

BURIAL PRACTICE AND ASPECTS OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN THE LATE  
CHALCOLITHIC OF NORTH-EAST BULGARIA

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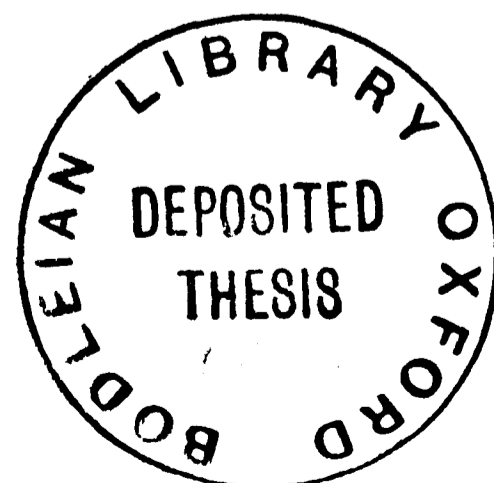
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# BURIAL PRACTICE AND ASPECTS OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN THE LATE CHALCOLITHIC OF NORTH-EAST BULGARIA

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## ABSTRACT

The study considers archaeological evidence for burials and other mortuary practices from the Late Chalcolithic period in north-east Bulgaria. The Late Chalcolithic is defined (circa 4500-4000 B.C.) and around 900 burials are attributed to two cultural groups within the region in this period.

It is argued that previous studies of the evidence can be rejected for assuming a straightforward equivalence between burial forms and social structures. An alternative model of social organization is proposed based on the 'structuration' and 'habitus' models of Giddens and Bourdieu which emphasize the role of the individual in the reproduction of social institutions. This framework is used to examine the importance of (mortuary) rituals and the symbolic use of material culture in strategies intended to maintain or alter the distribution of power and resources.

The data is examined using quantitative measures of spatial and temporal variability and statistical measures of association between variables. It is argued that two basic patterns can be discerned and which correspond to the defined cultures. The inland cultural pattern is further divided into two 'types' based on the location and forms of burials.

Burial forms and grave goods are also examined qualitatively and the values attributed to artefacts, materials and the processes of burial are addressed. From this it is argued that meanings are fundamentally mediated through processes of reciprocation between kinship groups and with ancestors. Social structures based on gender and age, the settlement community and residence are proposed.

'Codes' of the use of material culture within mortuary rituals are described and evaluated through a consideration of assemblages and performance. Changes within and between cemeteries over time are used to reconstruct patterns of competition and emulation.

The interpretations of social interaction in burial practices are related to other forms of evidence from the Late Chalcolithic in north-east Bulgaria and suggestions made for a new understanding of social organization in both cultures.

The conclusions are placed in a wider spatial and temporal perspective and conclusions presented relating to both the data studied and the theoretical models adopted.

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## NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The Bulgarian scheme is used throughout for the Cyrillic alphabet unless the pronunciation in Russian is sufficiently different (basically SHCH for SHT). Articles in Russian are noted as such in the Bibliography.

Letters are transposed as follows:-

	BUL	RUS		BUL	RUS		BUL	RUS
A	A		Л	L		Ц	TS	
Б	B		М	M		Ч	CH	
В	V		Н	N		Ш	SH	
Г	G		О	O		Щ	SHT	SHCH
Д	D		П	P		Ъ	A	
Е	E		Р	R		Ы	-	Y
Ж	ZH		С	S		Ь	-	'
З	Z		Т	T		Э	-	E
И	I		У	U		Ю	YU	
Й	Y		Ф	F		Я	YA*	
К	K		Х	H				

The following symbol used in older forms of Bulgarian is transliterated as follows:

ѣ      E

\* NOTE that ИЯ is transliterated as IA as the simplest rendering of the pronunciation.

In a small number of cases an English form of the name is used (e.g. Aibunar instead of Aybunar) where this is common in the archaeological literature.

Some accented letters used in Romanian are unavailable on normal keyboard fonts and have been rendered as the un-accented letter here. This applies particularly to 'ș' which is transposed as 's' and 'Ț' which is rendered as 't' except in the cases of some well known site and personal names where the common English form 'ts' is used (as in Gumelnitsa).

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study has two principal aims. The first is to produce a new understanding of the evidence from one particular archaeological context - burial finds from the Late Chalcolithic period in north-east Bulgaria. Some finds from this region have been widely reported and discussed in the archaeological literature in recent years. It is suggested, however, that most interpretations of this material to date have been flawed both by the use of insufficient data and by the adoption of a theoretical perspective which does not allow for an adequate understanding of social organization and the role of material culture. It will be argued that the results of this study have implications beyond the re-interpretation of the burial evidence itself, and will require a re-evaluation of social interpretations in a far wider spatial and temporal context.

The second main aim is to produce a theoretical account of the data, which draws upon and develops a number of recent arguments in archaeology and related subjects, and is therefore of relevance to other archaeological data. Chapter 1 is divided into four sections. The first section is a brief introduction to the evidence and the region. The second section critically reviews previous discussions of burial evidence in the region. The third section develops the theoretical perspective to be used in this thesis. The intention is not to establish a 'model' to which the data is applied. Rather, the discussion concentrates on establishing a framework to structure the analysis of the data in Chapters 3-7. This is achieved by discussion of the relationship between three elements: the nature of social structure, through consideration of the theory of 'structuration' (Giddens 1979); the importance and social role of ritual, and mortuary rituals in particular; and the use and interpretation of symbolism in social behaviour.

Chapter 2 returns to the concerns of the first section of this chapter and establishes both the chronological parameters of the study and the precise chronology of the data to be considered. Chapters 3 to 5 are a detailed examination of the burial data in the light of

the theoretical framework described in the conclusions to this chapter. Chapter 6 explores the relationship between burial and other social practices in the Late Chalcolithic. Chapter 7 expands the area and period addressed. Detailed conclusions to the interpretation of the burial data are presented in Chapter 5. The remaining chapters attempt to move towards a more complete understanding of social *organization*<sup>1</sup> in the Late Chalcolithic of north-east Bulgaria and also describe consequences for future social interpretations in a wider temporal and spatial context.

### 1. *THE DATA*

A significant reason for selecting north-east Bulgaria and the Late Chalcolithic period as spatial and temporal limits for the study is the relative abundance of burial evidence for this region and time compared with other areas of south-east Europe. The only area with a comparable, or greater, number of excavated and published burials is the Neolithic/Copper Age of Hungary (Bognár-Kutzián 1963; Kalicz and Raczky 1987; Sherratt 1982, etc.). A number of large cemeteries have been excavated in Romania but are essentially unpublished, or, in the case of Cernica, are unique to their period and therefore without comparable data (Cantacuzino and Morintz 1963; Cantacuzino 1965; 1969). These sites will be returned to only in Chapter 7.

Figure 1.1 shows the location of burial and human skeletal finds in Bulgaria for the Chalcolithic/Transitional Period (Chapter 2 is a full discussion of the general chronology of the period and the dating of individual sites). It is clear that north-east Bulgaria largely defines itself as a region for analysis. The reason for the large number of finds in one part of the country may partly reflect the industrial developments,

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<sup>1</sup> I use 'social organization' in this thesis to refer to a comprehensive description and explanation of social behaviour (which can never be completely achieved), and 'social structure' as the institutions and practices which this study addresses (according to the definitions offered below).

consequent large-scale excavations and new excavation techniques in the region in the 1960's and 1970's (Chapman 1994). Whether the distribution of finds is an accurate reflection of the occurrence of cemeteries is a problem which cannot be resolved without further investigation and will only be considered at the broadest level of analysis in this study (in Chapter 7).

Late Chalcolithic burial finds are known also from Romania (Appendix 3), but the total number of finds and the number of finds from each site, is smaller. For this reason, Romanian Gumelnitsa Culture finds are not included in the main part of the study.

Apart from the vagaries of finds distribution, north-east Bulgaria provides a relatively well-defined geographical area for the study. Natural boundaries can be distinguished on three sides. To the south, the ridge of the Stara Planina separates northern Bulgaria from Thrace. The eastern limit is provided by the Black Sea coast. To the north, the area follows the national border, which is for the most part the southern bank of the Danube. In the extreme north-east of the region, the national border does not clearly follow a natural boundary, and the division between Bulgarian (southern) and Romanian Dobrudzha is essentially arbitrary, reflected in the border changes of the last hundred years. The western limit is also chosen to follow modern political boundaries, but corresponds approximately to the boundary between western and eastern Bulgarian cultures in the Chalcolithic (Todorova 1978a), falling between the Yantra and Osam rivers. For convenience and clarity the study area comprises the administrative regions of Veliko Tarnovo (the western boundary), Ruse, Targovishte, Razgrad, Shumen, Silistra, Dobrich (Tolbuhin) and Varna. These political divisions are depicted in Figure 1.2.

The region is largely composed of plateaux between 200 and 500 metres above sea-level, rising to over 1000 metres in the Stara Planina (Figure 1.3). The land is below 200 metres in a broad strip south of the Danube and along the coast. Most of the region

is drained by rivers running north to the Danube, but the south-east corner is drained by the Provadiyska and Kamchia Rivers flowing east, the former to the Varna Bay. The southern Dobrudzha has a number of small rivers running to the coast and inland lakes.

The region may be only partially defined by modern political boundaries, however. An important distinction can be made between the archaeological assemblages of the coastal and inland parts of the region, which are frequently described as belonging to separate cultures in the Late Chalcolithic. I have explored some of the background to this situation elsewhere (1993) and will not repeat the arguments here. Nevertheless, the contrast between coastal and inland burial practices will be one of the central themes in the following chapters. The region has been chosen to include and exploit this comparative dimension.

The data vary considerably in quantity and completeness between sites. A number of the cemeteries have been fully published, others partially so. The majority of stray finds within settlements and caves are poorly reported with regard to context. Appendix 1 details all of the *published* evidence available to me during my research. A small number of articles which I am aware of, but have not been able to locate, are excluded. In addition, the study uses data collected on three study-visits to Bulgaria between 1991 and 1993. Unpublished data collected on these visits is not included in Appendix 1, but is included in the analyses (including figures) in Chapters 2-7.

The major source of unpublished data is the large multi-period cemetery of Durankulak, where it has been possible to examine documentation relating to almost every burial in the cemetery (1204 in total, with roughly 250 graves datable to the Late Chalcolithic). Additionally, I have made a detailed examination of artefacts from around half of the Late Chalcolithic graves. Evidence from Durankulak provides roughly 30% of the total number of Late Chalcolithic burials to be considered (and over 40% of the coastal area burials).

Some finds, excluding the vast majority of pottery vessels, have also been examined from Varna I, the largest single source of Late Chalcolithic graves under consideration. However, in most cases it was not possible to attribute artefacts to grave with the information made available and many details, such as position of grave goods in the burial, are not known to me for this site. Around 80 burials from the site are fully, or almost completely, published - principally the richer burials which are the focus of most recent accounts of Late Chalcolithic burial practice (Section 2, below).

Some documentation and finds from Sava-Tsonevo were also made available for examination, but this provides only partial information about the site, which is in the process of being prepared for publication. I have examined the material stored in Razgrad Museum which is described as being from the Radingrad cemetery, but includes very little of the pottery, which was reportedly not catalogued before the death of the excavator. The records do not generally attribute artefacts to specific burials and many of the objects seen were probably from the area of the cemetery but not actually placed in graves. It was impossible to discover excavation records left by the late Dr. T. Ivanov during my visit to the museum.

For the remaining unpublished sites, I have been able to examine pottery finds from the cemetery at Polyanitsa and concur with the suggested Middle Chalcolithic date for the site. The Omurtag cemetery is included in this study, although it proved impossible to study material from the cemetery, which is published only in barest outline.

Where possible, published finds have also been examined first-hand. It has been possible to re-draw the pottery from the cemetery at Vinitza, for example, which is published only as photographs without scale. Classifications of some artefacts (and consequently analyses) are based on these examinations.

Despite the variable quality and quantity of evidence from each site all are considered in this study. Sites are omitted from particular analyses where information is unavailable but the use of only the 'best' (i.e. most complete or detailed) evidence is rejected as potentially obscuring important variability.

## *2. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF LATE CHALCOLITHIC BURIAL REMAINS IN NORTH-EAST BULGARIA*

The relationship between the form of burial finds and social structures has been a topic of Bulgarian discussions of Neolithic/Chalcolithic funerary remains since the first finds were discovered in the early part of the century. There has been very little explicit theoretical discussion of the nature of this link, however. In general, until the mid-1960's, burial remains are presented as an example and illustration of religious beliefs and superstitions (e.g. Popov 1928; Ovcharov 1963).

For the same period in western Europe, Chapman and Randsborg have characterized approaches to the interpretation of burial remains as comprising 'speculation, chronology and normative thought' (1981: 2). The Bulgarian discussions may be placed within the first of these categories. Burial evidence was not used as a chronological or cultural indicator until Todorova's definition of a 'Varna Phase' of the Sava Culture (Vajsová 1967) due to the limited number of finds and the abundance of settlement data. Considerable attention was directed at anthropological analysis of skeletal remains and the identification of racial types (Dronchilov 1923-4; Boev 1959; 1972). Such studies generally identified race as evidence of evolutionary processes and as indications of the origin and diffusion of populations (ibid.).

Since 1960 the amount of burial evidence from Bulgaria has increased sharply with the discovery of a number of extra-mural cemeteries. In the last fifteen years, discussions have been dominated by the gold finds from Varna: that is by the published finds from

a minority of burials excavated at the site. Since 1973 there have been approximately 50 articles solely or principally about Varna - five times more than about any other individual site and more than twice as many as about all other Bulgarian sites combined.

Despite the increase in the amount of evidence and the number of articles there has been little explicitly theoretical discussion. This is the case for both site-specific and synthetic articles and despite the fact that a majority of the general studies of the evidence have been written by non-Bulgarians.<sup>2</sup> There has not been a movement directly equivalent to the New Archaeology developed by Binford and others, but many accounts of Varna (etc.) have adopted approaches similar to 'processual' studies of burial (and other) evidence.<sup>3</sup>

Central to these processual discussions of the interpretation of burial practice are Binford's arguments: that burial remains can be interpreted as reflecting a 'social persona' - 'a composite of the social identities maintained in life and recognized as appropriate for consideration after death' (Binford 1972: 17), which includes age, sex, rank, social position and circumstances of death - and that the number of dimensions of social complexity represented in burial ritual would partly reflect the relative complexity of the society as a whole. Similar arguments have been expressed more fully by Saxe (1970) as four of eight hypotheses that may be tested. Thus:-

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<sup>2</sup> The following comprehensive discussions may be cited: Todorova (1978a; 1986a); T. Ivanov (1978); Lichardus (1982; 1984; 1988; 1991a); Gimbutas (1990); Avilova (1984; 1986b); Chapman (1983; 1991). The first two archaeologists only are Bulgarian. A similar argument may be made for the period before 1960: e.g. Gaul (1948); Garasanin (1956); Comsa (1960).

<sup>3</sup> The term 'processual' archaeology is used loosely here to refer to the 'New Archaeology' movement and some later developments described in (e.g.) Hodder (1986). Similarly, 'post-processual' is used to include a number of critiques of the New Archaeology whose interrelationships are discussed by Hodder (*ibid.*; 1992).

'Hypothesis 1: The components of a given disposal domain cooperate in a partitioning of the universe, the resultant co-ordinations representing different social personae.

Hypothesis 2: In a given domain, the principles organizing the set of social personae (produced by cooperative partitioning of the universe of disposal components) are congruent with those organizing social relations in the society at large.

Hypothesis 3: Within a given domain personae of lesser social significance tend to manifest fewer positive components in their significata relating to others, and conversely.

Hypothesis 4: The greater the social significance of the deceased, the greater will be the tendency for the social personae represented at death to contain social identities congruent with the higher social position at the expense of the other (and less socially significant identities) the deceased may have had in life, and conversely.'

(1970)

Further processual studies, such as those by Goldstein (1981) relating formal disposal areas to lineage descent groups or Tainter's (1978) association of energy expenditure with status, have been influential only to particular discussions by western scholars (Chapman 1983; Renfrew 1986) which will be returned to below.

In studies of the Bulgarian burial evidence (whether written by Bulgarians or not) there is almost universal acceptance of the use of burial form and artefacts to represent social roles in life. Social rank or status is also argued to be directly reflected in burial practice, and many studies also consider the relative complexity of the society, placed on an ordinal scale from simple to complex.

However, the similarities between Bulgarian and processual accounts are superficial, being based on a shared positivist and functionalist understanding of the relationship

between burial data and social organization. Many studies of Bulgarian data ascribe particular symbolic or religious meanings to burial forms and artefacts - a form of interpretation rejected by Binford and others as 'idealist' (Binford 1982b). Ethnographic and cross-cultural study - favoured by processual approaches - has been only sporadically used in Bulgarian studies, either to show similarities of form (Todorova 1986a), or to relate religious beliefs to supposed Indo-European or 'Kurgan' origins (Gimbutas 1977a; 1977b; Zanotti 1986-7; Nikolov 1991). There has been no adoption of hypothesis testing as a methodological standard, or 'scientific method' in general, and the use of formal analyses has been promoted only in the last few years (e.g. Todorova 1992). Combined with elements of diffusionism and a 'normative' understanding of culture many studies contain both elements of a processual approach and the 'culture-historical' models it rejected.

This is reflected in the adoption of the outline of both the aims and methods of funerary analysis presented as a series of points by Alekshin (1981), which are echoed, though not stated, in a majority of articles by Bulgarian scholars.<sup>4</sup> The possible goals of studies of burial remains are suggested to be:-

1. Social structure and social organization.
2. The position of individuals in the social hierarchy.
3. Features of family organization.
4. Ethnic affiliation, contacts and diffusion.
5. Anthropological aspects of the population.
6. Ideology - i.e. beliefs and magic customs.
7. The level of abstract thought.
8. Ethnocultural traditions.
9. Demographic structure.

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<sup>4</sup> For example Todorova (1986a: 182-3); Raduncheva (1976b); Avramova (1992).

Methods of analysis are divided into three broad categories, as follows:

1. Historical - including comparison with historical processes, relations between areas and within larger ethnocultural groupings.
2. Sociological - involving statistical information on social characteristics.
3. Formal - including the organization of burial evidence and its link with belief and economic organization.

Burial evidence is often taken as the best or only means of interpreting social structure, reflecting both a 'ladder of inference' (Hawkes 1954) and a ranking of evidence in terms of its suitability for addressing particular topics.

In practice, these aims and methods have resulted in a number of models which are very similar in general form and often in detail, as regards the internal structure of the society. Interpretative statements are most frequently made about the overall level and type of social structure (points 1 and 3 of the 'aims'), the social position of individual graves (point 2) and the meaning of individual artefacts (subsumed within point 6). There is more variation regarding the origin of social and material forms (including points 4 and 8).

The following discussion concentrates on accounts of Varna because of the overwhelming preponderance (and variety of origins of) articles about this site. Models have changed since the discovery of Varna (and the number of different authors writing about Bulgarian burial remains has increased sharply), but in the particular social roles (etc.) reflected by artefacts and burial types, rather than in the ways in which inferences are made. The following review is comprehensive, therefore, for the theoretical and methodological techniques that have been applied to Bulgarian Late Chalcolithic burial remains in the last thirty years.

This may be seen, for example, in the very similar interpretative statements found in Todorova's publication of the Devnya cemetery (Todorova-Simeonova 1971) concerning rich burials, the importance of copper and gold artefacts, etc.. At a wider level both T. Ivanov (1978) and Avilova (1984) have distinguished between intra-mural and extra-mural cemeteries. Avilova argues that intra-mural cemeteries are an earlier form and show an egalitarian social structure that is replaced by socially stratified extra-mural cemeteries (an idea traceable back to Comsa 1960). This can be disputed on chronological grounds from the arguments presented in Chapter 2. T. Ivanov pursues a similar argument in which 'animistic' and 'totemic' cults in the intra-mural cemeteries are replaced by a belief in an after-life which mirrors the social structure of the living population at the extra-mural sites.

Statements have commonly been made about the overall level of social complexity found at the Varna cemetery (and by extension to the Gumelnitsa/Varna period as a whole). The range of variation extends to the 'Proto-civilization' envisaged by Egami (1982) and I. Ivanov's 'proto-state' (1978d), but most of the accounts discuss or imply 'ranking', 'classes' or 'stratification', with 'chiefs', 'kings' or 'high-priests' (Figure 1.4).<sup>5</sup>

Statements about the complexity of the society as a whole are based on interpretations of the status of individual graves. For Varna, most discussions have concentrated

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<sup>5</sup> Figures 1.4-1.6 are not comprehensive. Models are left out if they replicate those included in the table, or are only peripherally derived from the Varna data. Translated terms may not have precisely the same implication as their English equivalents, and may not in all cases refer to schemes of social complexity such as that of Service (1975). In any case they do not take account of differences in the theoretical models by which the interpretations are generated. The figures are intended only as an illustration of the models of social structure which have been proposed for Varna. A detailed critique of many of the models is undertaken below.

wholly, or in large part, on a small number of the richest burials. Different meanings which have been ascribed to these burials are detailed in Figure 1.5.

The variety in interpretations for particular burials (especially Grave 36) is the result of differing suggested meanings for particular objects. Gold is universally accepted as denoting value and status, and the 'sceptres' as being symbols of high rank, hence the relatively little variation in the 'meaning' of Grave 43, for example. Specific meanings are more rarely given to other particular objects, as shown in Figure 1.6.

A detailed critique of each of the models cited in Figures 1.4-1.6 would be both time consuming and unnecessary. A number of general comments may be made which apply to most of these models. Thus, levels of social complexity or social ranks are used without justification or definition in many of the models. The presence of particular objects, or gold itself, is sufficient for many to use the terms 'chief', 'priest', 'king' etc., without discussion of the actual social roles designated. Levels of social complexity implied by these terms and commonly described are also employed without definition. Recent criticism of scales of social complexity (band to state etc.) as excluding wide variation in favour of simplistic social types, and for failing to account for transitions from one level to another, may be applied only where a clear understanding of social type is presented (e.g. Egami 1982).

All of the models included in Figures 1.4-1.6 state, or assume, that Varna represents an increase in social complexity over preceding periods in the same region, whether linked to defined levels of complexity or not. Fewer give reasons for the proposed changes in social structure, however.

Chapman (1991) identifies three types of explanation for the particular circumstances of the Varna Cemetery. Of these, the majority of the explanations outlined so far are placed in the 'materialist' category. These models propose a shift from a matriarchal to

patriarchal social structure based on increased arable production and a shift to male controlled economic activities. Chapman criticizes this as being a simplistic description of gender relations (*ibid.*: 154) as well as for failing to provide reasons, or even evidence for, such social changes.

This model, while implied in many accounts, however, is rarely stated, or is combined with other elements. No reasons for the increases in arable production are suggested by most authors who imply only a 'natural', inevitable rise in social complexity (e.g. Raduncheva 1986; Avilova 1986a; 1986b; I. Ivanov *passim*). Todorova (e.g. 1978b) argues for a metal boom with Varna well-placed to control exchange routes (similar points are also made by I. Ivanov, e.g. 1989a). The development of a patriarchal social system is argued to be dependent on the ability of men to control the production and exchange of metal objects in addition to agricultural production. Todorova's model therefore resembles a 'prestige goods' model in that status is achieved through exchange of metal obtained itself in exchange for agricultural surpluses. Todorova is unable to explain why copper becomes important only at this period or why a major concentration of wealth only occurs at Varna.

Several authors, especially Lichardus (1982; 1984; 1988; 1991a) and Marazov (1991), link status with craft-specialists, of whom metal-smiths are the most important. Lichardus invokes a model in which over-production again allows full-time *craftsmen* to exchange copper for food. Rich Varna burials may therefore be those of craftsmen (e.g. Graves 1 and 4: 1984), or chiefs/priests who oversee production. In later accounts Lichardus (1988; 1991a) sees the shift to this type of social system as being so radical that the impetus for social change has to be introduced from supposedly more developed societies in the north Pontic region. The link between a horse-riding, pastoralist steppe elite (for which the evidence is very poor: Anthony 1986; Häusler 1991) and a metal-smiths class is not made explicit. Certainly, copper and gold artefacts

are less common in the steppes region at this period than in the Balkans, and no copper mines of this period are known in the region (Chernyh 1991).

