A SOCIAL ARCHAEOLOGY OF HOUSEHOLDS IN NEOLITHIC GREECE

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH

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For my father,
GEORGIOS EMM. SOUVATZIS,
who made the difference

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK SHOWS HOW THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF HOUSEHOLD, WITH ITS
wealth of cultural and empirical information, its rich variability, and the mul-
titude of ways in which it interacts with the wider society, can provide a
very meaningful framework from which to conduct a social archaeology. The
chapters rearticulate the notion of household at and between different scales
of space and time and through key issues, such as the definition of household
and its relationship with community, autonomy and interdependence, diversity
and homogeneity, individual and collective agency, domestic and public ritual,
intrasettlement burials, architecture and symbolic representation, and produc-
tion and consumption, as well as social reproduction, change, complexity, and
integration, in order to capture some of the many dimensions of household and
to show how many theoretical issues and areas of common interest intersect.

In recent years, the archaeological literature has been undergoing a change
and has been obliged to reconsider its traditional epistemological focus on large
scales of space and time, towards an inclusion of smaller scales. There are now
a growing number of works on individuals, houses, households, communi-
ties, and other social categories and the conduct of everyday life. However,
this has not resulted in the emergence of a truly alternative and coherent
approach to households as dynamic social entities, which have instead contin-
ued largely to be viewed as passive responses to wider and longer-term changes
and through old, top-down perspectives and traditional assumptions. In addi-
tion, the boundaries between theoretical traditions and research agendas (and
sometimes between Anglo-American and 'other' archaeological-sociological
perspectives) result in a compartmentalisation in these studies. At the same
time, the interaction between anthropology, history, and sociology has led to a
clearer conceptual and analytical framework for household in a variety of past
and present social contexts.

This book has grown out of (a) the desire to provide an integrative theo-
retical and methodological approach to household as a social process and (b) a
concern with how archaeology, rather than merely borrowing theories, mod-
els, and concepts from other disciplines, can evaluate them against its own
concerns, data, and experience and make genuine and influential contribu-
tions to wider social research. The origins of the book lie in 1993, when

as a doctoral researcher at the Cambridge Department of Archaeology I first encountered, and decided to face up to, the challenge of the household. It is based on continued research carried out since and presents significant analysis of primary unpublished data and of much new material that has emerged in the last few years, as well as reinterpretations of older material. Although the case studies are from Greece, I have tried to make clear the implications for archaeologists and anthropologists in other areas and periods. Likewise, I have synthesised a rich wealth of often little-known discussion and examples of the idea of household in anthropology and the social sciences.

The present volume is offered as one step in the path towards a more interpretative understanding of household, and, from that, of social organisation, as a dialectical, historical, and dynamic process. As such, I wish to relate it to the recovery of difference and varying social realities underneath the bigger picture, as a critical part of archaeology's sociological and intellectual practice and of its position and relevance in the contemporary world. In this way I aim to add my voice to those wishing to take a new look at the body of knowledge and the set of theories we have built up concerning social units. The result is, I hope, interesting and challenging to the reader, but, above all, I hope that it will stimulate dialogue and exchange.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION: WHY THE HOUSEHOLD?

THE HOUSEHOLD HAS BEEN A UNIT OF PRIME IMPORTANCE IN SOCIAL investigation to a wide range of disciplines for nearly half a century. It has also been the focus of a fruitful interdisciplinary dialogue. Archaeology shares many interests with this discussion, and the many theoretical and practical justifications for the significance of household in the related social disciplines are also highly relevant to archaeology.

Household is not one thing but many: a social group; the network of tasks, roles, responsibilities, and relationships (internal and external) that this group encompasses; and the materiality, spatiality, and temporality through which it exists and is defined. It is a location of action, a collection of actors, a pattern of social, economic, and ritual activity, and a system of social relations, economic arrangements, cultural meanings, and moral and emotional patterns. Households also incorporate transitional processes: continuity and changes of membership, partnerships, repertoire of activities and material dimensions, shifts in intra- and interhousehold social relationships, and constant interactions between changes in their organisation and changes in the broader society.

Households are enduring social formations. They occur diachronically, cross-culturally, and at various societal levels. As it has been succinctly put in anthropology, "most people in most societies at most times live in households" (Kunstadter 1984: 300). They also have wider social and cultural boundaries and may pervade, transcend, or indeed encompass other units and formations such as families, kinship groups, or co-residential groups. In many anthropological,

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historical, and sociological case studies households comprise complex and shifting socioeconomic and ritual groups, whose members may not be kin-related and may not all reside in the same architectural unit (e.g., Bourdieu 1996; Burton et al. 2002; Carter 1984; Hammel and Laslett 1974; Lévi-Strauss 1987: 160, 178–80; Segalen 1986: 14–17; Solien de González 1969). In this sense households can be of wider analytical applicability and comparative utility.

Household's many dimensions and levels of analysis give it the potential for a dynamic theoretical and analytical interface of a host of mutually transformed themes, issues, and domains (e.g., Ilcan and Phillips 1998; Netting et al. 1984a; Small and Tannenbaum 1999). For example, household is particularly crucial for the study of economic systems, modes of production, division of labour, and distribution, and a most interesting field for addressing the question of the relationship between production and distribution and between moral economy and political economy. Equally, the studies of gender, kinship, class, race, ethnicity, and inequality all provide further conditions for the understanding of households, as this is where many of these differences or inequalities are realised, as are those of inheritance and property patterns, social networks, and reproductive strategies. As a site with great intensity of social relations, practices, choices, and decisions, household is a critical place for studying social action and for addressing notions topical in contemporary social archaeology and anthropology: social identity, memory, power, position, and complexity. For the same reasons, practice and agency theories, widely debated in archaeology, also have special pertinence to household.

Household is also a strategic site for observing and understanding social and cultural variation, and beyond that, some of the factors and processes which produce it. Households may vary considerably in form – size, structure, and spatial dimension; in the ways in which they organise themselves and their daily lives across and within cultures and through time; in belief systems; in the kinds of options and choices they exploit; and in the extent to which they 'plan' their activities in the short term and the long term (Anderson et al. 1994: 11–15). The character and forms of household interact closely with the cultural principles and socioeconomic processes of the society within which households exist and cannot be fully understood outside of them. Charting and understanding this variability is an essential step in any understanding of social dynamics. This holds for all social studies, but is particularly true for prehistoric studies, in which there is a tendency to provide overall accounts of long-term structural changes, behaviour, or 'evolution', often through a major focus on larger spatial and temporal scales. An awareness of the varying realities of the household can promote an attempt to move beyond the big models for change and towards different scales of interpretation.

Understanding households is important for archaeology. Archaeology can tackle issues of interest to anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and

economists, still focusing on its own materialist concerns and retaining its privilege of witnessing the long-term sequence of events. In fact, archaeology, with the materiality and historical depth of its data, is in a favourable position to study households and to make important and influential contributions to wider social research. It can expand considerably the knowledge of the diversity and multidimensionality of social units, both synchronically and diachronically; provide insights into social configurations, rules, and ideals that may no longer exist; and add a historical perspective to transformations of households and wider transformations. A central argument of this book is that a social archaeological approach to household is particularly crucial to an interpretative theory of social organisation as a dialectical, historical, and dynamic process. In this way the household can also serve as a common frame of reference, a point of dialogue between archaeology and its related disciplines.

However, archaeology's contribution to this interdisciplinary problematisation has been limited, despite the proliferation of archaeological works on houses and households in recent decades and the increasing concerns with interdisciplinarity. It is largely through a collection of theories, frames of research, methods, and case studies that one can approach the household archaeologically. And although all of them have produced useful insights, many can be criticised for their social models. Useful research extends from economic systems and strategies (e.g., Feinman 2000; Halstead and O'Shea 1989; Marcus and Stanish 2005) to the symbolism and ideology surrounding architecture (e.g., Parker Pearson and Richards 1994a; Richards 2004; Watkins 2005), and from a focus on material culture (e.g., DeMarrais et al. 2005; Hodder 2005a) to debates on memory, identity, and social agency (e.g., Barrett 2001; Bradley 2002; Diaz-Andreu et al. 2005; Dobres and Robb 2000), all of which, in turn, might apply to both intra- and interhousehold levels. The important contributions of much of this research have developed in ways which have yet to be fully integrated into the analysis of households. Conversely, the issue of household has yet to be fully included into archaeology's theoretical and interpretative practice. At the same time, many archaeological debates have moved onto other analytical scales: of the individual or the person on the one hand, or of anonymous and much larger collectives on the other, variously but vaguely labelled community or society.

It has sometimes been argued within archaeology that the household is elusive, its identification an unfeasible task; that archaeology does not recover households; and that the concepts and notions involved in household have little application to the material world familiar to the archaeologist (see discussion in Alexander 1999: 80–82 and Souvatzi 2007a). I argue, instead, that the problem is not with the archaeological data but rather with the kinds of questions we ask of them or with an inadequate conceptualisation of household. The elusiveness of the household and the supposed inability of the archaeological data to stand

up to the requirements of a 'proper' understanding of household dynamics, compared to the data available in anthropology and the social sciences, or even in historical archaeology, should no longer be an excuse. We should focus on the considerable data we already have, a substantial corpus of which comes from everyday life contexts, instead of constantly referring to what we lack. Besides, the household is as elusive for archaeology as it is for its related disciplines (e.g., see Allison 1999: 2–3; Burton et al. 2002: 66; Nevett 1999: 6–12; and Segalen 1986: 27, 110 for the biases that may be involved in historical records, interviews, iconographic evidence, and so on). Although we may not be able to determine the finer points of the definition of households or their composition, households as activity groups, as collectivities, and as enduring social formations have material components that can be traced over the remarkable time and space scales available to archaeology. It is precisely the materiality, spatiality, temporality, historicity, and specificity of households that connect them to key social phenomena, that create links between household organisation and patterns in the archaeological data, and that therefore make them particularly appropriate analytical units for archaeology.

AIMS AND STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This work focuses on the spatial and material patterning of the remains of household activities and daily practices and attempts to tie this to an interpretation of household and wider social organisation, using empirical data from Neolithic Greece. The preliminary framework of thought, concerns, and questions above define the aims and arguments that follow.

A main concern is with issues of theories and practice and their articulation into an integrated approach to household as process in archaeology. Chapters 1 and 2 focus on the conceptual and social definition of household, for it is in this area that we can recognise the multiplicity of factors which make up its diversity and dynamics. Questions relate to the nature of appropriate theories and methods, the recognition of sociocultural variability, and the evaluation of disciplinary contributions. Because I feel that archaeological approaches to household still have much to reflect upon before they can capture its social dynamics, I begin this book (Chapter 1), perhaps unorthodoxly, by presenting the main points of the discussion not in archaeology but in the social sciences, in which the dialectics of both household and research have been established and a comprehensive framework has been constructed. This review can be valuable as both a reference point and a starting point for new ways of thinking. Chapter 2 discusses critically the situation in our discipline and offers an alternative framework for interpretation. I argue that the goal of capturing the social dynamics of household in archaeology is achievable, provided we bridge two divides: an internal one between various archaeological approaches, and

an external one between archaeology and its related disciplines. We should not be isolated from wider social theory, but neither should we apply such theory when clearly inappropriate.

Although the book has a considerable theory and methodology element, this serves to set the background for the empirical analysis that forms my main arguments. The major task is to investigate the issues outlined above by bringing together all lines of archaeological evidence available. I intend to demonstrate that by employing a bottom–up viewpoint, and by focusing attention on socioculturally specific issues and intrasite variability, we gain invaluable insights into the patterns of household activity, ideology, and morphology and into the use of space within a settlement, and from these we can develop a new approach to understanding past societies. Such an approach is particularly appropriate for contexts such as Neolithic Greece, whose architectural and material data not only are rich and complex, but also are derived almost in their entirety from houses and settlements. This important characteristic associates Greece with many other parts of the prehistoric world in which households are key units of analysis, such as central and eastern Europe and the Near and Middle East.

Yet, in Greek Neolithic research, as generally in wider prehistoric research, the recognition of the fundamental social significance of household has not come easily. To date, there has been little systematic effort to look to the contents of houses with the aim of moving beyond generalisations and towards interpretations of Neolithic life. I aim specifically at such integration at the household level. Attempts to use extensive study of the internal layout of settlements as a basis for examining social, economic, and ideological organisation rely on analysis of primary data, unpublished and published, recent and older, from the more extensively excavated sites. Chapter 3 provides a brief outline of Neolithic Greece to set in context the case studies in Chapters 4 to 7. The sites on which I concentrate in Chapters 4 and 5, Nea Nikomedeia, Sesklo, and Dimini, are among the most famous of the Greek Neolithic and also figure prominently in syntheses of the European Neolithic or of aspects of it (e.g., Bailey 2000; 2005; Chapman and Gaydarska 2006; Whittle 1996). Earlier interpretations of these sites have been left largely unchallenged. I also provide an account of my analysis of the ceramic material from Dimini (Chapter 5), as its production, distribution, and use are closely linked to household economy and ideology.

In Chapter 4, I examine the evidence from the earlier Neolithic settlements of Nea Nikomedeia and Sesklo and compare this with the widely held belief that the complexity of later Neolithic societies was preceded by a long and relatively uniform period of idealised simplicity and homogeneity. Attention focuses on the distinction between the ideal and the real both at the theoretical and at the methodological level.

Chapter 5 constitutes an important methodological stage in the attempt to understand past societies from the bottom up, providing a detailed case study in household organisation. It examines the remains of household practices from Late Neolithic Dimini and integrates these with the notion of meaningfully and purposefully structured spaces – both residential and communal. A central theme here is the conceptual and analytical separation of social complexity from inequality and hierarchy. This also involves consideration of the notions of reciprocity and antagonism, independence and interdependence, and social differentiation and integration.

Chapters 6 and 7 bring other important sites of the Greek Neolithic world into a comparative synthesis which illustrates the need to shift away from the preoccupation with the big picture and towards a consideration of the entire range of variation – spatial and temporal – underneath it. In Chapter 6, attention is directed to the recognition of difference and patterning, as seen in, among other things, household activities and ideologies, the examination of patterns of similarities and differences, and their articulation and meaning. In Chapter 7, I try to pull all the evidence together to offer concrete examples of what goes on underneath the general tendencies of the Neolithic sequence. I take a diachronic perspective on continuities and changes and their range and character. This means little in terms of a chance to account for a uniform 'household evolution'. I argue instead that courses of progression are so fluid, ambiguous, and context-specific that it is impossible to enclose them into uniform and predictive models. Discussion includes the means, media, and mechanisms through which changes occurred or continuities were maintained, and what might have been their stimuli and consequences.

In focusing on the household, I have not intended to suggest a hierarchy of levels; rather to point out that any socioeconomic discourse constructed in the absence of these multifaceted, dynamic social units is not only complacent, but bound to prove unconvincing. In each of the data chapters (4–7), as well as in Chapters 1 and 2, there is an attempt to link the large scale with individual variation and choice. It is hoped that the analysis of such evidence will highlight a new meaning for the patterns and interpretations concerning the large scale.

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THE HOUSEHOLD IN THE
SOCIAL SCIENCES

THIS CHAPTER LOOKS AT THE CONCEPT OF 'HOUSEHOLD' AS IT IS WIDELY understood and approached in the social sciences, focusing attention on the recognition of household's multiple but interdependent facets and analytical levels. It aims to show the richness and dynamics of the subject, drawing on the breadth of household studies – theoretical and empirical – in our related disciplines, particularly anthropology, sociology and history. The concepts of 'household', 'family'/'kinship', 'co-residence', 'house', and 'domestic group', often taking the same name in the archaeological literature, are categorically different, whereas uniformity, predictability, and fixity barely correspond to household organisation at all. The problematisation outlined here is a starting point for what follows in the rest of the book.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF 'HOUSEHOLD' AS AN ANALYTICAL CONCEPT

Like households themselves, household studies have not been shaped outside history; they have grown out of earlier approaches and earlier research agendas. A brief consideration of this history is important to an understanding of the reasons for the emergence of household as an analytical concept and of its significance in social analysis.

Research on domestic institutions and social groupings originated in the nineteenth century under scholars such as Morgan, Bachofen, LePlay, McLennan, Maine, and Engels and was further developed in the first half of this

century by Malinowski, Murdock, Lowie, Fortes, and others. However, until as late as the 1960s, the household was not a realised category in social analysis. Earlier discussion had almost entirely revolved around kinship systems, family history, descent groups, marriage customs, hereditary patterns, and rules of residence in order to build models of social and political structures and cultural evolution. These categories were supposed to be at once universally recognised, linked together in a cross-culturally valid fashion, and resistant to historical change. Their relationships were accounted for largely through classificatory schemes, genealogies, and terminological analysis, whereas kinship, economics, and politics were perceived as discrete analytical domains with fixed boundaries (see Parkin and Stone 2004 for a full review of earlier kinship studies). Fortes's (1958) classic separation between the 'politico-jural' and the 'domestic' domains maintained that the former is constituted by the social principles of kinship and the political and economic spheres, whereas the latter includes the family, conceptualised as a site of nurture, sustenance, and psychological and emotive considerations and as marginal to social, economic, and political organisation. The household was viewed as a residual of such rules and structures and as being just as resistant to change (Netting et al. 1984b; Roberts 1991). In addition, any variability was regarded as an exception or deviation from the normative ideal (Carter 1984: 73). For example, the ideal normality that was sought in the nuclear family as a universal social institution masked the diverse reality and the plurality of cultures and promoted a treatment of other forms as 'pathological'. True, the role of economic cooperation in social grouping as well as of inequalities based on gender had been stressed at an early stage (Engels 1972), the more flexible concept of the 'domestic group' had already appeared (Fortes 1958; Goody 1958), and cultural variation had been noted. However, research remained largely attached to classificatory approaches, offering increasingly abstract and formalist models regarding associations of subsistence systems, labour organisation, kinship forms, locality, and societal types.

It was in this context that the household emerged as a more significant analytical concept in the 1960s, the result of increasing dissatisfaction with the normative, ahistorical character of the earlier approaches, the concomitant recognition of the dynamics and variability of social units, and the profound criticism of the evolutionism, functionalism, structuralism, and structural-functionalism that had been employed up until then (e.g., Netting et al. 1984b; Roberts 1991; Wilk and Netting 1984; Yanagisako 1979). This epistemological shift contributed to the full revelation of the diversity, multidimensionality, and historical specificity of household and to a view of it as a process rather than a norm (cf. Hammel 1972), constructed and realised through everyday practices and relationships.

Another important point is that academic interaction started soon after the household appeared as a new analytical category. At its heart was the

epistemological and analytical status of the concept (e.g., Bender 1967; Rapp 1979; Wilk 1991; Yanagisako 1979). For example, the fact that the household occurs across cultures and societies might lead to a focus on its universal properties, reifying the socioculturally specific household forms, endangering the identification of variation, and leading the research again to normative and stabilising approaches. Thus, concepts, perspectives, and approaches have been subjected to criticism, resulting in significant refinements and clarifications and generating an impressive number of studies. Household research has been influenced and greatly benefited by the impact of Marxist-feminist and feminist critiques from the 1970s onwards. Household studies and gender studies have continuously informed each other, and, despite certain tensions between them, it has been in a context of constant interaction and mutual transformation of research questions, agendas, and approaches that a reconceptualisation both of household and of gender as processes has been achieved (Morgan 1999). This was followed, from the mid-1990s onwards, by the revitalisation of kinship and the reconceptualisation of it as a process – that is, a way of 'becoming kin', through human agency and everyday practices which may have little or nothing to do with the Eurocentric and 'biologised' conceptions of kinship or the idealism and formalism of earlier studies (Carsten 1997, 2000; Schweitzer 2000; Stone 2004a, 2004b; Yanagisako and Delaney 1995). Indeed, to paraphrase Carsten (2000: 19), the discussion of kinship in contemporary anthropology in many ways seems to replicate an analogous discussion of household (and of gender) in earlier decades which questioned its 'natural' basis and revealed its social and political character.

Thus, discussions of household reflect growing interdisciplinary interests as well as increasing awareness of the fluidity and permeability of analytical domains in general. The important implications of co-relating the various converging themes and directions can be seen in numerous works (e.g., see Anderson et al. 1994 on household and economy; Chant 1997 on household and gender; Fraad et al. 1994 and McKie et al. 1999 on household, class, gender, and power; Kabeer 1991 on household production, distribution, and gender; also, Cheal 1989 on moral and political economy; Han 2004 on kinship and production; Komter 2005 and Sykes 2005 on social solidarity, gift exchange, power, and status; Yanagisako and Collier 1987 and Stone 2005 on kinship, gender, and reproduction). The following discussion draws on this recent development of thought and elaborates on key issues, turning points, and reasons critical to a view of household as process.

DEFINING HOUSEHOLD

Household has been a difficult concept to tackle. Households are not fixed and monolithic entities; they are shifting and fluid organising principles, whose boundaries are not clear-cut. Some of the factors affecting household

boundaries across space and through time include the disparities between cultural ideals and actual practice; rules and conceptions about who can belong to a household (e.g., Burton et al. 2002); forms and roles of organisation of production, resource allocation, labour participation, decision-making, and bargaining strategies (e.g., Chant 2002); changing inheritance, kinship, marriage, and sexuality patterns (e.g., Segalen 1986). Definitional complexity also has to do with household's polysemy, its implication of multiple but different concepts such as family, co-residence, and domestic group, as well as with household's familiarity to everyone. This 'empirical, felt knowledge' could pose biases to household's study and understanding. Yanagisako (1979: 200) timely outlined the problem:

> the dilemmas we encounter in cross-cultural comparisons of . . . households stem not from our want of unambiguous, formal definitions of these units, but from the conviction that we can construct a precise, reduced definition for what are inherently complex, multifunctional institutions imbued with a diverse array of cultural principles and meanings.

However, although a unitary concept of this diverse and contradictory social entity is inappropriate, a concern with definitions is fundamental to an understanding of household as a process. Indeed, it has been one of the main factors contributing to a sense of fluidity and flux in household studies. Rather than trying *a priori* to delineate household boundaries, the challenge is, following Hammel (1984: 31; also Wilk 1991), to construct a flexible analytical notion of household which can accommodate the diversity of household forms and local conceptions of household, as well as different research questions and dimensions, and which would permit observations and comparisons. In searching for an appropriate approach, two main methods were employed. First, because the term 'household' appears to gloss a variety of social forms, it has been considered essential to refine the concept. Second, because the morphology of the household is socioculturally specific and unpredictable, emphasis was placed primarily on the role or activity of household rather than on its formal classifications.

Extensive household research has shown that the activities consistently associated with the household consist minimally of production, consumption/ distribution, and reproduction; several scholars also include transmission (e.g., Wilk and Netting 1984: 5). The view of household as an activity group moves away from formalism and pre-given ˙definitions and towards a focus on the actions and interactions of people through household co-membership and cooperation in a set of practices. This is not to say that all households crossculturally and diachronically perform the entire set of the above activities or that these cannot take place outside the household. Similarly, there are other activities that sometimes are carried out in the household and other times are not.

There is, in addition, no assumption that the household boundaries thus iden-
tified necessarily exist in terms of indigenous categories. Rather, household
practices represent analytical mechanisms which result in existing or chang-
ing boundaries rather than homogeneity of households themselves. Besides,
as we will see below, these basic practices are so complex and multiform that
an expectation of uniformity of households is illusory. Thus, the definition
of household is not an end in itself; rather it is the first step in research on
household as a social process.

HOUSEHOLD, HOUSE, AND CO-RESIDENCE

Although co-residence is a pertinent component of household grouping, it is
not synonymous with household. Co-residential groups can exist on different
levels within the same society, can contain more than one household or can be
parts of larger households, and may not carry out key functions of the household
such as consumption and reproduction (Bender 1967: 498; Yanagisako 1979).
A general conceptual intricacy relates to the fact that every social group has
spatial dimensions but not every social group is a household.

A good example is the Serbian *zadruga*, in which the constituent subgroup-
ings of the extended household occupy cabins surrounding a central house or
rooms, usually for the use of conjugal pairs, built onto the main accommoda-
tion (Byrnes 1976; Hammel 1972). Conversely, the large family-communities
of medieval France formed one co-resident group, amounting usually to thirty
or forty people, occupying one large and partitioned house and consisting of
several households (Segalen 1986: 14–17). In Caribbean matrifocal societies,
the household is in most cases part of a larger residing unit, the compound,
which is a loose association of households of varying sizes but usually linked
through the maternal line and often sharing food, domestic labour, childcare,
and field work (Solien de González 1969).

Of course, a household always occurs in a spatial context; it requires a
space, which, except for single-person households, is shared space. However,
household space may be designated more by the social activities carried out
in it and less by physical structures. It may involve the use of several types of
spaces other than the domestic dwelling, including external work areas, spaces
of leisure, household properties, and areas designated by the community or the
wider society (e.g., communal areas) (McKie et al. 1999: 5–8). Thus, instead of
each co-resident group or house being identified with a household, it is rather
the other way around: the household consists of one or more individuals who
may often form a co-resident group and may often, but not necessarily, coincide
with a house.

This understanding has important implications for the archaeology of
houses and 'house societies', which is an important and growing subfield

(see Chapter 2) and in which the definition of 'house' as a social unit tends to overlap with the definition of household. However, an overemphasis on residential propinquity and continuity risks both disregarding the flexibility of spatial boundaries and privileging some types of societies (e.g., house-based societies, with more or less permanent architecture) over others, and thus, some types of households over others. It may therefore be of limited applicability and cross-cultural utility (see discussion in Gillespie 2000a: 32–49; also Allison 1999: 4 for the limitations of the archaeological overemphasis on architecture). Although long-term locality and solid architecture may impose different constraints on household social structures than the mobility in residence patterns of other societies, they are not the exclusive referents of households. This is exemplified by the numerous cases in which there is considerable seasonal mobility of household groupings such as nomads, hunter-gatherers, and seasonal horticulturists (e.g., Kent 1995; Kramer and Boone 2002; Nuttall 2000), or mobility of people between dwelling units (e.g., 'double residence', guests, and so on; see Burton et al. 2002). Households, therefore, exist within a number of different temporalities and spatialities, and the relationship of household with house and with other spaces ought to be defined analytically rather than being presupposed.

HOUSEHOLD, FAMILY, AND KINSHIP

The distinction between household and family has been crucial from the beginning of household research in the social sciences and for both theoretical and analytical reasons. It results in part from the need to replace the more culturally defined and rigid unit of family with one that is more socially defined and flexible. It also stems from the critical reaction to the Eurocentric ideological baggage that the terms 'family' and 'kinship' usually carry with them, as we have briefly seen in the first section of this chapter.

Conceptually, family is defined on the basis of kinship/alliance through descent or affinity, and it is based on a more culturally generated and structured set of rules, roles, and ideals about membership and behaviour than household. Household, on the other hand, is defined by relationships between its members which are constructed through activity-sharing rather than by abstract rules, and it is highly flexible in relation to changes in the wider social and economic environment. Family members need not cooperate, whereas household members need not be kin-related (Bender 1967; Cheal 1991: 125–32; Hammel and Laslett 1974; Roberts 1991: 62–3). Analytically, a large number of anthropological case studies have shown that there are many societies in which nonrelatives may live together as household members, whereas relatives may not live together or may be members of other households. Among the Maharashtra of India, a group of unrelated persons could form a household,

and, equally, a household could be composed of more than one family unit (Carter 1984). In the farming commune of the Ulad Stut of Morocco, Seddon (1976) identified three types of social units: the nuclear family, the household, as a larger association of co-residing individuals, and the 'budget unit'. This was a yet larger corporate or sharing group, extending beyond or permeating the families and households and pooling and exchanging goods and resources freely. Significantly, it is the household, not the family, not even the 'budget unit', which is the basic production unit and whose members generally share farm labour and sometimes costs and profits, even if they belong to different 'budget units'.

Marxist and feminist scholarship from the 1970s onwards contributed considerably to the 'deconstruction' of family (and of household, for that matter) as a 'natural' fact existing outside of the wider circumstances and to its incorporation back into the social and economic environment (Bourdieu 1996; Folbre 1987; Guyer 1981; Harris 1981; Hartmann 1981; Levin 1993; Rapp 1979; Tilly 1987; Yanagisako and Delaney 1995). The nuclear family model in particular, with its assumed ideals of democracy and freedom governing the family, has been exposed as a Western notion that not only masks the real-life practices inside the family, but often creates oppressive dominant ideologies for subjecting other forms to discriminatory practices (Dolgin 1995; Leñero-Otero 1977). For example, in many Latin American and Caribbean contexts, although the nuclear family household is considered to be the ideal form, in reality it is rarely achieved, and when it is, it tends to be temporary. Among the Black Carib of Livingston in Guatemala the nuclear family unit is dispersed among different households; the core of the household is one, two, or more related women and their children; the husband-fathers may be absent for long periods for the purposes of labour elsewhere; and there is also a practice of 'child loaning' between households in order to assist lone mothers with young children (Solien de González 1965; 1969). Chant (1997; 2002) argues that 'female-headed households' – single or extended, consanguineal or non-kin-related – are very common in present-day Latin America, and indeed, rising in numbers due to, among other factors, increased female labour force participation. Among the Malay of Pulau Langkawi, Carsten (1995; 1997) finds that regardless of how households are composed, it is siblingship rather than the conjugal pair or the parent-child relationship that constitutes the focal kinship notion.

Thus, the household-family relationship is fluctuating and complex rather than fixed and straightforward. A household may or may not contain a family, and families may spread over two or more households. Furthermore, notions of family and of what constitutes kin and a kindred group can be perceived very differently in different contexts. The current reconceptualisation of kinship in anthropology aims precisely at revealing the distinctively cultural character of

kinship and acknowledges that 'fictive' kinship or ways of 'relatedness' are as legitimate as biological kinship and continuously 'under construction' (Carsten 2000; Stone 2004a).

HOUSEHOLD AND DOMESTIC GROUP

'Domestic group' has never really been coterminous or synonymous with 'household' in anthropology and it is not widely used as a key analytical unit (Carter 1984: 44–5; Goody 1972: 106). As a concept it is more cultural and emotive than social, mostly pertinent to Western ideals, and often derived from an intuitive sense of the 'domestic' (Pennartz and Niehof 1999: 2). Besides, the domestic domain is only one of the domains with which household is interrelated. So attempts to specify household on the basis of 'domestic activities' alone limit household's wider social character. There is also the important rejection by the feminist and Marxist analyses of the poor and stereotypical explications of the term 'domestic', which are usually accompanied by a whole set of set of unproductive dichotomies (e.g., public/private, political/domestic) and thus impede the understanding of either the household or the domestic domain as a social and political process (Harris 1981: 148–52; Yanagisako and Collier 1987).

Indeed, the very definition of the public and the domestic has been called into question and their relationship has been critically reassessed. This reassessment has led to the recognition that in most societies what is commonly labelled 'domestic' has in fact a political significance, and vice versa. What we commonly assume as being domestic or what we now see as being private (e.g., affective and sexual relationships) can belong to some extent to the public domain (Carrier and Miller 1999; Carsten 1997: 19–20). Gender relations, dominant ideologies and their reproduction, economic life, social behaviour, the house as a social space, and sexual identities and relationships are only some of the many interactions between the domestic and the political, and between the public and the private. These important clarifications are discussed in the next section with reference to the 'domestic labour debate'.

HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTION

Within the general definition of household production as the procurement and management of resources are included food preparation (acquisition, processing, and cooking); housekeeping, sustenance, and generally all kinds of domestic labour; 'self-provisioning' (e.g., horticulture and livestock keeping); extra-household acquisition of resources and goods (e.g., by foraging or gathering); and organisation and division of labour (Anderson et al. 1994; Wilk and Netting 1984: 9). In addition, what households produce and by what means depends on

particular circumstances, household production can be organised differently at different times and in different contexts, and production systems, modes, and patterns can be considerably diverse.

The 'domestic labour debate' in anthropology and sociology, instigated by Marxist and feminist scholarship (although not always with the same agenda; see Morgan 1996: 6–10, 15–21), aimed at a reevaluation of the home/work opposition and has revealed the importance of domestic labour in the analysis of economic life (Folbre 1986; Hart 1992; Hartmann 1981; Moore 1992; Yanagisako and Collier 1987). Feminist anthropology in particular has demonstrated that the gender (or sexual) division of labour is a social, and not a biological, phenomenon and that stereotypical usage of the term 'domestic activities' as automatically associated with women and considered inferior to surplus production and to household's economic status entails ethnocentric, androcentric, and capitalist attitudes. The present low esteem in which domestic labour might be held is not a diachronic and cross-cultural phenomenon, but largely a recent one, linked to the development of a 'modern' society with values orientated towards productivity, efficiency, and economic rationality. There are societies in which women undertake extra-domestic activities or are the primary producers (e.g., Chant 2002; Gates 2002); men undertake much of what is usually considered to be 'women's work', including housework and motherhood (e.g., Coltrane 1992; Duindam 1999); and children may also make important contributions to subsistence and the economic viability of the household (Kramer and Boone 2002).

Production is therefore a dynamic and complex household activity. It links dialectically what in economics and sociology are called the 'formal economy' and the 'informal economy' and needs to be examined in close relation to the wider sociocultural norms and rules concerning production and labour division. Many anthropological case studies have demonstrated that such rules and decisions affect and are affected by gender and age roles and status; that variations in mode of production may connect to variations in kinship roles; and that social divisions, inequalities, and conflicts may be mediated through the household (e.g., Evans 1991; Han 2004; Kabeer 1991, 1997; Moore 1992).

HOUSEHOLD DISTRIBUTION AND CONSUMPTION

Distribution includes pooling, sharing, consumption, and exchange as well as resource, goods, task, space, and time allocation and redistribution. Exchange applies on both intra- and inter-household levels and includes both 'economic exchange' (e.g., based on agreement between the parties and usually involving bargaining) and noneconomic or 'social exchange' (e.g., based on morality and altruism and relying on the creation of a social obligation) (Bloch 1973; Curtis 1986). In general, distribution/consumption is considered to

be particularly helpful for the identification of household boundaries on the grounds that the social rules which coordinate transactions within the household often differ from those which operate between households (Wilk and Netting 1984: 9).

Food preparation and consumption are a very good example of the dialectical relationship between household production, distribution, and reproduction. In many cultures the production and consumption – often communal or ritual – of food and drink is critical to the notion of economic cooperation, viability, and reproduction of the household, as well as to its wider social and economic significance. In the Serbian *zadruga* and the family communities in medieval France discussed earlier, the communal preparation and eating of food is the most important binding element, often emphasised by the presence of a single, communal hearth and of centralised cooking facilities. Furthermore, contemporary studies of kinship have showed that giving and receiving food and substance are central in creating a notion of 'relatedness' and social bonds, irrespective of genealogy and blood-ties (see Carsten 1997 for the Malay of Pulau Langkawi; Hutchinson 2000 for the meaning of the exchange of cattle among the Nuer of Sudan; Lambert 2000 for the sharing of mother's milk or the milk of livestock among the Rajasthani of India; and Nuttall 2000 for the sharing and distribution of hunted meat among the Inuit of Greenland).

However, household distribution is not only about sharing. It is also about conflicting interests, the interaction between economic and noneconomic exchange, and the redistributive processes that come into operation when goods and resources enter the household. Households are not unitary social actors or aggregates of balanced individual interests, and they are not just a place where people exchange resources; they are also a place where people create, establish, and affirm their gender identity, age role, and individual authority and where altruism coexists with antagonism over resource, time, and space allocation (see Curtis 1986 for a theoretical model of households as internally unequal redistributive units). A distinct line of household research has called into question notions such as gender or age role complementarity within the household and has been devoted, instead, to the study of differential access to power, resources, and opportunities, to bargaining and negotiation patterns, and to the social definition of 'rights' (e.g., Folbre 1986; Gates 2002; Hart 1992; Kabeer 1997). It is the outcome of all these processes which results in the total amount of intra-household distribution and consumption patterns.

HOUSEHOLD TRANSMISSION

Transmission is one of the more flexible spheres of household practice. It includes the issues of property and inheritance and the transmission of

knowledge, goods, privileges, rights, status, and prestige, and it is closely linked with household viability and reproduction (Segalen 1986: 61–69, 273–285; Wilk and Netting 1984: 11–14; Yanagisako 1979: 169–173).

Although a household could be viewed in terms of rules of residence, property, and inheritance, it must be stressed that the ways human societies recognise, maintain, and affirm links between generations in material terms are far from fixed and uniform. Within evolutionary and functionalist approaches the transmission of property is seen as shaping household morphology and composition, especially when it is related to land ownership, whereas household property and inheritance systems are seen as being determined by ecological and demographic factors, productive systems, and the availability of resources (e.g., Goody 1976; Laslett 1972). Such attitudes have been severely criticised as embracing a narrow conception of complex social processes and cultural meanings and reducing an entire system of social relationships to an economic relationship between people and things or people and land (Bloch 1975; Hammel 1978; Segalen 1986: 61–9).

The reality is a lot more complex, and it might actually be the other way around: household structures and ideologies, morality systems, and the 'ethics of inheritance' might in fact shape inheritance patterns. In the context of farming communities and 'house societies', combining the theme of property, especially ownership of land, which in these societies is also a means of production, with the theme of locating social groups in space leads to links between dwellings, temporal succession, and ancestral lines (Lévi-Strauss 1987: 152). Even within this situation, however, there is a range of social, cultural, and economic features that may define intergenerational transfer. For example, household and community ideologies often play an important role, as does also the ideology of kinship. In a study of a contemporary Austrian farming community, Seiser (2000) contrasts the ideology of the 'house' with the ideology of kinship and shows that is the latter which regulates the transmission of property: although people generally attribute great importance to the continuity of the 'house', it is kinship relations and inter-household relationships which ensure the social reproduction of the status of affairs. In short, the systems of rules, meanings, roles, strategies, kinship, and ideologies within which property rights and modes of inheritance are shaped must themselves be explained rather than produced as explanations.

HOUSEHOLD REPRODUCTION

Reproduction is the widest and most complex and diverse sphere of household activity, and perhaps the one that links households most directly to larger domains. It refers to "all the activities in which households recreate themselves and in the process, contribute to the reproduction of the total society" (Rapp

1979: 176). First, reproduction refers both to physical and social reproduction. Second, social reproduction includes two further spheres, the socialisation of the young individual or the new member and the social reproduction of the household group. Third, the social reproduction of the household group relates to a further bundle of economic, social, and symbolic activities that have to do with household viability, livelihood, and continuity. Last, modes of social reproduction can exist at levels and institutions outside the household – for example, at the family, kinship, community, or wider society – and household interacts with all of these, though differently in different cultural and social systems.

Physical reproduction and social reproduction are largely interdependent for the apparent reason that without new members entering the household its viability may be threatened. Physical reproduction, however, is not equivalent to biological reproduction, and procreation, sexual relationships, or blood-ties are not necessarily what binds members together. For example, in the Western world the profound transformations of society after the 1970s, following radical changes in kinship, marriage, family and sexuality patterns, and the advances in new reproductive technologies have challenged the very notion of natural procreation as the core element of reproduction and have become themselves an important direction of current research (e.g., Edwards and Strathern 2000; Ginsburg and Rapp 1991; Stone 2005: 277–99). In other parts of the world and in ethnographic societies there is also great diversity in the familial dimensions of the household group, as we have already seen. Household members may be nonrelatives and new members can enter through adoption or agreement, or as resident guests, working personnel, and so on.

Socialisation entails a process whereby wider social and cultural norms, rules, and ideals, as well as the more particular 'ways of the household' (Cornell 1987: 122), are internalised, mediated, and experienced, and new members are expected to conform to them. Overall, the social reproduction of the household can involve a multitude of forms, attitudes, and mechanisms to prevent dissolution, from strategies for coordination and management of resources (e.g., Netting 1993) to inheritance and marriage strategies (e.g., Bourdieu 1976) and from participation in social networks and alliances to domestic rituals and symbolic elaboration of the house. The research potential of the multifaceted issue of social reproduction is further explored in the next chapter.

CONCLUSION: HOUSEHOLD AS PROCESS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

In this chapter, I have attempted to outline the context of research on household in the social sciences and the multitude of ways in which household can be analysed. I have focused on two main points. The first is that, both as a notion and as a social reality, household must not be taken for granted; rather, it should

be analysed in and of itself. The other point is that household is a dialectical process. The following chapters relate to these points closely.

A detailed consideration of the relationship between household's three main analytical levels – morphology, activity, and ideology – or of the specific ways in which the household interacts with other forces within a society has been omitted here. This omission was intentional. Relationships between changes in the household and changes within society cannot be resolved *a priori*. What is important is to accept that there is indeed such interaction and not a monocausal relationship between these issues. A single focus on function risks being heavily charged with causative connotations and seeing the household as an end in itself rather than as a means of examining the processes of production, consumption/distribution, and reproduction. Equally, a primary focus on morphology risks obscuring important functional differences and leading to formal and sociologically empty conclusions. In examining household's dimensions and practices therefore it is crucial (a) to recognise their multifaceted and interdependent nature and (b) to consider the nexus of social and cultural rules, roles, rights, and ideologies within which they take place. Provided we recognize the contextuality of this interaction, the fact that the household is a process becomes immediately obvious. Its 'emergent' properties make it more than the sum of its parts and give it the characteristics of an organising principle rather than a residual category. It ceases to be the 'odd-job word' that Yanagisako (1979: 200) aptly warned against and becomes a dynamic and flexible analytical tool.

Because of its social dynamics, household operates as a process also at another level, that of academic interaction. Since the 1960s and up until the present time, criticism and debate have always gone hand-in-hand with the study of household. Given that household is a concept and a reality whose study and understanding relate closely to, and can be biased by, the sociocultural and political backgrounds of the researcher, such criticism is neither surprising nor unconstructive. Its starting aim was to eschew *a priori* definitions of this diverse social unit, on the one hand, but, also the endless and fruitless reductionism which the seeking out of its functions and definitions in each different society could bring, on the other. Similarly, uncritical focus on the household maintains ethnocentric or idealist attitudes presuming sharing and harmony and fails to recognise that there may instead be considerable inequality, domination, and exploitation based on gender, age, and individual status. Marxist and feminist critiques from a variety of disciplines have severely criticised such attitudes, and it has been particularly in relation to intra- and extra-household gender inequalities that a reconceptualisation of household has occurred. The object of many useful works, especially in the realm of anthropology, is the 'denaturalisation' or the 'deconstruction' of household (and of other sociocultural specific issues such as kinship systems and the gendered division of labour) as a 'given'.

They have also contributed significantly to an awareness that households are not undifferentiated unitary actors performing a 'joint utility function' and that negotiations of roles and assigned tasks may be such that they might even lead to dissolution (e.g., Anderson *et al.* 1994; Evans 1991; Folbre 1986).

The important outcome of this kind of process that I wish to emphasise here is the effective minimisation of *a priori* assumptions. Despite the fact that there still is, and always will be, disagreement as to the specifics and the finer points of how to define the household (e.g., whether the morphological, the functional, or the co-residential dimension is emphasised), given household's changing and context-specific nature, a comprehensive, integrative theory of household has been constructed. Fully realising the challenge of the household. this theory not only acknowledges the idea of indeterminacy of research, it positively encourages it. At its heart lies the recognition that the household is a process rather than a thing and that researchers are to explore it accordingly and ideally freed from universalising tendencies and presuppositions, provided that they are aware of the conceptual, theoretical, and analytical intricacies involved in the subject. This is what I would call 'the challenge of the household' and 'the indeterminacy of research'.

TWO

THE HOUSEHOLD AS PROCESS IN A
SOCIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Contemporary theory of household in the social sciences, as outlined in the previous chapter, has had little impact on the theory or practice of archaeology. Although several of the analytical facets and issues that household involves have been studied more or less extensively by archaeologists, it has often been independently of the household itself. Many studies continue to treat household as a residual category of longer-term and larger-scale processes, whereas others project back onto past social groups concepts and rationalities pertinent to Western cultural and political ideals. Instead of interaction or constructive debate, there is compartmentalisation of theories, traditions, frames of research, and methodologies. All this has meant that the significance of household as a process remains undertheorised in our discipline. Much of this inadequacy can be understood in terms of inadequate conceptualisation and/or inappropriate theoretical perspectives. To capture the dynamics and multidimensionality of household would require both more systematic theoretical self-reflection and an interdisciplinary approach.

This chapter attempts a step towards an archaeological theory of household, reviewing previous archaeological approaches and bringing in insights from contemporary social theory. It focuses principally on the social definition of and approach to household, for it is in this area that we can consider the state of the research, contest the relevance of inherited models, and explore ways of accommodating an analysis of household as process within archaeology.

More specific themes and methodological issues are addressed in the following chapters.

PREVIOUS APPROACHES

The above is not to say that archaeologists are unaware of the social salience of the household, that useful attempts to systematise its study have not been made, or that an explicit interest in its social context and meaning has not been taken. But it is to argue that archaeology is marked by a series of contradictions and by uncritical adoption of inherited models that impede theorisation of the household as process. For example, on the one hand, archaeologists, even those concerned primarily with larger spatiotemporal scales, increasingly make references to smaller social units – variously as 'houses', 'households', 'families', or 'domestic groups'. On the other hand, they usually take the definition and role of these units for granted or treat them as constructed concepts perceived as supracontextual givens. However, there is a fundamental difference between referring to households and actually studying them and effectively integrating them within the wider picture.

A recent example of this pervasive attitude is Cutting's (2005; 2006) otherwise very useful analyses of settlement data from Neolithic and Chalcolithic sites in Anatolia. Although the household figures in the titles of both of these works, and Cutting (2006: 167) acknowledges that explanations of architectural variability "go right to the heart of household and settlement organisation because they are concerned with issues of . . . social structure", in practice, she does not focus on the household as a central analytical category. There are a detailed and comparative study of individual buildings and features, an exploration of intra- and intersite differences in architecture and subsistence strategies, and a much-needed emphasis on local context and trajectories. However, the household essentially appears only at the end of the analyses, largely as a concluding remark rather than as a starting point for investigating social action on the small scale. In this way, inevitably, the social dynamics of the household is understated and important research questions such as 'how social units interacted with each other and with the community' and 'did household inequality increase over time, and did this inequality affect the social structure' (Cutting 2005: 136; 2006: 168) are left unanswered.

Worse, the polarisation between different theoretical approaches is often, and most unfortunately, reflected in an artificial opposition between the household and the house. Much of the relevant literature in the 1980s, when household first appeared in archaeology, and the 1990s can be summarised in two main trends. On the one side are the processual approaches, more typically associated with the household, the notions of 'space' and 'activity area', the house as a material correlate of the household, and the household unit as primarily an economic corporation. On the other side are the 'alternative' or more

eclectic approaches, akin to various strands of post-processual archaeology, almost entirely concerned with the built environment, the more cultural and emotive notion of 'place', and generally the house as a meaningful entity for multiple sensory experiences or ideological facets. Currently, there is a growing interest in the social analysis of action and the conduct of everyday life, informed by concepts of social agency, theories of practice, and other elements of contemporary social theories. A variety of interrelated social notions are increasingly deployed in order to elicit social relations, categories, and practices from archaeological data – identity, position, boundaries, power, negotiation, memory, knowledge, experience, and socialisation. Although all of these notions relate more or less directly to issues raised by household theorising, relatively few social archaeological studies focus directly on the household. Most place the emphasis on new, individual categories, most notably the individual or person, women and men.

'Household Archaeology'

What is often called 'household archaeology' emerged in the realms of settlement archaeology and Mesoamerican research and coincided with the rise of processual archaeology. It appeared officially in 1982 in Wilk and Rathje's edited volume (also Flannery and Winter [1976] and Winter [1976]). Under the influence of systems theory, functionalism, and logical positivism, interest in the household grew out of the need to employ universally valid analytical categories in order to formulate generalised explanatory models of sociocultural behaviour. As was explicitly stated by Kramer (1982: 664), "identification of prehistoric social groups is not inherently interesting. Because some of them are units of production and reproduction, however, local and inter-regional comparison of such groups may be useful in examining changes in productive systems and political organisation". An overall objective was the investigation of the causal factors that determine the relationship between social organisation and spatial patterning, particularly with respect to production, distribution and social ranking. Causality was principally understood in terms of environmental and economic determinism (Hayden and Cannon 1982: 133). As Mesoamerican researchers were the first to develop household archaeology and have been particularly active since, their views and methods have been immensely influential and often continue to serve as 'working models' (Joyce 2004). One inevitably notices that in archaeology the household started its life for reasons very different from, if not opposite to, those in the social sciences, where attention to sociocultural variation and the overcoming of normalising models were the primary concerns (Chapter 1).

Leading on from these starting points, research moved in various directions and dealt with numerous issues. From being rather descriptive it became more explanatory, and from making straightforward inferences about behavioural

regularities it grew to be more cautious, more sensitive to variation, and more interested in social and ideological aspects of life and in the relations between material and nonmaterial variables. A factor contributing to this progress was the undertaking of ethnoarchaeological research, which has provided a plethora of cautionary tales against making automatic associations between material remains and social realms (e.g., Cameron 1996; Haviland 1988; Kent 1995, 1999; Kramer 1979, 1982). Much progress has also been made in the realms of historical archaeology (e.g., Alexander 1999; Allison 1999; Ault and Nevett 2005; Beaudry 1999). Combined efforts and developments can be seen in the flood of edited volumes that followed Flannery's and Wilk and Rathje's seminal publications (e.g., Billman and Feinman 1999; Blanton and Parsons 2006; Coupland and Banning 1996; MacEachern et al. 1989; Santley and Hirth 1993; Wilk and Ashmore 1988).

A great deal of research has been devoted to the association of households with their spatial and material correlates (dwellings, work areas, storage pits, and floor assemblages), from the relationship between room size or form and function (e.g., Ciolek-Torrello 1985, 1996; Dohm 1990; Hole 2000) to the relationship between architectural modifications and modes of inheritance and ownership, changes in the domestic cycle, and socioeconomic inequality (Banning and Byrd 1987; Byrd 2000, 2005; Blanton 1994; Gnivecki 1987; Groover 2001; van Gijseghem 2001). 'Activity area research' has proved a recurrent and important theme, although not always within typical 'household archaeology' and its theoretical tenets (e.g., Kent 1987, 1990, 1991). The spatial analysis of house floors and the identification of household activities within and outside domestic space have provided useful insights into household behaviour and economic and social relations. Activity area research has also demonstrated the effects that formation processes have on the creation of archaeological contexts and has attempted to relate social units to other realms of behaviour such as refuse distribution, patterns of movement, reuse of structures and household abandonment modes (e.g., Brooks 1993; Cameron 1991; Deal 1985; LaMotta and Schiffer 1999; McKee 1999). But perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of household archaeology is that it has been largely concerned with elucidating evidence of the household as an economic construct. Thus, a large body of work has focused on craft production, subsistence, surplus specialisation, and the participation of households in exchange systems (e.g., Charlton et al. 1993; Haines et al. 2004; Matson 1996; Middleton et al. 2002; Sheets 2000; Wattenmaker 1998).

There is no doubt that 'household archaeology' has contributed considerably to the understanding and systematisation of the analytical utility of household using archaeological data. However, it has rarely overcome its original functionalist and processualist orientations. The household is usually viewed as an adaptation to ecological, demographic, and economic factors and as an

aggregate of behaviours and labour requirements. There is a theoretical assumption that economic organisation is what social groupings are essentially about and that it is underlain by, or results in, a homogeneous social behaviour. The study of household activities usually includes the craft-productive ones only, and there has been a tendency to separate household-focused from specialised activities (Allison 1999: 8; Hendon 1996: 49, 55). Overall, a main concern is to formulate general principles of relationships or models of causality concerning broader issues rather than to investigate the complexity and dynamics of everyday life in its own right.

For example, Byrd (1994, 2000, 2005) provides such an all-encompassing model of household changes in relation to the emergence of large settlements and of centralised power, drawing on data from southwest Asia in the period between the eleventh and ninth millennia BC. These changes centre on the size and internal compartmentalisation of domestic buildings (e.g., single-roomed versus multiroomed), the distinction between private and public space, the impact of greater settlement permanence and population size, and the circumscription of resources (Byrd 2000: 85). The inferences are that (i) increasing building size and compartmentalisation reflect increased spatial restriction of household production and storage, and therefore increased household autonomy, possibly the result of population growth (Byrd 1994: 641); (ii) increased household autonomy facilitates increased productivity and encourages group conflict, jealousy, and resource competition; and (iii) centralised coordinating functions, as indicated by the presence of large, nondomestic buildings, emerged in order to deal with conflict resolution and the need for regulation of subsistence activities and access to resources (Byrd 1994: 643, 660). Byrd (2000: 90–91) also argues for the primacy of the nuclear family household (e.g., over the extended household) on the grounds that nuclear families have 'an adaptive advantage' in economic situations such as the one he describes. According to Byrd (2000: 91), this is 'how households dealt with a novel reorientation in settlement pattern and subsistence strategies'. The weakness in all such models is that they suppose that novel reorientations, developments, and changes are something that happens elsewhere to which households merely respond. Despite the focus on daily practices and the active creation of social frameworks for life, the emphasis is basically placed on the impact of external forces and on the ways social units are organised or change largely in adaptation to such impact.

Architecture and the Built Environment

The 'built environment', a concept employed to describe all products of human building activity, has recently become a field of interdisciplinary research. Apart from a common view of the built environment as an integral part of any

cultural, social, or ideological facet of life, two broad groups of approaches can be distinguished – 'cultural' and 'social' – depending on the principles or aspects they emphasise.

Cultural or ideational approaches place the emphasis on symbolism and ideology as cultural phenomena. A main point they make is that houses are inherently meaningful entities and the premise on which they generally rest is that there is a coherent meaning or system of meanings deriving from cultural needs and mental structures. They draw on a plethora of theoretical perspectives, most notably French structuralism, linguistics, modern philosophy (especially Bachelard 1964), and social and environmental psychology (especially Baron and Byrne 1991: 561; Cooper 1974; Eliade 1954; and Sanders 1990: 51). Elements of all these theories have been merged into an approach which views the house as a metaphor for ontology, cosmology, landscape, and language.

Lévi-Strauss first stressed the theoretical and cultural significance of the house, using the term 'house societies' (1983, 1987). He studied the house as a unit of social structure that integrates and objectifies a number of antagonistic principles, or binary oppositions, revolving around kinship, alliance, marriage, and exchange systems, and as a means of justification of hierarchy (Lévi-Strauss 1983: 174–84, 1987: 155). The concept of 'house societies' has been enthusiastically taken up by a host of later anthropologists and archaeologists, who, without necessarily embracing all of the implications of Lévi-Strauss' conception of structure, have explored and extended fields of his theory (Carsten 1997; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Joyce and Gillespie 2000). An archaeological example can be seen in Hodder's (1990, 1998) *domus/agrios* scheme, whose manifestation and changing nature he traces in the various cultural settings which make up the European Neolithic.

Conceptions of the ontology of the house, its visualisation as a fundamental symbol of the self, and the interactive relationship between house and body can be found in a large number of anthropological works (e.g., Blier 1987; Bloch 1995; Gudeman and Rivera 1990; Hugh-Jones 1995). Cosmology may also be an overall principle of classification and order, and houses and settlements may provide a cosmological map and thereby serve to naturalise the social relations which they order (e.g., Gillespie 2000b; Helms 2005: 121–3; Waterson 1990: 93). In archaeology, a general influence of all these ideas is evident in the construction of narratives of house or place biographies and histories and the views of the house and the landscape as media for a complex of symbolic structures, cosmological principles, and systems of classification (e.g., Bailey 1990; Bradley 2001, 2005: 50–56; Hodder 1994; Parker Pearson and Richards 1994b; Tringham 1995). For example, Watkins (2005) argues that the burst of architecture in the earliest Neolithic of southwest Asia constituted a powerful frame of symbolic reference at multiple levels, which in turn stimulated

significant developments towards a new way of living. The formalised design of domestic and communal buildings, their fittings and association with elaborate symbolic behaviour, and the structuring of whole settlements became an effective system of 'external symbolic storage' (Watkins 2005: 104, 105), through which abstract concepts, beliefs, and ideas could be for the first time materialised in permanent forms. In addition, by means of architecture people devised 'theatres of memory' (Watkins 2005: 97, 105) in which the histories of the communities were recorded, retained, and transmitted.

Alternatively, the built environment may be seen as a nonverbal way of communicating thoughts and messages concerning cultural norms and social order or as a text that can be read and analysed according to its own vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. Hillier and Hanson's (1984) approach to social space in terms of written language, and their 'access analysis', which considers movement to, through, or from spaces, has been of use to archaeologists on sites with good preservation of building plans (e.g., Brusasco 2004; Chapman 1989, 1990; Gnivecki 1987). Another group of archaeological approaches has been influenced by the work of Rapoport (1990a, 1990b), who, combining elements of architectural and psychological methods, sees the built environment as a channel of nonverbal communication, whose various cues (houses, furnishing, decoration, and physical objects) promote 'appropriate' social behaviour and communicate power and aspects of social and personal identity (e.g., Blanton 1994; Kent 1990).

Social approaches to the built environment are closely associated with sociologists, social historians, political economists, and geographers and attempt to move beyond the static perspectives of structuralism and the ideational nature of the ordering principles. Generally drawing on Marxism, their emphasis is on the social processes which produce built space, on the dialectical relationship between the socially produced space and the reproduction of social order through social action, and on the ways in which the social relations are produced and reproduced with the aid of the built environment (Bourdieu 1977, 1990; Foucault 1975; Giddens 1984; King 1980; Pred 1985). Attention is drawn to the importance of historical particularities, to the interrelated concepts of space and time, and to human agency. Most influential on anthropology and archaeology have been the theories developed by the sociologists Giddens and Bourdieu, both of which focus on the interaction between social structure and human agency and on the spatial dimension of action as central to an analysis of social practices.

Giddens (1984) argues that space is integral to the materialisation of social behaviour because it provides a field for interaction between individual behaviours and social systems, a field in which these shape each other until socialisation and social reproduction become one another. The structuring of social relations occurring in this manner he calls 'structuration'. The

patterning of social relationships occurs in space and time, both of which are very important components of structuration theory. As a setting for the interaction Giddens (1989: 280) indicates the 'locale', which is defined as 'the intersection of the social, spatial and physical'. He gives the example of the home as the locale which is regionalised internally so that different rooms are associated with different activities at different times.

For Bourdieu, the organisation of spaces reflects, generates, and reproduces social structures and practices. Practice is shaped by the *habitus*, which is the key concept of Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) theory. The *habitus* is a system of structured, structuring, and durable dispositions produced historically; it is not only 'a way of being' but also 'the result of an organising action' (Bourdieu 1977: 214). In his study of the Kabyle house, Bourdieu (1977, 1990) identifies the *habitus* in the objectification of physical and symbolic oppositions and shows how the house serves for the socialisation of individual action. In his concept of the *habitus*, Bourdieu has incorporated ideas about the significance of the house as an instrument of thought, as a mnemonic device, and as interacting with the human body, but has strongly emphasised the dialectical interaction between these concepts and the house.

Elements of Bourdieu's and Giddens' theories and a consideration of the role of architecture as social space are present almost in all current studies of social organisation, including those discussed in the previous and in the following section. A clear archaeological example of the application of Giddens' time-space geography is that of Barrett (1994a), who has studied the changing landscape and the development of monumentality in Neolithic and Bronze Age southern Britain. Richards (2004) has also suggested that the monumental architecture of Neolithic Orkney, with its great henge-enclosed stone circles, should be seen as the material representation of a 'choreography of social practices', akin to the choreography of bodily movement within the interior and involving the negotiation and reproduction of an extensive network of social relationships. The interplay between substance, place, and architecture and the process of construction effectively embodied socially constructed concepts of order; fused lines of descent, images of the past, and social relations; brought a physicality to otherwise abstract social categories; and transformed the social world (Richards 2004).

Household and Social Practice

The focus of social analysis on action, strategies, and the conduct of everyday life in recent years has emerged largely within the conceptual space of what has been known in different guises as 'agency', 'action', 'practice', and 'structuration' theories. There is a new theoretical interest in 'agents embedded in structures' (Lesure 2004: 73), and the relationship between structure and

agency is widely debated (Barrett 2001; David 2001; Dobres and Robb 2000; Robb 2005; also Chapman 2003: 64–8 and Whittle 2003: 9–14 for reviews), often responding to earlier related debates in anthropology (e.g., Ortner 1984: 144–57). The principal sources of theoretical inspiration for archaeological practice-based approaches have been Bourdieu and Giddens, discussed to a larger extent above, both of which emphasise the significance of the repetition of daily practices for the materialisation and socialisation of human behaviour. According to Bourdieu (1990: 271–83), it is through everyday practice that we learn about the world and re-create it. The *habitus* serves to provide continuity and agents tend to find the world 'more acceptable than one might imagine' (Bourdieu 1990: 131). The *habitus* with its 'fuzzy logic' has proved a favourite concept for archaeologists. For Giddens (1984), too, socialisation and social reproduction occur through the repeated performance of everyday activities, routines, and behaviours, and a social system is a patterning of social relationships.

All this is reflected in the proliferation of publications that focus on the small scale of everyday activities, as opposed to large-scale processes, on new patterns of social interaction and new questions of ideology and the construction of meaning, whether expressed materially or symbolically (e.g., Grove and Joyce 1999; Hendon and Joyce 2004; Hodder 2005a, 2006a; Joyce and Gillespie 2000; Kuijt 2000a; Whittle 2003). Bourdieu's and Giddens' theories have also informed studies of social relations, particularly gender relations, and social identities, from the perspective of architecture and the spatial arrangements of household material culture – for example, on the basis of the identification of specific gendered workplaces, of architectural accessibility or restrictedness, and generally of the social dimensions of architecture, which both shapes and is shaped by social action (e.g., Düring 2001; Hegmon *et al.* 2000; Hendon 1999, 2000; LeMoine 2003; Manzanilla 2004; Tringham 1991).

Like its anthropological counterpart in earlier years (see Chapter 1), gender archaeology constitutes a major contribution to the exposure of cultural and gender biases in the study of past social action. It has demonstrated how gender categories, identities, relations, inequalities, and their material, symbolic and ideational representations are constructed differently and have different implications in varied social settings (e.g., Gero and Conkey 1991; Wright 1996a; Claassen and Joyce 1997; Crown 2000a; Joyce 2000a; Nelson 2004). More recently, there has been a productive shift of emphasis from women's action only, characterising an earlier stage of gender studies (Meskell 2001: 194–197), to gender as a cultural construct involving both men and women and as an ongoing 'social negotiation rather than strictly social identity' (Crown 2000b: 25). However, there have been rather few attempts systematically to combine the study of gender with the study of household (e.g., Hegmon *et al.* 2000; Hendon 1996, 1999; Robin 2004; Tringham 1991). Many of these have focused

on deconstruction of the separation of craft specialisation and surplus produc-
tion from the domestic domain. For instance, food, ceramic, shell, and textile
production, traditionally attributed to women and the domestic domain, have
been shown to be not only essential to household economic and social repro-
duction, but also specialised and often involving all sex and age groups of a
household (Hendon 1996, 1997; Mills 2000). Equally, in many cultures, such as
those of the Hohokam and the Mogollon in North America, extra-domestic
and extra-settlement activities such as farming, foraging, and the exchange
of pottery can be carried out by women (e.g., Fish 2000; Spielmann 2000).
Taken together, these works have also effectively deconstructed the percep-
tion of households as largely undifferentiated and unchanging wholes through
demonstration of the varying ways in which gender hierarchies create internal
differences in access to basic resources and to symbols of power and prestige.

Another area of growing interest concerns the temporal dimension of social
practices and the notions of time and memory in the past. Objects, buildings,
monuments, settlements, and landscapes can all be enmeshed in strategies by
which groups and communities negotiate the construction of the past (e.g.,
Bradley 2002). The house can act as a site for the construction of social memory
through the daily repetition of practices, the repetitive patterning of construc-
tion, use, and continuity of buildings over time, the burial of ancestors, and the
transmission of social knowledge and information, as well as the transmission
of the houses themselves and of the objects kept in them (e.g., Hendon 2000;
Hodder 2005b, 2006b; Joyce 2000b; Kuijt 2001; Tringham 2000). In Neolithic
Çatalhöyük, for instance, burial in houses and foundation and abandonment
rituals appear to have constituted important commemorative practices, whereas
differences in architecture, interior decoration, number of human burials, and
continuity may suggest that more elaborate houses played a special role in the
construction, control, and preservation of a collective social memory, acting
probably as 'guardians of the archive of memories' (Hodder and Cessford 2004:
36; Hodder 2005b).

Social studies of household practices have addressed the roles of ritual and
symbolism also in the deposition of household material culture, including the
issues of 'structured deposition' (Chapman 2000; Last 2006: 205–7); symbolic
closure and ritual 'killing' of buildings by burning (Cessford and Near 2006;
Hodder 1994; LaMotta and Schiffer 1999: 23–4; Stevanović 1997; Tringham
1991, 2005); and deliberate fragmentation of objects and reuse of fragments
as material symbols for social enchainment and relational identities (Chapman
2000; Chapman and Gaydarska 2006). For example, in Neolithic southeast
Europe Tringham (1991, 2000, 2005) and Stevanović (1997, 2002) have pro-
posed that house burning should be seen as a deliberate act, a socio-ritual
mechanism marking the end of a household cycle or the death of a significant
person and intended to ensure continuity of place: through the practice of

direct superimposition or of incorporation of parts of the old houses in the new ones, or through the permanent reminder which a burnt rubble leaves on the village and the landscape, the old place (and the material, memories, and histories inside it), lives on symbolically, and continuity and social memory are established. In the same spatiotemporal context, Chapman (2000: 105–6, 224–5; also Chapman and Gaydarska 2006: 189) argues that uncommonly large assemblages of material (especially broken fragments of objects) on house floors may represent 'intentional burying' of artefacts in houses to be burnt as a deliberate commemorative practice involving structured and ritual deposition by more than one household.

AN ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR INTERPRETATION

Far from a single notion or a unified research agenda, the household exists in archaeology through a collection of theories and through what we are attempting to elicit from a variety of categories, terms, and classes of data. Two consequences of this are that many studies work at cross purposes and that little has been done by way of integration. In addition, the extent to which the chosen concepts and theories meet the specific research purposes and stated intentions is often questionable. A theoretically informed understanding of household organisation needs to address a range of issues wider than those conventionally considered by 'mainstream' household archaeology or by 'alternative' approaches to houses. It also needs to view them from perspectives which are more open and dynamic than the brands of economism, functionalism, (post)structuralism, and social evolutionism which customarily underlie most archaeological interpretations. So long as the basic notions of these models are maintained, the recent preoccupation with a variety of social terms such as 'action', 'processes', 'agency', or 'change' risks being simplistic. The attempt to arrive at interpretations of social dynamics through theoretical perspectives that are highly predictive, rationalised, universalised, timeless, and inactive has all too often led to teleological explanations of social action and social change, as well as to circular arguments.

Reconceptualising the household and rethinking old approaches presents a new perspective on social reality and can stimulate dialogue and exchange. In developing such a theory, it is useful to consider how indeed we can benefit from areas of social thought we might have not drawn inspiration as yet.

The Problem of Indeterminacy

A key problem of any interpretative theory about household organisation is the nature of the relationship between household morphology, activity, and ideology, the individual and the household, and the household and the society within

which it exists. Are household actions partly free, the outcome of conscious will, or are they determined by organising principles outside their control? In other words, is the above relationship complex, diverse, and dialectical or monocausal, uniform, and predictable? And are researchers of the household free to explore this relationship and its implications in varied social contexts or do they have to follow a series of preconceived theories and rules in their approach? In the social sciences, long research and intellectual interaction have concluded that the household is a process, that this relationship cannot be universalised and determined *a priori*, and that researchers have to face the conceptual and analytical challenge. This is what I called in Chapter 1 'the challenge of the household' or 'the indeterminacy of research'. In archaeology, however, lack of genuine interest in the household in its own right has often resulted in lack of awareness of its complexity and dynamics, and, consequently, in employment of inappropriate theoretical perspectives.

Ironically, the most severe limitation of 'household archaeology', which emerged and largely continues within the tenets of processual archaeology, is the very loss of process. There is an inherent contradiction between the determinacy and universalised principles that objectivist approaches advocate and a really processual view of the household. Nor can there be anything dynamic in the idea that the household is merely an adaptation to social environment or that it is determined by rational choice and planning that usually have to do with availability of resources, labour requirements, or ecological and demographic factors. Rather, the household is constructed by as much as it constructs and reconstructs any social environment. It is a producer of change rather than merely a response to it.

Conversely, (post)structuralist archaeological approaches to houses tend to overemphasise symbolism and ideology. But disregarding issues of economy and function, together with the single focus on architecture which often characterises this trend, cannot lead to consistent interpretations either. This inability is also reflected in a series of inherent contradictions. Structuralism was not designed to account for social processes, and as Moore (1988: 4) points out, "the concept of cultures as a pregiven set of meanings . . . makes it very difficult to conceptualise social change, except as a concept of creation and contradiction which would arise outside the given social structure". It is also essential to remember that architecture is not shaped by culture in some abstract manner and will mean little if we view it only as being encoded with some original meaning (Barrett 1994b: 91).

Another serious problem relates to reliance on the grand models of social evolution, particularly of Service (1962) and Fried (1967). This applies not only to processualists, but also to the more social approaches, even though these prefer to use terms such as 'social transformations or developments'. That the basic principles of these models, with all their archaeological refinements

(see Chapman 2003: 38–45), are essentially maintained, nonetheless, becomes immediately obvious from the perceived reluctance in the prehistoric literature to employ a 'bottom up' interpretation of past societies independent of the established paradigm of 'prehistoric social evolution'. Instead, the reconstruction of both household and wider social organisation has rather tended to be determined by this predictive, and often arbitrary, typology. A distinct example is the common effort to define types of production in relation to types of social systems, when there is no comparative discussion of household economics on a par with the comparative studies of systems of production. The understanding of the short-term conduct of household affairs still relies to a considerable extent on Sahlins' (1972) model of the domestic mode of production. Incidentally, in anthropology it is by challenging the value of this model that 'household economics' has been developed (Wilk 1989).

Furthermore, in the studies searching for emergent vertical differentiation, employing the formal approach to economics and/or starting from the premise of socioeconomic and social stress – and these form the majority of prehistoric archaeology – the emphasis is placed on maximising activity, often with an axiomatic presumption of strain and scarcity (e.g., Flannery 2002; Halstead 1989). From this follows the distinct belief that social action is primarily defined by economic criteria and by such parameters as restrictive access to resources and to productive processes, competition over resources and the acquisition of 'valuable' objects – traditionally, elaborate pottery, exotic items, and house size, and more recently, land and livestock ownership (e.g., Bogucki 1993; Earle 2004; Hayden 1995, 1998; Hirth 1993; Russell 1998; Tringham and Krstic 1990; Wattenmaker 1998). A common assumption is that these are regulated through inheritance or property systems at the level of each individual household or by some centralised elite authority. It is also often thought that there is a straightforward relationship between material variation and wealth variation, between wealth variation and household status, and in general between wealth, social status, and economic strategies. Hence, material variability and intrasite variation will automatically indicate socioeconomic inequalities. How then do the notions of 'agency' and 'social dynamics' fit with this predictive, single-dimensional framework? Below, I attempt to take these arguments further.

The Issue of Variability

Reluctance to move beyond the big models for change and towards different scales of interpretation has resulted in an undertheorisation of the varying realities of the household underneath the broader picture, a question that will be one of the themes of this book. Variability and change become externalised in the form of population pressure, of some general demand for intensification of production, or of some fixed original meaning, whereas action and

contradiction are thought to arise outside the given social structure. The narratives of long-term structural changes usually lack a sense of short-term social action. Social evolutionary reconstructions consistently assume that history is something that happens elsewhere and often get the variable household data to fit uniform models of higher-level integration. Similarly, uncritical adoption of Fortes' (1958) model of the developmental cycle of domestic groups (even in terms of household life-cycles or house 'biographies') and of Goody's (1976) and Laslett's (1972) models of land ownership and modes of inheritance, all of which seem to serve as a ready solution to the problem of interpreting household variability in archaeological studies (e.g., Tringham 1991: 119–20; for an exception, see Matthews' 2006 multiscalar application of the concepts of life-course and life-cycles to Neolithic Çatalhöyük buildings), entails presupposing that there is one ideal household for each settlement and a refusal to distinguish between the ideal and the real. By prescribing a rigorous one-dimensional perception to sociocultural processes, functionalists-processualists often leave important questions unanswered: were the 'causes' of variation and regularity economic, cultural, ideological, demographic, environmental, or some combination of these (Ashmore and Wilk 1988: 11, 12; Netting 1993: 4–11)? Post-processual or 'alternative' social approaches to houses also do not make clear how much variability there is between 'typical' houses or households, as they usually discuss a typical or ideal house for each settlement (e.g., see Bailey's [1990] 'Living House' and Tringham's [2000] 'Continuous House'). Relatively few archaeologists and only fairly recently have taken individual houses seriously and have sought to make theoretically informed use of the diversity of their form and contents (e.g., Coudart 1998; Haines et al. 2004; Levi 2002; Matthews 2002; Modderman 1988; Souvatzi 2000, 2008; Tripković 2003).

The recognition and interpretation of difference is indeed crucial, if we are to move beyond abstractions and normalisation and to consider the dialectics between theory and data, structure and agency, and stability and variability. Norms of household organisation in each society may determine who is supposed to be in a household and what the household is supposed to do, but who is actually there and what the household actually does might be a different reality (Barlett 1989: 4). By simply regarding each household as self-sufficient, we fail to recognise how household economic organisation varies between sections of the population and how it changes over the household's life and over historical time. Different households exploit different kinds of options, different allocation systems, and different devices for organising their daily lives. Variation in household belief systems, social reproductive strategies, and uses of symbolism may reveal distinct, and even contrasting, social identities, including those between household and community. Household membership and intra- and interhousehold relationships change over time, as partnerships are formed and end (e.g., through death or dissolution), and as new members are added

and depart. For example, an anthropological case study on household composition in four Micronesian societies encountered such great diversity and complexity across space and time as to render any single-dimensional model completely inappropriate: at least twenty-four household forms were recorded, some households still did not fit into any one of them, and there were constant changes in number of members due to constant mobility of people among linked households (Burton et al. 2002). Therefore, even if one ideal type is successfully defined for a society, the extent to which each household conforms to this type should remain a question, as multiple versions and perceptions of the ideal can exist.

In short, household morphology, activity, and ideology and the use of space in general do not remain constant on a site throughout its existence. But how much variability can we allow for within an archaeological analysis of temporally and spatially structured practice? How is change in material culture related to change in social structure? What are the purposes of diversity and homogeneity in household characteristics and in the ways and degrees in which households interact with other social institutions and with the broader society? As with any interpretative step from the statics of the archaeological record to the dynamics of past social action, there is no easy correlation of particular assemblage types and spatial forms with particular kinds activities and the relative value accorded to them: it depends on a contextual understanding of the way space and activity are structured, and on cross references between and integration of the various data categories and at different scales. Different degrees of variation exist at different spatial levels, and the type of variation relates to the significance of the element.

Household Economics

The emphasis in prehistoric studies overall not only tends to be upon economy; it is also rather economistic in tone, focusing upon resources, divisions, restrictions, competition, and dominance. The language and terms employed are distinctive: self-interest, status attainment, differential access to opportunities for control and to sources of power and prestige. The notions referenced are derived from a bundle of theories in economics – most notably, interest, role, resource, strain or constraint, and bargaining theories (for use of these notions in economic anthropology see Aragwal 1997; Curtis 1986; Gates 2002; Hart 1992: 115–17; and Ross 1979: 188–9). The so-called 'formalist' or 'neoclassical' approach in the economics literature (Folbre and Hartmann 1988: 186–90; Hart 1992: 112–17), which focuses on pragmatic rationality and on activity or resource maximisation, has been particularly popular within processualist-functionalist agendas and the perspectives of political economy and/or centralised administration. Agency-based approaches have not always managed

to extricate themselves from economistic and positivist-processualist thinking (David 2001: 271), privileging social asymmetry and domination and the links between such relationships and the wider economy. They have also tended to take individuals or individual social categories as analytical units – women and men, age or elite groups. In most household-gender or gender-household studies in archaeology, priority is given to sexual stratification as a major division within the household and in society as a whole. Overall, the critical social relations in question often revolve around economy and production, activities previously regarded as economic are now labelled 'social', and the view construed of the past that that is as reflecting domination, oppression, and exploitation.

