN Khirokitia and Tenta). The interaction that this entails between the living and the dead would become a crucial part of people's embodied memories. Furthermore, this prolonged interaction and physical contact actually enabled and facilitated memory through people being able to access and manipulate the dead, and physically engage with them on a sensory level. By ensuring that the dead were 'dealt with' in the proper way, and that they were prepared for the transformation and journey that they had embarked upon, the living were free to remember them as they were when they were living, and picture them as being in the 'right place'. The mortuary arena was used in this way to maintain and (re) create memories of the deceased. This notion is supported by Cannon's (2002, 192) work, for example, in which he argues that creation of a specific place for the dead causes the perpetuation of their memory in the minds of the living. This dismantling of the dead is also particularly interesting with regard to 'forgetting' and 'remembering'. The process of decomposition may therefore have marked the beginnings of their transition from one realm to another, from the living to the ancestral world, and their subsequent dismantling may in part have reflected the 'un-making' of their physical existence in the world of the living in order to facilitate their transcendence to the next. Hutchinson and Aragan's (2002, 31) constructs are interesting here; they present death as a process, and suggest that archaeologists only see a 'snap-shot' of a broader 'death-cycle'. A key problem in interpretation has thus been the tendency to see the excavated remains as representing the final, complete ritual act. This point seems particularly relevant in relation to Shillourokambos, where the remains appear to be laid out as if still in the process of being manipulated. Hutchinson and Aragan (2002, 31) further suggest that this continual movement of the dead keeps the spaces and places of

death 'in motion', as well as perpetuating the notion of transformation and transcendence rather than a finite end.

The data from the Aceramic Neolithic of Cyprus therefore not only demonstrates people's physical involvement with dead bodies and their parts, but also something of the way in which they experienced and understood these bodies. Clearly this was potentially very different to the way we may explain and understand the body now; at the risk of seeming banal, however, it is important to reiterate that whilst there may be some basic universal bodily sensations, limitations, and experiences, their interpretation is ultimately fluid. It is also to be remembered that our understanding of the body in the western world today is based in part on information derived from medicine, biology, religion and the media (see Lyon & Barbalet 1994, 50–51). We thus know that we have organs, blood, skin, hair; when we die we 'decompose', since all of these things involve 'chemicals' and 'tissues'. Further, we also have set reasons why people die (as a result of medical or accidental factors, or even murder) as well as a set concept of the moment of death itself. Yet, when we discuss emotion, we refer back to this biological body, which changes to become an embodiment of 'us', 'our body' as something we live in. Thus, when people express emotions they can explain the sensations as being felt through their body, some of the most familiar being 'broken hearted', 'gut feeling', 'pangs of guilt' or 'butterflies' in the stomach. In this sense, then, the metaphorical expression of emotion stems from our lived bodies, the sensation of 'being-in-our-bodies'. This is in line with Lyon and Barbalet (1994, 52), who distinguish two key notions of the body in the modern world which underpin our perceptions of it; firstly, the 'consumerist body', which is objectified and subjected to treatment, and secondly the body as a 'terrain of medical practice'.

The body is a potent source of mnemonics, particularly through sensory experience. In this context Hamilakis (1998, 117) notes the phenomenon of 'performative ceremonies which generate bodily sensory and emotional experiences, resulting in habitual memory being sedimented in the body'. Commenting on this, Alcock (2002, 28) suggests that these 'incorporated practices' that form an important part of the social act of commemoration, are one of the most archaeologically 'visible' aspects of memory. Essentially, our bodies, and the way we can feel and understand them, are a product of our explanations for their form and their nature. Thus, when looking back 10,000 years, we are studying people whose understanding is likely to be both familiar and unfamiliar. We have the same physiology, and we potentially suffer and delight in similar sensations. The interpretation, and the ways that these emotions were dealt with, may have been very different to our own, pain being a prime example of a sensation which we may now consider to be unacceptable, avoidable and undesirable (for the most part), which may have been considered necessary, important and indeed, desirable. The experience of pain, however it is understood, can also

have a dramatic impact upon our experience and perception of our own bodies, uniting or dividing us from our 'selves' (Jackson 2004). Emotion is in this sense fundamentally enmeshed with memory, and for this reason emotionally charged memories often appear to be the most lasting. It is perhaps here that the rather more major question of how much we can ever understand the experience of 'others' comes into play. If indeed experience and its ensuing intake into our consciousness is regarded as being contextually specific, affected by culture, social norms, age, sex, religion, then it would follow that no individual would be capable of truly understanding another that did not precisely mirror themselves. I would suggest, however, in line with Rapport (2001), that this is not the case, in that commonalities exist which afford our understanding of one another.

The boundaries between our bodies and the world are clearly fluid, and in the processes of dying and death become blurred. The existence of deceased individuals is secured in memory – through mnemonics, both intentionally memorialised and the unintentional 'invasions'. Moreover, it is through both maintenance and destruction that the past and the people in it are ever-present in their traces.

Conclusions: creativity, imagination and the fallacy of freedom?