The introduction of an outside element which 'explains' the social structure at Varna is common to a number of models, although Lichardus' studies are perhaps the fullest accounts. In almost all cases, the influence is from the north Pontic region, although, by an act of considerable chronological contortion, Weißhaar (1982) introduces metal and marble forms from the Aegean. Chronological errors are also made by Zanotti (1984-5; 1986-7) and Best (1984) in trying to locate the origin of the extended burial rite and other features of Varna burials in the Pontic steppes. The chronological shortfalls of these models are discussed in Chapter 2. The major parallel invoked is in the extended burial position, but other similarities are also suggested (see also Chapter 2).<sup>6</sup>

Marazov (1988) also associates metal-smiths with the religious structures of steppe groups. The burials therefore reflect a 'natural', existing ideology albeit from another region. Parallels are found between artefacts in the burials and 'Indo-European' deities. Several accounts depend upon, or involve, similar arguments to explain the overall social structure (including Gimbutas 1977a; 1977b, and also Raduncheva 1986; Nikolov 1991; I. Ivanov 1982b; 1983a; 1988 (etc.); Avilova 1984; Todorova 1992). All of these studies accept the basic idea of a fertility or mother goddess, whose existence and characteristics are supported by Indo-European religious iconography (described fully by Gimbutas, e.g. 1990). Regardless of the potential problems in proving that the Late Chalcolithic population of Bulgaria is Indo-European (Mallory 1989), it is problematic to extend back religious beliefs unchanged over several thousand years. In the example cited above, for example, it would certainly be difficult

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<sup>6</sup> Other criticisms (of Lichardus in particular) are outlined by Häusler (1991), while I have discussed antecedents for the extended burial rite in the eastern Balkans elsewhere (Price 1993).

to support the existence of a metal-smith deity (in Bulgaria or the steppes) before the Late Chalcolithic, and the only metal-smiths symbol 'found' is the 'hammer-sceptre' of Grave 36. It is certainly difficult to accept secure evidence for a 'Goddess of Life, Death and Regeneration' (Gimbutas 1977b), a 'Bird Goddess' (*ibid.*), or an hermaphroditic deity (Todorova 1992).

The above discussion illustrates the major flaws apparent in a number of the articles, and which stem from an uncritical *reflectionist* reading of burial goods.<sup>7</sup> Because the Varna grave goods (i.e. the rich graves and cenotaphs) 'reflect' social status, the whole social structure is 'read off' from the gold and copper artefacts. Individual artefacts are given specific meanings and social structure is the sum of these individual interpretations. Incongruities or contradictions are explained as religious imagery or imports from other regions, or are left unexplained.

To take a single example, Varna 36 is interpreted variously as: an important individual (leader of a trade expedition) who died elsewhere - *or* as a mythical individual (Demoule and Ivanov 1979); glorification of a deceased chief - *or* as part of an ancestor cult (I. Ivanov 1982b); a representation of a god connected with animal raising (I. Ivanov 1983a); a chief (the above plus Todorova 1978e; Lichardus 1982; 1984 - 'Fürstengrab'; Raduncheva 1986); a representation of a bird-goddess (Gimbutas 1977b); a false royal burial as part of a ritual of kingly substitution (Marazov 1991); a rich male individual (Best 1984); the treasure of a royal clan (Todorova 1992).

Although a number of authors have warned against a simple association of artefact and meaning (e.g. Todorova 1986a; Marazov 1988), justifications for interpretations made have relied on imported forms or later religious parallels. While recognizing this

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<sup>7</sup> I use 'reflectionist' here in the sense meant by Hodder (1982a) - to denote a functionalist form of explanation ('[where] cultural remains are seen as *reflecting*, in a straightforward way, what people *do*': Hodder 1982a: 4, original italics).

problem, Todorova (1992), for example, has argued that comparative analysis (in this case cluster analysis) is sufficient to overcome it and to accurately reveal social structure. However, while the analysis is used to produce measures of the degree of similarity between graves, the meanings of the burials are again expressed in terms of specific deities whose existence is not questioned.

Renfrew (1986) has also argued against uncritical reflectionist interpretations and for the rejection of 'psychological' explanations, while adopting a processual, systemic model for social change. Furthermore - and alone of all the articles considered so far - Renfrew has sought to provide reasons why gold may be considered to be valuable. Five reasons are given for accepting gold at Varna as valuable including its use on important parts of the body (face and genitals) and the use of sheet gold to make artefacts made of other materials seem as if made of gold. Gold and copper are given an important, active role in social organization. Thus:

'What we appear to be seeing ... is the very early use of metal in the area in question in contexts that at the same time are documenting the emergence of personal ranking, reflected in what might have been individually owned goods, buried with the deceased in the grave. Copper and gold clearly afford in each case a new vehicle for the expression of ranking, and thus in this sense a new channel of communication. Indeed, it may be suggested that they are not merely reflecting or documenting a degree of ranking in society that would have existed in any case without them. On the contrary, the ownership and display of these valuable objects may have constituted an essential part of the prominence of their owner and contributed significantly to his or her prestige. It may be permissible, then, to see these materials as playing a more active role, and rather than simply reflecting a social structure, as taking a significant role in its very formation.' (ibid.: 156).

Renfrew's account is primarily concerned with explaining the development of social complexity at Varna. Three elements combine through the action of a 'multiplier effect' to enhance social complexity - 'a developing system of production and exchange' the 'circulation of goods of prime value' and 'the emergence of prominent social ranking' (ibid.: 163).

Although this model relies upon internal factors to explain social changes there are problems in providing the original impetus for the multiplier effect. Either changes must occur in social ranking to provoke developments in the system of exchange and production, or vice versa, or an outside factor must be introduced. Similarly, gold is argued to have 'prime value', but the justification for this is found in its use at Varna to reflect status positions. This does not explain how gold came to have value originally. Either the value is intrinsic or 'inherent' (ibid.: 149), in which case, as Chapman (1991) points out, it is difficult to understand why large quantities of gold are only found at Varna, or gold was available at an earlier period but not exploited (Renfrew 1986: 153), and thus requiring some stimulus for gold to acquire such prestige value.

In his account of Varna, Renfrew also uses cross-cultural generalization to locate artefacts with 'prime symbolic value'. Thus, 'sceptres' are accorded prime symbolic value because of their location in the grave and their association with gold (1986: 148). It is argued that sceptres made of other material would be recognizable (ibid.: 153), but stone axes found in the same position in burials have lower 'value', unless, as in Grave 4, they have gold leaf decoration when a ceremonial function is 'obvious' (ibid.: 152). Despite arguing that meaning is culturally dependent, the meanings offered by Renfrew rely upon universalizing categories of value, status symbolism and social structure.

There are further potential difficulties apparent in the transition from a prestige goods model in which status is achieved, to a chiefdom system in which it is ascribed. Renfrew is wary of characterizing Varna as a chiefdom without more evidence but

accepts the existence of 'salient ranking' which is reflected in disparities in the number of grave goods, the quantity of high-status materials (e.g. gold), 'symbolic insignia' and unusual artefact types (ibid.: 149-50).

Chapman also acknowledges Hodder (1982a) as part of a critique of 'reflectionism' (also Chapman 1990). In the earlier of his two main articles about Bulgarian burial practices (1983) the discussion does not consider Varna but does discuss Devnya, Golyamo Delchevo and Vinitsa. Whilst adopting some of Hodder's criticisms of processual archaeology the article also uses processual methodology. Saxe's eighth hypothesis - developed and expanded by Goldstein - is used to suggest that formal disposal areas (cemeteries in this case) relate to the existence of corporate descent (lineage) groups (ibid.; Saxe 1970; Goldstein 1981). Within cemeteries, Chapman uses three indices to examine the symbolic use of grave goods. These (quantity, diversity and degree of differentiation by age and sex in non-pottery grave goods) resemble Renfrew's measures of salient ranking but the conclusions reached are different. Chapman argues for competition between lineage groups, and for symbolic differences between age and sex categories, rather than for specific status positions. While Varna (the Black Sea Coast) is simply described as 'advanced' (Chapman 1983: 33), the article is significant in suggesting that there may be 'inconsistencies between the messages expressed through different facets of grave good deposition' (ibid.: 33), and that there may be 'other social groups with different access to burial - i.e. to a more complex social order than is immediately apparent' (ibid.: 32).

Similar arguments have been further developed by Chapman (1991) with specific regard to Varna, but also considering the wider context of the site. In this article the idea of social competition is taken further, with burial practice (and Varna) interpreted as a 'social arena' in which corporate lineage groups compete for prestige and the position of 'paramount', through the symbolic manipulation of burial forms. The idea of agency, implied in the reference to power as 'power to' and not solely 'power over'

(*ibid.*: 152), is also introduced, and will be a significant element of the discussion in the next section of this chapter.

Chapman's model is not without potential difficulties. The existence and scale of social inequalities suggested for tell settlements has been criticized on theoretical and methodological grounds (Chapman 1990; Brown 1990), for example. Whether in any case social and symbolic structures, and strategies, can be assumed to be shared between inland tells and coastal cemeteries will be a recurrent theme in later chapters. The extent to which individuals possess knowledge about, and the ability to manipulate, social structures or their own position within them, is also a question that will be returned to below.

The above critique has outlined a number of problems with particular interpretations, notably those involving migrations or Indo-European mythology, but the major difficulty with most has been argued to be the direct association of the organization of burials with social positions, roles and statuses.<sup>8</sup> Other criticisms result from this weakness: a failure to adequately understand symbolic meanings; reduction of social organization to simplistic 'systems' or levels; lack of explanation for suggested increases in social complexity, and so on. The following section confronts these problems (and those relating to Chapman's model) by re-examining the overall nature of social structure, and by proposing a new framework for the interpretation of burial remains.

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<sup>8</sup> Other criticisms of particular aspects of some 'reflectionist' arguments may be noted - such as the link between grave goods and status. Several specific (e.g. Parker Pearson 1984) and general (e.g. Ucko 1969) ethnographic studies have rejected the link between status and grave goods, while Tainter (1978, cited in Chapman 1983) argues that grave goods indicate status in only 4 of 93 societies surveyed.

### 3. *SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND BURIAL PRACTICE*

There are three main elements to the following discussion: social structure; symbolism; and the nature of ritual. The arguments presented are not intended to be complete descriptions or explanations of these, however. Further points will necessarily be raised during later Chapters with regard to the precise data under consideration. The following discussion nonetheless serves to establish the major theoretical elements with which to consider the evidence.

#### A) *Social structure*

One criticism of 'processual' interpretations of social organization (and, by extension, of many of the models considered above) is that the reconstruction of 'roles', 'statuses', etc., and their articulation as 'systems', fails to understand how the individual acts in society. Among the components of such a critique the concepts of agency and power may be shown to be central. The understanding of these concepts in archaeology derives largely from the works of Bourdieu and Giddens. These models are also the basis for all of the following discussions. It is necessary, therefore, to present the models in basic outline and to consider some of the archaeological implications of their use in greater detail.

##### i) *structuration/habitus*

While there are differences in terminology and origins (Giddens in sociology, Bourdieu in anthropology), the two models are broadly similar. Reference is therefore made principally to the 'structuration' model of Giddens (1979; 1984), with additional comments relating to the concept of 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1977; 1990).

Structuration establishes a relationship between agency and social structure. The starting point for the theory is the idea that agents constantly reflexively monitor their behaviour. Reflexive monitoring depends on knowledge which may be unconscious, discursive (capable of being explicated) or practical (what agents believe but cannot necessarily express verbally). Agency is not reducible to intentions but is the capacity to act. Thus, agency requires power (to act), which itself is exercised via resources - 'structured properties of social systems, drawn upon and reproduced by knowledgeable agents in the course of interaction' (Giddens 1984: 15).

Because all human activity depends on agency social structure cannot be seen as a patterning of social relations external to action or as a code of rules (ibid.: 17). Rather, structure is composed of rules ('techniques or generalizable procedures applied in the enactment/reproduction of social practices', ibid.: 21) and resources which exist as memory (knowledgeability) and as instantiated in action. Institutions are a feature of social systems having 'depth' in time and space and constituted by:

- '1. structural principles : Principles of organization of social totalities;
2. structures : Rule-resource sets, involved in the institutional articulation of social systems;
3. structural properties : Institutionalized features of social systems, stretching across time and space.' (ibid.: 185).

As structures are produced and reproduced only through interaction (agency), this must involve integration, either face-to-face ('social integration'), or indirectly, as reciprocity separated by time and/or space ('system integration'). Through integration, 'actors draw upon the modalities of structuration in the reproduction of systems of interaction, by the same token reconstituting their structural properties' (ibid.: 28), and which has been represented by Giddens in the following diagram:

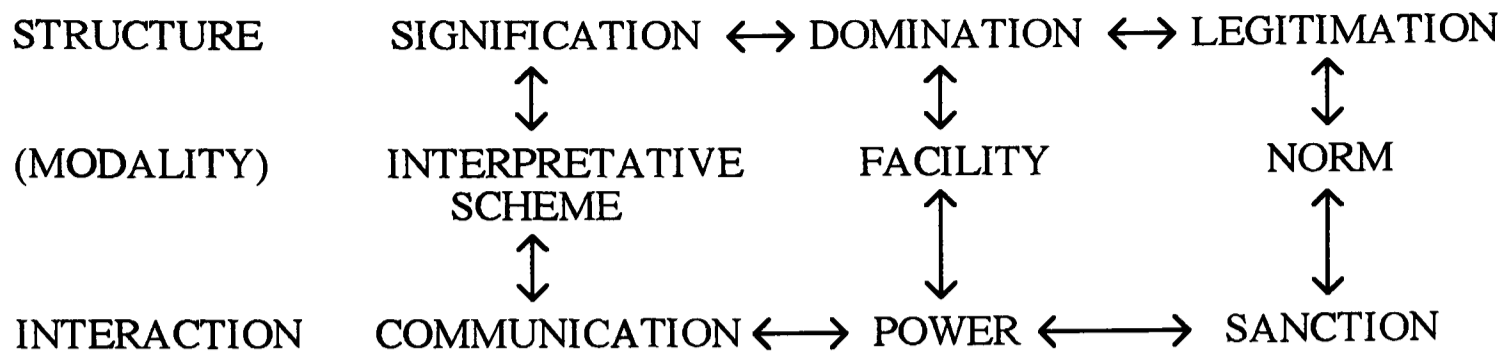


Figure 1.7 - Model of the duality of structure from Giddens (1984: 29).

The equivalent to the 'duality of structure' in Bourdieu's model is provided by 'habitus' - the principles which organize and generate practice (agency), and express knowledgeable without requiring intentionality (1977: 72).

## ii) *ideology*

Along with agency, ideology has been a major component of 'post-processual' archaeology. Ideology is necessarily a characteristic of agency, though it may be linked to, or realized through, social groups. Ideology is also apparent in structure as a form of domination 'which connects signification to the legitimation of sectional interests' (Giddens 1984: 33). The three elements of structure in Figure 1.7 are therefore only separable analytically, though each can be taken to characterize different institutional forms. Thus, signification leads to symbolic orders and legitimation to legal codes. Domination 'depends on the mobilization of two distinguishable types of resources. Allocative resources refer to capabilities - or, more accurately, to forms of transformative capacity - generating command over objects, goods or material phenomena. Authoritative resources refer to types of transformative capacity generating command over persons or actors' (ibid.: 33).

It is at the level of the institution that analysis has normally proceeded in archaeology. Three common ideological forms distinguished by Giddens (1979) have been widely adopted: the representation of sectional interests as universal; denial of contradictions;

and reification (see e.g. Miller and Tilley 1984). The other major contribution of ideology to archaeological debate has been the concept of multiple ideologies - ideologies relating to different groups within society which may be contradictory, and the ability of individuals to 'see through' dominant ideologies (ibid.; Miller 1989).

While ideology may serve to reify or obscure forms of domination, there is a danger in assuming the forms that domination will take. The term 'dominance' itself has been used by archaeologists typically to refer to political or economic positions which are given primacy in explanations of social organization. All variation is therefore seen in terms of attempts to maintain, resist or subvert dominant ideologies. This has particularly been the case with burial studies. This both marginalizes 'subordinate' groups, who are reduced to 'subversive' strategies and privileges certain social strategies in advance as being of particular importance. Domination in the sense used by Giddens refers to reproduced asymmetries of resource distribution. The degree to which different sections/groups in society can be assumed to have the same wants is itself a feature of the structural properties of the society.

This has been discussed in another context by Hodder (1992). In a consideration of gender representation, Hodder dismisses his own earlier arguments that women may possess an alternative, subversive ideology, which in the example in question was manifested through decorative motifs on pottery (Hodder 1982b). This, Hodder argues in the later article, was to assume a passive 'reality' behind the symbolism and to focus on gender relations as an aspect of the relations of production. 'Real' power is therefore an analytical construct - the dialectic of control as it relates to specific circumstances and resources.

A crucial element in interpretations will be whether shared roles (see below) may be taken as implying identical wants, therefore. The extent to which strategies are shared is central also to an understanding of change.

### iii) *social change*

Consideration of power and ideology has led to the conclusion that institutionalized relations of dominance are re/produced through the mobilization of resources and ideological schemes where ideologies may be multiple and circumstantial. The basic premise of the structuration model is that social structures, including institutions, only exist through the actions of strategically aware agents. The major question to be addressed is therefore the role of the individual in the reproduction, and change of these structures.

The concept of time-space used by Giddens is central to a discussion of change. As outlined above, it is clear that in the structuration model, agency refers to seriality of an individual's actions through time. As Giddens argues, 'all social life occurs in, and is constituted by, intersections of presence and absence in the "fading away" of time and the "shading off" of space. The physical properties of the body and the milieux in which it moves inevitably give social life a serial character, and limit the modes of access to "absent" others across space' (1984: 132).

The ideas of the 'regionalization' of time-space and the creation of 'locales', which provide the setting for, and structure, particular forms of interaction, have been widely adopted in archaeology. Barrett has applied a similar understanding of time-space to archaeology through the term 'field of discourse' (1988) where this is a region of time-space in which specific modes of resource mobilization are accomplished. The term 'social arena' as used by Chapman (1991) also refers to a temporal and spatial setting for a particular social discourse, especially 'arenas of social power', where dominant structures are located and which may be the setting for competition (ibid.; 1994).

Time-space thus provides the settings for, and describes the seriality of, interaction. Bourdieu has exemplified this through a discussion of gift exchange. Bourdieu argues that at the base of all gift-giving is the sense of honour (1990: 110). This means the 'sense of limits' or 'sense of reality' (1977: 164) which forms the knowledgeability of agents, the conditions of existence which are unconsciously accepted because they are naturalized through inculcation. Strategy exists at the level of a sequence of events in which choices may be made 'under heavy pressure and often involving considerable stakes' (1990: 101). However, strategy is argued to represent a 'false anticipation of the future' (ibid.: 62). This is due to the nature of habitus, described thus:-

'[habitus] is the source of these strings of "moves" which are objectively organized as strategies without being the product of a genuine strategic intention - which would presuppose at least that they be apprehended as one among other possible strategies. If each stage in the sequence of ordered and oriented actions that constitute objective strategies can appear to be determined by anticipation of the future, and in particular, of its own consequences (which is what justifies the use of the concept of strategy), it is because the practices that are generated by the habitus and are governed by the past conditions of production of their generative principle are adapted in advance to the objective conditions whenever the conditions in which the habitus functions have remained identical, or similar, to the conditions in which it was constituted.' (ibid.: 62).

Change occurs because agents do not act rationally, in the sense that they do not possess complete knowledge in any circumstance, and do not make decisions based on identical experiences. The competence of individual actors may also vary. Thus, change is incidental to all action. It is a result of the unintended consequences of action but also alters the conditions for subsequent actions. Time is also important in other respects beyond the seriality of interaction. The strategic element of practice (in time) may be taken as 'tempo'. Tempo is therefore central to an understanding of attempts by an

individual or group to consciously alter their social conditions within regionalized 'fields of discourse'.

This returns to the question of ideology. I have already argued that individuals and groups may be able to penetrate, and to possess alternative, ideologies. This is what Bourdieu means by 'orthodoxy' and 'heterodoxy', where heterodoxy is 'made possible by the existence of competing possibles' (1977). Giddens has considered the same problem in terms of competition and conflict. Conflict is defined as struggle between groups and individuals expressed as physical action. Contradiction is a broader term, including conflict, which refers to circumstances where structural properties contravene one another. Contradictions may arise again out of the unintended (perverse) consequences of action, including through competing interests expressed as different patterns of behaviour, but within the possibilities defined by the 'real' world (1984: 198-9).

Two different scales, or forms, of change may be distinguished therefore. On one hand, change is a by-product of the continual reflexive monitoring of behaviour and reproduction of largely unconsciously accepted social principles. On the other hand, change may result from contradictions caused by different strategies pursued by groups or individuals. Both are reflected in recent accounts of burial practice: the former in principally institutional accounts; the latter in models stressing individual or sectional competition.

The former perspective is apparent in the study by Mizoguchi (1992) of an English linear barrow cemetery. Mizoguchi criticizes the synchronic perspective of most burial studies and concentrates on the diachronic development of the cemetery complex. Memory is suggested to be a central feature intentionally mobilized in burial practice to reproduce idealized social structures. Social change in this model is implicitly gradual - rejecting a focus on 'moments' of change (ibid.: 47) - and occurs largely through the

unintended consequences of action which are nevertheless 'rationalised in such a way that actors carried on in much the same way as usual' (ibid.: 46).

Thomas, in reviewing the development of burial forms in Neolithic Britain, rejects the existence of long-term power strategies and 'strategies without strategists' (1991a: 138) and argues that individuals' strategies are governed by 'hegemony' (rather than ideology, as meant by Shanks and Tilley (1982), for example). The definition of hegemony adopted emphasizes the reproduction of society and the maintenance of dominant relations (Thomas 1991a: 139). Thomas nonetheless still has to contend with alternative strategies (megalithic and Beaker) which overlap in time and space (ibid.: 107) and which are argued to reproduce different patterns of relationships between individuals, groups and burial forms. For example, for Beakers to 'misrepresent' the previous pattern implies a recognition of the pattern and the ability to recognize and pursue an alternative strategy.

In contrast to these arguments are models which usually emphasize competitive deposition of grave goods. Cannon (1989) has described such a model, though not in terms of structuration. In this model it is argued that the main 'function' of burial is social competition and display. A cycle of increasing elaboration of certain items, followed by their decline in importance or prohibition, is developed. The model does not include a concept of agency and therefore provides no strategic reasons for such a cycle, nor its origin. In this sense the model resembles a prestige goods system extended to include its decline. Both competition and the cycle of fashion are treated as inevitable, but, unlike the prestige goods model, the link with domination (achieved status) is not inevitable. The absence of agency within the model and the uncertain association with social structure makes the model appear rather a description of the principles of typology than a model of burial practice.

Chapman (1991) does include agency in his model of Varna as has already been seen. Again, a significant element of burial practice is argued to be social competition for the position of 'alliance paramount', based on short-term competition between lineages expressed largely through exchanges and mortuary deposition.

The two types of model are not incompatible. Different time-scales and different sequences of change (seen archaeologically) are apparent in each of the studies. To a large extent the form of the model depends on the extent to which the major concern is to reconstruct shifts in the status of individuals or groups as opposed to modelling changes in the structures which determine statuses in society as a whole. The relationship between long and short term strategies (in burial practices) will also be central to the discussion of ritual (below).

Structural change (in both types of model) may also involve what Giddens terms 'de-routinization' (1979) in addition to gradual, incremental change. Such change results when contradicting structural principles are brought into opposition, or through shifts in the resources employed by different social groups within society to support their aims, and is thus a more rapid and radical form of social change. De-routinization may also result from external factors, such as environmental change, or contacts with other societies. Such explanations for major social change are familiar in archaeology, and numerous examples have already been given in Section 2 of this chapter. Problems with such causes of change (particularly when environmental factors are postulated) are also well known. It can be noted additionally that the changes which are external to one society are internal to another. The nature of contacts between societies, and the definition of social totalities themselves, therefore need to be considered before this may be regarded as a simple, or unproblematic, cause of change.

There is also another potential element of change, which is conscious strategic intent. Bourdieu has stressed the inability of individuals to seek to modify the

unacknowledged conditions of action (in the passage quoted above), but also accepts the possibility of the 'outsider' who does not conform, by choosing to ignore some forms of negative sanctioning (1990). Giddens also refers to the 'opacity of action' as the extent to which agents are able to penetrate the contradictions of the social system (1984: 314-5). This in turn depends upon the form, articulation and dissemination of knowledge agents possess about the conditions of reproduction of the social system (ibid.: 91).

The multiplicity and permeability of ideologies also allows for the nature of institutionalized relations (of dominance) to be recognized in part or whole. This in turn may allow for circumstances where 'radically opposed utterances' (Asad 1979) are not precluded. These circumstances relate in part to the regionalization of practices. In some regionalized practices there may be several dimensions to power (several structures of dominance), and therefore a potential for strategies which alter some of the conditions of action. The degree to which roles and structural boundaries are fixed within a field of discourse, and the relationship (through structural properties, etc.) with other fields of discourse, therefore influences the extent and form of knowledge possessed by individuals about the conditions of action.