I would argue that is an exceptionally 'dark' and negative view of both prehistoric economics and life. It also seems to me that for prehistoric researchers the unwillingness of individuals and individual groups to submerge their own interests in the collectivity has become a matter of principle instead of an object of research. Either for the purposes of coping with their life circumstances or in the name of intentionality, prehistoric people are presented as having always to struggle with or against something, driven by self-interest and antagonism and often with an orientation to improving individual status.[1] For example, in his model of household organisation, discussed earlier, Byrd (1994: 643) writes: "more *competition*, the development of more formal rights to resources, inheritance rules and *competition*, and the growing autonomy of smaller social groups such as households increased *jealousy* and *stress*" (all emphases are mine). Similarly, Halstead (1999) titles his review of 'The Household in Neolithic Greece' as 'Neighbours from *Hell*' (my emphasis). Curiously, of all notions involved in the model of the domestic mode of production, we have chosen to ignore those of altruism and reciprocity based, for example, on conceptual rules of social behaviour (Sahlins 1972: 196). Yet, this vision of a world marked by division, tension, and competition may suggest that the 'capitalist penetration', which was the main subject of Marxist anthropology in the 1970s and 1980s, still makes its way into archaeological thinking and the prehistoric world.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of the shift to a focus on households is that it entails a shift from a concern with universalised economic models to one for economic life (Morgan 1996: 36). The attribution of the archaeological record to household organisation, following theories of social grouping and decision-making derived from the rational-logical modes of thought which characterise Western societies, can never capture the full practical significance of the household, let alone help us understand it as a dialectical, social process. In economic theory, across the social sciences, the notion of the self-interested pragmatic individual has been the target of much criticism over the last two decades (Folbre 1987; Folbre and Hartmann 1988; Hann 2001; Ortner 1984: 150–51, 157; Wilk 1993). It has been recognised that rational choice and planning require a single-dimensional criterion and are therefore

not an appropriate comparative measure of household activities, which are multidimensional and context-specific (Anderson et al. 1994; Wheelock and Oughton 1994). Even within one society and even within a view of economic or activity maximisation, different social groups may have different ideologies and may be affected differently by economic processes. Finally, notions of rationality explicitly depend upon and reproduce the idea of separation of work and home and of public and private in capitalist, industrial society (Morgan 1996: 15–16; Tilly 1987: 123).

Although it makes sense to consider households as fundamental economic units, they do not simply function on behalf of the wider economy, nor do they merely respond to wider economic processes. And although the household as an economic unit must indeed be able to offer access to resources or protection against risks, we must avoid assuming that an organisation of people into a household is *a priori* essential to managing either. There is substantial variation among societies in whether these dependencies are dealt with as household or as public/communal matters. Intra-household exchanges also do not necessarily follow the economic set of wider rules. As Curtis (1986: 169) argues, 'whatever principles govern distribution from producing units may be accentuated, reversed or left unchanged by units of redistribution'.

Thus, divisions and antagonisms are important themes of household relationships, but they are not the only ones. Household relationships are also about unities and the dialectical interweaving between the political economy and the moral economy. Although idealised perceptions of altruism within the household may be misleading, household does act as collectivity at many levels, and altruism, even viewed as a complicated form of reciprocity, can be quite visible there. In addition, resources and values are not only narrowly material or economic in their character; they are also nonmaterial, ideal, symbolical, and emotional. The discussion of the 'moral economy' in anthropology draws attention to the fact that economic benefits, rewards, and ownership are only part of a much larger package that also includes emotion, shared value systems, and restrictions on self-interested or ego-centred behaviour (e.g., Cheal 1988, 1989; Edwards and Strathern 2000; Hann 2001; Wilk 1993). A very good example is the concept and practice of gift exchange, which involves a series of complex processes of giving, receiving, and reciprocating for no overriding personal or economic gain. As generations of anthropologists have discovered, the terms of rationality and commodity clearly limit an analysis of 'the gift economy', of the obligation people feel to reciprocate, and of the social relationships that are formed and maintained through the exchange of gifts (Komter 2005; Strathern 1988: 314; Sykes 2005: 4–6). Another important dimension is the relationship between delayed reciprocity, morality, and long-term relationships or between short-term economy and long-term security (Bloch 1973). The growth of the long-term dependencies that are necessary for

delayed-return economic systems, such as the majority of those traditionally studied by archaeologists and anthropologists, relies more on social relationships, based on morality and the creation of a social obligation, than on immediate return or reward. As Bloch (1973: 77) pointed out, the idea of the pursuit of immediate reciprocity presumes a fundamental amoral side of people in that it denies any moral relationship or tolerance of imbalance between the exchanging parties.

In short, social life is composed of both self-interest and morality in a rich dialectic, and interpretative arguments about household economics should not treat these ideas as opposites. To recognise this is not to return to some reified notion of household as an undifferentiated whole. However, it is also the case that household members do have some sense of solidarity and unity, and these identities have wider consequences.

The Individual and the Collective

The increasing emphasis on individualism among Western archaeologists may be as much a bias in the study of social action as is the exclusive focus on economy or the adaptationist thinking. In their welcoming reaction to the mechanistic varieties of systems theory and processual archaeologies, agent-focussed approaches have often drawn the rather problematic conclusion that agency theory would benefit from using individuals rather than groups as acting or organisational units and as motivating action and change (e.g., see Dobres and Robb's edited volume [2000] and critical discussion in David 2001 and Whittle 2003: 9–14, 51–52). They have tended merely to reorientate the focus from corporate groups and larger scales of analysis to individual practices and strategies and action within these domains. The pursuit of household autonomy and activity maximisation advocated by functionalist assumptions is another face of individualism, in both its sociological and moral versions. It assumes a weakening of institutional controls, in which case the community is often called upon 'to act as some kind of regulator' (Morgan 1996: 197) or to explain behaviour that fails to conform to some straightforward economic logic. By implication, they both tend to downgrade relationships and dimensions which are not of direct significance in understanding oppression, division, and exploitation.

However, by holding that able, self-contained adult individuals are responsible for themselves and that they are not duty-bound to support one another, an ideology of individualism has no natural place for children, the sick, the aged, or those otherwise unable to support themselves and who are thus dependent on others (Curtis 1986: 178). In its sociological version it simply ignores intermediate levels of social organisation and relationships other than that of an individual. At the analytical level, Strathern (1988; also Edwards and Strathern

2000) has demonstrated with Melanesian examples that the concept of 'persons' or 'personhood' as individual entities has only limited value for historical explanations or comparisons and can be as much ethnocentric and rooted in metaphors of Western culture as certain outdated androcentric assumptions. In archaeology, Chris Fowler (2004: 14–21), using evidence from Melanesia and South India, also questions the idea of the self-contained, self-defined, and integral individual actor and emphasises the importance of interaction with other persons and with wider social units in the construction of personhood, whereas Jones (2005) recognises households as relational identities just as much as persons in the European Neolithic.

Indeed, the shift away from individual action and towards theories of collective action has emerged as a focal point in the social sciences, from the exploration of collective power strategies (see next section) to the motivation of action by the interests of collectivity – economic, social, or ethical (Crow 2002; Folbre 1987: 116–17; Folbre and Hartmann 1988: 196–8; Komter 2005; Ortner 1984: 149–50, 157; Strathern 1996; Wilk 1993). In archaeology, Blanton et al. (1996) and Feinman (1995, 2000) have attempted to remedy the lack of attention to collective action by proposing a model of individualising vs. collective leadership strategies, or of network-based societies (where power is personal and derived from exchange networks and access to long-distance prestige goods) and corporate-based societies (where power is collective and individual prestige deemphasised), as not mutually opposing but alternating types.

Household provides a dialectical framework for studying collective practice, as it is itself a collectivity, a coalition of individuals. It is also a remarkably diachronic and cross-cultural phenomenon, as shown in Chapter 1. If individuals are the most pertinent agents of action and change, then why do they persist across time and space in organising themselves into such complex productive, distributive, and reproductive groups as households? Although gender and the individual are important dimensions of household and broader relationships, a social archaeology of households needs to be concerned also with other key social institutions, groups, and relationships within society. Human beings become social beings through a complex set of social relations, of which individual relations are only one. Indeed, one of the most intriguing and complex properties of household is that it looks both to the self and to society at the same time. In this process its fluid boundaries dissolve and we see family, kinship, community, and other relationships and networks spreading across these boundaries.

Kinship, for instance, is often the basic matter of social categories in archaeological and anthropological societies. Its reconceptualisation as a process in contemporary anthropology (see Chapter 1) can be of particular relevance to household in that kinship provides a dynamic potential for connections,

networks, and continuous transformations at a larger context as well through everyday acts – for example, the development of a fusion of possible relatives within and between households (Carsten 2000: 14–18). It offers a framework both for social integration and for 'societal disintegration' (Schweitzer 2000: 15) and the social reproduction of inequality. As we have seen in the previous chapter, in many societies positions in social networks and the reproduction of individual social units or patterns of transmission of property are shaped through subtle manipulation of kinship relations (Mader and Gippelhauser 2000; Wilk 1983, 1984). In others, kinship provides a framework for the coexistence and distinction of different modes of production, consumption, reproduction, and power (Han 2004). 'Fictive', 'ritual', or 'spiritual' kinship may also link two individuals or two collectivities together – for example, in the form of sponsoring a child or a new household, which is a pertinent characteristic of several Mediterranean and southeastern European contexts (Just 2000: 129–54).

In pursuing a goal of accounting for household connections and of looking for patterns of collective action, we might also want to include questions to do with the nature and deployment of social networks and obligations in all their complexity; with culturally defined belief systems and concepts of value and reward; with the mapping out of the social, spatial, and temporal dimensions of different interest groups and various collectivities that pursue distinct interests (Wilk 1993: 203); and with a distinction between production and distribution or between producing and redistributive units. As Curtis (1986: 169) points out, no matter how products are supposed to be distributed in a society and despite the fact that increased productivity might receive greater rewards and the acquisition of social valuables might accrue prestige, people can always organise themselves into various collectivities such as households, cooperations, communes, friendship groups, and neighbourhoods to redistribute these same products according to needs. Wilk's (1993: 198–9) suggestion that instead of posing selfish goals and moral goals as alternatives, 'we can look at them as linked continua, as scales that define a grid in which to map the logic of choice', may also be of relevance to an understanding of fundamental complexities in social life.

Social Complexities

There are severe limitations in using neo-evolutionism and positivist, functionalist, and determinist assumptions to develop a comprehensive sociology of the household. The bewildering and contradictory complexity of everyday lived reality is compressed into a few arguments about economic manipulation, rational choice, and production inputs and outputs, while the diversity of societies is compressed within the existing band/tribe/chiefdom/state classification schemes. One consequence of this is a fundamental confusion in archaeological

theory of complexity with inequality, social stratification, centralised power, and authority.

Proposals and models linking economic complexity with social and political hierarchy, taking hierarchy as the chief mechanism driving social integration, and seeing all differentiation of power relations as hierarchical abound in the archaeological literature (see Chapman 2003: 38–45, 2007 and McIntosh 1999: 1–4 for examples and references). The idea of complex society as a separate taxonomic category continues to shape research priorities by privileging the quest for centralised hierarchy and control and the focus on 'chiefdoms' and 'states' (e.g., Earle 1991, 2001; Rowlands and Kristiansen 1998). As Robert Chapman (2003: 71–4) notes, archaeological social thought has been pervaded by a dichotomous thinking which classifies societies either as simple or complex, egalitarian or hierarchical, equal or unequal. Neo-evolutionary societal typologies and models of complexity have been widely criticised within most theoretical archaeological agendas (e.g., Bender 1990; Feinman 2000; Hastorf 1990; McGuire 1983; Miller et al. 1989; Saitta 2005; Trigger 1990; Yoffee 1993), as archaeology is continually confronted by numerous examples of societies that do not fit into such typologies. Collectively, these critiques have contributed significantly to the decoupling of institutionalised or political inequality from economic production, social stratification, wealth inequality, and centralised elites and have drawn attention to the active constitution of meaning and sociopolitical structures through practice, materiality, and agency.

Current debate attempts to move still further from the traditional concern with what constitutes a 'complex society' towards a reconceptualisation of complexity as a historically contingent phenomenon, as inherent in all social forms, and as pertinent to the understanding of all types of society (Chapman 2003, 2007; Crumley 2005, 2007; Kohring and Wynne-Jones 2007; McIntosh 1999). The concept of heterarchy, defined "as the relation of elements to one another when they are unranked or when they posses the potential for being ranked in a number of different ways" (Crumley 1987: 158, 1995: 3), has provided new perspectives to an increasing number of archaeologists seeking to affirm the dynamic nature of decentralised societies and to explore the potential of all societies for innumerable choices (social, economic, political, spatial, and temporal) in the creation of social complexity (e.g., Crumley 2003; Ehrenreich et al. 1995; Herrera 2007; Joyce and Hendon 2000; McGuire and Saitta 1996; Mehrer 2000; Kuijt 2000b; Lesure and Blake 2002; Taomia 2001). This alternative view challenges the metaphor of complexity as differentiation by political hierarchisation and argues that aspects of hierarchy and heterarchy and multiple overlapping hierarchies, vertical and horizontal, can exist in the same society. Even in supposedly egalitarian societies there are different kinds of inequalities (e.g., in social position, respect, and authority accorded to different people), and even capitalist societies may exhibit nonhierarchical social relations

or ideologies[2] expressed and practised at different levels (e.g., see Crow 2002: 73–82 on mining workers' cooperatives and communes in Britain).

Another most serious theoretical problem with these ideas of 'progress' deeply embedded in social evolutionism is that they effectively deny complexity to households of prestate, noncapitalist, and small-scale societies because of the lack in these societies of clearcut and permanent hierarchical structures and relationships. In using such a single-dimensional framework, it is hard to think about households as complex processes or as a way in which people have integrated and differentiated themselves socially. Yet household, either as a notion or a dimension of social reality, by definition incorporates complexity (see also Chapter 1). An important part of this complexity lies in the contextual nature of the interaction between household and the continually changing wider social and material conditions with which it exists. Cultural and social ideals, values, identities, rules, roles, rights, and ideologies enter the household and will affect and be affected by its activity. Inevitably any generalised, mechanical model of household organisation and the specific ways in which the household interacts with other forces within a society risks overemphasising normative features and tends to attribute an ahistoric stability to households.

Contextuality or the need for contextualisation applies also to the definition and perceptions of notions such as power, authority, prestige, value, and status. The persistent tendency to use economic criteria, to locate power/knowledge centrally in individuals, dominant groups, or elites, to overemphasise political centralisation and hierarchy, and to view beliefs and rituals as utilitarian, as in the prestige goods models, clearly represents the ideal image of Western political systems, as many archaeological critiques have remarked (e.g., Hodder 1982, 1992a, 2002; McIntosh 1999: 16–19; Miller and Tilley 1984; Miller et al. 1989). Considerable ethnographic evidence indicates that factors such as age, gender, descent, experience, different skills and abilities, control of social and/or ritual knowledge, and access to the supernatural or the exotic, rather than economic success or access to basic resources, may be valued bases for special power, status, and recognition. Archaeological examples of diffused or horizontally counterpoised power span many regional and temporal settings, from the sharing of food and goods among hunter and gatherer societies in the Kalahari (Kent 1999) to settlement distributions and intra-settlement practices in Late Classic Honduras (Joyce and Hendon 2000). In sub-Saharan African societies, prestige good systems cooccur widely with corporate power and knowledge-based strategies such as secret societies and title-taking associations through which ritual leaders lacking any significant political power or economic advantage are able to align themselves and to enable effective, supralocal action (McIntosh 1999). In the chiefdoms of Bronze Age Denmark, Levy (1995) finds that the basis of the chiefs' power was not one of economic control (for example, there was no evidence for centralised storage or craft-productive activities),

but of control of ritual ceremonies and esoteric knowledge. We therefore need to consider different sources of power, including those embedded within the mundane practices of daily life; to explore the ways in which beliefs and rituals, objects and places, prestige and meaning are contextually and socially constituted; and to examine how various power forms, shifts, and distributions are associated with stable and unstable configurations (Crumley 1995: 4) and whether they become institutionalised or not.

Structure and Agency, Reproduction and Change: A Historical Dimension

The problems with a theory that postulates a system or deep structure as determining action have to do mainly with the question of reproduction and transformation of that system or structure. The objectification of society has the implication that people are passive or that these higher-level 'entities' somehow exist independent of their human components or of history. In the circular teleology involved in the structural-functionalist perception, structures exist to perform certain functions and functions create certain structures. The practice and agency approaches have not as yet developed specific methods of dealing with households either in archaeology or in anthropology. As other scholars have remarked (David 2001: 271, Schweitzer 2000: 9–10, 15; Whittle 2003: 9–14; Wilk 1993: 195–6, note 5), the focus so far has been more on the relationships than on practice, and more so on hierarchical relationships. They have also tended to emphasise the intentionality and knowledgeability of the individual actor. An archaeology of households therefore still requires accounts that are historically informed, that allow for the interplays between the macro- and micro-levels, and that explore linkages between a whole range of relationships.

I would argue with Ortner (2001: 271) and the current social archaeological works focusing on the small scale of everyday activities that the subject of agency becomes most useful when it is placed within some version of practice theory, whose analytical strength lies in the consideration of the dialectics between practice and system. Practices do not themselves have a teleology. Household practices have a theoretical status in that they provide conceptual and analytical tools for grasping the dialectics between intentional social actions and their unintentional structural ramifications, between structure and agency, and between reproduction and change. Although the term 'practices' has a degree of fixity, solidity, repetition, and regularity rooted in their everyday character, it also has fluidity and an open-ended character, stemming from people's ability to contest, resist, or change the wider social and cultural norms. Households are neither some kind of administrative system perfectly organising their functional integration at any one time nor the authors of some original meaning (Barrett 1994b: 89). They themselves sought to understand and interpret their conditions of living and had the ability to produce, reproduce, and change their

own history, in their own terms. It is the historical dimension of practices that makes them intriguing and far-reaching subjects for social investigation.

Nor has social change in itself a teleology. A focus on social change ought to be paralleled by a focus on the reproduction of structure. It seems to me that instead of social stability, it is social change which is now taken for granted. However, if we are to account convincingly for it, we will first have to interpret social reproduction and the state of affairs in a social context and to elucidate what social structures or practices are the target of change. Giddens' structuration theory, which is readily employed by many archaeologists wishing to account for social change, recognises that stability needs as much explanation as change. Bourdieu's equally influential theory and logic of practice also reveals the importance of change and stability in system reproduction and transformation.

The concept and modes of socialisation and social reproduction can serve as examples of what needs further attention. The processes of social reproduction are connected to the social practices and routines of everyday life from which 'structure' emerges. They also take into account the several institutions that create and shape us as particular social beings and provide the opportunity to see the contradictions that compel change without reducing agency to notions of individual and/or rational choice or some inherent variable called 'attitude', 'tradition', or 'individualism' (Wilk 1993: 197). For example, they allow us to see individual relationships reflecting larger social relationships, and therefore to examine the contradiction of collectivity and individualism (Bridenthal 1979: 193). Bourdieu's *habitus* is produced historically and reproduces both collective strategies and social practices. For both Bourdieu and Giddens, structures are not a stagnant symbolic scheme, and the reproduction of symbolic schemes is always in question; beliefs that make sense in practice may appear counterlogical or contradictory in a broader view (e.g., Bourdieu 1990: 271–83). For Giddens (1984), social structures exist only in and through the actions of agents, and a social system does not have 'structures' but exhibits structural properties. Agents are considered to be knowledgeable, but action always involves unacknowledged conditions and produces unintended consequences. Hence, social reproduction embodies the reciprocal shaping of the individual and the society and is not a foregone conclusion, but constantly at issue.

Households themselves are important mechanisms of social reproduction through socialisation of their members into particular rules, constraints, dispositions, and orientations in daily practice. At the same time, they do not passively submit to wider cultural and social processes, but also actively affect these processes. Wider developments, norms, conditions, and relationships can be contested or inverted within the household, and there is also a contradiction between dominant ideologies or community ideals and the actual practice of

real households. Developments and transformations at the household level and those in wider contexts must therefore be examined simultaneously rather than consecutively. Finally, we might also consider an expansion of the concept and modes of social reproduction to include the general themes of memory and knowledge, the interrelated concepts of space and time, matters such as access to networks of information, and issues to do with status, position, and power.

In all, action, structure, and change do not exist in a historical vacuum; rather they are socially and historically shaped. When we reduce them or their stimuli to exogenous factors or when we view them through a set of static dichotomies (as opposed to contradictions), we trivialise two key issues: the socially and *historically* specific structure and its interaction with human agency, and the importance of relationship over structure. We should instead attempt to situate interpretation within a theory which recognises the dialectics between social structure and human agency, social reproduction and social change.

CONCLUSIONS

Households should be a question for archaeology for a number of reasons, historical, sociological, and intellectual. In avoiding a direct confrontation with this question or in considering the answer as self-evident, we have left significant gaps in our theory and methodology, and, I would argue, in our potential for a deeper understanding of past societies in general. In this chapter I have critically discussed several key issues with respect to the state and weaknesses of the archaeological research on households and houses and have presented alternative arguments, viewpoints, and answers.

Our weaknesses stem primarily from two interrelated points. The first is that there has been little genuine interest in the household in and of itself. The other is that with little such interest, and hence with no theorising of household and its influence upon society, much social discourse, particularly that conducted in the name of households, is likely to prove unconvincing in the long run. A range of increasingly sophisticated methodologies and an exceedingly eclectic array of diverse and often conflicting theories, developed in other disciplines, and often for other purposes, have been applied to household, household-related topics, and wider social organisation, not always with second thought. Despite accepting the plurality of theoretical and methodological positions within archaeology and the contribution of existing approaches, this fragmentation or inadequate integration cannot be seen as constituting a satisfactory framework for a contemporary archaeology of household as a social process.

Households can and should be seen in other ways than through a list of activities or production inputs and outputs or through just the house and architecture. They should also be seen from perspectives more dynamic and flexible

than those of economic rationality, functionalism, (post)structuralism, and neo-evolutionism. This way of thinking has proved unsuccessful, and if we are to capture social dynamics and the complexity of everyday lived reality, we need to move away from models that are normative, ahistorical, and inactive and that tend to externalise variability and change. I have sought here to develop an approach that is particularly sensitive to the contextual and multidimensional nature of household and that combines social thought and archaeological data.

The core element of this approach is that household by definition incorporates complexity, dynamics, historical specificity, and dialectics. First, it is composed of conflicting and sometimes contradictory elements – rationality and 'irrationality', resistance and change, division and solidarity, measurable things such as the intensity of production and immeasurable things such as care, support, and emotions. The synchronic and the diachronic, short-term concerns and long-term concerns, and individual interests and collective interests may also both conjoin and conflict. Function and symbolism, economy and ideology, structure and agency, and reproduction and change should also be recognised as inherent in every action, and interpretation should not treat them as opposites. Such treatment merely creates an artificial and polarised dualism which has often become reflected in the opposition of different approaches to households and houses within archaeology. Second, just like any other social institution, the household does not just exist outside society or history, nor is it regulated through principles which are 'natural', universal, and eternal. This means that changes in the household and those taking place within society can never be explained in terms of simple and single models. Rather, if we wish to problematise the social practices and relations which create and maintain the household, it is essential to consider the interplays between the macro- and micro-levels, as well as the dialectics between a range of sets of relationships. In the following chapters, I put the arguments and ideas proposed here into practice.

THREE

THE NEOLITHIC OF GREECE

MORE THAN A CENTURY OF RESEARCH IN GREECE HAS REVEALED AN impressive and complex Neolithic, rich in architectural remains and material culture, of an idiosyncratic character and with significant regional patterns. A most characteristic feature is the centrality of the house and the village community. In marked contrast to the hundreds of habitation sites (Fig. 3.1), less than a dozen separate cemeteries have been securely identified to date, and there is no monumentality so far – ritual or funerary – outside the settlement. This means that virtually all of the remarkable variety and quantity of material culture has been recovered from settlements, together with an equally wide variety of animal and plant remains. Another characteristic element is the complexity and diversity manifested in most types of the archaeological record, from settlement types and patterns to material culture, and from a very early stage.

However, little effort has been made to use this vast and meaningful record systematically to investigate the Neolithic way of life. In Greece, the focus on the 'big picture' relates to a series of factors intertwined with the study of its earlier prehistory and continuing to play multiple roles in the production of archaeological knowledge. As the scope of this chapter is to contextualise the case-studies in chapters 4–7 within the existing framework of thought and data, it is important to understand how the above have played a part in both of these aspects. This chapter offers a critical account of the Greek Neolithic research, arguing that a single focus on the large scale is not adequate for

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coherent interpretations. More typical recent syntheses, general and regional, can be found in Alram-Stern (1996), Andreou et al. (2001), Davis (2001), and Papathanassopoulos (1996a).

HISTORY OF RESEARCH AND THE PRODUCTION
OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

The strategic location of Greece between three continents, which has always made it a locus for the exchange of cultural traits, ideas, and material culture, combined with the eventful modern political history of the wider region, raised early geopolitical concerns and quests about cultural origins and identity, usually within nationalist agendas. Hence, until recently, a disproportionately large amount of research has aimed to establish culture history and chronology and to draw connections with the Balkans and the Near East. The question of the origins of the Neolithic in Greece as an autochthonous versus exogenous (i.e., an offshoot of the Near East) process has also been a central and recurring theme of research (e.g., Efstratiou 2005; Kotsakis 1992, 2001, 2005; Perlès 2001, 2005; Theocharis 1967). The various theoretical and political backgrounds of the numerous foreign researchers and missions involved in research over the years have equally contributed to the ways archaeological knowledge has been produced. But overall, it was the wider focus on Hellenism and the prestigious Classical past that was always favoured at the cost of prehistory (see Cullen 2001: 13–16 and Margomenou et al. 2005 for theoretical and practical implications of this focus). And when prehistory was investigated it was the world described in the Homeric epics and the achievements of the Minoan and Mycenaean cultures which attracted attention, not least because they could extend the wider belief in Greece as the cradle of European civilisation as far back as the Bronze Age (see Andreou 2005 for further discussion). Worse, it often overshadowed the exploration of the Neolithic communities in their own right, resulting either in simplistic notions about their socioeconomic organisation compared to that of later prehistoric societies or simply in the projection of organisational characteristics of these later societies onto them.

The study of Neolithic Greece was initiated in Thessaly by the pioneering excavations of Tsountas (1908) at Dimini and at Sesklo and his identification of sixty-three habitation sites. It was followed by Wace and Thompson's (1912) second major synthesis. Through these early works and their impressive results, Thessaly became the focus of Neolithic research and the basic reference for subsequent inquiries in all of Greece – a 'Thessalocentricism' which still persists to some extent (Andreou et al. 2001: 261). In the 1950s and 1960s, the German Archaeological Institute under Milojčič focused exclusively on the refinement of dating sequences and the relationship of Thessaly to southern Greece and the Balkans. Excavations usually took the form of
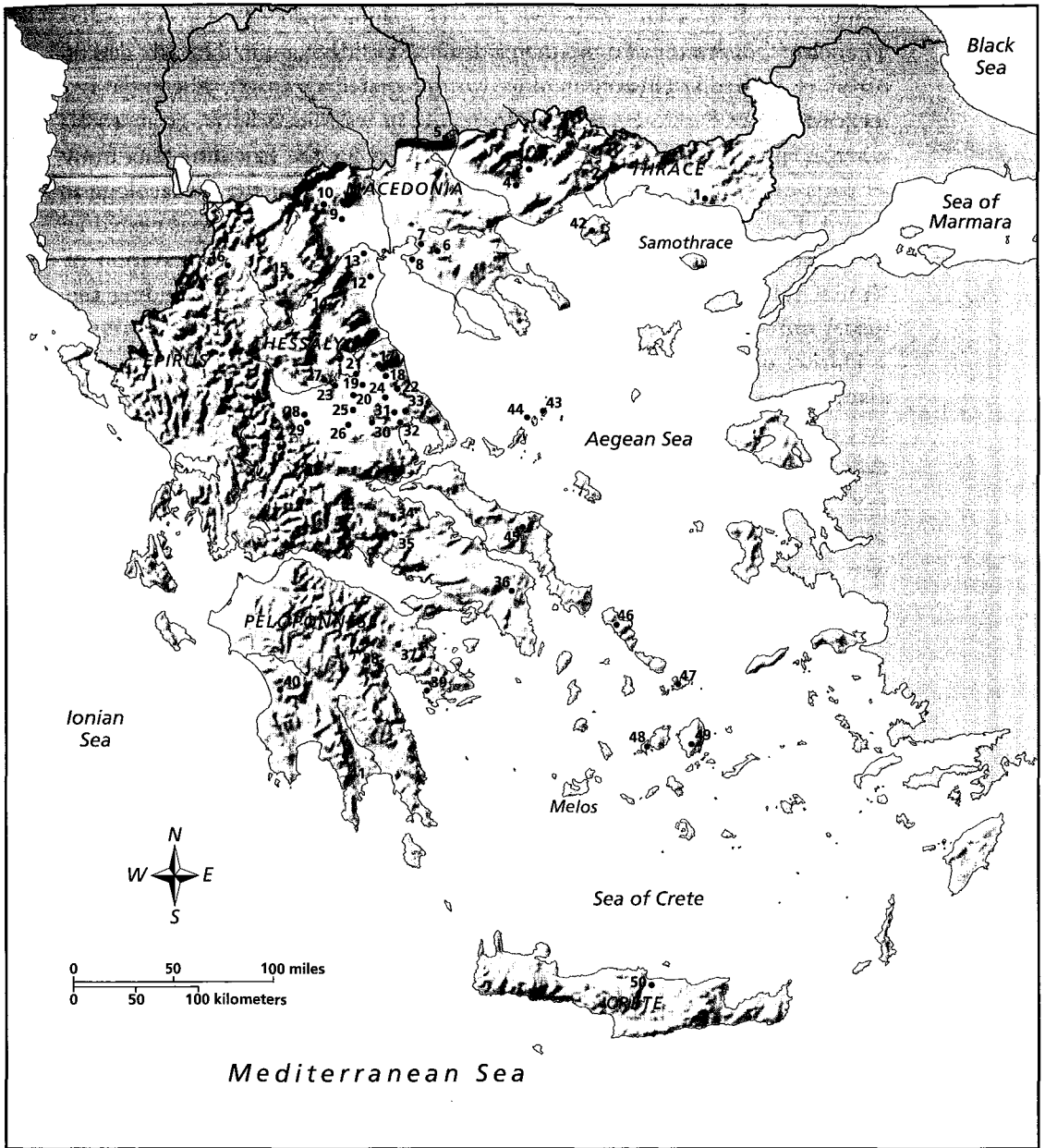
3.1. Map of Neolithic sites from Greece mentioned in the text. 1: Makri. 2: Dikili Tash. 3: Sitagroi. 4: Dimitra. 5: Promachonas-Topolniča. 6: Vassilika. 7: Thermi. 8: Stavroupolis. 9: Yannitsa (Yannitsa basin). 10: Mandalo. 11: Nea Nikomedeia. 12: Makriyalos. 13: Paliambela. 14: Servia. 15: Megalo Nisi Galanis (Kitrini Limni area). 16: Dispilio. 17: Makrychori 1. 18: Rachmani. 19: Otzaki. 20: Argissa. 21: Ayia Sofia. 22: Mandra. 23: Galene. 24: Palioskala. 25: Tsangli. 26: Achilleion. 27: Platia Magoula Zarkou. 28: Myrrini. 29: Prodromos. 30: Visviki Magoula. 31: Sesklo. 32: Pefkakia. 33: Dimini. 34: Elateia. 35: Chaeroneia. 36: Nea Makri. 37: Prosymna. 38: Lerna. 39: Franchthi. 40: Ayios Dimitrios. 41: Alepotrypa Cave (Diros). 42: Limenaria. 43: Cyclops Cave. 44: Ayios Petros. 45: Skoteini Cave. 46: Strofilas. 47: Ftelia. 48: Saliagos. 49: Zas Cave. 50: Knossos.

a single trench in order to observe the stratigraphic sequence. Exceptionally, Theocharis, excavator of more than a dozen Neolithic sites in Thessaly and of others elsewhere in Greece, employed an integrated approach. The extensive reexcavation of Sesklo between 1956 and 1977 was Theocharis' great work, whereas his renowned synthesis (1973) included for the first time data from all parts of Greece and revealed the regional variation of the archaeological record. Following Theocharis' steps, Hourmouziadis' research was geared at the outset towards the exploration of Neolithic life, and his reexcavation of Dimini (Hourmouziadis 1979) was aimed specifically at understanding the spatial and social organisation of the site.

During the 1960s, a shift of attention to southern Greece and the Aegean islands is associated with Anglo-American research and its focus at the time on palaeoeconomic and environmental reconstructions under the premises of determinism, systems theory, and neo-evolutionism. For such models, Thessaly, with its long-lived and socioeconomically stable villages, constituted an 'anomaly'. Given also that the centralised Minoan and Mycenaean societies were located in southern Greece, it was expected that the characteristics inherent in a state economy would be found here. Since Renfrew's (1972) explanations of the southern Greek Bronze Age,[1] there has been a marked tendency to look to long-distance exchange, unequal distribution of resources, and 'prestige' objects to assess socioeconomic organisation and complexity in the Neolithic. Research was conducted, however, within the context of more general investigations of prehistoric sites (Neolithic together with Bronze Age) and excavations were again very limited in extent.

Macedonia, on the other hand, was envisioned through late 19th century Western perceptions of nations and races as the 'Other' of either the European or the 'Aegean' Neolithic (Fotiadis 1993, 2001; Kotsakis 1998), a belief which delayed concentrated investigation of this region. Despite the great impact of Heurtley's early and masterly synthesis on Macedonia (1939), it took another thirty years before any substantial research was conducted in this region, this time by Rodden and his team in Nea Nikomedeia in the 1960s, and at least another ten years after Rodden's departure for active interest in the prehistoric life of Macedonia to develop. Meanwhile, Neolithic habitation levels have been revealed all over Greece, but our knowledge is still patchy.

In the last fifteen years or so, interest in the Neolithic has been revitalised. Research is a lot more problem-oriented, a number of innovative methodological studies are being undertaken, previously neglected regions such as Macedonia and Thrace are being intensively investigated, and a new picture is emerging all over Greece. However, many of these advances are still conducted according to the general aims and theories outlined above, and works focusing on intrasite analysis or on consideration of any source of material

variability other than time are few. It is essential to be aware of the unevenness of archaeological knowledge across Greece, prolonged by the fact that numerous regional studies and final excavation reports remain unpublished, and that although a very large number of settlements are known, few have been excavated with a strategy that exposes their maximum area horizontally at a given time.

TIME FRAMEWORK

Despite the long-lasting concern with chronology, and although many calibrated and uncalibrated 14C dates have been acquired, the establishment of a uniform cultural sequence with definite time limits and interregional correlations remains to be settled. This is perhaps not surprising, considering the aforementioned unevenness of archaeological knowledge as well the considerable diversity of Greece's various 'cultures'. Comparisons with the Balkans and the Near East have also often resulted in a confusing terminology and phasing of the sequences in northern Greece and the Aegean islands, respectively, not least because there is a discrepancy between Greece and the above regions in the subdivision of the Neolithic.[2]

An initial Early Neolithic phase, in which pottery was absent or scarce, is defined at strata underlying subsequent Early Neolithic levels at a number of sites, but whether this is an absolute chronocultural phase (aceramic or pre-pottery) or a very early stage of the Early Neolithic remains an open issue (see discussion in Perlès 2001, chapter 5, and Thissen 2005). Equally controversial is the Final Neolithic (4500–3300/3100 BC): it has only recently been distinguished from the Bronze Age and the Late Neolithic; it may also be called 'Chalcolithic', or even 'Late Neolithic II', especially in the Aegean islands; and more importantly, it is not observed everywhere. The Early Neolithic is long-lasting (6800/6500–5800 BC) but has rarely been the subject of concentrated field research. A good synthesis of all the available Early Neolithic evidence appeared recently in Perlès (2001). The Middle Neolithic, in contrast, emerged as a much shorter period than previously believed, with most radiocarbon dates falling between 5800 and 5300 BC, and it is better known than the Early Neolithic. The Late Neolithic spans from 5300 to 4700/4500 BC and is the best documented period across Greece.

For the purposes of this book, I follow the broadest absolute chronological framework and the simplest terminology (Table 3.1) and keep references to regional sequences to a minimum. Even so, it is important to remember that 'dating regionalism' cannot be followed in all its details. The reasons for this generalisation are that a) it enables the reader to move through the text uninterrupted by the regional and terminological details and to get an idea of which settlements are roughly contemporaneous, and b) it permits systematic

TABLE 3.1. *Chronology and phases for the Greek Neolithic and the sites discussed in the text*

Period	Date (cal BC)	Thrace and Macedonia	Thessaly	Central Greece and Peloponnese	Aegean Islands
Final Neolithic (FN)	3500	Sitagroi IV			
	3600				
	3700				
	3800				
	3900				
	4000				
	4100				
	4200				
	4300	Dikili Tash II, Promachonas-Topolnica III, Mandalo II		Ayios Dimitrios	
	4400				
	4500		Palioskala, Sesklo FN, Pefkakia FN, Platia Magoula Zarkou, Rachmani		Strofilas
Late Neolithic (LN)	4600	Mandalo I			Zas Cave
	4700	Sitagroi III			
	4800		Dimini, Mandra, Sesklo LN, Pefkakia	Alepotrypa Cave	Knossos I-II
	4900	Makriyalos II	Ayia Sofia		
	5000	Sitagroi II, Promachonas-Topolnica I-II, Stavroupolis II	Galene		Ftelia, Saliagos, Knossos III
	5100	Megalo Nisi Galanis			
	5200	Makriyalos I, Makri II, Stavroupolis I, Thermi, Vassilika			Knossos IV, Skoteini Cave
	5300	Sitagroi I, Servia 6–7, Dikili Tash I	Makrychori 1, Platia Magoula Zarkou		Limenaria
Middle Neolithic (MN)	5400	Makri I			
	5500	Servia 1–5			Knossos V–VII
	5600	Kitrini Limni Area			
	5700				Ayios Petros
	5800		Sesklo MN I–III, Achilleion IV	Chaeroneia, Lerna II	

TABLE 3.1. *(Continued)*

Period	Date (cal BC)	Thrace and Macedonia	Thessaly	Central Greece and Peloponnese	Aegean Islands
Early Neolithic (EN)	5900			Lerna I	
	6000	Servia-Varytimides	Otzaki, Achilleion III, Platia Magoula Zarkou	Nea Makri	
	6100				
	6200		Sesklo EN II–III		
	6300	Nea Nikomedeia, Yannitsa Basin	Achilleion I–II		
	6400			Elateia	
	6500		Sesklo 'PPN'-EN I, Prodromos, Makrychori 1 (ditches)		Knossos VIII–IX
	6600		Argissa		
	6700				
	6800				Knossos X
	6900				
	7000			Franchthi Cave	Cyclops Cave

consideration of geographical and temporal patterns of similarities and differences in social practices.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Greek Neolithic settlements utilise a variety of locations in the landscape and create different patterns of spatial and social arrangements. They are usually villages situated in lowland regions and with dense concentrations on alluvial deposits. Short-lived hamlets also occur, as does occupation of caves, although less frequently. The recent recovery of the lake settlement of Dispilio in Macedonia (Hourmouziadis 2002) adds another dimension to the picture of diversity of settlement types. Enclosures, ditches, and other kinds of boundaries appear together with the first settlements and continue throughout the Neolithic.

Long-term villages in the form of earth mounds or tells (*magoula*) resulting from vertical superimposition of the closely spaced houses and accumulation of successive layers of habitation are characteristic of Thessaly and central Greece – for example, Sesklo A, Otzaki, Tsangli, and Pefkakia (Fig. 3.2). However, the
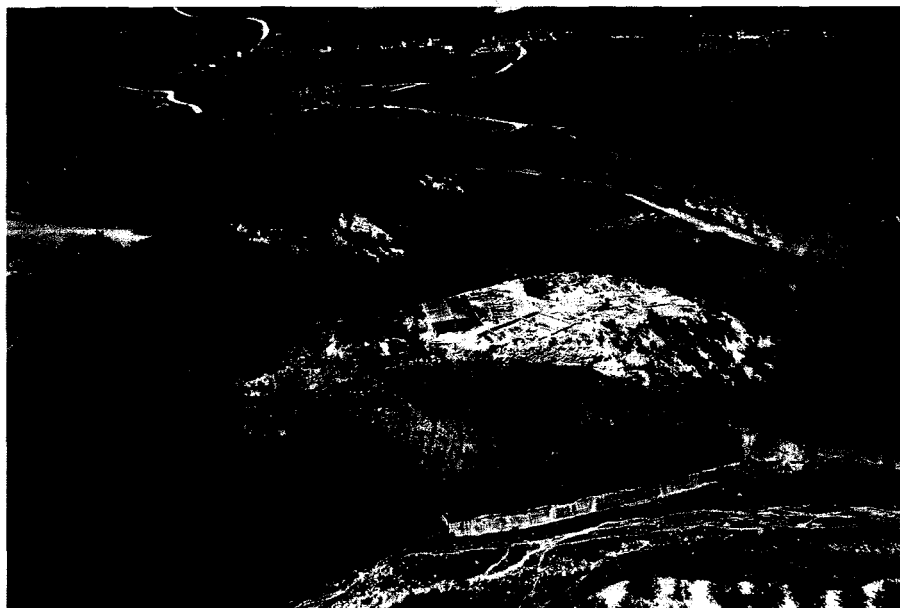
3.2. The tell of Sesklo, aerial photograph, with closely spaced rectangular buildings with stone foundations. From the southwest. (Photograph and copyright: Vassiliki Adrimi-Sismani.)

tell is not the only settlement type in Thessaly, as was believed until recently: extended and unbounded sites also occur (Fig. 3.3), even though sparsely, because previous surveys have always focused on the obtrusive tells. Equally striking here is settlement density: more than 300 sites have been located in eastern Thessaly alone, with the mean distance between neighbouring sites being less than 5 km (Gallis 1992; Halstead 1984; Johnson and Perlès 2004; Perlès 2001: 121–51). As it is put by Demoule and Perlès (1993: 363), this combination of intra- with intersite density would have created 'a heavily socialised environment'.

In Macedonia and Thrace, systematic field surveys and excavations have revealed a large number of extended, inconspicuous settlements with widespread houses and extensive open spaces, and of rather short-term occupation, such as Makriyalos and Stavroupolis, existing along with habitation on mounds such as Sitagroi, Dikili Tash, and Makri (Fig. 3.1). Key characteristics are their large size, up to over 50 ha, resulting from the horizontal replacement of houses and the important hiatuses observed at each one (Andreou and Kotsakis 1987; Andreou et al. 2001; Aslanis 1992; Grammenos 1991). Unlike Thessaly, a tendency to reduce rather than to expand the settlement area did not occur here any earlier than the Bronze Age (Grammenos 1991). Horizontal expansion is exemplified by Makriyalos, where the two main phases of habitation were established on opposite slopes of a low hill and had little spatial overlap (Pappa and Besios 1999). The settlement of Stavroupolis was initially

spread around the top of a low hill, then shifted to the north, and then shifted again, to the centre of the hill, which was apparently uninhabited until then (Grammenos and Kotsos 2004: 16–17). Another interesting characteristic is the 'Early Neolithic gap' in central and eastern Macedonia, and probably also in Thrace, where settlements were established only at the end of the Middle Neolithic (around 5500 BC) (Andreou et al. 2001: 298–299, 308–309; Efstratiou et al. 1998).

In southern mainland Greece and the Aegean islands, villages include both tells (mostly in central Greece) and open sites (mostly in the Peloponnese and the islands), are situated at the edge of fertile plains, on hillsides, and on coastal plains, and show a remarkable variety of size and possibly of function (see Alram-Stern 2005; Broodbank 2000; Cavannagh and Crouwel 2002: 121–58; Davis 2001; Sampson 1987). In the Peloponnese, the relatively low intra- and intersite density (10–30 km) suggests generally, but not always, small to medium-sized settlements (up to 1 ha), less long-lived and more mobile, with different territorial exploitation and a greater emphasis on seasonal pastoralism, exchange networks, and maritime economy (Cavannagh and Crouwel 2002: 121–58; Johnson 1996). Occupation of caves such as Franchthi and Alepotrypa in the Peloponnese, and Skoteini, Cyclops, and Zas on the Aegean islands is rather more frequent, but whether permanent or seasonal is not certain (e.g., Halstead 2005: 47; Papathanassopoulos 1996b; Sampson 1993, 2007; Zachos 1999). The Aegean islands in general do not seem to have constituted

3.3. The flat site of Galene with widely spaced elliptical wattle-and-daub pit buildings. From the west. (After Toufexis 2005.)

a particularly attractive environment for people until the later phases of the Neolithic (Broodbank 2000; Davis 2001: 22–4; Sampson 2005), even though habitation on rocky islets such Ayios Petros on Kyra Panayia (Efstratiou 1985) and Cyclops Cave on Youra (Sampson 2007) and the use of resources from other islands are attested from a very early stage (Table 3.1).

Even greater variation is observed at the site level, where the most striking element is the lack of standardisation in architecture, and from as early as the Early Neolithic (see Perlès 2001: 186–91). The houses are generally, but not always, small, rectangular, and free-standing. Other than that, building size ranges from 11 m² to 160 m²; ground plans may be square, rectangular, or even elliptical. Interiors were usually single-roomed, but double-roomed, three-roomed, or otherwise partitioned examples also exist, as do porches and indications for two-storeys, internal lofts, and basements. A type of building with elongated walls in the form of a porch at one or both ends, and with one or more internal subdivisions (improperly called 'megarons'; see Chapter 5), occurs throughout Greece and in many variations. Structural features include a variety of hearths, cooking and storage facilities, benches, shelves, platforms, and so on. Foundations may be stone-built or trenches dug into the ground, superstructure techniques include mud brick, wattle-and-daub, and pisé, and floor types vary from simple beaten earth to stone pole frameworks and wooden planks. The gabled type of roof seems to be most common, but double-pitched and flat roofs are also indicated. Several openings (doors, windows, and roof openings), as well as decorative elements, are known from the clay house models, although these may be idealised representations rather than accurate replicas (Fig. 3.4). Interestingly, the construction techniques and house types do not seem to correlate strongly with particular regions or temporal phases, certainly much less than the settlement patterns and material culture do.

MATERIAL CULTURE

Material culture also reveals regional differences within an overall sense of uniformity. But perhaps the most striking element here is the evidence for early craft specialisation and long-distance communications.

Greek Neolithic pottery is handmade, usually from several sections joined together to form the final shape, and baked at temperatures rarely exceeding 850–900°C. It is distinguished by considerable technical and aesthetic quality, high proportions of fine ware, imaginative decoration, and generally thin and complicated shapes. Naturally there were technological changes and improvements over time, but even in the Early Neolithic, pots manifest considerable knowledge of pottery-making techniques. As Vitelli (1995: 56) points out, in a matter of a few centuries the Neolithic potters developed

(a)   (b)
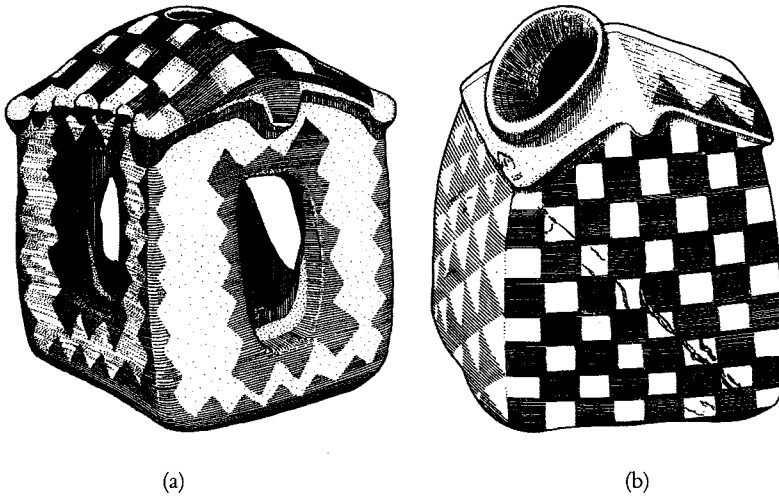
3.4. Miniature clay models of houses from Thessaly: (a) Krannon; (b) Myrrini. (After Theocharis 1973.)

'most of the basic ceramic technology, except for the potter's wheel, relied on by later historical potters'. The very early ceramics are distinguished by generally small, monochrome vessels, mainly bowls. Painted and incised decoration, mostly geometric, soon appeared and the number of decorated vessels increased. During the Middle Neolithic, striking technological and stylistic innovations resulted in a proliferation of shapes, decorative techniques, and wares. The Sesklo pottery and its famous Alpha Wares (in particular the Red-on-White one) (Fig. 3.5) appears as a uniform cultural manifestation from western Macedonia to central Greece and to northern Sporades, but coexists with local traditions such as the Pattern-Burnished (or Urfirnis) of central and southern Greece. In the Late Neolithic, new building techniques and advances in pyrotechnology, including kilns, enabled the production of very high-quality ceramics such as the Black-Polished, the Grey-on-Grey, and the Polychrome wares. Vessels grow larger and more complicated, and the range of shapes includes a wide variety of bowls, basins, jars, jugs, and cups. Painted and incised decoration become common, denser, and remarkably accurate, regularly covering both the inside and outside of vessels, and different styles are often applied on each surface. The distinctive Dimini Ware (Fig. 3.6; also Chapter 5) is widespread in northern Greece and shows similarities to the contemporary pottery of Albania. At the same time, highly specific, localised stylistic distributions increase – for example, the Graphite decoration of north-eastern Greece, which seems to link it with Bulgarian sites. As a whole, the ceramic evidence suggests that pottery production was a complex and demanding process with high rates of innovation, experimentation, and risk-taking.
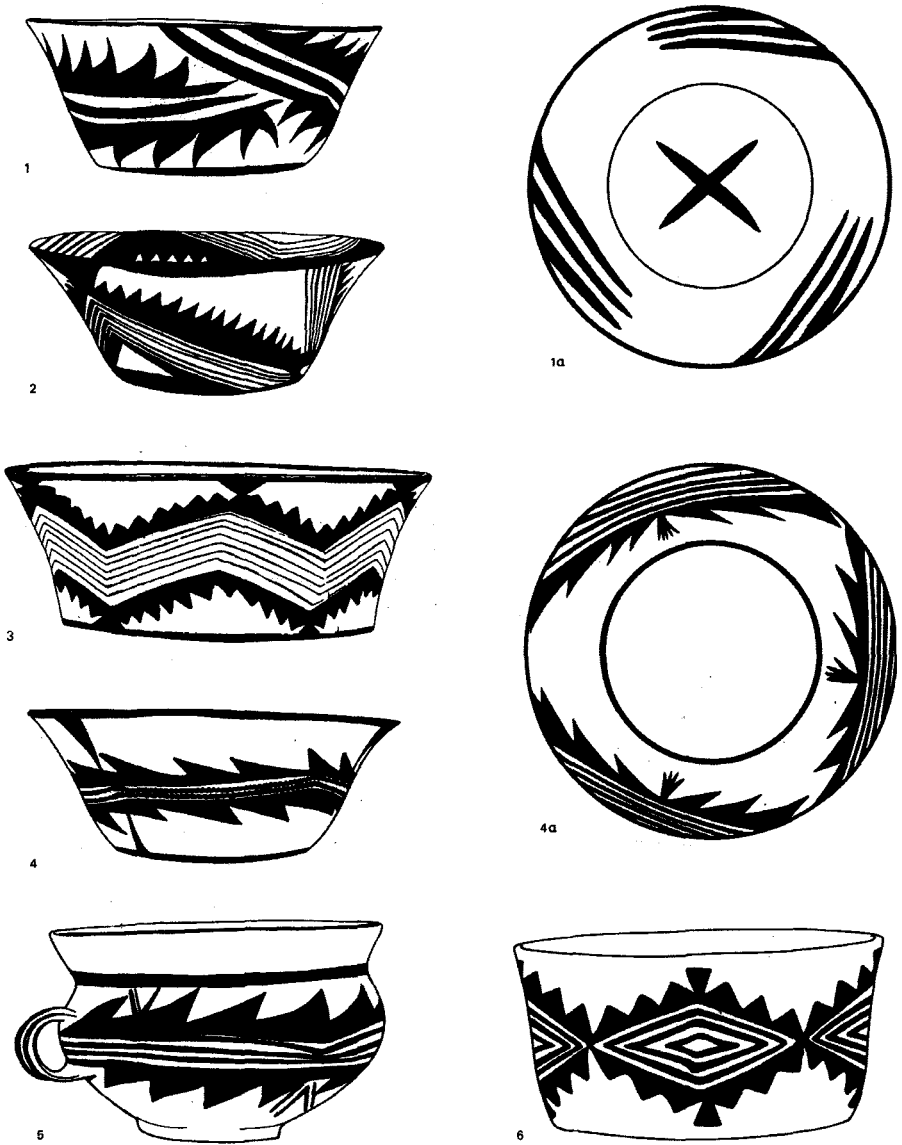
3.5. Typical painted pottery shapes and decoration of the Sesklo Ware (Red-on-White). (After Theocharis 1973.)

Stone, bone, and horn tools are less variable regionally, but they demonstrate a wide range of techniques relating to the acquisition of raw materials, processing, production, and consumption (Moundrea-Agrafioti 1996). A useful synthesis of the associations between chipped and ground stone tool types, raw materials, production techniques, and type of activity involved appears in Karimali (2005, Tables 8.1 and 8.2). Of the polished stone tools, axes, adzes, and chisels, usually made of serpentine, jadeite, and hematite or igneous rocks,
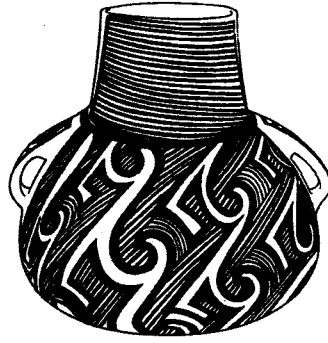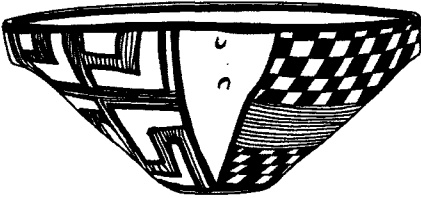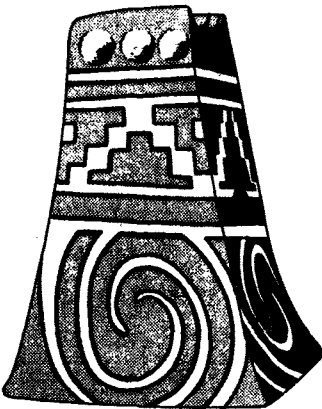
3.6. Typical painted pottery shapes and decoration of the Dimini Ware: (a) Dimini Bowl (Brown-on-Buff); (b) neck jar (Brown-on-Buff); (c) fruitstand (Brown-on-Buff); (d) 'spit stand' (Black-and-White-on-Red). (After Theocharis 1973.)

are the most common. Certain categories such as millstones and the so-called 'sling-bullets' have been linked with specialised procurement and production (Runnels 1985). Bone tools are varied and numerous and include pointed tools and needles, spatulas, burnishers, hooks, and combs. Sheep and goat bones were preferred, cattle bones to a lesser degree, and occasionally those of wild animals or birds.

The chipped stone tools were manufactured mostly of flint and obsidian, the volcanic glass that comes from the Aegean island of Melos (Fig. 3.1). Blade tools (blades, bladelets, sickles, and scrapers) with a small degree of retouch predominate. Perlès (1990, 1992, 2001: 201–10) has demonstrated that behind the deceptive typological simplicity of blade tools lie complex strategies of raw material exploitation and methods of production, and that from a very early stage there is a clear, deliberate association between specific raw materials, techniques, and classes of tools (see also Karimali 2005, Tables 8.1 and 8.2). Throughout the Neolithic there was a preference for use of exotic raw materials, especially of obsidian, which often was obtained from considerable distances and involved seafaring at a time when the Cyclades were uninhabited. This indicates that the network was particularly extensive[3] and has prompted the formulation of several exchange models (e.g., Perlès 1992; Renfrew et al. 1965; Torrence 1986). Perlès (1990, 1992, 2001: 207–8) has proposed that the extraction, distribution, and working of obsidian were conducted by specialised, and probably mobile, groups, described as 'itinerant knappers'. Current research is moving beyond concern with the typology and circulation of the tools and towards a consideration of context, agency, use, choice, and details of a more local character (e.g., Karimali 2000, 2001; Skourtopoulou 1998, 2006).

The far-flung distribution of the impressive seashell *Spondylus gaederopus* also attests to an exchange network so extensive that it was probably not connected with the smaller-scale local exchange structures only. *Spondylus* items – bracelets or rings (Fig. 3.7), pendants, and beads – reached as far as central Europe and the North Sea. Their provenance is the Aegean Sea, where the mollusc lives (though it now appears in the Adriatic and the Black Sea) (Shackleton and Elderfield 1990). The transcultural significance of *Spondylus* has also been particularly helpful for long-distance exchange modelling (e.g., Séfériadès 1995, 2000). Within Greece, the production of *Spondylus* objects has been associated with craft specialisation and specialised production centres (Karali 2004; Miller 2003; Renfrew 1973; Tsuneki 1989).

Throughout the Neolithic a wide variety of practices and activities are indicated by the numerous classes of material culture which are usually summarised under the blanket term 'domestic equipment' or 'small finds' – spindle-whorls, spools, and loom-weights, often decorated, clay tables and ladles, stone querns and palettes, and so on. These material classes have not received adequate
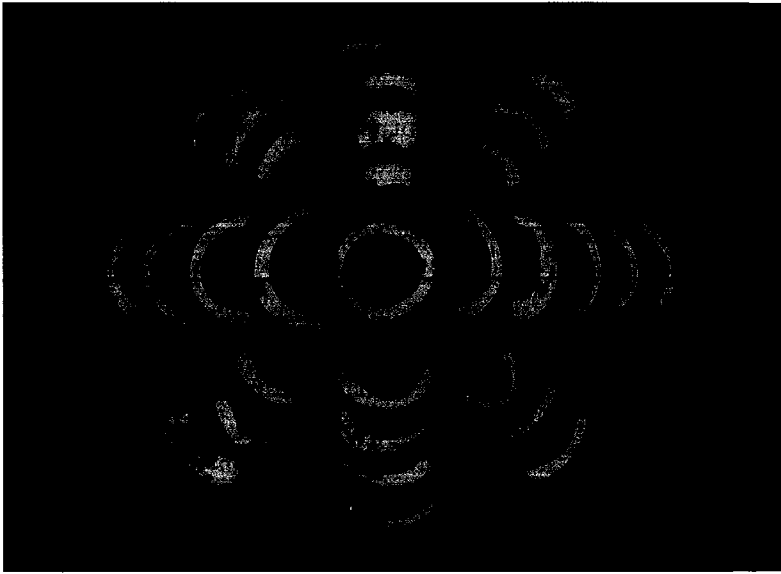
3.7. *Spondylus* bracelets from Dimini.

attention[4], compared, for example, to fine ceramic wares, figurines, and ornaments, which have been selectively treated as most meaningful.

GREEK NEOLITHIC HOUSEHOLDS AND NEW QUESTIONS

With important exceptions that will be considered in detail in the following chapters, the variable questions of Neolithic research in Greece have rarely been addressed at the level of the communities and their households. Either for the purposes of culture history or for those of an argument about increasing complexity as differentiation, it is largely the typology and circulation, and more recently the technology, of prehistoric artefacts out of context which have been used as the most sensitive and relevant index of social development. At the same time, the understanding of ideological life and social variation has been traditionally sought out in 'prestige' or 'ritual' items.

For example, Perlès (1992: 144, 2001: 218, 220, 294; Perlès and Vitelli 1999: 98, 101) argues that fine wares were largely 'nonutilitarian', 'high-status objects', their uses restricted to special functions or occasions, and that goods such as marble figurines and *Spondylus* bracelets were rare and distributed unequally within sites. Stone tools, on the other hand, are perceived as purely utilitarian artefacts, their production and exchange mostly economic and 'socially neutral' because of the *domestic* context of deposition (Demoule and Perlès 1993: 384; Perlès 1992: 143, 2001: 220, 296; Perlès and Vitelli 1999: 101; emphasis added). For Halstead (1995: 14–18), there is a shift in the use of fine wares over time: during the Early and Middle Neolithic they served

to build and strengthen social ties between communities through food and drink sharing, but in the Late Neolithic they became 'tokens' for wealth accumulation. That would be another instance of a conclusion reached by failing to consider the use- and find-context of material culture or the social definition of the household *per se*. Halstead's views of fine pottery derive from his social differentiation model (1984, 1989, 1995, 1999). This starts from the axiomatic presumptions of scarcity, mismanagement, and resource maximisation. It then puts forward the idea of 'social storage', in which subsistence goods are converted into cattle and mainly into 'prestige goods' intended to be exchanged back to foodstuffs in times of shortage. But the varying degrees of success in agricultural production would have created social differences: the successful households would have been able to accumulate wealth and to secure preferential access to labour and resources through their continuous ability to exchange their agricultural surplus, whereas the unsuccessful ones would have become poorer and increasingly dependent (Halstead 1989: 74–5, 1999: 89–90). All this, according to Halstead (1995), gave way to the rise of institutionalised elites in the Late Neolithic, named 'megaron elites' for Thessaly. The role of the elites was to control the mobility of labour and surplus, to redistribute the resources, and to maintain order in times of social conflict and dissent. Increasing differentiation within and between communities continued over the following millennia and culminated in the development of the Late Bronze Age palatial economy (Halstead 1995: 19).

Yet, whether emphasised or disregarded, variation and unpredictable courses of local progression keep emerging from all recent works. Given the relatively small geographical area of Greece, these phenomena make its Neolithic all the more intriguing. From every point of view, then, it is essential to address questions of social, economic, and ideological content on the household level. How were individual social units actually engaged in production, distribution, and social reproduction? How important was the household in the community, and in what way? Also, important questions revolve around the social significance of the architectural patterns with their numerous variations and exceptions. Given that they contrast with the relative uniformity of material culture, what constituted the link between the two? Was it only long-distance communication and exchange mechanisms or was it the shared social structure of the village and the house? Were there other shared social and ideological structures? And how were they shaped, negotiated, or contested through everyday life in the different societies? The general framework presented in this chapter serves to situate the households of the settlements to be examined within a particular sociocultural and temporal setting. But it may just as well be reconsidered from a bottom–up viewpoint. It would be interesting to see whether a different story can be told on the basis of data from the intrasite level and from within the houses.

THE IDEAL AND THE REAL: THE EXAMPLES OF EARLY NEOLITHIC NEA NIKOMEDEIA AND MIDDLE NEOLITHIC SESKLO

ALTHOUGH MORE AND MORE SCHOLARS ARE ABANDONING THE VIEW OF the earlier Neolithic as a period of idealised simplicity, few have attempted to elucidate the ways in which complexity occurred in everyday life, and what might have been its meaning, using specific evidence from the small scale. This is particularly visible in the narratives of prehistoric long-term structural changes, in which there is a tendency to reconstruct the Neolithic in terms of a contrast: the complexity of its later phases is seen to have been preceded by a long period of comparative simplicity. In Greece, Perlès' (2001) recent synthesis on the Early Neolithic has challenged this belief, arguing for early complexity in production and exchange patterns, and similar concerns have been expressed by others sporadically (e.g., Renfrew 1973; Vitelli 1995). But research interests have rarely been on the intrasite level. Thus, far from being foregone conclusions, the complexity and heterogeneity of earlier households remain to be established.

This chapter examines the evidence from Early Neolithic Nea Nikomedeia and Middle Neolithic Sesklo and compares it against the above stereotype. By uncovering complex patterns of sociospatial and economic organisation and variable symbolic uses of architecture and material culture, it argues against the tendency to enclose the unpredictability of real-life household practices into generalisations and simplistic contrasts. A final note concerns the reason for grouping together the Early and Middle Neolithic here. It is mainly practical and stems from the fact that Nea Nikomedeia and Sesklo are among the few, if

not the only, sites of the earlier Greek Neolithic phases that have been exposed on an adequate spatial scale offering a good basis for observations.

EARLY NEOLITHIC NEA NIKOMEDEIA (CA. 6250–6050 BC)[1]

Nea Nikomedeia in Macedonia remains the largest exposed Early Neolithic settlement in Greece (Fig. 4.1). It comprises a low mound 2 m high above the surrounding plain, partly natural and partly resulting from the accumulation of habitation debris and the disintegration of the buildings. The excavated area of approximately 1690 m² accounts for around 7% of the total mound area, estimated at 24,200 m².

The excavation of Nea Nikomedeia by Rodden and his team in 1961, 1963, and 1964 had an impact of European significance. Given Macedonia's strategic location and the earlier views of it as 'a gateway to Europe' (Rodden 1996: 1) (see Chapter 3), the project was conceived with a view to defining the nature of the earliest Neolithic settlement in the context of the origins and development of farming in Europe (i.e., indigenous or imported from further east) and its relationship with the Balkans, the Aegean and the Near East (Rodden 1962: 269, 1996). The extensive excavation, in conjunction with an early 14C date (ca. 7200 BC), established the site as 'the oldest dated Neolithic community yet found in Europe' (Rodden 1965: 83) and one in which life, although similar in many respects to that in the early Neolithic villages to the east, had 'its own exclusively European characteristics' (Rodden 1965: 83). The first volume of the final publication on Nea Nikomedeia, on stratigraphy, architecture, and pottery, appeared in 1996.[2] The second one, on the small finds, human remains and animal bones, is further awaited. The recently published radiocarbon dates, ranging from 6650 to 5730 BC, but falling mostly within 6190–6050 BC, date the site securely to the Early Neolithic but towards a later part of it than previously thought (see discussion in Perlès 2001: 98–112, Table 6.1 and Thissen 2005: 33–5, Fig. 4).

A Rich and Meaningful Daily Life

The twenty-four recognisable structures at Nea Nikomedeia (Fig. 4.1) were located as foundation trenches, post-holes and stake-holes, building material, and areas of compacted white clay representing floor areas. They were square or rectangular and detached, were built with clay mixed with chaff around a timber frame, probably oak, on foundation trenches or directly on the ground, and had pitched (thatched?) roofs (Fig. 4.2). Foundation trenches and post-holes were often lined with clay or plaster, and walls were plastered with mud on the inside and white clay on the outside. Floors were constructed
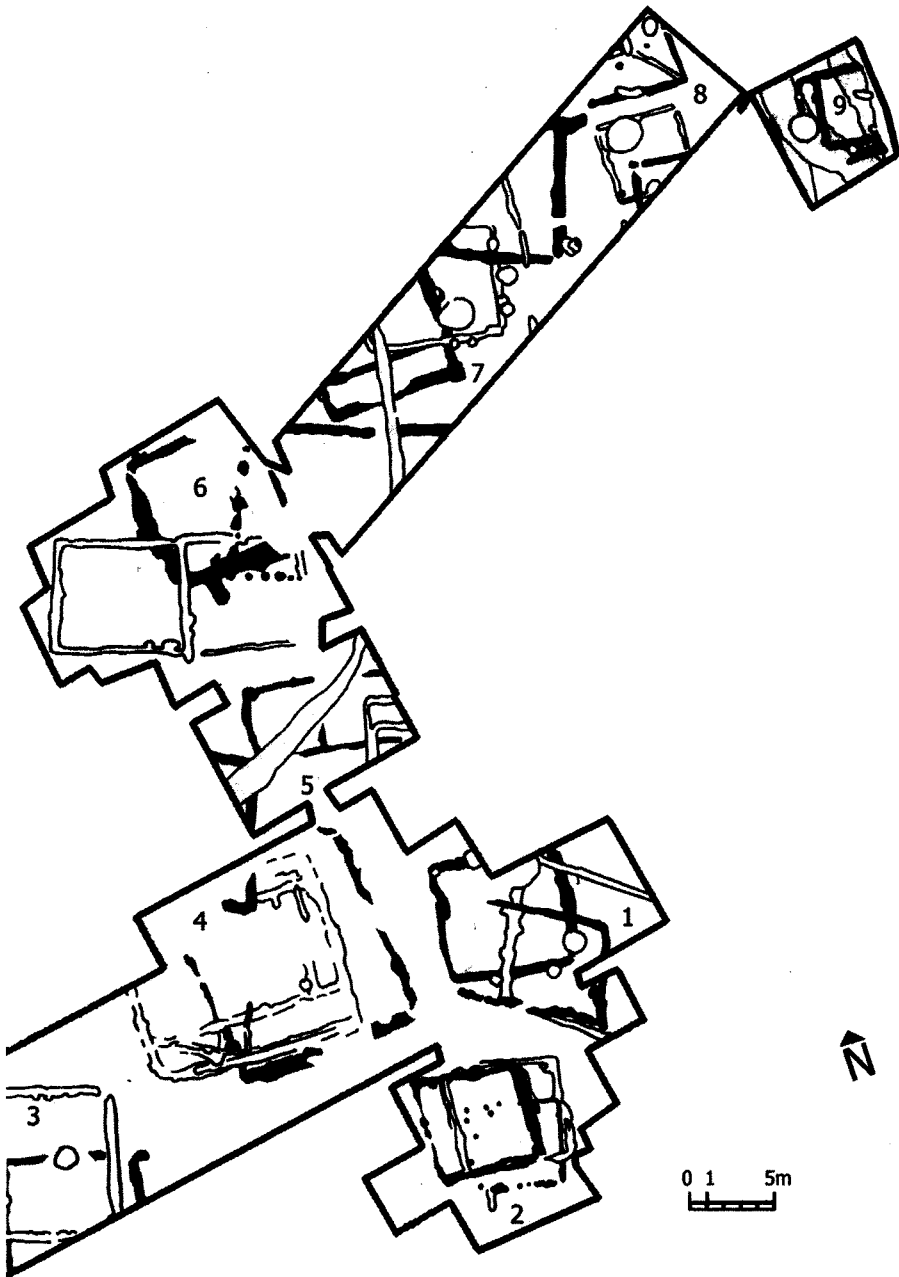
4.1. Plan of Nea Nikomedeia showing the building phases of the structural groups. (Plan redrawn from Wardle 1996.)

of hard beaten clay or clay and pebbles. The variety of structural features, including ovens, hearths, and clay-lined pits, and of vessel types, small finds, and carbonised faunal and botanical remains point to a wide range of activities. The subsistence economy relied on agriculture and animal husbandry.

People grew cereals and pulses, including naked six-row barley, emmer wheat, lentils, peas, and bitter vetch (Bintliff 1976; van Zeist and Bottema 1971), and kept flocks predominantly of sheep and goats, but also cattle and pigs (Payne 1969; Rodden 1962). Exploitation of the wild resources was limited and consisted of wild plants such as acorns and occasional hunting, fowling, and fishing of hares, deer, wild swine, birds, tortoises, fish, and shell fish (Shackleton 1970).

Although formally unpublished as yet and known largely through preliminary reports, the range and abundance of material culture are striking. One interesting feature is the large assemblage of polished and ground stone implements, especially the 75 complete and 118 fragmented axes (Pyke 1993; Rodden 1962). Together with the numerous adzes, chisels, pestles, pounders, querns, palettes, grinders, and slightly worked pebbles found at the site, they reach the impressive number of more than 400 items in total (Pyke 1993). They were made mostly of soft green or black serpentines and marble and suggest a very wide range of uses, from woodworking to animal skinning, and from crushing or grinding grain to preparing pigments used for decorated pottery. Equally, the chipped stone industry consists of something less than a thousand items – mostly blades, bladelets, and flakes made of flint, chert, and quartz – and the toolkit is further complemented by a variety of bone implements such as awls, points, needles, spatulas, and fishhooks (Rodden 1962; Rodden 1965).

Other interesting classes of material culture are the finely carved stone ornaments such as 'ear-studs' and long marble pins, the clay stamp-seals bearing a variety of geometrical designs on their flat stamping surfaces, and the anthropomorphic and zoomorphic imagery, best exemplified by figurines, anthropomorphic vessels, and three greenstone frog figurine-pendants (Rodden and Rodden 1964a and 1964b). Clay artefacts also include considerable numbers of spindle-whorls, spools and loom-weights, enigmatic clay roundels or discs and 'pinched forms', and a particularly large assemblage of the so-called 'sling-bullets' (Pyke 1993). These last artefacts have a fairly standardised ovoid or biconical shape with pointed ends and an average length of 5–6 cm and are found both baked and unbaked. They are common in Early and Middle Neolithic Greece, southeast Europe, and the Near East, and have been variously interpreted as fighting or hunting weapons, shepherds' implements, equipment used to determine oven temperature or to transfer heat to food and possibly rooms, counters, gaming pieces, and even loom-weights (Atalay 2005; Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 2003; Perlès 2001: 228–31; Tringham and Stevanović 1990). In Çatalhöyük, Atalay (2005: 155–9) suggests that clay balls and geometric objects were primarily associated with the heating/cooking of food (e.g., for grilling or roasting meat and for boiling, parching, or baking nuts
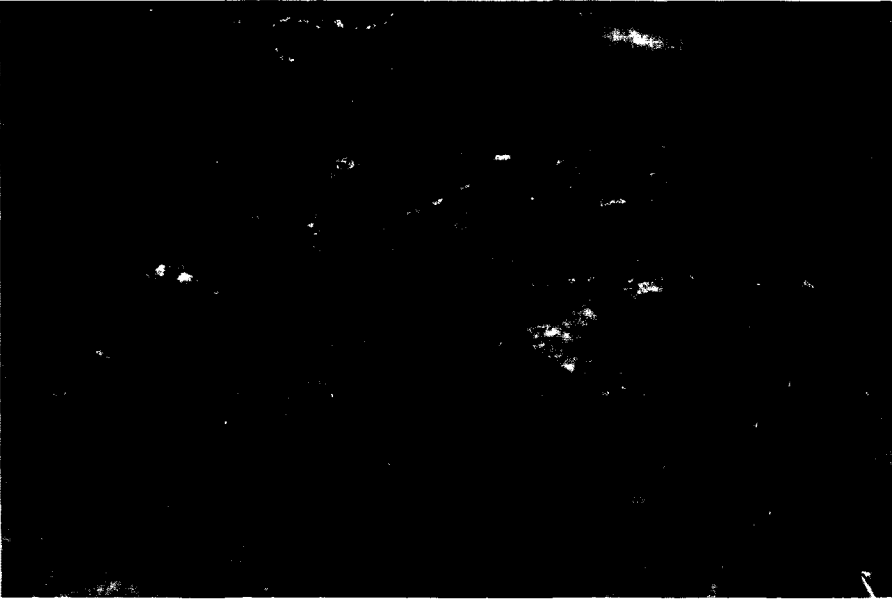
4.2. Structural group 4 at Nea Nikomedeia. From the northeast. (From Wardle 1996, by permission of the British School at Athens.)

and grains inside pits, baskets, or ovens), given also that they are frequently found near ovens, sometimes in large clusters.

Although somewhat unclear as yet, the material data from Nea Nikomedeia give an idea of the complexity and variety of daily practices. They also indicate varying modes of production and probably of use. Perlès (2001: 202, 221, 233) suggests that the production of several Early Neolithic classes of stone artefacts such as the finely carved stone ornaments and vessels, the flint bladelets, and possibly also the polished stone blades was specialised. For example, the scarcity of cores and debitage categories and the high standardisation of flint blades at Nea Nikomedeia suggest that these were introduced into the site as finished products (Perlès 2001: 202, 208–9). Furthermore, the abundance and wide size-range of stone axes, including several particularly large examples and semifinished or apparently unused products may suggest a more symbolic status for these objects, further emphasised by the occurrence of both clay and stone replicas or models of axes, as well as by the unusual deposits in certain areas of the site.

Of further importance are the ceramic data (Youni 1991, 1996, 2003). With the material only from the main excavation grid (Fig. 4.1: Structural Groups 1 to 6) amounting to 140,000 sherds, the estimated number of vessels at 1,115 at minimum, and the estimated annual production for the main excavation area at the impressive rate of 25–90 pots,[3] there can be little doubt that pottery was a

vital component of the life of the site. This is further demonstrated by the range of vessel shapes, which extend from large hole-mouth and neck jars to open dish-like bowls, miniature vessels, and anthropomorphic pots, and thus can be put to a variety of functions. The scarcity of definite evidence for cooking pots suggests that other types of cooking might have been preferred – for example, boiling, indirectly indicated by the abundance of plain bowls and the kinds and variety of botanical remains (e.g., bitter vetch), and roasting or baking, which could have taken place in the parching hearths and the domed ovens found at the site (Youni 1996: 186–91).[4] Combined calculations of the storage capacity of the pots and of the total storage volume that would have been needed annually by the households of the main excavated area indicated that ceramic containers were sufficient for the annual seed storage, but not for that of the annual crop production, which would have to rely instead on other storage means (e.g., storage pits) (Youni 1996: 191–2). Although decorated pottery amounted only to 4% of the sample, it showed highly elegant vessels, estimated at 160 items in total. They were painted in Red-On-White Standard, Red-On-White 'Porcelain', and White-On-Red or were decorated with impressed or applied patterns (Youni 1996, 2003).