In order to understand what has been described as the 'idiosyncratic' developments in the Early and Later Aceramic Neolithic of Cyprus I suggest there are a number of factors which not only need to be considered but 'synthesised'. Specifically, I emphasise here the roles of creativity and imagination, memory and movement in the particular manifestation of this Neolithic world. The distinctiveness and particularities of the Cypriot Neolithic stem from the inherent creativity and imagination of the human beings whose consciousness (re)created and made their world manifest in a 'new' place – not only from the desire to create a replica, but the inevitability of invention. Faced with a new context in which to envisage, a new location, materials and contacts, people were provided not only with constraints but also opportunities to remake a world and reinvent not only their lives but also their deaths. In this way creativity and imagination play a crucial role in the development of might now be considered digressions from the mainland Neolithic norm (Jones 2008, chapter 5). By 'imagination' I refer specifically to the phenomena as presented by Sartre as 'the possibility of positing a thesis of irreality' (2004, 182). Whilst there may have been many 'givens' in this Neolithic world, there was also the continuous possibility of escaping from such constraints, standing back and going beyond it through free thought (Sartre 2004, 184). As Sartre states:

> Imagination is not an empirical power added to
> consciousness, but is the whole of consciousness as it

realizes its freedom; every concrete and real situation of consciousness in the world is pregnant with the imaginary in so far as it is always presented as a surpassing of the real. (2004, 186)

With this transcendental freedom in mind, it is perhaps not surprising that the world (re)created on Cyprus beginning in the Epipalaeolithic is distinctive and indeed by the LAN remarkably different from its contemporaries elsewhere. This capacity to imagine is one factor which can be clearly seen in the mortuary practices throughout this period. Death provides not only a context, but perhaps also an incentive and motivation to imagine. Combined with memory, and the fluctuating bank of understanding it provides, (re)negotiations of life and death are not only possible but also desirable when (re)establishing not only home, but self and 'other'.

Simone de Beauvoir's ideas of 'situated freedom' are highly relevant to this discussion. Whilst imagination and through it creativity may be seen as inherent capacities, there is also constraint to consider. It has often been the island status of Cyprus and its geographical physicality which has been regarded as the 'constraint' (Jones 2008, chapter 5). However it may be argued that for a seafaring community clearly proficient in navigating the eastern Mediterranean basin that the sea was not an obstacle, but rather a means of connection. In this case perhaps the more significant 'constraint' is that of others, and the shared traditions and habitual practices which are performed by the group. Such ideas may be almost cemented in memory and become so fundamental to understandings of the world that they rarely, if ever, shift. Whilst they are not immovable obstacles, they are the foundations or bedrock of a community which reside in shared notions of how the world 'is'. As such they require group acknowledgement and effort to either persist or to alter creating a 'constrained consciousness' which co-exists with the potential freedom presented by imagination and creativity. Beauvoir highlighted the importance of our interrelationships with others, and presented them as being both potential liberators and obstacles to the freedom of the individual (Andrew 2003, 27). Hence the most significant 'constraints' faced by people in the Neolithic were likely to have been similar to those faced today. Whilst individuals had the potential to push ideas and perceptions beyond the archaic, beyond the 'norm', they also had 'others' to negotiate with and relate to and simultaneously restrictions of their own to contend with – their minds as permeated with memories and ideals as our own. In mobilising the world as they knew it, an opportunity to re-invent presented itself and was taken-up, the result was a distinctly Cypriot Neolithic life and death, both relatable and standing apart from its contemporaries.

In conclusion, the activities of the 'everyday', the mundane yet ritualised habits and chores in which people engage, steer their perceptions of the world and in turn their memories of it. Involvement in particular activities is never entirely meaningless, and the seemingly mundane is thus crucial to the maintenance of people's worlds. As such, activities remind people of who they *are*, who they *were*, who they *want to be*. This chapter has aimed to demonstrate that people indeed *carry with them* a *world* consisting of all that they know and have experienced; consequently, the movement of a world is far more than the movement of a Neolithic package, or even simply the migration of people. The world that people inhabit has to be picked-up and transported with them, composed and made mobile. In this process 'selection' is the key to our archaeological understanding. As archaeologists we can see the traces of this selective and creative process; not of course in its entirety, but its remains. On the practical and logistical side this meant that people had to quite literally move themselves and the living-beings they shared this world with to a 'new' location. But perhaps more fundamentally, on an emotional and spiritual level, their ideologies also went with them. Their memories of where they had been, their experiences and ultimately their *way of being*, was thus elevated and transported across space, and re-situated on Cyprus. Throughout the Aceramic Neolithic we have seen how people shaped, embellished and monumentalised aspects of their world, how they have engaged with and through this interactive process and built-up associations and meanings which endured the millennia. The persistence of their 'way of being' thus relates directly to the *persistence of memory*. As people shaped their landscape in a physical sense they moved the earth to make it fit their world, as well as being influenced by it. Furthermore, they shaped their world in a cosmological sense, to make sense of life and death. They created and maintained, performed and recreated ideas about the world they lived in and the meaning of it all.

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