The limited and circumstantial character of this form of change is similar to Lévi-Strauss's (1972) concept of *bricolage* (characterized by Barrett (1994: 24) as 'the reworking of the available resources by those with a competent and inventive understanding of particular orders of spatial practice'). *Bricolage* is most commonly applied to the manipulation and transformation of material culture and symbolism, but provides a link between these and the alteration of forms of interaction, and therefore social structures.

The concept of 'innovation' also explores this situation. As described by Van der Leeuw and Torrence (1989), innovation involves 'risk' which is determined by the

individual with regard to her/his aims and past experiences (context) and which has only partially perceived results. Innovation is therefore clearly associated with conscious intent though within a framework which is broadly compatible with structuration or habitus. The model also has been most commonly applied to artefactual change, which has no necessary or consistent relation to social change, even in the case of supposedly major innovations (see e.g. Sørensen & Thomas 1989). Nonetheless, Hodder's suggestion that ideologies are partially grounded in physical properties, discussed in Section 3B, further indicates that changes in artefacts may be significant in altering social structures.

The four sources of change outlined here are merely variations of the interplay of structure and agency in practice, therefore. Only external change is (by definition) not integral to the normal processes of social interaction. However, the strongly regionalized character of many practices may suggest that the boundary between 'internal' and 'external' causes of change is not clear or absolute. Similarly, the regionalization of change also suggests that the varying tempo of interactions in different practices will result in different, but interrelated, trajectories of change (within or between fields of discourse).

#### iv) *roles*

Social roles have been shown to be a basic concept in many of the discussions of burial evidence outlined above. Roles, in the sense of age, sex and status, or as occupations, are widely used as the fundamental blocks which burial forms represent. I have rejected this understanding of 'roles' as reflectionist. Within the theory of structuration Giddens has replaced the concept of fixed roles with that of 'social positions' which involve 'specification of a definite "identity" within a network of social relations, that identity, however, being a "category" to which a particular range of normative sanctions is relevant' (1984: 83). 'Role' is argued by Giddens to be a relevant term only to apply to

situations where certain norms of behaviour are strongly sanctioned, usually associated with specific locales. Thus, roles form the regionalized structures in which individuals act both unconsciously (producing incremental, incidental change) and consciously.

One of the most influential debates in archaeology in recent years has concerned gender and this has been closely bound with the idea of social roles. Sørensen (1992) has recently reviewed some of the elements of this debate and set out a number of steps which may be taken towards a clearer understanding of gender relations. A major component of the debate has been to reject the idea of gender roles as natural or universal and their association with evolutionary schemes based on changes in the forces of production (apparent in the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy).

A further separation from the idea of prescriptive universal gender roles results from recent suggestions that sex may also be socially constructed: that is, that biological aspects associated with a particular sex may vary through an individual's lifetime, and between individuals, and that this may be expressed culturally (Sørensen 1992; Nordbladh and Yates 1990). Apart from the clear implications this has for the study of burial remains, this proposal denies gender an automatic 'structure' based on the two biological sexes. It may also suggest a further principle structuring roles alongside gender (and other factors not being considered here). Nonetheless, gender and sex categories are important social divisions in most or all societies. Sexual divisions may serve as 'natural' bases for symbolic and cognitive structures (including gender) in the sense meant by Hodder (1992: discussed in Section 3B).

Within the debate on gender, the idea that gender must be situated within particular social contexts brings the notion of gender roles closer to the definition of roles offered by Giddens. This is a simplification, however. Gender involves institutionalized relations and forms of signification, legitimation and domination which cross-cut many fields of discourse. Gender classifications may be considered as structural properties in

this sense. As such, gender involves institutionalized relationships which are largely unconscious and which structure both the agents knowledgeability and therefore perceptions with regard to agency, and the resources which may be mobilized. Gender is thus a constraint on behaviour, but also an enablement which provides for different collective and individual strategies (and therefore ideologies). In this way, gender may represent a source of contradiction through different strategies for the allocation of material and non-material resources.

A similar point has been made by Sørensen. Individuals (engendered agents) are argued to be influenced by both self-identity and socially recognized identity (1992: 33) in the process of social reproduction. The link between gender and ideology and also 'real' power, made by Hodder (1992) has already been commented upon, and is expressed by Sørensen in terms of negotiation and gender tension.

Whilst the discussion has so far concentrated on gender, similar arguments could be made for other aspects of social structure, particularly kinship. In his discussion of kinship, Bourdieu (1990) describes kinship as a category of organization both of people and knowledge. Kinship is taken as an official, 'objective', truth, but within which different readings may be made for individual strategic purposes, because of the ambiguity of the structure. Roles are therefore 'official' uses of gender (or kinship, etc.) classifications in particular fields of discourse. As such, they sanction particular aspects of these wider social categories within specified locales. The extent to which roles are wholly proscriptive or prescriptive is variable, however.

Roles may also be specific to one, or a small number of practices (such as the 'role' of the corpse in burial rituals) which therefore intersect with a number of structural properties of social systems, and therefore provide another potential source of contradictions. The previous discussions of power, ideology and change are therefore inseparable from the consideration of social structures in particular areas of practice. As

the discussion of ritual will show, roles have been suggested to be strongly defined in this field of discourse, but interpretation, performance and strategy are determined by the individual participant. In this way, roles may be likened to Lewis's 'type' whereas their instantiation may be seen as 'token' (Lewis 1980: see also Section 3C of this chapter).

v) *social totalities*

The nature of societies (and archaeological 'cultures') is of some importance to this study because of the suggested division into coastal and inland cultures (Gumelnitsa and Varna) within north-east Bulgaria in the Late Chalcolithic. Cultures have been defined frequently in archaeological terms as recurrent assemblages linked temporally and spatially. This view is still apparent in much of the literature regarding the Bulgarian Chalcolithic and is also adopted for the purposes of chronological discussion in Chapter 2.

There has been a recognition nonetheless of the permeability of cultural boundaries in many archaeological accounts and of the 'blending' of cultures across time and space (e.g. DeAtley and Findlow 1984). Emphasis is typically placed on the use of material culture to define their separate identity (*ibid.*: 2). Similar arguments have also been used in the wider debate about 'style'. In this debate there has been considerable speculation about whether style conveys information about group membership, either deliberately or unconsciously (Sackett 1985; 1990; Wiessner 1985; 1990). While these arguments have closer affinities with the symbolism/meaning discussion to follow, comments by Hodder (1990b) are relevant here. Hodder takes style more widely as 'the referral of an individual event to a general way of doing' (*ibid.*: 45). Style therefore involves strategies, and is a component in the creation of meanings, of which one element may be associated with defining boundaries.

This view has closer links to what may be regarded as an anthropological understanding of cultural boundaries which sees them as dependent on behaviour rather than material culture. Barth (1969) for example defines groups by a majority of 'in-group' behaviour. A similar definition is offered by Hodder (1982b), where boundaries are linked to economic stress and competition, but are maintained ultimately by strategies which are dependent on 'within-group' organization.

Giddens does not discuss the nature of societal boundaries in great detail. The denial of an absolute boundary between social totalities is important, however. Social totalities are described as existing at the intersection of social systems which are therefore both within and between societies. Clusters of institutions specify social wholes within the social systems. Societies may be associated with particular locales, legitimated by norms and rules. Additionally, social totalities may involve a common identity among its members, without requiring a value consensus (Giddens 1984: 164-5).

The introduction of agency and social structure brings the question of the form of social boundaries into line with the general theoretical position adopted to date. The concept of inter-societal systems being composed of intersecting systems allows boundaries to be conceived in terms of structural properties and therefore modes of legitimation (etc.). As with the characterization of gender/kinship roles, it is also possible to suggest that group membership will be mobilized on particular occasions for certain purposes, and will be the medium for strategic conduct, which may involve material culture 'styles', or express competition, but cannot be reduced to these alone.

The origins of the structuration model in sociology rather than archaeology nevertheless limits the usefulness of the model for the consideration of archaeological evidence in other ways than the limited discussion of social boundaries. Thus, for example, the model has been criticized for having a limited understanding of long-term change (for example in the origins of state societies: Giddens 1984: 246-56: also see Shennan

1989). The importance of material culture in social interaction - fundamental to archaeology - is also not a specific concern of the structuration model. The following sub-section is therefore concerned to examine the relationship between social structure, agency and symbolic *meaning*.

### B) *Symbolism, meaning and material culture*

The preceding debate has demonstrated that social structure must be seen in terms of a recursive relationship between knowledgeable agents and institutionalized structures. From this it is apparent that symbols do not exist independently of social action, nor do they reflect social structure, but are implicated in its production and reproduction. For Giddens, therefore, 'signs' (this debate does not follow his distinction of sign from symbol) are involved in forms of coding which link communication with signification (1984: 32). Material culture - the basic component of archaeological analysis - cannot be divorced from the process of structuration, therefore. The material world is both a resource to be employed in action and the (structuring) result of previous action. As a component of social interaction, and therefore re/production, material culture has meaning. Most of the subsequent discussion focuses on the symbolic component of material culture.

The same arguments have been familiar in archaeology for over a decade. For example, in 1982, Hodder argued that material items come to have symbolic meanings in particular contexts because they are used in social action (1982a). It is thus unnecessary for the purposes of this discussion to present in detail the history of development of these ideas in structuralism, post-structuralism, etc. (though see e.g. Hodder 1986; 1992; Shanks and Tilley 1987a). An understanding of the nature of symbolism, however, clearly does not imply an understanding of the meaning of symbols in any particular context. In order to determine how the conception of social structure outlined above may be interpreted within a model of social organization (i.e. within a specified

cultural context), it is necessary to consider how, and indeed whether, the meanings of material culture can be understood. This discussion will also be required to consider the relationship between the past and the present and how this affects interpretation.

There is by no means universal agreement that symbolism is an important, or even possible, component of archaeological investigation. Binford, for example, has criticized the 'empathetic' approach of Hodder and others, arguing that '[archaeologists] ... do not have to study mental phenomena. In fact we study material phenomena' (1982a). In this view the 'meaning' of material culture is largely confined to its function. It is clear that this view is incompatible with the model of social structure developed here.

A number of archaeologists within the processual tradition have sought to include symbolism and meaning in their accounts. Thus, Renfrew (1985), for example has proposed a model for recognizing religious artefacts and locations. A series of expectations as to the forms that material expression of religious behaviour may take are proposed, suggesting that some symbolism may be interpreted by cross-cultural generalization. In application, however, the model depends upon assumptions about the resemblance of archaeological examples to the chosen criteria, and the use of further contextual evidence. Similar assumptions have already been described for Renfrew's model of the Varna cemetery (1986).

Criticism of the objectivist stance taken by processual models has come from many sources, including structurationists, but also feminists, critical Marxists, post-structuralists, etc. (see Tilley 1991). Many criticize the supposed neutrality of the 'scientific' approach and argue that the past, as archaeological observations, exists only in the present and that interpretation of the past must recognize the subjectivity of the archaeologist. The idea of agency makes this argument a necessary one: if meaning is

determined according to agency in the past, then the same must also be the case in the present.

Much of this criticism has been politically orientated, directed at, for example, androcentrism (e.g. Conkey and Spector 1984; Gero and Conkey 1991), or academic elitism (Shanks and Tilley 1987a; 1987b). A feature of both of these types of critique at times has been a tendency to concentrate on the production of archaeological discourse in the present and to see the past solely as a means to a conscious political goal. Particular interpretations of the past may thus be taken to be more desirable in some cases because they fulfill acceptable political criteria in the present (Shanks 1990). On the other hand, an appeal to pluralism may deny committed perspectives (e.g. feminism) any particular value (Wylie 1991). Whilst a political component to all archaeological analysis cannot be denied, a dominant interest in current political concerns ignores the specificity and variety of material culture patterning, and reflects an ultimate pessimism that past meanings can be interpreted.

Post-structuralism, though not an unified movement (Bapty and Yates 1990) shares a commitment to a plurality of interpretations of the past in the present. Yates (1990) has argued that there can be no 'original' meaning in the past, only the text, comprising 'difference' (after Derrida) in the present. This form of approach has led principally to debates on writing archaeology, and the nature of archaeological experience (Shanks 1992).

Most archaeologists have adopted a position (explicitly or otherwise) that the patterning of past material culture does shape interpretations - that meaning may be attributed to material culture remains in particular 'contexts'.<sup>9</sup> I have already suggested that this is

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<sup>9</sup> The use and definition of 'text' and 'context' in archaeology has been an area of singular debate (Hodder 1987; 1989; Tilley 1994, etc.). Rather than repeat the arguments in detail, I use the term 'context' loosely as 'the totality of the relevant environment' (Hodder 1992: 15) of an object. 'Code' is used to describe the patterning

necessary to understand the relationship between agency and material culture (through the regionalization of practices).

The use (after Saussure) of *langue* to describe the structure of symbolism, including material culture, and *parole* to describe the actual use in practice, has also been adopted by some archaeologists (see e.g. Shanks and Tilley 1987a). *Langue* nonetheless needs to be understood within a particular context in order for particular meanings (of *parole*) to be interpreted.

Tilley (1991) takes a similar view. The arbitrary meaning of signs is argued to become naturalized through tradition, and therefore becomes (contextually) non-arbitrary. Structured chains of meaning develop through time, which are either paradigmatic (consisting of 'relations of affinity') or syntagmatic (the practical ordering of paradigmatic orders). Tilley gives an example of burial goods in which 'the paradigmatic series would be made up of variations of the elements (types of pots, axes, beads, etc.). The syntagmatic chain would consist of sequences of these at the level of the grave' (ibid.: 22-3). Combinational rules of associations - a grammar - is thus suggested to be determinable (and changes are argued to be through *bricolage*).

Whereas Tilley begins from a consideration of symbolism, via Ricoeur, Derrida (etc.), Barrett (1988) concentrates rather on social structure and particularly agency. For Barrett, material culture may also be seen through a textual metaphor, as a 'code' or 'medium of discourse', by which social relations are re/negotiated. Barrett argues against the ability of the archaeologist to recognize the subjective component of the use of material culture but that the structured/structuring expression of the 'code' may be recognized in particular fields of discourse. This leads to a specific rejection of a

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of material culture and meanings within a context. The relationship between structures (of society, symbolism and ritual) and their enactment in practice is the subject of Chapter 3 of this study.

'representational' record of the past. The aim of archaeological investigation is therefore not the reconstructions of meaning(s), 'but to understand how it was once possible to talk in certain ways with the expectation of being understood. Such a question draws our attention away from the code used in 'saying' towards the wider issue of the pre-expectations which informed both the intentions of the speaker and the interpretive strategies of the listener.' (1991: 6).

Barrett concentrates on how it was possible to act, rather than on how individuals did act (Hodder 1992). However, without access to the meanings of symbols it is difficult to understand how power relationships were negotiated and maintained, because the material symbols manipulated by groups and individuals cannot be distinguished. Hodder has noted that Barrett is unable to avoid statements regarding the 'perceptions' of individuals in the past (ibid.: 17).

Hodder has developed an alternative view which argues more positively for the ability of archaeologists to decipher past meanings of material culture. He suggests that the material world partially defines context. The meaning of material culture is thus limited by its function and physical constraints ('materiality') - 'the meanings of objects, while imposed by convention, appear based on necessity. The non-arbitrary component of material culture meanings naturalises the ideological message' (ibid.: 207).

It is difficult to see this argument as more than the observation that function and meanings are likely to be linked and as a call for 'thick' description. Hodder himself acknowledges that the argument is incomplete - that there is a gap between practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge which is not understood.

Nonetheless Hodder also argues that *ideologies* may be grounded in technological and functional constraints while being ultimately an abstraction. In this way ideologies may become less arbitrary and also therefore more easily penetrated. Authority is seen as

largely maintained through control of physical practices and the means by which these are learned. The importance of the control of space (for example) and individuals movements within it has been stressed by several archaeologists, recently for example by Bradley (1993), with regard to monuments and ritual.

Hodder's arguments can be related to the ideas of Giddens presented earlier in the chapter. Thus it may be shown that the use of symbolism is contained within the interpretative schemes between symbolic codes, equivalent to the 'dominant' symbols suggested by Bloch (1991) to represent 'axiomatic' social values (e.g. gender divisions), and communication (i.e. agency, or performance). The symbolic codes are the concern of Tilley, and the relationship of the codes to domination and legitimation that of Barrett. Interpretative schemes depend upon agents knowledge of how to proceed which will be drawn principally from practical knowledge. This is the relationship explored by Hodder in his discussion of '*chaines operatoires*' (1992). How far this in turn informs social structure is the essence of the consideration of ideology.

Hodder has earlier (1986) suggested the relevance of the physical constraints of the body in shaping symbolic structures, based in part on the work of Bourdieu (1977), which shows how cultural dispositions may be inculcated through the use of simple learned rules of bodily movement. Connerton (1989) has also stressed how bodily movements may serve at the level of the social group as a form of collective memory.

Gender presents another area where natural and arbitrary meaning may be expected to be linked, but also indicates the difficulties in assuming or interpreting the nature of the links. Difficulties in (for example) associating social structures with biological sex have already been established.

Other examples relating natural and arbitrary meanings may be suggested (e.g. kinship, consumption of food, etc.). Such arguments are ultimately dependent on subjective judgement. Nonetheless, the arguments suggest that some universalizing assumptions as to the overall structures of meanings in some practices may be justified. The link between symbolism and natural conditions of existence can be further developed by a consideration of ritual.

### *C) Ritual and burial practice*

In separating ritual from other forms of practice in this section, I have implied that it may be regarded as significantly different from other areas of behaviour. To some extent this represents a traditional view of ritual, linked closely to religion and symbolism and placed often towards the more inaccessible end of a 'ladder of inference' (Hawkes 1954; Merrifield 1987). In fact the discussion here will focus largely on themes which have been developed in the preceding debate - including the ability or otherwise of archaeologists to reconstruct the meaning of symbols, and the extent to which an individual can influence and alter structural principles. Whilst being largely concerned here with placing ritual within the wider context of social organization (social structure plus social meanings), the debate will also focus on a specific concern of this thesis, namely burial.

Definitions of ritual have been numerous and varied in both archaeology and anthropology. Most start from the position that ritual involves formalized and repetitive patterns of behaviour. In a number of archaeological studies authors have attempted to define patterns of material evidence which represent ritual. In such studies, ritual is often equated with religion and defined by the presence of 'cult' objects <sup>10</sup> (see

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<sup>10</sup> 'cult' is used (here and generally in the studies cited in Section 2 of this Chapter) as essentially synonymous with 'religion', although, as Sherratt (pers. comm.) has observed, 'cult' is used more commonly to mean a minority ideology. I do not

Renfrew 1985, which has already been discussed), or by indicators of ritual activity gathered from anthropological studies (Levy 1982). Richards and Thomas (1984) suggest that ritual is characterized by repeated, structured patterns of deposition, the use of 'symbolic' material culture and/or decoration, etc.. Besides criticizing such 'checklist' approaches, Hill (1993) has argued that all disposal activities may be structured, as they follow routinized practices of maintenance, but that not all may be considered to be ritual.

A similar point has been made by Lewis (1980) in arguing that ritual cannot easily be distinguished from 'craft' or 'technique'. Lewis takes a definition of ritual to include a number of features, one of which is formalized, repetitive behaviour, which is also binding on certain individuals at a certain time. Ritual has a real 'function' in that it serves to achieve a legitimate social task and/or transformation. It is further argued to have an expressive or performative aspect. That is, the action of ritual is explicit and (necessarily) public to some extent, but the meaning of ritual (and the reasons for its performance) may not be. Ritual has rules ('type'), but performance ('token') has properties in excess of type in the interpretation by both performer and viewer (ibid.: 22). Nonetheless, the formal quality of ritual, its temporal and spatial setting (context) and 'alerting' aspect themselves limit the freedom of expression and interpretation.

This characterization of ritual allows access to the links between ritual and meaning and social structure. The formal, routinized practice of ritual requires there to be a link with categories of social classification and may therefore reinforce or reproduce institutionalized structures (of authority and power). The expressive component of ritual, however, allows for the meaning to be ambiguous. Ritual both directs activity and provides 'some "imaginative, prospective and creative understanding" (Tambiah

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distinguish between the terms in this thesis as no attempt is made to reconstruct religious beliefs as such.

1968: 200) of the situation, the technological operations and social activities involved' (ibid.: 36).

In a recent study, Hill (1993) has argued that ritual must be seen as a particular form of practice, including both the routinized character of all behaviour and an affective mobilization of resources. Ritual is separated from routine partly by its infrequency (and regionalization), but only at the level of activity, not of meaning, where ritual behaviour is suggested to be an explicit reproduction and routine behaviour an implicit reproduction of structure (ibid.: 190). Nonetheless, the explicitness of ritual itself is suggested to make it more readily accessible to manipulation and change than routine practices. In this way the practical effects of ritual are *reproductive*.

The idea of ritual as a form of practice has also been developed by Barrett (1991). Ritual is argued to be a field of discourse separable from other forms of practice by its reference to meanings which have an apparent origin outside the world of everyday experiences. The symbols employed in rituals exist in a metaphorical relationship with symbols used in other areas of practice (e.g. politics and economics) and thus have effects in these other fields of discourse. The tendency for ritual to express axiomatic social values and thus involve 'dominant' symbols provides a common framework which informs the interpretations of the participants. Individuals' interpretations of ritual symbolism are also shaped by their expectations (ibid.: 5), so that ritual is not simply a passive reflection of dominant social structures or ideologies (contra e.g. Richards and Thomas 1984; Shanks and Tilley 1982).

Resolution of this last point is central to an understanding of the interplay between agency and structure in particular ritual contexts. The significance given to individual manipulation of ritual meanings has varied considerably in recent anthropological studies. So, for example, Harrison (1992) has suggested that roles in rituals may be seen (in some cases) as 'intellectual property' and serve to make public the shifting

disposition of key tokens of strategic political value. Hill (1993: 205) also quotes Kelly and Kaplan (1990) who emphasize the competitive component of ritual and its importance in the *deconstruction* of relations of authority.

In contrast, Connerton (1989) uses the example of commemorative ceremonies to consider the importance of ritual in the preservation of social structures, as a form of social memory allowing the transmission of culture beyond the range and life-span of any individual. Bloch (1986; 1992) has made a similar point about the longevity of ritual forms and argued that they must be studied in their historical context. However, from the example given by Bloch (1986), this continuity is one of (in Lewis's terms) type but not token. The precise form of the ritual and its political and strategic context, and therefore 'meaning', vary considerably throughout the period considered.

The contrast between the long-and short term is similar to the arguments presented earlier for the causes and processes of change, and may similarly be related to different ideologies and strategies. In this context the concept of 'rebounding violence' proposed by Bloch is of particular interest (1986; 1992) because it suggests that subordinate groups may choose to participate in rituals in which their subordination is re-emphasized. Bloch takes many rituals, especially 'rites of passage', to involve a three stage structure (after Van Gennep 1960) and argues that the third stage is not simply a re-incorporation into society but the attainment of a more 'transcendental' state. Individuals, including those in subordinate positions, accept rituals because by participating they also move closer to the ultimate transcendental state which values 'descent' as the true social unit. 'Descent makes the action of creating valueless. Any change ... is resented as loss. What human beings should do is avoid all action, since this implies the dispersal of descent' (1986: 169).

This view can be criticized for the limited scope that it gives to 'individuals' expectations', and in apparently permitting elites to manipulate rituals but making less

powerful groups only recipients of them. Barrett (1991) has observed that rituals may undermine the position of superiors by testing their competence in the performance.

The argument emphasizes the importance of rites of passage in redefining the social roles of individuals (within the sense meant by Giddens, discussed earlier in the chapter - i.e. dispositions and statuses in individual contexts). Rites of passage do not solely or necessarily mark a transition to a more powerful social status but specify the adoption of a new (series of) role(s) and therefore inform dispositions and strategies. Rites of passage also convey access to authoritative and allocative resources outside the immediate context of the ritual and therefore strategies within society as a whole. This applies in terms of 'performance' and the distribution of resources equally to the individual focus of the ritual and to other participants (and other members of the society not present).

Considering funerary rituals as a form of practice also both provides an understanding of the way in which burial is involved in the production and reproduction of society and denies burial a privileged position as a reflection of social structure. The interpretation of the 'meaning' of symbolism used in burials must also therefore be related to ideologies and strategies in other fields of discourse. Attempts to generate statements about universal 'meanings' of burial practices tend to be over-generalized or difficult to sustain (Huntingdon and Metcalf 1979).

Nonetheless, ritual, and burial ritual in particular, may be significant in the creation and replication of dominant symbols which themselves inform systems of meaning in other fields of discourse. This is both because death is a powerful metaphoric resource and because rituals represent 'axiomatic social values' (Bloch 1992) but at the same time may be the locus for competition and conflict. The meaning(s) of burial rituals - that is, symbols used in ideologies and strategies employed in mortuary practice - can only be studied contextually. There have been a few attempts to generalize about the symbolic

associations of burial rituals, however, which may, in the sense meant by Hodder, (1992) provide a 'real' or 'natural' basis from which systems of symbolism are metaphorically developed.