Technologically, the vessels were made from six fabrics, all of which could have been produced from local materials. They were built by pinching and coiling and were fired in open fires at temperatures not exceeding 800°C. Youni (1991: 179–2) places the mode of production of the whole of pottery at the unspecialised household level on the basis of the high degree of variability of the raw materials used, the absence of any consistent correlation between fabric types and vessel forms for plain pottery, and the relatively simple, rounded shapes. However, this argument tends to disregard the high degree of technological uniformity in the ceramic material, the correlation between fabric types and vessel size for vessels with applied decoration, and the consistency in design and techniques between decorated ceramic classes, as well as the high quality of the 'porcelain' vessels and the skill of working with such fine-textured clays – all noted by Youni (1991, 1996). Similarly, it is not clear why the rarity and homogeneous spatial distribution of the latter wares are evidence against their association with craft-specialised production (Youni 1991: 180). Vitelli's (1993a: 248) argument that Early Neolithic potters should be seen as specialists, if not for their noted abilities, then for the fact that 'they had to discover everything about ceramic processes', may be of relevance here. There are, in addition, indications of interaction of the Nea Nikomedeia potters with potters from other settlements in terms of exchange of ideas and technological know-how (Youni 1991: 182–5). It is possible that different modes of production, including a more specialised one, could have been coeval at Nea Nikomedeia (see Chapter 5 for fuller argumentation on production modes).

Patterns of Variation

The variation in the size of buildings in all phases (from 161 to 20 m²) (Youni 1996, Tables 3.1–3.3) and in their ground plan (square or rectangular; single-roomed, double-roomed, or tripartite) (Fig. 4.1) suggests functional differentiation between and within structures and/or variation in household composition. Some buildings were partitioned across the long axis, usually into areas of unequal size – a large main room and a small narrow one – and there is at least one example of a building divided into two large compartments of equal size (double-roomed or double house?), possibly not communicating with each other (Pyke 1996: 25) (Fig. 4.1: 6). In Group 9 two partition walls perpendicular to each other formed an L-shaped aisle around the west and east sides. Different parts of buildings and different areas of the village appear to have been used in different ways. Judging from Rodden's reports (1962, 1965), inside the buildings, ovens, clay-lined basins (probably parching hearths, given their ashy and charcoal fill and the carbonised seeds scattered around them), storage bins, and raised benches tend to be located in the narrow rooms or in corner areas. For example, in the narrow room of a house, a hearth and a storage bin were sunk into a raised plaster platform (Rodden 1965: 85), probably suggesting a cooking and storage area, whereas in a corner of the earliest building of Group 4, a possible oven was associated with five female figurines and other clay and stone artefacts.

Several houses were associated with porch areas or timber fences, and it seems that open space was vital in daily life and, to a certain degree, an extension of domestic space. In Structural Group 8 (Fig. 4.1), an irregular three-sided structure made of two sturdy adjoining walls and a row of large timber posts running between the ends of these walls may represent an outdoor fenced-off area, used for work, cooking, or storage, or even as an animal pen. Outside the second building of Group 3 was found a subsidiary timber enclosure (Rodden 1962: 270). Two collapsed ovens containing ash and rubble were located between Groups 3 and 4, and another one between the second buildings of Groups 1 and 2 (Pyke 1996: 51; Rodden 1962: 270–71). Unfortunately, entrance number and location, which would potentially clarify the use of outdoor spaces (i.e., shared or not) and their relationship to specific houses, is unclear. Pits are scattered randomly across the site, are of various shapes and sizes, and must have been used for a variety of purposes, from storage to burial and from clay-digging to rubbish disposal. Three large and relatively shallow intersecting pits just outside a building were originally used as a clay source for wall construction, later for storage, and yet later for rubbish disposal (Rodden 1962: 270). Rubbish pits were distinguished by their dark fill of animal bones, ash, charcoal, and sometimes pottery fragments, whereas storage pits were clay-lined and relatively clean.

A precise reconstruction of the horizontal or vertical distribution of features and finds and of their relationship with the structures (inside or outside) is not always possible to determine due to recording problems and varied recovery methods. Nevertheless, a keen attempt by Youni (1991) and especially by Pyke (1993) to identify intrasite patterns was able to reveal some interesting trends. It is hoped that these will be further elucidated by the publication of the second volume on Nea Nikomedeia. Overall, the even distribution of all ceramic categories and most classes of small finds points against the existence of a hierarchically organised social structure. Concentrations of common finds in some areas and of rare finds in others indicate variation in the functional and symbolic use of space respectively. For example, the relatively high density in all phases of ceramic material, especially of decorated ceramics, in external areas on the south part of the site and in the vicinity of Structural Groups 1–4 (Youni 1991: 141–2) matches with the distribution of stone axes (Pyke 1993: 156), possibly indicating work and/or food preparation or consumption areas of more communal use. In the second phase, the dense pottery associated with Structural Groups 1, 3, and 4 might represent refuse areas outside the buildings. Similarly, in the same phase, of the twenty-two stone axes plotted for the south part of the site, only a few could be located with certainty inside the buildings – three to four inside Group 1, two inside Group 2, and two inside Group 3 (Pyke 1993, Fig. 59). Clay 'sling-bullets' were far more frequent on the east part of the site, again in external areas. A cache of sixty-nine sling-bullets of various sizes in the vicinity of Structural Group 6, and a further cache near Group 7 (Pyke 1993: 123, 160), possibly reflect storage or production activity rather than refuse. Clay and stone figurines are common across the site but show a clustering in Group 4 and in the area between Groups 7 and 8. Anthropomorphic clay vessels, on the other hand, proved indeed to be clearly concentrated in the earliest building of Group 4, as did clay balls and unidentified 'pottery objects', whereas clay roundels and clay pinched forms were found nowhere else (Pyke 1993: 162–71, figs. 65–8).

Communal Social and Ritual Practices?

The clustering of finds in the two first superimposed structures of Structural Group 4 coincides with an unusually large building size (Figs. 4.1 and 4.2). The earliest structure was square and single-roomed and measured 11.80 × 13.60 m, or over 160 m², clearly standing out from the average dimensions (8.40 × 6.65 m) of the rest of the buildings. The possible oven in a corner of this building, associated with five female figurines, and the concentration of other common and rare artefacts have already been mentioned. The material also includes two large greenstone axes, two caches of hundreds of flint blades, one stone and two clay axe 'models' (Pyke 1993: 94, 136), two clay trays, several

hundred clay roundels and 'pinched' forms of unknown use, and seventeen figurine fragments in total (Pyke 1993: 162). This structure was heavily burnt and was replaced roughly on the same spot by another one. This later building maintained an unusually large size, measuring at least 10.90 × 9.10 m, but was now internally divided by two parallel rows of heavy timber posts into three sections of unequal size – a large central room and two lateral aisles.[5] Interestingly, in the third phase the building appears to have been almost wholly horizontally displaced towards the north. Its shape and size are unknown, as most of it lies in an unexcavated area. The corner of yet another structure found on top of the earliest two buildings might suggest a fourth building phase and a return to mostly vertical house replacement.

Rodden and Rodden (1964b) interpreted Group 4 as a centrally located shrine around which the domestic houses were grouped. However, with only 8% of the site exposed, the central location of building(s) 4 cannot be claimed with certainty. A purely ritual interpretation of the clustering of finds is also problematic, as it would rely heavily on the typology of the building and on an acceptance of the anthropomorphic vessels, figurines, and enigmatic clay objects as unambiguously ritual or elite items, respectively. Incidentally, no benches, altars, or 'offering tables', traditionally associated with 'cultic' places, were found there. In addition, the greenstone axes, described by Rodden as 'outsized', were shown by Pyke (1993: 92, 165) to be within the size range of the axes represented elsewhere at the site, whereas a general caching of material is not exceptional to this building either (for example, note the caches of 'sling-bullets' mentioned above). Finally, the thinness of the deposits there impedes a clear phasing of the contents of the two successive floors, which were, moreover, collectively retrieved at the time of excavation (Pyke 1996: 22). It is possible that the contents of building(s) 4 are the 'packed' effect of material deriving from two different floors and the partial superstructure collapse inside the building.

Still, the unusual size and layout, the nature of the finds, and the absence of evidence for a clear association of this building with a residential space remain of significance. They suggest a special function, possibly of a communal nature. Worth mentioning is Rodden's (cited in Pyke 1993: 174–5) reconsideration of his original interpretation of this structure and his suggestion that the clay roundels, balls, and pinched forms might indicate some recreational or socialising function (e.g., as gaming counters) and that the building might have served as a space for communal gathering. Other interpretations include use of the building, partly at least, as a production area or for storage (e.g., Marangou 2000: 235; Pyke 1993: 171, 175); as the residence of a household that was especially successful in long-distance exchange – for example, of flint blades (Halstead 1995: 13, note 19); or for some unknown but collective function (Perlès 2001: 271–2).

What might be of greater significance than the specific function of this unusual building is its very presence. Either as a 'shrine' or as a central gathering space, a place for socialising, or even a common place for storing or producing goods, the need for such a building disputes both the idea of the simplicity of early Neolithic societies and the idea of loosely knit households. It implies, instead, the existence of a community-wide social structure or an ideological focus on the community, given also the nature of the finds. For example, anthropomorphic imagery appears to be particularly intense there, given the concentration of figurines and of face vessels. It may point to an emphasis on community identity, definition, and integration into a dynamic whole and/or it may have played a part in collective rituals through which village and household membership were established, maintained, and redefined (cf. Talalay 1993: 38, 46 for southern Greece and Bailey 2000: 101–3 and 2005: 118, 166 for southeast Europe). A similar interpretation might apply to the concentration and kind of stone implements. Eight stone axes in total and all of the clay and stone models of axes found at the site can be associated with Structural Group 4. The flint blades there amount to more than four hundred pieces, representing almost half of the entire chipped stone assemblage from the site. They are, in addition, unused, highly standardised, and unrelated to any corresponding cores or flakes, thus pointing away from a production area. All these items might have been perceived as social and symbolic valuables, important for the viability and reproduction of this early farming community, and perhaps associated with settlement permanence, social stability, and community identification. If this interpretation is correct, then the accumulation of specific artefacts or the possible storage activity would have been collective and social, rather than individual and strictly economic.

Another feature of apparently community-wide social and symbolic significance is the approximately twenty-one separate burials found within the limits of the Early Neolithic settlement levels (Rodden 1962; Rodden and Rodden 1964b) (Fig. 4.3). They are all primary, include individuals of all age and sex categories, and took place in shallow pits previously used for storage or refuse, or dug specially for the purpose. The deceased were found in tightly flexed position and lay on their sides or on their backs. The carelessly prepared graves and the rarity of noticeable grave goods suggest the absence of ritual elaboration or focus (Rodden 1962: 286; Rodden and Rodden 1964b: 607).

Although it is difficult to discern definite patterns of age, sex, or distribution of the burial pits inside the settlement or of the deceased inside the pits (e.g., individual or group burials) until the burials have been fully published, the data that are currently available do imply that the treatment of the deceased might not have been as random as it might at first appear. Regardless of the meaning of the flexed position (e.g., symbolic or simply a practical necessity
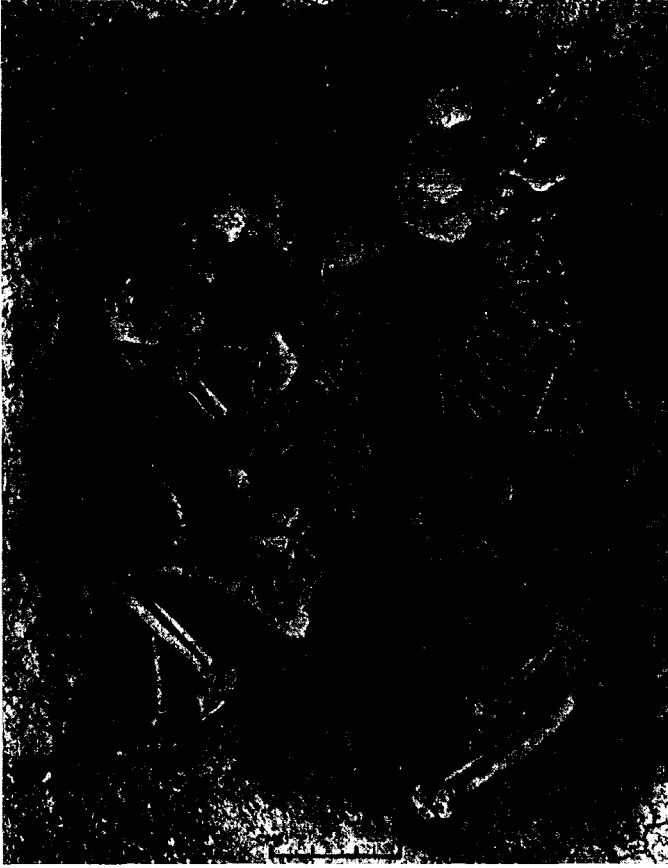
4.3. Multiple burial of children in a pit at Nea Nikomedeia. (Reproduced with the permission of R.J. & J.M. Rodden and the British School at Athens.)

owing to the generally small size of the pits), this positioning of the bodies appears to be consistent. There also seems to be a repeated pattern in the orientation of bodies north-south, with the heads turned to the south (Rodden 1962: 286). Although all the burials were found closely within the settlement, none was located inside the domestic houses or in particular buildings, not even inside the 'shrine'. If these patterns are confirmed by the publication of the data, they could support the view that burials might indeed have been a context in which interhousehold, community-wide practices, perceptions, and connections were expressed. They also illustrate an association of bodies with the village community as a whole rather than with individual people or households or with particular ritual or cultic spaces. Perlès (2001: 281), in her discussion of Greek Early Neolithic burial practices, has pointed out that the most consistent relation is not between individuals, live or dead, but between a collectivity of the deceased and a collectivity of the living. If this relation is indeed the rule, then Nea Nikomedeia provides its strongest expression.

There is also the question of who was selected to remain after death within the world of the living and why, because the relatively small number of burials apparently did not include the entire population of the community. Of potential interest are two triple burials, one of a female holding two children, and the other of three children (Fig. 4.3). They might present a clue for the importance of children and women, and perhaps even for the composition of the Nea Nikomedeia household, serving to emphasise fundamental kin bonds (e.g., mother-child).[6] Child burials generally seem to predominate over adult ones and/or to have been treated differently. Animal bones associated with a child burial possibly represent some kind of offering. In a single burial of an adult male a pebble was placed between the teeth of the deceased. The occasional inhumation of body parts or the human 'bone scatters' found across the site (Rodden 1962) further suggests that whatever the criteria for human inhumation were, they did not apply equally to all people. I return to the discussion of burial practices in Chapter 6.

Continuity and Change

One expression of settlement permanence and continuity at Nea Nikomedeia is the three – rather than two, as previously thought – successive building phases. Assuming that all buildings were contemporaneous at any one phase and that the settlement density of the exposed part is representative of the whole site, estimates of the community size suggest a population of 500–700 individuals and a number of buildings between 50 and 100 in each of the first two phases. Simultaneous occupation of all buildings, however, is not certain, and some buildings seem to have lived over only one to two phases, whereas others exceeded three (Pyke 1996: 30, 47).

Community continuity and social stability were also ensured through use of the same construction materials and techniques and styles, types, and techniques of material culture throughout the Early Neolithic occupation. Analysis of the pottery (Youni 1996) and small finds (Pyke 1993) revealed no break or change in their use and sequence. In conjunction with the absence of an abandonment layer between the building phases, they indicate swift succession and a relatively short span of occupation. The depth of the preserved deposits varied from 0.20 to 0.65 m and the duration of the settlement has been estimated to span from 50 to 150 years (Pyke 1996: 47–8; Youni 1996: 184).

The general layout of the settlement indicates spatial awareness and a degree of planning. Despite the observed variation in house size and internal organisation, house shape rarely deviates from the original rectilinear plan, whereas house orientation was aligned E-W in each phase. The buildings are located close to one another but not so close as to attach to one another or to prevent

the use of open space and the circulation of people and goods around the site, even though houses were replaced partly through horizontal displacement. A series of ditches, possibly perimetric, some parallel and one 'deep' and cross-cutting the others, have been identified at the site but it is unclear whether any of them could be securely assigned to the Early Neolithic or whether they actually surrounded the site, as Rodden (1965) suggested. Most of them seem to cut through the Early Neolithic deposits and to be associated with mate-rial belonging to the Late Neolithic (see Pyke 1996: 6, 29, 52). A variety of functions have been proposed, from drainage to protection against the wild, whereas symbolic protection, demarcation, or delimitation of the site or of part of it cannot be excluded either.

House positioning and replacement through the combination of partial superimposition and partial horizontal displacement indicate continuity in house site and consistency in household social reproductive strategies. Inciden-tally, the practice of physical and symbolic incorporation of the older structure into the new one (cf. Tringham 2000 regarding house continuity patterns in southeast Europe) might partly explain why at Nea Nikomedeia 'the structures overlap in such a way that it is difficult to define the walls of each' (Pyke 1993: 74) and why it has not always been possible to establish a secure association between foundation trenches and structural features, on the one hand, and specific building phases of each house, on the other.

Interesting changes occurred during the last phase. The average house area decreased notably, from 67 m² in the earlier phases to 44 m² now, and coincided with a decrease by 25% in the size of the settlement area, and possibly with a shorter occupation of the buildings. The population is estimated now at 300 to 375 individuals (Pyke 1996). Unfortunately, it is not possible to detect possible changes in the use of the buildings during this phase due to poor preservation of the upper layers and the Late Neolithic intrusions in some areas. The large degree of horizontal displacement of building 4 has already been noted, but it is not certain whether it represents a generalised phenomenon. Extensive fire traces and a considerable amount of burnt structural material in several areas indicate heavy fire destruction, but again it is not clear whether this was widespread or limited to certain buildings. The paucity of evidence for occupation during the Middle Neolithic indicates that the site was abandoned for a long time (Pyke 1996: 48). It was reoccupied in the Late Neolithic, as attested by the aforementioned ditches and the pottery associated with them, and by surface finds. Some pits cut through the foundations of structures and may have also been associated with Late Neolithic activity (Pyke 1996: 49). The configuration of the site at this period is unknown, as no definite structures were found and the upper deposits had been disturbed by modern ploughing (Rodden 1962, 1996: 4, 6).

Conclusions

Many of the data from the site are yet to be published, but the richness of the
fragments that are currently available is already sufficient to show that Early
Neolithic villages were a great deal more than rural groups engaged mainly in
ongoing subsistence practices. Nor is it plausible to regard Nea Nikomedeia
as a deficient predecessor of the later societies, or as belonging to the lower
scale of a linear ordering of social systems. In fact, this early site does not fail to
show elements of spatial and social organisation observed in later sites – such as
perimetric boundaries, consistent house orientation, and continuity in house
site. The clustering (or 'groups') of buildings partly overlying each other is
also a reminder, to some extent, of the replacement practices in other Greek
Neolithic open sites – for example, of the 'insulae' of Sesklo B (see below).
Furthermore, the hints of functional differentiation of space, the possibility of
craft specialisation in the production of certain material classes, the variation of
individual house/household arrangements, the abundance of decorated pottery
in external areas, and the indications of wider interaction of potters are all
elements found in later Neolithic societies. The presence of the (central?)
tripartite building alone is sufficient evidence against the idea of loosely knit
households, not to say for a more complex social organisation.

MIDDLE NEOLITHIC SESKLO (5800–5200 BC)

Sesklo is a most interesting site. It constitutes with Dimini the foundation of
Thessalian prehistory – being the eponymous site of the Middle Neolithic – and
one of the settlements which provide information on an extensive spatial scale.
Its total lifetime spans 5,000 years, covering the entire Neolithic, although with
some interruptions. Apart from itself being remarkably long-lived, Sesklo is also
the Greek Neolithic site which has enjoyed the longest lasting investigation:
from Tsountas' excavation in 1901–1903 to Theocharis' extensive research
between 1956 and 1977 and to minor research, after Theocharis' premature
death in 1977, up until the present time (Adrimi-Sismani 2002: 64–77; Kotsakis
1981). The excavated area amounts to 4,500 m², and the overall settlement
area is estimated at 12 ha. In terms of architecture and stratigraphic sequence
Sesklo is one of the most fully documented Neolithic settlements in Greece. In
addition, during the Middle Neolithic it shows a complex spatial configuration,
unique at the time of excavation, comprising a tell 8.5 m high (Fig. 3.2)
and a more extended settlement spread at the slopes of the surrounding hills
(Fig. 4.4).

    However, the final publication of Theocharis' research has not been accom-
plished as yet, and many of the numerous reports and studies after Theocharis'
death are preliminary or partly published.[7] On the other hand, the twenty-two
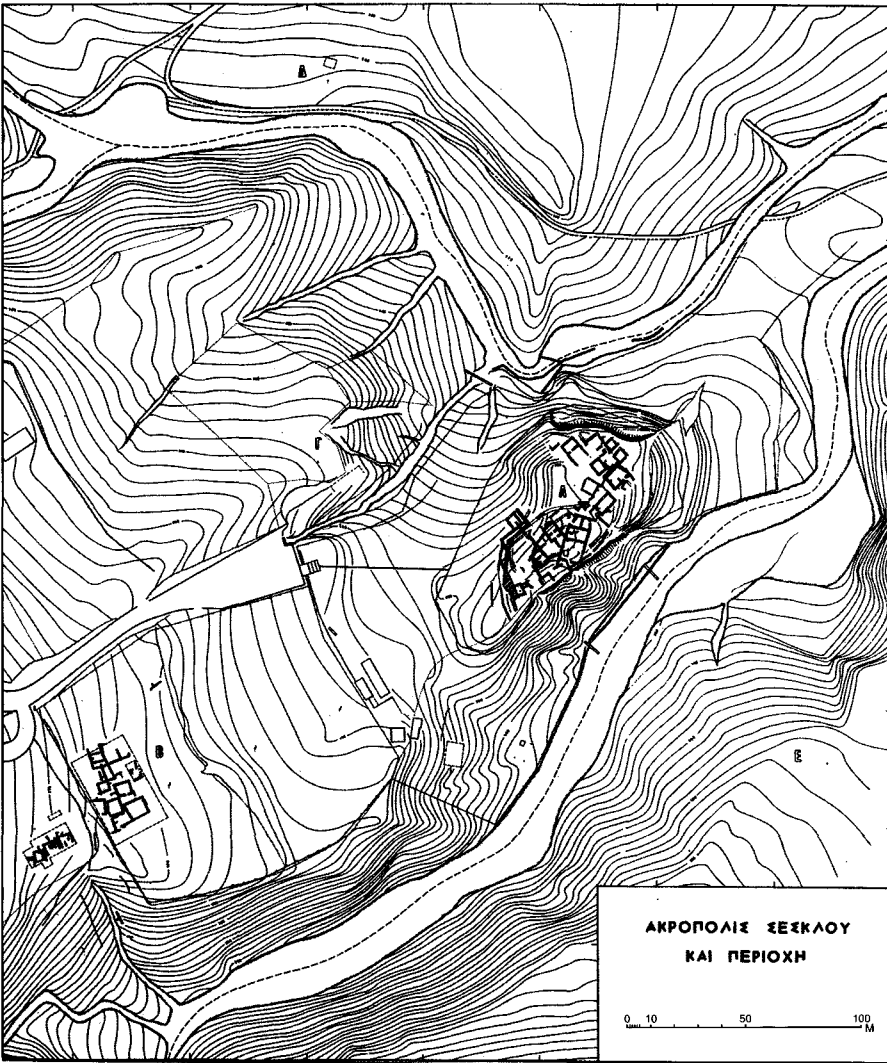
4.4. Plan and general topography of Sesklo. (After Theocharis 1973.)

complete and twelve partial structures uncovered at Middle Neolithic Sesklo compose one of the largest architectural assemblages of the Greek Neolithic and offer a good basis for understanding the processes of structuring and restructuring of space and household practice over time. In this work I focus on the data from the Middle Neolithic, both the best-known and the peak phase of Sesklo. As the main interest here is in households themselves, I have chosen not to employ as my starting point the wider differences identified by Theocharis and Kotsakis at the settlement level (i.e., between the tell and non-tell sectors of the site – see the next section), but to focus entirely on the house level. The aim is first to look for patterns at the lowest possible spatial scale and then to consider associations at larger scales.
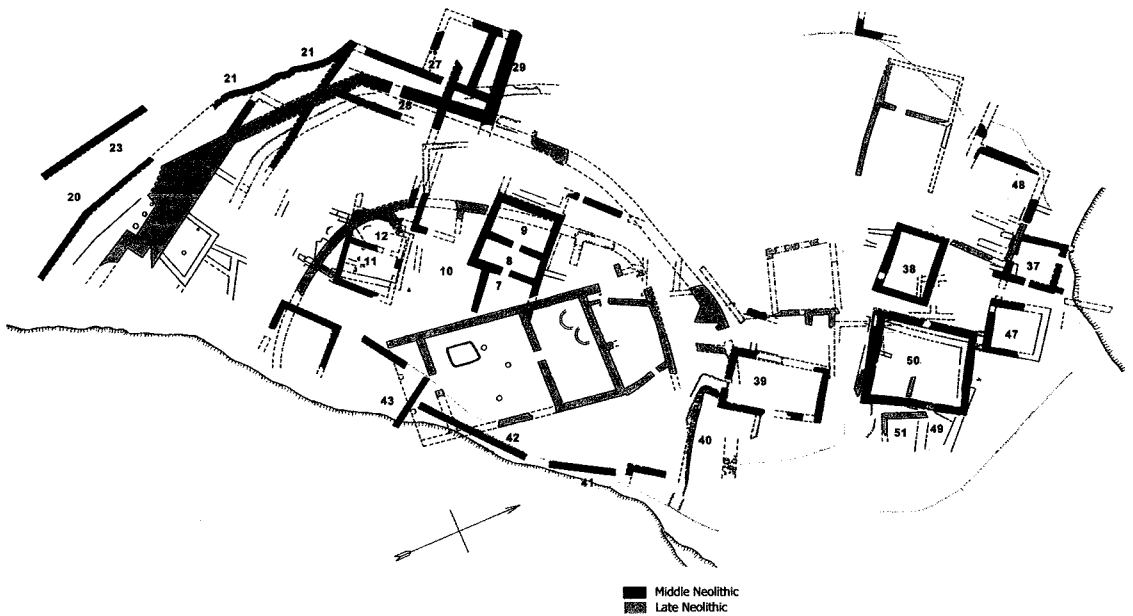
4.5. Plan of the tell of Sesklo showing the layout of buildings, squares, and lanes, after Tsountas (1908), with additions by Theocharis (1973). (Plan redrawn from Theocharis 1973.)

History of the Site and Interpretations

Sesklo is located 8 km southwest of the present coast of the Volos Bay and just 5 km southwest of the site of Dimini (Fig. 3.1). It is flanked by two deeply cut rivulets, which had eroded a large part of the site already by Tsountas' time, and is surrounded by low and high hills, lowland areas, and the small coastal plain of Volos (Fig. 3.2).

The evidence for a preceramic phase, with pit-dwellings or wattle-and-daub huts, is rather scant and ambiguous (see Perlès 2001: 69–70, 73, 76–7), but the Early Neolithic is well attested both stratigraphically and architecturally. The houses were generally small and rectangular, constructed with a pisé and timber technique, or on a stone foundation with mud brick superstructure (Wijnen 1982, 1992). This period ended with fire destruction, though perhaps less extensive than previously thought (Wijnen 1982: 11). The Middle Neolithic settlement comprised the tell and the area around, mostly to the west, named Sesklo A and Sesklo B, respectively (Figs. 4.5–4.7). It shows four main building phases or major architectural episodes, corresponding to the subphases of the Middle Neolithic (I, II, IIIA, and IIIB). The end of the Middle Neolithic settlement was marked by extensive fire destruction observed both at Sesklo A and at Sesklo B, and was followed by a long period of abandonment. The Late Neolithic settlement was established some 500 years later and apparently only at the tell (Theocharis 1973). Very little is known about this
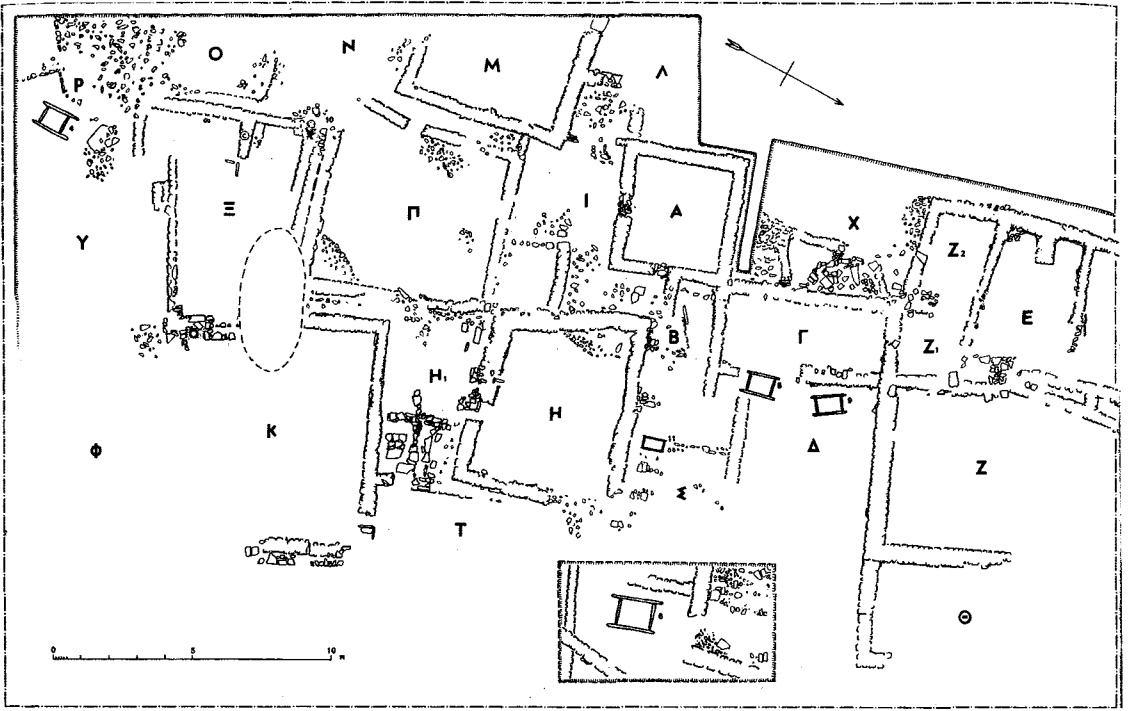
4.6. Plan of Sesklo B showing the buildings, pebbled yards, and external stone-built structures in the main excavated area. (After Theocharis 1973.)

4.7. View of Sesklo B. Foreground: buildings E and Z. Background: open area X and buildings Γ, Α, Μ, Π, and Η. Two Bronze Age cist graves visible in centre left, immediately outside building Γ. From the northeast.

settlement, partly because of bad preservation and Tsountas' excavation and partly because Theocharis' research focused on the impressive discoveries of the Middle Neolithic. Knowledge of the Final and post-Neolithic Sesklo is even more limited, owing to the paucity of evidence and the fact that the higher layers had already been removed by Tsountas. It is worth noting, however, that in the Middle Bronze Age the old, Neolithic settlement was transformed into a burial site, with cist graves scattered about both its sectors (Fig. 4.7), a practice also observed at Dimini (Chapter 5).

The complex and extensive spatial arrangements of Middle Neolithic Sesklo, which had no antecedents in the Greek Neolithic at the time, led Theocharis (1973) to suggest a proto-urban settlement organisation of the 'acropolis' and 'polis' type and a population at about three thousand. The term 'acropolis' seems to have derived from Tsountas' (1908) views of Sesklo and Dimini (see Chapter 5), but in Theocharis' case the 'acropolis-polis' designation was conventional and did not assume features of sociopolitical organisation of later periods (Theocharis 1973: 68, 77). Regarding population size, Theocharis' suggestion refers to the maximum area that produced Middle Neolithic finds, including the more distant Sesklo Δ and E, rather than to decisive evidence for continuous contemporaneous habitation (Theocharis 1972, 1976). Other scholars have argued that Sesklo was rather a typical Middle Neolithic site with a few hundred inhabitants (Halstead 1984; Kotsakis 1996a). Differences relating to stratigraphy, settlement pattern, and painted pottery distribution – but certainly not to degrees of sedentism – have been posited by Kotsakis (1994, 1999) to suggest a 'dual habitation pattern'. Briefly, Sesklo A shows a more or less uniform stratigraphic succession, with all the phases of the Neolithic represented, whereas at Sesklo B deposits are thinner and sometimes discontinuous, with areas showing no cultural deposits at all. It seems possible that parts of the latter sector remained temporarily or permanently uninhabited, although erosion and modern land use must also have played a role. Furthermore, the buildings at Sesklo A were free-standing and vertically superimposed (Figs. 3.2, 4.5), forming over the centuries a prominent tell, whereas at Sesklo B they were often clustered in complexes and were less long-lived, producing an extensive settlement (Figs. 4.6 and 4.7). A series of retaining – rather than defensive – walls at the west part of the tell seems to have symbolically stressed the spatial distinction between the two sectors. Differences seem to apply also to the distribution of painted pottery: the diagnostic painted ware shows higher overall frequencies at Sesklo A (12–22.5% in five assemblages) than in Sesklo B (1–8% in nine assemblages); and of the total amount of painted pottery of Sesklo A 72.5% was made of a technologically more advantageous calcareous clay, whereas 75% of the painted pottery of Sesklo B was made of a reddish non-calcareous clay, even though both clay sources were local and plentiful (Kotsakis 1983, 1986; Maniatis et al. 1988). Overall, according to Kotsakis (1994, 1999),

the pattern outlined above suggests social differences with economic content, as well as an ideological asymmetry bound up with longevity and continuity, although not necessarily a formally stratified society with an 'elite' controlling production.

Architecture and Social Life

A most extraordinary aspect of the Sesklo architecture overall is the emphasis on the house, or better, it is the houses, together with their external spaces, which constitute the most remarkable architectural evidence. Although the varying degrees of context preservation and/or excavation do not permit full consideration of all the buildings, none failed to present remarkable features. The construction, flooring, and roofing techniques, the plastering and stone lining of the walls, and the variety and quality of house furniture, as well as the constant modifications of house interiors over time, all indicate that the aesthetic and technical quality of domestic architecture was a primary concern.

The houses were built on stone foundations with mud brick superstructures and had pitched or gabled roofs made of a thick layer of clay on a timber frame (Figs. 4.8 and 4.9). Stone foundations are often lined with upright slabs both inside and out, and interior thresholds are sometimes lined with flat slabs. The upper, mud brick walls were repetitively plastered and replastered and perhaps painted. For example, the walls of room 12 of House 11–12, including the buttresses, preserved several layers of red plaster up to 1.30 m high (Theocharis 1968: 29–30) (Fig. 4.9). Houses contain clay or stone hearths, oval or quadrangular in form; domed ovens; large flat slabs, sometimes clay-plastered, with pots on them or surrounded by stone and bone artefacts; smaller flat slabs which might belong to fallen shelves; querns; grinding stones and tools in semicircular arrangements; and stone benches and pillars. One characteristic built feature is the clay and stone buttresses projecting respectively from the inside or the outside of the house walls. Interior buttresses appear to have been used to define functionally discrete areas and/or to support roofs and, perhaps, upper storeys or mezzanines (Fig. 4.8). Exterior buttresses are as a rule associated with house entrances and courtyards or lanes and seem to demarcate external spaces and to protect the entrances, and thus the interiors of houses, both physically and symbolically (Fig. 4.6). Equally typical are the raised stone platforms. They seem to indicate sleeping areas, given their scarcity of contents and relatively large size – they usually take up one-third of the floor space.

Material elaboration, as well as house individuality, is further expressed through interior planning. Divisions are usually made through construction of different types of floor for different sections of the house and through distinct arrangements of features or artefacts. Consequently, there is a wide variety
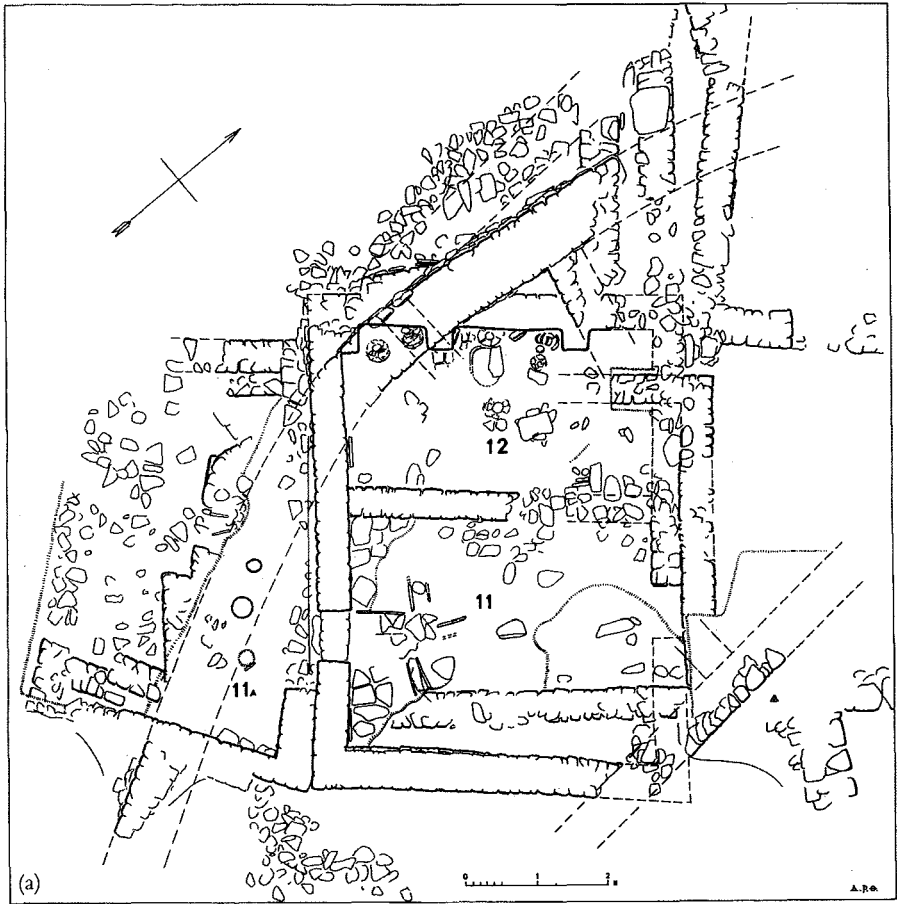
4.8. Plan and reconstruction of House 11–12 at Sesklo showing the changes in layout and internal organisation over the two building phases. (a) Plan of house in both phases, sheltered yard 11A of the first phase with post-holes and clay floor, and pebbled yard on the north west. (b) Reconstruction of second phase of the house showing introduction of partition wall, blocking of earlier entrance in room 11, possible loft in room 12, and sectional organisation of ground floors of both rooms. (After Theocharis 1973.)

not only of floors types *per se*, but of floor type combinations across space and over time, ranging from packed clay to pebbling and flat-stone paving, and from possible reed matting to large stone pole frameworks covered with clay-plastered slabs (Table 4.1). Entrance location is among the most variable elements. It may occur on the west, east, or south sides of houses, and at least one occurred on the north. In addition, some houses have only one entrance, but others up to three. Finally, house size varies from 50 to 10 m², although it tends to fall within two groups, houses larger than 30 m² and houses around 20 m² (Elia 1982: 254; Kotsakis forthcoming). House shape is typically square and single-roomed, but slightly elongated houses and two-roomed houses also exist. In general all living surfaces, internal or external, are
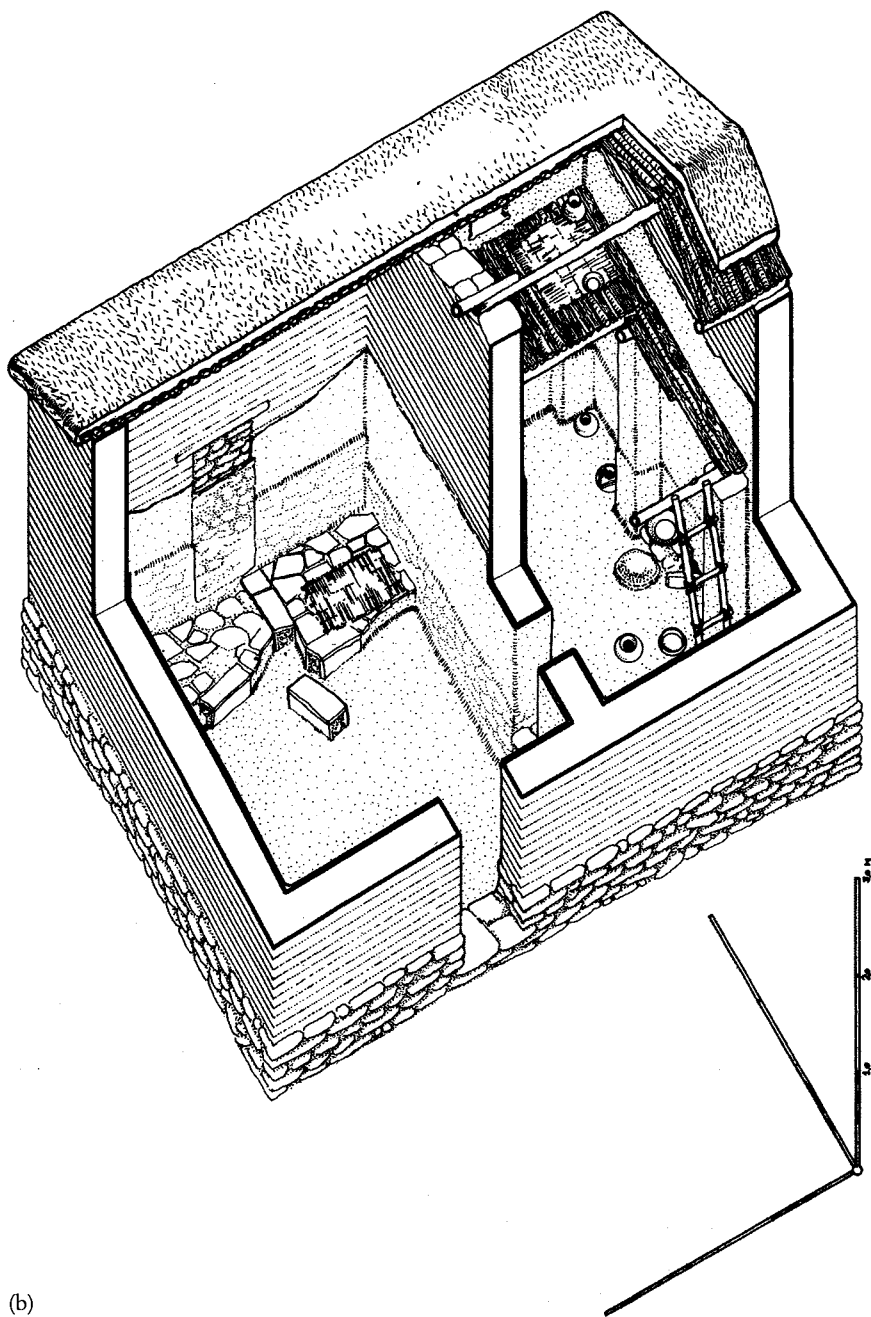
(b)

4.8. (*Continued*)

remarkably clean and tidy. In the phases prior to the destruction and aban-
donment of the Middle Neolithic settlement the scarcity of artefacts and their
non-*in situ* nature suggests continuous succession into the following phase
(Kotsakis 1981: 88). But even on the last house floors, sealed by burning and/or

TABLE 4.1. *Orientation and order? Floor types and entrance locations at Sesklo*

Building	Building phase	Floor type/sectioning	Entrance location
7–8–9	3	?	Southwest
11–12	1	Clay	South
	2	Clay; flat stone paved or raised stone platform in southern section of room 11	East
37	3	Clay?	Northeast + southeast + southwest
38	?	?	West
39	1	Flat stone paved	?
	2	Eastern half: clay; western half: flat stone paved; west corner: pebbled or stone platform	Southwest + (east?)
47	3	Clay	(west?)
50	1	Clay	?
	2	Clay	Southeast
	3	Clay	Southeast
	4	Flat stone paved	North
A	1	Middle: clay; rest: pebbled	East + south (+ north?)
	2	Eastern two thirds: clay; western third: pebbled or raised stone platform	East
	3	Pebbled	?
	4	Pebbled	East
Γ	2	Northern third: pebbled; western third: clay; rest: flat stone paved	?
	3	Northern third: beaten earth; southern two-thirds: flat stone paved	?
	4	Northern third: pebbled; southern two-thirds: flat stone paved	?
E	1	Clay	?
Z2	1	Pebbled	?
1–2–3	1	Northern third: flat stone paved; western third: raised stone platform; rest: pebbled	East
4–5	1	Clay	East (+ west?)
6–7	1	Western third: pebbled + raised stone platform; rest: unknown	(east?)
14	1	Southeast corner: stone platform; rest: clay	Southeast + south

superstructure collapse, the relative absence of refuse of any sort, especially of food remains, is conspicuous. It may indicate a culturally defined or socially regulated concern with cleanliness or, perhaps, the removal of foodstuffs prior to the destruction.

The Sesklo architecture also manifests the vital importance of open, public space in social life, as Theocharis (1973, 1980[1972]) rightly pointed out. Of the 4,475 m² of excavated area, only 1,056 m² or one-fourth belong to roofed space (Kotsakis forthcoming). None of the houses failed to be associated with at least one type of open space, from the more private yards, occurring immediately outside the entrance of houses and sometimes being defined by walls or roofs (Fig. 4.8), to the more public lanes, passageways, and 'squares' or 'plazas' between clusters of houses (Figs. 4.5–4.6). Public, open spaces, with their stone-paved or pebbled floors, gates, and built features, are no less well-constructed and planned than the houses. They all show analogous structural features with each other as well as with the houses (e.g., external buttresses) and tend to duplicate domestic space and activities. For example, indications of activities in the 37–47–50–38 square (Fig. 4.5) include complete pots, hearths, ash deposits, clay floors, and post-holes (Theocharis 1980[1972]). In the sheltered yard or portico of House 11–12 (11A) (Fig. 4.8), part of a large vessel and charred animal bones covered by a few stones found inside a post-hole may suggest a foundation rite or a symbolic emphasis on the importance of open space.

In short, the structural details and use of open space and the area devoted to it indicate that this formed an organic part of household space, of community space, and of social life. It also shows that 'domestic' and 'public' were not opposed, as is often assumed, but closely intertwined. The households constituted the focus of social life and of both variability and order, and architecture was a powerful mechanism for the embodiment and transmission of social rules and regulations. All this is further strengthened below.

Architecture and Symbolic Representation

The regular orientation of the Sesklo houses is among the clearest evidence that ritual or symbolic considerations are bound up with their construction: they are consistently laid out with their corners facing the cardinal points. But the most remarkable evidence for meaningful spatial arrangements comes from the living surfaces. Beyond an initial, and very real, impression of house individuality, there are consistent similarities, and an 'ordered' variability is apparent at this level. Judging from the well-preserved examples, I have suggested that the diversity in structural elements discussed above is contrasted with a pattern of symmetry and geometric order in the location of these elements at any one time (Souvatzi 2000).

House interior is consistently organised in two or four sections, most often referencing a central feature in one or all the building phases (ten out of the twelve well-preserved houses). Of the ten central features six were hearths, two were semicircular arrangements of artefacts, and another two were openings

TABLE 4.2. *Orientation and order: Location of structural features inside the buildings at Sesklo*

Building	Centre	North	South	East	West
11–12	Partition wall with opening in the middle	Clay buttress	Stone platform		Clay buttress
Room 11	Hearth		Stone platform		Stone platform
Room 12	—	Clay buttress	Upright stone slab		Clay buttress
37	Hearth				
39	Hearth	—	Stone slabs	Domed oven	Stone platform
50*	—	Clay buttress	Clay buttress	—	—
A*	Hearth	—	—	—	Stone platform
Γ	Hearth	—	—	—	Stone platform?
E	Hearth		Clay buttress		Clay buttress
Z2	Flat stone slabs and grinding stones	—	—	—	Hearth
1–2–3	—	—	Stone pillar	Buttress	Stone platform
4–5	Partition wall with opening in the middle	Stone pillar	Stone pillar	—	—
6–7	—				Stone platform
14	—		Stone platform	Stone slabs and grinding stones	Stone construction

Note: Dash indicates absence of feature; blank indicates absence of information or poor preservation.
*House 50 and House A are represented here by an earlier building phase than the rest of the houses (last phase), due to preservation and recording problems with their last phases.

in partition walls (Table 4.2). In addition, the orientation of square hearths is always related to the orientation of the house. Furthermore, most other characteristic elements such as the stone benches or pillars, platforms and buttresses, and storage and work-related facilities tend to occur in corner areas, emphasising house orientation and contributing to interior symmetry. For example, five out of the six to seven raised stone platforms, which represent empty parts of floors most likely used for sleeping, are located in the western sections (Table 4.2). The centre is not only a spatial referent but usually also the focus of production, consumption, and socialising, and whatever the symbolic or ideological considerations bound up with it, they were also bound up with the activities carried out around it. Much of the material culture found *in situ* on the last house-floors – from various pots to tools, and from figurines to 'sling-bullets' – was clustered around the central features (except in the case of the two openings) (Table 4.3). When not around the centre, storage vessels and concentrations of tools (or work areas) were found in recesses or alongside the walls, adding to the overall impression of highly structured space.

TABLE 4.3. *Associations of features and finds inside the buildings at Sesklo*

Building	Features	Associated finds
11–12		
Room 11	Hearth	Quern
	Platform or two separate stone-built sections	Quern; complete monochrome vessels; pedestalled bowls; 1 cup
Room 12	3 buttresses – northern recess	1 storage jar; 1 deep bowl; 2 feet of fruitstands, 1 painted globular jar
	3 buttresses – middle recess	Domed oven (?); complete clay dish on top of flat slab; large storage vessel; long straight-sided cup
	3 buttresses – western recess	3 complete storage jars, one of which had its mouth covered by a flat stone
39	Hearth	Large storage vessel
	Platform	—
	Domed oven	Quern/millstone; flat slab probably used as a work surface
	Flat clay-coated stone slab (shelf?)	1 small bowl; 2 globular jars, one monochrome and one painted; another flat slab with large storage vessel on it
50	—	High concentration of monochrome pottery
Γ	Stone hearth	On it: 1 small jar and 1 bowl; around it: 5 storage jars, 5 bowls, large parts of other vessels, 3 spindle-whorls, 18 polished and chipped stone tools, 2 querns and 6 grinding stones
E	Hearth	Long straight-sided cup
	2 buttresses – northern recess	?
	2 buttresses – southern recess	?
Z2	Hearth?	—
	Flat stone slabs next to each other (work surface?)	Monochrome vessels, 5 spindle-whorls, 1 spool, 1 clay 'sling-bullet', 15 polished and chipped stone tools, 3 grinding stones
1–2–3	Stone platform	Monochrome storage pottery
	Recess/niche with stone pillar or bench	Flat slab with quern and grinding stone on it
4–5	Stone pillar or bench	?
	Stone pillar or bench	?
6–7	Stone platform	—
14	Flat stone slabs next to each other (work surface?)	5 storage jars, 3 bowls, large parts of other vessels, 1 clay ladle, 1 clay table, figurines, spindle-whorls, polished and chipped stone tools, clay 'sling-bullets'
	Semicircular stone construction	Inside: large storage vessel
	Stone platform	—

Note: Reconstructed on the basis of combined information from Tsountas (1908), Theocharis (1968, 1971, 1972, 1976) and Kotsakis (1981, 1983, forthcoming). The data concern mostly the last phase/floor of the houses, and only the contexts for which such associations are possible.

4.9. Room 12 of House 11–12 at Sesklo, as it is preserved today, showing clay buttress and middle and western recesses, which were found associated with complete storage and serving vessels; house wall lined with upright stone slabs; and internal partition wall. Buttress, recesses, and walls coated with multiple layers of red plaster. From the east.

For example, House 11–12 at Sesklo A was subdivided into two rooms by a partition wall with an opening in the middle (Fig. 4.8). Room 11 seems to have been further subdivided into three different areas, with the central area probably used for food preparation and consumption (Theocharis 1968, 1969; Tsountas 1908: 86) and the western one for sleeping. In room 12 three short clay buttresses of identical size were aligned symmetrically along the northwest wall, creating three discrete recesses of equal size, where was deposited most of the *in situ* material in this room (Fig. 4.9, Table 4.3). In House Γ at Sesklo B, the northern part of the floor was pebbled and probably used for sleeping, whereas the southern and larger part was slate-paved and probably used as a work area, given the concentration of material there (Kotsakis 1981) (Fig. 4.10 and Tables 4.1 and 4.3). In the centre was found a square stone construction with fire traces, probably a cooking (parching?) hearth. On top of this were placed a cooking jar and a bowl, and around it *in situ* was clustered much of the material culture recovered from this floor, including a large number of complete vessels, grinding stones, and tools. Other houses show a remarkably accurate cruciform or diagonal or quadrilateral arrangement of features in the interior, with the different types of floor marking out the north–south axis, and the
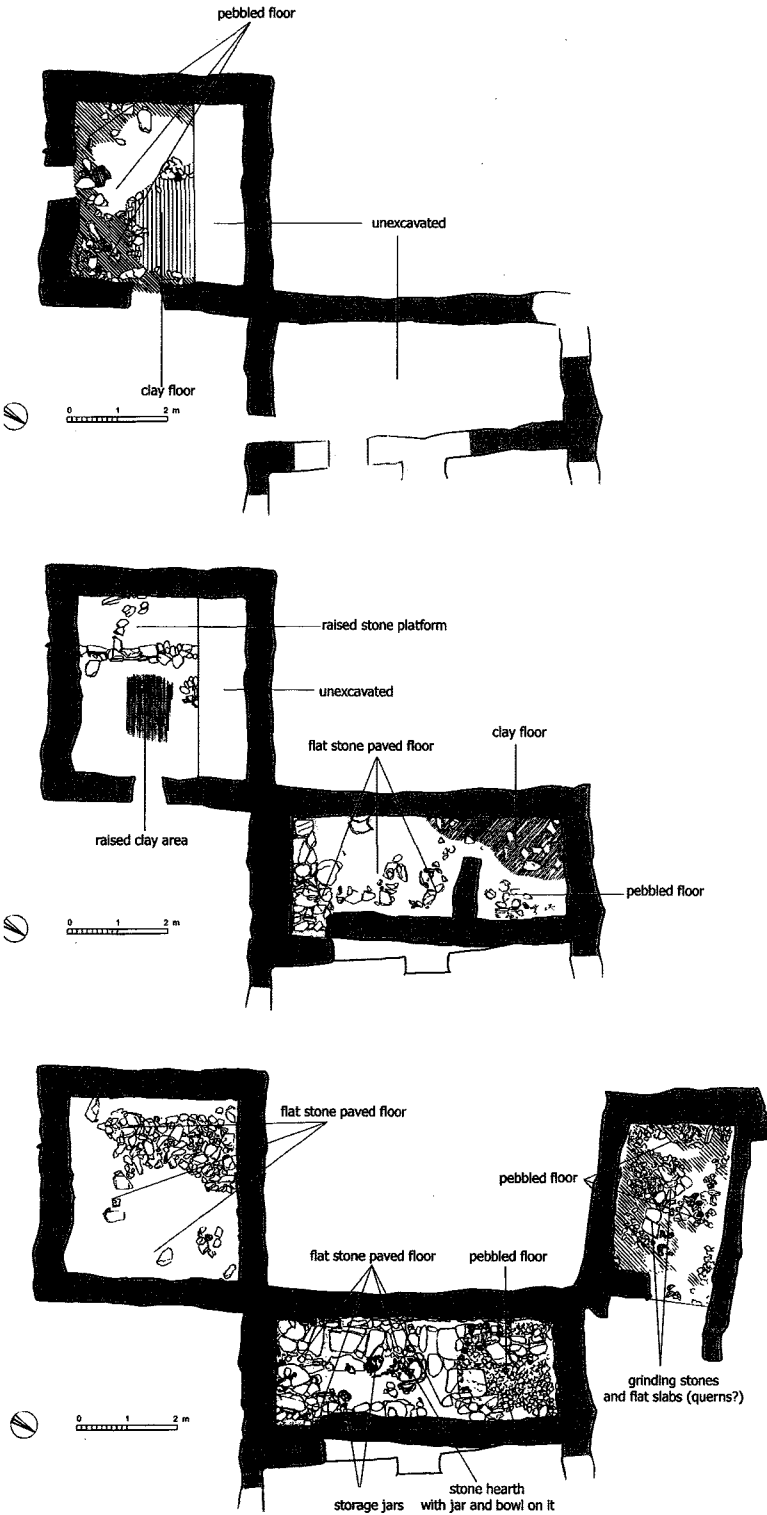
4.10. Occupation phases of buildings A, Γ, and Z2 at Sesklo, showing the changes in floors and internal organisation through time. Upper: first phase; middle: second phase; lower: fourth phase. (Plan redrawn from Kotsakis 1981.)

food-processing area and sleeping area the east-west one. The interior of House 39 (8.5 × 5.50 m) at the tell, for instance, is divided into three such activity areas, largely corresponding to three different types of floor construction (Andreou et al. 2001: 263). In House 14 at Sesklo B, the southwestern section was a storage area; the northeast corner shows a clear concentration of activities and was obviously a multifunctional space; the northwestern part was an extension of this work-area or a relatively empty space; and the southeast corner contained a stone platform serving probably for sleeping (Table 4.3).

All instances of thoroughly investigated courtyards, lanes, and 'squares' suggest that a concern with the spatial orientation and order of the house itself also implies meaning in the organisation of external space. For example, the orientation of the 37–38–50–47 square (Fig. 4.5) is also in terms of the cardinal points, and the positions of the lanes leading to and away from it recall the spatial emphasis on the corners inside the houses. That such alignments are not merely incidental to the alignment of the surrounding buildings is evident from the layout of area 8–12 at Sesklo B, which, even though found between houses of different orientation, reproduces the symmetry and dual or diagonal/quadrilateral arrangements in the interiors of the surrounding houses, in one case in reverse order.

These patterns suggest that the organisation of space may have been defined on a system of order and classification which revolves around the principles of symmetry and articulates links between the social structure, the symbolic order, and the 'natural' order or the cosmos. It also emphasises segmentation, division, and restriction of space. The highly structured internal space and the functionally discrete areas within buildings are paralleled by an analogous distribution of material culture, and thus a structuring of activities and of bodily movement inside and outside the houses. Different activities and/or areas may have had different social and symbolic meanings, and they may have been associated with different age or sex groups. In this way, household and community space embody and expresses certain principles of order and classification and create frames of reference for social relations and appropriate behaviour.

In addition, there are buildings which can as a whole be connected to a ritual or symbolic function, even though in the absence of contextual information the nature of this function cannot be specified. One is House 37 (Fig. 4.5), whose size and layout were characterised by both Tsountas (1908: 84–5) and Theocharis (1969: 34) as unique. Although this is the smallest building in Sesklo (3.10 × 3.50 m), it has two porches, one at the front and one at the back, three entrances, and a large hearth in its centre. As Elia (1982: 269) argues, three entrances in such a small building seem too many to have merely served a practical purpose or a single residence, nor are they – or the hearth

in the centre – consistent with a functionally discrete area such as a storeroom or workshop. Kotsakis (forthcoming) points out that although House 37 bears no resemblance to any real building from Neolithic Thessaly, it is almost identical to some of the Middle Neolithic clay house models, particular the one from Crannon (Fig. 3.4). Given that these seem to constitute idealised representations rather than replicas of real houses, is it possible that House 37 also materialises some abstract notion or central cognitive category? (Kotsakis 2003: 158–9). An alternative suggestion is that House 37 may constitute a symbolic representation of the ideal type of house/household or a material symbol of the household and its importance, an importance to which every line of evidence points (Souvatzi 2000). It can also be hypothesised that it served as a communal household structure, a ritual building of some sort, intended perhaps to reinforce household solidarity. This hypothesis is supported by the location of House 37 at the more public 37–47–50–38 square, next to the largest and perhaps relatively communal House 50 and in proximity to houses/households which seem independent or have more 'private' courtyards. Significantly, during the final phase of the Middle Neolithic, when House 37 took its final form, obtaining two more entrances, a previous gate to the 37–47–50–38 square was abolished and the square acquired a more communal character.

Another building of meaningful layout is House 4–5 at Sesklo B (Fig. 4.11). It has an unusual long and rectangular shape and contains two perfectly identical rooms, each of which has clay-coated walls, a floor made of reddish clay, and a small pillar in a corner (Theocharis 1976). These pillars are of the exact same size and are positioned diagonally in the interior of the house, one in the south corner of room 4 and the other in the north corner of room 5. Given the central opening in the partition wall, each room is effectively a mirror image of the other, with each pillar found consistently on the left-hand side on coming through this opening. The presence of an entrance in the middle of the southeast wall of room 5 and of another possible one in the middle of the northwest wall of room 4 makes the effect of antisymmetry in the interior of the house strikingly perfect. This meaningful arrangement, in conjunction with the scarcity of material culture in this building, may suggest a special, noneveryday function (Kotsakis 2003; Theocharis 1976: 156). Alternatively, it could result from an internal logic associated with the entire 1–7 complex, of which building 4–5 was part. I return to this point later.

Household Practices and Activity Patterns

No well-preserved building failed to provide evidence for a wide range of activities, and the impression is one of fully equipped, self-sufficient social units. They include food preparation, cooking, and consumption, storage or
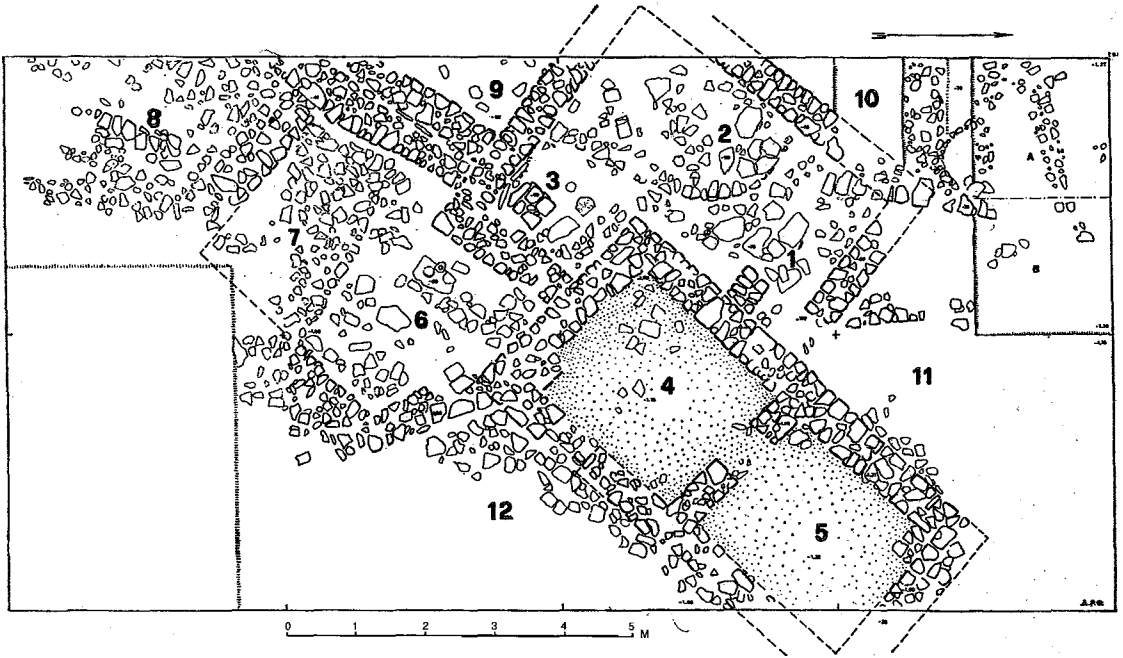
4.11. Building complex 1–7 and open spaces 8–12 at Sesklo. (After Theocharis 1976.)

household redistribution of the vital resources, spinning and weaving, and other practical activities evidenced in specific arrangements of tools and flat slabs. Practices such as socialising, social display, and hospitality are also associated with the households, given the presence of decorated vessels, the fallen shelves inside houses, and in general, the well-made and well-furnished interiors. Moreover, the frequent rebuilding of structural features, the replastering of walls, and the well-kept floors with their relatively empty parts suggest that a considerable amount of time and energy was devoted to house maintenance.

Because of the unevenness of information on material distributions, it is difficult to draw firm comparisons between houses in terms of functional or social differentiation, or of a distinction between residential and nonresidential buildings. Yet hints of functional differentiation of spaces, and perhaps also of household specialisations, are already present on the basis of the complexity and richness of the material culture, as well as of the complex life histories of the buildings. It should be reminded that the famous Sesklo Ware with its seven stylistic variations enjoys a central position in the remarkable stylistic and technological innovations of the Greek Middle Neolithic ceramics (Chapter 3, Fig. 3.5). It appears as a uniform cultural manifestation from western Macedonia to central Greece, particularly the Red-On-White style. Shapes include bowls, basins, jars, jugs and cups, and decoration consists of a variety of geometric patterns – triangles, zigzags, checkerboards, and so on – which

4.12. Red-on-White bowl of Sesklo Ware with 'flame pattern', groups of parallel bands, and cruciform motif at bottom. (After Theocharis 1973.)

seem to imitate textile patterns and recall the carvings on clay and stone seals (Fig. 4.12). Kotsakis (1983: 264–300) defined this ware's production at Sesklo as specialised and was able to identify three distinct ceramic subgroups or 'workshops'.

The high rates, typology, and technology of spindle-whorls, bobbins, and loom-weights suggest that spinning and weaving (most likely of wool and flax) were also among the most vital household activities. Indeed, textile manufacture was apparently intensive and specialised and probably involved use of the warp-weighted loom (Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 1992, 2003). Analysis of

the clay and stone seals suggested that they could have been used for body and cloth decoration and/or as pendant signs of individual identity, given the suspension holes in most of them, although some status-related use could be also considered (Pilali-Papasteriou 1992, 2003). The range of material culture also includes clay tables, usually painted, a large number of clay ladles, miniature furniture, clay and stone figurines – anthropomorphic and zoomorphic, naturalistic and schematic, standing and seated – stone 'ear studs', beads, and pendants, most likely craft-specialised (Pilali-Papasteriou 2003), clay and stone 'sling-bullets', and a variety of tools of all types and material – polished stone, chipped stone, bone, and antler (Moundrea-Agrafioti 1981). Microwear study of the 112 polished stone tools from Sesklo A indicated three functional categories – adzes, axes, and chisels – and a variety of uses, of which woodworking must have been a major one (Hristopoulou 1992). In all, although preliminary and somewhat brief as yet, the material data from Sesklo give an idea of the complexity and variety of daily practices.

Kotsakis' work on painted pottery (1983) still constitutes the most consistent source of information on spatial distributions of material at Sesklo. Although his final publication of the entire Middle Neolithic ceramic assemblage is further awaited, the above work offers evidence also for the distribution of monochrome ceramics. Regarding the different painted pottery groups, there was no association between houses or parts of the site and the sort of technical differences of manufacture and finishing involved in these groups. The universal occurrence and uniform relative frequencies of monochrome storage pottery further suggest the relative self-sufficiency of individual contexts in subsistence surplus, as does the uniform distribution of storage facilities. No secure pottery production location has come to light, which is perhaps not surprising, given that earlier research generally did not look for such evidence and that external spaces were usually less thoroughly investigated than the houses. Nevertheless, indications for pottery production, or at least for vessel-forming, may exist in open space 8–12 at Sesklo B (Fig. 4.11), where two half-baked clay chunks bearing fingerprints co-occur with three spherical clay lumps and an abundance of tools (Kotsakis forth.).

A possible textile 'workshop' was identified in buildings A-Γ-Z2 at Sesklo B (Fig. 4.10), where 24 of the 46 spindle-whorls recovered from Theocharis' excavation were concentrated (Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 1992: 80–81). House A in particular showed a relatively high frequency of spindle-whorls (13 pieces), in addition to an abundance of painted pottery and to three identical clay and stone seals (Pilali-Papasteriou 1992). Similarly, the preference of Houses Γ and Z2 for tools and monochrome pottery is conspicuous and contrasts with the wide range of findings in the nearby House A (Kotsakis 1981). For example, the semicircular arrangement in the middle of Z2 of three grinding stones and two small slabs (querns?), instead of a hearth, and the clustering

of most finds around this central feature may point to some work function for this building.

Thus, in spite of the symmetry and consistent arrangements of features and artefacts inside and outside houses, there is variation in range or intensity of practices and in degrees of self-sufficiency in different contexts at different times. However unclear at present, the occurrence of evidence for craft-specialised activities within the settlement, inside the houses or in their yards, implies that craft specialisation could be associated with the households, though not necessarily in terms of the domestic mode of production model. The variation in household activity and the likely presence of craft specialisation allows the existence of division of labour or of different household specialisations, and thus lesser self-sufficiency and greater interdependence.

Co-operative practices are also evident from the storage activity in external spaces or structures, the clustering of houses around squares or less private courtyards, and the kind of activities carried out in them. According to Theocharis (1968: 25), House 50 at Sesklo A (Fig. 4.5) may have partly served as a storage structure, at least during its final phase, when the house expanded, taking space both in the nearby square and in surrounding lanes and becoming by far the largest building at the site (around 50 m²). These major rearrangements coincide with a single-roomed and completely undifferentiated interior, a conspicuous lack of facilities, and an abundance of monochrome pottery (Kotsakis 1983; Theocharis 1963). Clearer evidence of a tendency towards more communal activities is provided by the small external constructions at Sesklo B (Fig. 4.6). As Theocharis (1973: 65, 1980[1972]) pointed out, a common feature of the Sesklo B spatial organisation is a kind of ancillary space adjacent to houses, often defined by exterior buttresses protruding from the house walls. These more or less shared courtyards were very carefully made and arranged and had a variety of stone-built facilities such as benches or platforms and small rectangular structures, probably for storage.

Finally, the site-wide high quality of architecture and the meaningful ordering of space can be seen as evidence for community-wide standards, not least because they raise the question of the technical and ritual expertise necessary: how was construction organised? They may also imply a degree of specialisation in architecture, although it is difficult to associate this with specific households or sectors of the site. Nevertheless, the large amount of area devoted to external space, the variable types and specifics of architecture of this space, the presence of multiple retaining walls at Sesklo A, and the construction of houses in relation to lanes and squares suggest that community space can be seen as an extra-household organisational level. Sesklo may not have been a proto-urban settlement of the 'acropolis' and 'polis' type, but its overall layout does indicate collective planning – and perhaps also communal labour – far beyond a loose collection of individual and independent farmhouses.

Household Morphology

Household morphology relates to the spatial definition of households and their composition or organisational principles. A point of relevance is the relationship between the elements of functional differentiation discussed above and the location of houses in Sesklo A and Sesklo B; in other words, the relationship between possible functional complementarity and organisation of space in free-standing houses or in building complexes. However, the sharing of walls alone does not automatically imply differences in household composition (e.g., extended households or families), inasmuch as square and free-standing houses do not necessarily imply nuclear families, as is commonly assumed. It is essential first to understand whether the component spatial units of a building complex were functionally related and, conversely, whether individual production units were indeed functionally independent.

The Sesklo B complexes are no easy question, not only because of the varying degrees of research on, and preservation of, their component buildings, but more importantly because there is little actual evidence for functional interrelation. For example, A, Γ, and Z2 and their neighbouring areas Δ, X, and E (Fig. 4.6) could be seen in a number of combinations in terms of household units, and each one of these buildings could equally be taken as relatively independent. One combination could be A and Γ together on the grounds of their contemporaneous life and of the 'workshop' picture of the latter structure. On the other hand, this 'workshop' picture does not correspond to a distinct functional differentiation of House Γ but rather to multifunctionality (Kotsakis 1981: 102). It is more likely that rather than functional complementarity and one household unit, we have different household specialisations and two social units, perhaps not so large and not entirely self-sufficient, yet separate. In turn, there are the questions of where Z2 should be attributed. Although the stratigraphic and architectural data, including orientation, indicate that Z2 was part of the E-Z1-Z2 complex, its layout and internal organisation associate it to A and Γ, as does their possible sharing of external space X. The 1–7 building complex (Fig. 4.11) seems indeed to be a complex in every respect, functionally and symbolically. Its configuration gives an impression of a closely tied spatial and social entity organised according to its own logic: it was completed over only the last building phase; all three component structures were burnt during the fire destruction in this phase (Theocharis 1976); their orientation is different from that of the other Sesklo B buildings; and each of the two apparently slightly later additions (Buildings 1–2–3 and 6–7) appears to surround, or better, to 'incorporate' the other as well the earlier one (4–5) rather than to displace them. Houses 1–2–3 and 6–7 exhibit an analogous spatial organisation and a concentration of the facilities and material from this complex, and they probably were of equivalent practical functions. House 4–5, on the other hand,

contains the two perfectly identical rooms discussed above and was found empty. The distribution of activities in these three structures might not be incidental to preservation, abandonment, or other factors. Theocharis (1976: 156) suggested that Houses 1–2–3 and 4–5 belonged to one extended family, with the former building serving as an auxiliary everyday space and the latter as a more formal living space. Alternatively, all three buildings together (1–2–3, 4–5, and 6–7) may indicate the existence of two, rather than one, households strongly bound together (kin-related?), with House 4–5 serving as the main residence for both of them and with their relationship being made apparent through the whole complex's layout.

At Sesklo A, evidence of integration of essential needs of a household in one physical structure seems stronger, and houses/households seem more independent. It would then appear that they are much closer to the idealised type of nuclear family household traditionally assumed both for real houses and for house models. However, there is no theoretical or practical reason to assume the existence of nuclear families, a type which besides, as we have already seen in Chapter 1, is not of such wide cultural applicability as is often thought. Incidentally, burials of any type, sex, or age group, especially child burials, which occur in many other sites (see Chapter 6) and which could potentially point to some fundamental kin bond, are conspicuously absent at Sesklo. There are also the possible nondomestic, ritual, or communal buildings discussed earlier. Finally, even at the tell some houses appear to be more self-contained than others, and in fact, more contained than is presumably required for the needs of a nuclear family. House 11–12 (Fig. 4.8) is an example of this 'packed' picture: its two rooms are packed with features and artefacts analogous not only in number but also in kind, so that the same set of activities fundamental to a definition of household (e.g., cooking, food consumption, and storage) can be identified in either room, even though the size of the house is small and that of each room even smaller (Table 4.3). This consistency suggests that the partitioning of House 11–12 may have not served functional purposes, but may have assisted instead the co-residing of two different social units, a distinction further emphasised by the unusually large height of the partition wall. Given that earlier in its life this house was single-roomed, the changes during its second phase may have resulted from a growth of the earlier household (or from its fission?). As for the idealised perceptions of house models, a similar 'packed' picture is presented by the model of a house interior from Platia Magoula Zarkou (Fig. 4.13), which contains a range of domestic facilities and eight human figures, identified as four children and two female and two male adults – supposedly two 'couples' (Gallis 1985). This arrangement has been seen as representing the ideal nuclear family (Gallis 1985: 22; Halstead 1995: 14). However, the very presence of four adults, even if these are couples and even if these couples are of the same descent, equates not with a

nuclear family but with an extended one (e.g., Pasternak et al. 1976; Segalen 1986: 18).

Household Histories and Ideologies: Households as Agents of Change

Ideological elements held in common across the site include the shared orientation of houses, the symbolic focus on floor sections and activities, the energetic and symbolic investment in the layout of interior and exterior space, the overall design principles of symmetry and geometric order, the use of household as a setting for socialisation and cultural transmission, and generally the use of architecture and material culture for the construction of sociocultural space and the mediation of communally accepted principles of identity, order, and classification. It would appear that the Sesklo houses are stable and timeless. The archaeologically visible repetition of plans, structural features, objects, and practices would seem to indicate the appropriateness of an explicitly symbolic interpretation or the full compliance of individual social units with the wider social norm. Certainly, the relative standardisation and regularity in these terms suggest a site-wide ideology, a pressure to conform to community standards, and use of the house as an ideological mechanism for constructing or stressing collective identity. The community or the wider social structure would have served to prevent change, to objectify social order, to normalise diversity, and to mask differences.

However, architecture is also the framework for human agency. Houses and households were also personal products organised according to individual 'logics' and involved in the construction of their own history, memory, and identity. There is a remarkable contrast at Sesklo between the stability of shape, size, and general rules of space segmentation (Table 4.2), on the one hand, and the constant rearrangements of house interiors (Table 4.1), on the other. None of the buildings whose life exceeded one phase retained the same internal organisation or pattern of movement throughout its life. The process of structuring and restructuring household space, and with it concepts and uses of space, seems to have been incessant, even though it rarely resulted in a deviation from the original, wider conventions of basic plan and size of houses and construction methods. Different types of floor and basic facilities are introduced in different contexts and at different times; entrances are blocked and relocated; methods of space division alternate within the same house between buttresses, recesses, partition walls, floor type combinations, or special artefact arrangements; living surfaces, walls, and structural elements are constantly and regularly renewed; new rooms are introduced onto or next to older ones; and features and associated artefacts keep changing location, shifting from one section of the house to another and then back to the previous one again.

4.13. Miniature clay model of house interior from Platia Magoula Zarkou. (Photograph and copyright: Kostas Gallis.)

Let us examine the complex life histories of some of the houses whose last phases we have already discussed. The earlier House 11–12 (Fig. 4.8) was square and single-roomed. It had a slate-paved floor, identified in the area of the later room 11, and an entrance on the west. Along this front side, structural remains and post-holes indicate a sheltered courtyard or portico. In the subsequent phase, the house became larger and was subdivided into rooms 11 and 12 by a partition wall with an opening in the middle; a new entrance was opened opposite the earlier one, which was now blocked; and the previous sheltered courtyard (11A) possibly became a separate house. Room 11 seems to have been further subdivided into the three functionally different areas discussed earlier, whereas in room 12 the three discrete recesses formed by the respective buttresses were perhaps of different uses (Fig. 4.9, Table 4.3).

House Γ at Sesklo B is another good example of the constant remodelling of internal space, thus of material and social activity locations, over time (Fig. 4.10). Its first phase was not excavated completely. In the second phase, the width of the building decreased (from 3.50 m to 2 m) and a low partition wall divided the interior in two sections of unequal size and three different floor types, of which the northern corner area was pebbled and probably used for sleeping. This dual arrangement was maintained in the third phase, except that activity locations seem to have been reversed. The floor of the northern section was now made of beaten earth and contained a large number of tools of various

types and materials (Kotsakis 1981: 102–4), a picture incompatible with the use of this area for sleeping, as was suggested for its previous phase. The partition wall was abolished, and the southern section became larger, more carefully constructed, and probably a storage area. Interestingly, in the last phase the pebbling in the northern section is reintroduced, reflecting a return after one intervening phase to using this area for sleeping. Given the considerable time that must have elapsed between the second and the fourth phase, this return suggests that the earlier use of this place was memorised and could represent an act of remembrance. It is now the southern part of the floor which presents a concentration of material (Table 4.3). A stone hearth now also appears in the centre of this floor.

The complex history of House A (4.50 × 4.60 m) of four successive building phases and corresponding floors imply that its use did not remain constant through time either (Fig. 4.10). The earlier floor was stone-paved, except for its middle part, which was occupied by a slightly offset circular clay area surrounded by stones, in the centre of which was a hearth. The house now had two definite entrances, one on the east and one on the south, and a third possible one on the north, defined by an external buttress. All three entrances opened onto stone-paved courtyards and lanes. The succeeding house was subdivided by a low partition wall in two areas of unequal size. The raised stone platform at the southwest end appears to have served for storage rather than for sleeping as in other houses (Kotsakis 1981). Only the east entrance was maintained in this phase. The third and fourth floors were now stone-paved to their full extent. In the fourth phase, the east entrance was blocked. Each one of the four floors of this house contained a wide range of material culture, including figurines, seals, two painted basins, a painted clay table, spindle-whorls, and tools of all types and materials.

These constant rearrangements, modifications, and alterations of house interiors over time imply reorganisation of activities, as well as reconsideration of the social relations associated with them. Given that in most houses the changes in interior are not paralleled by changes in types and range of material culture or in basic household practices, can they be connected to household social reproductive strategies shifting from generation to generation? Could the rearranging of space have served to mark the ends and starts of lives of new households, or at least to signify changes in household social composition? It is even conceivable that the new household units were composed of members who either were unrelated to the previous residents or wished to contest previous relations and statuses of affairs (sometimes only to return to them). Other explanations for these changes can include a shift in social positions and a negotiation of age and gender roles and the social division of labour, both inside and outside the household. For example, the constant relocation of entrances (Table 4.1) indicates that they played a particularly dynamic role in structuring people's

routes, movements, practices, and relations, not least because the opening of new entrances often coincides with changes in the character of surrounding courtyards or lanes (e.g., more or less public). Entrance orientation seems to have had much more to do with relationships between neighbouring households, the concept and use of external space, and the activities carried out in it rather than with an idealised order and uniformity or even with climate conditions (e.g., shelter from the north wind). Overall, households seem to have resisted stability, and whatever social categories, classifications, or norms were created by the wider social structure were contested within the household. This endless reorganisation and movement lies between the relative stability of collective identity and the contingency of individual household identity, between wider social structure and household agency. It lies between the ideal and the real as these were perceived, materialised, socialised, and transformed inside the household.

A 'Dual' Household Organisation? History, Memory, and Social Reproduction

The house and household data as a whole do not indicate a clear-cut distinction between the tell and the non-tell sectors of the settlement, but can the sector- or site-wide data suggest a 'dual household organisation' corresponding to Kotsakis's 'dual habitation pattern'? In other words, do the perceived differences between Sesklo A and Sesklo B as identified by Theocharis and Kotsakis also make sense in terms of differences in household basic organisation?

Continuity in house site and in household activity and ways of house replacement or abandonment are important links to strategies of social reproduction. Here lie the stronger differences between the households of the two sectors of Sesklo. Although Sesklo B as a whole was very long-lived and some houses show multiple and successive building phases and were replaced on the same spot, continuity in house/household site is not the norm. There are also houses whose lifetime did not exceed one building phase. There is a long discussion in prehistoric archaeology regarding the social formation of settlement mounds or tells and non-tells or open sites in terms of reproduction and continuity from central Europe to Anatolia (e.g., Bailey 1999; Chapman 1989, 1990, 1994a, 1997, 2008; Evans 2005; Whittle 1996). A central issue regards the role of social memory in long-term spatial structuring. Most models emphasise spatial practices as mnemonic devices that corroborate or dispense with continuity and tradition, defined largely in terms of ancestral values and genealogical sequences. John Chapman (1989, 1990, 2008) has contrasted the tell as a site of more centralised or community-based control of production and reproduction and less independent households with open settlements as sites where households were more independent. Tringham (2000; also Evans 2005: 115) points out that the traditional dichotomy between tells as continuous and intentionally formed

sites and open settlements as less continuous and more randomly formed sites impedes an understanding of the specific ways in which house replacement and memory construction took place in either type of site. Skourtopoulou (2006: 55) argues that although a genealogical model may be essential for adding the temporal dimension to the daily routines, the creation of connections with the past can also be sought in the manipulation and mobility of artefacts rather than solely in spatial structuring. Besides, tells themselves are not unitary constructions. There can be considerable differences in their form, size, location, visibility and degrees of continuity (e.g., Andreescu and Mirea 2008; Evans 2005: 117–18, 120–23; Whittle 2003: 59; also, compare Halstead 1999 and van Andel et al. 1995).

For the Sesklo context in particular, Kotsakis (1999), following Chapman (1989, 1994a, and 1994b), argues that house continuity at Sesklo A symbolically expresses both the relation to the ancestors and the growing independence of households, as opposed to Sesklo B, where descent is less stressed and communality more important. This discrepancy may reflect a tension between collective identity and the ideological dominance bound up with the continuity of the Sesklo A households (Kotsakis 1999). Indeed, we can discern several elements of a different, more communal organisation at Sesklo B – for example, in the presence of external storage facilities; in the impression of space economy presented by the closely spaced or even adjacent houses, even though this sector had far greater potential for widespread construction than the tell; and in the fact that tendencies to functional differentiation or household specialisations seem stronger there. A different household ideological structure may be revealed in these respects, suggesting a group of related households centred on one main residence or on the shared use of external space, and generally a pattern of less independent and more socioeconomically integrated households.

Yet, despite important variations between the two sectors in household space and ideology, and the general patterns discussed by Kotsakis, similarities in these and other realms are more abundant and consistent. A most fundamental one is the shared perception of the role and importance of the household. Household activity is uniform across the site in that most facets and spheres of practices occur in all spatial entities, even though with variations. Much of the evidence relating to household ideology, from the use of material culture to the repetition of identical architectural elements (house, yard, hearth, storage area, stone platform, buttress) and the layout of interior and exterior space, is also site-wide, and thus community-wide. The lack of consistent distinction between Sesklo A and Sesklo B in these terms gave the whole settlement coherence and suggests that all households were implicated in the construction of collective identity. At the same time, both tell and non-tell households were equally and actively concerned with the construction of their own, more personal

histories and memories through the repetition of daily practices, the constant modifications of house interior and the spatial reorganisation of activities, or the physical or symbolic incorporation of former rooms. Even though functional interdependence may be more apparent at Sesklo B, in reality little of its architecture can convincingly suggest a distinctively different household spatial structure or composition from its tell counterpart.

The same great deal of effort, concern, and symbolism was invested in architecture invariably by all households across space and time. True, the Sesklo A houses are free-standing, whereas the Sesklo B ones tend to form building complexes, although not always. Although such differences may indicate variation in household composition or reproductive strategies, they certainly do not correspond to differences in the quality of house architecture. If anything, the observed preference at Sesklo B for stone materials and furniture suggests a more labour-intensive undertaking. The most elaborate technique of floor construction of the entire settlement is met at Sesklo B, and indeed in a building complex: large horizontal stone poles or a stone pole framework serving as a substructure for a careful paving of large, probably clay-coated, slabs (Theocharis 1972: 10). Regarding the differences in painted pottery distribution, Kotsakis (1983: 58) points out that variations are not consistent with the location of the houses in Sesklo A and Sesklo B and that disparities are best defined in terms of the total assemblages of the two sectors rather than in terms of samples from individual houses. In addition, the frequencies of painted ceramics increase steadily throughout the Middle Neolithic in all individual contexts (Kotsakis 1983: 60, Table 1.5).

Although existing, differences in height and contour between the two sectors (for example, in terms of monumentality of the tell and inconspicuousness of the non-tell) cannot be overemphasised. Postdepositional factors should not be underestimated either. In the case of Sesklo A, considerable erosion by the two rivulets flanking the tell (Fig. 3.2) and collapse of another large portion during an earthquake before Theocharis' research[8] may have contributed to the present picture of steepness and sharp difference of what might have originally been part of a naturally rolling landscape. Sesklo B, as well as the more distant and less investigated Sesklo Γ, Δ, and E, is not exactly flat, as it is situated on the slopes of surrounding hills, whereas intensive modern land use and ploughing must have contributed to the thinness of cultural deposits there.

The frequent founding of the Sesklo B houses on Early Neolithic deposits, and sometimes *within* these deposits, and the several instances of vertical superimposition do indicate a concern to emphasise descent and/or place continuity. All the more so given that it sometimes happened after the intervention of many years. For example, Houses A and 14 were both founded in areas which had been part of the Early Neolithic settlement but which had during that period

been abandoned (Kotsakis 1981; Theocharis 1977). They both show successive building phases and/or major architectural episodes. Similarly, the occurrence of Middle Bronze Age graves at both sectors of the site (Fig. 4.7) implies that if the practice of transformation of the old habitation site to a burial ground in later periods symbolises an act of remembrance or an attempt to draw on this place's history, this symbolic association was not exclusive to the tell. Both sectors had been incorporated into later societies' social memory.

Practices of abandonment as seen in the presence/absence and quantities of material left behind seem varied, but not so much according to the location of houses in terms of Sesklo A and Sesklo B. One interesting difference concerns the evidence of burning in the respective groups of houses. As said earlier, the fire destruction which marked the end of the Middle Neolithic settlement is evidenced in both sectors. In Sesklo A, however, the fire which destroyed the houses was much more intense, carbonising all the organic material there and heavily distorting the clay artefacts. In Sesklo B, on the other hand, burning was often less intense or only partial, as indicated by the far better condition of ceramic artefacts and by the absence of charred roof material. For example, Houses A, Γ, E, and Z2 were covered by the same layer of partially burnt superstructure debris (Kotsakis 1981; Theocharis 1972: 9), and there is at least one case where collapsed superstructure debris was not burnt at all. Still, in view of the distance both between the two sectors and between the Sesklo B 'insulae' of buildings, what might be more significant than these differences is that such evidence existed at all at Sesklo B. Does this imply that the fire destruction might not have been accidental? Kotsakis (forthcoming) argues against the idea of deliberate burning. But in light of the differences in intensity and scale of fire destruction, the possibility that the fire was not equally sudden or equally destructive across the site cannot be precluded.

Although it is difficult to look for specific material associations between the two sectors, given the unevenness of information, there are already many site-wide symbolic associations or horizontal links between people or between specific households, beyond the general symbolism associated with the house. For example, House 11–12 at Sesklo A and House E at Sesklo B share the same number of uncommon features and artefacts: the linear arrangement of the buttresses in the west wall; the size and plastering of the small recesses in between; and the rare finding of a long straight-sided cup with plastic decoration (Theocharis 1971: 17–18). These three elements, which do not occur together anywhere else at the site, suggest a special link between House 11–12 and E. Similarly, the unusual, square stone hearth in House Γ (Fig. 4.10) recalls the one in House 11–12 (room 11) (Fig. 4.8) in type, location, and associated artefacts. House 39 and House 14 in the two respective sectors have an almost identical internal organisation of activities, following the same diagonal or quadrilateral principles of symmetry (Tables 4.2, 4.3). Finally, each part of

the site has at least one building of a more ritual or symbolic function – House 37 in Sesklo A and House 4–5 in Sesklo B. These connections emphasise special bonds between households, alliance networks or kin relationships that cross-cut sector boundaries and strengthen the impression that the wider distinction of the parts of the site may not have been perceived in terms of social differences.

Overall, all elements discussed here suggest double – as opposed to dual – patterns that establish interhousehold and intercommunal ties and represent another avenue for social reproduction, grounded on the negotiation of roles, social status, and identities. In this sense, the power of the past is weakened by the messages transmitted via current personal and cultural affiliations and a shared wider socioeconomic organisation, and memories about the ancestors are reworked into active social relations of the present.

Conclusion: The Social Organisation at Sesklo

Although there are varying spatial scales at which organisational structures become more or less distinct at Sesklo – the house/household, the sector, and the site – it is, interestingly, the first and lowermost of them which presents the greater degree of uniformity, or rather of 'ordered variability'. This shared perception of the role of household across the settlement is seen here to support Kotsakis' interpretation and his location of the differences in settlement pattern mainly in the ideological sphere. The variability in terms of the tell and non-tell sectors of the site, or Sesklo A and Sesklo B, is indeed best explained in terms of different habitation patterns and of the ideological structures constructed on them. It does not correspond to differences in basic household organisation, much less to a 'dual household organisation'.

In turn, all of the intrasite and intrasector uniformity is evidence for the importance in the community of the households of either part of the settlement, and points against a clear-cut distinction – social, economic, or ideological – between these sectors. The Sesklo A households may have been longer-lived, and they seem more independent than their Sesklo B counterparts, which also give an impression of stronger social integration, but this only serves to emphasise the complexity and flexibility of Neolithic societies, realised in individual preferences or variable perceptions and expressions of the ideal. Hints of social variation are limited mainly to the distribution of painted pottery of higher technical quality. This distribution could well relate to the fact that place and activity continuity facilitates technological developments. It could have equally well been of an ideological content (e.g., symbolic stress on place continuity) rather than of a clear-cut economic one (Kotsakis 1999). Theocharis (1973) suggested that the spatial arrangements at Sesklo indicate a more centralised control of the community's land, agricultural property, and

storage of surplus, intended to ensure a wider welfare and the prevalence of the communal over the individual. Power and authority were collective rather than derived from individual economic, social, or ritual differences between the two parts of the site. Thus, the existence of the tell does not represent a hierarchical social structure and should not carry an assumption of features of sociopolitical organisation of later periods, even though the tell might have been the likeliest place where any authority would have been situated (Theocharis 1973: 68, 77).[9]

That the Sesklo B households cannot be seen as deficient relatives of the Sesklo A ones is further strengthened by the fact that whatever spatial evidence for craft-specialised activities exists thus far occurs at Sesklo B. Nor were the non-tell houses aesthetically or technically inferior to, or less equipped than, their tell counterparts. Specific symbolic associations seem to create several 'pairings' between Sesklo A and Sesklo B on the basis of an almost identical internal organisation of interior space of certain houses; of sharing of the same number of uncommon features and artefacts; of the occurrence of buildings charged with more symbolic connotations; or of the presence and types of external spaces. These double patterns or 'pairings' suggest that the social distance between households was not as great as it might at first appear. Still, evidence for activities cross-cutting the two sectors are neither many nor immediately obvious, and integration of smaller units within the greater social entity is not the strongest characteristic of the social organisation at Middle Neolithic Sesklo. Elements of community-based organisation are several, but not merely as many and as dominant as those of a household-based organisation.

FIVE

COMPLEXITY IS NOT ONLY ABOUT HIERARCHY: LATE NEOLITHIC DIMINI, A DETAILED CASE STUDY IN HOUSEHOLD ORGANISATION

DIMINI IS A VERY CHALLENGING CASE (FIG. 5.1). TO DATE, IT REMAINS THE most famous Late Neolithic settlement in Greece; the title site of this period in Thessaly; a core site of the entire Greek Neolithic; and one of the sites which have prompted several specialist studies and various interpretations inside and outside Greece. Dimini has also been widely used to construct socioeconomic models and theories about Neolithic communities as a whole in Greece. Some of these claim that the origins of the type of complexity manifested in later Bronze Age societies, including the Creto-Mycenaean palatial economies, are to be found in the Late Neolithic and in settlements such as Dimini.

However, the emphasis has always been placed on the impressive architectural typology of the settlement, whereas inadequate attention has been paid to individual houses and their contents. Paradoxically, but also typically, the term 'household' has often been used to support theories. The analytical work presented in this chapter pays close attention to the intrasite patterning of the evidence and brings together the architectural, material, and contextual data into an interpretative discussion of each building and household. A study of the Dimini pottery, one of the most distinctive ceramic assemblages in Greece, was also undertaken, with a focus on the social context of its production, distribution and use within the site. Then the chapter ties all this into an interpretation of the social organisation of this community. It constitutes, therefore, the first systematic attempt to interpret the site from the bottom up.

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HISTORY OF THE SITE

The site of Dimini is situated 5 km west of the modern city of Volos and 3 km from the present coastline (Fig. 3.1). It lies on a low rocky spur at 16 meters above sea level and covers an area of 10,000 m². It was founded during the Late Neolithic and was used continuously throughout the Bronze Age, although sparsely and mostly not as a settlement.

The Neolithic settlement (4800–4500 BC) is organised in a series of habitation terraces surrounded by six or seven stone-built concentric enclosures (Fig. 5.1) that generally follow the natural contour of the hill: each successive enclosure is at a higher level than the preceding one, with the central part being 4–5 m higher than the bottom of the outermost enclosure. Only the first, third, and fourth enclosures form a complete circuit around the site, whereas the second and the fifth seem to have enclosed only the east side of the mound. The sixth and seventh walls, identified by Tsountas (1908), are not preserved today. Access and communication were accomplished through four main radial passages aligned on a straight line and several smaller, circular ones. The configuration of the southeast side of the mound remains unclear due to incomplete excavation. Findings outside of the mound[1] suggest either that the layout of the Neolithic settlement was larger than preserved today or that habitation may have extended outside the enclosures, although its extent and nature are not known. It is not clear whether the end of the Neolithic settlement was marked by disintegration or by continuity and consolidation.

In the Early Bronze Age a ditch was cut on the north and west sides.[2] During the Middle Bronze Age the mound was possibly turned into a burial ground, as indicated by a number of cist graves scattered across the site,[3] and was again demarcated by a mud brick perimeter wall.[4] In the Late Bronze Age[5] a large building was founded on top of the first and second enclosures,[6] two tholos tombs to the north of the mound, and a complete settlement to the east.[7]

HISTORY OF RESEARCH

The site was uncovered by Stais in 1901 in the hope of revealing Mycenaean tholos tombs, but was more systematically investigated by Tsountas in 1903 (Fig. 5.2). Tsountas traced three main successive building phases or 'ages' of the enclosures, starting from the inner pair and expanding outwards, as well as several repairs and modifications across the site, all belonging to the Late Neolithic.[8] Research on the buildings was limited and focused mostly on the identification of three tripartite or 'megaron' structures (Tsountas 1908: 52, 59–60, 63) (Fig. 5.2: 2–4, 26–28). Influenced by the picture of the Homeric city, as came to light in his contemporary discoveries of Mycenenae and Troy, Tsountas (1908: 59) interpreted Dimini as a well-defended

5.1. The settlement of Dimini, aerial photograph. Anticlockwise from top right: House 23, House 9, and Workshop S8 under shelter. Southeastern part outside innermost enclosure (bottom and centre right) largely unexcavated. (Photograph and copyright: Vassiliki Adrimi-Sismani.)
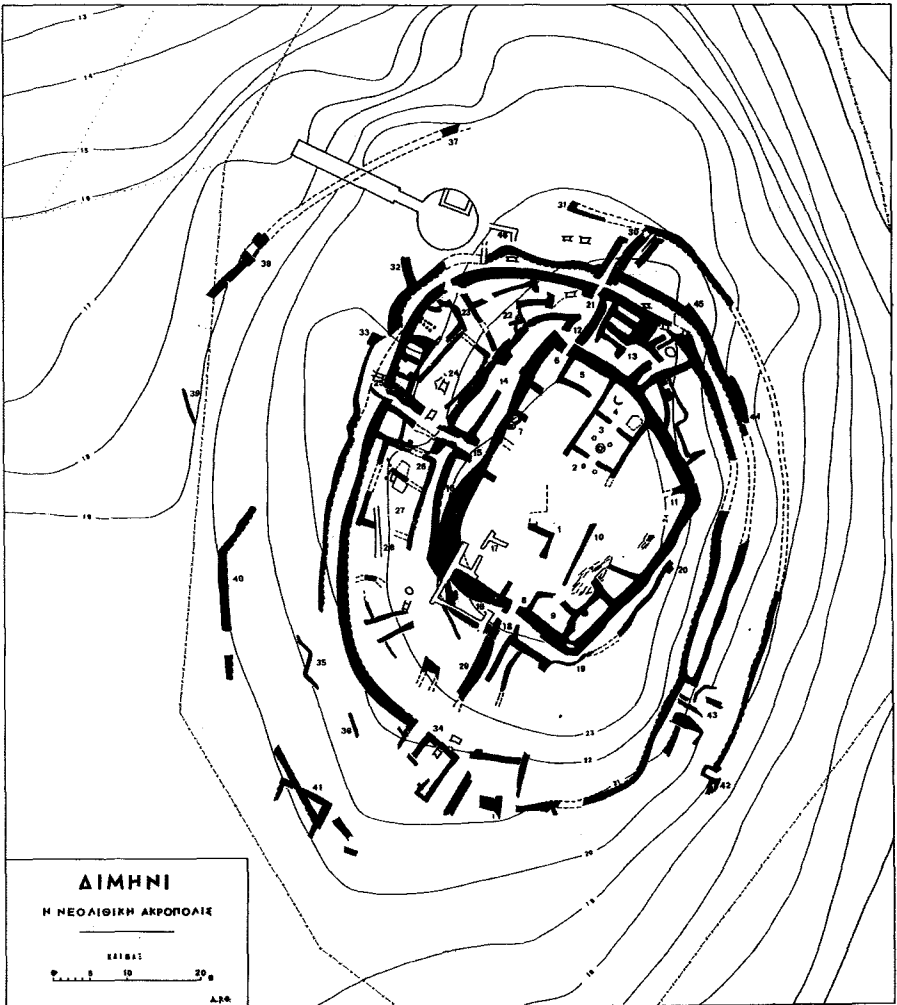
5.2. The layout of Dimini as excavated and planned by Tsountas (1908), with some additions by Theocharis (1973). (After Theocharis 1973.)

settlement, an 'acropolis', ruled by a king residing in the tripartite building of the first enclosure. The enclosures were perceived by Tsountas as high fortification walls (although he did notice several inconsistencies with this configuration: Tsountas 1908: 39–42), whereas the central open space served for the gathering of people at times both of peace and war.

Hourmouziadis' extensive excavation between 1974 and 1976 further clarified the layout of the settlement, confirmed Tsountas' gradual construction of the enclosures, and brought to light several new buildings and facilities (Fig. 5.3). Hourmouziadis' initial objective was the reconsideration of the nature and function of the enclosures, whereas a primary concern was with the spatial and economic organisation of Dimini, which he later used as a basis for
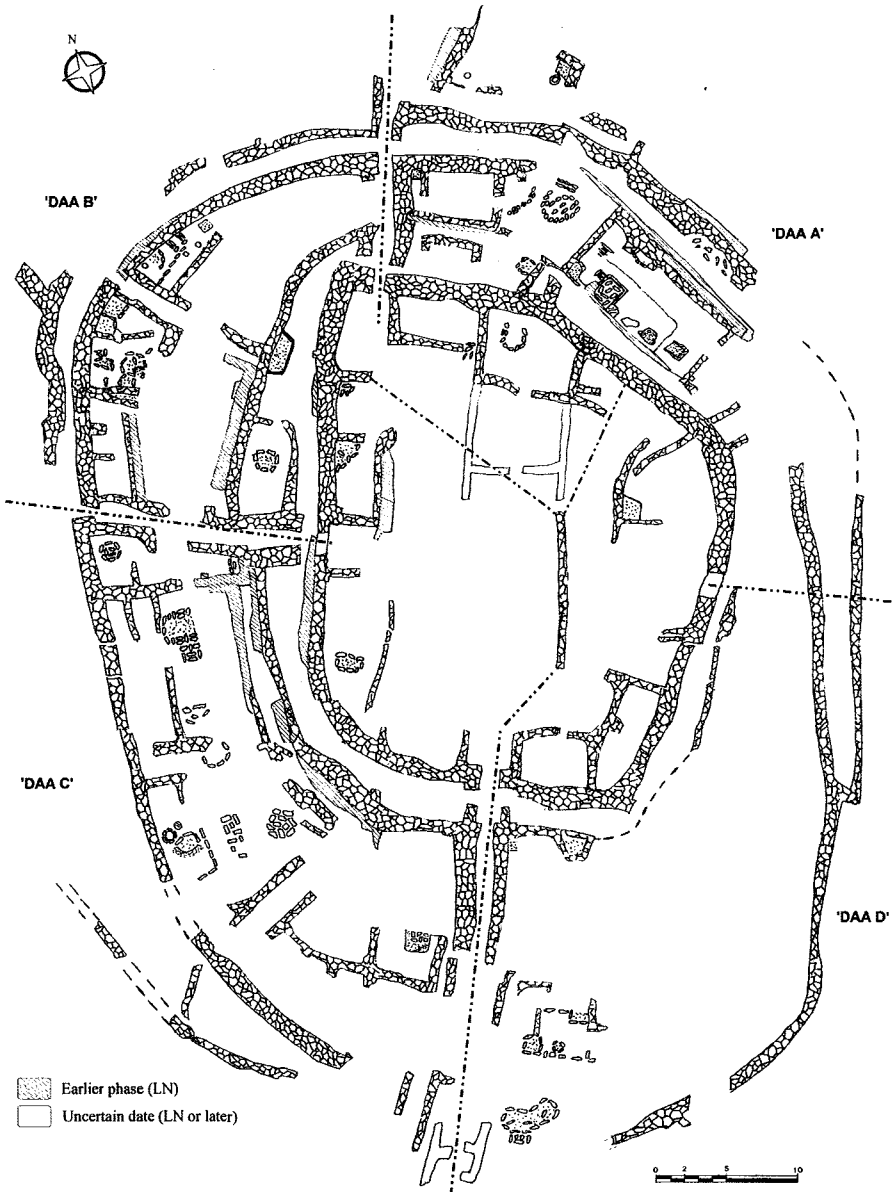
5.3. The large spatial segments at Dimini as excavated and distinguished by Hourmouziadis. DAA: domestic activity area. (Plan redrawn from Hourmouziadis 1979).

general discussion of Neolithic life in Greece (Hourmouziadis 1980a, 1980b, 1981). Hourmouziadis (1979: 59–60, 79–82) refuted the defensive function of the enclosures, as well as the idea of social stratification. Rather, the primary purpose of the enclosures was to serve as retaining walls and to functionally organise space into four main well-demarcated large spatial segments[9] and three smaller ones in the central part, as shown in Fig. 5.3. The segments represented

self-contained sociospatial units that shared the same range of spatial charac-
teristics and activities: each one contained one large residential building and
several smaller secondary structures, formed a separate living compound and a
self-sufficient unit of production, and corresponded to one household or one
extended family (Hourmouziadis 1978a: 33–45, 1979: 115–19). The interpre-
tation of each of these segments as entirely self-sufficient led Hourmouziadis
(1979: 91) to reject the idea of social division of labour and the existence
of craft specialisation, except with regard to incised pottery (Hourmouziadis
1978b). Hourmouziadis (1979: 96) attributed a communal character to the area
within the first enclosure ('Central Courtyard') and rejected the existence of a
'megaron' there. According to his observations, the final configuration of this
building took place during the Bronze Age, along with other extensive mod-
ifications of the entire Central Courtyard, which was in this period inhabited
by a single preeminent family.

Information from several specialist studies of material culture is discussed later
in this chapter. Of the more general theories, Halstead's model of social differ-
entiation and 'central megaron elites' in Late Neolithic Thessaly, discussed in
Chapter 3, should be recalled here, as it draws heavily on Dimini. On the other
hand, given the essentially abstract and generalising character of such models,
it is not always possible to know arguments relating specifically to the site from
those drawing on Halstead's theoretical position. Halstead (1984: 5.2.3) dis-
missed Hourmouziadis' Bronze Age dating of the megaron-like structure in
the first enclosure as being based on indecisive evidence and suggested instead
that this building existed as such in the Late Neolithic. The Central Courtyard
represents, according to Halstead (1984, 1995, 1999), a hierarchically organ-
ised structure, an 'elite', even though his study of the faunal data did not yield
evidence for any significant socioeconomic differences (see below). The 'elite'
resided in the so-called megaron in the Central Courtyard, derived its power
from its success in agricultural production and exchange, was able to control
agricultural surplus and to 'privatise' production, and probably had preferen-
tial access to socio-ritual knowledge (Halstead 1995: 19). Hourmouziadis' large
house and secondary structures in each segment are referred to by Halstead
(1995: 14) as 'dominant' and 'subordinate' households respectively, a designa-
tion for which no further specification or justification is provided except in
terms of building size.

THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE: ACCOUNTING FOR THE
DATA LIMITATIONS

To date there is no final publication of the site. Tsountas' (1908) volume
contains useful information but lacks contextual evidence, whereas Hour-
mouziadis' (1979) concentrates on architecture only. In addition, the pottery

from the recent excavation had never been systematically studied, unlike other material classes. On the other hand, there is a wealth of unpublished architectural, material, and contextual data which, interpreted within a systematic methodological framework, enables the understanding of the spatial and social organisation of the site.

My analysis is based on the data coming from Hourmouziadis' excavation, whereas Tsountas' (1908) publication is used only as a general reference. Work includes (a) study of the Dimini archive,[10] a most valuable source of evidence; (b) systematic analysis of the ceramic material; (c) reidentification of the architectural features according to the archive and to personal inspection at the site; and (d) reconsideration of the spatial distribution of small finds, whenever this was possible, and based on the archive. Combined analysis of these lines of evidence has been key both to understanding and to accounting for the data limitations.

The intensity of Hourmouziadis' research across the site generally corresponded to the degree of preservation of the spatial units, including the extent of Tsountas' research on them. The buildings and surrounding areas were investigated more thoroughly than the passageways and the areas outside the enclosures. A number of stratigraphic sections and depth measurements clarified the sequence in several parts of the site and within some houses, but the lack of a systematic stratigraphic examination poses some problems with the chronological correlation of the various construction episodes observed across the settlement. The following lines of evidence are secure: (a) the entire settlement is dated to the same subphase of the Late Neolithic ('Classical Dimini phase'); (b) the inner pair of the perimeter walls precedes the outer two pairs, so the same applies to their respective buildings; and (c) the south part of the site was probably inhabited after the remaining parts had been filled (Hourmouziadis 1979: 63, 116; Tsountas 1908: 48–9).

In order to minimise the discrepancies and to proceed with a meaningful analysis, I selected the better preserved and better excavated spatial contexts for the examination of horizontal material distributions. These appear with a code in Fig. 5.4. In turn, I employed a system of context evaluation of the selected spatial units and of construction of different resolution levels as shown in Table 5.1. This system was devised generally in reference to the literature on the formation of archaeological contexts (e.g., DeBoer 1983; Hayden and Cannon 1983; Patrik 1985; Schiffer 1987; Stevenson 1991), including that which employs properties of ceramic data such as mean sherd size, pot fragmentation, and reuse (e.g., Bradley and Fulford 1980; Sullivan 1989), but was adjusted specifically to the logic and disparities of the particular excavation. Justification of the parameters employed is as follows: (a) the condition in which each spatial unit was found at the beginning of the recent excavation makes possible an understanding of whether the deposits discovered underneath were intact

(e.g., burnt and/or 'sealed' by superstructure collapse); (b) the absence/
presence of floor also provides a clue to assemblage purity, on the assumption
that all contexts originally had a floor or some use-surface; (c) consideration of
the number of floors or building phases is important because successive floors
that were not distinguished during the collection of the data can result in a mis-
leading 'packed' effect of material and practices (Ciolek-Torrello 1985, 1989;
Deal 1985: 258); (d) the distinction between the in situ/non-in situ nature of the
finds provides a means of distinguishing primary from secondary deposition,
although it is difficult to discern whether 'in situ' in the notebooks means in
situ use or in situ abandonment; (e) in the absence of consistent measurement
of depths and occupational fill volumes, the number of days devoted to the
excavation of each context gives an idea of the intensity of research and the
thickness of the deposits – it is clear that this measure is relative and depends
on the size of each space as well as on the extent of Tsountas' research; rela-
tively high rates of both (f) fits between the sherds of each individual ceramic
assemblage and (g) complete or restorable vessels in each space are consid-
ered to be strong indicators of primary deposition (e.g., Schiffer 1989: 38, 42;
Nelson 1985: 319), and chances increase when the floor is 'sealed' and the
vessels are found with their contents. According to cross-references between
these factors, the various spatial units were assigned scores from 1 to 4, rep-
resenting the varying degrees of preservation. Although inherently heuris-
tic, this method allowed me to utilise all lines of available information in an
effective and realistic manner, to define consistent analytical levels across the
settlement, and to elucidate the extent of comparability between the various
spatial units.

ARCHITECTURE: DIVERSITY IN UNIFORMITY

Beneath the normative surface created by the functional-typological appro-
aches to architecture and the overemphasis on the enclosures emerge an
observed 'diversity in uniformity' (Modderman 1988) and a great potential
for interpreting household practices. On the site scale there is considerable
architectural uniformity. The houses were built, like the enclosures, on stone
foundations with clay for binding. Their superstructure is not well known,
but the use of mud brick is considered most likely (Hourmouziadis 1979:
128, 132; Elia 1982: 306; Skafida 1994). A large number of pieces of clay roof
plaster bearing beam and reed impressions suggest a gabled, double-pitched
roof. With a single exception, house replacement is characterised by vertical
superimposition. House orientation is consistently in terms of the axial points
(Fig. 5.4). On the spatial segment scale, variation in size, number, and type of
their respective spatial components indicates greater variability, but there is still
a large degree of uniformity seen in the symmetry created by the enclosures
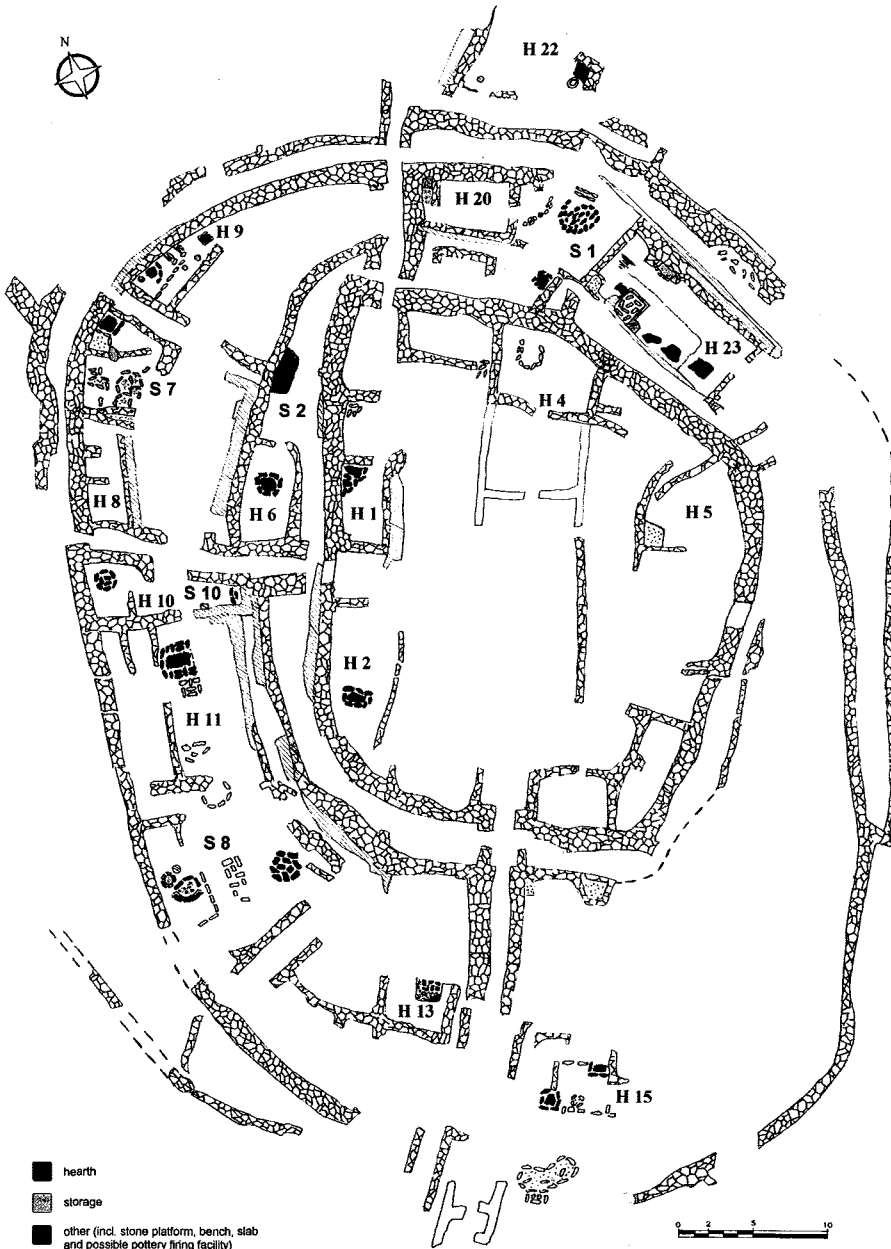
5.4. The architectural units and structural features at Dimini as recorded and analysed by the author. (Plan redrawn from Hourmouziadis 1979.)

and the radial passages, as well as in the fact that the segments as a whole share a basic architectural plan.

It is at the house/household scale that most of the observed architectural variability occurs. House size varies from ca. 51 to 14 m². Most houses are rectangular and single-roomed, but irregular, trapeziform, and double-roomed

TABLE 5.1. *Evaluation of spatial contexts at Dimini*

Context	Condition	Floor (presence/ absence)	Building Phases / Floors	*In situ* Finds	Excavation Hourmouziadis 1975–76 (in days)	Tsountas 1903	Sherd (re)fitting	Complete Vessels	Comments	Score
H1	Patches of ashy soil	?	2	None	2	Limited	—	—	Deposition lost; abandoned? disturbed by Bronze Age occupation?	4
H2	Patches of ashy soil	?	?	Some	8	Limited	1%	—	Disturbed by Bronze Age occupation?	3
H4	Patches of ashy soil	Yes	2–3	None	2	Extensive	—	—	Excavated by Tsountas; disturbed by Bronze Age occupation?	4
H5	Patches of ashy soil	?	1–2	Few	5	?	—	—	Deposition lost; abandoned? disturbed by Bronze Age occupation?	4
H6	Partly covered by roof debris – no burning	Yes	2–3	Few	5	Surface	7%	—	Deposition partly lost; earlier abandonment?	3
S2	Not reported	No	1	Not reported	?	Surface	—	—	No information	4
H23	Fully covered by burnt superstructure debris	Yes	3	Most	22	None	30%	11	Very well-preserved, well-excavated	1
S1	Burnt clay layer	Yes	1	Many	7	Surface	8%	4	Partly disturbed by Bronze Age graves; well-excavated,	2

H20	Not reported	No	2	Few	5	Surface	8%	1	Deposition partly lost; earlier abandonment?	3
H9	Fully covered by burnt superstructure debris	Yes	2–3	Most	6	Limited	13%	5	Very well-preserved, but material collected together from 2–3 floors – 'packed' effect	1
S7	Partly covered by roof debris – no burning	No	1	Some	3	Limited	7%	2	Partly preserved	2
H8	Not reported	Yes	2	Few	5	Surface	—	1	Deposition lost; earlier abandonment?	3
H24 (H10 + S10)	Extensive burning – no superstructure debris	Yes	2	Most	6	None	4.5%	6	Well-preserved, well-excavated	1
H11	Not reported	Yes	2–3	Not reported	20	Part of last phase	6%	—	Partly preserved	2
S8	Burnt clay layer	Yes	1–2	Most	31	None	6%	8	Very well-preserved, well-excavated	1
H13	Ashy soil	?	2	Many	13	None	3%	3	Well-preserved, excavation not completed	2
H15	Thick clay layer (from superstructure?) – no burning	Yes	?	Many	15	None	—	2	Partly preserved, excavation not completed	3
H22	Thick burnt clay layer (from superstructure?)	Yes	2–3	Some	15	None	3%	3	partly preserved, excavation not completed	3

houses also exist, as do, perhaps, mezzanines or upper storeys. Elongation of the front, and sometimes of the back walls of houses gives them the famous megaron-like form. This may indicate a greater load-bearing function or a sheltered entrance, or it may have served to extend the amount of space of the house by adding a small porch. Internal divisions are made through partition walls or rows of facilities (e.g., Fig. 5.4: H23, Fig. 5.28), and they are marked out according to either the long or the short axis of the house. Storage features include large storage vessels, often fixed on the ground, built-in structures, and occasionally pits. Hearths are of various forms and types – clay, clay and stone, stone, pebble-lined and plastered, oval or square – and pit hearths and domed ovens might have also existed (Tsountas 1908: 52; Hourmouziadis 1979: 134). I recognised four types of floor construction: packed clay (the most common); beaten earth; stone paving; and clay spread over a substructure of potsherds. Wooden mats and fur rugs may have also been in use, as indicated respectively by impressions on floors and pots and by the faunal data (Halstead 1992: 47). Although sometimes subject to ambiguity, the evidence suggests that the houses did not share a common entrance orientation. Equally variable is the location of other structural features, especially of the hearth. This may be found at the back of the interior, at the front and almost next to the entrance, in the middle, in a corner, or even outside (e.g., Fig. 5.4: H20). In addition, some structures possessed no hearth, but others more than one.

MATERIAL CULTURE: UNIFORMITY IN DIVERSITY

The diversity of the architectural data at the house level contrasts with the uniformity within classes of material culture and its distribution at the same level. In discussing material culture below, I focus on aspects pertinent to an understanding of patterns and meanings of variation and of the interaction between material culture, households, and wider society – particularly in production, distribution, and use. For pottery specifically, I thought it essential to summarise the main results from my analysis in some detail, given the absence of a previous systematic study.[11]

Pottery Production

The traditional use of decorated pottery merely as an index of culture history or economic development in Greek Neolithic research (see Chapter 3) has meant that although Dimini decorated pots figure prominently in wider syntheses and reference pottery studies, hardly anything is known about their monochrome 'everyday' counterparts. Equally, although many theoretical discussions of socioeconomic organisation make references to the distinctive Dimini Ware, commonly in terms of exchange and/or 'prestige items' models,
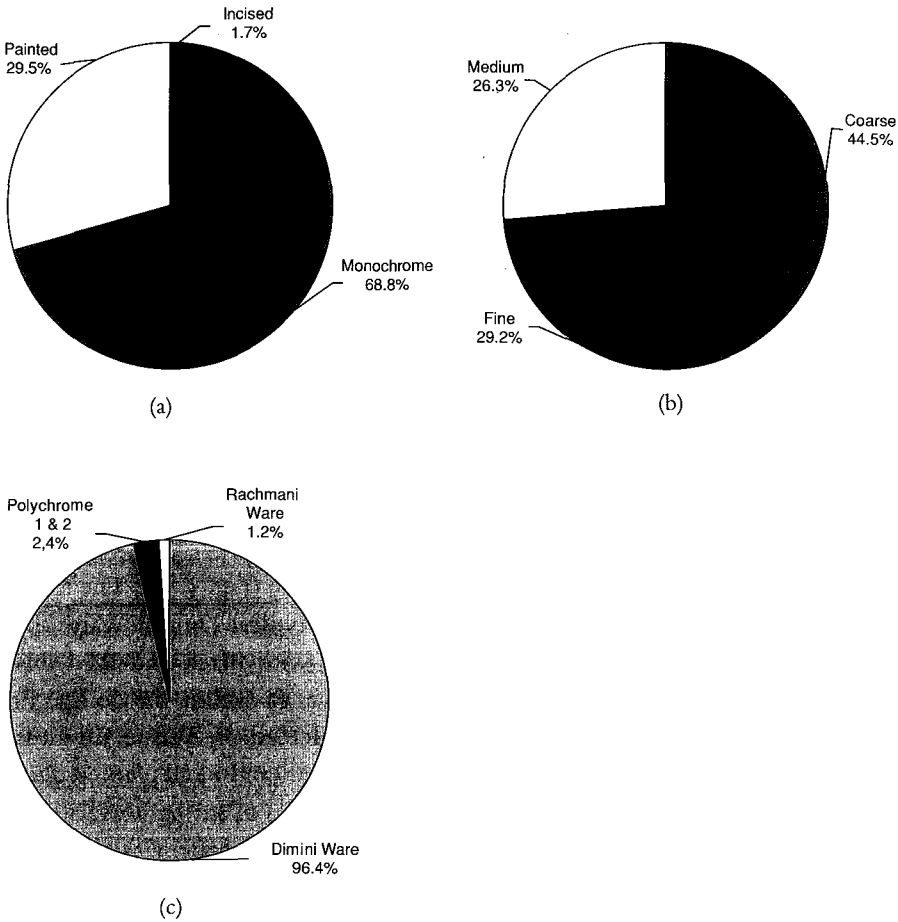
5.5. Relative frequencies of characteristics of the Dimini pottery: (a) monochrome, painted, and incised vessels; (b) clay quality; (c) decorative wares.

none has attempted to consider its use- and find-context or its horizontal distribution on the intrasite level.[12] Detailed examination of the ceramic collection from the 1975–6 excavation seasons has allowed me to (a) identify the general characteristics of the assemblage as a whole instead of focusing only the famous Dimini Ware, as well as of discrete ceramic classes, probably the products of a number of producing groups; and (b) explore the spatial patterning of ceramics. A detailed typological or technological analysis is beyond the scope of this book. Specific analytical issues and results can be found in Souvatzi (2000; see also Appendices B and C here).

Dimini pottery is characterised by high technical and aesthetic quality, internal coherence, and an abundance of fine decorated ware. Monochrome pottery forms the majority of the assemblage, but the high proportions of decorated pottery (over 31%) are striking, with painted pottery amounting to 29.5% (Fig. 5.5a). Coarse-clay ceramics form less than half of the assemblage, and
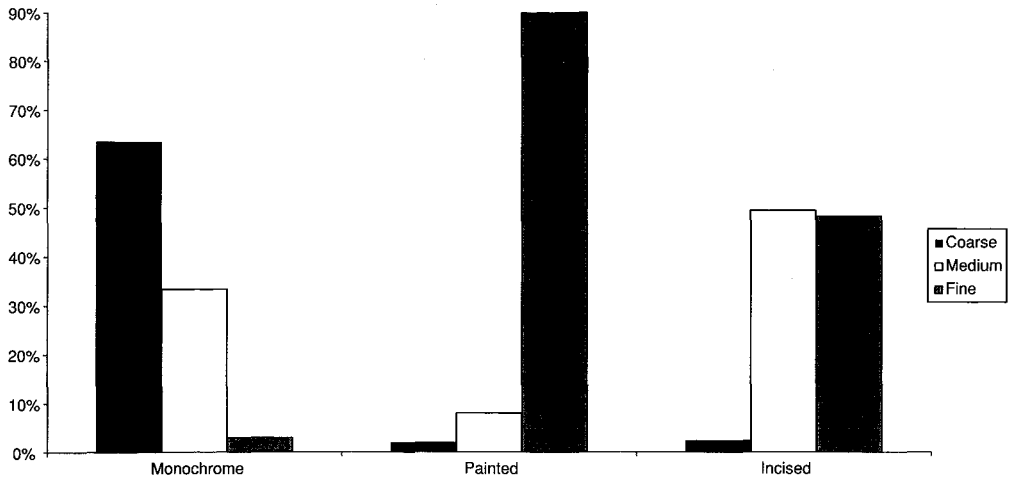
5.6. Correlation of monochrome, painted, and incised pottery with clay quality.

most pots were made of medium- or fine-tempered clay (Fig. 5.5b). The three main painted styles include the Brown-on-Buff or typical Dimini Ware; the Polychrome 1, with Black-and-White-on-Red or with Black-and-Red-on-Cream – the characteristic being that the black serves to outline the designs in red or white; and the Polychrome 2, with Black-and-Red-on-White. Of these the Dimini Ware is by far predominant, reaching over 96% of all painted decoration and well justifying its name (Fig. 5.5c). A series of strong correlations between all sets of ceramic attributes (fabric, decoration, shape, rim and base types, metric measurements, and so on) revealed a clear clustering into distinct subgroups within the assemblage and specific associations between clays, shapes, and decorative styles (Figs. 5.6–5.8).
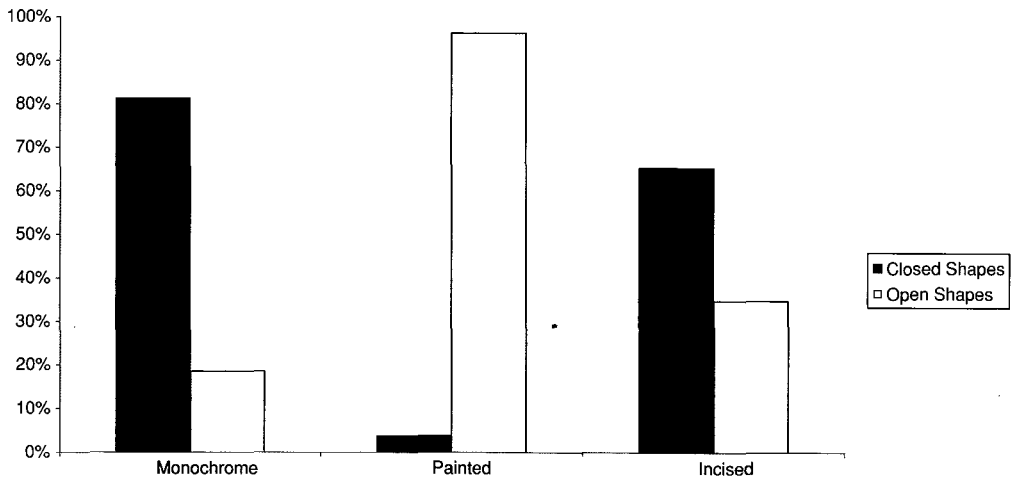
5.7. Correlation of monochrome, painted, and incised pottery with vessel shapes.
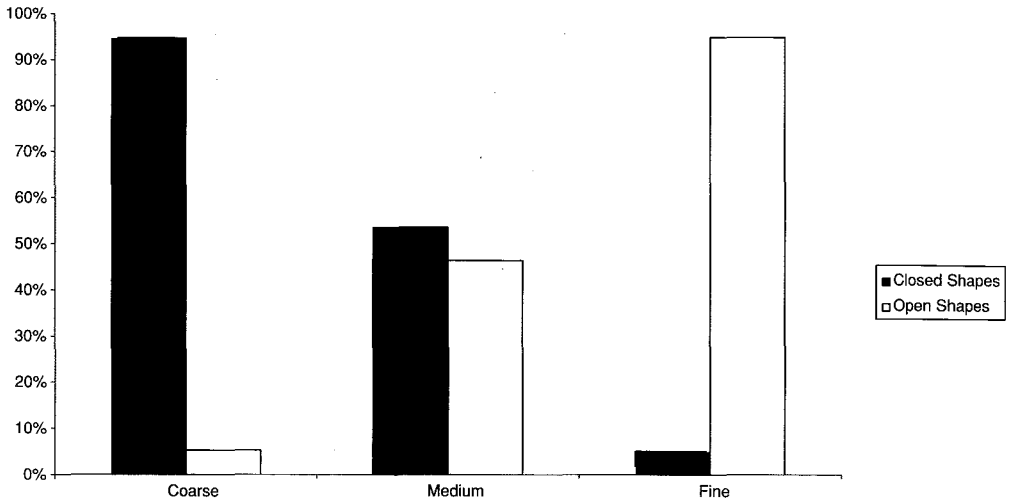
5.8. Correlation of clay quality with vessel shapes.

Knowledge, skill, and intentionality are particularly visible with respect to vessel types (Figs. 5.9–5.11). Monochrome vessels are made of coarse reddish clay and exhibit a variety of types, including large storage vessels (pithoi); hole-mouth jars; neck jars; several types of bowls (round- or straight-sided, with flat, ring-footed, or pedestal bases); shallow dishes; large and very coarse baking trays with short vertical walls and flat bases; and tripod cooking pots, small cups (5 cm diameter), mugs, sieves, and so on (Figs. 5.12–5.14). Painted pottery types are made of fine yellowish clay and consist of the 'Dimini Bowl' (Greek term 'phiale'), including miniature examples (rim diameter 6–10 cm), the fruitstand, a limited range of bowls and small neck jars, the 'basket', and the so-called 'spit
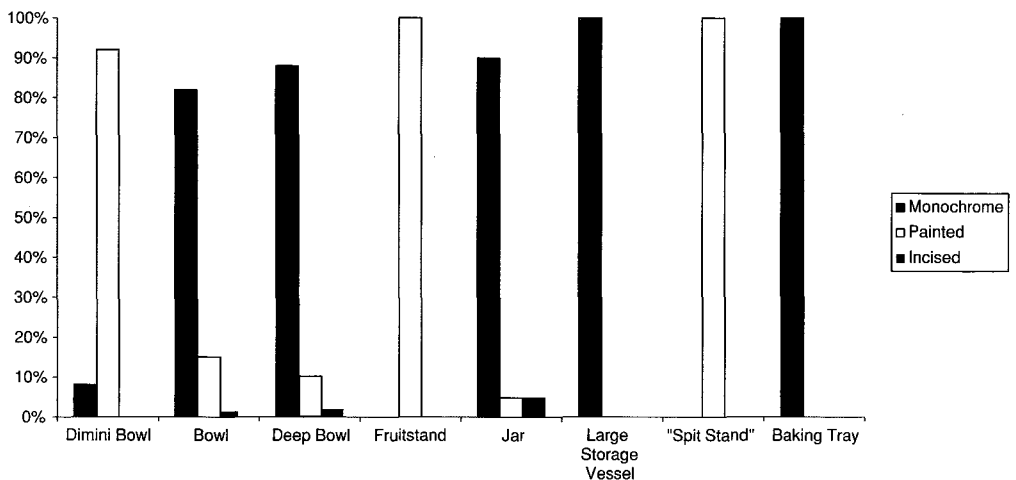
5.9. Correlation of common vessel types with monochrome, painted, and incised pottery.
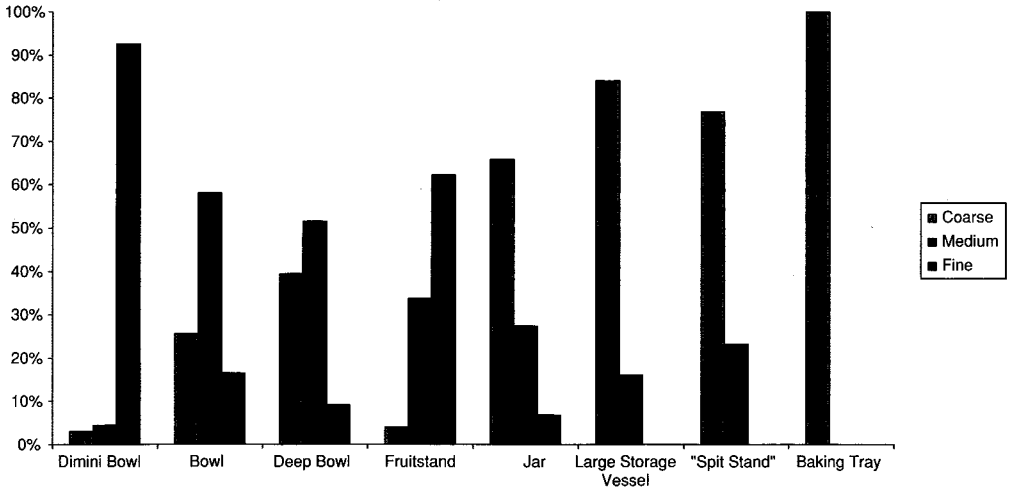
5.10. Correlation of common vessel types with clay quality.

stand' (Fig. 5.15–5.17; see also Fig. 5.29 below). The Dimini Bowl is by far the predominant type of painted pottery, justifying the traditional views of it as the type pot of the site and the most characteristic type of Dimini Ware overall. Painted vessels are fully covered by rich and sophisticated decoration consisting of a variety of geometrical design elements and patterns, usually arranged in alternating panels, which on the fruitstands and on some deep bowls is complemented by plastic and/or painted human or animal faces and beak-like features surrounded by painted circles and emphasising the curves of the rim (Fig. 5.16). Their exterior and interior surfaces often show different colours and decorative styles. Incised vessels are made
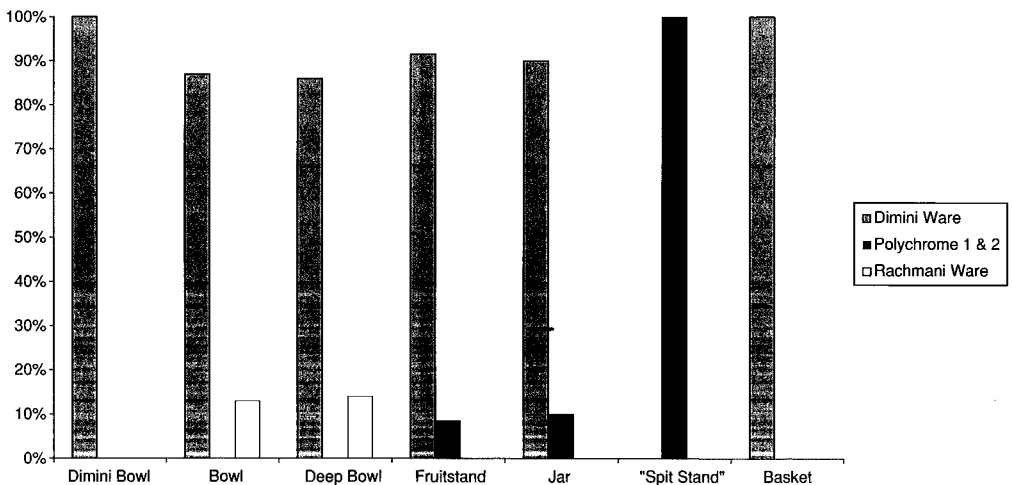
5.11. Correlation of painted pottery with decorative styles.

of grey fine to medium clay and are the thinnest (2–3 mm) Dimini pots. They include mainly an oval-shaped bowl, a small globular neck jar, and a biconical jar (Figs. 5.18 and 5.19). Their entire exterior surface is highly burnished and fully covered by dense, highly structured decoration, again with alternating geometrical motifs and patterns, often filled with white paste.

Overall, the Dimini pots reflect an important investment of time, energy, and imagination. This implies that pottery constituted an important component of the social,

5.12. Monochrome hole-mouth jar from Dimini.

economic, and ideological life of the community. My suggestion is that its production was not just a simple, casual activity, but a complex and specialised one. Clearly, the locality of the raw materials (Liritzis and Dixon 1984; Schneider et al. 1991, 1994); the existence of distinct production outputs; the relative uniformity of certain ceramic classes and general lack of irregularities; the high occurrence of the Dimini Ware; the accurately executed designs; and the complicated yet symmetrical shapes, such as the fruitstands and the sharply carinated bowls – all indicate considerable levels of efficiency and exper-tise. Furthermore, specialised equipment such as firing facilities required for the

complicated firing processes that must have been at work (cf. Vitelli 1994) was found at the site, as we will see below.

Regarding modes of production, the Dimini ceramic production does not meet the rigid classifications in the formal models of pottery production systems, especially the notions of modes of production as mutually exclusive or as con-comitant of a 'social complexity' defined in a linear continuum (e.g., Brumfiel and Earl 1987; Costin 1991, 2000; Peacock 1982; van der Leeuw 1984). It is not possible to enter here a detailed discussion of

5.13. Monochrome neck jar from Dimini.
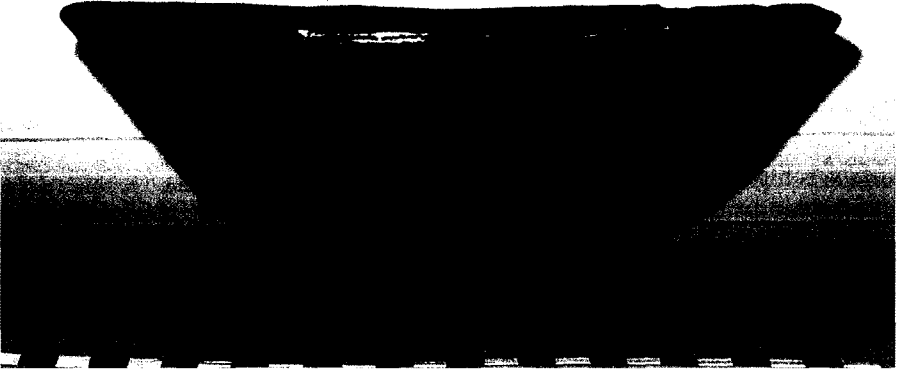
5.14. Monochrome bowl with pedestal base from Dimini.

the important issue of the concept of mode of production. But I would argue that its perception in a clear-cut, formalistic fashion tends to mask the subtlety and variety – surely, the complexity – of data from a wide range of societies and to overlook the social processes involved - on the various descriptive scales (Andrews 1997; Saitta 2005). For example, the idea underlying the models which explain the Late Neolithic ceramic developments in Greece in terms of the development of specialised production centres ('village special-isation' – e.g., Perlès 1992; Schneider et al. 1991) is that a single site within a region produced pottery on a large scale and for regional consumption or exchange (see Costin 1991; Longacre and Stark 1992). Although these models acknowledge the existence of craft specialisation, they are still too vague and insufficient to account for the context of pottery production and consumption at the intrasite level. Besides, the broader evidence from the Greek
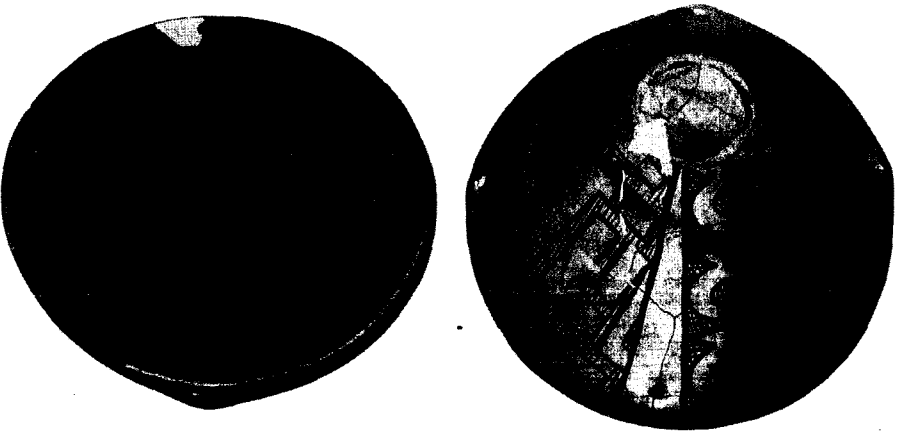
5.15. Painted Dimini Bowl (Brown-on-Buff) with dense geometrical motifs, mostly spirals, concentric circles, and meander, arranged in alternating panels on the exterior surface.
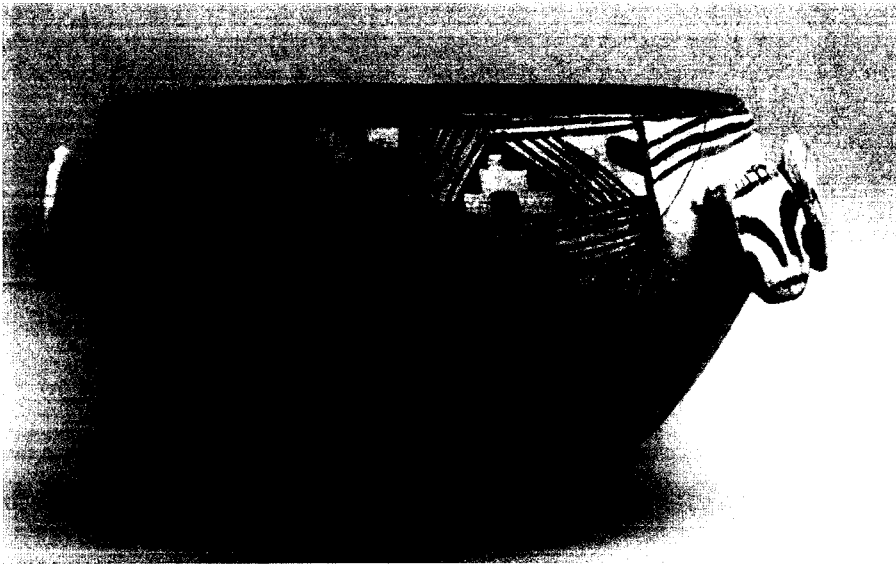
5.16. Painted deep bowl (Brown-on-Buff) from Dimini with double handles bearing painted human or animal faces and with designs probably imitating textile patterns.

5.17. Painted clay basket (Brown-on-Buff) from Dimini.

5.18. Incised globular jar from Dimini with dense and highly structured decoration and with spiral figuring prominently.
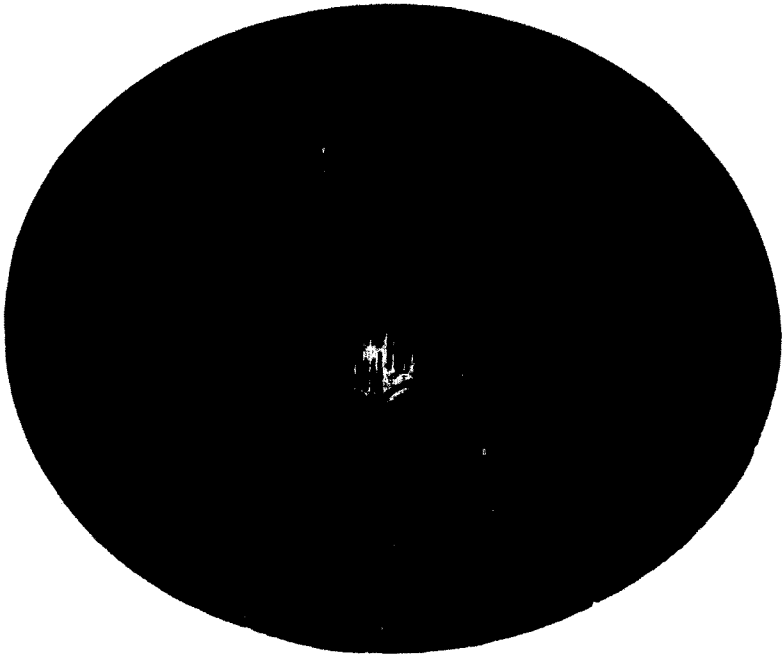
5.19. Incised bowl from Dimini with spirals and concentric circles highly visible.

Late Neolithic suggests that all villages produced pottery, each having a recognisable ceramic style, and that styles, techniques, and consumption were highly localised (e.g., Perlès and Vitelli 1999; Urem-Kotsou and Dimitriadis 2004: 319). The widespread Dimini Ware, for instance, was imitated locally at various sites (Hourmouziadis 1978b; Schneider et al. 1994; Vlachos 2002; Washburn 1983). Conversely, in the ceramic material from Dimini, extremely few atypical, 'imported' sherds occurred. This implies that the pattern we are dealing with is mainly one of circulation of ideas and styles or of spheres of interaction rather than of the actual objects.

All of the next three formal modes of production – i.e., in descending order, 'workshop industry', 'household industry' or 'individual specialisation', and 'household or domestic production' – may well have co-existed in Dimini. For example, although the Domestic Mode of Production may be true of certain crude monochrome pots, it does not account for others such as the rounded and carinated bowls or the monochrome Dimini Bowls, whose building, finishing, and firing are similar to those of their decorated counterparts (Fig. 5.14). Similarly, painted ceramics fit into a picture of more intense specialised production, but the evidence of the production processes was mixed with domestic debris, which would seem to point to the domestic production mode (Arnold 1991: 93). Finally, several indicators of the 'workshop industry' relate well to incised ceramics (see below), but the rarity of this ware points against large-scale production and full-time specialists which are thought to be consistent with this mode. Besides, whether formally or nonformally defined, all three modes are underlain by the same general and important idea: pottery production is organised by the households in one way or another, consumption is mostly local, and the workshop is still aggregated within the community (e.g., Arnold 1991: 92–4; Costin 1991: 8; Peacock 1982: 8–9; van der Leeuw 1984: 748–54). In this sense, the organisation of ceramic production in Dimini must be shifted from the unspecified site level to the households and probably to what has been termed 'small-scale specialised production' (Wattenmaker 1998: 4) or 'part-time specialisation' (Cross 1993).

The Spatial Distribution of Pottery

The most predominant pattern of ceramic distribution is one of homogeneity, indicating that all of the best preserved houses and open spaces (Group A) kept a wide and broadly analogous range of wares and vessels (Figs. 5.20–5.23). Given the elaboration and/or rarity of certain vessel types such as the painted fruitstands and the incised neck jars and the architectural differences between the various spaces, it was expected that pottery would be most helpful for the identification of functional and social differentiation in the settlement.
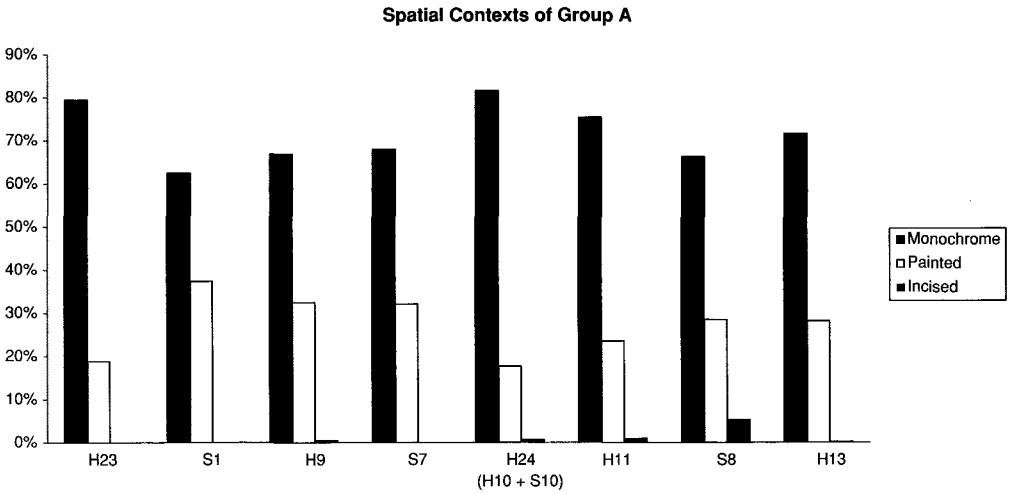
5.20. Distribution of monochrome, painted, and incised pottery in the contexts of Group A.

Instead, a somewhat diversified but essentially similar picture emerged. Coarse monochrome and fine painted ceramics, open and closed shapes, and the characteristic vessel types are represented in all spaces and in fairly stable proportions. Slight variations indicate that painted pottery (Fig. 5.20) was more abundant in open areas (e.g., in S1 and S8) and in smaller buildings (e.g., in S7 and H9) than in larger ones (e.g., in H23 and H11). Significantly, each space has not only a variety of pots – elaborate, storage, and cooking, open and closed, coarse and fine – but also almost the entire range of the main vessel types (Figs. 5.22, 5.23).

The second important pattern is that the rarer incised pottery shows a conspicuous concentration in open space S8 (although it still occurs widely across
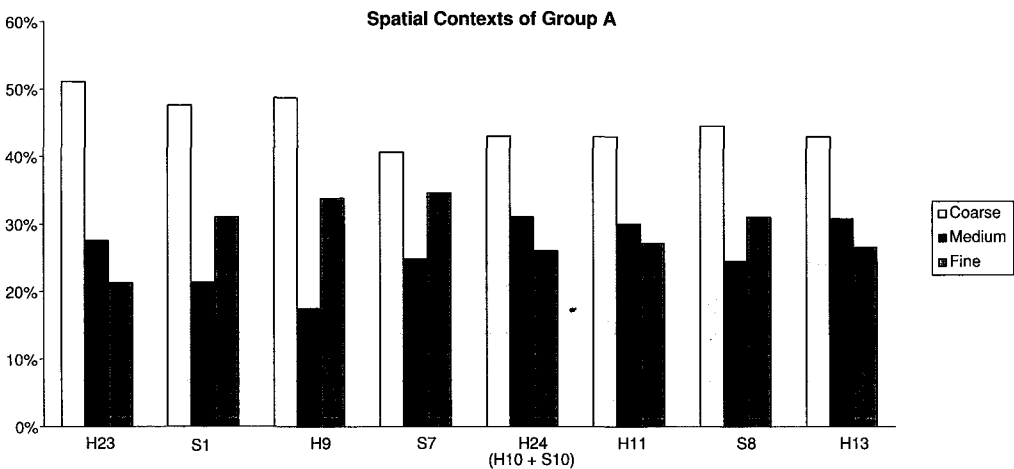
5.21. Distribution of coarse, medium, and fine clay pottery in the contexts of Group A.
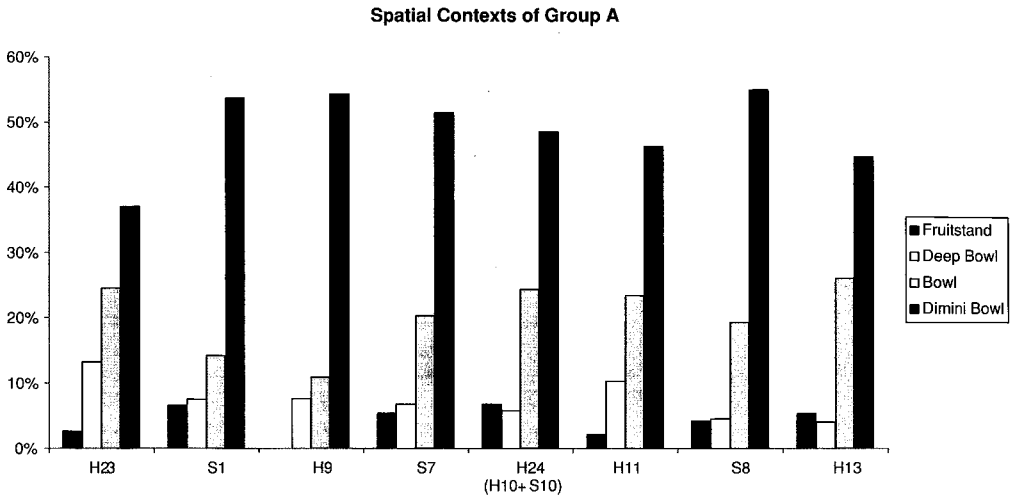
5.22. Distribution of common serving vessels in the contexts of Group A.

the settlement) (Fig. 5.20). In terms of numbers, 70% of the incised ceramics came from S8, and this context is the only one where the full typological range of this ceramic class occurs and where almost all of the complete or restorable incised pots were found. Interestingly, the concentration of incised pottery in S8 co-occurs with relatively high assemblages of other types of material culture such as chipped stone tools and shell beads, as we will see in the next section.