Bloch has applied the concept of 'rebounding violence' specifically to burial studies (Bloch 1982), arguing that the primary role of burial is the symbolic overcoming of the individual and the re-affirmation of an 'eternal' order. Consequently, burial symbolism is suggested to be commonly, or universally, linked to symbolism of regeneration. This provides a natural basis for symbolic structures but the symbolism which is developed from it is still ultimately arbitrarily constructed. Neither does a link to ideas of regeneration preclude other symbolic associations, as the above discussion has shown.

Nevertheless, the three stages of most rituals which Bloch describes (separation, liminal phase, re-incorporation) themselves may determine the structuring of symbols which are then related to strategies and ideologies (1992). This may be difficult to apply to archaeology, however, as archaeological evidence may only represent the final (or a single) phase of the ritual (addressed in depth in Chapter 3). The stages also re-state the importance of time (*tempo*) in ritual, both in the specification of the locale in which the ritual occurs and in the performance of the ritual itself.

Within archaeology, generalizing comments have been similarly related to the universality of death, and the physicality of the body. Death, via the treatment of the dead, also provides the archaeologist with a defined, recognizable form of (ritual) behaviour.

A number of studies have emphasized the importance of the body itself in structuring symbolism in burial rituals (e.g. Shanks and Tilley 1982; Thomas 1991b). The former of these examples adopts a structuralist approach and may be criticized for the imposition of structures without detailed consideration of context. The deceased

individual is nonetheless a common (indeed almost defining) feature of burial practices, though funerary ritual may involve treatment of all or part of the individual, or may not involve the body at all (as potentially in the case of cenotaphs). Mortuary practices which do not leave archaeological traces may be extremely widespread and varied (Chapman 1994). However, the importance of bodily dispositions as components of social memory (Connerton 1989) is certainly of relevance to the institutionalization of mortuary practice.

It has been widely observed that the dead do not bury themselves and that mortuary practice will represent strategies pursued by and directed towards the living. This is a re-assertion of the element of practice in this as in all behaviour, but suggests the fundamental axes along which that practice will occur. The relationship between the buriers and the physical and social individual to be buried distinguishes mortuary from other rituals. In this relationship the body may be both prime symbol (as an object) and object of other symbolism (relating to the individual). Further relationships exist between the buriers and other members of society (and possibly members of other societies). These relationships will involve strategic and ideological manipulation. A further axis may involve the relationship between the living and the dead.

The interrelationships of the participants in funerary rituals conform to the definition of their roles. The locations of burials (literally) embody particular locales, defined temporally and spatially (and often physically). Likewise, the participants are typically defined in terms of specific relations to the deceased and therefore required to conform to prescribed modes of behaviour. Practice, as it relates to burial rituals, is therefore both specific (within a cultural context, and for any individual) and related to the wider arguments that have been developed throughout Section 3 of this chapter.

#### 4. *DISCUSSION*

It is not intended here to summarize the results of this chapter, which is itself a summary and critical evaluation of two large (sometimes coincident) bodies of literature, relating to the specific Bulgarian burial evidence to be considered, and to the interpretation of social organization itself. However, Sections 2 and 3 have outlined and evaluated a number of central themes - and problems - that will run through the interpretative discussions in the remainder of this thesis. The orchestration of these themes - the relationship between institutions and individual practice, the ability of individuals and groups to manipulate practices and symbols in the pursuit of strategies/ideologies (and the ability of archaeology to interpret this), the nature and sources of change, etc. - in the following chapters is described in Figure 1.8.

Figure 1.8 is *not* a model of social organization. It is a description of how key elements drawn from the preceding discussions will be articulated within the necessarily linear narrative framework of this study. Two other general points may be made. This study is emphatically *not* intended to be another broadside in the increasingly fruitless processual-versus-post-processual debate. I have adopted some of the principal concerns of both schools (for example, detailed empirical study, use of technical analyses, some degree of anthropological comparisons, etc. advocated by 'processual' archaeologists: power, ideology, hermeneutics (etc.) from broadly post-processual archaeology). Equally, I have identified weaknesses in both schools. Thus, 'reflectionist' readings of burial data have been rejected but so too have accounts which concentrate unduly on modern political concerns, competition, etc.. Some areas which the sociological origins of the structuration model do not address in detail for archaeological evidence have also been noted. Consequently, this study is not, and should not be seen as, an attempt to solve all of the problems of archaeological theory. It is, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, primarily a study of one particular data set. However, it is possible to observe that many recent theoretically minded studies

have concentrated on only parts of the debate I have outlined (e.g. gender, space, time: examples have been given in Section 3, plus e.g. Gosden 1994) which though often valuable in themselves (deliberately) limit the scope of interpretation. Similarly, most recent theoretical studies have dealt with far smaller bodies of data than I am considering here, or, alternatively, have pursued 'Grand Narrative' accounts (e.g. Hodder 1991) with relatively little small-scale detail (notable exceptions include Tilley 1991 and Barrett, Bradley and Green 1991). The value of the approach I have adopted will form one of the general conclusions of this thesis (Chapter 7).

The basic interrelationship between institutions and individuals is represented in Figure 1.8 as an axis between 'structure' and 'action'. Both of these 'points' are connected by other axes to 'strategy' which encompasses 'meanings' and 'dispositions'. A fourth possible axis (forming a pyramid) covering the hermeneutic question is not shown in the diagram. The starting point, in narrative terms, is provided by the chronological discussions in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 addresses the structure of the existing archaeological evidence and also (begins to) examine structures of the burial ritual, (material culture) symbolism and the structural principles/properties of the societies examined (discussed further at the start of that chapter). Chapter 4 continues the evaluation of these structures by considering the meanings attached to structures (which may be represented broadly as the left hand side of the triangle in the diagram), as 'dominant' symbols, 'dispositions' (largely unconscious, reproduced meanings, relating to the limits of knowledgeability), and so on. Chapter 5 discusses those aspects of meanings which relate to individual actions (the right hand side of the triangle), and is fundamentally concerned with change, therefore. In terms of the data, Chapter 4 is concerned primarily with broad patterns and common occurrences, and Chapter 5 with deviations from the 'norms' as well as sequences of change.

It is clear nonetheless that the discussions in Chapters 3 to 5 must overlap - strategy and thus 'meanings' can only occur at the level of individual action, for example (Section

3Aiii, above) - and that it is impossible to specify the actual position along the axes (within the triangle) of any particular interpretation. Indeed, the arguments in Section 3 of this chapter have indicated that structures, meanings and strategies *must* be multiple.

The discussion of structure, for example, must take account of several 'levels' of inclusivity apart from the four senses in which it is used above. Thus, burial ritual are part of a wider structure of mortuary rituals; symbolism in burials is part of wider structures of meaning; roles (and structural principles) relate to structural properties, and so on. A number of dimensions of structure have already been introduced. The individual is, of course, the basic unit of social structure whereas the 'culture' is the highest level I have identified. Gender, kinship and the ancestors have also been considered in theoretical terms and are also used in subsequent discussions. However, the starting point for the characterizations of these terms in the following chapters are not based solely on universalizing definitions and certainly not on particular anthropological analogies. Rather, they are derived in large part from the contextual evidence presented in Chapters 6 and 7. However, this part of the 'hermeneutic spiral' (Hodder 1992) is not discussed in detail - in the interests of brevity and clarity - and the characterization of these structures in the mortuary and other fields of discourse will be re-evaluated and refined throughout the thesis.

I have argued, for example, that burial involves a 'rite of passage' and therefore a transition from one state to another, which I have termed 'ancesthood', and which is commonly performed by close kin of the deceased. It is of course possible to find examples where part of this pattern does not occur but the existence of such a 'spoiler' (Yellen 1977) does not justify the universal rejection of the pattern and ultimately suggests that any attempt at interpretation in archaeology is futile. At minimum, therefore, the interactions in burial may be regarded as lying along two axes where resources represent direct and indirect exchanges with other (living) individuals/groups (and could be represented as in Figure 1.9 with 'living' replaced by 'direct exchanges'

and 'ancestors' with 'indirect exchanges'). *However*, evidence for forms of exchange, domestic ritual, settlement organization, etc. (Chapters 6-7) do support the 'existence' of an ancestral state. Equally, settlement structures in particular provide indications that the 'household' and 'community' may be defined and recognized groups and may be linked, via inheritance patterns, symbolism and so on both to kinship structures and the ancestors (*ibid.*).

Meanings and strategies must also be multiple in interpretations, not least because meanings must relate to the several levels of structure existing simultaneously in all interactions (even before the unique circumstances of each action, the competence of the individual, etc. are taken into consideration). Within one aspect of interaction, for example, (Figure 1.9), meanings exist between two axes, relating to the living and to the dead.

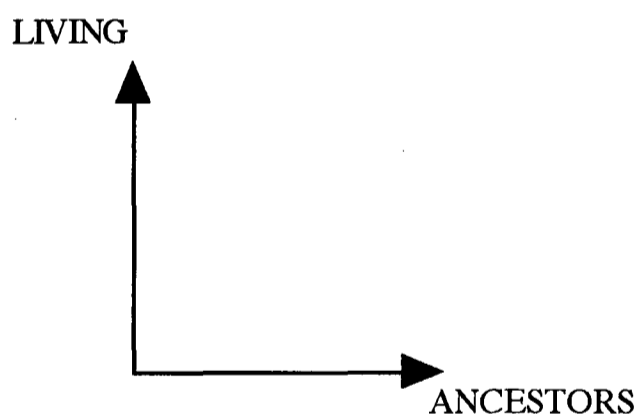


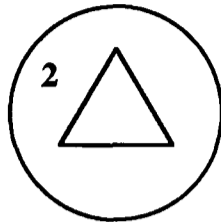
Figure 1.9 - Diagram showing the axes on which meaning is constructed within one aspect of structure.

Interpretation is thus a process of achieving a balance between institutionalized dispositions and strategic (circumstantial) meanings and between the several interlinked dimensions of structure (interaction). I will use the term 'value' to apply to both the deployment of these meanings in practice and to the qualitative component of interpretation. The final part of Chapter 5 will be an attempt to integrate the various forms of value into a series of conclusions relating to the cemeteries studied, and to

some extent the individual graves within each of these. These arguments will provide the *main* summary of the specific conclusions to the study. Chapters 6 and 7 will go beyond (but also to a degree re-examine) these conclusions by returning to the context (spatial and temporal) in which the burials occur. These chapters will also explore the reinterpretation of non-burial evidence in the light of this study.

With the exception of Chapter 2 which is relatively autonomous of the other discussions it is apparent that the themes of each chapter are strongly interlinked. This will inevitably result in some repetition of information and the separation of sections covering similar themes. Moreover, some themes and/or values (e.g. competitive strategies based on economic resources) will be stressed to a greater or lesser degree at different points during the thesis. *Arguments in individual sections must not be taken in isolation of the overall theoretical stance outlined in this chapter whether the theoretical component of the discussion is made explicit or not. Further in the interests of brevity, and to avoid having to repeat large sections of the arguments, some terms will be used as a form of shorthand for the overall arguments (including 'kinship', 'ancestors', etc.) without implying a simplification of the arguments or an end point of interpretation (unless specifically noted).* At the risk of anticipating one of the final conclusions to the thesis, one intention in the following discussions is an attempt to move away from singular explanations which depend upon predetermined assumptions as to what is central to social interaction (such as 'real' power, or 'dominant' motivations like competition for economic resources or particular statuses). Instead, I hope to move towards a dynamic, flexible account of the (changing) patterns of values - that is, fundamentally integrating the themes addressing social interaction, symbolism and ritual - of/in burial practices in the Late Chalcolithic of north-east Bulgaria.

## CHAPTER 2: CHRONOLOGY



Three aspects of chronology will be investigated in this chapter: the definition of the Late Chalcolithic; the attribution of burial remains from north-east Bulgaria to this period; and the internal chronology of the cemeteries.

The analyses in this chapter are dependent on three principal types of chronological relationship. The first is absolute age, defined by calibrated radiocarbon dates.<sup>1</sup> This specifies the beginning, end and duration of periods in calendar years. Two other relationships are partially dependent on absolute age: sequence, which also involves consideration of typology and stratigraphy; and synchrony, determined by measures of archaeomagnetism and stratigraphic parallels.

Chapter One considered 'time' in terms of a separation between the past and the present, and also as the 'tempo' of practice. This chapter does not discuss these concepts in detail but seeks to establish the precise chronological relationships of the burial evidence in order that they may be considered in later chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis uncalibrated radiocarbon dates are referred to as 'b.c.' and calibrated dates as 'Cal. B.C.'. Dates derived from archaeomagnetic measures are treated as dates b.c.. Calibrated dates referred to in the text, and the suggested absolute dates of periods and phases, use a single standard deviation and may be regarded only as a central range of possible dates, therefore.

## 1. *THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE LATE CHALCOLITHIC*

Of the three scales of analysis described above, the first is the least problematic, in that it has been selected in advance as the chronological extent of this study. In this sense the period defines the burial remains to be considered rather than the reverse. It is not intended here to 'deconstruct' the Late Chalcolithic as a period or to examine in detail the evidence for its composition. There is little reason to doubt the accuracy of the overall chronological schemes that have been established for the period (below). However, there are significant uncertainties concerning in particular the absolute dating of the period, and also the relative dating of cultural phases within it, which must be reconciled. Terminology for cultures and phases also varies between authors and a clear scheme to be used here needs to be outlined.

While my purpose here is not to review dating techniques as such, the establishment of a sound chronology is dependent on the recognition of the merits of the various techniques employed. Similarly, any discussion of chronology must be based in part on previous work into the problem, for terminology, phasing, methods of analysis, etc.. Thus, 'cultures' remain defined artefactually and, often, ethnically, and are therefore assumed to share a common, distinct, social structure. Here, I use the term to mean (differences in) material culture. The examination of social structures between and within 'cultures' is the subject of this study.

In practice, taking the Late Chalcolithic essentially 'as read' means accepting the chronological schemes established by Henrietta Todorova in the last twenty-five years. Until the later 1960's, a number of partial excavations of tell sites provided 'type-sites' for cultures in north-east Bulgaria. The most important of these from the Late Chalcolithic were Kodzhadermen and Ruse (Popov 1916-18; Georgiev and Angelov 1952; 1957). Both are found in the literature as synonymous with the Late Chalcolithic in the region - the parallels based on the sequence at Karanovo. Work at Sava and

Salmanovo provided type-sites for coastal and inland (respectively) Early Chalcolithic groups. The differentiation of the two cultural zones was first made by Todorova (Vajsová) in 1967 with the definition of a 'Varna' Culture (i.e. *Middle* Chalcolithic coastal group, later referred to as the 'Varna phase' of the Sava Culture, or Sava IV: Vajsová 1967; Todorova and Toncheva 1973). The importance of this cultural divide has been discussed in Chapter 1.

From the mid 1960's several large scale excavations occurred in the region, usually in advance of industrial developments. These excavations of whole tells, several directed by Todorova, provided a clearer stratigraphic understanding of the relationship of earlier to later Chalcolithic and the position and characteristics of the Late Chalcolithic in particular. The partial separation of north-east Bulgaria as a region has also been developed by Todorova on the basis of these sites and in the coining of the term Kodzhadermen-Gumelnitsa-Karanovo VI (KGKVI) to describe the three main regions of the inland Late Chalcolithic culture. In addition the accidental discoveries of the cemeteries at Devnya and Varna in the late 1960's/early 1970's and further discoveries of remains from the Varna Lake were used by Todorova to establish a more precise phasing of the coastal area. Most recently, excavations at Durankulak provide a stratigraphic sequence for the Varna Culture in the Dobrudzha (Todorova and Dimov 1989b). The elaboration of the basic cultural pattern into named or numbered sub-phases is now widely used (see Figure 2.1 for some of the variations and the scheme adopted here).

Relative dating techniques based on stratigraphy and typology remain the basis for all of the chronological schemes for the Chalcolithic. The typological sequences are based on primarily pottery forms and decorations (illustrated in Figure 2.2), which are also important in the discussions of cross-cultural parallels. However, although the sequences represented in Figure 2.2 may be accepted as an overall description of the chronology of the period, there are a number of potential weaknesses in their use to

describe detailed chronological relationships. First, while the phasing is based on stratigraphic sequences, these are longer and more common for the inland area where tell settlements are themselves more common. The stratigraphy of the tell site at Durankulak is neither fully excavated nor published in detail as yet. The definition of phases for the Varna Culture is based largely on cemetery evidence and the material recovered from the Varna Lakes. Second, the division of periods into three sub-phases by Todorova (two for the Middle Chalcolithic) is arbitrary in that it takes stratigraphic and typological continuity and imposes a tripartite early-middle-late convention. If the phasing is recognized as being an archaeological imposition then the terminology is convenient for dividing a relatively long period for the purposes of analysis. Several provisos remain. It cannot be assumed that the sub-phases are of equal length (as they are typically represented by Todorova (1986a; Todorova et al. 1983)). Neither is it possible to argue with certainty that the phases in the coastal and inland regions coincide exactly (*ibid.*). The resolution of radiocarbon dates does not allow confident statements to be made about the beginning and ending of the sub-phases. Additionally, there is an implicit assumption in Todorova's work that typological sequences from one or a small number of sites can be applied to the whole region without variation in form or date.

Absolute dating evidence from the region consists of radiocarbon dates, usually, but not always, with the acceptance of the need for calibration. The number of dates remains relatively low and unevenly distributed (Figure 2.3). The greatest problem in the interpretation of results is the considerable overlap between Early and Late Chalcolithic dates (Figures 2.3 and 2.4). The matching of dates with a dendrochronological sequence has only occurred in the last two years and has yet to be applied to this problem specifically (Boyadzhiev 1992a; Weninger 1992).

In recent reviews of the radiocarbon dates, Boyadzhiev (1988; 1992a; 1992b) extends the duration of the Late Chalcolithic beyond that suggested by the calibrated dates

alone, almost doubling the period in length to 400-500 years. This, if accepted, also requires the distortion of the duration of phases within the period. Moreover, there are potentially significant repercussions for the duration of use of cemeteries and the average intervals between burials, where phasing can be estimated. Boyadzhiev uses the estimated duration of the longest well-recorded stratigraphic sequences - which do not cover the whole of the period - to suggest a minimum duration of two-hundred years. However, this estimate is based in part on the assumption that layers of plaster from house walls found at Polyanitsa, Ovcharovo etc., represent annual redecorations, an interpretation which cannot be taken as unproblematic (Boyadzhiev 1988).

Archaeomagnetic measurements from the region which have been linked to a radiocarbon dated sequence (Kovacheva and Veljovic 1985; Kovacheva et al. 1986) support a later end to the Chalcolithic than the radiocarbon dates from the sites themselves (Figure 2.5), but are a more accurate guide to synchrony than absolute date. There is no clear way to reconcile these two dating schemes from internal evidence alone. Reference to other regions does provide some additional light on north-east Bulgaria through the use of relative dating techniques to refer to local radiocarbon sequences (Figure 2.6).

The assumption of common inheritance for similar but spatially discrete pottery forms, or for diffusion between contemporary cultures, has been influential in the formation of chronological parallels, sometimes leading to the acceptance of false synchronizations (Renfrew 1969). More securely, parallels have also been inferred on the basis of intrusive objects in cultural assemblages which can be attributed to other cultures. The number of such objects is greatest for parallels between adjacent regions. Problems of authentication of origin, later re-use of objects and so on, nonetheless remain.

A continuing dichotomy has been apparent in chronological studies between the generation of finer scale local sequences and the amalgamation of cultures into larger,

international groupings. This nevertheless remains in part a matter of convention and choice, so that the joint terms Salcutsa-Krivodol(-Bubanj-Hum Ia) and Kodzhadermen-Gumelnitsa-Karanovo VI are used for the Late Chalcolithic in Bulgaria (Early Chalcolithic in Romania), but the Maritsa/Polyanitsa and Sava Cultures in the Early Chalcolithic are still commonly distinguished from Boian and Hamangia Cultures in Romania, despite the widespread view that they represent aspects of the same cultural group. One result of the agglomeration of cultures has been the definition of 'mixed' cultural areas (artefactually and ethnically) at the boundaries between larger groups.

The use of different culture names or phases by different archaeologists still hinders analysis and synthesis, but it is possible to establish the general chronology for south-east Europe, and to relate this to a probable absolute scale. This is done in Figure 2.7 and the major points of relevance to this study are summarized below.

#### *A. The beginning of the Late Chalcolithic*

##### *i) inland*

The stratigraphic development from Middle to Late Chalcolithic is well attested from several sites and corresponds to the Karanovo V-VI transition in Thrace and Boian IV(Spantsov)-Gumelnitsa transition in Romania. Todorova has used the term 'Polyanitsa IV' to refer specifically to the Middle Chalcolithic of north-east Bulgaria which corresponds to Levels 5-7 at both Ovcharovo and Polyanitsa. There are three Middle Chalcolithic radiocarbon dates from Golyamo Delchevo and a similar number from Ovcharovo, all c. 4000-3800 b.c. (4900-4500 Cal. B.C.). These are closely similar to the Early Chalcolithic dates of the Azmak sequence for Thrace and overlap with the Polyanitsa III dates from Ovcharovo. The only other date for the transitional period to the Late Chalcolithic that seems reliable is from Ezero and is slightly later at around 4400 Cal. B.C.. The dates from Cascioarele in Romania from the Boian IV

(Spantsov) phase, which should be contemporary with Polyanitsa IV/Maritsa IV (and Sava IV) are, however, too variable to provide a secure date for the end of this period.

The archaeomagnetic measurements from Ovcharovo, Golyamo Delchevo and Polyanitsa, calculated as dates by Kovacheva and Veljovic (1985), for the Middle Chalcolithic and first part of the Late Chalcolithic fall within the range 4600-4400 b.c., though other Middle Chalcolithic measures from the region are considerably earlier (Kovacheva et al. 1986) when related to a radiocarbon scale.

Todorova (1986a) argues for the paralleling of the late Pre-Cucuteni Culture with the first phase of the Late Chalcolithic on the basis of a figurine of Pre-Cucuteni type found at Kodzhadermen. The Cucuteni A stage succeeding Pre-Cucuteni is dated by Ellis (1984) to around 3700 b.c. (45/4400 Cal. B.C.) by the dates from Margineni. These, however, are from the Cucuteni A2 sub-phase. Monah (1987) suggests a starting date for Cucuteni A1 - and therefore the end of Pre-Cucuteni - at between 3750 and 3650 b.c..

In the Galatsi region between the Gumelnitsa and Cucuteni cultural areas, a separate cultural aspect is argued to develop, possibly parallel to the latest Boian period, but mostly in the earlier part of the Gumelnitsa sequence. This group, named after two sites - Stoicani and Aldeni - also extends into Dobrogea.<sup>2</sup> It can be viewed as a mixed aspect between the two main east Romanian Early Chalcolithic groups (Comsa 1963). Dragomir (1977) cites radiocarbon dates of about 3800-3600 b.c. for the Stoicani-Aldeni period (4700-4400 Cal. B.C.). The aspect may end when the area is absorbed

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<sup>2</sup> The same cultural assemblage has been termed the 'Bolgrad Culture' by Todorova (1978a; 1986a), who also regards it as a mixed Cucuteni-Gumelnitsa group, but with a significant Varna Culture component. The spelling 'Dobrogea' is used in this study for the Romanian part of the region, whereas the Bulgarian spelling, 'Dobrudzha', is used for the area south of the border.

into the two larger cultures (Comsa 1963) or may continue until the Cernavoda I period (Todorova 1986a).

The evidence from several regions therefore converges on a date of around 4500 Cal. B.C. ( $\pm 100$  years) for the beginning of the Late Chalcolithic in north-east Bulgaria.

The majority of dates for the Gumelnitsa region as a whole have an upper range of around 4600 Cal. B.C. (Boyadzhiev 1988).

## ii) *Black Sea Coast*

The situation in the Black Sea Coast area is more complicated than inland. There is stratigraphic continuity at Sava in the southern part of the region and Durankulak in the north (Todorova 1986a), where a Hamangia component may also be evident. However, the material from Sava and Golyamo Delchevo which Todorova sees as a 'mixed assemblage' in the *Late* Chalcolithic, more closely resembles Gumelnitsa than Varna Culture sites, with relatively few coastal forms as imports. The transition from Sava to Varna Culture may be accompanied by a shrinkage of the area occupied by the coastal group, therefore (see Chapter 7).

Nonetheless, the fully published Golyamo Delchevo evidence does provide synchronizations between Sava IV and Polyanitsa IV phases and the second phases of Varna and Gumelnitsa. In the northern part of the region finds from the Durankulak cemetery associate Hamangia IV-V material with Sava IV finds and both show close typological links with Varna I (Dimov 1992a; 1992b; Vaysov 1992b).