A third pattern concerns the high proportions of fine painted wares, particularly of Dimini Bowls, in the contexts of Group B (assigned with scores 3–4) by comparison to those of group A (assigned with scores 1–2) (Figs. 5.24, 5.25). This can be better understood in terms of absolute numbers: the more contextually 'complete' spatial units of Group A as a whole yielded 80% of the
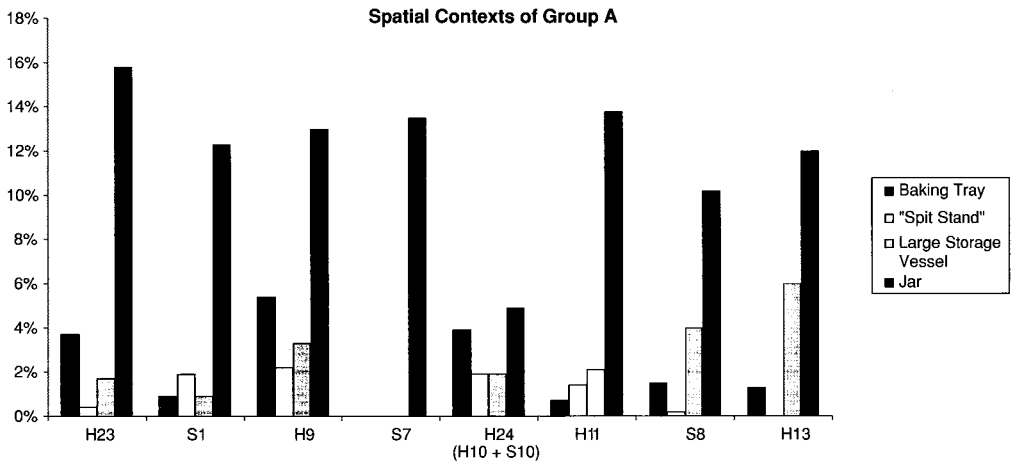
5.23. Distribution of common storage and cooking vessels in the contexts of Group A.

Spatial Contexts of Group B
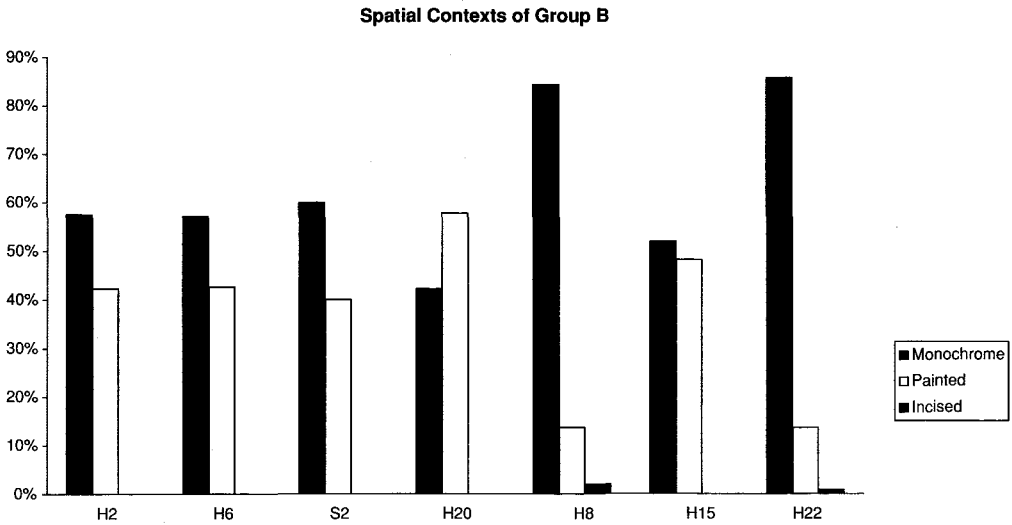
5.24. Distribution of monochrome, painted, and incised pottery in the contexts of Group B.

entire ceramic sample, of which 26% is classified as painted pottery and 53% as Dimini Bowl. On the other hand, in the remaining 20% of the sample, coming from the less contextually 'complete' spatial units of Group B, painted pottery reached 42%, and Dimini Bowl an overwhelming 74%. This greater representation of painted pottery can be due to the fact that monochrome potsherds tend to be more widely reused, and thus are more likely to have been removed from their original contexts (Rice 1987: 411–12). But it may equally relate to variation in modes and practices of house abandonment. I discuss this point later in this chapter.

Spatial Contexts of Group B
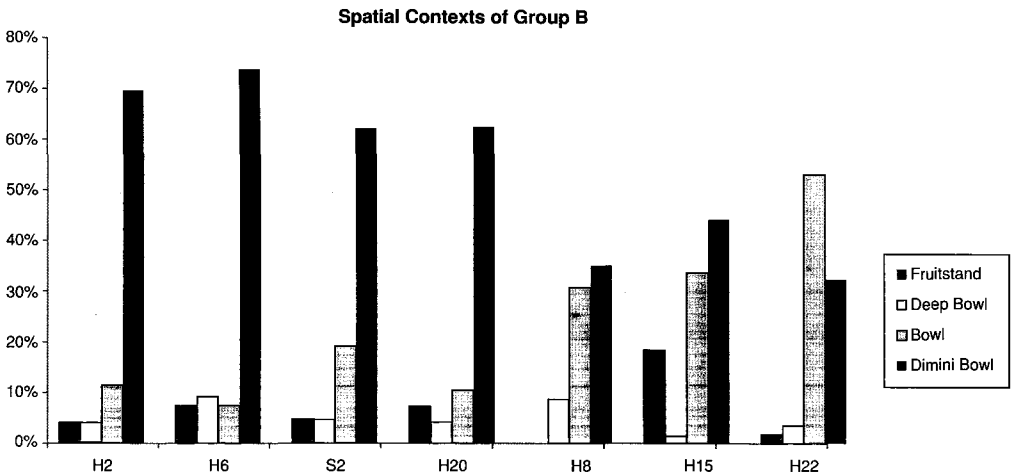
5.25. Distribution of common serving vessels in the contexts of Group B.

5.26. Figurines from Dimini decorated in the typical Dimini Ware style (Brown-on-Buff). (Drawing and copyright: Evangelia Skafida.)

The Spatial Distribution of Small Finds and Subsistence Data

Figurines amount to 129 clay, marble, and stone pieces, the vast majority of which are anthropomorphic (Skafida 1992, in preparation) (Fig. 5.26). Of these most are schematic, 10.5% are classified as female and under 5% as male, and above 16% bear painted and/or incised decoration. Their production was characterised as unspecialised (Skafida 1992: 176). The decorative style and designs on the decorated figurines recall strongly those on pots, whereas the heads of the more naturalistic ones are almost identical to the plastic or painted heads occurring on the fruitstands and deep bowls (Fig. 5.16). The spatial distribution of figurines is largely homogeneous, although they tend to occur in internal rather than in external spaces, and there is an interesting clustering outside the third and fourth enclosures in the west and east part of the site.

All of the 154 spindle-whorls found at Dimini are made of clay, and they fall into three shape categories – flat, conical, and biconical (Adam 1982). Of these, eleven bear incised patterns identical to those found on the incised pots (Malakasioti 1982). The spindle-whorl and textile manufacture are seen as unspecialised (Adam 1982: 22, 23). Spindle-whorls are evenly distributed both in type and in number, but, like the figurines, they show a concentration in internal spaces and outside of the enclosures.

Polished stone tools and bone tools consist largely of axes, adzes, and chisels and drills, needles, and cutting tools, respectively (Moundrea-Agrafioti 1981). The two respective material distributions in the spatial contexts under study are constructed by the present author (Table 5.2). Combining all available lines of available information, I would argue with some confidence that the various types of tools are evenly distributed. Slight variations may suggest that in some contexts both polished stone and bone tools are abundant, whereas in others either polished stone tools or bone tools predominate.

The chipped stone assemblage is made almost in its entirety (95%) of obsidian, contains both debitage and tool categories, and its production is defined as clearly craft-specialised (Karimali 1994). The most interesting spatial pattern is shown in the contrast between the distribution of tools and the distribution of debitage categories. Although the various tool types, especially blades, flakes, and sickles, occur more or less universally, the production sequence is far better represented in the southern part of the settlement (Karimali 1994: 345–7). In open space S8 in particular all stages of production are evidenced, including complete obsidian blade cores together with secondary crested blades and/or flakes from platform rejuvenation. Interestingly, obsidian cores alone, that is, in no association with by-products, occurred in buildings H11, H23, and H22.

The marine shell assemblage contains circa 5,800 examples, with both natural and worked shells, representing over 20 species of shells (Chapman et al. forthcoming; Kyparissi-Apostolika 2001; Tsuneki n.d., 1989). Over 500 pieces are of *Spondylus gaederopous* (Fig. 3.7), of which Tsuneki (1989) counted 87 bracelets or rings, 141 buttons, 8 cylindrical beads, and 5 miscellaneous objects. The distribution of shells as food remains suggests that they occur widely in internal and external spaces, with higher quantities in S7 and in S8 (Tsuneki n.d., Tables 1–3; 1989, Table 1). The distribution of *Spondylus* objects and their manufacturing waste, on the other hand, is fairly varied: rings and manufacturing waste show high frequencies in building H23, whereas buttons and, in lower quantities, rings and beads are concentrated in external space S8. Tsuneki (1989: 13) concluded that the production of *Spondylus* items was specialised and took place on site, a conclusion confirmed by Kyparissi-Apostolika (2001). Specifically, the production of rings took place mostly in H23, that of buttons and cylindrical beads in S8. The patterns of distribution of the *Spondylus* bracelets/rings are largely confirmed by a recent study of the life cycles of

TABLE 5.2. *Spatial distribution of features and finds at Dimini*

Context	Size (m²)	Features	Pottery[a]	Figurines	Spindle-whorls	Chipped stone tools	Polished stone tools	Bone tools	Shell objects[b]	Stone beads
H2	36.86	1	444	1	6	20	5	5	4	—
H6	20.2	1	110	—	1	—	—	1	1	—
S2	ca. 35.00	1	40	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
H23	51.36	8	1124	10	14	31	26	30	54	54
Phase H18	*51.36*	*3*	*559*	*6*	*8*	*11*	*14*	*10*	*20*	*50*
Phase H17	*51.36*	*5*	*354*	*4*	*6*	*20*	*12*	*20*	*34*	*4*
S1	ca.55.00	2	188	9	4	11	5	11	5	—
H20	14.4	1	128	1	—	1	—	—	6 (1)	—
H9	(18.48)	5–6	157	2?	5	8	2	8	5	19
S7	35.00	6	134	—	—	1	2	—	6	4
H8	16.00	—	51	1	—	2	—	1	—	—
H24 (H10+ S10)	14.55	2–3	235	—	4	23 (—)	12	3	12	3
H11	48.00	4–5	280	12 (13)	15 (19)	20 (64)	9	6	16	3
S8	ca.80.00	3–4	1086	1	20	90	43 (+8 'sling-bullets')	30	167	29
H13	(10.40)	1	336	4	6	50	4 (+1 'sling-bullet')	16	13	1
H15	(35.00)	4	135	2	3	16	15	13	19	—
H22	(45.00)	2	243	1 (—)	5	7	—	2	5	—

Note: ( ) in size column: approx. dimensions of partly preserved buildings; ( ) in small find columns: frequencies by previous scholars
[a] Rimsherd counts and complete vessels only.
[b] All shell species.

these items at Dimini (Chapman and Gaydarska 2006: 161–2; Chapman et al. forthcoming).

The majority of faunal remains were classified as sheep/goats, pigs, and cattle (Halstead 1992). Most of the assemblage came from habitation debris relating to food preparation and consumption, tool production, hide working, and so forth. There was no indication of specialisation in animal husbandry (Halstead 1992: 48). The lack of significant variation in the horizontal distribution of the faunal assemblage suggests uniform strategies of animal exploitation and relative self-sufficiency of the separate domestic units (Halstead 1992: 53).

Finally, considerable amounts of charred cultivated plants were recovered from Dimini, together with their crushed whole pots and storage constructions. They consist of cereals, with large quantities of emmer and naked four-row barley, seven species of pulses, including lentil, pea, bitter vetch, and horsebean, pips of vine and almonds, and one olive stone (Kroll 1979). This variety suggests diversification and, possibly, intensification of agriculture and perhaps the introduction of vine and olive cultivation. Information on the spatial distribution of the products is not sufficiently detailed. What we know is that H9, H11, and S8 each contained most of the aforementioned species, that a large storage vessel in H23 (phase H18) was full of naked six-row barley, and that another in H22 was full of emmer (Kroll 1979, Table 1). Further information will have to rely on the daybooks and, indirectly, on the distribution of storage pots and constructions.

CONTEXTUAL ASSOCIATIONS: HOUSES AND STRUCTURES

The broadly uniform distribution of material and subsistence data suggests multifunctionality, relative self-sufficiency, and a wide and broadly analogous range of activities in individual social units. It calls in question Hourmouziadis' widely accepted idea of functional complementarity at the spatial segment level, suggesting instead that this division of the settlement should be separated from a strictly functional interpretation. Given this invisibility of diversity in any straightforward manner, can variation in modes of activities and in intensity of use of any particular location be identified? And can households be identified? To answer these questions, a shift of attention from larger to smaller scales of analysis and to integration of all lines of evidence is required. Indeed, the most consistent indications of variation are represented at the house scale and in terms of two main patterns. One is a distinction of the various architectural units into residential and nonresidential. The other relates to the spatial organisation of craft-specialised production. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 present several lines of contextual information and the amount of structural features and finds for each space respectively. Table 5.3 summarises the spatial associations of features with
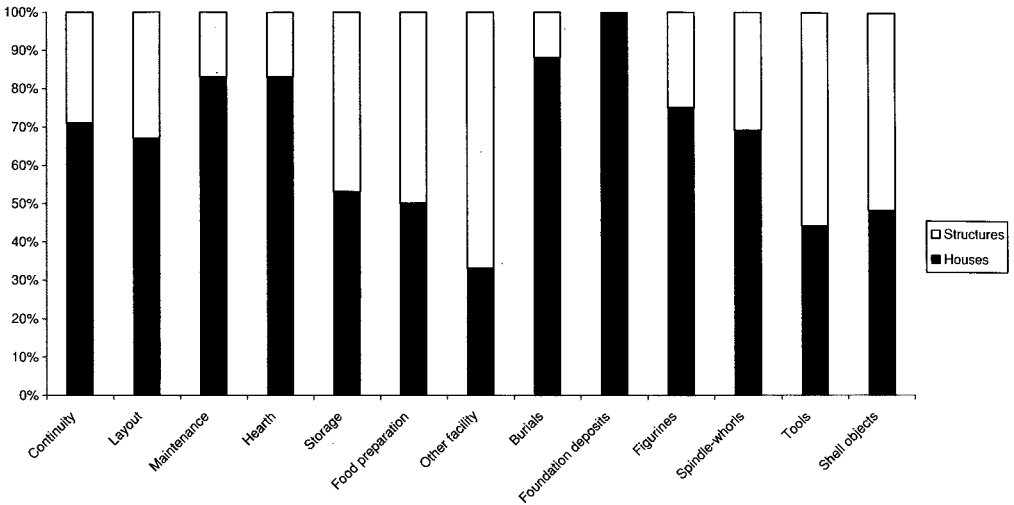
5.27. Schematic representation of some variables of the distinction between residential spaces (Houses) and nonresidential spaces (Structures). Continuity was measured according to the number of building phases evidenced in each group. Layout precision was assigned a presence (1)/absence (0) score. Maintenance includes signs of repair, facility rebuilding, wall plastering, and other construction details. Storage, food preparation, and 'other' represent structural features only. Ground stone, chipped stone, and bone tools were counted together. The spatial distribution of ceramic classes, considered in detail in Figs. 5.20–5.25, is not included here.

material culture, reconsidering Hourmouziadis' interpretation of the former and accounting for those that did not receive attention.

The various spatial contexts can be divided into two types, termed provisionally Houses and Structures. The Houses are residences or domestic buildings where a range of activities is carried out and which are equivalents to the notion of residence or dwelling. The Structures are nondomestic buildings, work areas, and open spaces of a more specialised or limited function. They are distinguished through a complex set of data, summarised below and schematically shown in Fig. 5.27. Although this classification depends on what each group is associated with or dissociated from, the distinction is consistent and explains much of the diversity observed so far. This is essentially a first methodological step away from a direct linking of architectural units with social units and towards the spatial and social identification of the household. Besides, this distinction has not always been clear-cut: several activities are evidenced in both types of contexts and, conversely, there are contexts which cannot be clearly classified into either type. Of the contexts that could be more or less certainly classified into each type Houses include H1, H4 (back room), H6, H8, H9, H10, H11, H15, H20, H22, and H23; Structures include H5, S2, S1, and S8 (Fig. 5.4). Buildings H2, H13, S7, and S10, on the other hand, show characteristics both of Houses and of Structures.

TABLE 5.3. *Associations of features and finds at Dimini*

Context	Code	Type	Hourmouziadis (1979)	Souvatzi	Associated finds
H2	f1	Square; flat stone with clay bottom	Food-processing	Hearth	Ash; potsherds; 1 figurine; 4 spindle-whorls; 4 ground and polished stone tools; 15 chipped stone tools; 4 bone tools; 4 *Spondylus* shell bracelets; animal bones.
H6	f2	Circular; flat stone with clay bottom	Food-processing		Painted potsherds, mostly from Dimini Bowls
S2	f3	Square; rubble stone and clay	Storage	Cooking facility?	Large parts of clay urns
H23					
phase H18	f4	Square; clay with clay rim	—	Hearth	Large storage vessel (pithos) full of carbonised barley seeds; 2 complete but crushed incised clay vessels; parts of monochrome and painted vessels; 1 figurine; 48 stone beads (corresponding to 1 necklace); 3 polished stone tools; 3 bone tools; 9 *Spondylus* shell bracelets.
	f5	Ashy patch encircled by rubble stone	—	Hearth?	Carbonised grain; 1 'spit stand'; 1 complete Dimini Bowl; 1 complete monochrome rounded bowl; 5 figurines; 5 spindle-whorls; 10 ground and polished stone tools; 7 bone tools; 5 *Spondylus* shell bracelets.
	f6	Rectangular; flat stone, built-in	Storage	Storage?	Child burial; 1 painted spherical bowl; large parts of monochrome and painted vessels.
phase H17	f7	Irregular; clay surface on flat stone substructure	Food-processing	Hearth	Fire traces; 1 large storage jar (pithos); 1 monochrome clay table; 1 complete painted clay 'basket'; 1 'spit stand'; 1 figurine; 3 spindle-whorls; 14 bone tools; 11 ground and polished stone tools; 3 *Spondylous* shell bracelets.
	f8	Rectangular; flat stone; built-in; interior walls clay-plastered and lined with upright stone slabs; own threshold	Workshop	'Cupboard'	Coarse monochrome pottery; 2 monochrome rounded bowls; few animal bones; 19 *Spondylus* shell bracelets; 4 stone beads; 1 quern.

	f9	Square; flat stone	Storage	Parching hearth	Fire traces; fragments from one coarse storage jar; painted vessels; 1 pedestalled monochrome bowl full of charred wheat; 4 *Spondylus* shell bracelets.
	f10	Flat stone slab	—	Shelf	1 painted neck jar; 1 monochrome pedestalled bowl; 1 'spit stand'; 1 figurine; 3 *Spondylus* shell bracelets; stag horns.
S1	f11	Square; rubble stone and clay	—	Hearth	Fire traces, ash, burnt clay chunks; large parts of coarse storage vessels; Dimini Bowl fixed on the ground; 8 figurines; 2 spindle-whorls; 2 polished stone tools; 4 bone tools; 2 shell bracelets and buttons.
	f12	Round stone platform	—	Other[a]	1 complete miniature Dimini Bowl; 1 complete handless cup; 1 figurine; 2 spindle-whorls; 5 bone objects; 3 polished stone tools; 4 chipped stone tools; 7 bone tools.
H20	f13	Rectangular; stone, built-in	Storage	Storage?	Large assemblage of painted potsherds; 1 chipped stone tool.
	f14	Niche/cavity in walls joint	—		Large fragment of Dimini Bowl; bones of 5 new-born dogs.
H9	f15	Square; clay surface on flat stone substructure	Food-processing	Food-processing	On top: 1 complete Dimini Bowl, 1 'spit stand', 2 animal mandibles.
	f16	Pit lined with rubble stone	—	Storage	(No detailed information)
	f17	Pit lined with potsherds	—	Storage	(No detailed information)
	f18	Square; clay with clay rim	—	Hearth	2 large storage jars full of carbonised pulses; 1 Dimini Bowl; 2 monochrome shallow bowls, 1 drinking vessel; 1 handless cup; 4 spindle-whorls; 1 polished stone tool; 3 chipped stone tools; 6 bone tools; 2 *Spondylus* shell bracelets; 15 beads.
	f19	Stone partition	Storage	Storage?	1 large storage jar (pithos) (no further information)
S7	f20	Square; flat stone with clay bottom	Food-processing	Hearth	Fire traces; lower part of large storage jar (pithos); 1 complete painted rounded bowl with charred grain; 1 drinking vessel.
	f21	Circular; upright stone slabs with clay bottom	Storage	Storage?	Child burial

(continued)

TABLE 5.3 *(Continued)*

Context	Code	Type	Hourmouziadis (1979)	Souvatzi	Associated finds
	f22	Square; flat stone with clay bottom	Food-processing	?	(No detailed information)
	f23	Circular; upright stone slabs with clay bottom	Storage	?	(No detailed information)
	f24	Square; upright stone slabs with clay bottom	Storage	?	(No detailed information)
H24					
H10	f25	Circular; flat stone with clay bottom	Food-processing	Hearth	Lower parts of two large storage jars, one of them containing child burial; 2 painted spherical bowls; 1 monochrome rounded bowl
S10	f26	Stone bench	—	Other	2–4 'spit stands'; 1 complete coarse cooking vessel; 1 clay sieve; 1 painted neck jar; 1 handled cup; large assemblage of charred shells and animal bones.
H11	f27	Square; flat stone with clay bottom	Food-processing	Hearth	2 'spit stands'; 6 figurines; 15 spindle-whorls; and 9 polished and ground stone tools.
	f28	Square; flat stone	Storage	Hearth?	
	f29	Oval; flat stone	—	?	
	f30	Circular; clay patch encircled by rubble stone	—	?	
S8	f31	Circular; clay walls and clay bottom	Food-processing + potter's kiln	Pottery firing facility	Inside: ash, burnt clay chunks and large monochrome potsherds; around: clay lumps and chunks; next to it: large storage jar (pithos) fixed on the ground.
	f32	Pit	Storage	Storage	—

	f33	Round stone platform	Food-processing	Other	4 complete but crushed incised biconical jars; 1 complete monochrome deep bowl; 2–3 Dimini Bowls; 4 handless cups; 1 'spit stand'; large fragments of coarse storage/cooking pottery; 10 spindle-whorls; 20 ground and polished stone tools, 5 'sling-bullets'; 18 bone tools; 30 chipped stone tools and 20 debitage pieces; 15 stone beads; 90 *Spondylus* shell 'buttons'; large assemblage of charred animal bones, grain and shells.
	f34	Square; flat stone	—	Food-processing/ parching hearth?	On top: ash and 1 'spit stand'; (this feature was found near the above platform (f33) so some of the above finds might be associated with it).
H13	f35	Square; clay surface on flat stone substructure	Food-processing	Hearth	Ash; carbonised grain; 2 monochrome bowls, one of which had a pedestal base; 4 figurines; 4 spindle-whorls; 4 ground stone tools; 15 bone tools; 30 chipped stone tools and various debitage categories; 10 *Spondylus* shell objects.
H15	f36	Square; flat stone with clay bottom	Food-processing	Hearth	Impressions of 2 large storage vessels on clay floor; child burial in floor.
	f37	Square; flat stone with clay bottom	Food-processing	Hearth	Large parts of storage vessels; 1 monochrome bowl; 1 coarse closed vessel; 2 figurines; 2 spindle-whorls; 7 polished stone tools; 10 bone tools; large assemblage of animal bones.
	f38	Stone; poorly preserved	Storage	?	(No detailed information)
	f39	Stone; poorly preserved	Storage	?	
H22	f40	Square; flat stone with clay bottom	—	Hearth	Dimini Bowl full of grain and placed inside a larger monochrome bowl; 1 figurine; 5 spindle-whorls; 2 bone tools.
	f41	Clay; poorly preserved	—	Hearth?	Large storage jar full of carbonised emmer

Note: Reconstructed on the combined use of the daybooks, the excavation recording cards, and the Volos Museum catalogues.

[a] 'Other' indicates features that cannot be classified with certainty; suggestions are offered in Chapter 5.

Spatial and Architectural Patterns

In terms of spatial associations, inside the Houses the focus of activities is the hearth, despite the observed typological or locational variation of this feature. Around the hearth were consistently clustered storage, cooking, and elaborate vessels, 'spit stands', spindle-whorls, polished and chipped stone tools, bone tools, and other equipment such as clay tables, querns, and grinding stones (Table 5.3). Stone and shell ornaments also tend to be found near the hearth – for example, the forty-eight stone beads, identified as one necklace, in House 23, which were found *in situ* next to a hearth. Interestingly, figurines tend to cluster along the long walls, suggesting either an original placement on shelves (Skafida in prep.) or a final act of deposition prior to abandonment. On the other hand, in very few Structures did the hearth, if present at all, indicate such focus or attributes, whereas the association of shell and stone objects primarily with tools and other specialised equipment suggests production rather than use, although the two are not mutually exclusive.

Trends also emerge in a series of architectural data, suggesting variation in continuity and in energetic and symbolic investment between Houses and Structures (Fig. 5.27). Architectural activity of all kinds and degrees, from the substantial modifications of enclosures and spatial segments to repairs of individual buildings, does not just occur across the site, but is strongly context-specific. All Houses showed at least two building phases, several modifications or restorations of their structural features (e.g., hearth rebuilding, entrance sealing, and wall replastering), as well as evidence for careful planning, construction, and arrangement of their interiors. For example, the floor of House 9 was made of clay spread over a substructure of potsherds, and the rectangular storage facility in House 23 was stone-made, built-in, and had its interior walls plastered with clay or lined with upright slabs (Table 5.3: feature 8; Fig. 5.28). The nondomestic structures are subsidiary to the Houses in this respect and were probably built more carelessly and less permanently. In addition, the buildings were not just constructed wherever space was available, nor did they invariably use the enclosures as organic parts of their construction. The Houses are usually of a rectilinear, more precise layout than the Structures (e.g., compare the adjacent S7 and H8 in Fig. 5.4) or can even be free-standing (e.g. H11). Finally, the fact that the enclosures do not always form a complete circuit (e.g., in the area of Houses 20 and 23) can result from a concern with the selection and preparation of House sites rather than from an opportunistic nature of settlement construction.

Subsistence and Craft Activities

Although various subsistence activities appear to have been carried out everywhere, craft activities tend to be segregated or spatially more distinct. Storage

5.28. Interior of House 23 at Dimini, showing the linear arrangement of features on the three successive floors. Earlier floor (H18): square clay hearth in the foreground and stone built-in facility in which children's bones and painted pottery were deposited visible top right. Next floor (H17), left half: stone and clay hearth, fallen stone shelf, stone built-in 'cupboard' and square stone hearth next to it. Top left corner of the interior: remains of the third floor, with a stone hearth and a clay vessel containing the cremation burial of an infant. Succession of house walls visible on the left half. Bottom right: part of the threshold to the house, next to which a complete monochrome bowl and a stone chisel were embedded. From the southwest.

occurs in all spatial units – Houses and Structures. Food preparation and cooking seem to be better associated with residential than with nonresidential spaces, although cooking certainly also occurred outside the Houses. By an interesting contrast, food consumption is evidenced invariably in both residential and nonresidential contexts, matching the universal occurrence of storage function. Several stages of crop and meat processing (e.g., threshing and winnowing, and slaughter and butchery) must have also taken place outside the Houses, or even outside the settlement (Halstead 1992: 33). Evidence for spinning and weaving occurs mainly within the Houses and in relation to the cluster of attributes around the hearth. Ceramic, lithic, and shell object manufacture, bone, antler, and hide working, and polished stone production seem to have taken place mainly outside the Houses, although not necessarily outside of the social unit of production. Examples of craft-specialised activities inside the Houses include the representation of the shell ring production sequence in H23 and the presence of obsidian debitage categories in H13.

The Spatial Organisation of Specialised Craft Production

The concentration of incised pottery in S8 concurs with another two unusual features. One is a circular construction made of stone, mud brick, and clay,
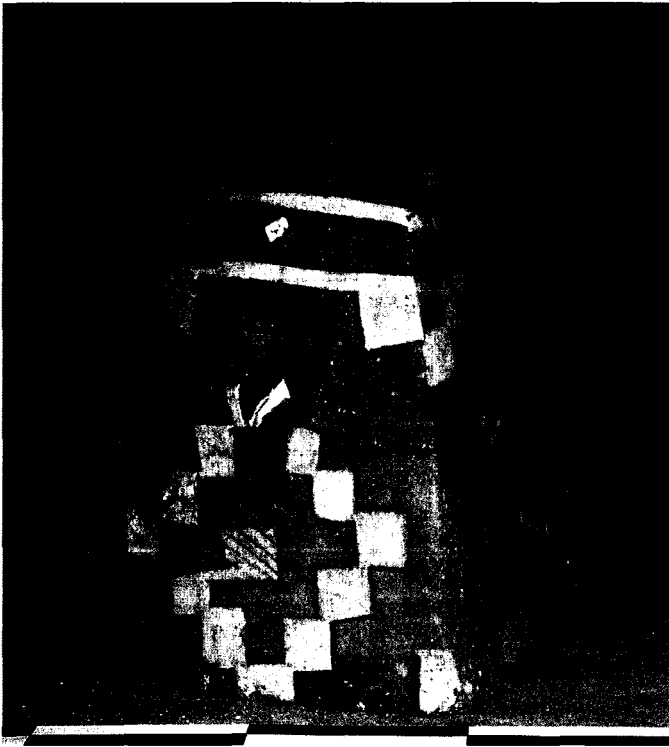
5.29. Black-and-White-on-Red 'spit stand' from Dimini.

with updraft walls ca. 0.30 m high (Fig. 5.30). It was associated with sev-
eral balls and lumps of clay, highly fired clay forms, deposits of ash and clay,
and numerous potsherds. Hourmouziadis (1978b) interpreted this feature as
a potter's kiln intended for the production of incised pottery and serving the
entire community. By integrating more and new lines of evidence, the present
work supports Hourmouziadis' views of this space and takes them further
(although the attributes of this feature fit better with those of a firing oven
or facility than with those of a kiln). The other special feature is a round
stone platform situated across from this firing facility and surrounded by a slate
paving (Fig. 5.1, 5.30). It was associated with high assemblages of potsherds and
complete vessels, tools, and food remains and apparently served multiple pur-
poses, in which vessel forming and drying as well as food consumption can be
included.

Open space S8 conforms to most of the indicators suggested by the long
literature on the identification of archaeological ceramic production locations –
for example, the presence of specialised structures, the relative spatial restriction
of the area, and the deposits of ash (Costin 1991; Deal 1998; Nicklin 1979;
Stark 1985; Tosi 1984). Chances increase further when pottery manufacture
is found to be specialised and when clay sources are closely located (Arnold
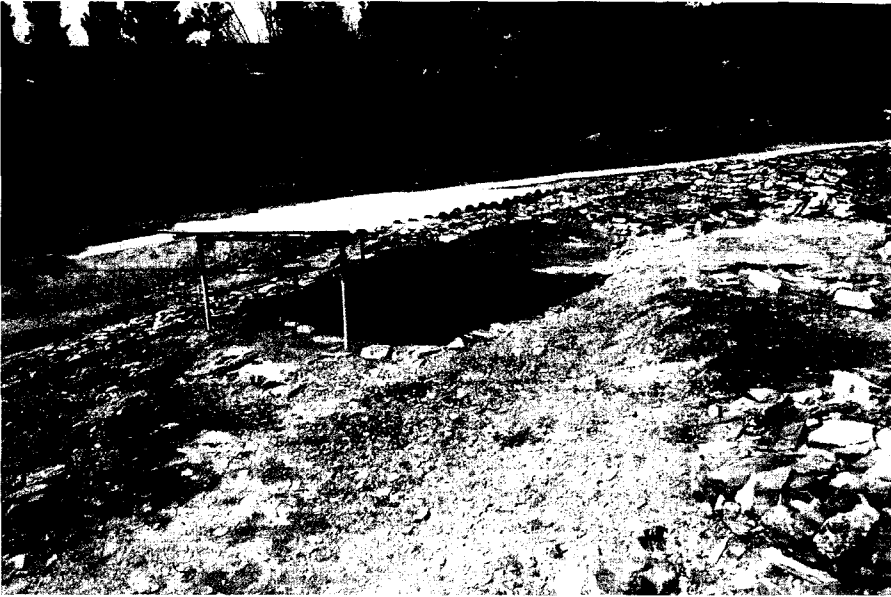
5.30. Workshop S8 at Dimini with stone and clay pottery firing facility under shelter and circular stone platform across it (bottom right). Third enclosure in the background. From the southeast.

1985: 51–2; Feinman 1985: 200), both of which are applicable to the Dimini pottery. The differential distribution of incised pottery (Fig. 5.20) is consistent with the concentration of finished products in production areas (Arnold 1991: 93–4). It is possible that other wares were also fired, if not produced, here and that the concentration of incised vessels represents only the last output.

Although production implements are neither self-evident nor universally defined, the number and variety of tools in S8 could easily be associated with various stages in pottery production (e.g., cutting tools, pointed tools, scrapers, and burnishers). The potential of tool concentrations for indicating production areas increases when it occurs simultaneously with evidence for multiple manufacturing activities, and signs of workshop debris in one raw material often highlight the place to search for debitage from another craft (Sinopoli 1991: 109). Indeed, at least another two lines of specialised production – chipped stone tools and shell objects – must have been carried out in S8. As we saw earlier, large quantities of *Spondylus* shell buttons and beads were associated with manufacturing waste and with implements such as drills and hammerstones, appropriate for shell manufacture (Tsuneki 1989: 10, 12), and S8 is the only space at the site where all stages of the chipped stone production sequence are evidenced.

In all, the spatial interrelation of several classes of information suggests that S8 was functionally differentiated and most likely associated with the organisation of specialised production, including pottery, shell objects, and chipped stone

tools. At the same time, the presence of large storage vessels, food remains, spindle-whorls, and a variety of pots (Table 5.3) attributes a multifunctional character to S8, demonstrating the flexibility of spatial organisation and socioeconomic practice.

Open space S1 in the northeast spatial segment (Fig. 5.4) exhibits noticeable similarities in spatial arrangements to S8. It was also covered by a similar clay layer with ashy patches and burnt clay chunks and had a roughly made clay hearth at its end, fitting with the description of a 'hearth firing' of pottery (Sinopoli 1991: 31), situated away from the nearby house entrances, and associated with clay pieces hardened by fire, carbonised organic material, and large coarse potsherds. As in S8, across from this fireplace was found the only other example of a round stone platform, associated with tools and with shells and shell objects, although neither in particularly high amounts. Is it possible that we have another production area in S1? The evidence is not so strong as at S8, and S1 was not so well-preserved either, but on the other hand, production areas are always difficult to establish archaeologically (e.g., Costin 1991: 19), especially when production is associated with households and such areas occur in domestic contexts, which is indeed the case for Dimini.

Socio-ritual Practices

Symbolic and ritual practices are evidenced in the form of foundation deposits, burials, possible rites of abandonment, and ritualised food consumption. Foundation deposits occur only in residential contexts (Fig. 5.27). They consist of various items – polished stone tools, animal bones, and large fragments of pottery – found singly or in combination in various structural elements of the House. For example, a complete monochrome bowl together with a stone chisel were embedded inside the lower part of the wall next to the threshold of H23 (phase H18). Among the most interesting foundation deposits are the remains of five new-born dogs in a small niche virtually under the west wall of H20 (Halstead 1992: 36). Their location seems to indicate a foundation rite rather than mere discard. They are a hint of the importance of domesticated animals, and even of pet animals, in daily life, an importance reflected also in the animal figurines and zoomorphic pots from Greek Neolithic settlements (Toufexis 1994, 2003).

Eight cremation burials were uncovered within the settlement, all placed near hearths in the floor, in built-in facilities or in pots, some of which were made especially for this purpose (Hourmouziadis 1978a: 33, Fig. 3). All are of infants and occur, with a single exception, within residential contexts. Some of these may constitute foundation deposits, as in House 23 (phase H18), where a child skull and a few bones were deposited together with decorated ceramics inside a stone facility (Fig. 5.28), apparently prior to the construction of the succeeding

structure. In other instances, infant remains give the impression that they were brought inside later, perhaps prior to abandonment of the building rather than during its occupation. For example, in House 9 a child skull and bones were found mixed with fallen superstructure material, implying deposition on the floor rather than interment in or under it. This type of reburial may indicate ways of house abandonment or symbolic closure.

Although, as said earlier, it is difficult to know whether the contents reported as found *in situ* on the house floors represent *in situ* use or *in situ* abandonment, that the patterning of material may be the result of abandonment behaviour is of equal interest. One such practice may be evidenced in the abundance of painted ceramics, particularly of often complete Dimini Bowls, and in the spatial patterning of the artefacts left in the relatively empty spatial units. These buildings might have been abandoned at an early stage or when there were few people to relate to the former occupants whose death possibly caused the abandonment.[13] For instance, the ceramic sample of House 20 consisted mostly of painted pottery (Figs. 5.24 and 5.25) and was deposited almost in its entirety in a built facility near the aforementioned dog burial. Likewise, the few items recovered from House 6 were found clustered (or scattered?) around the hearth. A larger group of Houses show evidence for extensive burning, with lots of burnt superstructure debris, and apparently retain most of their contents. Although the Dimini excavation data are not so pertinent as to convincingly suggest a tactic of deliberate burning similar to that in southeast Europe discussed in Chapter 2, the idea of a deliberate act can still be considered. Given the absence of any evidence of sudden abandonment or violent destruction of the site, the fires which destroyed these Houses seem to have been isolated instances. Even if some of these fires were accidental, the question remains of why so much material, including 'valuable' portable items, was left inside. Significantly, almost none of the relatively empty or the relatively full households were reused, rebuilt, or demolished in later periods. It is possible that the former could have served as a memorial still during the Neolithic habitation of the settlement, whereas the latter might have symbolically marked the end of habitation of parts of the site.

Interestingly, specific associations between carbonised food remains, cooking facilities, decorated vessels, and other features occur in both Houses and Structures, if not more strongly in the latter. The use-context of the pots and the elaboration of the means of consumption, indicated by the abundance of high-quality serving ware (Figs. 5.15–5.19), may provide a further clue to ritualised food consumption. The elaborate painted and incised vessels were, just like their monochrome counterparts, evenly distributed near hearths, food remains, and cooking and storage facilities. In the better preserved contexts, partially or wholly complete decorated vessels were found, often with their contents (charred cereals, pulses, and fruits) still in them or scattered around

them. For example, a Dimini Bowl was found full of grain or fruit and placed inside a larger, monochrome bowl in House 22. Another was fixed on the ground near an open hearth in S1, and a third was situated on a stone food preparation or cooking facility next to a large assemblage of animal bones in H9 (Table 5.3). Another interesting tale comes from the so-called 'spit stands' (Fig. 5.29). They combine a most elaborate, polychrome decoration (exclusively Polychrome 1) on the exterior with the coarsest fabric and a crude, plain, and fire-blackened hollow interior. Tsountas (1908) interpreted them as ritual objects, used probably for the ritual cooking of meat on the spit (hence the name), given the series of knobs on the upper edges of their sides. The involvement of this vessel in some ritualised cooking practice is indeed possible. The large size and amount of their nonplastic inclusions indicate that these pots were made to resist considerable thermal shock. In addition, all of the thirteen complete examples recovered during Hourmouziadis' excavation occurred in close association with hearths, ashy deposits, and high concentrations of charred food remains (Table 5.3). For example, in room S10 were found *in situ* three complete 'spit stands', some still containing charred wood in their interiors, a complete cooking vessel, a clay sieve, a painted neck jar, a cup, and a large assemblage of charred shells and animal bones, all of which were placed on a stone bench alongside the inner wall of building.

In summary, the residential contexts outnumber the nonresidential ones and exhibit a wider range of activities, stronger indications of long life and continuity, and greater investment in architecture and interior elaboration. To a certain extent, the distinction between Houses and Structures corresponds to that between residential and work spaces, with the former rather than the latter being symbolically emphasised.

IDENTIFYING HOUSEHOLDS

A key point in the definition of household discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 is that it engages in a maximum definable number of socioeconomic and ritual activities. Such co-occurrence of different practices, which could be considered as strongly indicative of an individual household, is not universal at the site. My suggestion regarding the number and spatial configuration of the Dimini households is shown in Fig. 5.31 and is discussed below.

Northeast Spatial Segment

House 23 provides evidence for all types of household activity and is probably an example of coincidence between household and house. Longevity, continuity, and house planning and maintenance are also strongly indicated, whereas the abundance of household equipment, stored food, and food remains
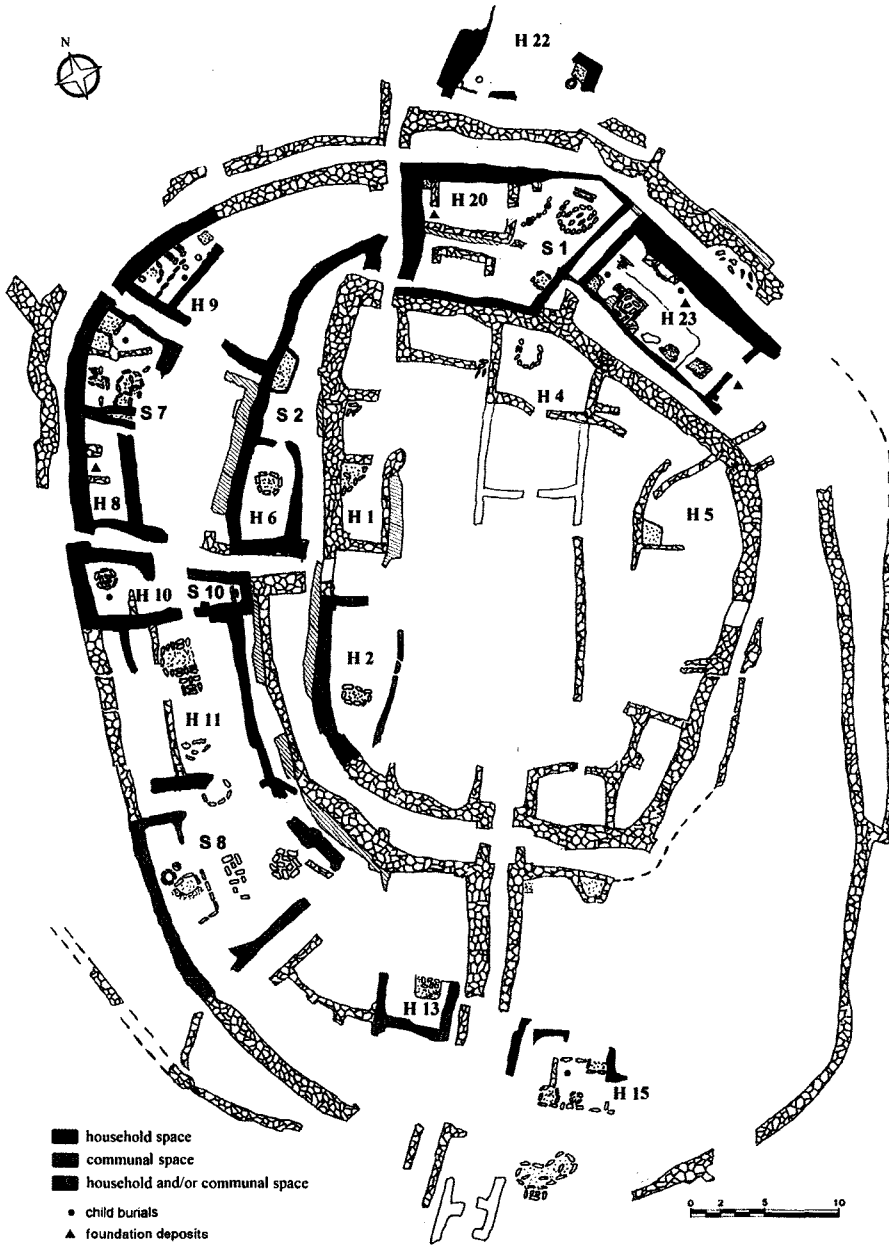
5.31. Households and work/communal spaces at Dimini as identified by the author, and distribution of child burials and foundation deposits. (Plan redrawn from Hourmouziadis 1979.)

contribute to the picture of a relatively self-sufficient social unit. The characteristic linear arrangement of features alongside the walls (Fig. 5.28) provides ample free space for further living activities such as socialising and sleep. House 20, on the other hand, seems to represent a different household spatial structure, defined as a house, an open area, and a smaller external construction. The

combined data considered here, including the evidence of symbolic practices, are not consistent with a view of House 20 as secondary to House 23 (contra Hourmouziadis 1979: 151), although the possibility of earlier abandonment of this structure cannot be disregarded either. The way movement is structured by the architecture provides a further corrective. The location of the entrances of both Houses 20 and 23 on the southeast points against a shared use of the areas in between, whereas the particularly steep and narrow passages both to the east and the west sides would not have not facilitated communication either.

Northwest Spatial Segment

House 9 is consistent with the definition of household, comparable to House 23, even though partially preserved. Tsountas' (1908: 64) suggestion that House 9 was part of a larger house whose entrance was on the south (Fig. 5.2: 22) is plausible. The two radial passages which delimit House 9 alone further strengthen the impression of one spatially autonomous household in one physical entity. House 8 and building S7 appear to represent component parts of one living complex, given their differences in architecture, planning and facility distribution (Fig. 5.31). They may have belonged to one household, although the number of storage features in S7 does imply use by more than one household (Hourmouziadis 1979: 154). The spatial definition of House 6 and its external space S2 points to a similar direction. Their delimitation by the second enclosure suggests that they formed a separate spatial segment, earlier than those of the third enclosure and also situated at a higher level. It is possible that a household comprising a House and an external space is represented there.

Southwest Spatial Segment

Rooms H10 and S10 may have also been parts of one living complex with two separate entrances and, perhaps, with a third room or a small open area in between. When seen together, they provide evidence for several spheres of household activities as well as some of the strongest symbolic elements in the site, particularly S10, with its accumulation of 'spit stands' and associated material. This latter line of evidence, on the other hand, may indicate a more widely shared use of this space than by H10 only. House 11 presents a picture of a self-sufficient context appearing to integrate the needs of an individual household in one spatial unit. The whole range of material culture is represented there and in considerable amounts, whereas the number and the linear arrangement of features are conspicuously similar to those of House 23. Further south, external space S8 provides a most complete picture of a

workshop, as we have already seen – one, however, in which storage and food consumption also took place. Although it is possible that House II used S8 as a courtyard or even for storage and food consuming, the range and intensity of activities in the latter space cannot be entirely attributed to a single household.

The Remaining Parts

Little can be said with certainty about the remaining parts of the settlement. The area within the first enclosure as whole does not permit a full reconstruction of the activities and the use of space owing to a number of factors, including substantial modifications over the years, Bronze Age occupation, and the removal of deposits by Stais and Tsountas. The complex of H4 and its two adjacent rooms were excavated mostly by Tsountas and his description is the main source of information. It was defined gradually and over considerable spans of time (Hourmouziadis 1979: 63, 107–10; Tsountas 1908: 52, 56). A sealed entrance in the wall shared by H4 and the room to its west suggests that the two rooms once belonged to one building. Tsountas (1908: 52, 56) noted that they both postdate the back room and identified the present megaron-like layout as the outcome of a third successive construction episode, which, however, he did not date. As noted earlier, Hourmouziadis (and Elia 1982: 312) argued that this last construction episode happened during the Bronze Age, whereas Halstead suggested that the entire H4 dates to the Neolithic. What could be of greater importance than the chronology and typology of this complex are its repeated rebuilding and remodelling, which imply among other things considerable longevity as well as change over time. With regard to households, Hourmouziadis' suggestion about the existence of three households there (Fig. 5.3), drawing on evidence of an uneven distribution of features and classes of material culture, is attractive.

To the south, House 13 provided evidence for several kinds of activities, whereas its adjacent room was found almost empty of contents. House 15 most likely represents a household, whose spatial configuration, however, remains unknown. Its structural remains suggest a careful construction, although the activities evidenced there extend from storage to primary child burials. Likewise, in the east part of the site outside the fourth enclosure House 22 clearly suggests a household, despite its incomplete excavation (Tables 5.1 and 5.3).

In summary, the architectural evidence and the spatial distribution of the material suggest that social and symbolic factors are reflected materially through patterns of movement, construction details, internal elaboration, and specific clustering of sets of items or features, but that household space can be mapped chiefly on the basis of activities, encompassing both internal and external space.

COMPARING HOUSEHOLDS

Analysis and integration of all types of data deriving from household practices suggests that the organisation of households was more complex, shifting, and heterogeneous than might appear. Household spatial configuration varies even within one spatial segment and is further complemented by variation in the organisation of interior arrangements (Fig. 5.31). There are cases of coincidence of a household with a house as a physical and social unit (e.g., H23, H9, and H11); of a household occupying a building and an external space (e.g., H6-S2) or another building (e.g., H8-S7 and H10-S10); and of a household incorporating more than two physical structures and/or external areas (e.g., H20 and surrounding area).

Neither is household activity completely uniform across the site, although lesser variation is observed here, suggesting that households were fundamental units of production and reproduction. Some households seem to have been more intensively engaged in subsistence production than others, as is indicated by the amount and diversity of their stored supplies; others can be more associated either with craft production or with 'domestic' activities such as spinning and weaving; and yet others show a combination of both. Craft-specialised activities occur mostly in the southwest and northeast spatial segments and near or within the spatial configuration of two to four households in the respective segments (Fig. 5.31). The involvement in pottery production of households in H11 and H23 in particular would have also been facilitated by their long life, large size, and continuity in activity, and so by the greater availability of labour force.

The extent to which these variations can be interpreted as an indication of social and economic differences between the households is highly debatable. They are not consistent with the form, size, or even location of houses, the space available, or the patterns of activity within. Smaller households can have a variety of features, whereas larger households have a single one, and more centrally located households can contain fewer features than the more isolated ones. Varying degrees of architectural elaboration or symbolic emphasis do not seem to make sense in terms of the usual indicators either: smaller households can be two-roomed or otherwise partitioned and/or may be more symbolically emphasised than larger households.

Another area of potential significance for identifying economic and social differences is the material possessions of the different households, provided of course that it is possible to single out categories of material which can be used as wealth markers. In doing so, it is essential to remember that perceptions and expressions of wealth and prestige are socioculturally specific rather than universal. Let us consider the distribution of some of the 'wealth markers' most commonly cited in the archaeological literature – painted pottery, exotic items, and craft-specialised products.

The spatial patterning of the Dimini ceramics suggests consistent and analogous associations of ceramic classes in all contexts. Spatial clustering occurred only in one instance and has proved to be functional. If social differences between households existed in Dimini, the homogeneous distribution and use of ceramics do not provide corroborating evidence. This same evidence suggests, in addition, that there was not any important variation in food consumption either. These arguments are particularly true of painted pottery, and especially the Dimini Bowl, whose unusual proportions universally discredit its significatory value as an individual prestige item. With respect to rarer vessels, the ubiquitous occurrence of the 'spit stands', fruitstands, and painted neck jars points to generalised household rituals and social display rather than to preferential access to social and ritual knowledge. The implication is that all households were socially, and perhaps equally, important.

The concentration of *Spondylus* objects in open space S8 and in House 23 provided a basis for Halstead's theory about social inequality and 'central megaron elites' in Late Neolithic Thessaly. That is, in his reconsideration of Tsuneki's (1989) published data, Halstead (1993) rejected the idea of craft specialisation in shell manufacture and argued that the concentrations in certain parts of the site reflect instead wealth accumulation and conversion to prestige. The high frequency of broken and/or burnt *Spondylus* items in H23 was taken by Halstead (1993: 608, 1995: 19) to suggest a 'cache' of burnt bracelets resulting from a deliberate, competitive destruction of valuable craft goods as part of a 'levelling mechanism' practiced by the Dimini 'elite'.

Such arguments, however, involve serious assumptions. First, there is no consistent evidence that in Neolithic Greece shell rings were associated with intracommunity prestige or wealth, even though they have been generally classified as 'rare goods' (Perlès and Vitelli 1999: 99; see also Chapter 7). At Dimini, in particular, shell was far from rare, either as a finished product or as a raw material, given also the proximity of the sea as a source. Second, in light of the numerous arguments for specialisation in *Spondylus* object production in Neolithic Greece (e.g., Karali 2004; Miller 2003; Perlès 2001: 221–6; Renfrew 1973) and of the lines of evidence examined here, Halstead's rejection of it cannot be sustained. Third, among the contexts that were not disturbed or abandoned, and which are therefore really comparable with each other, S8 is functionally discrete, showing all the characteristics of a workshop. Surely, it is not easy to suggest that wealth was accumulated in an external space. As for H23, it also shows uniform relative quantities of waste and of finished product, as well as being the only space where the stages of the ring production sequence are fully represented (Tsuneki 1989: 13). The distribution of these items inside H23 indicates that they were dispersed on the two floors of this house and in different areas on each floor (Table 5.2; also Tsuneki n.d., Table 3). This suggests production and continuity in activity rather than a 'cache'. Finally, the burnt nature of the rings is not an isolated phenomenon. The entire

H23 was destroyed by fire, and much of the organic material recovered from there was burnt. Chapman and Gaydarska's (2006: 163, 167–8; also Chapman et al. forthcoming) analysis of the Dimini ring use–wear and microstratigraphy indicates that two–thirds (64%) of the total assemblage of shell rings, and not only those in H23, had been burnt and that the pattern of ring burning is so varied that it cannot possibly be derived from deliberate potlatching behaviour as the basis for elite differentiation. In addition, there is no good correlation between burnt spaces and the proportions of burnt rings, whereas the burning of rings, possibly for aesthetic enhancement, often happened in phases prior to their final deposition (Chapman and Gaydarska 2006: 162–3, 167–8).

More interesting may be the distribution of obsidian cores in the same above household and in few others. As we have seen, although the whole production sequence is represented only in two contexts (S8 and H13), some households possessed obsidian core fragments alone, that is, with no associated by-products or debitage categories. Such occurrence implies that although lithic production apparently took place outside the realm of individual households, the acquisition and keeping of raw materials might have been regulated at the household level. Obsidian cores could compose part of household equipment and/or exchange at the site and probably beyond, given the exogenous provenance of obsidian. I return to these points in Chapter 7.

Finally, do the Central Courtyard and the so-called 'megaron' there epitomise social differentiation and an 'elite household'? Once we remove H4 and the Central Courtyard (and the entire settlement for that matter) from the perspective of Homer and the Late Bronze Age world, there is little *a priori* reason to assume that its spatial and social organisation 'recall features of the developed Late Bronze Age palatial economy' (Halstead 1995: 19). As is known, the term 'megaron' was employed in the Homeric epics to describe the residences of kings of the Mycenaean world and as such it is heavily charged with features of a socioeconomic organisation which may have little or nothing to do with its Neolithic counterpart.[14] Besides, megaron-like buildings appear already in the Middle Neolithic (for example, Building 7–8–9 in Sesklo) and occur throughout Greece and in so many typological variations to render the type virtually meaningless (Elia 1982). In Dimini alone there are at least another three megaron-like structures, and they are not found inside the first enclosure. The lack of differentiation of H4 and adjacent rooms in size, features, equipment, and material culture are not congruous with a view of this building as the residence of an 'elite', let alone an 'elite' controlling agricultural surplus. There are no data to support the idea of centralisation of resources, which is the precondition for their redistribution. Nor is it easy to substantiate the argument about 'elite' access to ritual and social knowledge, as all data indicative of such practices are as widely distributed across the site as the storage data. Finally, it is not wise to overlook the fact that this building, as well as the entire area

within the first enclosure, underwent repeated modifications over the years, which could well have resulted from changes in size, composition, or ideology of some of the earlier and longer-lived Dimini households.

In fact, the most subtle and perhaps most meaningful of the observed variation between households occurs in terms not of size or material possessions, but of ideology, as this is represented by certain socio-ritual and symbolic practices. For example, social reproductive strategies differ between households, comprising ritualised cooking and consumption, foundation offerings, child burial, continuity in activity, careful house construction and maintenance, or some combination thereof. House abandonment does not appear to be uniform, either. As we have seen, certain households are relatively empty and likely to have been abandoned earlier or in different ways than others. Others show evidence for burning, and apparently retain most of their contents, including 'valuable' portable items. Yet others yielded several items and features but no evidence of burning (Table 5.1). Child burial is another complex phenomenon which may have had different meanings for different households. Their distribution can indicate variation in household composition, with some households formed partly by some elemental kinship structure, in house closure and abandonment, or in house founding.

Overall, there is no consistent indication of social differentiation between households, no positive relationship of house size to house function and activity patterns, and extremely weak associations between economy and assemblage variability or between architectural variability and material variability. Differences can well relate to a number of other factors, including variable intensities and kinds of activities that each household unit undertook, household composition, and more importantly, individual household ideology. All this implies, in turn, that the value of architecture and material culture was defined primarily on social and ideological criteria rather than on economic.

CONNECTING HOUSEHOLDS

Households were important units of production and encompassed a number of practices central to the viability and welfare of the wider society, but were they the only ones? Were households interconnected into larger social and economic groupings? Can we distinguish between household practices and community-wide practices?

An important feature of the spatial and social pattern at Dimini is the presence of areas not clearly related to a specific household and the kinds of activities associated with them. External space S8 is a manifestation of the existence of cooperative activities and shared use of space for specialised pottery, lithic, and shell production and probably also for storage and food consumption. If we were to rely on architectural typology alone, the location

and relative spatial restriction of S8 would seem to associate this space mainly with the household in H11 (Fig. 5.31). Such a household of all specialists, who were apparently also intensively involved in agriculture, would have no parallel in the prehistoric and ethnographic literature. It is also far from the social organisation indicated for Dimini. Although it is not certain whether we should attribute an entirely communal character to S8, the fact that several specialised activities co-occur there does point to co-operative processes, processes which would potentially be necessary even for ceramic production alone (e.g., Arnold 1991: 26–33). Informal cooperation in other manufacturing activities could also be at work. Regarding chipped stone production, that S8 may have been used by several households is implied by the presence of obsidian core fragments alone in several spaces. Storage and food consuming may equally have taken a more communal character in this area, matching that of craft production.

It is possible that S7 also had some limited function, given the conspicuous amount of storage and food producing facilities which totally occupy its interior, the relatively high proportions of food bowls, the scarcity of other types of material, and its rough layout (Fig. 5.31). Its facilities were considered by Hourmouziadis (1979: 153–4) to be homogeneously dispersed on either side of the low partition wall and to have accommodated two different social units. It is likely that S7 was used for storage and food producing by more than one household – for example, by H10-S10, where storage and cooking facilities are scarce. Similarly, in S10 the accumulation of 'spit stands', charred foodstuffs, and food cooking and consuming pottery may indicate a more shared use of this space – for example, for ritual cooking. Given the location of the entrances of the surrounding buildings,[15] any households that shared this 'shrine' could not have been inside the west-southwest segment.

The cross-cutting of types of spatial contexts by types of activities disputes the presumed isolation of the production units and the rigid division of the settlement into autonomous, self-sufficient spatial entities – whether houses or larger segments. It points instead to activities cross-cutting social units, regardless of the high segregation or compartmentalisation of space. Besides, cooperation and interconnections as essentially social issues do not necessarily depend on the typology of architectural arrangements. For example, the wide range of animals kept in each spatial segment points to intracommunal exchanges of livestock (Halstead 1992: 53, 55). The *Spondylus* ring refitting pattern and context of discard also indicate multiple material linkages between different households such as the exchange of fragments as part of the creation and maintenance of social relations between persons or groups (Chapman and Gaydarska 2006: 163–8, Plate 18). House construction can also be viewed within a broader framework of shared labour, decisions, choices, and standards, given the space limits and the coherence of the overall settlement plan.

Interconnections are further manifested at the intermediary level of the spatial segments. Although its functional interpretation does not work well, the division of space into distinct segments smaller than the settlement but larger than the household remains of social and symbolic significance. It materialises horizontal links between households and other social forms and units, as well as an interaction between household, segment, and community interests. Substantial modifications in each segment, such as alterations of enclosure lines and the levelling or elevation of large areas, would have involved a degree of interhousehold cooperation, probably on a social scale smaller than the whole community. Significantly, when seen at this scale, the distribution of child burials creates an interesting pattern: they occur consistently in one building per spatial segment (Fig. 5.31). The variable entrance location could also make sense at this level (although it may have equally resulted from notions closure and avoidance): in the northeast segment, both H20 and H23 face to the southeast; in the northwest and southwest segments, H9 (as Tsountas' house 24), H11, and S8 face generally to the south; and in the first and second enclosures the general tendency is to view to the east. It seems that segmentation was not only intentional, but derived from a socially defined organising principle, and it can represent larger and more formal units. This principle could be a kinship grouping, with the various kinship sections being correlated with each other and with other notable features of the society through sharing of the same basic architectural plan and ritual practices. My understanding of this social grouping, however, differs from both Hourmouziadis' (1978a) and Halstead's (1992: 53–4) views in that it cannot be equated either to one extended household or to 'dominant' extended and 'subordinate' nuclear families, respectively. Instead, the settlement is intentionally and accurately organised into a series of spatial segments, but each one of them contained not one but several households, closely tied and perhaps kin-related yet different to each other in more ways than one.

The entire organisation of space at Dimini is the material manifestation of a variety of community-wide practices and relationships. The construction of multiple stone enclosures and buildings higher than level ground, and in fact up to 4–5 m higher, and the symmetrical and highly ordered layout of the settlement are the outcome of forethought and communal decision-making. It would have required the mobilisation, allocation, and exchange of labour on both a household and a community basis, as it would transform materially, socially, and symbolically the entire site. In a recent paper, Souvatzi and Skafida (2003) have discussed some of the ways in which various organisational principles and symbolic elements were involved in the architecture of Dimini, linking social order with natural order and with ideology in the construction of sociocultural space. For example, perceptions about cosmology and the 'natural' order are indicated by the orientation of the entire architecture: houses,

spatial segments, and the whole settlement, as this is defined by the main radial passages, are commonly aligned in terms of the axial points (Fig. 5.31). Cosmological or ideological order expands beyond architecture and links spatial organisation with aesthetics, material culture, and patterns of movement of people and objects within the site, as is discussed below.

Finally, the very diversity in household economic activity, in conjunction with the presence of more than one mode of production and of more or less communal undertakings, points to the existence of social division of labour and to variation in labour input into different processes by different households. It suggests interdependence and reliance on a wider economic system and a more complex relationship between producers and consumers or between household and community than is often assumed.

SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION OR SOCIAL COHESION?

All of the issues and common indicators of social differentiation have been examined at and between many different levels. None of these produced consistent evidence for a hierarchical social structure. They produced, instead, considerable expressions of social cohesion, interaction, and integration. It will be useful to review here the spatial and material patterns and to consider the social implications of this patterning.

The range and abundance of agricultural surplus suggests a degree of intensification of subsistence production. Surely though, if social differentiation existed at Dimini, it did not do so on the basis of these parameters. Instead, the homogeneous distribution of faunal and botanical remains, together with the lack of restriction of storage function, suggests equal access to subsistence resources and produce by individual households, whereas the occurrence of storage activity in external spaces can reflect a tendency towards more communal storage efforts.

The organisation of craft production and distribution is also clearly complex, showing evidence considered indicative of intensification of production, such as increased labour input in ceramic manufacture, maintenance of specialised equipment, and the very presence of craft specialisation. Yet most of the variation from the generalised distribution of material culture is explained by the division of the spatial contexts into residential and nonresidential, referred to above as Houses and Structures, respectively. Some special categories of finds, such as figurines and spindle-whorls, tend to be concentrated in the former type of context. The spatial clustering at certain areas of others, mainly of incised pottery, lithics, and *Spondylus* shell objects, is functional and relates to the location of 'workshops'. That craft-specialised activities and their products played an important role in the community's welfare and network of relationships is attested by numerous factors – for example, by the stylistic

influence of the Dimini Ware on a regional and interregional level; by the occurrence throughout central and southeast Europe of *Spondylus* shell ornaments, of which Dimini was a main production centre (Tsuneki 1989; Karali 2004); and by the fact that the lithic assemblage was made almost entirely of obsidian from Melos, an exotic material obtained from a considerable distance. Within the site, however, craft-specialised and other goods seem to have acted as symbols of social integration and of collective rather than individual power. For instance, the abundance, collectively and individually, of elaborate pottery suggests that it served as a marker of group identity rather than individual identity or economic ranking. The presence in both private and public spaces of fancy decorated serving ware, one of the most reliable indicators of household wealth in anthropological and historical settings, is of further interest. It points to the diachronic, cross-cultural significance of shared food consumption and hospitality in the construction of ideologies of egalitarianism. The distribution of other material classes would further indicate that individual status was not measured in terms of worldly possessions, and perhaps all the inhabitants of Dimini were equal.

The organisation of space at Dimini is also a complex phenomenon manifesting different social and symbolic patterns and structuring principles at different scales – the settlement, the spatial segment, and the house/household. The patterns identified suggest, however, that household size – let alone house size – can be of little relevance to the understanding of social or economic variation. Although there may be variation between households in their 'wealth', there is no consistent evidence that larger houses/households are richer, or that wealthier house/households are 'dominant'. The numbers of 'large' and 'small' households per spatial segment are also problematic for a purely status-related interpretation, as there has been no positive association between household size and household status.

All this implies strong perceptions of social cohesion. I therefore suggest that at Dimini these processes took place within a system of conceptual rules of social behaviour, of integration of individual social entities within a community-wide social and ideological structure which resisted change towards political centralisation and promoted egalitarianism. This wider structure seems to have been organised around solidarity and interaction, and overall, around integrative mechanisms favouring collective social behaviour.

This does not mean that households were static or that they passively subjected themselves to broader social conditions. The lack of conformity on the household level or in elements visible only from the inside (e.g., individual household spatial arrangements and ways of social reproduction and abandonment) contrasts greatly with the external uniformity on the settlement level (e.g., construction methods, orientation, ordered settlement layout, and homogeneous material distributions). If the external uniformity suggests that the

households were implicated in the structuring and maintenance of collective identity and reproduction, then the internal variability represents notions of a more individualised identity and ideology, and perhaps a challenge to broader social conditions. It reflects the contradictions between everyday practices and prevailing ideologies and the interaction between household and communal organisation. It seems likely that two or more, rather than only one, modes of social reproduction were at work, which might have been contradictory, and even conflicting, at times. Yet the prevailing ideology in the creation of social order and the dominant manifestations of social organisation still point to the community.

The settlement did not remain static either. During its lifetime, developments such as the addition of new circuit walls, the successive accumulation on the mound, and the reinforcement of building and enclosure foundations would have contributed significantly to the processes of interaction and socioeconomic integration. They would have created a network of relationships, exchanges, and obligations between different households and at different times and would have involved continuous negotiation and balancing of the power relations between individuals and the wider social group, as people's understanding and motives changed in the course of their lives and as the settlement grew and expanded outwards.

One key to viewing households as processes is to view their material conditions of living also as processes. Houses, households, architecture, and material culture share a number of common principles of organisation, categorisation, and order and cannot be seen independent of each other. For example, the shared use of decorative styles and artefact types across the site must have played a decisive role in a nonhierarchical organisation. Ceramic decoration – painted or incised – links pottery to spindle-whorls and figurines, and beyond these, it seems consistently to refer to the settlement layout and to conceptual directions or bodily movement across the site. The dense, geometrical, and highly structured ceramic patterns, usually arranged in alternating panels (Figs. 5.15, 5.18, 5.19), resemble the compact, geometrical, symmetrical, and compartmentalised layout of the settlement, with its segments and passages (Fig. 5.1, 5.31). The motif of the concentric circles resembles the enclosures, and all the central motifs – circles, spiral, and meander – may connect to patterns of circulation of people and things, as these are indicated by a closer look at the network of possible routes that linked the various spaces (Souvatzi and Skafida 2003, Fig. 3). In addition, wherever an enclosure foundation line was systematically investigated, a variety of items were discovered, most often the types of material closely associated with the houses – elaborate pottery, figurines, and spindle-whorls. The *in situ* nature of some of these artefacts along the base of the enclosures seems to indicate a foundation rite and recalls the foundation deposits in the houses. This sharing of principles between society and material

media provided the basis for encoding, mediating, and mutually reinforcing wider cultural perceptions and social relations.

One distinctive belief about the Dimini enclosures is that, along with the various passages and entrances, they expressed a concern to control access and circulation of people and material and to intensify productive activity (Hourmouziadis 1979: 83). Although this could also be true, a territorial demarcation primarily controls access to the site itself, physically or symbolically, rather than within it (Souvatzi and Skafida 2003: 432). Defence may not have been the primary purpose of the enclosures, but through their peripheral distribution the enclosures symbolically 'protect' the settlement, demarcate it from the landscape and the outsiders, and, complemented by the houses, probably make it visible from the sea. Thus, the settlement as a whole served as a material manifestation of the community's history and identity. A substantial degree of social memory and symbolic meaning was invested in the site, linking past, present, and future generations and eventually turning the site into a revered place – a site which was later again to be demarcated by perimetric boundaries, to become a burial mound, to host a Mycenaean settlement and tombs at its periphery, and generally to 'live' in a variety of ways until the end of prehistory and until today.

A similar ideology of social cohesion may be symbolised in the central open area of the settlement. Given the generally limited availability of space, this contrast between densely packed areas and central open space,[16] as well as between the rectangularity of house plan and the circularity of settlement plan, is significant. It can represent a symbolic emphasis on the community's identity, an ideal social plan, as well as provide a place of social meeting, rituals, or ceremony, as Tsountas (1908) long ago suggested. Such a meeting place in the most central and most ancient part of this settlement would be an important means of the social reproduction of the community. It would at once have facilitated socialisation and interaction between households; enabled possible gaps between the ideal and the real to be resolved; and allowed for privacy and autonomy of individual households in their different residential areas. A social structure that appears to have so tightly linked together the individual social units of each spatial segment and all spatial segments into an integrated and cohesive whole could have been some broader kinship structure.

It is mainly in view of the evidence for social integration and cohesion rather than loose connection of autonomous and unequal individual social units that we could, perhaps, assume the existence of some sort of leadership or 'authority' at Dimini. Nonetheless, there is no hard evidence to suggest a hierarchical social structure, much less a 'central megaron elite' formed on economic considerations and holding power over others. There is no household, inside or outside the first enclosure, which would alone satisfy all of the potential indicators of self-sufficiency, wealth, and status. Any status-related

notion of 'authority' or control at Dimini would have been fragmented and fluid rather than institutionalised and stable. It could have derived from a variety of parameters such gender, age, experience, kin affiliation, genealogy, interpersonal social ties, and ritual knowledge. But it would have most likely had to do with conceptual and social rules relating to the maintenance of social cohesion rather than with economic stress and aggressive 'levelling mechanisms'. This ideological model of heterarchy may have extended to corporate ownership of productive resources and interhousehold exchanges of labour and materials. Also, a household-to-household variation in production implies also a system of economic integration (Haines et al. 2004). Households might have been marked by divisions of interest and might have been highly competitive at times. But inequalities were apparently informal and ephemeral, roles and status complementary, and power forms and relations heterarchical and shifting.

SIX

HOMOGENEITY OR DIVERSITY? HOUSEHOLDS AS VARIABLE PROCESSES

I N THIS CHAPTER, I USE A COMPARATIVE APPROACH WHICH DRAWS ON evidence from other parts of the Greek Neolithic world to explore the forms, roles, and ideologies of households in different settings. I concentrate on the nature and diversity of social groups, the organisation of everyday activities, and the belief systems and social reproductive practices and examine the degree to which perceived similarities and differences in spatial organisation and material culture correspond to similarities and differences in social organisation and to sociocultural affiliations. Given the complexity and variation manifested even within the boundaries of the single sites examined in detail in Chapters 4 and 5, it is expected that equally complex and variable patterns will emerge within the wider context. This chapter argues against the predisposition to view a single site as 'typical' or representative of all sites in a region. The examples below indicate how much variation there is within and between 'typical' sites. I focus on a number of sufficiently exposed and recently discovered settlements.

SETTLEMENT ORGANISATION

As shown briefly in Chapter 3, Greek Neolithic architecture provides a very clear picture of diversity of settlement patterns and types, house forms, and construction techniques and materials. They reflect different engagements with

6.1. Large long house at Makri found in the habitation area around the mound. (Photograph and copyright: Nikos Efstratiou.)

the physical and social landscape, and much can be inferred about local social relationships and organisation.

Thrace and Macedonia

At the northeastern edge of Greece, in the middle of the sixth millennium BC,[1] Makri was founded as a small, short-lived camp of a few compact houses, limited to the centre of a rocky outcrop ca. 50 masl (Makri I) (Efstratiou et al. 1998). By the beginning of the fifth millennium BC it had grown to a large village of complex architectural arrangements, covering an area possibly of ca. 1 ha and producing habitation deposits up to 4 m thick. This second settlement (Makri II) seems to have been organised in three main sectors: a building complex with a special function on the top of the mound, a residential area on the slopes, and a more extensive habitation area around (Efstratiou et al. 1998) (Fig. 6.1). People built and rebuilt their houses repeatedly, renewed their plastered floors even more frequently, and deposited in them a very rich number of features and finds (Fig. 6.2). The buildings were constructed with frames of posts or mud brick, with occasional use of stone foundations. A combination of more than one technique (e.g., wattle-and-daub and pisé, or wattle-and-daub and mud brick) was often employed for the construction of different parts of the walls. A large long post-framed building contained a small, round post-framed structure in its centre. Another post-framed house had two
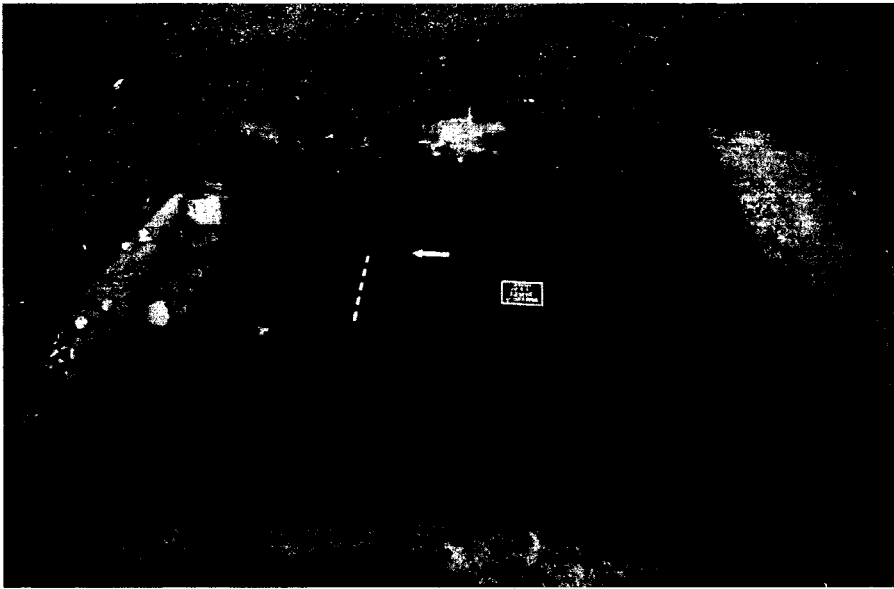
6.2. House at Makri with successive plastered floors visible in the foreground. (Photograph and copyright: Nikos Efstratiou.)

internal rows of post-holes opened onto a raised clay platform and contained a number of clay features (ovens, platforms, hearths, and pits).