Absolute dates are relatively few in number. The only secure dates which relate to the beginning of the Late Chalcolithic are those from Golyamo Delchevo. Only one radiocarbon date of specified phase exists for the Hamangia Culture and dates Hamangia III to c. 48/4700 Cal. B.C. Comparative dating indicates general

synchronism between the coastal and inland regions. Todorova has argued that finds from Late Chalcolithic burials at Durankulak show typological parallels with late Pre-Cucuteni and Cucuteni A pottery (1986a).

## B. *The end of the Late Chalcolithic*

### i) *inland*

Stratigraphically, the end of the Late Copper Age has been defined by the disuse of tell sites. Todorova regards this as an abrupt termination of the Gumelnitsa Culture caused by an invasion or immigration from the Pontic Steppes (1978a). Until recently, no settlement evidence existed for the period, which has consequently become known as the 'Transitional Period' (ibid.).<sup>3</sup> The discovery of several sites in north-east Bulgaria with Cernavoda I finds, which characterize the post-Gumelnitsa period in southern Romania, has partly filled this void. The local name of Pevets Culture is synonymous with Cernavoda I. From work at Hotnitsa-Vodapoda, Ilcheva (1986) has argued for the existence of two phases of the Pevets/Cernavoda I Culture, with an earlier phase of the culture resembling the Late Chalcolithic more closely, and a later phase with more features similar to the Early Bronze Age. This may indicate a more gradual evolution from Gumelnitsa to Cernavoda I than has been supposed by some authors (e.g. Todorova 1978a) - a conclusion supported by recent accounts of the Pevets Culture in Bulgaria (Georgieva 1992).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Bulgarian terminology is used throughout this thesis. It may be noted that the term 'Transitional Period' has a different meaning when used in other areas of south-east Europe (see e.g. Lichardus 1991b).

<sup>4</sup> Tudor (1978) has created the term 'Bratesti Group' for a series of sites in northern Muntenia which are argued to be a continuation of Gumelnitsa occupation in the Cernavoda I period. In the light of the above comments it is perhaps most plausible to see these sites as a local variant of Cernavoda I which is itself a continuation of the Gumelnitsa population in Muntenia.

There are a limited number of radiocarbon dates for the Late Chalcolithic of north-east Bulgaria but these dates are complemented by longer sequences from Thrace and Muntenia. The lower end of the range of dates is consistently around 4200 Cal. B.C. (3600-3400 b.c.) from these sites. This compares with the range of Late Chalcolithic dates Kovacheva and Veljovic (1985) derive from archaeomagnetic measures of 4200-3800 b.c.. These dates differ in turn from those calculated by Kovacheva et al. (1986) of 4600-4400 b.c. for the Late Chalcolithic. This may be the result of the weakness of one or both forms of dating as both types of dates are available from the same levels at Ovcharovo. Thus, Level 10 radiocarbon dates of  $3895\pm 40$  and  $3755\pm 60$  (4800-4500 Cal.B.C.) can be compared with archaeomagnetic derived dates of 4200-4100 b.c. (Kovacheva and Veljovic 1985) and 4600 b.c. (Kovacheva et al. 1986).

Attempts to remedy this discrepancy may be made by reference to other regions. Comsa (1987), for example, argues that Cucuteni A4 probably parallels the early part of Cernavoda I. According to Ellis (1984) the Cucuteni A3 phase can be dated to around 3400 b.c. (42/4100 Cal. B.C.). More radiocarbon dates are available from the Tripolye area of the same culture and broadly cover the second half of the fourth millennium b.c.. Imported Cucuteni A3 material has been reported from final Chalcolithic levels at Cascioarele, and the Karbuna hoard includes a vessel attributed to this period with metal finds closely analogous to Bulgarian Late Chalcolithic types. In a recent survey, Boyadzhiev implies that the Gumelnitsa Culture may continue later in Thrace than in north-east Bulgaria (1992a: 400), but this cannot be confirmed from the existing radiocarbon evidence.

There are three radiocarbon dates from the Transitional Period site of Polyanitsa-Plato which are the only absolute dates available from Bulgaria for this period. The three are all around 3100-2900 b.c. (3900-3700 Cal. B.C.) and are regarded as belonging to the earlier phase of the Cernavoda I/Pevets Culture. This may support the traditional date for the end of the Late Chalcolithic at about 4000 Cal. B.C.. These dates are

considerably earlier than dates from the type-site, however, which calibrate to circa 3300-3000 Cal. B.C., which may be taken to represent the end of the period.

## ii) *Black Sea Coast*

The same general pattern occurs in the coastal region as outlined for inland north-east Bulgaria although there is less settlement evidence for Cernavoda I. Parallels between Varna 3 and Gumelnitsa 3 phases are supported by 'imports' from one region to the other, as at Golyamo Delchevo, etc..

The few radiocarbon dates for the Varna Culture are all attributed to the later phases of the culture (Boyadzhiev 1992a). Two dates from Nakolni Selishta (Povelyanovo) and two reliable dates from the Durankulak settlement, all supposedly of the final phase of the culture, are not dated later than around 4250 Cal. B.C.. Of five dates listed as being from Late Chalcolithic burials at Durankulak, three dates may be reliable, but two of these are earlier even than the settlement dates. Boyadzhiev nonetheless argues for the ending of the Varna Culture around 4100-4050 Cal. B.C. by analogy with Gumelnitsa Culture evidence (*ibid.*). One date (number 36 in Figures 2.3 and 2.4) may support this later date, but has a large standard deviation. Nonetheless, given the typological parallels with the inland area and with other regions, particularly Moldavia, it seems likely that the end of the Varna Culture can be pushed closer to 4000 Cal. B.C. than the radiocarbon evidence alone suggests.

## C. *Phases*

The significant problems outlined above in establishing both the beginning and end points of the Late Chalcolithic make it impossible to define the absolute extent of the sub-phases described by Todorova and others. However, it may be possible to examine the relative duration of the three accepted sub-phases of both inland and coastal regions

through consideration of the radiocarbon evidence. The majority of dates from the earlier phases are from the inland area and later dates principally from coastal sites. Nonetheless the two regions can be compared because of the accepted general synchronization of the sub-phases of the Varna and Gumelnitsa Cultures, established in part from Golyamo Delchevo, which itself provides one of the major sequences of dates. The evidence from Thrace (Gumelnitsa 2-3) and south-east Romania (Gumelnitsa 1-2) can also be included because of the close cultural association of these regions with north-east Bulgaria.

The calibrated dates from all three areas for the first two phases have similar ranges (circa 4700-44/4300 Cal. B.C.). However, the north-east Bulgarian (Ovcharovo) dates for Gumelnitsa 1 are clustered within the range 4700-4400 Cal. B.C., while those for Gumelnitsa 2/Varna 2 are slightly later (circa 4600-4300 Cal. B.C.). The latter date compares with the Cascioarele sequence where the modal range is 4500-4300 Cal. B.C.. Gumelnitsa 3/Varna 3 dates for north-east Bulgaria overlap considerably with the preceding phase, the majority being about 4500-4250 Cal. B.C.. This compares to the evidence from Thrace whose range for Gumelnitsa 2-3 dates is the widest (circa 4700-4300 Cal. B.C.).

At best, the above discussion may indicate that the first sub-phase of the Late Chalcolithic is the longest, and the final sub-phase the shortest. In reality, however, the evidence seems to reflect rather the consistency of dates from the few sites with long sequences of dates. No conclusive statements about the length of phases (relative or absolute) can be made with the available radiocarbon evidence.

## 2. THE DATING OF BURIAL FINDS TO THE LATE CHALCOLITHIC

Burial remains from around thirty sites in north-east Bulgaria have been described and attributed to the Chalcolithic and Transitional periods. The nature and quality of chronological evidence from each varies considerably (Figure 2.8: Appendix 1), but comprises absolute and relative techniques, as was the case for the more general discussion above. The former of these is poorly represented. The only absolute dating evidence from burial contexts are the five radiocarbon dates from unspecified but reportedly Late Chalcolithic burials at Durankulak. Of these dates, two are unacceptably early, and of the others only one has a single standard deviation of less than  $\pm 200$  years. Radiocarbon and archaeomagnetic dates do exist for some settlements associated with burial finds, but the application of the absolute dates to other contexts requires stratigraphic or typological association.

Thus, for each site, relative chronological methods are the principal source of dating. All relative techniques rely on comparisons, with varying degrees of accuracy and generality, depending on the type of data used. Several such comparative approaches have been widely used - although they are not always explicitly acknowledged in the literature - and are discussed below. The headings used relate to those in Figure 2.8.

### a) *burial form*

That is, the form of the grave pit and body posture. For the Chalcolithic this principally involves flat, single inhumation burials in an extended supine or flexed position on either side but many variations on, and deviations from, these normal types also occur (see Chapter 3). This type of evidence alone cannot be used to conclusively date finds to the Late Chalcolithic. Very similar burial forms to those found in north-east Bulgaria have been shown to exist over wide areas of south-east Europe for long periods including the Middle and Late Chalcolithic (Häusler 1991). Variations in the main burial

forms may be wrongly dated when found singly or in small numbers, but, conversely, identical burial forms found at the same location may belong to different periods.

b) *stratigraphy*

The majority of sites considered in this study are cemeteries located between a few metres and a few hundred metres from settlement sites. In no case is it possible to link a settlement and extra-mural cemetery directly from excavated stratigraphic evidence. However, the settlements provide sequences of finds which may suggest both periods and phase(s) of the use of the cemetery, particularly where the settlement, or distinct horizons within the settlement, are of short duration. In a smaller number of cases, burial remains are found within settlements and may therefore be related directly to particular horizons *if* the level from which the grave pit was dug can be established.

Burial remains in both extra-mural cemeteries and settlements may have internal stratigraphy through sequential or overlapping burials. This will be considered more fully in Section 3 of this chapter. Depth of graves, however, cannot be considered an accurate guide to the sequence of burials where depth is related partly to social factors (Chapter 3).

Both burial form and stratigraphy apply to the grave itself. The following relate to the artefacts found with burials. The three headings essentially refer to the same process of comparison but are distinguished because each most commonly considers different classes of objects. Each also presents a further possible source of bias if graves with more chronological indicators (e.g. rich artefact assemblages) are used to date those with fewer. This could lead to the omission of a phase in which few (diagnostic) grave goods were deposited but is also liable to result in the preferential dating of particular age/sex/wealth (etc.) sections of society.

### c) *pottery typology*

Pottery vessels generally form the most common artefact type at both domestic and burial sites. Other object categories (lithics, bone tools, etc.) may also be common at both, but pottery is the most useful chronological indicator because it is most varied in form and decoration, and because these characteristics make it the most suitable for the definition of periods and sub-phases in the wider chronological sense. The principal assumption made is that patterns of decoration and vessel form in burials will correspond to those from settlement sites. This is made more likely, and the curation of vessels for long periods before interment is made less likely, by the general observation that vessels are poorly fired and thus probably produced specifically for funerary contexts. Pottery may therefore be related to cultures and cultural phases at associated settlements where known, and to regional cultural sequences (Figure 2.2).

### d) *metal artefacts*

Such comparisons are based not on sequential typologies but on particular artefact forms that are distinctive and can be related to stratified contexts or horizons, thus indicating possible synchrony. The artefact types may not be known from settlements associated with cemeteries but are part of the general cultural assemblage. Metal objects, especially copper axes, are particularly suitable because clear types can be distinguished which are distinctive for the Late Chalcolithic. Figure 2.9 relates copper axe types and some other distinctive artefacts found in graves to similar forms from known stratigraphic contexts. Use-life and the origin of objects are more of a problem for attributing dates by this method. Greater distance from the site of manufacture may affect the date and context of deposition, and duration of use, while rarity may make conservation more desirable. Not all artefact types are therefore suitable for this type of dating. Some metal forms (for example) are located at only one or a few sites (e.g. Varna gold forms), or are unchanged in form over long periods (e.g. copper awls,

copper beads) and are therefore excluded from Figure 2.9. Object types not found in burials are also omitted.

e) *intrusive artefacts*

These are defined here as artefacts having an origin outside north-east Bulgaria, or showing clear influence in form or decoration, from outside this area, which are not part of the normal cultural assemblages of the region. The distinction between this category and the above is blurred. The stone sceptres listed in Figure 2.9 may be considered an example of this type as they are suggested to be imports from, or carried by representatives of, populations from the north Pontic region, but are necessarily also part of the cultural assemblage of north-east Bulgaria. Figure 2.10 illustrates the problems of superficial resemblance that may affect such comparisons with regard to the site of Varna I. The same distortions caused by distance from source and curation of objects described for metal artefacts also apply to this form of comparative dating.

Whilst some problems have been outlined for each of the dating techniques described, the evidence from each is cumulative rather discrete and therefore tends to gain in accuracy. As presented, the evidence for most of the burial sites in the region allows unambiguous dating to culture and frequently also to phases within this (represented in Figure 2.11). This thesis will consider those finds certainly or probably dated to the Late Chalcolithic as depicted in this diagram.

Although the dates depicted in Figure 2.11 may be widely accepted, other chronological schemes have also been suggested. However, these are usually limited to discussion of the Varna I cemetery and based only on the 'intrusive' artefacts shown in Figure 2.10.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted, however, that most archaeologists, including the excavator, concur in dating this cemetery to the second half of the Late Chalcolithic (I. Ivanov *passim*; Gimbutas 1977a; 1977b; Todorova 1978b; 1986b; Lichardus 1988; 1991a).

The three models in Figure 2.10 all take the 'unique' elements of the Varna I cemetery as being the result of an immigrant population.<sup>6</sup> Each also relies on the assumption that suggested parallels with other regions must indicate influence from this region rather than vice versa, and are beyond the normal level of contacts and exchange that may be demonstrated at the inter-regional level. Refutation of the alternative dates depends on proving that the analogies are spurious (see Chapter 1) or unnecessary to explain the cultural context of finds at Varna.

Weißhaar (1982) argues that copper, gold and marble object types can be attributed to foreigners, whose immediate origin is the Aegean, but whose initial homeland is unknown. Thus, gold disc appliques are paralleled with Early Bronze Age finds from the Aegean, while copper axes and marble rhytons are 'undoubtedly' the work of Aegean craftsmen and have 'definite' Aegean Early Bronze Age counterparts. As a result, Weißhaar moves the whole Gumelnitsa/Varna period forward by 1500 years to parallel Troy I - i.e. circa 3000 b.c.. This is clearly impossible without disregarding all radiocarbon dates for the period from south-east Europe. The artefact parallels are also extremely selective and assume a single direction of influence. Weißhaar correctly denies the single horizon of disc appliques suggested by Renfrew (1969), but ignores similar finds from Cucuteni and Tiszapolgar contexts (etc.: Zanotti 1982), unless these cultures are also brought forward by more than a millennium. Stratigraphic and typological evidence as well as radiocarbon dates argue very strongly against this.

Best and Zanotti develop similar arguments, though Zanotti's is a fuller account. Both locate the Varna newcomers in the 'Kurgan' north Pontic cultures. Both stress the similarities between the extended burial rite at Varna and that found in the Sredni Stog II Culture. Best ignores, and Zanotti rejects, the closer and earlier parallels with

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<sup>6</sup> Other authors have also argued for a new population but with a Late Chalcolithic date - e.g. Todorova (1978a); Lichardus (1988; 1991a).

Hamangia/Sava burials which form a more likely origin for the burial rite in the Varna Culture (Price 1993). Double and multiple burials (Zanotti 1986-7) are also not new but have contemporary and earlier parallels. The only actual evidence for a migration is suggested by Best who claims that the high percentage of cenotaphs at Varna results from a high mortality rate, and inability to bury all the dead, due to a rapid population movement. This argument is inconclusive at the very least.

Another Kurgan element proposed by both is the 'poor quality' of Varna pottery and the use of similar decorative techniques at this site and in the north-Pontic area. The first observation is equally true of all of the cemeteries in north-east Bulgaria, whilst the second is made unnecessary by the closer analogies between pottery from the cemetery and settlement at Durankulak, where a Late Chalcolithic date is not in doubt.

Further support for the models of Best and Zanotti depends on comparisons for single artefacts or negative evidence. The supposed absence of Gumelnitsa type artefacts (e.g. double-spiral copper pins or graphite decoration - both of which *are* found at Varna: see Chapter 3) may say more about burial practices than changes of population or date (see this thesis generally) and in any case is not different from the other Bulgarian cemeteries. Parallels (Zanotti) with crescentic axes from the Caucasus or horizontal ribbed pottery from the Dniepr-Donets region are considerably less convincing than with artefacts from the Gumelnitsa/Varna Cultures. Such selective parallels also ignore the majority of burial object types which are commonly found in the Late Chalcolithic of the region. Lastly, it can be noted that claimed stratigraphic synchrony between Varna and the Ezerovo I lake site because of similar yellow clay sub-soil is based on reported descriptions rather than analysis of the soils. Ezerovo I is a submerged and unexcavated site. Material recovered is by dredging.

There are good reasons, therefore, for rejecting the placement of Varna later than the end of the Copper Age. With the exception of a number of erroneous 'intrusive'

parallels, the evidence presented combines to give a date in the second half of the Varna Culture. Pottery finds at the site, numerous analogies with metal artefacts from stratified contexts, and *some* possible intrusive objects all confirm this dating. There are no published finds which clearly indicate a date for any of the graves in the first half of the Late Chalcolithic.

Secure dating, particularly through stratigraphic position and pottery typologies, is also possible for Devnya (Varna 2-3), Golyamo Delchevo (Gumelnitsa 2-3), Hotnitsa (Gumelnitsa 3), Polyanitsa (Polyanitsa IV) and Vinitsa (Gumelnitsa 2-3). The absence of one or more of these types of evidence is generally not sufficient to cause doubts as to the dating of most of the graves, at least to period.

Dating to individual sub-phases is more difficult. For Golyamo Delchevo, Todorova suggests that all burials may date to a single phase (Gumelnitsa 3) because of the standardization of forms, but these cannot be dated to particular settlement horizons (Todorova et al. 1975: 55). This view minimizes the similarities that also exist with Gumelnitsa 2 pottery from the settlement. From the distribution of metal objects, Todorova also argues that metal finds date the cemetery to Levels 10-17 (Gumelnitsa 3) of the settlement, but the total number of metal finds is small and the same artefact types are not found in both locations.

At Devnya, the cemetery is probably related to a settlement with a single occupation level, and has little variety in pottery forms and decoration, which may also indicate that occupation is limited to a single sub-phase (i.e. Varna 3).

Kubrat is most clearly dated by its stratigraphy within the Gumelnitsa horizon, supported by the small number of grave goods. The stratigraphic evidence presented by Todorova (1986a) may indicate that the cemetery is further restricted in date to the second half of the Late Chalcolithic, and perhaps to Gumelnitsa 3 only.

At Ruse, the coincidence of burials with settlement horizons is not universal, although Georgiev and Angelov take 'horizons' to include the fill, not only the levels at which architectural remains are found. Todorova (*ibid.*: 74-5) uses this and some artefacts and body postures to suggest that not all burials may be of Late Chalcolithic date - i.e. that some may be later. This only seems possible, however, for those burials located near to the edge of the tell or at the shallowest depths. The most likely occurrence of a later burial (suggested on the basis of accompanying shell artefacts) is at 2.6 metres depth and close to the central (therefore deepest) profile of the tell.<sup>7</sup> Todorova's assertion that burials relate to the subsequent settlement horizon is also dubious, although the average depth of grave pits of 0.4-0.6 metres reported by Georgiev and Angelov (1957: 121) does suggest that all of the burials do belong to the same cultural phases as the settlement evidence - i.e. Gumelnitsa 1-3 (Todorova 1986a).

Where there is less overall evidence, in terms of fewer graves, uncertain stratigraphy, or few grave goods, the attribution to period is less clear. The placement of Ovcharovo in the Middle Copper Age is based on unpublished artefact evidence from a single grave. Druzhba, Varna-Batareyata and Varna II are all dated by limited evidence but the pottery comparisons for all are sufficient to place each in the Sava IV phase.

Targovishte may be dated provisionally to the Late Chalcolithic. Pottery evidence is inconclusive and other artefacts found with the burials are also not chronologically specific. The only comparable inland Middle Chalcolithic burials (Polyanitsa,

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<sup>7</sup> Two different schemes of measuring the depth of burials are used by Georgiev and Angelov. In the 1952 publication depth is measured from the top of the tell, while in the later article depth is taken from the top of the Late Chalcolithic horizon, which is 70 cm. below the top of the tell (see Figure 2.16). Individual graves are referred to by the depth as given in the relevant site report, but some measures, such as this one, use the depth from the top of the *tell*.

Ovcharovo) do not contain spondylus objects <sup>8</sup> or bone rings, which do occur in Late Chalcolithic burials, but the number of artefacts and burials is too small for this to be convincing. Body posture and orientation are consistent with other sites from the same region for both periods. The cemetery may be best dated by the stratigraphy of the associated settlement, therefore, which indicates a date in the Middle Chalcolithic and/or first part of the Late Chalcolithic.

The evidence from Lilyak is similarly insufficient to date the remains with certainty. In this case the limited pottery (and other artefact) evidence has closest analogies with Gumelnitsa Culture settlement finds and can be considered as belonging to this period. Omurtag and Radingrad are both essentially unpublished and it has thus been necessary to rely on information provided by the excavators. Both contain at least one burial given an earlier date than the majority. At Radingrad, one grave is suggested to be Middle Chalcolithic in date, while at Omurtag, one or more of the first three graves excavated are described as being from the Gumelnitsa 1 phase, compared with Gumelnitsa 2-3 for the remainder of burials from the cemetery.

My examination of some material from Radingrad and from Sava-Tsonevo, plus the limited amount of published detail from the sites, indicates that at least the majority of burials from both sites are Late Chalcolithic in date. Some artefacts (in Figure 2.9) from both sites can be used to date some graves to the final phase of the Late Chalcolithic. Other evidence (that I have had access to) from Sava-Tsonevo is also consistent with a date in the second half of the Late Chalcolithic.

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<sup>8</sup> 'Spondylus' is used here, and throughout this thesis, as an abbreviation for *Spondylus gaederopus* which has been identified as the source of the finds (Renfrew and Shackleton 1970). Similarly, 'dentalium' is used to denote finds of *Dentalium sp.* in this study.

The three locations with possible Transitional Period burials (barring Varna I) are principally dated by particular artefacts detailed in Figure 2.9. Reka Devnya has the most similarities with Gumelnitsa/Varna burials - a fact reflected in its uncertain placement straddling the end of Chalcolithic. This reflects Mirchev's initial assessment of the grave (1961). Some later authors have taken the ochre found on the grave goods as indicating an 'ochre grave', but ochre is common at Varna and other coastal cemeteries from at least the Varna period. Neither Kyulevcha nor Durankulak Grave 982 contain abundant ochre. Both are dated in part by single artefact types and in part by their differences in body position and pottery (respectively) from Varna/Gumelnitsa forms.

The majority of stray settlement and cave finds (Bacho Kiro, Belyakovets, Salmanovo), and possible cemeteries (Grozdevo, Kamenar, Kamenovo, Smyadovo, Strashimirovo, Varna-Detski Sanatorium), cannot be securely dated by any means, or shown to belong to burials (respectively), and are not included in Figure 2.11. At the former sites it is not possible to determine whether remains are from burials dug into the Chalcolithic horizon (rather than cannibalistic practice: Popov 1938), which would probably make them later in date, or, equally, whether they are earlier burials which are disturbed by Gumelnitsa period activity. Kodzhadermen has the clearest evidence of treatment after death (breaking of long-bones) and also the most precise stratigraphic definition (Polyanitsa IV-Gumelnitsa 1), which may indicate the date of the remains. The possibility that these finds are representative of non-burial mortuary practices (see Chapter 3) may be noted at this point, however. If it is accepted that such practices pre-date and continue alongside burial, then Kodzhadermen may be taken here as a token example of them, and the other sites as further, indirect, evidence for their existence.

Isperih poses particular problems. Pottery found at the nearby site is dated to the Gumelnitsa 2-3 period but the burnt plaster found in and around the graves may suggest that the burials are later than the settlement according to Mateva (1991). The

uncertainty as to the exact context of the finds cannot be resolved with information available to me. Neither can the one reported grave good be used to date the burials accurately. For these reasons the site is considered as undated in Figure 2.11.<sup>9</sup>

All of the cemeteries except Durankulak are attributable to a particular part of the time-span depicted in the diagram. Durankulak presents unique problems because it covers the whole period. In this case it becomes necessary to divide what is effectively a continuum of burials into discrete chronological units. This requires an at times arbitrary definition of phase-specific forms and consequent separation of burials. This point will be returned to below (Figure 2.15), but it must be noted here that while the general dating of Durankulak is certain in terms of the phases represented, the dating of individual graves to the Late Chalcolithic is a process of interpretation. This applies particularly to the Middle to Late Chalcolithic division.