In eastern Macedonia, the tell of Dikili Tash (5500–4000 BC)[2] is divided into two major phases of occupation with further subphases of rebuilding. The remains of substantial houses with impressive structural details, considerable amounts of fallen superstructure debris, and a very rich inventory of features and finds in place suggest considerable investment in domestic architecture (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 1996) (Fig. 6.3). At Dikili Tash I on the slope of the tell, the layouts of houses suggest a NW-SE axis. The walls were constructed in two variations of the post-framed technique and were covered with successive layers of white or red plaster both on the inside and on the outside. In one house a large fragment of a clay arch, possibly framing (or decorating) the entrance, was found. Combined macroscopic and laboratory analysis indicated that the different domestic constructions such as walls, roofs, floors, ovens, and benches (Figs. 6.4 and 6.5) were made of different clays, deliberately selected for their properties and taken from sources up to 15 km away (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 1996: 686–8). Three superimposed houses each contained domed ovens, clay platforms, shelves, bins, large clay plates fixed on the ground, querns and grinders, tripod cooking pots, charred food remains, and a variety of pots, tools and other artefacts (Treuil and Tsirtsoni 2000). At Dikili Tash II, higher up on the tell, large post-buildings (10 × 5 m) with white-plastered floors were arranged in regular rows, also along a NW-SE axis,
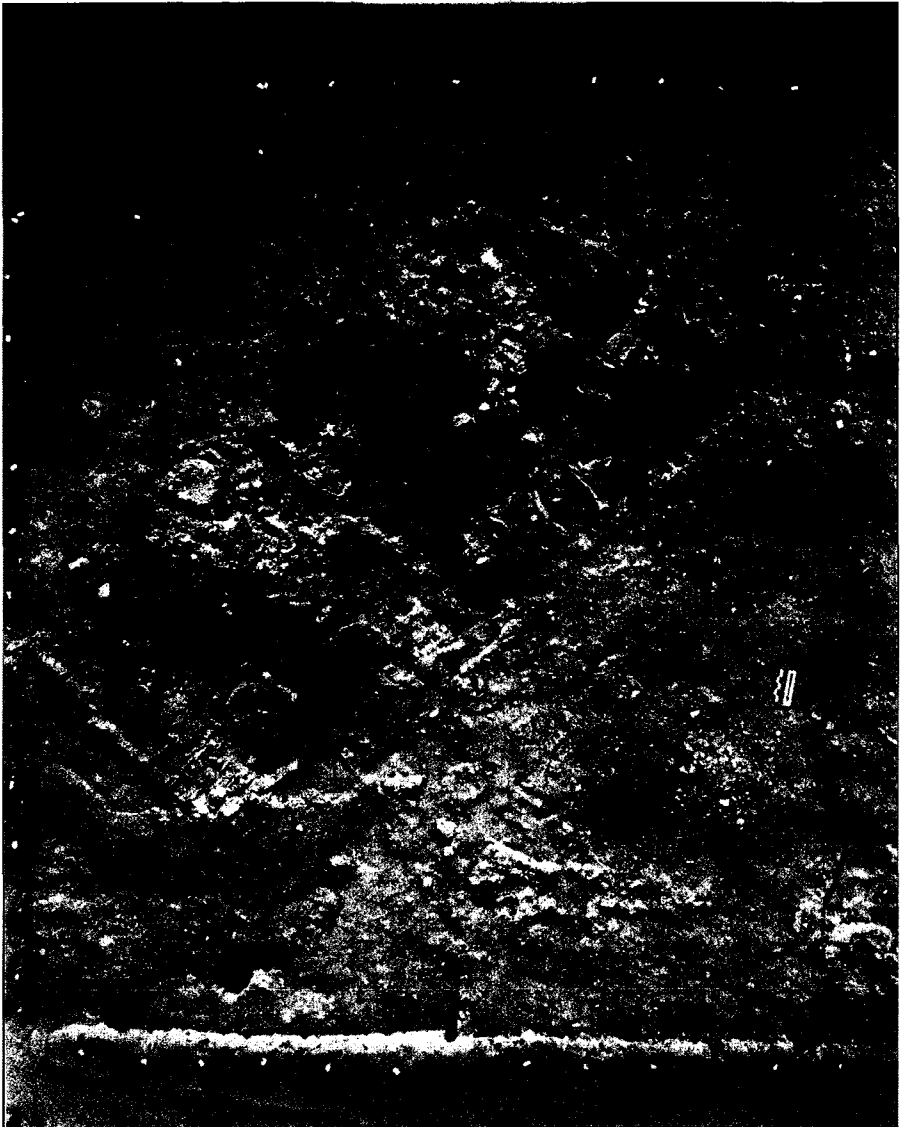
6.3. Large long House 4 at Dikili Tash, aerial photograph, with three autonomous rooms packed with features and finds in analogous spatial associations, found under a thick layer of burnt superstructure debris. (After Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 1996.)

separated by narrow lanes. In the fallen superstructure inside one house was found a large flat block of clay bearing at least fourteen thin layers of plaster: it was identified as a roof fragment and was taken to suggest the existence of a flat, rather than a pitched, roof (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 1996: 691).

At Promachonas-Topolniča, at the Greece-Bulgaria border (Fig. 3.1), ongoing Greek-Bulgarian excavations are revealing a different settlement organisation with scattered habitation spread over two adjacent hilltops and a total area
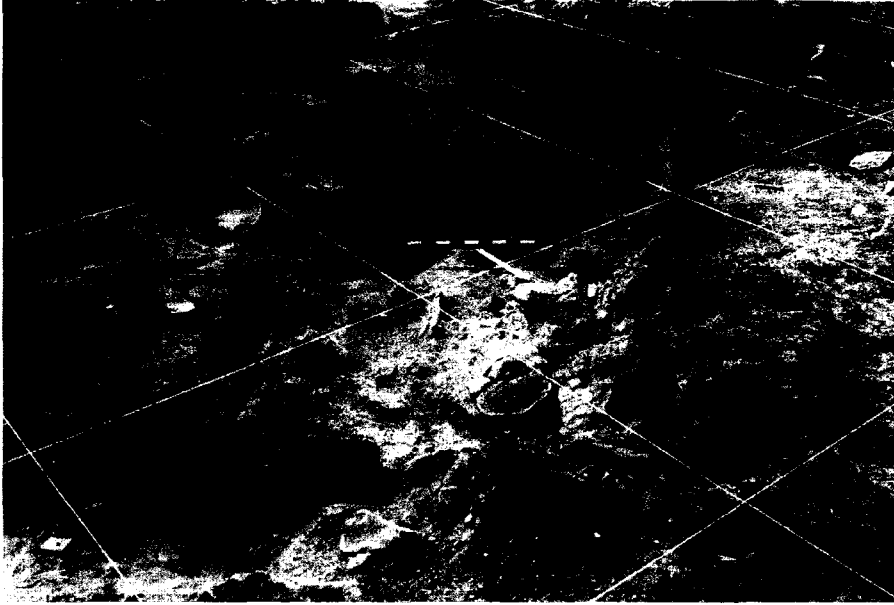
6.4. Clay domed oven with adjacent platform (in background) and large double clay basin with plates on top (in foreground) inside House 4 at Dikili Tash. (Photograph and copyright: Chaido Koukouli-Chrysanthaki.)

6.5. Incised storage jar, four-legged clay table next to it (found upside down), and clay bench inside House 4 at Dikili Tash, with a variety of complete but crushed pots around and clay basin with internal partitions in the background. (Photograph and copyright: Chaido Koukouli-Chrysanthaki.)
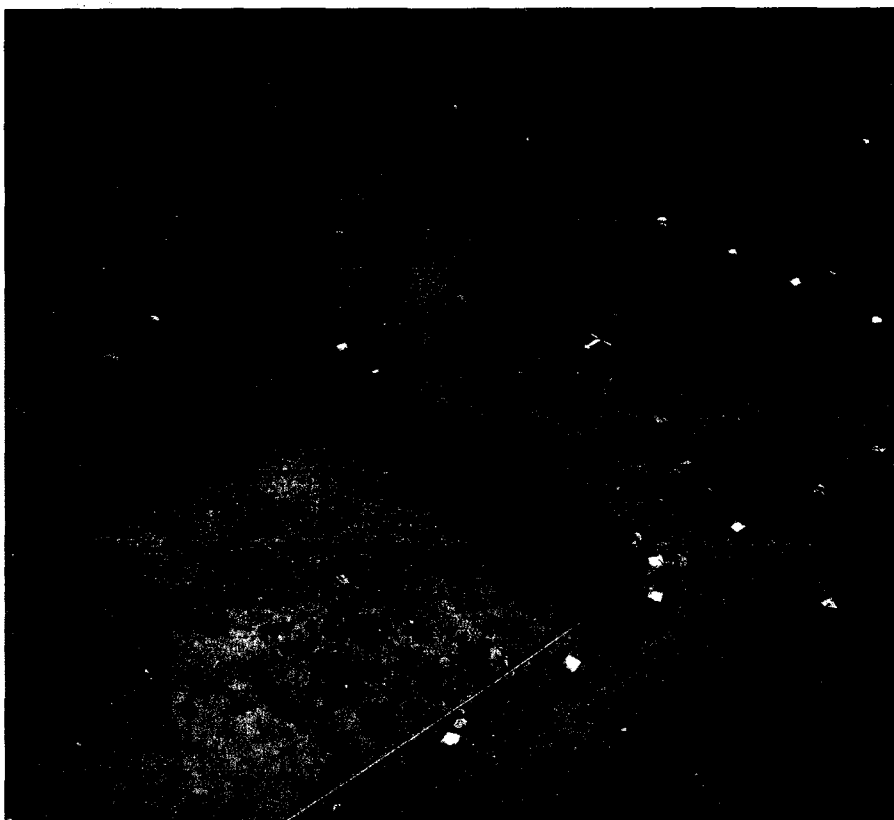
6.6. Elliptical semisubterranean and surface domestic structures at Promachonas-Topolniča. (Photograph and copyright: Chaido Koukouli-Chrysanthaki.)

of 5 ha (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 2005). The first two phases, dating from the end of the sixth to the beginning of the fifth millennium BC, are distinguished by post-framed, semisubterranean structures dug into the virgin soil (phase I) and surface structures with foundations reinforced with stones and floors of beaten earth (phase II), built partially on top of the earlier ones (Fig. 6.6). A third phase, dating to the second half of the fifth millennium BC, seems to have followed after a period of abandonment (Table 3.1).

   In central and western Macedonia, Stavroupolis, Thermi, Vassilika, and Makriyalos are all flat, horizontally shifting sites situated on low hills and with a life spanning generally from the end of the Middle to the end of the Late Neolithic. The extent of Stavroupolis is estimated at over 11 ha, of which 3,500 m² has been systematically excavated (Grammenos and Kotsos 2002, 2004). Habitation started at the end of the sixth millennium (phase Ia) as a camp of elliptical pit-dwellings (ca. 4 × 6 m) arranged sparsely over an area of roughly 150 × 200 m with storage areas, hearths, and ovens set up outdoors

6.7. Pit-dwelling at Stavroupolis with oven and storage area in external pits. (After Grammenos and Kotsos 2004.)

(Fig. 6.7). In the subsequent phase (Ib), people built more substantial, surface structures with mud brick or compacted clay walls and floors and tended to place their ovens inside the houses in the middle of the floors. In the third phase (II), houses were rectangular and mud brick with stone foundations, and facilities were situated both inside and outside. Thermi and Vassilika extend over 12 ha and 25 ha, respectively. At Vassilika buildings were constructed with mud brick on stone foundations. At Thermi post-framed houses and houses with mud brick on stone foundations, and possibly also pit-dwellings, co-exist (Grammenos et al. 1990, 1992; Pappa et al. 2002, 2003). At Makriyalos, surface remains cover over 50 ha, of which 6 ha has been intensively investigated (Pappa and Besios 1999). Makriyalos I (5200–4900 BC) is distinguished by loose groups of pit-dwellings with hearths and ovens located outside in smaller pits. A main characteristic of this phase is the system of large ditches appearing to surround the habitation area and containing sequences of burials (see below). Makriyalos II (4900–4500 BC), on the other hand, is smaller in extent but with a higher density of structures. These were again circular, with wattle-and-daub walls, subterranean or semisubterranean floors, and facilities located mostly outside, singly or in small clusters. One deep dwelling pit preserved traces of a staircase and three pot-holes at the bottom below ground level, suggestive of the existence of basement cellars and of wooden floors (Pappa and Besios 1999: 183). In a later subphase a number of large rectangular houses (up to 15 m

long) of a 'megaron' type, with apsidal ends and internal subdivisions, appeared at the northwest slope of the hill. A most interesting common feature of all these settlements is the extensive cobbled yards between the houses. One such yard at Thermi measured 66 m² and another at Stavroupolis over 30 m². Both showed two successive phases of paving. Hearths, ovens, storage pits, refuse pits, and a variety of artefacts indicate that a wide range of everyday activities took place in these yards, including food processing and cooking, animal bone working, and, most notably, flint knapping.

To the south, the village at Servia was built and rebuilt over a period of ten phases, spanning from the Middle Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age and showing a clear picture of diversity. It preserved 35 complete and partial buildings, of which 28 belong to the Middle and Late Neolithic (phases I–VII) (Mould and Wardle 2000a, 2000b). Neolithic buildings followed a general N-S alignment and were relatively loosely arranged to leave spacious open areas to use both for work and for waste disposal. They were either square or rectangular and had one, two, or three rooms. Ground plans measured from 3.5 to 5.5 m in width and from 6 to 10 m in length. Houses were constructed with clay packed around a wooden framework, especially oak, of small posts in a single or in a double row reinforced at intervals by large posts and plastered with layers of coarse and fine mud. The walls were usually set directly in supporting trenches dug into the ground, but sometimes also on stone foundations. The roofs were normally pitched and were supported by additional central posts. Lighter, thatched roofs must have also been used for less substantial or less permanent structures. Interior floors were made with three techniques – beaten earth, laid clay, and wooden planks or beams set side by side and covered with clay – and were regularly repaired. There were, in addition, several types of features, facilities, and cooking structures (Mould and Wardle 2000a: 92–7) and three types of storage: light structures in the yards; lower storage areas (basements?) inside the buildings; and defined areas on the building floors, commonly in corners. For the yards between buildings people preferred pebble flooring. As in Sesklo, these important external spaces contained ovens, hearths, storage structures, and pits and were carefully made and kept 'scrupulously clean' (Mould and Wardle 2000a: 91). In phase 3, lower interior floors (basements?) and internal buttressing suggest the existence of upper storeys. Rows of large posts set along the interior line of walls, large blocks of fallen burnt clay with characteristics of flooring techniques, and artefacts found in the structural debris provide further indications of upper floors (Mould and Wardle 2000b: 37). In phase 4, Structure 7 (preserved dimensions 8 × 3.30 m) was partitioned into two or three areas. It contained 17 complete or restorable vessels and over 50 small finds, ranging from miniature fruitstands to stone axes, and from querns to marble bracelets, as well as considerable amounts of charred remains of different food crops (Mould and Wardle 2000b: 36–40, Fig. 2.6). Specific

associations of features and finds on the floor seem to have marked out areas of different function, with the work and living areas found in the north part and the storage one in the south part. In this latter part, the concentration of stone waisted and clay ring weights suggests a weaving area with a possible warp-weighed loom.

Thessaly and Central Greece

The same variability is found across Thessaly alone. For example, at Achilleion (6500/6350–5500 BC), after an initial phase (Ia) of large pits and yellow-plastered floors, suggesting pit-dwellings and storage areas, people built and rebuilt substantial and durable rectangular structures using pisé on stone foundations or wattle-and-daub at the same time (Winn and Shimabuku 1989). Central lines of post-holes on the floors suggest a pitched roof, whereas their absence in phase IV, in conjunction with other architectural evidence, makes possible the use of a flat roof (Mould and Wardle 2000a: 99). One building (phase IIIa), designated as a 'long house' (12 × 2.5 m), had three rows of posts and contained a domed oven and an area of reed matting. The orientation of the buildings was E–W in all phases, except the last one, when it changed to N–S. It appears that buildings were loosely spaced, separated by yards and external activity areas. As in many Greek Neolithic settlements, these contained well-constructed hearths, domed ovens, clay platforms, stone benches, plastered or pebbled surfaces, and light shelters adjacent to the houses and apparently constituted an important part of everyday life. One such area (phase IIb) contained a large circular hearth, and another (phase IIIb) a cooking area delineated by a low stone wall.

A number of well-known tells such as Sesklo, Pefkakia, Otzaki, Ayia Sofia, and Tsangli are characterised by compacted layouts and a relatively limited open space, although with variations. With the exception of Sesklo (Chapter 4), the other excavations were limited to the tops and centres of the mounds; thus information on settlement layout and organisation is insufficient. Generally, the houses had stable square or rectangular plans (from 6 × 5 m at Otzaki to 8 × 7 m at Tsangli), with one and rarely two rooms (Milojčić 1983; Wace and Thompson 1912). They were built and rebuilt, usually with mud brick on stone foundations, on the same fixed location. A system of internal wall buttressing has been taken to indicate two-storied buildings. Another feature of these tell houses is the frequent use of central post-holes supporting the probably gabled roof, a feature represented also on house models (Fig. 3.4). At Pefkakia, in the late fifth millennium BC, houses were arranged in parallel rows separated by narrow lanes (Weisshaar 1989). One building had a clay hearth, a stone platform, lined pits, storage vessels, and a rectangular pit lined with mud brick and filled with ash.

6.8. The settlement of Mandra showing pit–structures, later structures with stone foundations, and stone enclosure. From the north. (After Toufexis in press b.)

Still within the same region, a number of newly discovered and suffi-ciently exposed settlements show characteristics of both flat sites, considered typical of central Macedonia, and tell sites, considered typical of Thessaly. Galene is an inconspicuous site of an extended and shifting habitation pattern (Fig. 3.3), situated among the numerous contemporary tell sites in the vicinity. It was found buried under 0.80–1 m of alluvial deposit (Toufexis 2005). The excavated area (ca. 0.17 ha) is characterised by numerous pits of varying size, shape, and distribution and most likely of different functions (e.g., dwellings, refuse pits, and storage pits). The pits in the eastern half and those in the west half probably represent two distinct phases of occupation with a hiatus between. Burnt mud bricks and wattle-and-daub pieces suggest more than one construction technique, whereas small structures and features in open spaces indicate intensive work areas. The site of Makrychori 1 consists, like Sesklo, of a tell and a more extended settlement spread below and covers an area of 350 × 200 m (Toufexis in press a). The area to the west of the tell yielded remains of post houses and cobbled yards, as well as of three rock-cut perimeter ditches. The excavated deposits date to the Early and Late Neolithic and the lack of any evidence of occupation during the Middle Neolithic may suggest that the site was abandoned for a long time.

6.9. The settlement of Palioskala, aerial photograph. Note that the large long building on top of the inner enclosures is dated to later antiquity. (After Toufexis 2006.)

The site of Mandra (4940–4550 BC) lies on a low hill and covers an area of 300×250 m (Toufexis in press b) (Fig. 6.8). It is contemporary with Dimini and shows five building phases. In the three earlier phases the settlement consisted mostly of pit-dwellings surrounded by ditches up to 100 m long, up to 5.5 m wide, and over 3.25 m deep. The larger and later of these contained settlement refuse as well as human burials, like the one in Makriyalos. In the two later phases a new building programme took place: the settlement area was levelled; the ditches and pits were filled with debris and were replaced by a large stone-built enclosure 1–3.5 m wide; and the buildings became more substantial, square or rectangular structures constructed with mud brick on stone foundations. One of these was a megaron-like building (8.80 × 5.80 m) with a small square structure (2.60 × 2.60 m) next to it.

Palioskala is a lakeside tell[3] 5 m high. It is dated to the Final Neolithic and has been exposed to the extent of 3,500 m² (Toufexis 2006). The settlement is surrounded by a series of stone-built concentric enclosures of various sizes, functions, and distances from each other (3.50–8 m) (Fig. 6.9). Some of the enclosures apparently served only as retaining walls, whereas others created habitation terraces. The outer one preserved a height of 2.30 m, another was traced for 70 m, and yet another preserved an entrance 2 m wide. Buildings were constructed mostly on and around the top of the mound in between

the uppermost enclosures. Architectural remains at the southeast foot of the mound indicate habitation outside the enclosures, as at Dimini (Chapter 5, note 1) (Toufexis 2006: 61). All of the excavated buildings presented interesting features. One consisted of three adjacent rectangular structures laid out along a NE-SW axis, the middle one of which was entirely stone-built (i.e., including the superstructure of the walls) and contained three zoomorphic clay objects (see below). Another was large and single-roomed (13.50 × 8 m) and had three hearths and two large storage vessels in its interior and a large domed oven (2.20 m in diameter) to its south. The small circular area (16.5 m in diameter) at the centre of the site was occupied by a building (8.40 × 10.20 m) whose interior was found covered by a mass of stones (see below). Overall, although the study and publication of these new sites have not been completed as yet, it is evident that they add considerably to the diversity of the social landscape and settlement pattern in Thessaly.

In central Greece, Nea Makri is a flat, coastal site with a life spanning two thousand years (ca. 6000–4000 BC) and distinguished into twelve successive building phases (Theocharis 1956; Pantelidou-Gofa 1991). The site must have originally extended to several hectares, but a considerable part of it has been eroded by the sea. Post-framed elliptical semisubterranean structures (average 5 × 3.5 m) with straight plastered walls, plastered floors, and gabled roofs appeared in the early phases and continued to be built until the end of the settlement, usually on the same spot. Their entrances were marked by low porches and stone steps or some other type of threshold. Small stone-lined channels outside the buildings served for water drainage. From phase 4 (Middle Neolithic) onwards, pit-buildings coexist with rectangular mud brick buildings (up to 3 m wide) with stone foundations and clay, pebbled, or wooden floors. Some of these were partitioned, whereas in others new rooms were added to older ones. An interesting feature is the small round external structures (1–1.5 m in diameter) with pebbled, mud-plastered floors and most likely conical roofs, interpreted as storage constructions that replaced the earlier storage pits (Pantelidou-Gofa 1991: 176–8). Smaller ones had walls woven of branches and reeds, larger ones were built with mud brick on stone foundations, and all had entrance openings. Other external constructions include cobbled yards and lanes, a variety of hearths and refuse pits, and possibly a water well.

The Peloponnese and the Aegean Islands

Neolithic habitation levels have been revealed in all other regions of Greece, including Epirus, the Peloponnese, most of the Aegean and Ionian islands, and Crete, but most of the information is based on evidence from systematic surveys, site definition, and rescue work rather than from extensive excavation. It would therefore be methodologically erroneous to compare sufficiently

exposed settlements, on the one hand, with the instances of house arrange-
ments representing many of these sites, on the other. All we can take at present
is glimpses of their spatial organisation.

In the Peloponnese, villages generally seem to be small- to medium-scale,
with rather small houses and a relative scarcity of large architectural remains.
One such settlement is the Final Neolithic Ayios Dimitrios, where the absence
of permanent building remains, in conjunction with the limited amount of land
for cultivation, has been taken to suggest a small and probably seasonally or
partly mobile community relying more on animal husbandry than on agricul-
ture (Zachos 1987, 1996). The settlement at Lerna, on the other hand, must
have been much more robust and long-term, with a life spanning from the Early
to the Late Neolithic and distinguished into more than ten successive building
phases (Caskey 1956, 1957, 1958). The Early and Middle Neolithic houses were
rectangular and built and rebuilt with mud brick on stone foundations, and
new rooms were added gradually to old ones. In one Middle Neolithic house,
internal buttresses similar to those in houses in Servia, Otzaki, and Tsangli may
have supported an upper story. These settlement and architectural differences
would point again to the existence of significant variability even within the
Peloponnese alone (see also Alram-Stern 2005, and Cavannagh and Crouwel
2002).

On the north Aegean island of Thassos, the settlement at Limenaria (Fig.
3.1) was founded during the transitional Middle to Late Neolithic period
(5500/5200 BC) and was used throughout the Early Bronze Age (third millen-
nium BC) (Malamidou and Papadopoulos 1993; Papadopoulos and Malamidou
2002). It is situated on a hillside in a coastal plain and seems to have been
organised onto a habitation terrace supported by long retaining walls. Two
different parts of the settlement have been investigated, which probably belong
to an outer area (160 m^2) and an inner area (150 m^2). The outer area contained
the remains of what might have been substantial buildings, both post-framed
and mud brick, one with an apsidal end, and an abundance of clay and stone
hearths, ovens, benches, and storage and refuse pits. Most of these structural
features seem to have been situated in external open spaces around the houses.
In the inner area, two partly superimposed long post-framed houses (up to 15
m in length) were each associated with an extensive external space containing
a number of clay and stone facilities and a rich inventory of all types of material
culture. Before the construction of these buildings, this part of the settlement
seems to have been of a communal character. It was occupied by a variety
of open-air hearths, stone platforms or benches, and storage pits surround-
ing a carefully made water well at least 5 m deep and 2.5 m wide, protected
by a low stone-built wall (Papadopoulos and Malamidou 2002: 28, Fig. 2).
Interestingly, after the destruction of the aforementioned long buildings, this
inner area of the settlement might have resumed its more public use: it is now

distinguished by a deep and unusual pit and firing feature, interpreted as a pottery 'kiln'.

Another example of an Aegean island settlement organisation may be provided by Ftelia on Mykonos (Sampson 2002, 2005) (Fig. 3.1). It lies on a low sandstone hill in a coastal plain and was founded during the Late Neolithic. It shows four building phases, dated from 5100 to 4600 BC, although probably not without occasional abandonment (Sampson 2002: 158). Its total size is estimated at 7000–8000 m², of which only a small portion has been excavated as yet. The remains of closely spaced and carefully made rectangular buildings with mud brick on stone foundations suggest a compacted settlement layout similar to that of the contemporary settlement on the islet of Saliagos (Evans and Renfrew 1968). On the top of the hill, substantial walls preserved up to 7.50 m in height seem to define a complex of two to three small and narrow rooms with apsidal ends, a N-S orientation, and an entrance on the north. Inside and outside this building were found circular cavities cut into the bedrock, fragments of large storage vessels, and an abundance of legume and wheat seeds and grindstones. The unusual architecture and layout of this building and the lack of other kinds of finds on its floor were taken to indicate a special, nonresidential function associated with collective storage (Sampson 2002: 35–6, 2005: 34). Elsewhere in the settlement, a number of obsidian cores and spearheads on a partially preserved floor may indicate a workshop area (Sampson 2002: 35).

Ongoing excavations at Strofilas on Andros are revealing what seems to be the largest Neolithic settlement on an Aegean island thus far. It is dated to the Final Neolithic or Chalcolithic (4500–3200 BC) and consists of spacious rectangular or apsidal buildings, extending over an area of at least 20,000 m² (Televantou 2003, 2005, in press). A main characteristic is the substantial stone enclosure (1.50–2 m wide) with circular 'bastions' placed at regular intervals, one of which is near a gate. Another outstanding feature is an exceptionally large open area (ca. 100 m²), partly built and partly carved on the natural rocky ground. It has been interpreted as a public 'shrine' (Televantou 2005: 214). On the outer façade of the enclosure and on the stone floor of the 'shrine' were carved a variety of naturalistic and schematic designs, most of which depicted ships (see Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion).

At the southernmost edge of Greece, in Crete, the Neolithic settlement of Knossos under and beyond the Minoan palace spanned the Neolithic and gradually grew in size from ca. 0.3 ha to over 2.5–3.0 ha (Evans 1964, 1971). It is characterised, in all periods, by small rectangular structures forming building complexes, usually through gradual addition of new rooms to old ones. They share a generally uniform orientation and are separated by cobbled yards. The buildings had mud brick or pisé walls on stone foundations, floors of clay or beaten earth, and probably flat roofs. Internal buttressing in some rooms may

again suggest an upper story. Repeated rebuilding of rooms and yards, wall and floor replastering, and a variety of hearths, cupboards, stone benches, shelves with pottery, loom-weights, and so on suggest permanent, fully equipped, and well-kept houses. Cooking, storage, and work installations located in the cobbled yards indicate a more public character for these activities (Evans 1964: 140–42, 153).

BOUNDARIES

All over Greece and throughout the Neolithic, people marked out parts of the physical and social landscape and divided settlement from nonsettlement space. They did so in a variety of ways, ranging from partial perimeter ditches to concentric stone enclosures.

Dimini still provides the best example so far of both site demarcation and consistent internal segmentation (Fig. 5.1). The pattern of concentric boundaries may be more widespread, although its particular material representation and social and symbolic significance might have varied considerably among different communities. For example, the perimeter ditches and enclosures of Mandra and Palioskala recall those of Dimini. The Mandra ditches, however, particularly the larger one (Fig. 6.10), are more similar in form and content to those of Makriyalos, whereas the stone enclosure of the last phase seems solely to surround rather than organise intrasite space (Fig. 6.8). At Palioskala the number of stone enclosures seems disproportionately large compared to that of the structures within, which were, unlike those at Dimini, limited to the central parts of the mound (compare Fig. 5.1 and Fig. 6.9). The absence of a central open space at both Mandra and Palioskala is another notable difference from Dimini (Toufexis 2006: 61).

At Ayia Sofia, limited excavations at the top of the tell revealed part of a platform constructed of mud brick in three successive phases, dated from the mid to late sixth millennium BC. On top of the latest of these platforms were found the porch of a mud brick structure, interpreted as a 'megaron', and two mud brick walls, interpreted as a gateway (Milojčić 1976: 1–14). In a later phase the platform complex was cut off by a ditch that may have surrounded the central part. To the east of this terraced area, a 'funerary complex' of an earlier phase consisted of another clay platform covering three mud brick structures (see below). At Paliambela in Macedonia geophysical survey has located a double Late Neolithic stone enclosure at the south-east part of the site (Kotsakis and Halstead 2004). It seems to have replaced earlier deep ditches after these fell out of use and were filled with debris. At Mandalo, two stone walls, the larger of which is 2.5 m wide and 1.4 m high, bounded the site or part of it (Pilali-Papasteriou and Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou 1993). Partial perimetric retaining walls are found at many other settlements all
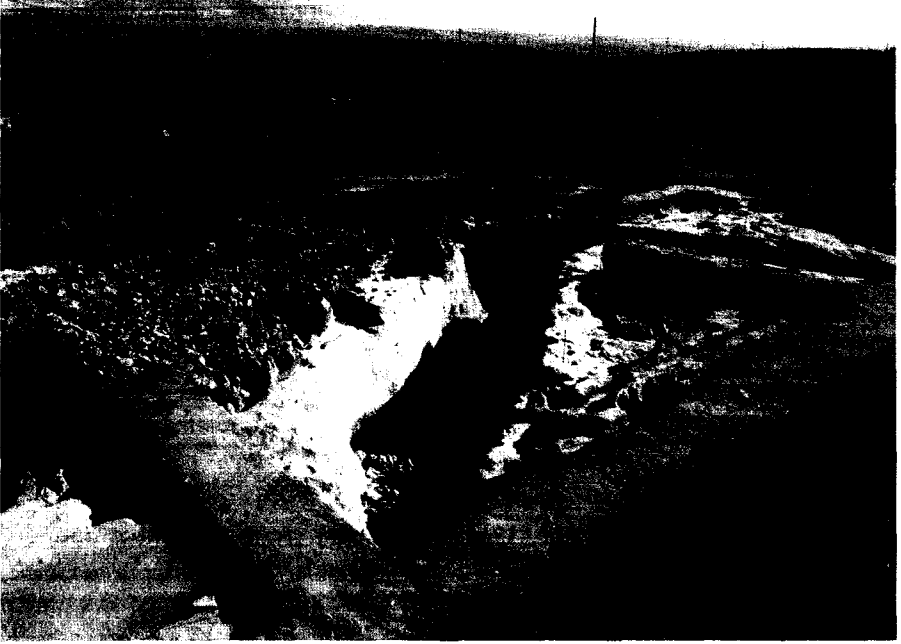
6.10. Double ditch and later stone enclosure at Mandra. From the northwest. (After Toufexis in press b.)

over Greece, such as Makri II, Sesklo (Fig. 6.11), Pefkakia, Limenaria, and Strofilas.

Ditches running around or through sites or parts of them are also found in a large number of settlements. The three concentric ones at Makrychori 1 provide a unique example thus far in Greece of ditches cut into the solid rock (Fig. 6.12). The two outer ones are dated to the Late Neolithic. They were exposed for 24 m and 59 m respectively and were 1.20–1.70 m wide and 0.35–1 m deep (Toufexis in press a). The middle ditch is considerably earlier, dating to the Early Neolithic. It was excavated for 30 m and was 1.20–1.50 m deep. All three ditches generally had a V-shaped section and were filled with debris. At Makriyalos I two large concentric ditches, traced in total for 470 m, surrounded an area estimated at 28 ha, whereas a further, much smaller one appears to divide the site vertically. The inner and larger one of the two concentric ditches was up to 3.5 m deep and up to 4.5 wide and was dug as a chain of large deep pits that had been maintained, renewed, and adapted continuously over time. In some places the original pits had been recut, indicating a distinct subphase of construction (Pappa and Besios 1999: 181). The ditch contained successive layers of refuse from the settlement, as well as primary and secondary human burials. Thin layers of mud between these deposits suggest that the ditch might have been filled with water at times. Makriyalos II also had
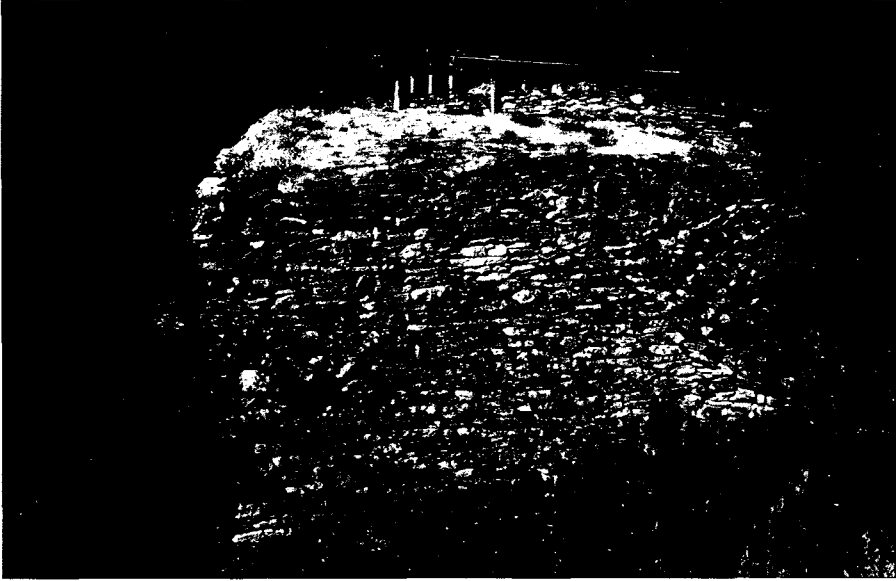
6.11. Retaining wall at the tell of Sesklo.

6.12. Stone-cut ditches at Makrychori 1.

ditches, but their courses, sizes, and construction details are unknown due to lack of excavation.

These different architectural patterns reflect different attitudes to spatial organisation and considerable variations in the forms and intensities in people's connections with the social landscape, with other communities, with their own community, and with each other. One significant similarity is the investment in the construction of sociocultural space, which incorporated, among other things, social perspectives about space divisions and the intention to engage in large-scale labour-intensive works, further amplified by the durability of these works and the techniques employed. The significance of this intention is explored in the next chapter.

HOUSEHOLD FORMS

In Chapter 2 I argued that the formal typological and functionalist approaches to space and architecture tend to ignore the important factor of variability within sites, let alone its social and symbolic significance. Similarly, the typically rectangular and relatively small Greek Neolithic houses have usually been taken to justify the assumption of regularity in function, form, and size of social grouping, one linked automatically with households and families – commonly with nuclear families.

Yet in reality, the evidence from the Greek Neolithic settlements shows little regularity. In Thessaly alone, the large timber-framed houses (up to 100 m²) with internal rows of posts at Prodromos (Hourmouziadis 1971) and the large building (30 × 8.5 m) at Magoula Visviki (Benecke 1942), which has four to five rooms, three entrances, and a rather consistent distribution of features between the rooms, could easily reflect the existence of extended households or of more than one co-residing unit. The pit-buildings at Galene (Fig. 3.3) and the structural complexes at Sesklo B (Fig. 4.7) are also quite far from the idealised picture of 'nuclear families' in the 'typical' square mud brick houses in the tells of the same region.

Similarly, at Dikili Tash in Macedonia the large rectilinear House 4 (11 × 6 m) was divided by two partition walls into three rooms of equal size and almost identical internal organisation not communicating with each other (Fig. 6.3). Each room had a separate entrance on the southwest; a clay domed oven with an adjacent platform, positioned at the back wall with its mouth facing the entrance; a clay basin near the oven; a clay bench; and a number of sizeable storage jars of unbaked clay in a linear arrangement along the east–west axis (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 1996). Each room contained a wide range of material found *in situ* in consistent spatial associations under a thick layer of burnt superstructure debris, including considerable amounts of charred seeds; a large number of cooking and serving pots; querns, grindstones, and tools of

various kinds; and clay tables, spindle-whorls, 'sling-bullets', and ornaments. This densely packed building, with its three apparently autonomous rooms, seems compatible with a picture of three different households sharing the same residence. On the other hand, the small elliptical and partly subterranean buildings in sites such as Makriyalos, Promachonas–Topolniča, and Stavroupolis raise the possibility of a different compositional and organisational ideal. They could reflect a social standard of smaller households with lesser emphasis on independence and self-sufficiency and greater emphasis on cooperation and communal areas. An example of this standard may be provided by Stavroupolis, where a larger pit, defining the residence, is surrounded by two to three subsidiary pits containing the oven or hearth, a large storage jar and other facilities for work or refuse, and occasionally a burial (Fig. 6.7).

Overall, architectural properties, including building techniques and materials, do not appear to have been a decisive factor in household spatial or social definition, and various household forms and spatial arrangements can be detected even within one site (see Chapters 4 and 5). This serves to emphasise the point discussed in Chapter 1 that households, as social entities, are not necessarily circumscribed by the boundaries of physical entities. The matching of architectural units to family types is consciously avoided here. Though kinship relations can be a significant organising principle of human grouping, they do not exhaust the issue of household, not even in conjunction with measures of size, sex or age structure, or population estimates. Other sociocultural factors such as kinds of activities and nonfamilial corporations can be of greater importance in household formation than the familial dimension. Besides, another dimension of kinship may be more worth pursuing than kinship's morphological and structural segmentations: the role of diverse kin grouping in the organisation of social networks that may contribute to the reproduction of individual social units and may provide a framework for social relationships. These points are more fully explored in the next chapter. The scarcity of separate cemeteries in Neolithic Greece further warns against firm inferences concerning family types, whereas the noted diversity of intrasettlement burials discussed later in this chapter may imply variation in household morphology.

HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES AND ECONOMIC FUNCTIONS

Subsistence and craft activities are less diverse in kind, suggesting relatively self-sufficient and largely equivalent social units within and between communities. This is hardly surprising, given that relative self-sufficiency and a large number of activities are part of the concept of household (Chapter 1). There is also little doubt that Neolithic production was generally small-scale, based on diversification and intensive labour investment. Yet, if these general indications

are treated as a starting point, not as concluding remarks, we can thoroughly investigate what really goes on underneath the bigger picture and how degrees or intensities of activities vary.

Reliance on generalised assumptions results in a normative view of homogeneous and unchanging households. For example, the view of Neolithic household in terms of a rural subsistence economy characterised by efforts to maximise the exploitation of resources is oversimplifying. In the Greek Neolithic, the extensive facilities for storage and the amounts and range of foodstuffs indicate that there was enough surplus collectively and individually to enable people to engage in a host of activities other than those directly related to survival. Diversity in household economic roles and functions is evidenced in all of the sites that have been sufficiently exposed. It can be further expected on the grounds of early craft specialisation and exchange. Again, though, the focus on the macroscale has meant that comparatively little work has been directed at the ways in which material culture was produced, used, distributed, and discarded within a site.

Activity diversity across space and time can be detected in various elements, from architectural construction details to specific material concentrations, and from production areas to ritual spaces. Some of the activities occurred in most houses, but others were more spatially limited. The remainder of this section focuses on households as productive units, taking the examples of lines of production that indicate specialisation. It is interesting to compare the production of these different types of material culture and see how it was organised spatially within sites. Other important facets of household activity, such as distribution and storage, are discussed in the next chapter.

The Example of Pottery

A good example regards the complex situation of Greek Neolithic ceramic development. Its formal and technical characteristics suggest that it was a complex and demanding process, motivated by different sociohistorical circumstances from later or present-day contexts (Kotsakis 1996b: 108). However, although these high standards are noted in many works, only a few researchers so far have explicitly argued for the existence of craft specialisation and even fewer have offered convincing interpretations of the social motives and relations behind the organisation, distribution, and consumption of pottery, using specific examples and intrasite analyses. This hesitation may relate to perceptions of simple self-sufficiency, for which such complexity does not seem suitable.

I have addressed these issues in detail in Chapter 5 with reference to the Dimini pottery. As we have also seen (Chapter 4), in the Nea Nikomedeia ceramic assemblage Youni (1991, 1996) has encountered evidence for intersite interaction of potters in terms of technological expertise, although she did not

argue for craft specialisation. Kotsakis (1983: 264–300) defined the production of the widespread Middle Neolithic 'Sesklo Ware' at the eponymous site as specialised. In the Early Neolithic, Vitelli (1993a, 1993b, 1995; Perlès and Vitelli 1999: 102–5) suggested that the production of grey pots at Franchthi and Lerna was clearly specialised and takes her argument further to suggest that Greek Early Neolithic pottery as a whole should be seen as specialised, if only on the grounds of the symbolic properties of early vessels and their position in social and ritual ceremonies. Following Vitelli, Björk's (1995) study of the pottery from Achilleion also favours a view of early pottery-making as a specialised and ritually valued process.[4] In the Late Neolithic, the question of local and specialised production of pottery and of different producing groups has been investigated at some settlements, including the Kitrini Limni area, especially Megalo Nisi Galanis (Kalogirou 1997), Stavroupolis (Urem-Kotsou and Dimitriadis 2002, 2004), Makri (Efstratiou et al. 1998: 35–6), and Knossos (Tomkins 2004).

Another important characteristic of Greek Neolithic ceramics is the co-existence of broad, well-defined wares, vessel types, and firing techniques with highly specific, localised productions and stylistic distributions. Regional variation is observed already from the Early Neolithic, although shapes and decoration are fairly homogeneous throughout Greece, suggesting interaction and few sharp stylistic or cultural boundaries. Stylistic diversification and distinctiveness increases so in the next phases of the Neolithic that in the Late Neolithic it seems that each village within a region produced a distinctive ware (Vitelli 1993a; Perlès and Vitelli 1999). In Thessaly alone, at least fourteen stylistic categories are known from this period (Gallis 1992: 37–73; Schneider et al. 1994), including the distinctive Dimini Ware, the Grey-on-Grey, and the Black Polished. Other regions also have their own distinctive decoration (e.g., the Graphite-painted of north-eastern Greece and the Matte-painted of central and southern Greece), and great decorative variety and individuality is observed in the islands.

The occurrence of pottery firing features and associated equipment within settlements further confirms that the making and firing of pottery was well within the capacities of Neolithic households. At Dikili Tash I a potter's firing facility resembling the domed ovens found at the site was recovered in situ, still containing pots, charcoal, and ashes. The pots had been placed on stones on the floor of the oven and were deformed and burnt, probably the effect of the same fire which also destroyed the houses of this phase (Treuil 1992: 42–3). Associated with this feature were a large pit full of ashes and another full of clay, two joined cavities of unknown use (clay-digging pits?), a silo filled with carbonised lentils, and an abundance of potsherds and tools. This whole assemblage and arrangement of data recalls those at space S8 at Dimini[5] (Fig. 5.30), in which a pottery firing facility and other special arrangements occurred

together with a concentration of incised pottery and stone tools, large storage vessels, and food remains. Another possible pottery firing facility has recently come to light at Stavroupolis, where a circular clay oven constructed inside a large pit was found associated with a hearth, a clay grid-like construction, and large quantities of potsherds (Grammenos and Kotsos 2002: 292, 293). A roughly similar construction at Limenaria on Thassos has been identified as a pottery kiln (Papadopoulos and Malamidou 2002: 26–7, Fig. 1). It consists of a deep and unusual pit located next to a hearth. The pit had burnt sides and a grid-like floor, ending, on one side, in a clay channel 1 m long.

The Example of Chipped Stone Tools and an Axe Workshop

The procurement, production, and distribution of chipped stone tools, especially of obsidian and honey-flint blades, meet the definition of specialisation already from the Early Neolithic (Perlès 1992, 2001). As discussed in Chapter 3, the obsidian exchange network was so extensive that it was probably connected not only with the smaller-scale local exchange structures, but also with specialised 'itinerant knappers'. Different levels of technical knowledge and amount of skill were embodied in different strategies of raw material acquisition and procurement and in production techniques, and there also were different modes of specialisation (Karimali 2000, 2001, 2005; Perlès 1992; Skourtopoulou 1998, 2004, 2006). In the Late Neolithic, changes in technology and diffusion result in regional variability. Projectile points and spearheads are particularly abundant in southern Greece and the Cyclades, whereas sickle blades are more common in northern Greece (Moundrea-Agrafioti 1996). The theme which applies to all these processes is of variety between and within regions.

In Thessaly and southern Greece, exotic raw materials, mainly obsidian from Melos, are dominant throughout the Neolithic. Comparative study of the lithic assemblages from four Thessalian sites – Dimini, Pefkakia, Ayia Sofia, and Platia Magoula Zarkou – has shown that they retained differential access to obsidian and production skills (although their respective rates of production were comparable) (Karimali 1994, 2000). In the first two, coastal sites obsidian is considerably high, amounting to 95% and 90%, respectively. To the west, at Ayia Sofia, it decreases to 77%, and further inland, at Platia Magoula Zarkou, it reaches only 7%. Certain evidence such as flakes identified as by-products of core processing suggests local preparation of cores at Dimini and later at Pefkakia. Dimini was possibly involved also in the distribution of prepared cores to inland Thessaly (Karimali 1994: 378, 379). In the islands, the Late Neolithic site on Saliagos has also been identified as a southern 'regionally localised production centre' on the basis of the presence of roughly prepared obsidian cores (Evans and Renfrew 1968; Perlès 1992: 128). At the same time,

parallel to these wider networks, local production of chert flakes by simpler techniques also occurred, aiming at the production of everyday tools.

In Macedonia and Thrace, on the other hand, obsidian from Melos appears in minor amounts and mostly as finished products, and people chose raw materials from sources available at a closer distance (Dimitriadis and Skourtopoulou 2001). Expedient techniques that could be practiced by the average member of the community coexist with skilled techniques requiring the activation of part-time craft specialists (Skourtopoulou 1998, 2006). The former techniques relate to the manufacture of quartz and chert flakes and splinters, the latter to the manufacture by indirect percussion, and occasionally by pressure, of blades, bladelets, and long flakes from siliceous limonite and high quality flints (Skourtopoulou 1999, 2004). The evidence suggests that in most cases the knappers were activated at local and regional rather than interregional scales. The model of 'itinerant knappers' proposed for Thessaly and southern Greece could still fit in Macedonia and Thrace, functioning, however, within much more restricted networks (Skourtopoulou 1998).

The local character of skilled work is highlighted for central Macedonia by the presence of possible workshops for siliceous limonite in conjunction with a local quarry 3 km away from Vassilika and 12 km from Thermi (Fig. 3.1). The latter site yielded over 3,000 lithic products, including an impressive number of cores (326 items) (Skourtopoulou 1993). Most of the material was found on the expansive stone-paved yards discussed earlier and it represented all stages of the lithic production sequence. The increased amounts of worked cores and cortical, rejuvenation, and waste products in these two sites attests to the organisation of skilled production at a scale that exceeds the needs of the resident communities. It is likely that Vassilika and Thermi functioned, partly at least, as local production, exchange, and/or redistributive centres (Skourtopoulou 2002: 550–551). The lithic assemblage from Stavroupolis amounts to more than 1,000 products, attests to the processes of production, use, and discard of tools within the site, and reveals interesting variation in raw materials and technical strategies (Skourtopoulou 2002, 2004). Its quantity and technical characteristics suggest that the site participated in craft exchange networks both at a local scale, most likely with the sites of Vassilika and Thermi, and at wider scales (e.g., for the acquisition of obsidian and high-quality flints) (Skourtopoulou 2002: 545–51).

Among the rarest production areas identified in Neolithic Greece so far is the newly discovered stone axe workshop at Makri, dated to ca. 5500 BC (Efstratiou and Dinou 2004) (Fig. 6.13). It consists of a rectangular post-framed building with a very well-preserved lime plaster floor, on which *in situ* were represented all stages of the polished stone tools production sequence: a block of raw green schist, a hammerstone, a whetstone bearing marks of abrasion of the cutting edges of the tools on its surface, a number of finished, unfinished, and broken
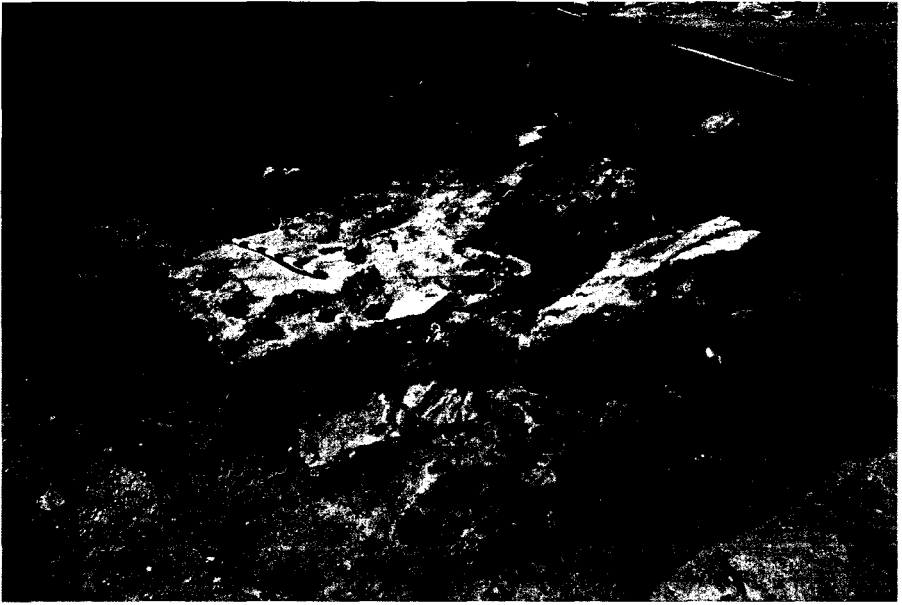
6.13. Stone axe workshop at Makri. Background: post-framed walls and plastered floor. Foreground: external platform coated with multiple layers of lime plaster. (Photograph and copyright: Nikos Efstratiou.)

serpentinite axes and adzes, and an abundance of flaking waste. The stone assemblage from this building includes at least twenty celts of various sizes, ten polishers and burnishers, and over thirty beads (Fig. 6.14). Immediately outside the building, a large rectangular platform made of successive layers of lime plaster and a discard area with high quantities of ceramic vessels, stone polishers, and pecking and flaking waste were apparently also related to the manufacturing procedures. The excavator interpreted these features as a specialised workshop intended for the production of stone axes, and possibly also of other stone tools and beads, and serving the entire community (Efstratiou and Dinou 2004). The overall assemblage of polished and carved stone artefacts from Makri II amounts to over 150 items, most of which were made from locally quarried raw materials such as serpentinites and phyllites. Granite, on the other hand, was probably transferred from the nearby island of Samothrace. All this implies that the organisation of craft production was differentiated and constitutes another instance of village-based group specialisation.

The Example of Spondylus Items and Other Shell Ornaments

The patterns of production and circulation of *Spondylus gaederopus* also enhance the idea of a nondomestic economy. As already mentioned, *Spondylus*
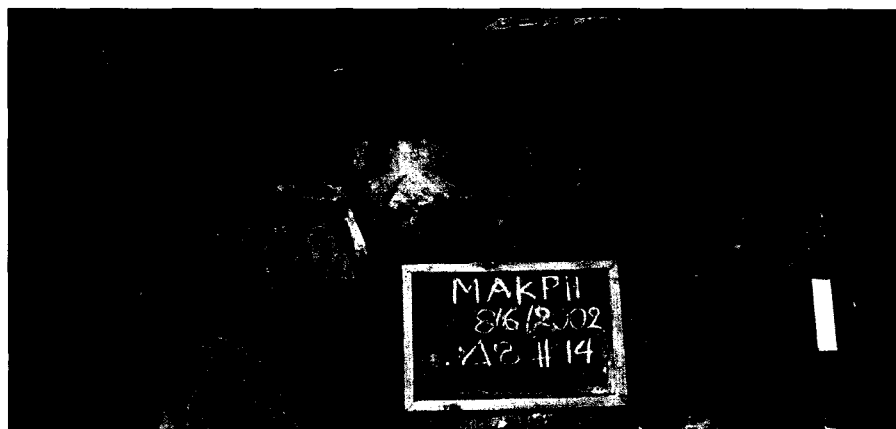
6.14. Stone axes found *in situ* in the workshop at Makri. (Photograph and copyright: Nikos Efstratiou.)

ornaments originating from the Aegean Sea are widespread in the European Neolithic and Copper Age and have always attracted attention for their inter-cultural significance. In the Greek Neolithic, Dimini still remains among the sites with the largest marine assemblages in general (ca. 5,800 specimens in total, representing over 20 species of marine shells) and *Spondylus* assemblages in particular (over 500 pieces) (Fig. 3.7). As we have seen in Chapter 5, the clustering in two spaces of the majority of the *Spondylus* items, together with unworked shells, shell–making debitage, and relevant implements, points to production areas, one for buttons and beads and another for bracelets. The site itself must have enjoyed an important position in long-distance exchange networks.

Recently published data from northern Greece attest to the local working of *Spondylus* and other shell ornaments and the existence of 'workshops' for making specific types of jewellery in several other sites, especially Sitagroi, Dikili Tash, Stavroupolis, and Dimitra (see Karali 2004 and Nikolaidou 2003 for comparative syntheses of the recent evidence). Miller's (2003) combined archaeological and experimental study of the Sitagroi ornament production indicates clear associations between raw materials (stone, shell, and clay) and types of ornament (bead, pendant, and bracelet) and leaves little doubt that this craft was not practised by all individuals. Miller identified five stages in the manufacture of shell rings, matching those proposed by Tsuneki (1989) with regard to the Dimini ring production, all indicating considerable knowledge and skill. At Servia the marine shell assemblage amounts to forty-six specimens, forty-three of which are whole and half-finished objects – bracelets, beads, and pendants – and three are pieces of the raw material (Mould et al. 2000). The

majority of the worked items were recovered from Middle Neolithic levels and in close spatial association with two structures (Structure 3 of Servia I and Structure 7 of Servia IV).

In the sites of southern Greece and the islands, on the other hand, *Spondylus* items occur in considerably lesser quantities, being rather rare findings (Karali 2004). Unless this is due to the limited character of excavations there, it is surprising, considering the coastal environment and maritime economy of many of these sites, which would potentially facilitate the provision and exploitation of the shell. It would appear that the production of *Spondylus* depended on cultural and social choices, status in the social networks, and position in economic or ceremonial exchange, rather than merely the availability of the raw material.

The earliest example of a specialised workshop of shell ornaments, this time of cockle-shell beads, has been recovered at Early Neolithic Franchthi (Perlès 2001: 223–6). There, in two distinct areas 30 m apart, conspicuous concentrations of shell-bead manufacture waste were spatially related to hundreds of small, locally made flint points and drills, all of which showed traces of use on a hard material and could be easily associated with various stages in bead production. This clustering, together with a noted discrepancy between the large amount of manufacturing debris and tools on the one hand and the low rate of finished products on the other, led Perlès (2001: 224) to suggest that the production of shell beads at Franchthi was a village-based specialised craft aimed mostly at regional consumption, export, or exchange. It would also imply development of community specialisations or specialised centres already from the Early Neolithic.

In summary, the examples of pottery, stone tools, and shell ornaments suggest that there were different patterns in the organisation of production and distribution/exchange of different goods within and between sites. This would indicate systematic differences in the role and economic importance of households within a site and of sites within a region or inter-regionally.

BURIALS IN EVERYDAY CONTEXTS

The scarcity of cemeteries in Neolithic Greece, contrasted with the abundance of settlements, deserves special attention. However small in absolute numbers, the burying of the dead within the boundaries of the settlement still is a social and symbolic praxis. It encodes distinct aspects of a community's narratives and worldviews and of the ways that material symbolism was selected and displayed, not least because it apparently did not include the majority of the population. Aside from the different degrees of site exposure or publication, I believe that we can detect four main patterns of intravillage burial, depending on location and treatment: (a) child burials or overall visibility of children;

(b) pit burials; (c) fragmented and scattered skeletal remains; and (d) 'funerary complexes'.

Many sites are characterised by isolated burials of individuals, in which children clearly predominate. This is best exemplified by Dimini, where the presence of eight infant burials in houses is contrasted with the absence of evidence for adult burial.[6] At Axos A in western Macedonia an infant burial in flexed position in an urn covered with a large fragment of another pot, found under the floor of an Early Neolithic house, provides the earliest example of burial in a pot thus far in Greece (Chrysostomou 1997: 162). At the contemporary Yannitsa B two infants were buried in a shallow pit outside a house, resembling the triple child burial from Nea Nikomedeia (Fig. 4.3). Final Neolithic Rachmani and Mandalo each had one child burial in an urn, and at Alepochori in the Peloponnese, pots containing infant bones were found placed inside a larger storage vessel (Gallis 1996). Further child burials, usually in floors, in built-in facilities, in pots, or in pits, are reported from a very large number of settlements all over Greece and throughout the Neolithic, including Makriyalos, Argissa, Elateia, Lerna, Ayios Petros, and Limenaria, where a storage pit contained an infant burial lying on its back and covered with stones (Malamidou and Papadopoulos 1993: 564–5), and Knossos, where seven burials of children up to seven years of age were uncovered in the earliest Neolithic levels (Cavannagh and Mee 1998: 7). Even in sites characterised by pit burials, children frequently seem to be more visible or distinct, as is the case with the single and multiple child burials at Nea Nikomedeia. At Franchthi in the Peloponnese, of the eighteen pit burials in total for the Early, Middle, and Final Neolithic, ten were of children and were lined or covered with rocks and stone slabs (Fowler, K. D. 2004, Tables 3.2 and 5.2). In one case, a juvenile's head was rested on a 'pillow' of pebbles (Fowler, K. D. 2004: 28). In the same region, in the Alepotrypa Cave, both a habitation and a burial site, primary pit burials, cremation, and secondary burials in ossuaries were practiced at the same time (Papathanassopoulos 1996c). Of these, most distinctive are the single and multiple cremation burials of children: they were placed inside prominent natural niches of the cave and were found covered by a bulk of burnt smashed painted pottery and thick layers of ash, apparently from a funerary pyre (Papathanassopoulos 1996c: 176–7).

Isolated adult burials also occur, but they tend to occur outside the houses. At Galene (Fig. 3.3), three burials of adults in contracted position were clustered in the northern part of the side, between rather than within pits (Toufexis 2005). Similarly, at Palioskala three burials were found at the southern side of the tell between houses (Toufexis 2006). In Mandalo a secondary burial of an adult in a pit lined with mud bricks and a clay floor has been uncovered, and at Makri two adults had been buried inside a clay-lined pit, and another one under a plaster floor (Aggelarakis and Efstratiou 1996). In Lerna, two single adult

6.15. Domed oven at Makrychori 1, on top of which an adult was found buried in contracted position. (After Toufexis in press a.)

burials near habitation areas were each accompanied by up to three ceramic vessels and one of them also had a stone placed under the head (Fowler, K. D. 2004: 64). An intriguing finding is the burial of an adult in contracted position at Makrychori 1, found on top of a large domed oven (ca. 1.10 × 0.85 m), apparently after this fell out of use (Toufexis in press a) (Fig. 6.15).

Other sites display variations on the above patterns or even entirely different burial practices. At Stavroupolis, three basic practices of the disposal of the deceased occurred simultaneously: one complete cremation of an adult in a pot (Fig. 6.16); five primary single pit-burials of children and adults, with the deceased found in contracted position (Figs. 6.17 and 6.18); and over 100 bone fragments scattered in the settlement and belonging to at least twelve individuals of both sexes and all age categories (Triantaphyllou 2002, 2004). There was no obvious preference in sex and age (although a predominance of young individuals over adults can be recognised in the pit burials), body part representation, or degree of disarticulation, and grave goods are virtually absent. At Makriyalos at least 50–60 individuals are represented in primary and secondary burials, found mainly inside the large perimetric ditch of phase I (Triantaphyllou 1999). Most were adults, and again, there is no clear pattern in the treatment of the deceased. In some cases, complete skeletons were thrown directly into the ditch, and in other cases, concentrations of bones in skeletal association, sometimes covered with stones, may reflect originally articulated

6.16. Cremation of an adult in a pot at Stavroupolis. (After Grammenos and Kotsos 2004.)

burials. But overall, most human bones were disarticulated and fragmented and probably represent either secondary treatment burials or primary burials disturbed by subsequent everyday activities (Triantaphyllou 1999: 129). Interestingly, in the 50% of the adult individuals that could be sexed, women clearly
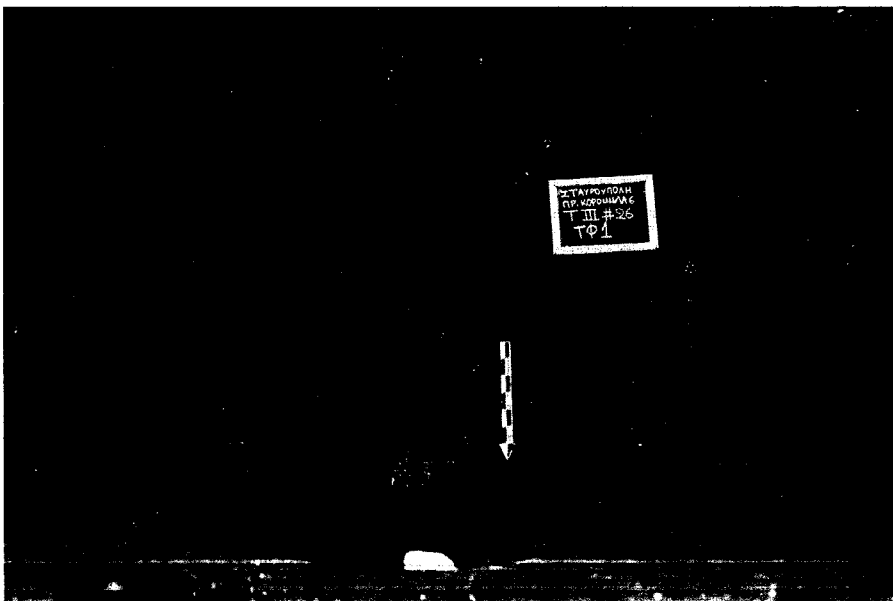
6.17. Pit burial of an adult female at Stavroupolis. (After Grammenos and Kotsos 2004.)
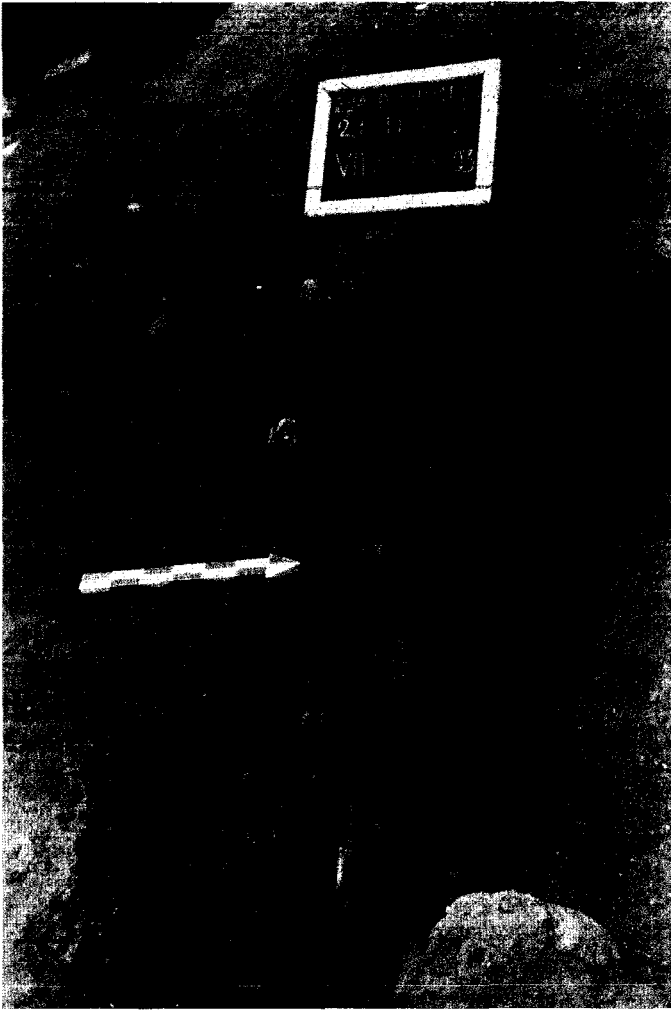
6.18. Skeletal remains of a young male at Stavroupolis. (After Grammenos and Kotsos 2004.)

predominate (24 of 33) (Triantaphyllou 1999: 132). A change in patterns of mortuary deposition seems to occur in phase II: human remains belong only to a dozen individuals, but they all come from habitation deposits, including an intramural infant cremation in a pot and two inhumations in a rubbish pit (Triantaphyllou 1999: 131–2). There is, in addition, greater visibility of children (five individuals) over adults (seven individuals, of which only one could be sexed).

At Mandra, in Thessaly, two single primary burials and two single secondary burials were found in shallow pits and small cavities dug specially inside the large ditch that surrounded the earlier settlement (Toufexis et al. in press) (Fig. 6.10). In one instance, the limbs of the deceased had been removed at some stage after the original interment and were reburied in a small cavity
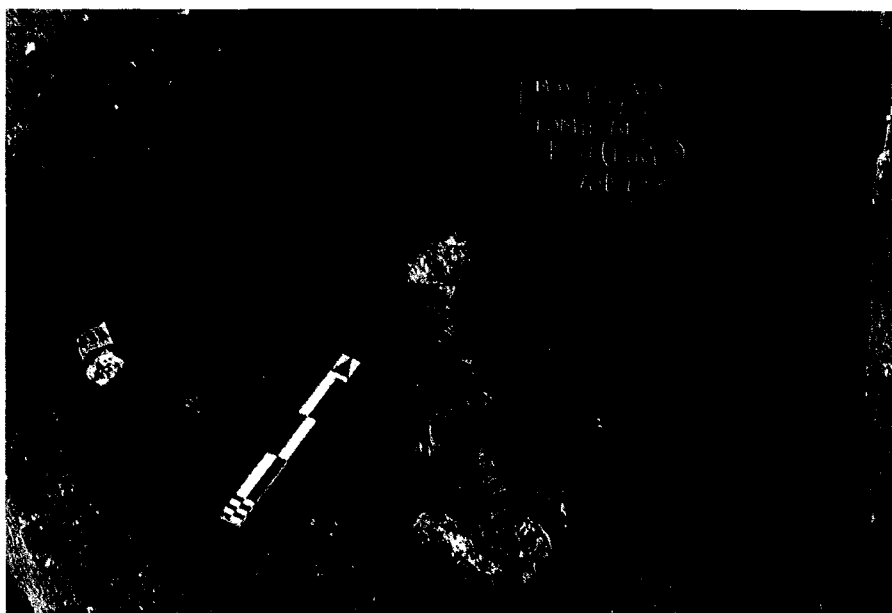
6.19. Pit burial inside ditch B at Mandra of a mature adult female whose limbs were removed at a later stage and were reburied in another pit inside the ditch. (After Toufexis et al. in press.)

on the side of the ditch dug specially for the purpose (Figs. 6.19 and 6.20). Another single pit burial had taken place inside the settlement but outside the residential areas and was, uncommonly, delineated by a low circular clay wall. In most burials, large limestones placed near the head of the deceased seem to have served as memorials of the burial grounds (i.e., as 'tombstones') (Toufexis et al. in press) (Fig. 6.21). Another interesting feature of the Mandra burials is the total absence of children and young individuals: all burials were of adults of both sexes and mostly middle-aged.

Finally, in yet other sites, what are often called 'funerary complexes' reflect different social and ritual practices, little understood as yet. At Early Neolithic Prodromos a multiple secondary burial, consisting of eleven skulls and some fragments of thigh and rib bones deposited in three successive layers, was found in a pit beneath the floor of a large house (Hourmouziadis 1971, 1973). Whether an ossuary or not (see discussion in Perlès 2001: 279–80), it certainly illustrates a deliberate and repeated process, perhaps a ritualised act of remembrance. It involves exhumation from the original place of internment, removal and transportation of selected bones, and reburial in the same specific location and in different episodes of burial ceremony. Similarly, Ossuary II in the Alepotrypa Cave contained skeletal remains from nineteen individuals, mostly skulls without the lower jaw (Papathanassopoulos 1996c). The skulls had been placed carefully next to each other; most were upright and some were encircled by stones. At the tell of Ayia Sofia in Thessaly two secondary burials, of a child

6.20. Secondary burial of human limbs inside ditch B at Mandra, probably belonging to the adult female interred in another pit inside the same ditch. (After Toufexis et al. in press.)

and of an adult, were placed in the corners of two overlying mud brick houses, obviously after these had been abandoned. Part of a third, still earlier house was discovered underneath. The three structures were filled with fine compact earth, mixed with sporadic human and animal bones, and were sealed off by an artificial mound of clay, burnt hard on the surface. On top of the mound rested a circular clay pit full of ash (Milojčić 1976: 6–7). To the west of this complex was found the later mud brick platform mentioned above. At Middle Neolithic Chaeroneia, in central Greece, the burial of an adult and a young male found under a layer of ash containing potsherds and stone tools, over which a deposit of earth seems to have been deliberately piled, is also thought to represent a place of mortuary ritual (Gallis 1996).

There are many important aspects to these burial patterns. In general, the overall thinness of the funerary records in Greece seems to indicate that either the full range of burial practices is not visible to us or there was generally no emphasis on the visibility of the dead. The lack of emphasis on ritual elaboration and the relative absence of special cultic places underline the importance of the social group at the household and the community level and the relative unimportance of the deceased. These observations imply, in turn, that independent funerary rituals were not a particularly important means of social integration or of social distinction. Within this wider social and cultural framework, the noted diversity in intrasettlement mortuary patterns suggests that the disposal of the deceased and the manipulation of human bones were not structured by a
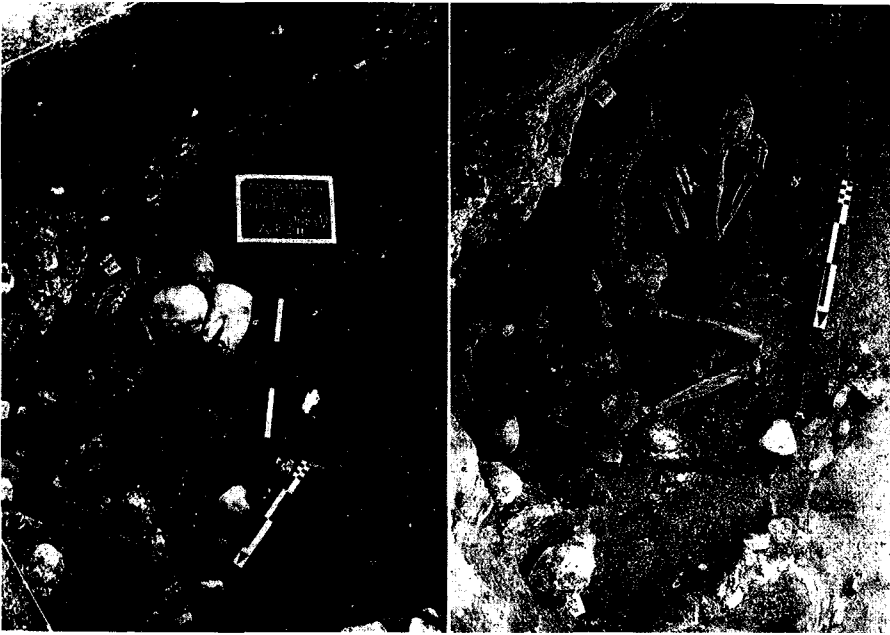
6.21. Left: Primary burial inside ditch B at Mandra of a mature adult male in flexed position, with the body turned to the interior of the ditch and with two large limestones placed near the head and on top of the right arm and a smaller one at the feet. Right: After the removal of the limestones. (After Toufexis et al. in press.)

homogeneous sociocultural norm, nor did they have the same meanings for all the Neolithic communities. Another pattern that may be read in the treatment of the dead and the specific location of burial within a site is in relation to the realms of the living and of a distinction between individual identities (e.g., seen in the isolated child and adult burials) and collective identities (e.g., seen in the burials – single or collective – that cannot be clearly associated with a particular house, household, or part of the settlement). They can also be evaluated as points of reference of household versus community social reproductive strategies. The implications of these patterns are discussed in the next chapter.

HOUSEHOLD IDEALS, IDEOLOGIES, AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTIVE STRATEGIES

Household ideals, ideologies, and social reproductive strategies are the sphere in which the greatest variability is found, within an overall sense of uniformity resulting from the fact that any household is actively involved in its viability, welfare, and reinforcement of role. They can be detected in a combination of data – from building houses to food consumption, and from internal elaboration

of buildings to making offerings. Several of the elements discussed thus far can also be linked to household ideologies – for example, the overall visibility of child burial. The separation of children from the rest of the group and their symbolic 'keeping' after death within the world of the living is evidence for their special status and also implies an intimate connection with household. It suggests that they were important in household physical and social reproduction, including the socialisation of the young members. In addition to the burying of bodies or parts of bodies within the village boundaries, there are numerous indications that ritual elements were closely intertwined with everyday life and the repeated flow of daily activities.

Domestic Rituals and Symbolism

The issue of domestic rituals is not unknown to Greek Neolithic research, with reference either to buildings or to house models and other artefacts. However, it has either been considered in traditional terms (i.e., relying on a typological and *a priori* designation of certain items as ritual, accompanied by a dichotomy between function and symbolism) or been met with excessive scepticism as being idealist and as entailing a great deal of inference and supposition. It is essential to accept that objects and contexts acquire their social and symbolic significance only in relation to each other and to move away from the artificial oppositions between ritual and functional. As Bradley (2005: 119–20) points out, ritual is a form of action which can occur in a variety of settings and scales, including the domestic sphere, permeates everyday life, and does not include a different kind of logic from everyday activities. Significantly, whatever material evidence the prehistoric literature associates with rituals and symbolism, in Greece occurs in everyday contexts – houses and settlements.

At Achilleion in phase IIIa, a strange outdoor feature comprising a sloping clay platform with four fire pits, one at each corner, and associated with another hearth, a domed oven, numerous figurines, a clay table, and parts of legged vessels was designated as an altar (Gimbutas 1974; Winn and Shimabuku 1989). In the next phase (IIIb), one room of an apparently two-roomed structure containing a bench, nineteen figurines, and several anthropomorphic vessels has been interpreted as a 'house shrine'. At Dikili Tash I, a bucranium modelled in raw clay, apparently originally attached to the interior wall of a single-roomed house, was found fallen with its back up on the south part of the floor (Treuil and Tsirtsoni 2000: 214). Immediately around this feature were preserved intact a shallow bowl and two collared pots containing a dozen stone and bone tools. The north part of the room contained a very well-preserved domed oven, associated with a tripod cooking pot, a biconical jar full of barley, a large clay plate, a cup, and a collared pot, as well as a clay platform with four querns, a grinder, polished and chipped stone tools, a stone bowl, and at least two

large jars. All were found crushed beneath the fallen superstructure debris. The excavators (Treuil and Tsirtsoni 2000: 214, 215) argue against a ritual interpretation of this context on the grounds that the building also contained the typical 'utilitarian' set of items expected for a house. They suggest, instead, that this building was a common domestic structure and that the bucranium could simply represent relief decoration or a hunting trophy.