### *3. THE INTERNAL CHRONOLOGY OF SITES*

The determination of the internal chronology of sites - the temporal order of burials - essentially requires the same techniques and invokes the same problems as the general dating of the sites. The above review establishes in large part how these affect the various sites. This section considers only those burial finds that can be dated to the Late Chalcolithic. The types of evidence available for each are depicted in Figure 2.12. Both Reka Devnya and Hotnitsa are listed on the table although neither has applicable evidence. In the former case this is because only one burial is found. For the latter the probability that the finds are not due to formal burial practice makes sequence irrelevant.

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<sup>9</sup> As I have been unable to obtain further details about the site, it will not be considered in the main part of this study. It will be discussed in Chapter 7, however.

Stratigraphic evidence is only available where the burials are located within a tell - i.e. Kubrat and Ruse. In both cases, the depth is that at which the body was found, not the level from which the grave pit was dug. In using depth to indicate sequence of burials, therefore, the assumption is made that all grave pits are of similar depth.

The stratigraphy at Kubrat is represented in Figure 2.13, taking the burials as lying along a north-east - south-west line through the site. The consistency of depth within the two halves of the cemetery does suggest that each group belongs to a single horizon. However, as the two areas do not overlap, it cannot be certainly stated that the higher group is later than the lower. In their grave goods and burial form the two groups are very similar and may also be close in date. A similar diagram (Figure 2.14) for Ruse is more complex. The exact positions of most of the burials excavated in 1948-9 are not published (Georgiev and Angelov 1952), and the burials excavated by Shkorpil and Kostov are not included because it is not known whether the depth of these burials is measured from the same point as the later finds. Settlement levels reported by Georgiev and Angelov are included. Remains found in rubbish pits are typically multiple burials and are therefore related to stratigraphy differently from single burials. The stratigraphy of the Ruse burials can be taken only as a very general indication of the order of burials, therefore.

Superimposed or overlapping burials indicate sequence only for the graves involved, in the absence of other types of evidence. Furthermore, without other evidence, the interval between superimposed burials cannot be determined precisely. I. Ivanov has argued (1978b: with regard to Varna II) that disturbance of earlier burials requires a sufficient interval for the location of earlier burials to have been forgotten. Sufficient ethnographic and archaeological examples can be cited to disprove this for all circumstances (Huntingdon and Metcalf 1979, etc.), but the explanation does distinguish between longer ('accidental') and shorter ('deliberate') periods between burials in the same spatial location.

The double superimposition at Ruse may not be exact from the positions given in the site report (Georgiev and Angelov 1957: 115, 117). The excavators state that the burials do not date to the same time, but not whether the spacing between them represents the interval between burials, or whether the later burials partially cut into the grave pits of the earlier. The three burials have similar orientations but cannot be certainly considered as 'deliberate' superimpositions.

The two overlapping burials at Kubrat are more likely to be separated by a short time-span. The lower of the two skeletons is immediately below Grave 2a and is oriented in the opposite direction. Two facing burials at Kubrat (Graves 11 and 12) and the partial grave (10) between them are all at approximately the same depth and are found in separate pits, but are probably deliberately arranged (given the anomalous position - on the left side - of burial 11), and may be considered as either sequential or as a 'multiple' burial.

A number of burials at Durankulak are also overlapping (Fol and Dimitrov 1984; Todorova 1988), though the only published example is from the Hamangia III period (Vaysov 1987). Only one overlap occurs at Varna (I. Ivanov 1991a: 125), where Grave 98 overlies a cenotaph, Grave 97,<sup>10</sup> though Ivanov also reports some cases of bones being 'mixed' in with later burials (*ibid.*). Wholly overlapping burials are not found at other sites. However, at Golyamo Delchevo, Grave 10 partially overlaps Grave 24, and, at Vinitsa, the leg bones from a second individual in Grave 3 are placed over the main burial.

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<sup>10</sup> In the original description (I. Ivanov 1978c) it is stated that it could not be determined which of the burials is the earlier.

Double or multiple burials, by contrast with superimposed graves, imply synchronism, or at least a limited duration during which the grave pit was left open. The largest number of such burials occurs at Ruse where five double and three multiple burials are reported, although the lack of recognizable grave pits makes accidental accumulation of burials possible (particularly for the six burials between 3.3 and 3.5 metres depth: Georgiev and Angelov 1952). Both groups of skeletons from Kubrat discussed above may actually fit within this category of burial. Excluding these sites, double burials are rare, and multiple burials unknown. At Vinitsa, Grave 30 is a double adult burial, while Grave 3 contains a leg from a second individual. Devnya Grave 6 contains an adult female and an (probably) unborn infant. I. Ivanov (1991a: 125) states that no double burials occur at Varna I, but this is contradicted by the account of three double burials given by Yordanov and Marinov (1978), and by details published by Ivanov himself (1978a).<sup>11</sup>

Typological evidence, whether from copper artefacts or pottery finds, has already been shown to be rarely precise enough to allow definite attribution to phase and thus the determination of the internal chronology of sites from grave goods. Several of the cemeteries have pottery only rarely as a grave good (e.g. Targovishte, Ruse, Kubrat) or are not published in sufficient detail (Omurtag, Radingrad, Sava-Tsonevo, Varna I). Nonetheless it is probably via pottery typologies that graves at Radingrad and Omurtag have been separated by phase or period by the excavators. Of the remaining sites, Vinitsa and Golyamo Delchevo only exceptionally include decorated funerary vessels. Durankulak has a pottery sequence which is well established (Figure 2.15) and may be applicable also to Devnya and Varna (Dimov pers. comm.). In practice, however, the

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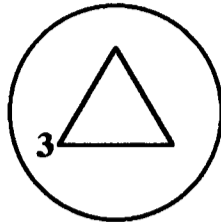
<sup>11</sup> One of the double burials (Grave 33) has been dated by I. Ivanov to the Late Bronze Age in some accounts (e.g. 1978a), but is suggested to be little different from the other burials. This dating of the grave is also not repeated in recent accounts of the site which include overall details of grave form (etc.) for the cemetery as a whole. The burial is therefore also treated as Late Chalcolithic in the analyses of the following chapters. No details of the contents of the grave are published.

forms and decoration from the latter sites cannot yet be securely dated beyond attribution to the second half of the Late Chalcolithic. The Devnya vessels are very standardized in form and decoration - which may itself suggest that they all date to a single phase - but also lack a number of vessel and decorative types central to Todorova's Durankulak typology. Too few vessels (and frequently only one per burial) are published from Varna to relate to the scheme in Figure 2.15.

Several authors have proposed sequences among (usually) the rich graves in the south-east part of the Varna cemetery. These schemes are based on interpretations of the meaning of individual burials rather than chronological evidence. Thus Marazov (1988) sees Grave 36 as a substitute burial for the individual later buried in Grave 43, while V. Nikolov (1991) views the mask graves as an earlier expression of status than the graves with sceptres. Todorova (1981b) argues that Grave 43 is earlier than the richest cenotaphs, but gives no exact reason for this interpretation. Only Zanotti (1984-5) proposes a wider internal chronology based on the idea that flexed burials are an older burial type replaced by extended burials. This suggestion has been rejected above as being based on faulty parallels and ignoring evidence from other known cemeteries.

These 'interpretative' chronological statements belong within the second two definitions of 'time' outlined at the beginning of the chapter and will not be considered explicitly here. This chapter has concentrated on 'absolute' and 'relative' time, as defined, while recognizing the elements of uncertainty (and interpretation) that these involve. A chronological scheme has been developed both for the Late Chalcolithic as a period (Figure 2.7) and for the burial remains found in north-east Bulgaria (Figure 2.11). Some attempt has also been made to determine internal sequences of burials within cemeteries. The chapter has treated the chronological evidence as though divorced from practice and meaning. Time as it relates to these will be re-introduced in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER 3: STRUCTURE



### 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the 'structure' of the burial evidence whose attribution to the Late Copper Age was confirmed in Chapter 2. For the purposes of this chapter, 'structure' may be understood in four senses given in Figure 1.8: as the form and patterning of the archaeological remains of burial practices; as the institutionalized 'structural principles' and 'structural properties' of the structuration model discussed in Chapter 1; as the patterned 'code' of material culture symbolism; and as the formalized and repeated actions of burial ritual. The object of the chapter is to explore these four meanings.

The first definition has been the focus of most previous discussions of the burial evidence, where 'structure' has commonly been taken to refer to the physical situation and form of the grave. A number of axes of measurement have been widely adopted - body position, orientation, age/sex, position of grave goods, etc.. Many of the same classifications will be used here. Excavation data is frequently published according to some or all of these categories. Appendix 1 presents the totality of the published data according to a number of the most commonly employed classifications.

However, whilst this study adopts similar reference points for measurement (to e.g. Avilova 1986a; 1986b; Todorova 1986a), I have strongly criticized many previous studies for directly 'reading' social organization from the burial evidence (so that body position is a function of gender and ethnic origin, depth of grave is a function of status,

etc.: Comsa 1960; I. Ivanov 1991a; Todorova 1986a). From the arguments presented in Chapter 1 the archaeological evidence *must* be understood in terms of the recursive relationship between structure and agency. In this chapter the recursive relationship may be described in four ways: as the structure-agency duality of the structuration model; as Lewis's 'type' (institutionalized pattern) and 'token' (individual example) of ritual' as the *langue* (structure) and *parole* (use) of symbolic codes; and as the interaction between the past and the present.

These senses of structure are increasingly specific as presented in this chapter, with the hermeneutic 'structure' the most general. The structuration model applies to all social behaviour. The discussion of symbolism and meaning concentrates on the material component of all behaviour and the materiality of archaeological evidence in particular. Type and token refer specifically to ritual behaviour. This last metaphor coincides most closely with the study of burial practices, therefore, although Lewis is not concerned to present a methodology with which to measure type or token (and specifically discusses the limitations of the code metaphor as a description of ritual: 1980: 35-7). The most basic level of analysis therefore is the structure of ritual type - the material dimension of the prescribed, formalized and repeated actions that are typical of and partly define ritual.

The analyses in this (and following) chapters may also be seen in terms of Giddens' distinction of two broad forms - quantitative and qualitative - which studies in the social sciences may take. The objectives of quantitative approaches are typically the 'specification of institutional orders', and, to some extent, the 'identification of the bounds of knowledgeability' (Giddens 1984: 327). Of the qualitative forms of analysis described by Giddens, the 'hermeneutic elucidation of frames of meaning' is of clear relevance to all of this study in that it addresses the separation of past and present, the possibility of, and limits of, interpretation, and so on. Although I have stated elsewhere that the hermeneutic issue will not be the explicit focus of this study, some aspects of

this problem will be stated or implied in the the following discussions. The second main form of qualitative analysis - the 'investigation of the context and the form of practical consciousness' is, in essence, the focus of Chapter's 4 and 5.

The separation of quantitative from qualitative research is clearly only a methodological device, but is one which has repercussions for the arguments in this and subsequent chapters. The statistical measures used in this study, for example, can rarely be based on wholly accurate information. Due to site formation processes, whether natural or cultural, and publication of (or my access to) the data, many measurements are imprecise, provisional or arbitrary.<sup>1</sup> Thus, only relatively simple quantification of many of the types of evidence summarized in this chapter is either possible or relevant. There are significant differences in the amounts and quality of data from the sites, which rules out or distorts some summary statistics. Complete information (even according to the limited number of criteria I have chosen) exists only for a minority of the graves and thus requires the various particular criteria by which individual measures are made.

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<sup>1</sup> Thus, while total frequency counts do not clearly indicate the proportion of the cemetery for which a particular burial form applies, percentage counts may vary widely with small changes in absolute totals at the smaller cemeteries. For this reason, both absolute counts and percentages of graves containing are used in the following discussions, where appropriate. All analyses are based on the evidence available to me. This does not always include the totality of the site, but, in some cases, includes published figures where these are based on more complete information than was available for this study (e.g. for Varna). In the case of Durankulak, the information used is that from burials that I was able to study details of, and which could be dated by the excavators or by personal observation to the Late Chalcolithic. The criteria by which graves are included in this study may not coincide entirely with those used by the excavators or others who have studied the material. In many cases, published details from the site relate to a particular period of the excavation of the site, or to a wider time-span than considered here. Nonetheless, such details are noted in the footnotes to the figures where appropriate. For reasons of clarity the figures for Section 2 as far as possible use the same format - in tabular form, divided by cemetery, and with cases where classification is problematic detailed in the footnotes to the figures. Complete details of published burials are given in Appendix 1.

At a more general level it is *essential* that the initial presentation of data in this chapter allows for the evaluation of both production and reproduction (agency and structure). In practical terms this means that the description of the evidence must be relevant to the discussions of institutionalized meanings (values) in Chapter 4 (i.e. equating to some extent to common patterns or 'norms') and of strategic meanings/values in Chapter 5 (including some deviations from norms). I have already criticized some recent Bulgarian studies which have used statistical measures to 'prove' the existence of predetermined statuses, roles, etc.. It is completely incompatible with the theoretical arguments I have made to reduce social structures to statistically derived probabilities, or even 'exclusive' relationships, even as it is entirely *necessary* to base interpretations on a detailed and sophisticated analysis of the evidence. However, the main patterns within the data are described in the text with little other detail for the sake of brevity, *and* in diagrams in Section 4 and Chapter 4 *and*, in some cases, in summary diagrams included with the figures in this chapter. Some complex statistical techniques will be used - notably correlation by chi-square, cluster analysis and correspondence analysis - where they provide additional, useful information or illustrations of pattern/lack of pattern. Reasons for the specific techniques adopted are given (principally in Section 4 of this chapter) as also are reasons in some cases where other/more statistics are deemed inappropriate.<sup>2</sup>

A number of other criteria are used to 'structure' the discussions in this chapter beyond the various classifications of the data and statistics. The cultural division between Varna and Gumelnitsa Cultures defined in Chapter 2 is adopted here. There is nonetheless a danger of circular reasoning - in using cultural differences between regions to separate cemeteries whose differences are then used to assert the existence of the cultural divide.

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<sup>2</sup> It may be noted in passing that I have classified or examined the data in more ways than detailed here but where the results add nothing to the discussions in the way of new information. It is clearly impractical to justify the omission of all other techniques than those used.

Many major differences between the Varna and Gumelnitsa cemeteries will become apparent, however, and the cultures are used simply as another level of description and not as an explanation of the patterning (and not to the exclusion of other spatial/temporal divisions). A more detailed account of this problem is deferred to Chapters 6 and 7.

Age and sex categories have been argued (in Chapter 1) to be likely to relate to fundamental structural properties of society and can be measured regardless of gender classifications (although not of possible multiple sexes). Section 2B therefore considers in detail the age/sex structure of the available evidence and the relationship of age and sex categories to the essentially spatial patterning of the data explored in Section 2A. Definition of gender categories, along with other broad social groups (based on kinship, residence, etc.) will be one of the objects of the discussions, principally in Section 4.

The elements of the physical enactment of burials are expressed temporally as well as spatially. Most previous studies of the burial evidence have concentrated almost exclusively on the spatial dimension with comments about the temporal aspects of burial limited to the definition of relative chronologies. This will be of some relevance to the discussions here, although the difficulty in establishing precise chronological sequences has been fully discussed in Chapter 2. The temporal aspect of burials may also be seen in terms of the prescribed sequences of (ritual actions); the temporal order of the rite of passage, and so on. Although all stages of the process of burial may not be equally visible archaeologically some aspects of the material and symbolic sequence of the burial ritual will be examined in Section 3.

Section 4 of the chapter therefore takes the temporal and spatial patterning of the evidence and continues to explore and define the multiplicity of ritual, symbolic and social structures within the hierarchical framework I have imposed on these. Inevitably,

the discussion also begins to move towards interpreting the values of these structures and thus leads into and partly overlaps with the arguments of Chapters 4 and 5.

## 2) BURIAL FORM

### A) *Spatial patterning*

The potential number of spatial characteristics of burial practices that can be measured is limitless. Many of the commonly used categories for description, as discussed above, are distinguished because they are suggested to be *meaningful*, often *meaning* one particular aspect of social structure, or facet of religious belief. In adopting many of the same categories it is not intended that the same interpretations should be assumed.

Figure 3.1 presents in outline the size and composition of the total sample of Late Chalcolithic burials from north-east Bulgaria, and is a summary of the information detailed in Appendix 1.<sup>3</sup> It is obvious from the figure that there are major variations in the distribution of the finds. From a total of approximately 875 burials, almost two-thirds are from two sites, Varna and Durankulak. The total number of graves differs from the number of individuals both because of 'cenotaphs',<sup>4</sup> which do not contain human remains, and because of multiple burials and stray finds of human remains. Because the number of individuals represented by the stray finds is often indefinite, the total figures for some sites are approximations.

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<sup>3</sup> It has been suggested that further unexcavated burials exist at most of the known cemeteries (Durankulak: Dimov pers. comm.; Golyamo Delchevo: Todorova et al. 1975; Radingrad: T. Ivanov 1980; Sava-Tsonevo: Toncheva pers. comm.). Excavation at Varna and Omurtag may continue.

<sup>4</sup> Cenotaph is used here to denote any grave pit containing artefacts but in which no body was interred. For this reason the ten 'symbolic burials' containing partial skeletons from Varna (I. Ivanov 1988) are excluded from the figure for cenotaphs.

i) *burial location:*

There are two principle forms of burial location: extra-mural cemeteries, and burials within tells. The former is the more common. Most of the extra-mural (flat) cemeteries are related to particular settlements, being from circa 50-500 metres from the site (Figure 3.2). Todorova (1986a) has suggested that the cemeteries are generally located to the west or south-west of the settlement. This is indeed the case for Devnya, Durankulak, Golyamo Delchevo, Targovishte and Radingrad (west and north-west), but is by no means universally so. The possible lake settlement at Varna is to the south of the cemetery; at Vinitza the cemetery is south and south-east of the tell; at Lilyak the cemetery is to the north-east of the tell, and the Sava-Tsonevo site, falling between the two tells is therefore to the north-east of Sava. No direction is specified for Omurtag. The Hotnitsa, Kodzhadermen, Kubrat and Ruse finds are from within the tell.

Topographically, the location of the cemeteries is also variable (see Figure 3.2). A broad division between the coastal and inland sites may nevertheless be distinguished. Devnya lies in a shallow depression to the west of the lake edge, Durankulak on a spur into the lake and Varna on a shallow slope rising from the Late Chalcolithic shoreline. Inland, the cemeteries are typically on river terraces or slopes, either higher than the tell (Vinitza, Radingrad), or separated from it by a stream (Golyamo Delchevo, Targovishte).

The cemeteries are not physically bounded (insofar as the known finds represent the limits of the cemetery), except in some cases by natural features (e.g. streams at Golyamo Delchevo and Varna).

ii) *cemetery form:*

With the exception of a few double or multiple burials, and cenotaphs, all burials consist of individual inhumations in pits. Multiple graves exist only at Ruse, double burials at Varna, Ruse and Vinitza. These graves do not overlap (except in rare cases as described in Chapter 2), and do not possess surface structures.<sup>5</sup>

Published plans exist for several of the sites (Figure 3.3), though the plans for Durankulak, Ruse and Varna are only partial. No published plans exist for Kodzhadermen, Lilyak, Omurtag, Radingrad, Reka Devnya and Sava-Tsonevo. The Lilyak cemetery can be loosely reconstructed from the description given (Ovcharov 1963: Figure 3.3e). A number of the plans (e.g. for Varna) are schematic rather than to scale. Statistical techniques which rely upon precise spatial relationships are therefore applicable only in a minority of cases. Even in these cases the general phasing of the sites is too poorly detailed to determine synchrony and sequence for the burials and the analyses are therefore not undertaken.

The clearest evidence for the grouping of graves by date is from Durankulak (Todorova and Dimov 1989b). These details are shown on the map of the whole cemetery in Figure 3.3bi. The map also indicates that these zones of the cemetery overlap, and therefore cannot be used alone as a clear indicator of the date of burials.

Discussions of spatial patterns at the cemetery level have concentrated on determining clustering of wealth (especially I. Ivanov 1991a; Lichardus 1988), or the possible existence of clan or family groups (Mikov 1926-7; Todorova 1983). Figure 3.3

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<sup>5</sup> Todorova (1986a) has suggested that the absence of overlapping graves is evidence that the burials were originally marked on the surface, possibly by wooden markers, but the only evidence which might indicate this are the post-holes from a minority of burials at Devnya (see Section 2B).

demonstrates that both clustering and absolute distance between graves vary between and within cemeteries. The 'ritual core' of Varna (Lichardus 1988; I. Ivanov 1991a) refers to the location of the richest burials from the site but does not form a clearly defined spatial cluster of burials. The spatial component of the distribution of 'wealth' within sites will be returned to in later discussions.

iii) *grave form*:

The shape and size of the grave pit is reported in a minority of cases (and is not included in Appendix 1 for this reason). In some cases it is specifically noted that the form of the grave pit could not be distinguished (Figure 3.4). Grave form may be divided into two basic types, rectangular and oval. Although the evidence is incomplete, there is some evidence that the rectangular shape (at Varna typically trapezoidal with the wider end at the head and with rounded corners: Ivanov 1991a) is dominant in the coastal cemeteries (Durankulak, Varna and Devnya) and the oval form inland (Golyamo Delchevo, Sava-Tsonevo, Vinitsa). Thus, the oval form is associated with a flexed body posture (Section 2Aiv) inland, but the rectangular form is reported to be used for flexed burials at Varna. Size is not recorded for any flexed burial pits from this site but at Devnya flexed burials are generally in shorter grave pits than extended burials.<sup>6</sup>

Depth of the burials is more commonly recorded (and is included in Appendix 1). In most cases depth is from the present ground surface and may differ from the original depth as a result of both erosion and deposition, therefore. For this reason comparisons of absolute depths between cemeteries are meaningless. Burials within tells must also be separated from the extra-mural cemeteries for description and analysis. Relative

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<sup>6</sup> It may be noted that the burials at Varna have sloping sides (I. Ivanov 1991a) and absolute dimensions will therefore vary with preservation and depth. It is not clear whether the same is true for other sites.

(within cemetery) depth is a more useful measure (though not of chronological age or sequence), but many of the cemeteries lie on sloping ground and/or close to watercourses and may also be subject to differential deposition and erosion. The general patterns which may be suggested are presented in Figure 3.5.

Cenotaphs are included in the statistics for both grave form and depth where the evidence is available. Two basic forms of cenotaph may be distinguished. At Devnya and Golyamo Delchevo, objects in the grave cover a roughly circular area, and are smaller in length and diameter than inhumations. At Varna (where size is specified), and for at least some cenotaphs at Durankulak (Vaysov 1992b), cenotaphs are placed in pits with approximately the same size and shape as inhumations (see Figure 3.19). Depth, however, varies in comparison with inhumation burials from the sites where information is available (Figure 3.5). Cenotaphs are on average deeper than inhumations at Devnya and Varna, and shallower at Vinitsa, but fall within the range of variation of inhumation burials at all sites.

iv) *body posture:*

Body posture can be divided into two general categories (Figure 3.6): the 'extended' position, with the corpse laid on its back with legs outstretched; and the 'flexed' position where the body is laid on either side with legs and (usually) arms bent. There are many variations on these basic positions, in the position of the arms, the degree of contraction of the legs, and so on (Figure 3.7), and in the placement of the body, which may be turned to one side (extended burials), prone (flexed and extended burials), or on the back but with the legs flexed and turned to one side. A small minority of burials do not fall directly into the two basic categories, either by being anatomically disordered (but not resulting from later disturbance), or by being only partial interments (Figure 3.8). Figure 3.9 lists the human skeletal remains which do not result from formal

interment, or are due to disturbance of earlier graves during or subsequent to the Late Chalcolithic and exist as 'stray' finds.

The exclusivity of the two main cemetery types divided on the basis of body position - extended and flexed burials with the body laid on the right side, opposed to flexed, left-side burials - is almost complete, and is also reflected in a spatial division, shown in Figure 3.10. The presence of extended burials is thus limited to Devnya, Durankulak and Varna, and child burials at Ruse, while flexed burials on the right side are found at the same sites, plus Kubrat, and as a single occurrence at Golyamo Delchevo. It should be noted nonetheless that flexed/left burials occur in small numbers at Varna, Durankulak and Devnya. The Reka Devnya burial is also probably in the flexed/left position.

The incidence of partial and mutilated skeletons is more irregular. Some cemeteries have no such finds. The nature of the remains also varies considerably. The trepaned skulls from Ruse are from otherwise complete burials, without obvious differences from other graves at the site, whilst Kubrat has two burials consisting solely of skulls and the Devnya mutilated burial *lacks* a skull. The similarities between finds are typically closest within the same cemetery. Nonetheless, the majority of the finds probably involve defleshing/excarnation, or are secondary burials. This will be returned to below in discussing temporal characteristics of the burial ritual.

Stray finds are also unevenly distributed in terms of their numbers and location. As with partial/mutilated finds they are also probably the result of different processes (as, for example, the probably disturbed burials from Ruse, compared to the 'accidental' finds from Hotnitsa).

v) *orientation:*

Orientation of the burial is measured most commonly by compass point and taken along the axis of the body, or in some cases where preservation is poor, or for cenotaphs, of the grave pit itself. The orientations given in Appendix 1 are in all cases the direction of the head from the centre of the grave.<sup>7</sup> Precise measures of orientation, by degrees, are reported for a minority of burials and therefore the information presented in Figure 3.11 uses compass points for all sites.

The majority of the cemeteries have a single dominant orientation. Ruse is the major exception to this, although over half of the burials are oriented between south-west and south-east. This general orientation is also exceptional. The prevalent orientation in the coastal cemeteries is north to north-east, and at the inland sites is east to south-east (with Lilyak as an exception). At Varna almost a third of the available evidence comes from cenotaphs where the finds are from rectangular pits. The orientation of these finds (and similar cenotaphs at Durankulak) is in most cases consistent with the dominant orientation of burials at the site (i.e. north-east for Varna and north for Durankulak).

vi) *grave goods* <sup>8</sup>

The number and variety of artefacts found in the burials under study is enormous. The total number of individual objects recorded is close to 30 000. These may be divided by

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<sup>7</sup> Or, in a few cases, the direction in which the head would lie if anatomically arranged (e.g. Kubrat 1).

<sup>8</sup> Grave goods are defined as any artefact placed in the grave either as separate objects or by virtue of being attached to the corpse. It is generally assumed here that any artefact found on the body or the base of the grave is a deliberate inclusion, and that objects in the grave fill (more than a few centimetres above the level of the body) are accidental inclusions, unless there is specific evidence to suggest that this is not the case. All discussions, unless otherwise specified, use *deliberately* included artefacts only. Where known the location of grave goods with regard to the body is included in Appendices 1 and 2.

several criteria, including: material from which the object is manufactured; form/function; frequency (and multiplicity in the case of beads, etc.); and location. The artefacts found with individual published burials are included in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 classifies the artefacts by material, type and frequency. Two alternative schemes for classification are given - dividing the finds by form and the material from which they are made, or by form regardless of material. Both schemes will be referred to throughout this and later chapters. The majority of published accounts of the sites include details of the artefacts found in some or all burials from the site, and this information is also available for a large number of the unpublished burials not included in Appendices 1 and 2.

The analysis of grave goods will form a significant part of this thesis. This section is only concerned with those elements of direct relevance to this particular discussion, therefore - i.e. the spatial distribution of artefacts within the grave. The two classifications of artefacts in Appendix 2 are to some extent an arbitrary division by form and material. It may be argued that different materials possessed different symbolic associations (values) for those who used them as grave goods (this will be considered in subsequent chapters). Appendix 2 is thus a single level of quantitative analysis of the finds. Several further forms, or levels, of classification may be distinguished.

At the widest level, the number of burials from each site containing grave goods is given in Figure 3.12. A division is made where possible between burials without grave goods which are relatively intact, and may therefore be assumed not to have originally included grave goods (made from durable materials), and those graves which have been disturbed and may therefore have originally contained artefacts. The percentage of burials with artefacts is consistently high - between 70% and 100% at all sites except the two intra-mural cemeteries (Kubrat and Ruse) and Omurtag. Although precise information is not available for Radingrad and Sava-Tsonevo, the majority of burials

from both sites include artefacts.<sup>9</sup> This overall distribution pattern can be broken down according to the same classifications used in Appendix 2 (Figure 3.13). The figures given in Figure 3.13 are the number of graves containing each artefact type, regardless of the number of artefacts in the grave (the total number of artefacts is given in Appendix 2).

Figure 3.13 may also be used to indicate presence/absence of artefact types at cemetery level. Figure 3.14 establishes that the majority of artefact types found at a single site only are from Varna, and include objects made from gold, copper, obsidian, marble and fired clay (but does not include other unique features of this site, such as gold decorated pottery). It may also be observed that Varna also includes at least one find from most of the artefact categories distinguished. A number of other artefact types are limited in distribution to two or three sites (Figure 3.15), usually Varna and Durankulak, sometimes with the addition of Devnya. Thus it is possible to suggest that some artefact types are associated only with the coastal, Varna Culture, cemeteries (Reka Devnya is difficult to relate to this pattern because of the few finds published). The inland cemeteries only include four of the defined artefact types not known from at least one of the coastal cemeteries (flint axe, fired clay applique, bone chisel, bone point) - none of which occurs in more than five graves in total.

The accuracy of this cultural distinction is nevertheless dependent on the criteria chosen for classification. The coastal-inland division ignores artefact types which are found at Varna, Durankulak and Golyamo Delchevo, for example. The large size (and smaller number) of the coastal cemeteries may exaggerate their similarities and the variety of the Gumelnitsa cemeteries. Greater confidence may be ascribed to those patterns of exclusivity which occur frequently as opposed to those based on a single, or few

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<sup>9</sup> Information is from published accounts (Radingrad) and my examination of unpublished documentation from the sites (both).

artefacts, but this ignores the possibility of associations based on values, or symbolic meanings (for example), which are limited in their geographical extent.<sup>10</sup> A further comparison may be made between the distributions derived from Figure 3.13a and those from Figure 3.13b, where classification is by function regardless of material. The pattern produced by this second form of classification is far less culturally distinct. All of the tool/ornament types specified in Figure 3.13b occur at at least three cemeteries including inland and coastal sites.

Greater resolution of the initial classifications is also possible. In particular, different types of copper axe and chisel, figurines and pottery vessels have been defined (Chernyh 1979; Todorova 1981b; Raduncheva 1976a; Todorova 1980a, etc.). Specific axe and figurine types are given where known in Figure 3.16. The figure reflects the observed greater frequency and variety of copper axe types in the coastal culture. The only axe type found solely in the Gumelnitsa area (Radingrad) is itself an unique find. Figurines show considerable variety in form even among the very limited number of burial finds. Pottery typology is more complicated, and it may be emphasized that this study is not concerned to undertake precise typological classification, which would require more detailed consideration of pottery from non-burial locations. Some subtypes of common vessel forms are given in Appendix 2, nevertheless (e.g. 'classic' and 'footed-classic' biconical bowls), and are included in the distribution details of Figure 3.13.

The second major aspect of spatial patterning important here is positioning of objects within the grave. Some information regarding the location of objects in the grave is

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<sup>10</sup> Detailed, statistical analysis of these patterns (e.g. by the Chi-square statistic) is not undertaken because the classificatory categories used do not distinguish between typological differences (in pottery vessels for example) which may be a more accurate guide to the identification of artefact types with sites or cultures. The establishment of specific patterns of artefact use between the sites and cultures studied is addressed in the general results of this chapter and in later chapters.

reported for approximately two-thirds of the objects included in this study.<sup>11</sup> The evidence varies considerably in the precision and manner in which the location of objects is described. The available information also varies according to the type of object. The location of roughly 70% of pottery vessels is available to this study, but the figure for gold and marble objects is around 50%, due to the publication of finds without full publication of the graves to which they belong.

Quantification of the location of objects is difficult. The location of many objects can be equally described in terms of several parts of the body, particularly in flexed burials (e.g. an object before the face may also be in or by the hands). However, using the pit circumference as the basis for description is impossible in the many cases where this is unknown. Potentially more problematic is the disturbance of objects between deposition and recovery. In some cases, where the grave is heavily disturbed, the location of objects within the grave is taken as unknown. A detailed study of formation processes for the remaining several hundred burials is impractical, given the aims of this thesis, but where possible an indication of disturbance to the grave overall, or to objects within it, is given in the individual burial details in Appendix 1.

The summary of the patterns in Figure 3.17 is an interpretation dependent on both the above problems of description and a simplification of the known variety. The percentages given are therefore intended to be used as relative rather than absolute measures. Percentage figures for the location of artefacts are given where the position of at least five artefacts in total are recorded for the cemetery. This figure is subjectively chosen to decrease the distortions that percentage figures for small total quantities may produce. In over half of the cases where adequate numbers of objects occur, the primary location accounts for over two-thirds of the finds. The addition of one further

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<sup>11</sup> That is, as listed in Appendix 2, excluding cenotaphs, and counting groups of objects (e.g. beads) as a single artefact where this may be inferred from the location and association of the finds.

location (either primary or secondary as given in Figure 3.17) extends this to over 90% of the finds types. In large part the percentage measures apply to Durankulak, although in some cases (e.g. gold rings) the evidence from one site supports that from other sites where fewer finds are known.

A number of the consistent patterns between sites are clearly related to the function of the objects. Thus, bracelets of any material are almost invariably worn by the individual. Beads in all materials are most commonly used for necklaces (i.e. are found in the region of the head, neck and chest) except in the case of Vinitsa (and Ruse) where spondylus beads are principally found in pottery vessels in the grave. The most consistent difference between sites is in the placement of pottery vessels and also to some extent follows the cultural division between Varna and Gumelnitsa sites. In the former, most vessels are placed near the head, and in the latter most commonly over the legs or between the legs and chest of flexed burials (i.e. before the waist).

A further level of simplification (and interpretation) is presented in Figure 3.18. The divisions used (worn, held, etc.) are impossible to quantify precisely. The assessments are based on the most common patterns derived from Figure 3.17 (e.g. bracelets are worn, pebble polishers are found in vessels, etc.). In most cases, however, an assumption is made that movement of artefacts within the grave will be minimal and that the function of the object will be reflected in its placement.

Different problems apply to the classification and quantification of the location of artefacts in cenotaphs. The locations of some artefacts in cenotaphs at Varna are included in Appendices 1 and 2 and the distributions of artefacts within cenotaphs from all of the sites (for which I have evidence) are included in the schematic diagrams of Figure 3.19. The figure re-asserts the difference noted above between cenotaphs (largely at the Gumelnitsa sites, plus some at Varna) which do not have the same grave form as burials and those (at the Varna Culture sites) which do. Figure 3.19 also

indicates that the placement of artefacts in many of the latter group of cenotaphs approximates to the position of similar artefacts in burials. Thus, pottery vessels are typically at the north end of the grave, axes in the north-east or north-west corner, etc.. The resemblance to burials is stronger in some cenotaphs than others (and is modified by other factors such as the multiple layers of deposits in some Varna cenotaphs) but the general division of burial-like or otherwise organized cenotaphs is summarized in Figure 3.19b.

## B) *Age and sex patterning*

### i) *variation between cemeteries:*

Information about the age and sex of the deceased is available for nearly 60% of the total number of burials (Figures 3.20 and 3.21), but the information varies between sites in quantity and precision. Studies by a number of anthropologists (Dronchilov 1923-4; Boev 1972; Marinov and Yordanov 1978; Cholakov and Boev 1986) frequently specify approximate age as well as sex. The largest single study is by Boev (1972) and includes the 75 skulls analyzed from Ruse. In this case, and also for Lilyak and Kubrat, no information is given in the study or site report to identify which skull belongs to which burial. Only where there is information which is recorded in both anthropological study and site report is it possible to relate age and sex to other features of the burial. For the more recently published cemeteries the major limitation to the determination of age and sex is preservation. In the case of Durankulak many shallow burials were found without surviving trace of bones. By analogy with other examples where some bones did survive many such graves are assigned to children.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The percentage of child burials at Durankulak in Figures 3.20-3.21 is lower than the 50% given by Todorova (1983). This figure is nonetheless for the whole cemetery, not only the Late Chalcolithic burials, and for only about half of the total number of graves eventually excavated. Nevertheless, the totals given in Figures 3.20-3.21 may be an under-representation of the actual number of (recovered) child burials because of the

Information is not available for Reka Devnya, where the body was not recovered; Radingrad, where some artefacts are said to be associated with male burials (e.g. axes: T. Ivanov 1980), but no anthropological information is given; and Omurtag. Details for some burials only are recorded for Lilyak, Kubrat, Ruse and Varna. The Hotnitsa finds are divided by age into children and adults, but not by sex.

Many of the attributions to age and sex categories are probable rather than certain (Figure 3.21). In a number of cases either age or sex is known but not both. Child burials are rarely also divisible by sex, but age is often estimated to within five to ten years (Figure 3.22) for adults, and more precisely for infants. In this chapter, the general categories given in Figure 3.21 are generally referred to, rather than the more detailed figures from Figure 3.22. However, only the more secure attributions to sex are used for most of the statistical analyses which follow. Sex has often been associated with body posture etc. (see above), but it is not possible to argue that posture can therefore be used to determine sex, without additional evidence (see Chapter 5).

Figure 3.21 shows that two-thirds of the burials are of adults. Children and adolescents combined account for a quarter of all burials. The lowest percentage for child and adolescent burials is at Ruse (12%), but does not take into account the stray burials from the site. The high percentage from Durankulak (31%) may nonetheless be lower than the total percentage for young individuals because of the very limited bone preservation and the paucity of grave goods in such graves. Devnya and Golyamo Delchevo both have significant percentages of destroyed burials for which age and sex are not known.

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tendency for such burials to have fewer grave goods and therefore to **be harder to accurately date.**

Males are more common than females at all but two of the cemeteries (at Targovishte equal numbers of males and females are found). The difference is greatest at Varna, although age/sex information is available for a smaller proportion of this site than for the other cemeteries. A general tendency in anthropological studies to over-estimate the number of males as opposed to females has been suggested (e.g. Molleson 1981) and may account for some of the variation (although not obviously at Durankulak). A tendency for females to be more frequently placed in the 'unknown' category has also been suggested (ibid.) and may also partially account for the discrepancy. Figure 3.22 shows the predominance of males in almost every age category. The principal exception is the age range 17-20, although here the higher number of females is almost totally due to the evidence from Durankulak.

The overall age pattern shows a peak in the number of individuals between 21 and 30, and reproduces the pattern found at several of the cemeteries, including the three largest samples (Durankulak, Ruse, Varna). The modal age-range for both males and females also falls within this category but the decline in the number of older individuals is steeper among females than males. Conversely the number of younger females is greater than males and average age is lower for females than males therefore.<sup>13</sup>

Other anthropological information, particularly cause of death, is only known for a small minority of burials and is only presented where it is relevant to the following discussion.

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<sup>13</sup> Average age has been estimated by Todorova (1978a) using information from fewer burials than considered here. Thus, average age for adult males is given as 32.37 years and 27.71 years for adult females. Including child deaths a population average of 24.6 years is suggested. Whilst describing the discrepancy between male and female age at death and roughly indicating life-expectancy these figures have little further application for the purposes of this chapter and similar statistics are not presented for the available evidence.

Information is available from a number of sites for the spatial distribution of age and sex categories (Figure 3.23). At Varna the south-eastern corner of the site contains considerably more male than female graves (but is the only well-published sector of the site). Devnya has no clear separation of male and female or adult and child graves. Durankulak is excluded from Figure 3.23 because too little information is available even for the fraction of the cemetery for which a detailed, published plan exists. However, the excavators do note the possibility of slight clustering of male and female graves within very localized areas of the site (Todorova 1988).

There is no clear grouping of graves according to age at Kubrat and Ruse (except in the presence of children in multiple burials at Ruse, not shown in the diagram), nor is there any definite grouping of any of the categories of grave at Vinitsa (and Sava-Tsonevo, from the partial information available to me). Targovishte and Golyamo Delchevo do show a spatial separation of graves by sex, however. At Targovishte the four male burials found are the westernmost known burials. At Golyamo Delchevo this is reversed with males graves predominantly found in the eastern half of the site.

ii) *grave form:*

There are no consistent patterns of associations between age and sex categories and variations in grave form though information is only available from a minority of sites. Details of grave dimensions exist only for male adult burials and cenotaphs at Varna. At Devnya male graves are largest (longest) but female graves are smaller than child burials. At Golyamo Delchevo there is no difference in length between male and female graves but child graves are considerably smaller.

Depth has been associated more closely with age and sex divisions at several sites. This has already been shown in Figure 3.5. For Durankulak the only available information suggests that child, female and male burials occur at progressively greater, non-

overlapping depths (Todorova and Dimov 1989b). At Varna, I. Ivanov (1991a) has linked depth to wealth (rich cenotaphs and burials) and to unusual burial rites (partial burials).<sup>14</sup> For Golyamo Delchevo, Todorova (Todorova et al. 1975) has suggested a correlation between depth and age, regardless of sex. This last observation is the most consistently found. Only at Vinitsa are child burials on average deeper than those of adults.

iii) *body position:*

Two broad patterns are also apparent when body position is related to age and sex (Figure 3.24). At the inland cemeteries dominated by the flexed/left body position this posture is used for adult, child, male and female burials. Golyamo Delchevo shows a slight digression in that burials in the flexed/left position but with the chest downwards are predominantly limited to adult males (although adult males are also more common than females and children in the normal flexed/left position).

In the coastal cemeteries, the differentiation between extended, supine male burials and flexed/right female burials is found at the three largest sites, although the evidence is incomplete. This is especially true of Varna where a number of the attributions to sex are probable rather than certain. At none of the sites is this sexual dualism absolute: female extended and male flexed burials occur. Flexed/left burials occur rarely at the coastal sites. Four are reported from Varna and one from Devnya, plus the only grave from Reka Devnya. There are also a number from Durankulak (see Figure 3.24) but the total evidence is too limited to suggest a strong correlation with age or sex categories.

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<sup>14</sup> This is nonetheless a simplification of the variation in the cemetery as a whole. Thus, burials in the north-east section of the site are reported to be generally shallower, averaging 0.7 m. depth (I. Ivanov 1985). This may reflect topographical factors. The evidence presented in Figure 3.5 is almost exclusively from the southern half of the cemetery.

The Durankulak evidence may suggest a slight preponderance of females and a clearer association with adult burials in this position.

The lone, sexed flexed/right burial, of an adult female, from Golyamo Delchevo cannot be compared with other similar inland burials from Ruse, Kubrat and Omurtag for which no anthropological evidence is available. It is clear, however, that there is no division of flexed/right and extended burials by sex at the inland sites. Neither is there any indication in the published anthropological accounts of these cemeteries that the side of the body in flexed burials is associated with any one age or sex category.

iv) *orientation:*

In general, orientation of the burials is not dependent on, or related to, the age or sex of the individual, but is consistent for all burials within an individual cemetery. It is not possible to relate age/sex categories to orientation for Ruse and Kubrat where there is greater variety in both measures. The other sites for which no age/sex data exists (Radingrad, Lilyak, etc.) have a single dominant orientation which is therefore likely to apply to all age/sex groups.

v) *grave goods:*

The complexity in the overall distribution of grave goods described above is increased by a division by age and sex categories. At the level of distribution within the grave, it is clear from the above discussion that in some cemeteries age and sex classification is closely linked to differences in body position, and this will therefore have an impact on the way in which the location of objects is described. At the wider level the major difficulty is again the absence of age/sex data for many burials and the uncertainty of attributions in other cases.

The overall division of artefact types by age and sex (and cenotaphs) at each site is given in Figure 3.25. Where no age or sex information is available for a site or category it is omitted from the table. Few of the object types detailed in Figure 3.25 are found solely with one of the age or sex categories. Most of the exclusive distributions of artefacts shown in Figure 3.26a are found in adult graves, but not with children, and/or burials but not cenotaphs. The former pattern is common for both classificatory schemes (form and material, or form only) and includes a wide variety of tools, ornaments and vessels. Artefact types not found in cenotaphs are similarly varied, especially at Durankulak, where several types of copper and gold artefacts (etc.) are only found in burials. Figure 3.26a nonetheless does not include gold, copper, marble (etc.) artefact types only found in Varna cenotaphs, but which occur in fewer than five graves in total. The Gumelnitsa sites include one, or at most two, artefact types which are exclusively distributed according to any of the categories.

Exclusively male associated artefacts include general categories (e.g. shaft-hole axes at Durankulak) as well as more specific classifications. Artefact types solely found in female burials (and in more than five graves at a site) occur only at Durankulak and only for specific and relatively uncommon grave goods.

Many other object categories are predominantly, but not exclusively, found with one age/sex category, or with cenotaphs, or are exclusively distributed at one or more sites. Figure 3.26b indicates the circumstances where no exclusive relationship exists but where a statistical association with an age/sex category can be determined using the Chi-square statistic.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The information available for each grave is frequently incomplete. Thus, far more burials are recorded than the sum of sexed and aged individuals. Further, there are a small number of graves (e.g. with sexed child burials) which could lead to double-counting. Three separate Chi-square statistics are produced, therefore: child-adult, male-female, and burial-cenotaph, which depend on the total of available evidence for each pair independently. As this produces three statistics with a single degree of freedom, Yates Correction is applied, as suggested by Owen and Jones (1990). Where the number of graves containing an artefact type for each pair of categories is fewer

The patterns which the Chi-square results produce for distributions by sex are to some extent a reverse of the exclusive relationships. Again, the most commonly occurring patterning is from Durankulak, but, in this case, female graves are more likely to contain general classes of artefacts (rings and appliques), whereas male graves include specific artefact types. Figure 3.26a also demonstrates the greater variety of grave goods in adult burials, at least at Durankulak (where sufficient numbers of finds exist to allow statistical measurement). Only gold rings in Varna burials correlate to child graves. However, the same artefact type correlates even more strongly with cenotaphs at Varna. Both figures may be partially due to the preferential publication of graves containing gold artefacts from the site. The greater number of Chi-square correlations for Varna and Durankulak may be explained largely by the large size of these sites and the high number of grave goods on average that burials include.

It is possible only in a few cases to specify an *absolute* relationship between artefact types and age or sex groups, therefore. In other cases a tendency for artefacts to be unequally distributed between individuals and cenotaphs may be determined for individual sites or for the data as a whole. Certainly, caution must be exercised in interpreting both the exclusive and statistical relationships. There is, for example, no definite reason why only those artefact types which conform to the specific Chi-square level adopted should be assumed to have a relationship with an age or sex category, particularly where the results only apply to a small number of graves and may thus reflect chance factors of preservation or publication (as with the Varna gold rings). Even where there is an exclusive relationship the grave goods invariably occur in only a minority of graves of that category. The relationship between sex (gender), age and

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than five no Chi-square statistic is produced. Only those correlations valid to at least the 0.05 confidence level are included in the table.

artefacts (plus body position, etc.) will be of fundamental importance to the arguments of each of the later chapters.

The possible influence of body posture on the position of artefacts in the grave, and the influence of age and sex categories on this itself, at some sites, has been commented upon above. Nonetheless, it has also been observed that many grave good types are predominantly placed in one position in the grave or are more commonly found with one age or sex category than with others. Thus, the proportion of pots found in any one position in the grave is similar to the overall proportions of the artefact type for each category as given in Figure 3.25. Some degree of differentiation in the placement of three vessel types (classic bowls, footed-classic bowls and cups) from Durankulak may be suggested, however.<sup>16</sup> In each case, the vessels are proportionately less likely to be located by the head in female graves than male graves. The reverse is true in the case of flint blades from the same site where finds in vessels are twice as common in female graves than male. Conversely, a higher percentage are located by the arms of male burials. There is slight evidence to suggest that this last pattern may be found also at Devnya - flint blades in male burials are more commonly by the arms, and in female burials in vessels - but the overall variety in placement is also greater.

This section of the chapter has been a protracted attempt at classification of a large and complicated body of evidence according to a number of chosen criteria. The emphasis has been to specify the terms by which the classifications are made, as well as expressing variation in numerical terms. There has been little analysis of the evidence, except in terms of the accuracy and frequency of the results, although, in the first part

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<sup>16</sup> Figures for the variations are as follows:

Classic bowls (percentage by head): male 88%; female 68%

Footed classic bowls (percentage by head): male 65%; female 36%

Cup (percentage by head): male 60%; female 40%

These figures assume that the position of artefacts is equally likely to be known for male and female graves. In female graves, the vessels are more likely to be located near the waist and legs, and 'elsewhere' respectively.

of the chapter, variations between sites were measured in terms of a cultural division, and in the second part differences between individuals were discussed in terms of age and sex patterning. Results have also been described solely in terms of spatial patterning. Section 3 adds a further level of variation to those already described by considering the temporal element of burial rituals. The relationship between the aspects of spatial patterning discussed in this section will be returned to and elaborated in Section 4, in addition to the results of the following discussion.