However, although buildings and objects are not imbued with special qualities in themselves, as the excavators rightly argue, the domestic context of discovery of this assemblage does not counteract its interpretative value as a place for ritualised events. To the contrary, it serves to emphasise the importance of the household not only as an economic, but also as a ritual unit. The bucranium 'cult' in particular occurs over a very wide area, from central Europe to the Middle East, and both in domestic and nondomestic settings (e.g., see Watkins 2005: 102 and Helms 2005: 120–21, 123 for animal representations in communal places). The bucrania come frequently from inside houses, and even the most 'artistically' or ritually elaborate domestic 'shrines' can contain a wide range of everyday 'utilitarian' artefacts, including storage and cooking pots and chipped stone tools, with classic examples coming from Çatalhöyük in Anatolia (Mellaart 1967; Last 2006: 201–4; Russell and Meece 2006), and from Vinča (Vasič 1936: 50–52) and Parţa (Lazarovici and Lazarovici 2003: 391–4) in southeast Europe.

Returning to Greece, one clay house model from Thessaly (Toufexis 2003, Fig. 29.3) and two from Promachonas-Topolniča (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 2005: 100, Fig. 30) had bucrania sculptured in clay attached to their gabled roofs. The Promachonas-Topolniča house models had been deposited together with a large number of actual cattle skulls and skulls of other horned animals inside a large circular subterranean building (Fig. 6.22). At Palioskala in Thessaly three zoomorphic clay objects (probably animal heads) came from the middle one of the three adjacent structures mentioned above (Fig. 6.23). This middle structure measured only 4.85 × 3.80 m and had a clay floor, an entrance with a stone threshold on the northwest corner, a stone bench to the left-hand side on coming through the entrance, and a clay platform or hearth positioned diagonally to the entrance on the southeast corner. The zoomorphic objects were found between the entrance and the stone bench in a triangular arrangement (0.35–0.45 m from each other). Their small size (14–15 cm high, 12–13 cm wide, 10–14 cm thick), flat bases, and partly hollow interiors suggest that they might have originally been fixed to or hanging from structural elements of the buildings (e.g., the entrance, a wall, or a wooden post), or they might have been used to retain large pots (Toufexis in press c). This structure also yielded two anthropomorphic figurines and one acrolith, two spindle-whorls, fifteen obsidian and flint tools and debitage, four grinding stones, ground stone tools and objects, and an abundance of storage pottery.
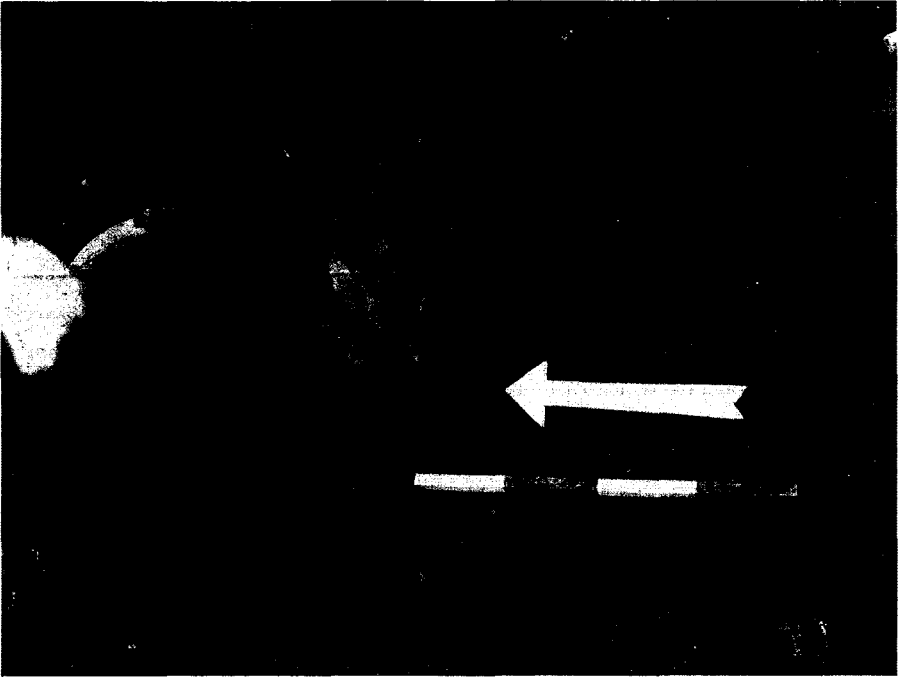
6.22. Bucranium inside the communal subterranean building at Promachonas-Topolniča, deposited together with a large number of other bucrania, horned animal skulls, and all types of artefacts. (Photograph and copyright: Chaido Koukouli-Chrysanthaki.)

Much of the material was found broken to pieces and displaced, and all was covered by burnt pieces of clay from the roof, bearing wood impressions, and by rubble from the fallen superstructure of the stone walls (Toufexis in press c). The amount and heavy fragmentation of the material and the burning of the building may point to symbolic or ritual closure, possibly involving structured deposition and/or deliberate burning. Heads of animals – domesticated or wild, actual, clay, or modelled in clay – are reported from a number of other sites in Greece (see Marangou and Grammenos 2005 for an overview and comparisons with other parts of the world; also Treuil and Darcque 1998 for comparisons of the Dikili Tash bucranium with those from southeast Europe).

The context of finding and use of fine ceramic wares, discussed in detail in Chapter 5 with reference to the Dimini pottery, also indicate that even the most highly decorated pots could have had a more daily use than is usually assumed and that many of the social reproductive practices that may be put to decorated vessels (e.g., hospitality, ritualised and/or shared food consumption) can also be put to the households. In the Dikili Tash houses, the recurrent association of painted carinated collared jars, incised cups, and painted bowls with ovens and platforms suggests that the social or ritual functions of richly decorated

6.23. Central building at Palioskala with interior covered with multiple layers of field stones. On the right: Three adjacent structures in which zoomorphic clay objects were found. From the west. (After Toufexis 2006.)

vessels are not incompatible with areas of food producing and cooking activities (Tsirtsoni 2002). Similarly, at Servia, decorated vessels are found both inside houses and in their yards, together with food preparation and storage facilities, food remains, tools, spindle-whorls, ornaments, and grindstones (Mould and Wardle 2000b). The occurrence of serving ware in more spatially restricted craft production areas is not unusual either, as is the case with space S8 at Dimini and with the stone axe workshop at Makri, where two decorated vessels were found *in situ* next to a hearth and a pit (Efstratiou and Dinou 2004: 1).

House models and figurines – anthropomorphic and zoomorphic – were also parts of a close relationship with people, households, and everyday activities, as has already been evident from the cases discussed so far. They are consistently found near the hearth, around the central post of the roof, in corners, or along the walls, and next to cooking, storage, and work areas. They seem to emphasise a link between human and animal representation and domestic architecture as shared systems of signification in early societies, a link which has been pointed out by many scholars for many different archaeological contexts (e.g., Bailey 2005: 197–204; Helms 2005; Russell and Meece 2006; Voigt 2000: 270–90; Watkins 2005). Another line of evidence that ritual or symbolic considerations were bound up with the construction of buildings is

the occurrence of foundation deposits. They consist of a variety of fragmented or complete artefacts, child bones, or even animal bones, found embedded under or inside the lower parts of structural features of buildings (e.g., walls, floors, facilities, and post-holes), probably as charms for household prosperity. Perhaps the best testimony of the character of the ideology associated with these artefacts is the context of discovery of the model of the house interior with its domestic group from Platia Magoula Zarkou (Fig. 4.13): it was found intact under the floor of a Late Neolithic house, and specifically inside a pit in the area under the hearth dug specially into the debris of the previous house floor (Gallis 1985).

Finally, the very architecture of houses and settlements provides clear evidence of where social and symbolic value was placed. The coexistence of different and often complicated building techniques, the abundance and variety of structural features and facilities, the decorative elements, and the constant improvements and maintenance all attest to the degree to which people invested in the construction of their everyday environment. The regular orientation of buildings and yards (and boundaries) within a settlement also implies meaning in the organisation of space and articulates links between social order and natural order. For example, at Sesklo the 'ordered variability' of internal and external space at the household level seems to have been centred on principles of orientation and symmetry, whereas in the case of Dimini the entire layout of the settlement could be taken as highly symbolic (Chapter 5). Houses themselves acted as symbols, reflecting the interaction between sociocultural norms (seen in externally visible elements) and the decisions, interests, and identities of individual households (seen in elements visible from the inside).

In summary, the contextual understanding of domestic rituals and symbolism proposed here does not rely on the form or on an 'objective' symbolic significance of artefacts or buildings. Nor does it locate the ritual element of Neolithic life in an abstract sphere of religion or in some primordial meaning. Rather, they are best seen as aspects of the ideology of Neolithic societies, an ideology associated with the importance of the social groups and their reproduction and with the structuring and restructuring processes of everyday life. They could have served to strengthen group cohesion and to resolve intrahousehold conflicts – for instance, over a gender or age division of labour and task allocation, the (re)distribution of products, or property or inheritance claims. Domestic rituals and symbolism were components of both the household process and the wider social dynamics, a means of promoting definitions of household and community identification and membership. At the same time, the frequent location of special structures or special sets of items in spaces not clearly related to a specific house or household suggest communal rather than individualistic ritual loci. These are discussed in the next chapter.

House Replacement and Continuity

House replacement also varies from vertical and successive superimposition to horizontal and often discontinuous displacement. These two basic replacement practices seem to correlate with the distinction of settlement types into tells and non-tells or flat, extending sites, and much has been inferred about their differences in terms of socioeconomic formation and of the role of social memory in the long-term process of organising space (see Chapter 4 for an analytical discussion with reference to Sesklo A and B). For instance, a common interpretation of the tell pattern in Thessaly is that the location of villages on good agricultural land inhibited horizontal expansion in favour of rebuilding on the same plots, so their longevity and economic stability resulted from the high productivity of the fields and created a sense of ownership of domestic space and arable land, which in turn lead to the need for intensification of production and 'banking' of vital economic resources (Demoule and Perlès 1993: 363; Halstead 1989, 1999). Conversely, the non-tell shifting pattern in Macedonia may be the result of the use of cultivation plots within the site, interspersed with nonfixed habitation structures and involving greater flexibility with space and land holding and more limited scope for intensification of production (Andreou and Kotsakis 1987: 82–4, 1994: 20; Kotsakis 1999: 73). However, environmental and economic factors alone fail to explain both why in the equally rich soils of Macedonia the flat settlement pattern was preferred and why unrestricted sites do occur in Thessaly, let alone why horizontal shifting and vertical superimposition of houses, or some combination, can coexist at the same site – for example, at Nea Nikomedeia, Servia, Achilleion, and Sesklo.

Although all these social and architectural patterns may suggest varying degrees of attachment of individual communities to specific places and landscapes, an overemphasis on the contrasts between tells and non-tells may impede the recognition of variation *within* either type of site. All the examples of intrasettlement organisation discussed thus far indicate considerable variability in household spatial arrangements, social identities, and contributions to the wider economy, regardless of the location of settlements in particular regions or environmental conditions. Different settlement and house types, spatial practices, and construction techniques are developed within the same region, and new surveys have shown that soil formations and geographical areas do not seem to have played a decisive role in settlement location (Gallis 1992; Johnson and Perlès 2004).

Nor is there any reason to assume that households and villages maintained the same ways of house replacement or abandonment through time, either in tells or in non-tells. Although the understanding of the social structures connected to reproduction and continuity passes through the investigation of wider settlement patterns that reflect longer-term processes of organising space, it is

never fully accomplished without the consideration of the varied and more personal agency produced at the small scale. For example, the history of the settlement at Servia reveals changing attitudes to house replacement over the seven successive Neolithic phases: either buildings were relocated and the old plots were left temporarily vacant, or the old structural debris was levelled and new building programmes on the same plots were undertaken (Mould and Wardle 2000b). At Sesklo the distinction between vertical and horizontal house replacement in sectors A and B respectively suggests the cofunctioning of two levels of identity and ideological expression, accompanied by the creation of personal affiliations and interhousehold connections crossing the two sectors. Nea Makri in central Greece, with its twelve successive habitation layers, spanning two thousand years, verifies the fact that flat inconspicuous villages of pit-buildings can be as long-lived as tells with more durable houses and that people both reused fixed locations and shifted their structures. At Makriyalos I the repeated digging and renewing of ditch A and its recurrent association with burials created a permanent landmark which may have been just as vital to expressing and maintaining site (re)occupation or residential continuity (Triantaphyllou 1999: 131–2). At Makriyalos II the depositional patterning of the production and use of knapped stone tools in the pits at the upper part of the hill reveals 'events' of 'structured deposition' potentially connected to a technique of creating social memory not identifiable by durable material structures of habitation: the *in situ* accumulation of knapped stone artefacts that are still in use point not to discard but to the temporary stopping and careful placement of the production cycle as an act that confirms social reproduction and temporality (Skourtopoulou 2006: 67–9, 71).

It is more likely, then, that the differences between tells and non-tells derive from different preferences, ideological structures, and levels of dominant manifestations of identity (cf. Andreou et al. 2001: 307). Of equal relevance is Tringham's (2000) argument that open or flat settlements are not necessarily less continuous or less complex; they just have different notions of continuity and different ways to reinforce or dispense with social memory. Differences in social relationships at a larger level, varying degrees of emphasis on social integration, different modes of social cohesion and relation to the past, independence or communality, and the ways in which domestic units were interconnected into larger social and economic groupings may be a more important distinction between tells and non-tells than the notions of continuity, stability, and permanence. Generally, in tell settlements, the spatial practices of demarcation, segmentation, house restriction, and replacement on the same spot, the maintenance of a specific and fixed settlement plan, and the use of more durable construction materials are vital mechanisms of social reproduction and memory. Individual households seem to constitute more fundamental or key units of socialisation and social regulation than those in flat sites, in the sense

that they show stronger, clearer, or more independent contributions to social identity, economic stability, and social distinctions via lineage. Communal ties are strengthened to a considerable degree via the shared experience of space and the routinisation of daily practices through successive generations of largely unchanged occupation. Flat settlements, on the other hand, might be viewed as having less stressed patterns of lineage and descent and a more fluid social organisation, involving more limited use of spatial practices. However, the successive interventions and short-distance relocations of buildings, in conjunction with the constant digging of pits and ditches and their infilling with various types of material, may well reflect a method of 'appropriating' and holding ancestral values and of creating connections with the past (Skourtopoulou 2006: 55–6). The possible mixing of habitation and cultivation plots, the lack of clear spatial distinction between household and communal areas, and the process of manipulation of material at a communal scale emphasise reciprocity and perhaps the transformation of the past via the social relations of the present.

House Abandonment and Discontinuity

Although, as said earlier, it is not always possible to distinguish between primary and secondary or structured deposition, ways of abandonment in individual households do not appear to represent structural variation on a shared sociocultural theme either, akin to the internal variability in their spatial arrangements and in the type and kind of their structural and ritual features. Symbolic closure of the house varies from bringing inside burial remains to be covered by structural debris to placing them in pits dug specially in abandoned houses, and from leaving behind considerable amounts and ranges of material to possibly emptying the house before abandonment. In flat settlements, the abandonment and short-distance relocation of individual buildings and of the whole settlement can represent an attempt to create the necessary distance between the social present and the social past (Skourtopoulou 2006: 56).

Yet another type of abandonment may be evidenced in the successive and dense layers of field stones that covered the entire interior of the central building at Palioskala (Toufexis 2006: 58, in press c) (Fig. 6.23). This deposit could not have resulted from collapse of the superstructure either of this building, because this was made of mud brick rather than stone, or of the surrounding enclosures, because these were located on a lower level. Also intriguing is the complete lack of findings. Although the removal of this debris has not been completed as yet, one might be tempted to think that it represents deliberate deposition, probably symbolic sealing after the building fell out of use. The possibility of structured (ritual?) deposition of the items left on the house floors and of deliberate house burning was considered in some detail in reference with Sesklo and Dimini (Chapters 4 and 5). In Neolithic southeast Europe, John Chapman

(2000: 105–6, 224–5) has proposed that concentrations of objects on floors exceeding the amount normally expected for a house might represent deliberate and careful placing by more than one household (i.e., as a commemorative practice of the last act of the life of a house). Thus, unusually large assemblages in abandoned houses may suggest an idealised and deliberately created material and symbolic representation of the household or the community rather than the original possessions of a single household. This proposition might apply to several Greek Neolithic settlements. For example, it may help explain why full and empty houses and burnt and unburnt houses sometimes co–occur in the same settlement.

There is also interesting variation in the degree of preservation of buildings and contents as a result of fire destruction. In many settlements, buildings were burnt down both before episodes of rebuilding and at the end of the village's use. The practice of house burning upon abandonment, usually upon the end of a household history or the death of a significant household member, and sometimes with the entire household assemblage left on the floor, has been widely documented both ethnographically and archaeologically (e.g., LaMotta and Schiffer 1999: 23–24; Tringham 2005). In Neolithic Çatalhöyük, Cessford and Near (2006) suggest that fires themselves have life-histories and that they were often linked to building abandonment procedures, even if only for the recycling of parts of the buildings into later ones directly above.

Fire destruction of houses and settlements is widely reported from all over Neolithic Greece, but it is not clear whether it was deliberate or accidental or how it occurred and why. Greek Neolithic sites generally have not been excavated with such questions in mind, and evidence essential for a proper discussion of this kind is not always available. Yet the generally good preservation of architecture and the numerous instances of floor contents *in situ* are often owing to fire destruction and the subsequent superstructure collapse inside the buildings. For example, in Makri and Dikili Tash the transition from phases I to phases II was separated by a destruction deposit and ended in a uniform destruction horizon (Andreou et al. 2001: 314). Of the seven phases of Neolithic Servia, three ended with extensive fire destruction (phases 3, 4, and 7) (Mould and Wardle 2000b). After the last one of these, the settlement remained uninhabited for a minimum of 2,500 years before occupation was resumed in the Early Bronze Age. Middle Neolithic Sesklo and Platia Magoula Zarkou were also destroyed by fire. Sesklo was abandoned for about 500 years before reoccupation in the Late Neolithic, whereas Platia Magoula Zarkou continued into the early Late Neolithic, but seems to have been abandoned during the later Late Neolithic and until the Final Neolithic. Several other settlements were also reoccupied after a hiatus, often following fire destruction. In the deep stratigraphic trench ZA at Sitagroi, alternation of house floors with layers described as middens suggests that occasional short-term abandonment

may have taken place within a generally continuous habitation of the tell (Renfrew 1986: 175–82). Promachonas-Topolniča II and III are probably separated by a period of abandonment of the site, and at Makriyalos the thick deposit from erosion that covered the ditch of phase I and the lack of findings in the ditch of phase II suggest that the earlier ditch was abandoned and filled up before the establishment of phase II (Pappa and Besios 1999: 181).

In light of new and increasing arguments in the prehistoric literature for various types of structured and ritual deposition before abandonment, symbolic closure, and deliberate burning of buildings, and given the possible occurrence of such evidence in the Greek Neolithic, this taphonomic element should be introduced more distinctively into current and future field research. As Bailey (2000: 165; also Tringham 2005: 98) points out with regard to the Balkan Neolithic, similar attention should be directed at the social dynamics of house closure, destruction, and abandonment as is devoted to processes of foundation, construction, and reconstruction of buildings.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have examined the spatial, material, and social components of households and everyday practices which create and give meaning and value to the broad patterns observed at larger scales. This analysis suggests a degree of consistency in the structure of the settlement, the house, and the material culture in time and space, combined with much variability. There is routinisation in conjunction with variability, and organisational principles might have been realised differently at a local level.

On the bigger picture, there is an overall sense of uniformity in the material culture and in ways of life. Although material culture traits show regional and temporal variations, we can legitimately speak of a relatively uniform Greek Neolithic culture which shares key elements including vessel types, the organisation of ceramic decoration, tool technology, and the so-called 'domestic equipment'. The common structure of ceramic decoration (geometric elements laid out in a remarkably ordered fashion), which applies also to figurines, house models, spindle-whorls, and other clay artefacts, may be seen as reflecting and reinforcing the ideology of the communities using those objects. Cultural uniformity was partly maintained through settlement patterns and the contextual associations of people, buildings, and material, which linked sites within and between regions through particular specialisations, communication, exchange of ideas and objects, and shared systems of signification. Settlement types and spatial organisation, on the other hand, reflect considerable variations in how social groups defined themselves and sustained that sense of identity and how they might have been connected with larger and more inclusive social groups; in wider social norms, rules, and standards; in the organisation

of economic activities; in territorial exploitation and subsistence strategies; and in notions of permanence, stability, and continuity.

A consistent and significant similarity underneath the bigger picture is the central role and importance of the household. It is remarkable how, when it comes to the site level, the regional identities, preferences, and choices outlined above diminish: the village is the most widespread and fundamentally common sociospatial entity, and the household, whatever its form, is a key unit in social structuring. At the same time, the diversity in household morphology, ideology, and social reproduction and to a lesser degree in economic activity suggests that households vary considerably in the ways in which they organise their daily lives, express their identities and 'logics', and promote their own concerns and interests. This variety of households indicates, moreover, that features of morphology are not limited to such apparently straightforward phenomena as house size, form, and architectural properties. Interestingly, this rich variability not only occurs within single settlements, but also is not specific to particular regions or periods. It is therefore not a reflection of some homogeneous sociocultural norm, but an expression of the diversity and flexibility with which Neolithic communities and their households were materially and symbolically structured and integrated. It also implies that each household had an identity, which may or may not have been a structural variant at a site or at a region. Subsequently, it is both theoretically and methodologically erroneous to regard any site's data as 'typical' and much more so to extrapolate from a few sites to entire regions and to entire periods. This is not only because of the differences in excavation and available information, or 'real' chronological and sociocultural differences, but because none of the sites or of their households is exactly 'typical'. Rather, what we can see here is a complex and varied picture of the tension between diversity and homogeneity, differentiation and integration, the social unit and the larger collective.

SEVEN

EVOLUTION OR CONTINGENCY? HOUSEHOLDS AS TRANSITIONAL PROCESSES

THE INITIAL REACTION TO THE DATA PRESENTED IN CHAPTERS 3–6 is a recognition of the unpredictability and multidimensionality of real-life household practices, in accordance with the theory discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. It is now time to draw together the data, pull in more evidence, and integrate them all within a diachronic perspective to form a picture of how the household worked and whether basic social principles and ideals were maintained or abandoned over the course of the Neolithic. In doing so, I return to points made in Chapter 2 and explore the implications of the evidence for a further two issues: (a) the stylised, and thoroughly static, image of household in many archaeological studies; and (b) the attempt to establish a unilinear social evolution, implicit in the notion of growing household autonomy. These issues are largely interdependent, rest heavily upon top-down approaches to households and social organisation, and epitomise a series of false foundational claims such as the teleological and single-directed view of change and the idea that social units merely adapt or respond to the impact of such change.

Among the most deeply embedded evolutionary concepts is the notion of change from 'simple' to 'complex' societies involving the emergence of specialisation and hierarchy and representing the culmination of ordered progress and the apex of societal achievement. Alasdair Whittle (2001, 2003: 162–5) and Robert Chapman (2003: 64, 2007) have reviewed in detail the models of 'single-directed' change and their inconsistencies. Another consequence of

these models is that in most prehistoric socioeconomic studies inequality begins as a foregone conclusion, often on the assumption that social action largely means economic competition and social complexity largely means increasingly hierarchical societies. In turn, most accounts of Neolithic long-term structural changes suggest, or rely upon, a more or less uniform sequence which proceeds from the pioneer earlier Neolithic sites with loosely knit, kin-related, and interdependent households to the later Neolithic 'nucleated' villages with households acting as autonomous units, competing with each other over land, resources, and all types of 'property', and being able to act independent of the community (e.g., Byrd 2000, 2005; Chapman 1991, 1994b; Earle 2004; Flannery 2002; Johnson and Earle 2000; Tringham and Krstić 1990). This essentially evolutionary model for social change argues for growing household independence and a progression against cohesion, communality, or reciprocity and towards political centralisation. On a different theoretical basis, Hodder (1990, 1998) also argues that the Neolithic sequence represents a gradual process of expansion of the *domus* and elaboration of its boundaries, although the importance of the house declines in the later phases of the Neolithic, as new forms of power based on exchange increase (Hodder 1998: 90–91). In Çatalhöyük, it is argued that the increasing emphasis on the house through decoration, art, burials, and ritual appears to appropriate and internalise the symbolism which in earlier Anatolian sites had been in suprahousehold ritual buildings (Asouti 2006: 86–7). This is taken to suggest increased centrality, importance, and independence of the house at the expense of larger corporate groups and collective functions (Hodder 2005c: 18, 21, 2006c: 9, 12). In the Greek Neolithic, Halstead's (1984, 1989, 1995, 1999) model of 'social storage', discussed in Chapter 3, maintains that short-term attempts to stabilise food production led to long-term emergence of elites, who were successful in agricultural production and capable of accumulating 'prestige goods' through their continuous ability to exchange their agricultural surplus. This led to the development of institutionalised inequality in the Late Neolithic and of social stratification in the ensuing Final Neolithic and Bronze Age, accompanied as it were by an ideological shift amongst Neolithic households from sharing to hoarding.

In this chapter, I argue for a categorical separation of all these concepts and against the idea of a progressive, simple, and single model of social processes (see also Souvatzi 2007b). The architectural, material, and subsistence data from Neolithic Greece suggest considerable complexity of the social relations of production and reproduction within and between communities. They also reveal considerable regional variation and different local trajectories, serving more than anything to highlight the spatial and temporal variability underpinning social units. Can we then talk about one uniform Greek Neolithic process? Is it possible to enclose all kinds of continuities, discontinuities, changes at different

scales and times into generalised models? The dialectical approach adopted here moves beyond the 'generalities' about the Neolithic sequence and focuses attention on the intrasite patterning of the evidence and on socioculturally specific issues as more appropriate for the reconstruction of household process. The theoretical position I advocate is that social change (and continuity) is not evolutionary determined but multicausal, episodic, and historically contingent (Giddens 1984) and that households are producers of change rather than merely responses to it.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY AND THE MORAL ECONOMY

In Chapter 2, I argued that current archaeological theory may place too much emphasis on individual actors and on self-interest as motivating history and change. The idea of the self-interested rational individual seeking to maximise his or her own satisfaction presumes a fundamentally amoral side of people in that it leaves little space for morality, altruism, solidarity, support, and emotion. One of the aspects that make households complex and distinctive units is that they are composed of both individual interests and group interests in a rich dialectic. Although economy involves divisions, conflicts, and inequalities, it may have also something to do with unities and ethical notions about the limits of rationality. If morality is viewed not as some idealised, normative notion but as 'an essential aspect of the actors' motive' (Bloch 1973: 75), we may begin to problematise its effects on economic and social organisation. As Bloch (1973: 76) pointed out, "the crucial effect of morality is long term reciprocity and the long term effect is achieved because it is not reciprocity which is the motive but morality". Whittle (2003: 68–9) argues that an idea of a moral community is necessary both to counter the ego-centred nature of many of the archaeological reconstructions of social networks and to understand more fully what might have been expected of smaller groupings and individuals who belonged to such a community. In the remainder of this section I consider some of the areas in which the presence of such forces, their significance and consequences, can be detected.

Modes of Production, Craft Specialisation, and Economic Rationality

Most archaeologists would agree that intensification of production and craft specialisation are integral components of complexity, and many have regarded these as concomitant with political centralisation, social stratification, and, ultimately, hierarchical organisation (see Brumfiel 1995: 126 and Cross 1993: 62–3 for examples and references). The evidence for early development of craft specialisation and long–distance exchange in Neolithic Greece in the absence of political centralisation clearly does not fit neatly into these models.

Bourdieu (1977) has rightly argued that in capitalist or stratified societies those who control the circulation of labour control the social reproduction of society. In the studies of noncapitalist societies such as Neolithic ones, however, the relationship between *control* of labour and (social) *division* of labour or between restricted access to production processes and the meaning of craft specialisation remains unspecified. When there is craft specialisation, it is logical to expect that there is also control of the circulation of labour in terms of organisation, skill, knowledge, and the labour force. Furthermore, we might expect controlled access to production in the sense that craft specialisation means exactly that not everyone was involved in production, in the sense of division of labour. But this is not synonymous with control in a narrower sense, in which access is based on social or economic inequality or those who organise production control the distribution and consumption of the finished products and the social reproduction of society in terms of Bourdieu's argument. In other words, there is a fundamental difference between hierarchically controlled production, on the one hand, and the household/community organisation of production and division of labour manifest in nonhierarchical societies – prehistoric or ethnographic – on the other.

Reassessment of concepts such as 'specialisation' and 'mode of production' through reference to the ethnographic record of nonhierarchical societies makes clear that the dichotomy drawn between economic and noneconomic behaviour is a false one, but so is the application of modern, capitalist rationalities to prehistoric socioeconomic processes. Practices and strategies that are rational culturally but not economically, such as ritual activity, social commitment, and moral obligation, can always operate at the household level and beyond. Equally, modes of production are neither mutually exclusive nor concomitant of a 'social complexity' defined in a linear continuum, but can well coexist. In the socioeconomic and ideological processes I identified, with particular reference to the Dimini ceramics (Chapter 5), society is not dominated by productive systems, and productive systems are not a series of formalistic, technological issues, but configurations of relationships linking the social, economic, and ideological/ritual spheres. The importance of the households in these processes is not only retained, but also highlighted. The household is the locus of ceramic production, not in the sense of the domestic mode of production, but in the sense of labour force and technical knowledge and of transmission of this knowledge.

The localisation of ceramic production and consumption suggested by the evidence from the broader Greek Neolithic context is also very significant in these terms. Continuous use of the same local resources permits the development not only of skills and techniques appropriate for the pottery-making of each community, but also of an ideological link between people, space, and time (Sillar 1997: 8). My suggestion is that it is the combination of local resources,

the way pottery-making is perceived, local social organisation, and the repro-
duction of people's social and technical knowledge that can and did cause craft
specialisation in Neolithic Greece. And it is the long tradition of experimenta-
tion, innovation, and imagination and the emphasis on skilled manufacturing
and elaboration that, in connection with the settlement patterns and the distri-
bution of raw materials, encouraged the occurrence of highly specific, localised
stylistic distributions later in the Neolithic.

The observed technological and stylistic innovations in material culture may
also be accounted for by ideological considerations. Spielmann (2002) proposes
that the concept of the 'ritual mode of production', according to which large-
scale demands for the production of 'extraordinary' material items are defined
by the intended use of these items in networks of social obligations or as ritual
offerings, might be more appropriate for understanding the motivation for sub-
sistence intensification and the emergence of craft specialisation in small-scale
societies. Perlès (2001: 300) has also suggested that in the Early Neolithic of
Greece craft specialisation and intersite exchange of goods could have devel-
oped as the result of primarily social needs for interdependence, exchange,
and reciprocity within and between communities rather than of strictly eco-
nomic or technical reasons. I believe that these notions can well be extended
to include the entire Neolithic of Greece, as is more clearly shown below.

Social Division of Labour

Craft production systems in the Greek Neolithic range from household pro-
duction for household consumption to activities carried out by specialists.
Other important activities such as architecture, agriculture, and rituals could
have also involved different degrees of specialised knowledge and an element
of role differentiation. Although still considerably underinvestigated in this
respect, Greek Neolithic material culture points to much greater complexity
in social relations of production and to higher degrees of division of labour
and coordination than had previously been acknowledged.

With regard to pottery, distinct ceramic categories have been identified in
the assemblages of many sites, but it is difficult to know whether they reflect
different producing groups or are primarily of functional and stylistic justifi-
cation. For instance, the Stavroupolis ceramic assemblage was subdivided into
several different clusters of attributes or categories, some of which suggested
clear associations between fabric, technology, firing techniques, and function
(Urem-Kotsou and Dimitriadis 2002, 2004). The production of food/drink
consumption vessels in particular indicates much higher skills and knowl-
edge, thus differentiating these pots from the rest of the assemblage both
technologically and stylistically (Urem-Kotsou and Dimitriadis 2004: 322–3).
At Knossos, analysis of fabric and finishing techniques suggests a number of

different producing groups already from the Early Neolithic (Tomkins 2004: 45–6). At Dimini, the clear internal patterning of ceramic attributes into the three main, discrete subgroups of monochrome, painted, and incised pottery possibly reflects different potters or pottery-making households, and an attempt was made to identify those households spatially (see Chapter 5). Alternatively, given the similarities between painted and monochrome pottery, their respective vessels could be the outcome of one production group. Painted and incised ceramics, on the other hand, are far more clearly distinct from each other (e.g., in formal and technical characteristics, relative proportions, and vessel types), and in this sense they could be more easily associated with different production groups. Yet they both share the same range and structure of designs, which extend, moreover, to other ceramic artefacts such as the spindle-whorls and the figurines, thus appearing to represent a joined production group.

Such interrelations between various classes of material culture can also relate to the division of labour, especially to a gendered division. A large number of anthropological and archaeological studies of craft production, gender, and social organisation have demonstrated a link between the sex of producers and the organisation of different crafts. The production, as well as the ownership and distribution, of pottery has frequently (but not always) been shown to be a female domain, especially when pottery making is organised at the household scale or as a household specialisation (Crown and Wills 1995; Miller 1985; Rice 1991; Spielmann 2000; Welbourn 1984; Wright 1991). The association between ceramics and gender is often strengthened by links between pottery and other craft activities such as textile manufacture and shell working, also documented as generally gender-specific (e.g., Brumfiel 1991; Costin 1996; Gibbs 1987; Hendon 1997; Wright 1996b). However, generalisations derived from the present or from societies where additional lines of evidence are available (e.g., texts and iconography) should not be directly applied to prehistory, although they do point to major trends. Even if they are applied here, household representation and participation in craft production remain unspecified, not to mention unequal participation or division of labour *within* female groups – always possible on the grounds of age, status position within or outside the household, and so forth. For instance, at Franchthi, Vitelli (1995: 61) suggests that not every woman was involved in ceramic production. In addition, ethnographic and cross-cultural studies have shown that there are many ways in which craft production and gender covary and that in many contexts a signifi-cant number of activities such as weaving and basket making are not exclusively male or female but rather 'dual-gendered tasks' (Mills 2000: 302–5).

Evidence regarding the degree of efficiency embodied in chipped stone production suggests the coexistence of multiple levels of technical knowl-edge and networks of exchange, particularly in the extraction and working of cores and in the blade production sequences (see Chapter 6). Karimali (1994)

suggests that in Thessaly obsidian cores were subject to on-site processing by indigenous or small-scale itinerant specialists of different apprenticeship who practiced highly skilful techniques on a array of materials and were involved in a range of skill-demanding production activities such as manufacture of ground stone tools, obsidian blade production, and shell modification. In Macedonia and Thrace, 'itinerancy' must have been much more limited, with specialists moving in between households at the same site and with sites participating more intensively in local and regional networks of craft exchange, extraction of rock types, and redistribution (Skourtopoulou 1998, 2006). Although we might never be able to know the relationship among the different modes of procurement and specialisation and producing groups, it is clear that behind these networks lie a number of spatially and temporally discontinuous patterns.

Ornament production and circulation is also characterised by varying degrees of complexity in structure and different levels of technical efficiency. For example, at Sitagroi, ornament production has been characterised as a part-time specialised household craft, most likely with different specialists in different raw materials and with neighbouring households participating in ornamentation in varying degrees and functions (Nikolaidou 2003: 358–9). At the same site, Miller (2003: 380) identifies two different ornament production groups on the basis of the technological choices, skills, and tools required: shell and stone ornaments were most probably produced by the same craft group, whereas clay bead production, which is clearly distinct from that of shell and stone and considerably similar to that of pottery, could have been a supplementary activity of pottery producers.

Thus, some individuals or groups practised crafts that others did not, household production was organised differently at different times, and there were different modes of production and exchange within and between sites. Such groups, with their cross-cutting interests and potentially varied motives and goals, would have contributed to the creation of a differentiated society. This raises a series of questions: was different status attached to these different crafts and craftspeople? Did groups of skilled people wield greater power? Did they enjoy greater rewards for the production of valued material? Was economic differentiation accompanied by social differentiation or centralisation? Were specialised products also prestige items and markers of social differences?

Patterns of Distribution

Prehistoric studies often assume that that there is a straightforward relationship between material variation, wealth or status variation, and social variation – commonly in terms of the prestige goods models. As noted in Chapter 3, in Greek Neolithic research certain items such as fine ceramic wares and *Spondylus* shell ornaments have been selectively used to assume elite use, economic

exchange, or wealth accumulation, whereas others such as weaving implements and stone tools are characterised as relatively unimportant in the definition and reinforcement of social relations. It has also been argued, largely for Thessaly, that there is a shift in the use and values of fine pots from being food-sharing utensils in the Early and Middle Neolithic to becoming items for hoarding and wealth accumulation in the Late Neolithic (Halstead 1995: 14–18, 1999).

The recognition of social variation in prehistoric contexts is a complicated process requiring several levels of linking arguments. It requires the recognition and interpretation of spatial and material patterns: consistent associations of material data, spatial clustering within the settlement that does not appear to be functional, and indications of different use of the same artefacts in different spatial contexts. For instance, the presence of functional and symbolic variation between different contexts and at different times, ranging from production locations to ritual structures, may account for much of the observed specific concentrations and the presumed unequal distribution or spatial discrepancies of the material. This dialectical approach also requires an attempt to identify households more specifically. Such identification, however imperfect, enables distinctions and comparisons between household units instead of between unspecified architectural units and their formal properties or material concentrations. Finally, it is also essential to remember that what we characterise as 'wealth', 'status', or 'prestige items' in Western terms can be perceived quite differently in different societies and in different times. And surely, such questions can be better explored contextually than typologically.

Although an unequal distribution of certain goods *among* sites (Perlès and Vitelli 1999: 99) may be true, given the differences in specialisations, exchange modes, and distribution of basic resources within and between regions, the same does not necessarily apply *within* sites. Until we can rely on a larger number of extensive excavations and a greater concern with horizontal material distributions, it is difficult to draw firm inferences. But even though limited, the evidence is suggestive: at all of the sites at which such questions have been addressed, consistent indications of unequal distribution of a kind that would point to social differentiation are lacking. The even distribution of all types of material, from subsistence to ritual data, is best exemplified at Dimini, the very site which has been taken to suggest the rise of economic elites. There, the differences in modes of production and in kind and intensity of separate activities carried out in different parts of the site are contrasted with a pattern of homogeneously distributed goods, including a generalised use of symbolic items (Chapter 5). Halstead argued for a 'megaron elite' at Dimini, but his analysis of the animal bones shows that there were no major differences in stock-breeding strategies between households or in consumption. At Sesklo, hints of social variation are limited mainly to the varied distribution of painted pottery of higher technical quality, an element which, however, could have been of an

ideological character (e.g., a symbolic stress on place continuity at Sesklo A) rather than of a clear-cut economic one. The Nea Nikomedeia decorated pots and stone axes are distributed more or less evenly across the site, with relatively high densities in the external areas, pointing to food consumption, work, or refuse activities. In Servia and in Dikili Tash, as in many other settlements, all houses appear to be similar in nature, containing a fair amount of features, facilities, and finds, despite variations in building techniques. At Stavroupolis, the spatial distribution of chipped stone tools related to agricultural and everyday activities (e.g., plant cutting, cereal harvesting, hide working, and working on hard materials) is largely homogeneous across residential contexts and for both main phases of occupation, despite the variation in raw materials and technical strategies (Skourtopoulou 2004: 393–401). By-products and higher relative frequencies of tools made of higher quality raw materials tend to be concentrated in nonresidential spaces, pointing to workshops and/or to different treatment of certain tools (e.g., more careful storage of high-quality blades and of cores for further use). At Makriyalos II, the recurrence of the same lithic repertoire in the various domestic units at the upper part of the hill suggests equal access to tools and associated practices, whereas the depositional and compositional patterning of the lithic assemblages at the foot of the hill implies use of this area for secondary discard of material from the rest of the site at regular intervals (Skourtopoulou 2006: 62–70). At Makri II and Makriyalos I the differentiation in amount and representation of the ceramic repertoire of two central structures, a 'bin complex' and a large pit, respectively, has been related to a special, nondomestic function of these structures (see below).

One important implication from these patterns is that although there was obviously 'restricted' access to specialised production processes, as the existence of craft specialisation and the spatial segregation of specialised activities indicate, the distribution of the products appears to have been unrestricted and their consumption uniform within sites. At the same time, the multifunctional character of most of the workshops, evidenced in the constant presence of food preparation, cooking, and storage activities there, disputes clear-cut divisions of space into monofunctional and multifunctional. Overall, although there were certainly economic parameters involved, there is nothing to suggest that social distinctions referred either to craft activities or to access to the finished products, deriving, for example, from their economic value, or that producers were assigned prominent and differential status in a hierarchical economy (cf. Perlès and Vitelli 1999: 105).

All this evidence suggests a less straightforward and more complex relationship between producers and consumers than is often assumed and prompts us to reconsider the extent to which we can envisage household empowerment over the rest of the community. It suggests, among other things, that in social dynamics, functional or economic differentiation and specialisation are

not necessarily synonymous with social differentiation understood in terms of worldly possessions. Instead, they could indicate, and have contributed to, the success of social interaction. The households – although not all of them, as the very idea of craft specialisation implies – may have been the loci of maintenance and transmission of technological information and the source of the labour force; but the main patterns of distribution, the ideological information on how to consume the products, and possibly also the exchanges of labour and material culture were apparently defined in conjunction with wider interests.

Patterns of Storage

Archaeological explanations of prehistoric subsistence production and intensification have largely been economic and concern issues such as risk avoidance, resource imbalance, and maximisation. There is an assumption that individual households intensively undertook to increase the value and exploitation of their resources and that they would anyway produce a 'normal surplus' in order to protect themselves from misfortune and mismanagement and to enjoy economic independence. Differential access to resources and ability for surplus appropriation or redistribution are thought to have given way to the rise of aspiring leaders (e.g., Halstead 1989). Similarly, the Greek Late Neolithic is considered to be a period of intensification of land exploitation and storage activity, seen, for example, in the introduction of large storage vessels[1] and an increase of storage pits, even though there are no changes in agricultural production, except for a possible intensification (Halstead 1989: 75–6; Perlès 2001: 166, 193–4; van Andel et al. 1995). Halstead (1995: 14–18, 1999) argues that during the Late Neolithic previously open villages become organised into courtyard groups, and storage and cooking facilities are placed indoors or in closed yards. This is taken to suggest independent, bulk storage, a new sense of ownership, and an increase in individual household economic control (see also Tomkins 2004: 50–52 for an application of this model to Neolithic Knossos).

There are several problems with these types of arguments. At a theoretical level, they can be criticised for the ideas of the primacy of the economic over the social and of a disembedded prehistoric economy. Further criticism can be aimed at the projection of capitalist concerns onto ancient cultures – for example, the need for activity and resource maximisation and the assumption of a direct connection between surplus production and surplus appropriation or ownership. They also tend to ignore the variety of socially rather than economically prescribed reasons for overproduction (intensification) and accumulation, most saliently documented ethnographically and archaeologically – for example, the needs of hospitality and of feasting; the different cultural definitions of status and values of foodstuffs; the importance of resource mobilisation in the creation and maintenance of wider and longer-term social networks, exchange,

and dependencies; and the intended destinations of social or symbolic exchange (Spielmann 2002; Strathern 1988). Certainly modes of surplus appropriation are associated with particular forms of power relations. But those who exercise power or who own the 'means of production' are not always those who extract and distribute the surplus (Saitta 2005: 29).

At an empirical level, a major problem with such arguments is that they are hardly substantiated by the data. Throughout the Greek Neolithic, the importance of external, more public space is clearly manifest not only in the careful construction and maintenance of such space, but in the area devoted to it at many sites. Throughout the Greek Neolithic much of the evidence for features and areas not clearly related with an individual household is associated with storage, food consumption, and work, with more or less shared but apparently external storage facilities, hearths, ovens, work installations, and serving pottery occurring in various sites. They can reflect a tendency towards more communal control of the surpluses and the practices of social reproduction.

In fact, according to the present evidence, if there is an association between outward location of storage and cooking and temporal period, this seems to be in favour of the Late Neolithic. The extensive yards of Thermi, Makriyalos, Stavroupolis, and Galene, with their storage pits and pots and cooking installations; the nondomestic structures S7 and S8 at Dimini, with their large storage vessels; the small round structures with an abundance of charred cereals around the houses at Saliagos and the similar constructions at Nea Makri – all are Late Neolithic examples. So are most of the communal social and ritual buildings discussed below. At Stavroupolis, storage areas and ovens were initially set up around the houses (phase Ia), then shifted inside the houses (phase Ib), and later, in phase II, they were situated both indoors and outdoors. At Thermi there is a change in spatial organisation from phase IIIa to phase IIIb characterised by a transition from relatively closely spaced post-framed houses to more extensive and more communal open areas (Grammenos et al. 1990: 240). At Servia, of the twenty cooking facilities (17 hearths and 3 ovens) in total for the Middle and Late Neolithic occupation, only one-third can be securely identified as located indoors (Mould and Wardle 2000a, Table 3.4). The external facilities at Late Neolithic Dimini are neither less frequent nor more isolated than they are at Middle Neolithic Sesklo A. At Early Neolithic Nea Nikomedeia, if there can be any secure association between buildings and features, this is in favour of an internal location of the latter (Pyke 1993, 1996). As for Dimini's layout, on which much of the application of the household isolation model to the Greek Neolithic is based, we have seen (Chapter 5) that architectural segmentation is not synonymous with socioeconomic isolation, and interhousehold contacts do not necessarily depend on the typology of spatial arrangements. In short, storage was well within the capacities of individual households, but individual households might have not been as

intrinsically predisposed to hoard or as socially unrestrained in hoarding as is supposed. Besides, interdependence and the production and pooling of subsistence surplus would be an essential precondition for the engagement of people in activities such as craft specialisation, long-distance exchange, and large-scale architectural works.

SOCIAL INTEGRATIVE MECHANISMS

If inequalities and power relations are indeed best conceptualised in terms of economic parameters and vertical differentiation, and given that specialisation, and therefore labour division, were developing already from the Early Neolithic, then why is there no convincing sign of social hierarchy within or between communities? Why are there no significant or visible differences in the distribution and use of the goods within a site? Why do households appear to be similar in importance, partly self-sufficient and partly interdependent units, despite the noted diversity in their spatial configuration, social composition, and ideologies? Why do funerary rituals, those from separate cemeteries outside the settlements included, provide no indication of inequality? All this is much more consistent with a complex picture of differentiation that would have required complex and powerful practices of integration.

Indeed, if we treat the household as a coalition of individuals, and the community as a coalition of households, each with their own interests, interests that may both conflict and conjoin, then we may raise a more pertinent set of issues: how were these fragile coalitions held together? How were tensions resolved and consent achieved? What conditions, institutions, and beliefs prompted individuals to transcend their own interests in favour of a collective goal?

Communal Social and Ritual Structures

In addition to domestic or more individualised social-ritual events, discussed in Chapter 6, expressions of more public ritual and ceremony are also found. Three main kinds of nondomestic, communal structures can be identified: ritual, storage, and work areas. They occur singly or in combination in a number of sites.

In the large central building at Nea Nikomedeia (Fig. 4.2), the concentration and spatial associations of usual and unusual material items suggest that it had a special function, possibly ritual and probably not at a single household level. The human skull deposit beneath a house floor at Prodromos is another intriguing finding, although, unfortunately, this large house has not been published in detail and it is therefore not clear whether it represents an individual or a collective ritual locus. At Sesklo, Houses 37 and 4–5 (Fig. 4.11), with their
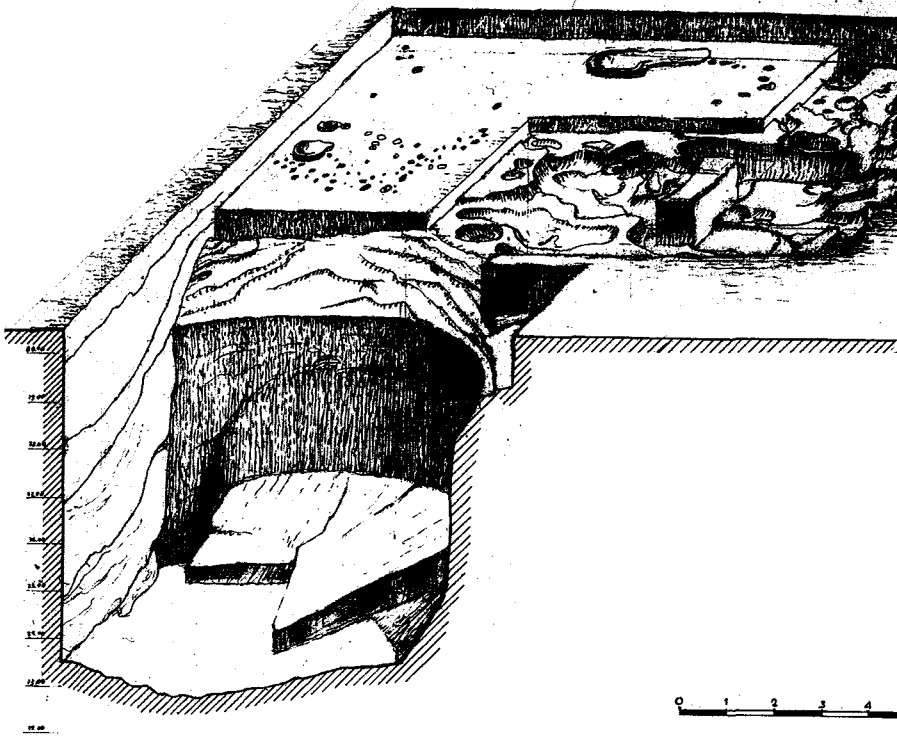
7.1. Plan of the communal subterranean building at Promachonas-Topolniča, partly excavated, showing distinct differences in size and architecture from the domestic buildings around it. (After Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 2005.)

formalised and unusual layouts, might have acted as a material symbol of the importance of household. At Dimini, the central yard (Fig. 5.1) can reflect a material ideological mechanism of social cohesion and a possible venue for suprahousehold gathering. The large and well-made water well at Limenaria on Thassos, surrounded by hearths, stone benches, and storage pits and a possible pottery 'kiln', all situated in a central open space, should also be recalled here.

A coherent picture of collective ritual and ceremony in a probably central location is emerging from the on-going excavations at Promachonas-Topolniča I (end of the sixth millennium). It consists of a large and deep circular subterranean structure with pisé walls, a succession of clay floors probably laid on a wooden substructure, and a displaced hearth (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 2005) (Fig. 7.1). It was rebuilt at least two times and there were many minor phases of maintenance and modifications of the internal structural details (Fig. 7.2). Its exceptionally rich contents include over fifteen actual bucrania (Fig. 6.22); several intact horns of bulls, rams, and deer; and high assemblages of
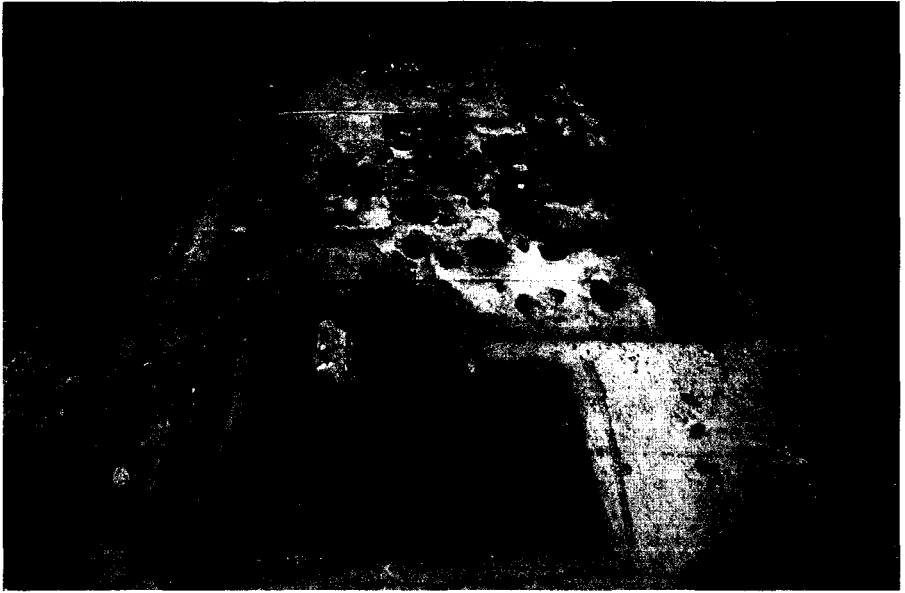
7.2. Architecture and stratigraphy of the communal subterranean building at Promachonas-Topolniča. Pisé walls, multiple burnt clay floors, and alternation of burned floors with layers of sand, pebbles, reeds, and branches visible at the bottom of the pit, on the sides, and on the block of fill that has been left for stratigraphic observations. (After Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 2005.)

serving, storage, and cooking pottery, house models, figurines, animal bones, grinding stones, tools, and ornaments. Bucrania and heads of other horned animals made of clay or modelled in raw clay, as well as fragments of clay with plastic decoration and a fragment of wood with painted designs, probably served as decorative elements of the building. The material had been deposited in thick successive layers inside the building, roughly corresponding to the different floors (Figs. 7.3 and 7.4). Each floor/layer had been burned, then covered with stones, reeds, and branches, and then abandoned for a short time before it was replaced by another, as indicated by the intervening layers of sandy soil (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 2005: 95–6, 104) (Fig. 7.2). Although less than half of this structure has been exposed thus far, it is clearly distinct from the small semisubterranean domestic buildings of this phase. The excavators believe that it had a communal ritual function involving offerings and ritualised food consumption (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 2005: 101) (Fig. 7.5). Similar central nondomestic buildings occur in Neolithic settlements in the Near and Middle East and have been interpreted as corporate buildings.[2]

Another possible interpretation of this building is that it represents a cycle of ritualised and collectively organised discard, if not also destruction by fire ('ritual killing'?), of material by the entire community. Such a process could indicate a social need to balance competing household interests, positions, and

7.3. Large-scale deposition of material on layer 28 of the communal subterranean building at Promachonas–Topolniča. Foreground: Complete jugs, broken vessels, painted 'fruitstand' with part of a bucranium next to it, and signs of extensive burning. Background: Another bucranium and complete jug. (Photograph and copyright: Chaido Koukouli–Chrysanthaki.)

7.4. Large-scale deposition of material on layer 31 of the communal subterranean building at Promachonas–Topolniča. Complete and crushed serving, storage, and cooking pottery, animal horns, grinding stones, and signs of extensive burning. (After Koukouli–Chrysanthaki et al. 2005.)

identities (i.e., by regularly destroying individual household material possessions and symbols) and thus to address the challenges of an emerging social differentiation and to (re)generate a dominant communal ethos. The burned floors and material inside this building may attest a motive similar to that explored by Cessford and Near (2006) in their study of house burning at Çatalhöyük. They point out that although fire destroys personal histories and memories, it also has transformative, purifying, and renewing properties and can thus create new, collective memories (see also Tringham 2005: 104–8). In this sense 'burned buildings can be viewed as offerings on a grand scale' (Cessford and Near 2006: 182). In any case, repeated use in Promachonas-Topolniča of the same context of ritual deposition and symbolic behaviour created a history of a socialising process and must have attributed a formalised and widely accepted character to it.

At Makriyalos I (5200–4900 BC), an exceptionally large pit-feature (Pit 212) lying roughly in the middle of the area enclosed by the large ditch also yielded clear evidence for ritual activity well above the individual household level. The pit was preserved to an area of 30 × 15 m (although its original size must have extended to 500 m^2) and to a depth between 0.3 and 1.4 m (Pappa et al. 2004). It contained an unusually large volume of ceramics, small finds, animal bones, grain crops, grinding stones, and fragments of burned clay, probably from cooking facilities. The extraordinary number of animals represented in the fill reaches several hundreds,[3] mostly domestic cattle, pigs, sheep, and goats. The assemblage of pottery, from bulk storage vessels to serving ware, accounts for 42% of the entire ceramic assemblage from this phase (Pappa et al. 2004: 33; Urem-Kotsou and Kotsakis 2007). Most of the finds formed a layer 10 cm thick at the base of the pit. Combined stratigraphic, ceramic, and faunal evidence suggested that they accumulated over a short depositional episode (spanning from months to just a few years). It is argued (Pappa et al. 2004: 41) that the pit represents large-scale feasting and conspicuous consumption of domestic animals as a mechanism for strengthening relationships and shared identities in the local, or even in a regional social network. Practices of commensality involving gathering and collective cooking and eating would periodically reinforce communal reciprocity at flat, horizontally extending sites such as Makriyalos, where the spatial patterning implies looser organisation and less stress on lineage and descent (Halstead 2007; Urem-Kotsou and Kotsakis 2007).

At Makriyalos II (4900–4500 BC), the stratigraphy and contents of the large and deep Pit 24 suggest formalised large-scale ceremonies involving structured deposition and resembling characteristics of both the Makriyalos I and the Promachonas-Topolniča I pits. Its upper strata were marked by layers concentrating impressive amounts and kinds of material, deposited there after the end of the original use of the pit as a dwelling (see Chapter 6). They include
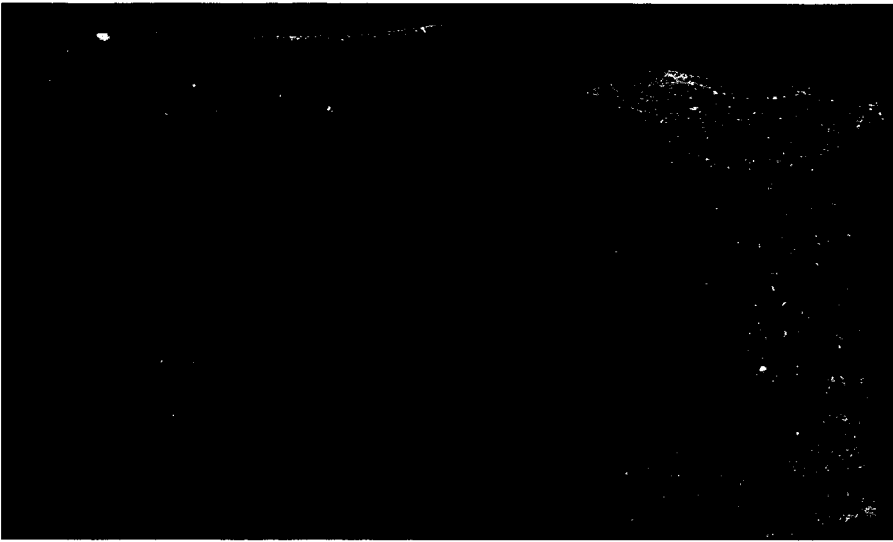
7.5. Red painted fruitstands from the Promachonas-Topolniča subterranean building. (After Koukouli-Chrysanthaki et al. 2005.)

high-quality blade tools, painted pottery of the Thessalian Dimini Ware, stone and clay figurines, clay stamps, ornaments, charcoal, and animal bones (Skourtopoulou 2006: 68–9, 72; Vlachos 2002: 121, 123–4). By contrast, in the lower strata of the pit, presumably representing the original house floors, the material diminished both in quantity and in quality. This pattern may reflect special and sequential depositional processes carried out at communal level and probably associated with large-scale storage or intentional discard of material coming from various areas of the site (Skourtopoulou 2006: 72).

Another, most outstanding instance of apparently elaborate, ritualised, symbolic behaviour is provided by the large 'hall' or 'shrine' (100 m²) in a prominent area at the settlement of Strofilas on Andros, briefly mentioned in Chapter 6. It is partly defined by a stone enclosure and surrounding natural rocks and partly carved on the flat natural rock and is arranged in two different floor levels. The smaller of these had a large circular stone-built construction of an unknown function in its centre. The other and larger one was empty of structural features and had its rock floor surface fully covered by carved depictions of ships, singly or in procession, fish, and animals, as well as abstract designs such as spirals and ring-shaped motifs resembling the schematic figurines from the site (Televantou 2005: 214). Similar carvings in very low relief are found on the façade of the enclosure and the surrounding rocks. Although the specific nature and character of this entire feature are not known, its location, unusual architecture, and size, as well as the expressive rock art, suggest a communal ritual function, probably associated with the maritime and nautical life of this community.
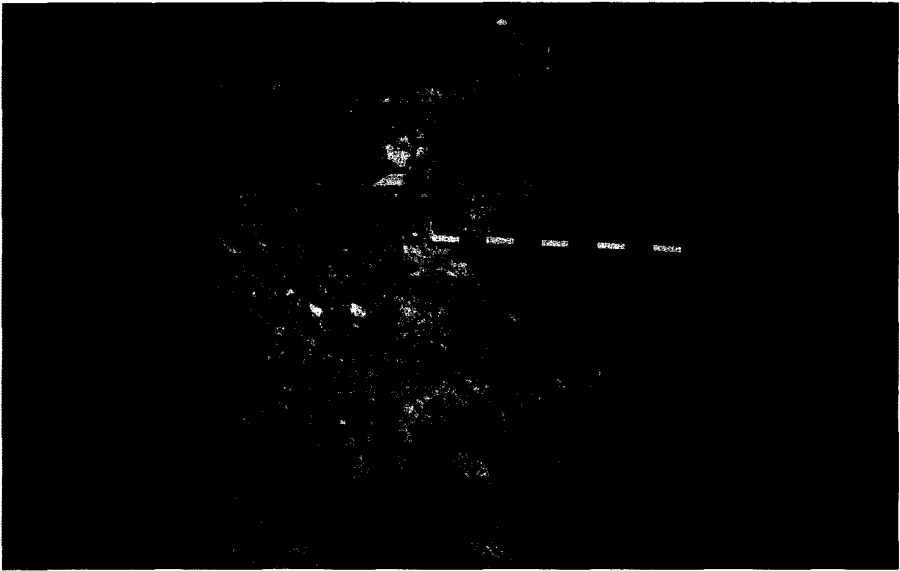
7.6. Uncovering the storage bin complex at the central part of Makri. (Photograph and copyright: Nikos Efstratiou.)

Overall, considerable recent evidence of public ritual and ceremony of a kind unprecedented or unrecognised thus far in Greece challenges previous views of social organisation and the purposes of symbolism. It also suggests that the pattern of central buildings and spaces is more widespread in time and space than the Late Neolithic of Thessaly, and that such buildings might be better associated with social integrative mechanisms promoting an ideological focus on the community than with social differentiation and 'central megaron elites'.[4]

Shared Storage and Work Areas

There is also more conclusive evidence for collective storage, apart from the cases of external storage areas mentioned above. A good example is the structural complex with a concentration of storage facilities found in the central part of the settlement of Makri II (Efstratiou et al. 1998) (Figs. 7.6 and 7.7). It lies beyond the spatial realm of a single household, is encircled by a low clay wall, and is clearly distinct from the domestic buildings located in other areas in terms of architecture, size, and contents. It consists of a large and possibly two-storied post-framed building (ca. 60 m^2) with a fine plastered floor and many minor phases of reconstruction. It contained a large and deep clay bin and a finely constructed clay platform, both located in the centre of the floor and surrounded by several smaller bins (Fig. 7.8), as well as a considerable range of finds, including the complete range of the ceramic repertoire. Four unique
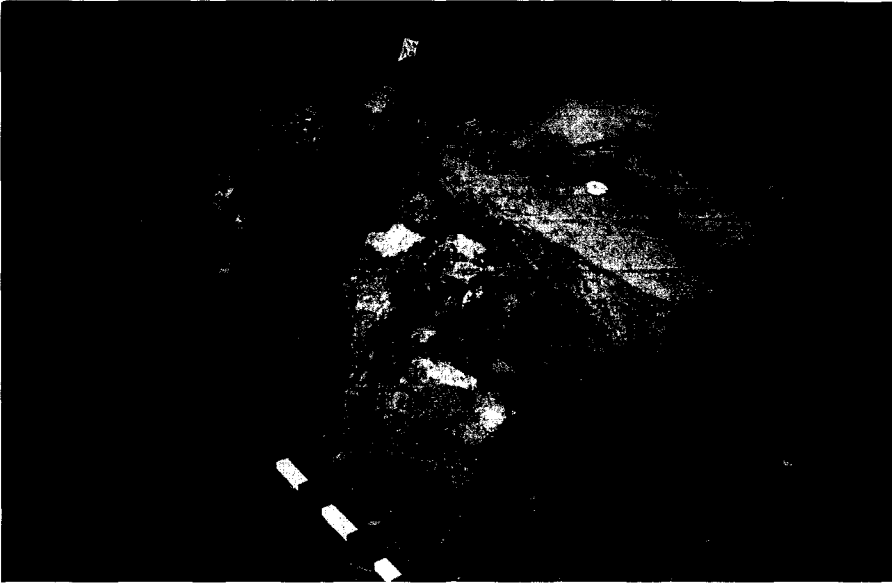
7.7. The storage bin complex at Makri after the excavation. (Photograph and copyright: Nikos Efstratiou.)

conical clay objects were found buried at the bottom of the central bin and have been interpreted as possible symbolic items. The excavator believes that the complex represents communal storage of grain and/or goods (Efstratiou et al. 1998: 25–7). Another recent example of an effort at collective storage
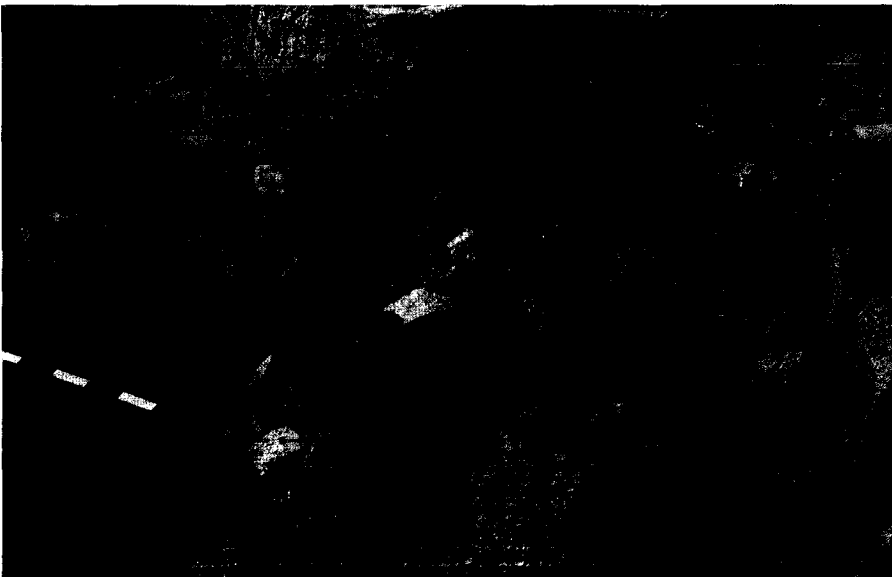
7.8. Large bins in the centre of the floor of the storage complex at Makri. (Photograph and copyright: Nikos Efstratiou.)

may be provided by the two narrow adjacent rooms in a central part of Ftelia on Mykonos, with their unusual architecture, size, and layout, large (storage?) pits, and charred wheat. They have been taken to indicate a granary (Sampson 2005: 34).

Other spatial indications of communality include shared use of work areas and simultaneous performance of craft and other activities. This is best exemplified by structure S8 at Dimini (Fig. 5.30), where evidence for three lines of specialised production – ceramic, lithic, and shell object – occurred together with specialised facilities. Other examples include the specialised stone axe and bead workshop at Makri (Fig. 6.13); the pebbled yards at Thermi, Vassilika, and Stavroupolis, with their flint-knapping and crop-processing waste; the pottery firing facility at Dikili Tash, associated with a silo of carbonised lentils and an abundance of tools; and two pit complexes at Makriyalos, where knapped stone tools and production debris from high-quality materials were spatially interrelated with domed ovens and hearths, indicating a common space for domestic and technical practices (Skourtopoulou 2006: 66).

The spatial division between general and specialised activities suggests that the latter were performed on a communal basis. Ethnographic and ethnoarchaeological studies suggest that cooperation between different production groups and between individual producers is of vital importance over a broad range of societies, especially in nonindustrial contexts (e.g., Costin 1991: 14, 2000; Fish 2000: 194–6; Musgrave 1997). It can enable efficient production, even when individual producers maintain independence in subsistence production or in use and exchange of their products, and can operate at several stages even of one production sequence. For example, pottery production often requires different degrees of cooperation, from obtaining the raw materials to firing the vessels, whereas the transmission of the craft is essentially a cooperative process in that potters can be influenced by many sources and can learn from many individuals (Arnold 1991: 26–33; Sinopoli 1991: 120). In workshop areas the production of a wide variety of goods and different production activities or stages must have been carried out by craftspeople in a sequential way. Occurrence in most of these workshops of storage pits and pots, serving and cooking pottery, and food remains implies that the sharing of tools, facilities, and labour might have been accompanied by shared storage and food consumption.

The Social Values of Material Products

The traditional dichotomy between 'elite' or 'status' and 'utilitarian' items is often, and most unfortunately, reflected in an artificial opposition between meaning and function and between ideology and economy. However, all material products of people's activities are used in a social context, and their

relationship with this context is recursive. It is therefore not sufficient to say that they play an important role in the definition and reinforcement of social relations. The specific contexts of production, distribution, use, and evaluation of the products must be considered both independent of and in relation to each other and against other classes of data in order to understand how they convey and represent social relations and what sorts of relations they reinforce or deny.

One area of potential significance is the role of decorated pottery as a code of social and ideological information. The high proportions of richly decorated serving ware in Greek Neolithic pottery (Figs. 3.5 and 3.6) underline the importance of food consumption in socialisation and in the construction and maintenance of social order. Ever since Malinowski's, era social anthropologists have always drawn attention to the centrality of shared food preparation and consumption in enduring social bonds and in enabling antagonisms to be resolved, both at a domestic and at a wider level (see Chapter 1 for examples and references). Recent archaeological literature has also demonstrated that food exchanges play an important role in negotiating tensions, although it has rather tended to privilege ceremonial feasting as an arena of political competition and authority (Dietler 2001; Potter 2000). However, as Spielmann (2002: 196–7) points out, communal gatherings and ceremonies are not only the arena for the rise of aspiring leaders; they are the ideal context for social interaction, the pursuit of symbolic capital, and the development and renegotiation of a variety of social roles and relationships. In the Greek Neolithic, the elaboration of the means of food consumption, the carefully made and maintained cooking facilities, the evidence of ritualised cooking and consumption in shared contexts, and the wealth of cooking and eating representations in the miniature world further highlight the importance of these activities and indicate where the value of the so-called 'prestige' pottery must be situated and assessed.

Decorated pots might have acted also as symbols of group identity, given the coexistence of homogeneous and widespread with highly specific and localised wares. Stylistic interaction and material homogeneity reveal how cultural entities were formed during the Neolithic and how decorated pottery contributed to the degree of uniformity of material culture, serving as a symbol of broader cultural identity. But in densely packed social environments it seems that pottery acquired significance also as a symbol of community identity, conveying social and ideological information about each different community. Such information would be important, given that communication and interaction involved exchange not only of styles and ideas but also of actual objects such as the obsidian cores and the shell rings. Thus, we move from cultural identity to social identity. It is, then, unsurprising that in Thessaly alone, with its density of long-term village communities, at least fourteen different stylistic categories were developed during the Late Neolithic only.

The production, exchange, and use of obsidian from Melos must have also been embedded in schemes of intercultural communication and socio-ritual behaviour. The long and stable preference of a large number of sites for importing this distant and exogenous material, when locally or regionally available raw materials of comparable quality could have easily been used, implies that this preference might have been dictated by the obsidian's exotic properties (Karimali 2005: 187–8). The ideological importance of raw materials and goods derived from geographically and culturally distant and perhaps invisible origins, and thus possessing unusual 'mysterious qualities', has been widely documented ethnographically and archaeologically (e.g., Bradley and Edmonds 1993; Helms 1993, 2005; Trubitt 2003; Whittle 1995).

Spondylus shell objects (Fig. 3.7) would have also been desired as socially valued goods derived from distant places, given their prominent position in long-distance, long-term, and continuous exchange networks. In the European Neolithic, the central role of shells either in 'prestige' or in ceremonial exchange has been addressed in a large number of studies (e.g., Renfrew 1973; Séfériadès 1995, 2000; Whittle 2003: 120–21). A most significant aspect that deserves further attention concerns the contrasting contexts of deposition of shell items outside and inside Greece. That is, in the rest of Europe *Spondylus* items tend to be found in the mortuary domain, in graves and cemeteries (Bailey 2000: 222–3; Chapman 2000: 96). They may be seen as conferring status on their bearers, given also their relative rarity and cultural distance from the place of origin. In Greece, on the other hand, they always occur in the world of the living, in settlements and the day-to-day interactions in production areas and domestic structures, and play an important role in a wider variety of social practices. They were also far from rare, as attested by the quantity of shell items and shell-making debitage at various sites. This contextual contrast further highlights the point made earlier that objects and contexts acquire their social and symbolic significance only in relation to each other and that maintenance of the 'prestige' goods model masks the complexity of their use. A useful comparative analysis of the contextual differences and subsequent social practices related to *Spondylus* shell rings appears in Chapman and Gaydarska (2006, chapter 7) with regard to the settlement of Dimini, on one hand, and the cemeteries of Durankulak and Varna in the Balkans, on the other.

The social and symbolic value of goods is reinforced by their contextual interrelations in Greek Neolithic settlements, discussed in more detail above and in the previous chapters. Further examples of the social interactions inscribed upon the *in situ* deposition of material include the two obsidian cores which accompanied an adult buried under a house floor in Pefkakia (Weisshaar 1989), two obsidian blades in the burial of an adult female in Franchthi (Jacobsen and Cullen 1981), and three flint blades scattered in the Prodromos skull deposit; the painted bowls containing stone tools inside a

house at Dikili Tash and the association in pit twenty-four at Makriyalos of painted Dimini Bowls with both high quality blade tools and mundane knapped stone of expedient debitage (Skourtopoulou 2006: 68–9); the layer of *Spondylus* shells in the fill of a pit containing a young male burial at Stavroupolis (Fig. 6.18), which represents ritual feasting rather than grave goods (Grammenos and Kotsos 2004: 61); and the animal and human representations, house models, and miniature furniture in food preparation and storage areas.

Overall, the depositional context of material culture reflects the social significance of the household as well as of the public context of communal ritual. It suggests that material products were valuable not because they were 'exchangeable tokens' in some wider situation of scarcity, nor because they were objects of wealth accumulation or economic competition, nor indeed because they could be used for personal or household display, but because they were objects of social, economic, and ideological significance all at once. They were vital components of interpersonal relations and negotiations, social relationships, dependencies and integrative mechanisms; they embodied persons', households', lineages', or communities' identities, memories, and histories; and they were kept in relatively constant exchange through individual and communal activity.

Architecture as Process

Another key to understanding the social processes which lie behind the organisation of communities is a view of architecture as process. Reliance on the assumption that architectural order is merely an expression of the social order tends to disregard the fact that settlement layouts represent the *gradual* and *collective* result of a number of people or groups of people. To slightly paraphrase Bailey's (2000: 278) argument with regard to the Balkan Neolithic, the constructions, rebuildings, and replacements of houses, the consequent additions of rooms, and the floor sequences were as much processes of integration as the burials and the common depositional rituals. In the British Neolithic, Barrett (1994a) and Richards (2004) have suggested that it is the practices of construction, rather than merely the completed form, that are crucial in reproducing social order, and that in this process labour itself becomes a potent form of social or ritual exchange.

The Greek Neolithic settlements, with their ordered layouts, their consistent house designs and orientation, and their public places, exhibit a great deal of effort and concern for the creation of a structured environment, where technical skills coexisted with ritual knowledge, social organisational principles with cosmological connections, and collective identities with individual identities. Parallel to the continual rebuilding on the same spot, the intensive use of durable materials, and the effort to reconstruct basically the same form

of building over long periods of time in the tell sites, the continual interventions or relocation of buildings of flimsy architecture also represent a process of destruction and reconstruction in the flat sites (Skourtopoulou 2006: 56). Significantly, one of the common elements that connect all different architectural patterns in Greece is the emphasis on investment in labour-intensive undertakings such as stone enclosures, perimetric ditches cut in the soil or in the bedrock, the levelling of large areas within settlements, and the undertaking of new building programmes. They must have involved a considerable degree of collective labour, forethought, planning, and decision-making, drawn from the community rather than the household level. Why were people so dedicated to the undertaking of such large-scale, labour-intensive, and time-consuming projects? Why would they in several cases invest a great deal more in collective constructions than in their own domestic houses, as is the case for the flat sites?

The most plausible interpretation is that it was indeed the process of construction which was the main social focus as a frame within which households and other social groups could come together, organise their transactions, and (re)negotiate their differences. That is not least because collective works constituted not a unitary act but a continuous process of building, maintenance, and adaptation events. Every time a section of a ditch or a part of an enclosure was added or adapted, social relationships and alliances were realigned, and individual and group identities were reordered through the abilities of different groups to provide the resources and through obligation and debt (Hodder 1992b). Thus, architecture provided not only a framework for social life and the materialisation of social institutions, but also a framework for human agency and a mechanism for enhancing social interaction, as well as a material mnemonic of those transactions.

Mobility between settlements, including horizontal shifting of habitation and a 'deliberate' fissioning of communities, is another means of dealing with conflict situations. Recent analysis of settlement patterns in Thessaly, the region of hundreds of Neolithic sites (Fig. 3.1), reveals that powerful and widely accepted social constraints on demographic expansion, village territory, and site spacing were apparently at work as a means to ensure socioeconomic balance (Johnson and Perlès 2004; Perlès 2001). From the Early to Late Neolithic (ca. 6500–4500 BC), settlements remained up to 5 ha in size, with populations maintained in the low hundreds, a mean distance between first-order nearest neighbours of 2.2 km, and an individual territory estimated at 430–450 ha. The number of settlements for each phase also remains relatively stable over time (between 118 and 146), despite, or rather because of, abandonment of settlements and establishment of new ones. Up to 75% of the sites were occupied during both the Early and the Middle Neolithic. In the Late Neolithic the number of sites increases by 20%, but two-thirds of the earlier ones are abandoned and half are new. The correspondence between abandonment and

creation of settlements and the regular spacing of sites implies regular migration and conscious relocation of whole villages, possibly as a mechanism to prevent internal conflicts (Johnson and Perlès 2004: 70). Constraints on the maximum size of settlements would have also allowed for a steady and controlled demographic expansion in order to remain within the limits of an egalitarian society (Halstead 1984: 6.4.3; Perlès 2001: 297). Overall, the long and stable history of the settlement pattern in Thessaly would have at once facilitated collective decisions on a site level and ensured interconnections between sites (Perlès 2001: 151). This could help explain both the exceptional density of long-term Neolithic settlements in Thessaly and why, despite this density, no intra- or intersettlement hierarchy was developed.

Kinship and Corporate Groups

Although the temptation to construct rigid models of association of family types with house types and with production modes must be resisted, it is important to consider the role of kinship relations in the creation and maintenance of corporations, social alliances, and interhousehold conduct. Kinship is an active principle even in today's urban societies, a prime factor in the organisation of nonindustrialised societies, and a dominant one in rural societies (Carsten 1997; Pine 1996, 2000; Segalen 1986). It structures social relationships between households both vertically and horizontally, and although there can of course be other kinds of organisations, institutions, and associations within and between villages, there is often an overlap between such associations and kinship networks (Segalen 1986: 62).

Within communities, the physical proximity, the day-to-day interaction, and the repetition of activities would have contributed to the development of a sense of 'relatedness' (Carsten 2000), resting on biological, fictional, or ritual kinship bonds. Equally, through the practice of house replacement, either vertical or horizontal, a household history and genealogy are created and transferred from one generation to another. Shifts in settlement organisation can also betray changing kinship relations and residence patterns (Barrett 1994a: 111). Either in tells or in flat sites, through kindred groups households were linked to each other and to those preceding and those succeeding, were committed to certain forms of behaviour, and enjoyed particular relationships, rights, and duties involved in all the vicissitudes of social life. In essentially egalitarian societies, the construction of enclosures and the whole organisation of settlements can also be understood as the creation of stable lineages (Edmonds 1999), the material representation of lines of descent, and 'the spatial mapping of different group genealogies' (Richards 2004: 110), and thus as a form of history.

The location, type, and distribution of human burials within a site can also provide a clue to kinship patterns and degrees of social incorporation. At

Makriyalos I the constituent sections of ditch A and the sequences of inhu-
mations inside it might have been created and later used by particular kinship
units for burial. At the same time, the collective character of the deposits sug-
gests that burial practices constituted a public and common ceremony which
incorporated all individuals inhumed into longer lineages or into one corporate
group and emphasised the primacy of the communal over the individual (Tri-
antaphyllou 1999: 131–2). Dimini's particular spatial segmentation (Fig. 5.1)
and the patterning of a number of social and symbolic elements at this level
(Fig. 5.31) could represent a kinship sectioning, smaller than the settlement
but larger than the individual household. The incorporation of the deceased
into enclosures, yards, and houses in many sites and the human skull deposits,
ossuaries, and funerary complexes in others can also suggest that descent and
origins were important.

The role of kinship in cooperation and delayed return may also account for
the strong social integration and cohesion evidenced in most Greek Neolithic
communities. In the absence of centralised political institutions, kinship would
have provided a political framework for the ordering and reordering of rela-
tions of individuals and households within and between larger kinship units
(clans? lineages?) and for the creation of networks of alliance, indebtedness,
and interdependence. The circulation of people, goods, and ideas, the access
to resources, the technological and stylistic interaction, and the information
about how to consume the products would also have required the formation of
kinship bonds. And although formal and material homogeneity and the shared
practices of everyday life may have levelled certain asymmetries of power, the
presence of kinship bonds would have further reinforced social ties within and
between communities.

HOUSEHOLDS AS TRANSITIONAL PROCESSES

The most serious obstacle to viewing household as a transitional process is that
in most studies the prevailing image has been of a stable domestic group, more or
less firmly rooted in house, land, material possessions, and tradition, and worth
maintaining its space and by extension the social group in it. The studies which
privilege place continuity in social reproduction and the construction of social
memory may also play too much emphasis on stability. For example, Bailey
(2000: 269–70) argues that in the prehistoric Balkan village communities, social
relationships within and between households became increasingly static and
inflexible, as the result of the anchoring of people to place and the repetition of
spatial relationships over time. It can also be argued that research has dealt with
social reproduction almost exclusively in the longer term, focusing upon the
macroscale of resource manipulation, including the ownership and transmission
of domestic space and the control of vital economic strategies.

However, although the interpretation of life practices and the relatively slow degree of social transformation during the Neolithic may explain the search for social mechanisms that ensure stability and control social change, these processes become successful only through the microscale and short-term agency. In this way, the very process of social reproduction is tested through everyday social agency, including acts of resistance to the dominant ideological and material structures and the relationship between autonomy and interdependence. And although a repeated fixity might generally be true of farming communities, and it is applicable to a considerable extent to the Greek Neolithic communities, it does not apply to the household itself. Instead, household either as a notion or as a social reality is fundamentally unstable and subject to continual fission rather than to perpetuation over time of a single social unit. At any given time, there is the threat of a split as a result of internal tensions and disagreements, arising, for example, over rights to collective wealth, property and inheritance, the fusion of new members, and the repeated redistribution of goods, labour, and resources. Through its internal dialectics every household 'creates the seeds of its own destruction' (Just 2000: 191) and every household is in a constant state of transition.

The Short Term and the Long Term

Similarly, the long term might not be the only concern of the household in organising its resources, and households may place more emphasis on material and social interaction in the present than on establishing continuity of tradition and links with the past. It is also clear that there is a difference between choice and acceptance of the wider sociocultural and economic circumstances facing the household, and often between the motives and the effects of action. Real-life practices and relationships have a variety of time scales, and there is substantial variation in the extent to which households 'plan' their activities in the short term and in the degree to which actions are set within longer-term 'strategic' frameworks (Bloch 1973; Anderson et al. 1994: 11–15). Inevitably any generalising theory 'collapses the time scale either to a state where all actions begin and end simultaneously or all end in a very remote but identical long term' (Bloch 1973: 76).

The Greek Neolithic households provide a remarkable illustration of these observations. Underneath an initial, and real, impression of cultural homogeneity and social stability, there is nothing to suggest that households within a community remained stable or that they retained the same social and material organisation and composition over time. Different architecture and space divisions are introduced in different contexts at different times; features keep moving around; entrances are being blocked up and relocated; houses shrink or become larger, others are abandoned and new ones are founded, on top

of, in adjunction to, or away from the earlier ones; and house interiors are modified, altered, or totally rearranged over the different building phases. The incessant process of structuring and restructuring household space, best exemplified at Sesklo (Chapter 4, Fig. 4.11, Table 4.1), is evident in most sites and buildings whose life exceeded one phase. For example, at Makri, recent micromorphology analysis of successive house floors (Fig. 6.2) indicates constant alteration of flooring techniques and of types of deposits on the floor, suggesting important reorganisation of internal areas or even change of residents (Karkanas and Efstratiou 2003). A change of or in residence may mean a break or a loosening of tightly knit relationships with the village community, with neighbours or relatives. By shifting the facilities and associated material and by rearranging house interiors, people recraft material conditions and social roles within the household. By relocating entrances, households reconsider the use of external areas and degrees of sharing and of privacy and relations with other households.

Lack of fixity and a degree of instability at the household level must have also been produced both by geographical mobility and by the unforeseen effects of often rapid economic development and material change. The latter is seen in the inhabitation over the course of the Neolithic of previously sparsely inhabited areas; the increase in craft specialisation; the technological improvements and proliferation of styles of material culture; and the introduction of new items, the changes in already existing ones, or the greater localisation and distinctiveness of others. Residential mobility and seasonal relocation must have also been at work and for an endless list of reasons – for example, to ensure the reproductive viability of local populations through 'marriage' and inheritance patterns; to form or end external alliances and partnerships; to work elsewhere; to exchange labour, goods, and visits; and to claim or contest affinity, kinship, lineage, or leadership (see also Halstead 2005 for more reasons, such as subsistence failure and seasonality of consumption). The early development of long-distance communication and exchange also suggests constant mobility of people and things. For instance, Chapman and Gaydarska (2006: 170–71) estimate that for every *Spondylus* shell ring that travelled from northern Greece to the shores of the Black Sea at least three different specialists were required, in addition to a long voyage and stay away 'from home and hearth'. Similarly, the model of 'itinerant knappers' of obsidian from Melos implies mobile and seafaring specialised workers and traders activated at local, regional, and interregional scales. Although the position of these specialists in the wider social landscape has not been specified, they must have been members of certain households and communities rather than just 'socially neutral' (Demoule and Perlès 1993: 384) constant travellers. Upon their arrival at a site, they would exchange their semi- or fully prepared cores to be processed by local specialists and depart (Karimali 1994: 379). Eventually, they would

come back to their villages, perhaps to take part in other major tasks (e.g., in agriculture). At Makriyalos, the great variability of rock types and techniques suggests communicational schemes and diverse cultural routes over wide geographical areas, including central Macedonia, Thessaly, and southern Greece (Skourtopoulou 1999; 2006). In fact, Makriyalos' location at the crossroads between northern Greece and Thessaly give it the potential to be a meeting place of people coming from different areas and bringing forth a mosaic of sociocultural relations (Skourtopoulou 2006: 72). This impression is strengthened not only by the variability in the chipped stone industries, but also by the presence of Dimini style pottery and by the evidence of feasting and gathering most possibly at an intercommunal or intercultural scale. At the same time, the depositional patterning of chipped stone tools within the site implies various patterns of circulation of both tools and people, including the activation of certain specialists moving in between households (Skourtopoulou 2006: 62–7).

This endless restlessness and mobility lies between stability and change, and between broad trends in social practices and household contingencies. It is the short-term and small scale of household transactions which is at the basis of the distinction between structure and agency; it prevents social relations from being objectified and allows social structures to be contested.

Household and Community

Indeed, it is in household's constant state of transition and in the continually shifting relationships within and between households that changes in social structure can be best understood. As Joyce and Grove (1999: 4) have put it with reference to the Preclassic Mesoamerican context, 'the small-scale setting of domestic life is the pre-existing context for the beginnings of all transformations that occur'. I suggest that a developing contradiction between community and household organisation, located particularly in the realm of conflicting strategies of social reproduction, might be a better cause of tension and transformation than other, external factors (e.g., an abstracted notion of intensification of production).

There are many examples which suggest a distinction between household and community. One set may be detected in the built environment and the organisation of intrasite activities. For example, the external uniformity, seen in the ordered layout of settlements, the common orientation of houses, and the generalised distribution and consumption of goods within a site, suggests that all individuals were part of one corporate unit. It contrasts greatly with the internal variability at the household level, seen in individual household spatial arrangements, social reproductive practices, and ways of house replacement and abandonment. If the wider social structure represents the objectification of the social order and the promotion of collective standards and

ideals, then the household promotes its own individual logic and choices and the opening up of new paths and possibilities. In other words, if the community provides the institutional frame for social stability, cohesion, and integration, then the household provides the potential for intervention, novelty, and change.

Another contradiction is between household or domestic rituals and public rituals. The rituals of the household, often highly elaborate (see Chapter 6), emphasised metaphorically its social and economic importance and attempted to make it public and explicit, as opposed to those of the community, which aimed to subdue individual identities in favour of the collective. The outside locations of food cooking, storage, and consumption also suggest a distinction between household and public consumption. The production of house models is another means to reinforce the social significance of the household. Also intriguing is the perceived shift from exterior and more abstract representation in the Middle Neolithic to interior and more specific depiction in the Late Neolithic.[5] It has been summoned in support of the emergence of an ideology of household autonomy and isolation (Halstead 1995, 1999; also Nanoglou 2005: 149; Tomkins 2004: 52).

However, the social reality might be exactly the opposite. Although concepts of the household and the person might have become both more individualised and diverse through time, this might well have emerged in response, or as a reaction, to the ever-present forces for social integration that were central to most of the communities. If the Late Neolithic is indeed characterised by the emergence of the individual, then why is this not supported by the changing forms of other material culture? For example, if anthropomorphic figurines are also to be seen as one of the main media through which people played out identity, personhood, and subjectivity (Bailey 2005: 201–2; Nanoglou 2005), then how is the persistent coexistence of both naturalistic and schematic figurines (e.g., Marangou 2000; Orphanidi 1998) incorporated into this rhetoric? Why do zoomorphic rather than human representations appear to increase over time (Toufexis 2003)? All this could imply that the individual takes on a position in the background rather than the foreground of representation.[6] Small-scale, more personalised acts, as well as material objects, can retain a double meaning of both individual differentiation and collective integration. Expressions and manifestations of individuality (as different from individualism) should be placed in the wider social context of shared settlement values and use of material culture, the commitment to delineated spaces, and the burial traditions. They can indeed be seen in terms of specific power strategies and the negotiation of individual and group identity, for which, however, the need grew as community living and control increased.

An equally distinct degree of contradiction between household and community can be detected in the intrasettlement burials. Although the mortuary

records overall underline the importance of the village as a context for socialisation, specific manipulations of bones and bodies provide clues for strategies of social reproduction at various levels – household, wider kin group, community. For example, the child burials within houses may constitute part of individual household social reproductive strategies and memory construction. On the other hand, the burials in places not confined to an individual household (e.g., between houses, at the edges of settlements, or in ditches), which more often than not belong to adults and/or tend to be disarticulated, might reflect a concern to promote shared ideals and strategies of social reproduction and memory making – for example, a collective body of community ancestors (Triantaphyllou 1999: 131).

The social identity arising through all these practices incorporates a tension between the collective and the individual, and the community and the household in a process containing the potential for both social asymmetry and social equality, and for both empowerment and resistance to power. What is more, such processes underline the fact that the creation of large-scale social structures passes through small-scale social agency.

Autonomy and Interdependence

As argued in Chapter 2, the pursuit of household autonomy based on the assumption of an interrelationship of agricultural intensification, population growth, land exploitation, resource appropriation, and power hierarchies may be another version of ideological, sociological, and moral individualism in archaeological theory. There is no society – ethnographic, historical, archaeological, or other – in which households are autonomous, however intensified production might be, however self-sufficient social units might appear, however isolated architectural units might seem, and in whatever segregated or agglomerate fashion settlements might be organised. Households are always interconnected through a variety of economic activities, social rules, knowledge and networks, ritual and ceremony, and horizontal and vertical links of age, gender, and kinship. In the Greek Neolithic societies, although there is household autonomy and relative dominance, there are also signs of considerable dependence on larger socioeconomic groupings and wider collectivities. To name but a few of the lines of evidence discussed: efforts of collective storage and control of surpluses in order to use for the community's own benefit; shared use of work areas and simultaneous performance of craft activities; collective rituals; and communal planning and labour for the construction of boundaries and ordered settlement layouts, not least because of the symbolic considerations that are often bound up with these layouts.

Significantly, all these signs seem to increase rather than decrease towards the Late Neolithic, suggesting maintenance and intensification rather than erosion

of shared values. For example, it is in the Late Neolithic that we see more conclusive evidence for collective storage and rituals. Larger-scale, more public works also seem to proliferate in this period. The emphasis on the rituals surrounding the importance of the house may have also shifted, from household-based consumption to conspicuous community-based consumption. The majority of flat, extended settlements with their greater emphasis on cooperation and communality also appear during the Late Neolithic. New representations of individual identity and the domestic group aimed to negotiate and contest group identity exactly when evidence supporting the primacy of the communal over the individual increased. The burial traditions, evidence from separate cemeteries included, continue to provide no consistent indication of social differentiation.

The dominant forms of social identification also appear to revolve around the village community, despite the continuing significance of the household. The level at which archaeologically observed spatial patterns are principally manifested (e.g., household or village) provides information on the nature of social organisation, the formalisation of particular practices, and the visibility of identities. In many settlements there are contradictions between the structuring of space (and through it of social relations) at different scales. For example, at both Late Neolithic Dimini and Middle Neolithic Sesklo distinct patterns are observed at three levels: the house, the segment or the sector, and the site. At the former settlement, architectural consistency and the visibility of cooperative activities increase as we move towards the larger scale to produce the picture of a highly ordered settlement space and of strongly integrated social units. Similarly, Late Neolithic Makri II was organised into 'three well-defined areas with distinctive characteristics' (Efstratiou et al. 1998: 25) – the top of the mound, a purely residential area on the slopes, and a peripheral area with more extensive habitation. It was the first, central, and uppermost of these which was selected as the location of the corporate building complex discussed above. This organisation seems to have persisted for hundreds of years without noticeable changes (Efstratiou et al. 1998: 25). At Sesklo, however, uniformity, or better, an 'ordered' variability is principally manifested at the lowermost scale, social integration is not particularly visible beyond the sector level, whereas the site level shows the greatest diversity of spatial, and perhaps social, organisation. Thus, the Late Neolithic examples would indicate greater emphasis on communal organisation and lesser degree of independence of social units than their Middle Neolithic counterpart. Nor is it plausible to regard Early Neolithic sites as deficient predecessors of the later societies, or as belonging to the lower scale of a linear ordering of social systems in which later settlements presumably follow. In fact, Early Neolithic sites do not fail to show elements of spatial and social organisation observed in later periods – for example, perimetric boundaries, shared house orientation, functional and ritual differentiation of spaces,

diversity in household arrangements, and wider interconnections, evidenced in the presence of exogenous goods and raw materials.

All' this brings into question the applicability of the predictive model of progressive household isolation. The unilinear evolutionary sequence towards greater political centralisation proposed for the Greek Neolithic also has great problems with the empirical evidence, which suggests, instead, that progression might have been the opposite to what is usually assumed, if linear at all.

Social Balance and Social Transformation

Current ideology on Neolithic social 'evolution' tends to see things in terms of a contrast between two main stages: Early–Middle Neolithic and Late–Final Neolithic. The former period is seen as relatively simple and the repository of real family and communal values, cooperation, and interdependence; the latter period is seen as more complex, characterised by a sense of new awareness of household and the erosion of communal ideals. Such a simplistic contrast, paralleled by a teleological view of social change, will not stand up to any in–depth analysis. It risks disregarding historical context and fails to recognise and account for cases of discontinuity and devolution. In order to reconstruct social trajectories we need to look into the contexts of many practices that take place in a given local, regional, temporal, or cultural setting. Besides, the most tenacious phenomena we are dealing with in the Greek Neolithic are wider social balance, integration, and interaction rather than radical changes and incessant economic conflicts. Nor is it easy to enclose the complexity and diversity of the data at different scales and in different times into a single continuum from the Early Neolithic to the Late Bronze Age, not least because of the possibility of cultural breaks.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND MATERIAL CULTURE The settlement pattern evidence as a whole indicates regional differences and socioeconomic flexibility rendering single-explanatory arguments inadequate. For example, the absence of Early Neolithic sites in central and eastern Macedonia cannot be satisfactorily accounted for by economic factors, environmental conditions, or temporal trends (see discussion in Andreou et al. 2001: 318–19). The Aegean islands were not systematically inhabited until the later phases of the Neolithic, even though habitation on rocky islets and the circulation of obsidian from Melos began from the Early Neolithic. In southern mainland Greece, the Final Neolithic is also a period of territorial expansion, which has been linked to a general shift to Aegean trade and metalworking (Davis 2001: 24). This would indicate the breakdown of the relative isolation of these societies and the beginning of more sustained contacts with mainland societies. By contrast, in Thessaly, the long and stable settlement pattern which provided a successful mechanism

for balanced interaction broke in the Final Neolithic. A dramatic reduction in the number of sites takes place during this period (only 34, as opposed to 118–146 in the previous periods), with few new settlements founded and only half of the previous ones continuing to exist. Distances between neighbouring sites become much larger and the areas that had been the most densely settled in Late Neolithic are now almost completely abandoned (Halstead 1984: Fig. 6.22; Johnson and Perlès 2004). These changes are often seen as indicating site nucleation and aggregation associated with the beginnings of settlement hierarchy and the development of central places (Gallis 1992: 237; Halstead 1984: 6.4.6). However, the sites are as homogeneously distributed over the whole region as previously and no 'core' and 'satellite' sites can be identified (Johnson and Perlès 2004: 75). Even in later Thessalian prehistory, there are no indications of a centralised sociopolitical formation comparable to the palatial economies of the Peloponnese and Crete (Andreou et al. 2001: 281; Demoule and Perlès 1993: 406–7).

The limitations of predictive postulations are further displayed by the material culture, whose development did not follow a typical evolutionary trajectory either. The Final Neolithic ceramic production seems to have been directed primarily at coarse wares and is often described as crude and lacking diagnostic features. In southern Greece coarse wares reach nearly 100% of the assemblages at some sites and most of the shapes introduced in this period are plain cooking vessels (Tomkins 2004; Vitelli 1995). Painted and incised decoration are rapidly and carelessly produced, and the decorative themes are a simplification or degeneration of those of the previous phase. It seems that a large number of individuals were involved in ceramic production, and it may be that for the first time in the Greek Neolithic 'we are seeing something close to household production for household consumption' (Vitelli 1995: 58; contra: Kalogirou 1997: 15; see also Mee 2007). The evidence for chipped stone production in the Final Neolithic also points to a process from specialisation to 'de-specialisation' (Perlès 1992; Perlès and Vitelli 1999). *Spondylus* shell production began during the Early Neolithic as small-scale and limited, with sporadic items occurring in a few sites, increased considerably in the Middle Neolithic, and saw a rapid and overall blossoming in the Late Neolithic, with an abundance of items found in a large number of sites. By the Early Bronze Age *Spondylus* bracelets, and generally shell ornaments, had almost completely disappeared (Karali 2004). The overall changes in material trends and the deterioration of quality compared to earlier phases suggest that the social and economic roles of material culture had changed.

CHANGE AND RESISTANCE Indeed, many of the earlier communities disappear in the Final Neolithic, when, apparently, the wider social integrative

mechanisms identified above were no longer in use. Incidentally, this might help explain why the Final Neolithic in mainland Greece, and particularly in Thessaly, is not well known. The reasons for breakups and changes in households and communities of this kind are varied and multicausal. They can be dissolved for economic, social, and cultural reasons arising from developments in wider society, but also for internal reasons such as the disagreements inherent in life in a community or the threat of dissolution when a member decides to leave. If a household member claimed his or her rights, the household could collapse. If a household claimed more rights than others, the community might collapse. A claim to personal gain, a need for greater social recognition, and an increasing concern with individual household reproduction and viability may all have induced people to reject community constraint. Oppositions, domination, and hierarchical relationships within a social unit, based on age, gender, and social position, are some reasons for dissolution. The house rituals can reflect the order of age and gender hierarchies which might have given form to social relations of household and community. Intergenerational competition favouring elders, older lineages, or perhaps the founders of a settlement is also very likely, and there is often exploitation of 'junior' members within a household or 'junior' households within a lineage group, with 'seniors' dominating in decision-making, ritual practice, and social reproduction strategies. Such discrepancies may be evidenced in the spatial organisation of several settlements and particularly in the frequent presence of boundaries or dividers which run through rather than around sites. For example, in Sesklo, sector A is distinguished by longer and more successive sequences of buildings, and thus presumably by older households, compared to sector B. It is also demarcated partly by a stone wall, although, as argued in Chapter 4, there is no clear correlation between an older sector and ritual expression, material wealth, or architectural elaboration. In Dimini, too, the aforementioned distribution of symbolic elements such as child burials and foundation offerings in one house per large spatial segment, in conjunction with the overall symmetrical settlement segmentation and its gradual but uniform outwards expansion, might imply control and regulation of ritual practices by kinship sections rather by individual households.

Yet, although there are clear disparities in the relationships between household and community, and a great potential for economic and social tensions was certainly present, given the different specialisations and the physical proximity within and between densely packed settlements, an equally distinct degree of cohesion ran within and across village communities, as a result of collective processes and an ethos of egalitarianism. Although the household provides the economic framework for the organisation of labour, its economic importance might have been downplayed in favour of its moral and cultural importance.

Here I would suggest that if there is a temporal trend at all, this is charac-
terised by an increasing focus on communal organisation and dependence on
the larger society, despite the continuing significance of the household. During
the Late Neolithic, when the contradictions between wider social stability and
household contingency seem to intensify, the wider economy and consump-
tion become more visible, collective labour, rituals and identities, and burial
traditions emphasise powerful constraints to remain under the threshold of a
hierarchical organisation, and asymmetries of power are masked. The impor-
tance of the household remains consistent, but its symbolic elaboration appears
to be largely expressed through domestic rituals and an increasing diversity of
internal 'logics' and identities, rather than through material rewards or worldly
possessions. Whereas the households were to a great degree the keepers and
transmitters of economic and symbolic capital throughout the Neolithic, it is
the community as a whole that displays status to the world. And it is the social
structure of the community as a whole that supports the existence and level of
institutionalisation of groups with limited, cross-cutting, and alternative inter-
ests, as well as setting limits on the extent of possible social differentiation and
domination of such groups.

There is no blanket application of continuities, discontinuities, and changes
across the regions and through time. It all depends on context, articulation,
and meaning over space and time, something that we cannot understand with
the rigid framework of all-encompassing typologies. In Chapter 2, I argued
that social change in itself has no teleology. The Greek Neolithic communities
as a whole seem to have a remarkably long and successful history of resistance
to change defined as a linear, cumulative process of hierarchisation. They also
suggest that social change is not synonymous with economic change either.
Technological and economic developments such as craft specialisation, long-
distance exchange, subsistence surplus, and settlement agglomeration consid-
ered as indicators of profound social changes, as the key innovations towards
structural transformations, or as marking different evolutionary stages did not
effect any radical or long-lasting changes on the social organisation of Neolithic
communities. Nor were these 'innovations' (and other indicators of change)
exactly new to Greece. Many of these are far earlier than the Late Neolithic,
no matter how hard we may attempt to force the data to fit into an earlier/later
Neolithic contrast. They all constitute the preexisting context of social strate-
gies, mechanisms, and practices through which Neolithic communities and
their households defined, redefined, ·and transformed themselves. This raises
a very important implication. If the emergence of institutionalised inequality
and political centralisation had not occurred by the Late Neolithic, then we
ought to search for less gradualist and more fluid and discontinued models for
their development.

CONCLUSIONS: THE DIVERSITY OF SOCIAL RELATIONS
AND THE COMPLEXITY OF SOCIAL PROCESSES

In place of conclusions, I offer the suggestion that the key to understanding development and transformation in the Greek Neolithic lies in the phenomena of organisational complexity and flexibility of the social relationships between households, between household and community, and between communities rather than in a single, hierarchical image of social organisation. Rather than focusing on social integration as a reified level of societal achievement, we can direct the emphasis on the diverse ways, different scales, and various forms in which a society integrates numerous differentiated parts into a cohesive whole (Crumley 2005; Wynne-Jones and Kohring 2007) and which are variously manifest in material culture.

When production and distribution are not organised on a community basis, but are divided up among social units – in other words, when there is household independence and economic freedom – the household becomes increasingly open to 'risk and uncertainty' (Halstead 1989). In contrast, when production, and particularly (re)distribution, are organised in dependence on the larger society, individual households are more 'protected'. For instance, cooperation between male and female knowledge and labour in craft and agricultural activities can be more essential and effective than gender-oriented social or economic differences (Arnold 1991: 93; Fish 2000: 194–6; Mills 2000: 338–41; Spielmann 2000: 372–7). Furthermore, the coexistence of several modes of production, skills, and specialisms may provide the potential for a differentiated society with limited interest groups, but it also aids in ensuring household and community viability, interaction, and social reproduction. Among nonhierarchical groups, inter- and intracommunity specialisation are often the basis for establishing inter- and intragroup alliance, and conducts and exchanges are constantly in flux (e.g., Cross 1993). Rather than highly regularised or site-controlled, the patterns of production, distribution, and storage considered above would have required a higher degree of coordination, planning, and communication within and between sites and a connection in overlapping exchange systems. They also suggest that producers did not necessarily have a 'natural' right to their own produce and that control and exploitation of surpluses, local resources, and finished products may instead have been organised at a higher communal or sectional level.

This is neither to return to some notion of simplicity nor to argue that Neolithic societies should necessarily be viewed as egalitarian. But egalitarianism and simplicity are not synonymous. It is neither simple nor easy 'to defend equality' (Trigger 1990: 145) and to resist change towards political centralisation and social stratification over such temporal scales and in such dense social

landscapes as those of Neolithic Greece. It is, besides, mostly in capitalist society that the relations to be reproduced are those of hierarchy (Bridenthal 1979: 190), and stable and clear-cut social hierarchies are the last thing that should be expected in the kinds of social organisation of which the very importance and power of household are a concomitant. Finally, in any society, 'egalitarian' social systems require highly complex codes of social behaviour (Flanagan 1989).

The concept of heterarchy, and its dialectical relationship with hierarchy, helps to account for much of the diversity and unpredictability of social relations through time and space. For example, the very presence, nature, and strength of the social integrative mechanisms identified above constitute different but interrelated social processes that highlight elements of both social differentiation and egalitarianism. Who had the ability to mobilise, allocate, and divide labour in order to build or readapt from time to time settlements, boundaries, and community buildings? Who had acquired the knowledge or was given the authority to perform collective rituals? How was the decision reached and the consensus achieved to overcome potential conflicts between the production and distribution of craft-specialised products? Who was allowed to exert a degree of communal over solely household rights to storage? On a larger scale, why did sites retain differential access to certain goods such as obsidian and *Spondylus* items? Why were certain ceramic wares very widespread whereas others remained localised? On a smaller scale, why are domestic rituals more visible in some households over others? Why were some individuals, and not all or none, selected to remain within the boundaries of a settlement after death?

The most plausible answer to all these questions is that there indeed existed social inequalities among individuals, households, and communities, different sources and forms of power and authority, and some degree of community leadership. Power relations are also strongly implicated in community integration, in intrasettlement differentiation, and in the tension between homogeneity and diversity, represented in so many ways, forms, and contexts. However, there is no convincing evidence that these developed into stable configurations, a central vertical social hierarchy focused on one individual or an elite – economic, hereditary, or other. There is also little evidence for the development of institutionalised inequality at this time. The content, context, and goal of these same social processes say much about the nature and duration of leadership: ritual and collective destruction of material possessions, as, I believe, instances such as the Promachonas-Topolniča pit represent and the possibility of deliberate burning of houses might further indicate; near absence of grave goods with the individuals selected for intrasettlement burial; collective feasting and collective storage; homogeneous and standardised overall design principles of residential architecture; settlement destruction, abandonment – short-term, long-term,

or permanent – and/or fragmentation into others. They all reflect an attempt to counter tendencies towards the emergence of social stratification and to emphasise an ideological identity of commonality. At the same time, they provided a continuous framework for the affirmation, reaffirmation, and subversion of social positions and identities through human agency. In this case, although they effectively existed, inequalities and exploitation were ephemeral and the social structure constantly in a state of flux. Such a flexible and integrative approach allows a more dynamic interplay between different factors in decision-making, social choices, and social change and allows many competing strategies and power bases to be at work, within and between households and at a wider social level.

EIGHT

HOUSEHOLD AND BEYOND: IMPLICATIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR SOCIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

W HETHER FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF TRADITIONAL, TOP–DOWN models for change or in terms of 'alternative' narratives of long-term structural changes, the history of prehistory has often been constructed in the absence of its key protagonists – the households and their members. This book has focused on the household as a social praxis in its own right and has told a different story from this point of view. In examining the social significance of household and its profound influence upon society, it has made reference to a plethora of issues and concepts topical in contemporary social archaeology and anthropology – a most topical one being the household itself: household organisation; diversity and complexity; production and reproduction; autonomy and dependence; interaction and integration; social identity; individual and collective agency; ideology, ritual, and symbolism; and continuity and change. Above all, it has intended to show that the social context of household and the multitude of ways in which it is tied to social, economic, and ideological elements of life provide a very meaningful framework for a social archaeology.

A key role in this attempt has been played by the need to develop a theory of household that is flexible and has a degree of openness about it and an approach that is particularly sensitive to the contextual and multidimensional nature of household. In facing up to this challenge, the theoretical position taken is a dialectical one, moving between contemporary social theory and archaeological data from Greek Neolithic societies, as well as acknowledging

the indeterminacy of research. This makes clear that the household is as relevant a unit of social analysis for archaeology as it has been for other social sciences and that its assumed elusiveness can no longer be an excuse. The development of an integrated approach to household as process I would consider an important contribution of this book.

This book does not pretend to have exhausted the subject of household. It is also possible that it has raised more questions than it has answered. But this, I believe, should be taken as a merit. Any single work which takes up the household challenge must confront the unfeasibility of covering all of its facets. A main concern has been to search for the correct questions to ask; I do not purport to have all the answers. But the aspects of Neolithic life that I have, hopefully, elucidated are a demonstration of what is to be gained by focusing on smaller social units. My greater ambition is that this book takes a step towards a more dialectical, dynamic, and 'historical' prehistory. In the remainder of the concluding chapter I wish to discuss some implications of such a focus and integrate them with some important concerns and prospects of social archaeology.

We often like to contemplate a stylised (and thoroughly static) image of household in the past. We often perceive questions of methodology as theoretical, and consider answers concerning the household as self-evident. We often question the validity of our data as to whether they are appropriate for a 'proper' household analysis, but we rarely question the validity of our models. It is perhaps images and attitudes like that that have strengthened our stereotype of the prehistoric, ahistoric household, have maintained a complacency of generalised accounts of prehistoric social organisation, and have, ultimately, impeded a view of it as a process. The myth that the prehistoric household is elusive and therefore only abstractedly approachable has usually served to qualify an excuse for our reluctance to move beyond grand, all-encompassing models and the fictional search for 'representative' data.

In attempting to provide a social context for household, and despite the fact that the Greek Neolithic is rich in domestic architectural data, I have chosen to designate household as a shifting location of action and a collection of actors with both joint and conflicting interests, rather than resort to ready-made social and spatial forms. This view enabled me to combine all lines of available evidence – contextual, spatial, and material – and to resist reliance on the normative views of what has been often termed 'household archaeology' or the abstraction and timelessness of purely symbolic approaches to houses – both ahistorical and ultimately insufficient to accommodate complexity and diversity. More importantly, it enabled me to consider, however imperfectly, social entities and their processes rather than architectural entities and their formal properties. This preliminary work of defining the social boundaries and nature of the household is necessary before one can thoroughly address

wider social relationships or systematically look for potential fields of conflict and change.

Relationships between changes taking place within the household and those taking place within society can never be explained in terms of simple and single models. Households are not ahistorical phenomena. Inevitably any generalising, top-down approach is likely to be considered deficient because of the need to simplify a complex reality for analytical purposes. Every case of household organisation examined in this book shows the wide range of different situations involved in different socioeconomic and spatiotemporal contexts. The results suggest that significant internal variation is a far more pertinent characteristic of real-life household practices than the idealised regularity and homogeneity often assumed of them. The variability in the size and shape of buildings and open spaces in all phases at each settlement, specific material concentrations, and areas of special function – functional or symbolic – and different types of organisation at different times point to a wide range of, but also diversity in, activity, further grounded on the presence of craft specialisation and labour division, and to considerable variation in ideologies and social reproductive strategies and possibly also in household composition. All this makes it is very difficult to assume that there is a 'standard' or 'ideal' house/household for each site, much less for the whole of Greece. The variety and ambiguity inherent in the category of household indicate, moreover, that the household must be subject to exactly the same sort of sociocultural definition that makes other social and cultural constructs such as communities, kinship, gender, and individuals such diverse aspects of study.

The data examined here are also incompatible with an image of the prehistoric world as marked by stress and scarcity, and, by extension, of household activity as motivated by efforts to maximise the exploitation of resources in an uncertain subsistence economy. Instead, life was rich and meaningful in every respect, and households were intended to encompass a number of spheres of practice central to the social, economic, and ideological reproduction of the wider social entity. The range and abundance, collectively and individually, of storage facilities and stored supplies as well as of many types of the so-called 'prestige' or 'valuable' items; complex socioeconomic patterns, including different subsistence strategies and the coexistence of several modes of craft production and exchange systems; variable symbolic uses of architecture and material culture; domestic and public rituals – all point to much higher and different degrees of complexity, specialised knowledge, and role differentiation than might at first appear. Recognition and interpretation of this diversity and flexibility therefore can lead to a fuller understanding of Neolithic economics.

It is equally unwise to maintain the dichotomies between function and meaning, economy and ideology, utilitarian and ritual, domestic and public, and so on. These artificial oppositions have resulted, among other things, in a

belief that the absence of monumental architecture and the scarcity of funerary data outside the settlement mean that in the Greek Neolithic symbolism was low. But this belief clearly ignores the data from households and daily life. As current Greek Neolithic research is continuously bringing to light, and future research on largely exposed sites will no doubt further confirm, it is the domestic architecture itself which represents a most durable material and symbolic expression of life. The characteristics and spatial patterning of material culture also pertain both to functional and ritual processes, and the social context of production, distribution, and consumption of all material products, including specialised ones, is closely linked to the ideologies of the people using those products. They were vital components of the life of the communities and their relationships, of mechanisms of social and economic complementarity, and of relatively constant exchange through individual and communal activity. Reconsideration of older evidence and examination of considerable new material also offer a coherent picture of communal social and ritual spaces and practices. They require us to reconsider the earlier views of what rituals occurred and what functions they served in the local and regional social networks. The deposition of large quantities of goods in collective contexts, in conjunction with the circulation of people, goods, and ideas, would have required the formation of economic and symbolic exchange and of kinship bonds. This integrative approach may offer a more specific definition and understanding of the sociohistorical circumstances behind the phenomena of early specialisation and long-distance exchange and the role and consumption of material culture in the Greek Neolithic.

Another favourite and pervasive assumption in the prehistoric literature is that social change is largely evolutionarily, economically, and uniformly determined. One thing I have not intended to provide is such an account of household or wider social 'evolution'. This decision was conscious. My theoretical argument and the empirical evidence that I have examined suggest that unless the contribution of households, the sociocultural plurality, and the short-term changes underneath the big picture are fully and genuinely taken into account we will never gain even a partial understanding of long-term socioeconomic changes. I believe that we have long enough generalised or theorised the large-scale processes, and have just as long downplayed the dynamic and transformative properties of households. It will take more than a number of abstract references to smaller social units before we can effectively integrate them into any bigger picture. For Greek Neolithic research in particular, it will also take larger exposure of settlements and a closer concern with the intrasite spatial and material patterns. Such an attempt will also benefit from comparisons from broader, worldwide prehistoric contexts, for many of which households are key units of analysis. In turn, this requires the emergence in archaeological scholarship of some kind of consensus about basic conceptual and theoretical

issues in household research that will make such debate and comparisons possible.

To understand variety in social life and its transformative tensions, we also need to distinguish complexity from hierarchy and power or authority centralisation. Conflation of these concepts limits our understanding of the character and diversity of the social relations, the distinctions, identities, and processes created by different sociohistorical circumstances. This in turn limits our potential for conceptualising the dynamics of change at different scales and times. In real life, there is a great deal more of social complexity and unpredictability than evolutionary stages allow for. For example, Greek Neolithic communities do not fail to show elements of social and economic organisation thought to characterise only later periods. Agricultural intensification, craft specialisation and long-distance exchange, structural complexity in settlement patterns and types, large-scale architectural works, conspicuous consumption (and ritual destruction?) – are all found in Neolithic Greece, and often at a much earlier stage than the Late Neolithic, commonly considered as the culmination of Neolithic economic change and therefore the apex of Neolithic societal achievement. In spite of this complexity, the data resist being enclosed within a uniform and inevitable evolutionary trajectory towards a goal of social stratification (cf. Chapman 2007). If there is a rule, it is one of different, and often fairly autonomous, local trajectories, flux, ambiguity, and cycles of change.

Although idealised perceptions of 'simple' egalitarian societies or of households as places of eternal harmony will not stand up to any in-depth social analysis of action and contradiction, it is equally illusory to believe that by simply imposing our own system of hierarchies and priorities on prehistoric societies, we will develop a compelling social discourse or will affirm the dynamics and complexity of these societies. As Crumley (1987: 163) argues, 'the ultimate in complexity is not hierarchy but the play between hierarchy and heterarchy', and 'heterarchy does not stand alone but is in a dialectical relationship with hierarchy' (Crumley 2005: 2). The account, use, and manipulation of power is also much more subtle than a material, rationalistic, and individualistic calculation (McIntosh 1999: 16), and the ways and means by which people exert authority are varied and variously manifest. In Neolithic Greece, households 'deprived' of personal rights and gains, in terms of economic rewards at least, were able to remain in coexistence for remarkably long periods, as a result of collective processes and social integrative mechanisms revolving around an ideology or ethos of egalitarianism. Such processes and mechanisms, in conjunction with the systems of economic integration and social reproduction that I have identified, imply the coexistence of hierarchical and egalitarian dimensions, of cooperation and competition, of community control and household autonomy, and overall, of multiple sources, forms, shifts, and distributions of power, authority, status, and inequality. Still, widely accepted social codes restricted

the consolidation of these into some stable, centralised form. It is not until a very long time after the Neolithic, and not without considerable temporal and spatial discontinuities, that we see any conclusive evidence for stable, vertical, and clear-cut hierarchies in Greece.

Thus, instead of being given explanatory power over a broad range of different societies, complexity, power, strategies, and the entire variety of social terms we currently employ ought to be the subject of definition, explanation, and interpretation for each of these societies. My suggested answer for the definition and interpretation of social complexity in the Greek Neolithic is that it must be situated and assessed in terms of the coordination of interhousehold and intercommunity social and economic relationships, facilitated by intensive interaction and encouraging social cohesion, and of how these phenomena develop and change in space and time. Rather than an objectified social structure, social integration was, I would propose, a target for achievement and maintenance as well as for transformation. It provided an ideal framework for continual definition, negotiation, and challenge of social and ideological rules and identities and for the self-transformation of households and communities.

It is also not simply a question of no longer being able to claim that changes in wider social and material conditions alone changed the household in a fundamental way. We have to make a more sophisticated study of the various complex relationships between the two processes. We need to consider different sources of power and authority, and whether they might have been consolidated or shared, to imagine ways that individuals could be conflicted by multiple positions and identities, and to conceptualise the complexities of change at different scales and times. Consideration of the concept and modes of social reproduction, instead of a single focus on social change, may also prove a powerful tool and an important avenue for further research. It provides an opportunity to see what is most important for individual and collective social agency to struggle over and can capture different impetuses to change – for example, a contradiction between communal and household organisation and reproduction, both of which I specified as potential fields of conflict and transformation.

It is important for any author committed to a critically aware social archaeology to reflect and make explicit the recovery of difference and to add a historical perspective to transformations of households and wider transformations. This can enable the recognition of the relative nature of particular attitudes and theories towards social organisation as characteristics of contemporary society and can affirm the respect to prehistoric societies in their own right. As Barrett (1994b: 89–90) points out, 'history is written as we attempt to come to terms with other ways of knowing and other ways of reading'. Confrontation with these issues is relevant not only to theories of household, but also to a larger understanding of fundamental issues in the study of past

societies generally. What is more, it is essential to archaeology's sociological and intellectual practice.

Rather than merely borrowing theories and models, archaeology needs to evaluate useful concepts and ideas against its own materiality, historical depth, and disciplinary experience in order to develop its own distinctive social theory and practice. The effective dialogue with the other social and historical disciplines, as well as the encounter with the other-ness of the past, can prompt us to rethink the body of knowledge and the set of theories we have built up concerning social units. It is primarily in these terms that the discussion of household in the social sciences offers a useful lesson. As for the persistent preoccupation with the large scale and the grand models of change, there can be little theoretical or empirical help from anthropology, because history and archaeology alone can witness the long-term sequence of events. To this end, theorisation and research of household as process can be most effective. It is a matter of and a motive for exploring new paths of ideas and interpretation. It requires not only more systematic theoretical self-reflection, but also the breaking down of artificial barriers, traditional confines, and classic contrasts both between different archaeological approaches and between archaeology and its related disciplines. In pursuing this practice, we should remember that our perceptions will be affected by what we hope for and what we expect to see, and that ways of seeing and thinking about society are *not* automatically validated by time but are socially, culturally, politically, and ultimately historically contingent. The choice is ours and seems a fairly straightforward one.

APPENDIX A

DIMINI: CORRESPONDENCE OF RECORDING SYSTEMS

THE FOLLOWING TABLES INCLUDE ONLY THE ARCHITECTURAL UNITS AND features that are referred to in the book.

Author's code	Excavation unit – Dimini archive	Hourmouziadis (1979)
House 1 (H1)	Sector Eα	6.CC*.4Dwelling
House 2 (H2)	Sector Eε	9.CC.5Dwelling
House 4 (H4)	"Megaron A"	1.CC.1Dwelling
House 5 (H5)	Sector Z2	16.CC.8Dwelling
House 6 (H6)	House 14	30.DAA**/B.13Dwelling
Open space S2	Space 14	—
House 23 (H23)	Sector Γ / House N	18.DAA/A.9Dwelling
House 16 (3rd phase)	House N	
House 17 (2nd phase)	House N	
House 18 (1st phase)	House N	
Open space S1	Sector Δ	—
House 20 (H20)	House K	22.DAA/A.10Dwelling
House 9 (H9)	House Ξ	25.DAA/B.2Workshop
Structure 7 (S7)	House M	33.DAA/B.3Workshop
House 8 (H8)	House Λ	39.DAA/B.15Dwelling
House 24 (H24) (House 10 + Structure S10)	Space northeast of "Megaron B"	—
House 11 (H11)	"Megaron B"	43.DAA/Γ.—
Open space S8	Sector P (R) / Excavation square 1	—
House 13 (H13)	Sector K	51.DAA/Γ.18Dwelling
House 15 (H15)	Excavation square 4	53.DAA/Δ.19Dwelling
House 22 (H22)	Sector Θ	—

Note: CC: central courtyard. DAA: domestic activity area.

Author's code	Excavation – Dimini archive	Hourmouziadis (1979)
Feature (f) 1	Eε1	7.CC.2Food-processing
f2	'hearth'	31.DAA/B.6Food-processing
f3	—	29.DAA/B.6Food-processing
f4	Nδ10	—
f5	Nδ5	—
f6	Nζ1	21.DAA/A.4Storage
f7	Nδ9	19.DAA/A.4Food-processing
f8	Nδ5	20.DAA/A.1Workshop
f9	Nδ2	—
f10	Nδ7	—
f11	'hearth β'	—
f12	(Δ8)	—
f13	(Δ5)	24.DAA/A.5Storage
f14	'niche Δ5'	—
f15	—	27.DAA/B.5Food-processing
f16	(pithoi)	—
f17	(pithoi)	—
f18	'hearth'	—
f19	'wall'	26.DAA/B.6Storage
f20	'hearth'	34.DAA/B.7Food-processing
f21	'hearth'	37.DAA/B.8Food-processing
f22	—	35.DAA/B.8Storage
f23	—	36.DAA/B.9Storage
f24	—	38.DAA/B.10Storage
f25	'hearth'	41.DAA/Γ.9Food-processing
f26	'spit stands'	—
f27	'hearth'	44.DAA/Γ.10Food-processing
f28	'hearth'	45.DAA/Γ.12Storage
f29	'stone-paving'	—
f30	—	—
f31	'kiln'	46.DAA/Γ.11Food-processing
f32	'pit'	47.DAA/Γ.13Storage
f33	'stone-paving'	48.DAA/Γ.12Food-processing
f34	—	—
f35	'hearth'	52.DAA/Γ.13Food-processing
f36	'hearth'	54.DAA/Δ.14Food-processing
f37	'hearth'	59.DAA/Δ.15Food-processing
f38	—	57.DAA/Δ.—
f39	—	58.DAA/Δ.—
f40	'hearth'	—
f41	'pithos'	—

THE MAIN DATABASE USED TO ANALYSE THE
CERAMIC MATERIAL FROM DIMINI

THE CERAMIC COLLECTION FROM THE 1975–1976 EXCAVATION SEASONS amounts to 536 boxes and bags with an average content of 350 to 400 potsherds, and to 61 whole vessels. The ceramic sample discussed in this book consists mainly of the 4,904 rimsherds and 37 restored vessels recovered from the well-excavated and/or well-preserved buildings and open areas that are shown in Fig. 5.4. I decided to record in detail the rimsherds, considering them as the more diagnostic of vessel morphology and use, and also because they generally show a lower potential for being recycled or reused than other potsherds. The nonrim ceramics were counted and weighed as a whole for each individual spatial unit, and notes were taken down regarding preservation, fragmentation, functional or decorative accessories, base and handle types, and so forth. The entire ceramic collection had been washed and refitted at length. In the main database, each rim fragment and whole or partially complete vessel was re-corded as an individual entry and according to the same set of variables below.

1. *Registration of rimsherd/vessel*: Individual number and provenance/context details.

2. *Decoration (presence/absence)*: Monochrome (plain)/Painted/Incised.

3. *Ware*: Monochrome: slipped/burnished/impressed/plastic. Painted: Dimini Ware (B3a with its different variations [B3a1–B3a3]), Polychrome 1 (B3b), Polychrome 2 (B3c), and 'Rachmani Ware' (B3c). Information was recorded for both exterior and interior surfaces, as these were often decorated in different styles. Incised: Incised Standard, and Incised with the incisions Filled with White Paste.

4. *Shape 1*: Closed/Open, defined respectively according to absence/presence of interior surface treatment of any sort.

5. *Shape 2*: Unrestricted/Vertical/Restricted, representing respectively vessels with a rim angle less than 90°, vessels with a rim angle around 90°, and vessels with a rim angle larger than 90°. Rim angle was defined as the angle between the rim line and the upper wall of the vessel.

6. *Fabric*: Coarse/Medium/Fine, defined according to size, number, and dis-tribution of nonplastic inclusions visible to the naked eye.

7. *Rim type (profile)*: Twelve types were identified.

8. *Rim diameter* (in cm).
9. *Rim wall thickness* (in mm).
10. *Size*: Maximum preserved length (in cm).
11. *Rimsherd/whole vessel weight* (in grams).
12. *'Fragmentation/restorability'*: Number of joined sherds matching each individual entry when more than one sherd.
13. *Vessel types*: Thirteen main clear types were recognised, some with further variations.

APPENDIX C

DESCRIPTION OF VESSEL TYPES, DIMINI POTTERY

THE FOLLOWING IS A PRESENTATION ONLY OF THE VESSEL TYPES RECOGNISED
with certainty during the examination of the material. The information here
includes the various subtypes and minor types that were summarised under
larger, more representative categories within the book.

1. DIMINI BOWL (GREEK TERM: PHIALE)

The Dimini Bowl has traditionally been regarded as the type pot of the site of
Dimini – and of the so-called 'Dimini culture' in general – and as the most
characteristic type of Dimini Ware (Brown-on-Buff with different variations).
As was shown in Chapter 5 (Figs. 5.9–5.11), its attributes are noticeably uni-
form, although 'standardisation' is rather not the term that describes them best.
The form is characterised by a conical body, a flat base, and a strongly inverted
rim (Figs. 3.6a, 5.15). The most common height is around 15 cm. Sets of two
or four small string-hole lugs are placed symmetrically around the rim, but
it is not clear whether this is a functional or stylistic accessory. Both interior
and exterior surfaces are highly burnished and fully covered with various geo-
metrical design elements and patterns. Painted miniature Dimini Bowls also
exist (rim diameter 6–10 cm). A small number (6%) of the Dimini Bowls are
monochrome. All these are highly burnished and have exactly the same formal
and technical characteristics (shape, plastic attributes, height, diameter, thick-
ness and fabric) as their painted counterparts. All Dimini Bowls (painted and
monochrome) are made of fine yellow clay.

2. BOWL

Bowls are considerably diverse, although most are monochrome and made of
medium, medium/coarse reddish brown clay. A few but distinctive painted
and incised types also exist. The bowl types are summarised here in two broad
morphological subcategories, the first of which is considerably more common.

(a) Rounded Bowls

Monochrome types have flat, ring-footed or pedestal bases and are quite diverse
in formal and functional/technical characteristics (Fig. 5.14). (Typological

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parallels in Thessaly: Hauptmann 1981, Appendix 1: A5, A8, C4, C6; Weisshaar 1989, Plates XII: 3–6 and XIV: 1.)

Painted rounded bowls are decorated with the designs and design structures of the Dimini Ware and are also made of the same fine yellowish clay. Most of them have the same, inverted rim type as the Dimini Bowl. One painted rounded bowl type has a spherical contour and a flat base, and bears painted and plastic decoration on the exterior surface only (Fig. 5.16). At least in one case the plastic decoration comprises human or animal faces identical to those found on the fruitstands.

Incised rounded bowls occur in only one type. This has an oval-shaped form and a rounded base (Fig. 5.19). It is made from the fine fine/medium grey clay used for incised pottery, and is decorated only on the outside with a combination of geometrical patterns.

(b) Carinated Bowls

Carination is usually found under the rim. Most of these vessels are monochrome, but painted (Brown-on-Buff, and more rarely Polychrome 2 [B3c]) and incised examples also exist. It was not possible to define form distinction among monochrome, painted, and incised types. However, clay fabrics, rim diameters, rim types, and rim thicknesses differ considerably between these three classes. The clays, in particular, are very distinct, correlating the carinated bowls with the other vessels occurring in monochrome, painted, or incised pottery: medium/coarse reddish brown clay is used for monochrome carinated bowls, fine yellowish clay is used for painted, and fine/medium grey for incised. (Typological parallels in Thessaly: Hauptmann 1981, Appendix 1: A1–4, A14, B3, B7.)

3. DEEP BOWL

Deep bowls are less diverse than the rounded bowls and tend to occur in monochrome coarse pottery. These vessels were defined as deep bowls mainly on their profile. Some might be larger vessels, cooking pots, or 'stew pots' rather than bowls. The absence of restored examples and the relatively poor preservation of the deep bowls made the identification of their exact contour difficult. Two broad categories were defined:

(a) Straight-Sided Deep Bowl

Monochrome types are made of reddish brown coarse/medium clay. (Published example: Tsountas 1908, Fig. 108; Typological parallels in Thessaly: Weisshaar 1989, Plate XII: 8.)

Most *painted* fragments were made of fine yellowish clay and were decorated in the Dimini Ware. A few belonged to 'Rachmani Ware' (C1c).

No *incised* bowl of this type occurred.

(b) Deep Bowl with Body Carination or Sinuous Profile

This type is rarer and usually occurs in monochrome pottery. (Typological parallels in Thessaly: Hauptmann 1981, Appendix 1: C13.)

4. FRUITSTAND

Fruitstands are the most elaborate vessels of the Dimini ceramics both in form and in decoration. Their attributes are generally less uniform than those of the Dimini Bowl. The form is characterised by a most distinctive wavy rim and a rounded or conical body resting on a high bell-shaped foot (Fig. 3.6c). All feet are concave and have a number of lozenge openings placed symmetrically around the circumference. All fruitstands are highly decorated and in a most sophisticated manner: plastic and/or painted human or animal faces and beak-like features surrounded by painted circles emphasise the curves of the rim, while various patterns and design elements fully cover both sides of the body and the outside of the foot. The inside of the foot is completely undecorated and untreated. Painted decoration is mostly in the Dimini Ware, but several Polychrome 1 (B3b) examples exist. The interior and exterior surfaces often show different colours and decorative styles. The clay used is the fine, sometimes fine/medium, yellowish one which characterises all of the Dimini painted pottery.

5. JAR

(a) Hole-Mouth Jars

Hole-mouths are monochrome pottery types made of coarse reddish brown clay. Their rim angles range from 120° to 140°, and their rims are often slightly everted (Fig. 5.12). Their upper walls can be straight or slightly concave. Sets of two to four knobs placed symmetrically around the rim or around the body, between the opposing strap handles, are found on most hole-mouths.

(b) Neck Jars

Monochrome examples are generally rather low- or medium-collared jars than clear-cut neck jars, while some can be taken as an intermediary between hole-mouth and neck jars (Fig. 5.13). The collars usually have vertical

or tapering walls. All monochrome neck jars are made of coarse reddish brown clay.

Painted neck jars are rather rare (ten examples). They are small and globular, have low tapering necks and a pair of strap handles on the body (Fig. 3.6b). They are all made of fine yellowish clay and are painted with various geometrical motifs in the Dimini Ware. Their necks are surrounded by series of painted circles. The famous low-collared jar painted in Polychrome 2 (B3c, Black-and-Red-on-Cream), discovered by Tsountas (1908, Plate 11), must be included in these examples.

Incised neck jars are rarer than their painted counterparts. They have high tapering necks, compressed globular or biconical bodies, rounded bases, and strap handles at the body or at the rim (Fig. 5.18). All of the incised neck jars are made of medium to fine grey clay. A variety of geometrical incised motifs, sometimes filled with white paste, covers their burnished body. Height of restored examples is around 9 cm.

(c) Incised Biconical Jar

The recovery of four whole vessels allows a full definition of this special and elaborate type. Sets of two or four vertical strap handles are placed symmetrically around the globular body, which usually lies on a rounded base. The entire exterior surface is highly burnished and fully covered by a dense, highly structured incised decoration: vertical or oblique and intersecting parallel lines subdivide the panels defined by the handles into smaller parts, which are filled with alternating geometrical motifs and patterns. The incisions are often filled with white paste, which would have created an impressive contrast with the dark grey background. Two incised lines surround the rim. All biconical jars are made of medium to fine grey clay and have the same rim profiles. In addition to the incised bowl, the biconical jars are the thinnest (2–3 mm) Dimini pots. Height is around 20 cm.

6. LARGE STORAGE VESSEL (PITHOS)

Pithoi are large and distinctive monochrome storage jars. They have vertical and thick upper walls (over 20 mm in thickness), which usually end at a rim of a square or oval profile, and a mouth of over 35 cm in diameter. They all bear impressed or incised decoration around the rim and, often, plastic decoration on the body. They are made of coarse red clay different from that of the other monochrome types. (Typological parallels in Thessaly: Tsountas 1908: Figs. 123–126.)

7. 'SPIT STAND'

The 'spit stand' is a rather rare (13 complete pieces), painted four-sided type classified as a vessel with some reservation. It has a square-sectioned shape and a concave interior (Figs. 3.6d, 5.29). The exterior surface is fully covered with bright polychrome geometric patterns, often arranged in horizontal panels, painted exclusively in Polychrome 1 (Black-and-White-on-Red or Black-and-Red-on-Cream, with the black serving to outline the designs in red or white). The inside of the 'spit stands' is monochrome and very crude. Each or all of their sides sometimes bear angular openings similar to those on the fruitstands. A series of knobs are found on the outer upper edges of two of the sides. The 'spit stand' is the only painted type made of coarse reddish brown clay. Height is 25–30 cm.

8. BAKING TRAY

Baking trays are large, monochrome, very coarse and crude vessels possibly of an asymmetrical shape. Their short vertical walls form an L shape profile with the flat base, while the irregular thickened rim end sharply at a spout. A series of holes along the rim are found on all such vessels. (Possible typological parallel in Thessaly: Weisshaar 1989, Plate 62: 8.)

9. SIEVE

Coarse monochrome pottery type of a small rounded body reminiscent of the clay ladles.

10. BASKET

'Baskets' are small painted bowls with a loop handle over the rim (Fig. 5.17). The designs on their exterior surfaces recall strongly a real wooden basket and are applied in the typical Dimini Ware. Their interior surfaces are burnished but not decorated. They are made of fine yellowish clay. Only two complete examples of this type were preserved.

11. CUP

This is a small monochrome coarse vessel of a globular or ovoid contour. Its small diameter (5 cm) is what distinguishes this vessel from an open bowl. (Typological parallels in Thessaly: Weisshaar 1989, Plate XIII: 7, 9–11.)

12. MUG OR ONE-HANDLED CUP

The identification of this type is difficult as it depends entirely on the presence of the handle. Two examples were recognised. Both of them are monochrome and coarse, and of a contour similar to the handless cups. (Published example: Tsountas 1908, Fig. 105; Typological parallels in Thessaly: Weisshaar 1989, Plate XIII: 1–2, 5.)

13. 'ASKOS'

'Askoi' are monochrome coarse pouring vessels of an asymmetrical shape resembling the leather containers used for carrying liquids. A very large part is needed in order to recognise this type, which is otherwise easily confused with necked jars or closed vessels. The securely identified examples are therefore few (three specimens).

MISCELLANEA

This group includes parts or fragments of vessels whose precise form was not identifiable, such as lids and legs of tripod cooking pots.

Vessel types	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cum percent
Dimini Bowl	1,202	24.5	49.4	49.4
Bowl rounded	495	10.1	20.3	69.7
Bowl carinated	22	0.4	0.9	70.6
Deep bowl straight-sided	129	2.6	5.3	75.9
Deep bowl carinated	36	0.7	1.5	77.4
Fruitstand	101	2.1	4.1	81.6
Neck jar	154	3.1	6.3	87.9
Hole-mouth jar	125	2.5	5.1	93.0
Biconical jar (incised only)	4	0.1	0.2	93.2
Large storage vessel (pithos)	51	1.0	2.1	95.3
Small storage vessel (pithoid)	13	0.3	0.5	95.8
'Spit Stand'	14	0.3	0.6	96.4
Baking tray	57	1.2	2.3	98.7
Sieve	4	0.1	0.2	98.9
Basket	2	0.0	0.1	99.0
Handless cup	7	0.1	0.3	99.3
Urn legged	6	0.1	0.2	99.5
'Askos'	3	0.1	0.1	99.6
One-handled cup	2	0.0	0.1	99.7
Misc.	7	0.1	0.3	100.0
—	2,470	50.4	Missing	
Total	4,904	100.0	100.0	
Identified cases 2,434				
Missing cases 2,470				

Vessel type	Rim diameter (cm)			
	Range	Mode	Median	Mean
Dimini Bowl	14–36	28	27	27
Bowl rounded monochrome	9–38	23	25	25
Bowl rounded painted	10–30	15	19	19
Bowl rounded incised	8–26	8	19	19
Bowl carinated monochrome	15–25	15	17	19
Bowl carinated painted	15–25	15	20	20
Bowl carinated incised	16–17			
Deep bowl straight-sided monochrome	9–36	20	21	22
Deep bowl straight-sided painted	13–30	13	19	19
Deep bowl carinated monochrome	9–36	17	20	22
Deep bowl carinated painted	27–28			
Deep bowl carinated incised	20			
Fruitstand	19–31	29	28	27
Neck jar monochrome	5–40	11	15	16
Neck jar painted	8–19	8	9	10
Neck jar incised	6–14	8	8	8
Hole-mouth jar	13–40	25	27	27.5
Biconical jar (incised)	11–13	12	12	12
Large storage vessel (pithos)	25–45	45	40	36.6
Baking tray	<40			
Sieve	17–23			
Basket	5			
Handless cup	2–8	2	5	4
'Askos'	9–15			
One-handled cup	5			

NOTES

2: THE HOUSEHOLD AS PROCESS IN A SOCIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

1. Ortner (1984: 151–2) discusses a similar situation in anthropology in earlier decades.
2. See Chapman (2003: 73, 75–6) for a distinction between egalitarian relations and egalitarianism as ideology.

3: THE NEOLITHIC OF GREECE

1. This was officially revised only in 2004 in a volume edited by Barrett and Halstead.
2. See Andreou et al. (2001: 298–9, 308–9), Perlès (2001, Chapter 6, note 2) and Thissen (2005) for the general dating regionalism; Alram-Stern (2000), Demoule (2004), and Thissen (2000) for chronological connections between the Balkans and northern and southern Greece; and Thissen (2005) for the Neolithic of the Aegean islands.
3. The recent discovery of obsidian from Carpathia at the Final Neolithic settlement of Mandalo in Macedonia, some 800 km away from Carpathia, adds a new dimension to the extent of the exchange network (Kiligoglou et al. 1996, cited in Andreou et al. 2001: 322).
4. Recent exceptions include Carrington-Smith's (2000) and Papaefthymiou-Papanthimou's (1992, 2003) works on spinning and weaving at Servia and Sesklo, respectively, and Perlès' (2001: 243–2) consideration of matting, basketry, and weaving practices in the Early Neolithic.

4: THE IDEAL AND THE REAL: THE EXAMPLES OF EARLY NEOLITHIC NEA NIKOMEDEIA AND MIDDLE NEOLITHIC SESKLO

1. This is the time frame for the foundation of the site, estimated on the basis of Perlès's (2001,

Table 6.1) and Thissen's (2005: 35, Fig. 4) calculations of 14C dates assigned to Early Neolithic levels; it is not clear whether it also represents the duration of the site.

2. Pyke's (1993) work on the stratigraphy, the architecture, and some categories of small finds and Youni's (1991) work on the pottery from Nea Nikomedeia provide important information on spatial distributions, which has not appeared as yet in published form. The late Professor Robert Cook, Colin Renfrew, and Ken Wardle kindly brought these works to my attention.

3. Perlès (2001: 214), Vitelli (1997: 172), and Andreou et al. (2001: 323) suggest that Youni's high figures for annual ceramic production, though not unlikely, should be treated with caution on the grounds of recovery, recording, and statistical problems. Perlès (2001) lowers the rate of production to only 7–22 pots per year, but Youni (2003) supports her own original estimates.

4. See also Perlès (2001: 216–17) for a discussion of hearth types in relation to vessel types and types of cooking in Early Neolithic Greece.

5. Detailed stratigraphic analysis by Pyke (1996: 22, 45) suggested that Building 4 acquired its tripartite layout in the second phase rather than originally being laid out as such, contrary to what was previously thought.

6. Bob Chapman kindly pointed out to me that group burials need not have taken place over a single episode of inhumation, nor do they necessarily represent a kin group. For example, evidence from Bronze Age Spain indicates that there might be a generation or more between such burials, and there are burials with two adults and a neighbouring child. Regarding adults and children at Nea Nikomedeia, I still believe that even if they are not contemporary in multiple burials, their association remains of

significance, whether in terms of generational links or in terms of some kind of ideological statement.

7. Concerning Middle Neolithic Sesklo, the works by Kotsakis on the stratigraphy and architecture; by Moundrea-Agrafioti on the polished stone, chipped stone, and bone tools; by Papaefhtymiou-Papanthimou on the clay artefacts; by Pilali-Papasteriou on the stamp-seals; and by Vouzaxakis on the history of research remain partially published. These works, which were kindly provided to me, made comprehensible an important part of the information. Equally enlightening has been my personal inspection of the site in 1998 and 2005 under the guidance of Yannis Tsamitas, a chief worker at Theocharis' excavations and the guard of the archaeological site of Sesklo for many years.

8. In fact, the earthquake in Volos in 1956, which caused the collapse of a considerable portion of the tell, revealing its stratigraphic profile at the northeast side, is what initiated Theocharis' research, originally designed as a preliminary excavation for stratigraphic observations.

9. Theocharis (1973: 65, 66) proposed that Building 7–8–9 at the tell could have served as the 'Community House' of the Middle Neolithic phase III 'acropolis' because of its central location, its megaron-like layout, and the existence of a stone-paved courtyard at its front. Little is known about the contents of this house, as the floors corresponding to its three building phases were not preserved. Its final, megaron-like form is the result of the gradual subdivision of an originally square building, whereas its present central location results from the erosion of the south and east parts of the tell (Elia 1982: 267–8).

5: COMPLEXITY IS NOT ONLY ABOUT HIERARCHY: LATE NEOLITHIC DIMINI, A DETAILED CASE-STUDY IN HOUSEHOLD ORGANISATION

1. Hourmouziadis (1979: 51) reports Neolithic potsherds and architectural remains in the nearby modern village of Dimini. Recent excavations by the Archaeological Service for rescue and restoration purposes have encountered Late Neolithic deposits to the east and south of the mound, right outside of what is today the out-ermost enclosure (Adrimi-Sismani 2000: 279, Fig.1; Adrimi-Sismani 2002: 95).

2. See Tsountas 1908: 65–6, 363–4; Hourmouziadis 1979: 96, 110; and Adrimi-Sismani 1994, forthcoming.

3. See Tsountas 1908: 125–32, 248–52; Hope Simpson and Dickinson 1979: 147–52; and Maran 1992: 217–18.

4. Adrimi-Sismani 1994.

5. This is the Mycenean period (fourteenth to thirteenth century BC).

6. See Hourmouziadis 1979: 107–10 and Adrimi-Sismani 1992.

7. See Adrimi-Sismani 2002 for a recent report.

8. This is Tsountas' (1908: 48–9) 'B Period', with his 'A Period' defining the Early and Middle Neolithic.

9. These were named 'domestic activity areas' (English term by Elia 1982: 308).

10. This consists of the notebooks, which monitor the day-to-day progress of the excavation, the arrangements of material, and the deposition layers encountered in each excavation unit; a series of recording cards and listings for the small finds and the complete ceramic vessels with details of their provenance; photographs of the findings and the excavation units; drawings of the house floors and associated finds; and more formal recordings of material culture in the Volos Museum catalogues.

11. Of the previous empirically based studies, Tsountas (1908) first divided the Dimini ceramics into three main categories, monochrome (B1), incised (B2), and painted (B3), which was further subdivided into the three subcategories of Brown-On-Buff (or 'Dimini Ware' or B3a), Polychrome B3b, and Polychrome B3c, which are referred to in the main text here. Hourmouziadis (1980a, 1981) employs ceramic evidence in his theoretical discussion of Neolithic socioeconomic organisation, but only generally. More systematic, but still preliminary, was his design analysis of painted pots (Hourmouziadis 1980b; also Washburn 1983), extended by Voulgari (2000: 101–41) to pursue individual identities and styles in the decorative patterns on the Dimini Ware specifically. Microscopic analyses of the clay composition of Thessalian Neolithic wares have included potsherds from Dimini (Schneider et al. 1991, 1994; Hitsiou personal communication).

12. The only exception has been Hourmouziadis' (1978b) identification of incised pottery production at the site.

13. The latter idea was kindly put forward to me by John Chapman.

14. See also Darcque (1990), Elia (1982: 39–49), and Polychronopoulou (2003) for the misleading connotations of the term 'megaron'.

15. Note that the small opening at the south wall of H10-S10 is due to a later disturbance and does not represent an entrance to the adjacent H11.

16. Recent inspection at the site by Skafida (in preparation) indicated architectural remains underneath this central open space. They consist of two substantial walls adjoining in an L-shape. Although without excavation there can be no firm inference about the layout or function of these remains (e.g., whether a building or not), their presence may change our picture of the site. First, it suggests that its spatial organisation was not only gradually completed, but perhaps even more shifting than has been realised. Second, if these walls belonged indeed to one substantial building that once dominated the Central Courtyard, then its abolition over the course of the settlement's Neolithic life might be seen to strengthen the argument about the intention of the community to place restrictions on potentially status-seeking behaviour.

6: HOMOGENEITY OR DIVERSITY? HOUSEHOLDS AS VARIABLE PROCESSES

1. This is late Middle/early Late Neolithic according to the 'Aegean terminology', but Middle and even Early Neolithic in Balkan terms (see Andreou et al. 2001: 298, 308, 314; Efstratiou et al. 1998; and Mould et al. 2000: 14–21 for the phases and relative chronologies in Macedonia and Thrace in relation to those in Thessaly).

2. The time frame suggested for the Late Neolithic by Roque et al. 2002 according to recent TL dating of Dikili Tash clay ovens is 5500–4500 BC. As they note, however, Dikili Tash II stretches over the second half of the fifth millennium BC (and after a chronological gap from Dikili Tash I), which would be Final Neolithic or Chalcolithic (see also Demoule 2004). Dikili Tash I spanned from around the middle of the sixth millennium BC to the first centuries of the fifth millennium BC.

3. Palioskala was originally situated at the shore of Lake Karla (Voiviis), which was drained in 1962.

4. These views of early ceramic specialisation have been questioned by Perlès (2001: 210, 218) and by Tomkins (2004: 45–6) in his study of Early Neolithic pottery from Knossos.

5. The Dikili Tash pottery firing feature is earlier than the Dimini one, still within the Late Neolithic (see note 6.2 above and Table 3.1).

6. Tsountas (1908: 125) reports human skeletal remains underneath the fourth enclosure on the southwest part of Dimini, some in an arrangement recalling a contracted position. Their location is very interesting. It may suggest a late Middle Neolithic date and probably even some rite associated with the foundation of the enclosures. Unfortunately, excavation of this area was not complete, and no information on the age, sex, or number of the deceased is available.

7: EVOLUTION OR CONTINGENCY? HOUSEHOLDS AS TRANSITIONAL PROCESSES

1. Studies of Early-Middle Neolithic ceramics suggest that pots were not large enough for the storage of the annual crop production (Tomkins 2004: 42; Vitelli 1989; Youni 1996: 191–2), although there must have been a variety of non-ceramic containers such as wooden baskets and animal skin containers that would leave no trace in the archaeological record.

2. Corporate buildings serving as mechanisms for the integration of the community and possibly related to social and ceremonial or ritual activities have been found in Jerf el Ahmar and Tell Mureybet in Syria; in Nevali Çori and Göbekli Tepe in Turkey; in Qermez Dere in Iraq; and in 'Ain Ghazal in Jordan (e.g., see Rollefson 2000 and Watkins 2005 for recent reviews).

3. Given that only half of the pit was excavated, the actual number of animals represented in the entire fill might be between 1,000 and 2,000 (Pappa et al. 2004: 33–4; also Halstead 2005).

4. Halstead's (1984: 8.1.2, 1995) argument about a hierarchical social structure in the Late Neolithic is based on three Thessalian sites – Dimini, Ayia Sofia, and Sesklo. Of these sites only Dimini has been excavated sufficiently,

and there is nothing to suggest a central elite there (Chapter 5). At Ayia Sofia excavation was extremely limited. We do not even know the enclosure's layout, whereas its contents include not only a building, but also a platform, a ditch, and a curious funerary complex, which are neither clearly described nor firmly dated (see Chapter 6). At Sesklo, the state of preservation of the Late Neolithic remains does not permit certainty as to the settlement's arrangement or the number and location of its other buildings. Theocharis' (1973) restoration of Late Neolithic Sesklo (Fig. 4.5) as having a layout similar to that of Dimini remains largely hypothetical (Kotsakis 1996a: 54). In all, as things stand at present, it is highly debatable whether we can draw comparisons between these sites, let alone take them as typical of the Late Neolithic. The recently uncovered settlement at Palioskala (Fig. 6.9) might be seen to repeat a pattern of central buildings and enclosures. However, Palioskala dates to the Final rather than the Late Neolithic, its excavation has not been completed, and the specific use of the central area and its association with the other buildings is not known as yet.

5. This argument draws too heavily on a single so far model of house interior, that from Platia Magoula Zarkou. House models without a roof or with detachable roofs, probably suggesting a shift of interest to the interior of the house, seem indeed to appear in the Late Neolithic, but they are far fewer than their contemporary roofed counterparts (Toufexis 1996, 2003: 269; Toufexis and Skafida 1998).

6. Nanoglou (2005: 151) argues against 'the framework of individual vs. community' suggested by various scholars, as leaving little space for alternative interpretations of the representations of individual identity, but he himself leaves many important questions unanswered: How and why exactly such identity emerged? How it was tolerated by the rest of community? Why so many figurines are found fragmented?

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