### 3) *THE TEMPORAL DIMENSION OF BURIAL RITUAL*

A distinction has already been made between time as chronology (e.g. absolute and relative date, synchronism, duration, etc.) and tempo - the sequentiality and rhythm inherent to the models of habitus and structuration outlined in Chapter 1. This section is concerned with both time and tempo but is a full account of neither. Chronology has already been considered in depth in Chapter 2 and this section uses some of the results detailed in that chapter. Tempo, because it is an element of social behaviour, interaction and strategy, cannot be wholly reduced to the quantitative measures which are the focus of this chapter. Nonetheless, the tripartite structure of the 'rite of passage' provides one (potentially) measurable (though not quantifiable) dimension of structure. The relationship of burial to other mortuary practices, of which burial may be a part, is another.

The focus of analysis used here is also different from that of Chapter 2. Variations between sites, and some variation within sites, have already been detailed, at least in chronological terms, and do not need to be discussed further in depth. The major concern of this section is therefore the individual grave and its component parts.

A) *Inter-site variation:*

The overall chronological position of the cemeteries being considered in this study has been presented in Figure 2.11. From this figure it is clear that the cemeteries under consideration are not exactly contemporary and do not all exist for the same duration. However, Chapter 2 has also discussed the difficulty in providing both a certain date for individual burials (and therefore sites) and in establishing the exact (absolute) age and duration of the sites. Nonetheless, differences in the duration of the sites are an element of temporal variation which can be distinguished to some extent. The five skeletons from one house at Hotnitsa which probably all date to a single event, or a short period of time, are at one end of a spectrum of longevity, while Durankulak lies at the other extreme. The other cemeteries, excepting perhaps Radingrad and Targovishte, are founded in the Late Chalcolithic, and do not continue after the end of the period. Golyamo Delchevo and Devnya may be limited to the last phase of the Late Chalcolithic only, but this does not indicate whether the cemeteries are in use for the whole of this phase (whose duration in any case cannot be established from current evidence).

It is possible to observe differences between the cemeteries in terms of foundation and longevity, therefore, but not to accurately measure either of these. Neither the date at which the cemetery is first used, nor its duration, can be clearly related to cultural factors - Devnya for example is a late foundation and of short duration, the opposite of Durankulak. Most of the inland sites do appear to be limited to the Late Chalcolithic but this is not certainly the case for all.

The size of the finds locations (in terms of number of graves) also can be related to the duration of the site to suggest the frequency of burials. This is clearly affected by the exact duration, which is unknown in all cases, and the completeness of excavations at the site. As a very crude measure, the number of burials per division of the Late Chalcolithic for which the cemetery certainly or probably exists, suggests that fewer

than ten burials per period (Lilyak, Radingrad, Targovishte), or up to 150 burials per period (Varna), may occur. Both Durankulak and Varna (and also, possibly, Ruse) may be suggested to have a larger number of burials per unit of time than the other sites (where a typical range is 10-30 burials estimated per sub-phase). Although this does not certainly indicate that burials occur more frequently at Durankulak and Varna than at other sites, it is possible to observe that more burials are known from one sub-phase (i.e. Gumelnitsa/Varna 3) at these sites than at the other sites which also date to this period (see also later arguments that the coastal cemeteries may include a greater proportion of the settlement population than the inland sites).

Evidence for the duration of any sub-phase of the Late Chalcolithic (in absolute terms) is extremely poor. The tentative suggestion made in Chapter 2 that phase 3 of the Late Chalcolithic may be the shortest sub-phase can nonetheless be used along with the bias in distribution of the finds towards the end of the Chalcolithic to argue that burial in general, and at most sites, is most frequent at this date.

The uncertainty of dating several sites does not allow clear comparison of the elements of burial practice established in Section 2 with specific temporal divisions. Most of the better dated sites are at least partly contemporary (in Late Chalcolithic 3). The Targovishte cemetery, which is probably earlier than the majority of the sites, is very similar in body posture, orientation, etc. to later sites from the same region. The relative infrequency of grave goods (and absence of some common artefact types) at the site is difficult to assess in chronological terms because of the absence of clearly dated parallels from the first part of the Gumelnitsa Culture. Omurtag has few grave goods in total throughout the Late Chalcolithic and is geographically close to Targovishte. Targovishte may provide a chronological link with Middle Chalcolithic burials from the inland region. The similarities between Middle and Late Chalcolithic burial patterns in the coastal and inland areas will be addressed in Chapters 6 and 7.

B) *Temporal variation within sites:*

Only at Durankulak is it possible to establish clear differences between burials of different phases for a substantial number of graves. Approximately half of the burials from Durankulak which have been certainly or probably dated from available evidence are from the third phase of the Varna Culture. Roughly equal numbers of burials are known from Varna 1 and 2. Many burials cannot be precisely dated, except, broadly, to the first or second half of the Late Chalcolithic (thus in line with Varna, Golyamo Delchevo, Devnya etc.). The overall burial pattern which has been described for Durankulak is found throughout the Late Chalcolithic: that is, extended and flexed burials, largely differentiated by sex; orientation to the North; variations in depth between adult and child burials, etc.. It may be possible to suggest that female graves are proportionately more common in the earlier half of the Late Chalcolithic, and child graves less common, but this is influenced by the occurrence and age/sex distribution of a number of artefacts, principally pottery and copper forms, which have been used as clear chronological indicators. It is also possible to distinguish an increase in the frequency of copper artefacts through time. Some copper axe forms may be limited in distribution to the Varna 3 period (see Figure 2.9). Most artefact types nonetheless occur in burials in all phases of the Late Chalcolithic (including gold objects), although they may alter typologically, as in the case of pottery vessels.

This consistency through time in the basic pattern of burial forms at Durankulak is also apparent at other sites where some chronological variation (in terms of phases represented) is known. At Radingrad, published accounts of the site do not distinguish between the single Middle Chalcolithic and remaining Late Chalcolithic burials, in terms of form. Similarly, at Omurtag, the available information suggests that the Gumelnitsa 1 burial(s) is/are similar in form to later Gumelnitsa graves from the same site.

At Ruse and Kubrat the value of the depth of burials in the tell as an exact chronological indicator has been questioned. However, a crude division of the burials at Ruse by depth (in 1 metre blocks from the top of the tell) shows that the three main burial positions (flexed/left, flexed/right and extended) occur at all depths from one to four metres, although flexed/left burials are the most common form at the shallowest level, and flexed/right below this at all depths, including the three burials more than four metres below the surface of the tell. There is also a slight differentiation in orientation with depth. Whilst orientation to the South (including South-West and South-East) is most common at the shallowest and deepest levels, orientation to the North (with North-East and North-West) is found commonly between two and four metres depth, and is more common than the southern orientation for burials between three and four metres. This can be taken as an imprecise association of temporal and spatial variation.

Overall variation in the depth of burials at Kubrat is far less than that from Ruse. The consistent depth and spatial separation of the two groups of burials at Kubrat suggest again that depth is not wholly dependent on chronological age. Both groups of burials are in any case very similar in their burial forms (predominantly adult and flexed/left with a minority of flexed/right, partial and extended child graves). Orientation does vary between the groups, being principally to the East in the higher burials and to the South in the lower group, but the temporal aspect of this variation is impossible to establish.

The broad contemporaneity and relatively limited duration of the other burial sites also supports the view that variations in burial form are not linked to chronological date (i.e. phase), at the relatively coarse scale of analysis which is possible, other than in terms of the typology of artefacts. This provides some justification for regarding each site as a single unit of analysis (including in Section 2 above).

C) *Variation at the level of the grave:*

Neither precise chronological relationships between sites, nor within sites (including the sequence of burials), can be measured with the evidence available, therefore. Some understanding of the relationship between graves can be understood, however, in terms of the (relative) frequency of burials and the longevity and date of formation of the sites. Similarly, only vague suggestions can be made regarding the absolute duration of individual burial rituals, but it is possible to distinguish differences in the *tempo* of burial practices between graves and sites.

In Chapter 1 it was observed that the archaeological evidence of burial practices is likely to reflect only, or principally, the final stage of a series of funerary rituals. At the same time it was also noted that some elements of a burial must occur sequentially. Thus, in purely physical terms, the following sequence is involved in each burial: choice of location; preparation of the grave; inclusion of the body and artefacts; closure of the grave. The duration of these stages cannot be measured in absolute terms but, in a minority of cases, the evidence may suggest a *relatively* longer duration for one or more stage.<sup>17</sup> The actual duration of any stage is therefore less important (for my purposes here) than the fact of the elaboration of the stage in individual burials.

The excavation of the grave pit at a number of sites (and possibly all) is likely to be related to one particular individual. The depth and possibly the size of the grave pit are related at least to the age and sex of the deceased as well as (in some cases) to body posture. There is no published evidence (but also no published evidence to the

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<sup>17</sup> It is assumed that a longer duration may be apparent when there is evidence of greater complexity in the features associated with a stage of the burial, and it is therefore unclear what would indicate a shorter duration, except, for example, at Durankulak, where a minority of burials do not have a layer of stones over the body.

contrary) for infilling or re-cutting of the grave pit, supporting the view that the grave was dug close to the time of the burial of a particular individual.

There are two possible exceptions to this situation: double and multiple burials; and reburial. The occurrences of double and multiple burials have been described in Section 2. Reburial is a potential cause of the disarticulation of some partial or mutilated skeletons. The circumstances of individual burials of each type are widely different, however. The one occasion of the burial of an adult female with foetus (Devnya 6) may be counted as a single burial for these purposes. Vinitsa 30 may be a simultaneous double burial. There is no obvious disturbance of the larger individual, which the smaller burial partially overlaps, but also no evidence of the grave pit(s) in which the burials are placed. Vinitsa 3 and Varna 28 both contain a 'normally' buried individual and the partial remains of another. In the former case the additional (articulated) leg is probably placed on top of the whole skeleton at the time of the complete burial. In the latter case the disarticulated remains of a boy date either to the time of the complete burial, or to only slightly later, as the adult skeleton remains articulated. Another double burial from Varna (Grave 29) contains two disarticulated (or disturbed) skeletons. Simultaneous or sequential burial cannot be differentiated, therefore.

Different circumstances are found for the double and multiple burials from Ruse. The double burial of 1926 (No. 2) is of a complete adult and child, but again without evidence of the grave(s) form(s). A simultaneous double burial is implied by Kostov nonetheless. The same may also be the case for the double child burial (1952/4.15/1-2). The three multiple burials (1952/1.5/1-5, 1952/3.3-3.5/1-6, 1957/2.45/1-3) all include skeletons with different body positions and orientations and, in at least one case, (1957/2.45/1-3) have overlapping skeletons. The varying relationships between the bodies may indicate a number of separate (but not necessarily single) burials in the same location, although each skeleton apparently maintains its original posture,

suggesting either a short interval between burials or that care was taken not to disturb previous interments.

Kubrat is again different. At this cemetery individual graves may be associated in two locations. No indication is given by Mikov (1926-7) as to whether Skeleton 2b lies within the same pit as the higher skeleton, or what the vertical distance between the two finds is, but, in this case, the vertical stratigraphy indicates a clear temporal sequence. Graves 10, 11 and 12 from the same site are (presumably) in separate grave pits, and are all at the same stratigraphic level, so that the only indication of their being a 'group' is their spatial arrangement. In this case the juxtaposition relates also to the general sequence and frequency of burials.

Partial and mutilated burials may also reflect variations from the norm in the interval between another two events in the mortuary rituals: that is death and (final) burial. The sequence and speed of decay of the body after death vary according to many factors (Garland and Janaway 1989), including climate, treatment of the corpse, cause of death, etc.. However, the presence of disarticulated corpses in graves implies a longer interval between death and burial than for fully articulated corpses, and/or secondary burial.<sup>18</sup>

Variations in the forms of the partial and mutilated finds known have already been outlined. Mutilations involve a range of treatments of the skeleton, including breakage of some bones, deposition of all or parts of the skeleton other than in anatomical order, trepanations, etc.. Partial skeletons may include additional mutilations (as in the broken skull burials from Kubrat). Not all mutilations involve the disarticulation of the

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<sup>18</sup> It is possible that the interval between death and burial is the same in all cases but that the process of decay was more advanced for some burials than others. However, there is no obvious factor which would apply only to so few burials, and neither would such a factor explain the other unusual features of many partial or mutilated burials (extreme depth, breakage of bones, etc.).

skeletons, however. Occurrences of post-mortal trepanation at Ruse include fully articulated skeletons and may not have involved the defleshing of the individual before burial. Excarnation or secondary burial is likely in most cases of mutilation, however. There are no reported instances of cut-marks on bones which would indicate deliberate defleshing or dismemberment. It is impossible to determine, for example, whether the purposely crushed and split bones from Kodzhadermen were mutilated prior to burial (if indeed they belong to formal burials) or at a later date.

The possibility of exposure of some corpses prior to burial may also be related to the apparent relative infrequency of burials (in terms of numbers of burial per chronological phase and the short duration of use of many cemeteries compared to the associated settlements) at many sites. The higher number of male burials than female at many sites, and the under-representation of children at all of the cemeteries (with the possible exception of Durankulak), also suggest that many, perhaps the majority, of individuals are not given formal burial. The evidence from partial and mutilated burials may indicate that exposure of corpses is a common practice. 'Stray' finds from settlements may also be evidence of the exposure of corpses. The duration (and tempo) of burial can be related to other forms of mortuary practice, therefore.

The difference in time between the reburial of disarticulated skeletons and the 'normal' burial form may be considerable. The evidence for objects being held, worn on particular parts of the body or attached to clothing (including ochre staining on bones) is extensive. That the corpse was fully fleshed, and not for example an articulated skeleton, in most cases, is suggested by the precise location of objects such as beads (e.g. from necklaces) in graves with very little apparent disturbance.

Variation at the second stage of the temporal sequence of each burial - essentially the period between the digging of a grave and its closure - is potentially the most complex of the three stages in terms of the number of objects (including the corpse) affected. It

is also the most difficult to determine because there are few physical indicators which can be used to suggest either absolute or relative temporal variations in the performance of the burial ritual itself.

The precise order in which the body and objects were included in the grave may vary. The large number of ornaments and tools which are worn or held, and the evidence for the corpse being dressed, all suggest that the body was prepared away from the grave and placed in the grave pit with these objects in a single action. The majority of pottery vessels were probably placed in the grave after the body had been deposited. At several sites (Golyamo Delchevo, Vinitsa, Radingrad, Sava-Tsonevo) many, or most, of the vessels are placed on top of the body. This is also true for a smaller number of vessels at Devnya and Durankulak. Very few vessels are found below the body. The stacking of vessels (and other objects) inside each other provides a further sequence in the deposition of artefacts in the grave. It is possible thus to make a general observation that larger vessels are placed in the grave before smaller vessels, for example.

This temporal sequence in the deposition of the body and artefacts applies to the majority of graves from all sites, at least in outline. The sequence may also be simplified or complicated by the omission and addition of elements. Omission is most apparent in the burials either without ornaments attached to the body, or without pottery, or without grave goods at all. Additional components may exist in the complexity of the ordering of grave goods, in the treatment of the grave pit prior to the inclusion of the body (e.g. pebbles lining the base of the graves Omurtag 4, 5 and 6, Golyamo Delchevo 3, Targovishte 2 and 6, also a probable hide in Devnya 18), or in the placement of objects above the body, as in the stone covers of most of the burials from Durankulak.

Temporal variation in the burial ritual also extends to the grave goods themselves. In particular, a distinction may be made between objects made specifically to be included

in burials and objects which have a less direct link between manufacture and mortuary deposition. In terms of physical evidence, the production of an object for (a) burial or otherwise can be suggested from the presence or absence of use-wear, or by analysis of the material of which the artefact is composed. Use-wear analysis has been published for very few of the artefacts found with the burials under study here. Where wear is positively identified, it is included in Appendix 1. A summary of all the available evidence is also presented in Figure 3.27.

The most complete evidence for the use or otherwise of non-pottery grave goods is from Varna. Figure 3.27 indicates that copper and stone tools, including almost all axes and chisels, have use-wear traces. Flint tools are also generally heavily worked except for blades and end-scrapers which are described as lightly worked or unworked by Kanchev (1978). It may also be noted that some artefact types which are only found at Varna (copper spearhead, copper axe-pick, obsidian blade) are unworked. I. Ivanov (1978d) further suggests that the axe-pick was unsuitable for use because of the size of the shaft-hole. There has been less published work on the jewelry from the site. The detailed study of gold-work by Echt, Thiele and Ivanov (1991) outlines manufacturing techniques but does not describe use-evidence for the finds. Only three double-spiral copper pins are therefore certainly stated to be without traces of wear (I. Ivanov 1992). Although demonstrating that most of the artefacts analyzed had been used, Kanchev (1978) argues that most of the (non-flint) tools had been used for only a short period before deposition, and may have been 'symbolically' used, rather than as tools in everyday use.

Comparative evidence from other sites is limited. For Devnya, Todorova-Simeonova (1971) states that tools found in Cenotaphs do not have use-wear traces and that most tools in burials are similarly unused. Devnya also includes a 'miniature' copper shaft-hole axe in one child burial which is also regarded as 'non-functional' (ibid.). Copper artefacts at Golyamo Delchevo, by contrast, are heavily used (Todorova et al. 1975).

Use evidence is not given for flint or stone tools from Golyamo Delchevo, but many of the flint blades are broken, probably before inclusion in the burial. Many flint blades from several sites are only fragments (Appendix 1). This represents another aspect of the use of artefacts but does not require that the blades were broken *for* inclusion in burials without further evidence (deliberate breakage of flint blades is only suggested for some finds from Varna: I. Ivanov 1988). The same is true for the clay anthropomorphic figurine from Vinitsa (Grave 22) which was also broken before placement in the grave.

Evidence for the breaking of some objects before placement in burials, or for the presence/absence of use-wear, all relate to complete objects which may be assumed to represent finished types. This is not always clearly the case. From finds at Durankulak it is clear that spondylus appliques are made from cut lengths of bracelets. For this study, however, it is the relationship to burial which is of central interest. This allows a general observation that raw materials (i.e. material specifically intended for manufacture into artefacts as opposed to objects used without modification such as pebble polishers or some shells) are only exceptionally found in burials. There are a number of finds of colouring material, lumps of ochre and graphite which would probably be used in the decoration of pottery (Appendix 2), but not, for example, flint cores or complete spondylus shells. Two copper ingots have been proposed, from Reka Devnya (Mirchev 1961) and Varna (Ivanov 1991b) but neither is unambiguously identified as such. Reka Devnya also includes gold rings which Mirchev argues are unfinished and intended for further work.

Pottery vessels are the most frequent example of the second reason why artefacts are suggested to be manufactured specifically for inclusion in burials (Figure 3.27b). The careful manufacture of vessels (including use of decoration at some sites), but low firing temperature, accounts for a high percentage of pottery from Devnya, Durankulak,

Golyamo Delchevo, Targovishte, Varna and Vinitza (no details are given for other sites). At Devnya, Durankulak and Varna, additionally, many vessels are argued to be miniature versions of domestic or storage vessels. Large storage vessels with the same shape and decoration as the 'staged' vessels found in burials are known from the settlement at Durankulak, for example. No examples of the poorly fired 'burial' pottery are reported as being found in settlement or other non-mortuary contexts, from the sites associated with the known burial finds, or from other sites in north-east Bulgaria.

Objects in most other materials are either impossible to describe in such terms (e.g. spondylus), or can be analyzed only through use-wear traces (e.g. copper, flint). Only stone 'tools', where made from a friable or soft stone, can be argued to belong to this category. This is proposed for the stone objects from Targovishte (Angelova 1986a). However, Kanchev (1978) notes that chemical changes after deposition may account for the friability of the stone axe from Varna 43 (which is also unused according to wear evidence), and the same may also apply to the Targovishte finds.

The relationship which the above evidence describes is between the manufacture and use of artefacts and their deposition with a particular burial. However, much of the use evidence from Varna relates to objects found in Cenotaphs. The analysis of temporal variation between graves so far has been dependent on the framework provided by the death and burial of an individual. Cenotaphs, by their definition, do not possess this same structure, whether or not they do represent a particular individual. Thus, artefacts are the only means with which to address the temporal dimension of the ritual creation of cenotaphs.

Much of the detail discussed above is relevant to cenotaphs. Those cenotaphs for which use-wear analysis of artefacts is available are detailed in Figure 3.27. The slight difference in the frequency of artefacts with use traces between cenotaphs and burials at Devnya has also been noted. From Varna, Kanchev's (1978) analysis shows few

general differences between cenotaphs and burials in the occurrence of use traces on tools. Some differences may be related to the distribution of artefact types between the cenotaphs and burials with analyzed finds (e.g. the spearhead from Grave 43 is analyzed but not the similar find from cenotaph Grave 97). The pottery in cenotaphs at Varna and other sites is of the funerary (poorly fired) type. Exceptions include the gold decorated pottery of Grave 4.

Without the presence of a body in cenotaphs stratigraphic variation is dependent on the superimposition of objects. Two general types of cenotaph have been distinguished on the basis of overall form: those with artefacts placed as though a body were present, and those with artefacts otherwise deposited (Figure 3.19). The latter type includes, in a number of cases, additional treatment of the grave pit, by stones lining the base, for example. Objects are superimposed (e.g. stacked pottery vessels) in many such cenotaphs, but there is no indication from available evidence for a significant interval between the placement of different objects within the grave for any cenotaph of this type.

The former cenotaph type is also in some cases elaborated, by the use of stone covers at Durankulak, for example. There is greater complexity, however, in a number of the rich cenotaphs from Varna. Traces of organic material and staining from ochre and other minerals are found lining the base of several cenotaphs. Similar material is also present at a higher level in a number of graves and is often accompanied by grave goods. Figure 3.28 summarizes the two or three stage of the deposition of artefacts (illustrated in Figure 3.19) for these graves.

Todorova (1992) has suggested that several of the richest Varna cenotaphs contained a life-size anthropomorphic figure of unfired clay which is partially preserved in the case of the clay masks from Graves 2 and 3. This argument fails to explain why traces of the model are not found except for the masks (themselves unfired), which seem to have

been placed on the base of the grave along with many of the artefacts found, rather than on any such model.<sup>19</sup> Two or three phases of the deposition of artefacts, with partial infilling of the pit between these, is a more likely hypothesis. The similar finds in the upper layers of several of the graves and the clear horizons at which the finds occur suggest that this pattern of deposition-fill-deposition is deliberate and probably therefore involves the manual infilling of the pit rather than allowing the pit to be naturally filled by erosion and deposition. This potentially shortens the interval between the excavation of the pit and its closure.

In terms of the deposition of grave goods, as opposed to other structures found in burials, these Varna finds are unique. Some mention has already been made of other objects which are placed in or over the grave after the deposition of the body and/or objects. The most frequent example is the stone cover - that is, flat stones (sometimes a single stone) which are laid either horizontally or diagonally over the skeleton and grave goods at Durankulak. Approximately 90% of Middle and Late Chalcolithic graves from Durankulak possess a cover of this sort (this figure provided by Dimov, Boyadzhiev and Todorova (1984) is close to the figure for the graves used in this study). This form of covering is unique to Durankulak.

A further material addition to some graves is the sprinkling of ochre (or occasionally charcoal) over the body and finds. In many cases ochre may have been used as a colouring on textiles. The spreading of ochre separately over the finds is therefore difficult to demonstrate conclusively, but is suggested in a number of cases.

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<sup>19</sup> A figure made from organic material is also possible (Sherratt pers. comm.) and accounts for the traces of organic matter in the grave, but does not explain the completeness and position on the floor of the grave of the masks in Graves 2 and 3. The inclusion in the graves of textiles, possibly clothing (to which appliques were attached), seems likely, however, but does not necessarily distinguish these graves from other cenotaphs with a single layer of deposits.

The use of ochre in this way and the stone covers from Durankulak represent both the second (depositional) and third (closure) stages of the basic scheme presented at the beginning of this section. The particular pattern of deposition in some Varna cenotaphs can also be considered in this way. There is very little evidence for the length of time between the deposition of the final layer of objects and the infilling of the grave. The only evidence that graves may have been left unfilled for a period after the inclusion of grave goods and body is from Devnya where post-holes are reported from four burials. The post-holes do not underlie the body or grave goods and were probably therefore created after the placement of these in the grave. The excavator has argued that in Grave 7 the twenty post-holes and remains of a horizontally laid 'stick' (which is below the body) belong to a structure, presumably supporting an organic cover, which is the source of the red ochre found over the finds in the grave. The collapse of this structure is argued to cause the damage found to the skeleton and grave goods (Todorova-Simeonova 1971). The number of post-holes varies from two to twenty, and their location in each grave is irregular, so that it is not clear that they belong to similar canopies in each of the graves. The four burials are all adults, three in the extended position and one flexed/right, and comprise two females and two males. Other extended and flexed/right burials from the site do not have similar structures. Neither are the graves with post-holes distinguished from other burials at the site by the quantity or type of grave goods found.

The post-holes from Devnya are the only clear indication of the extension of the burial rite beyond the three simple stages proposed at the beginning of this section. Some link between burial and wider mortuary rituals has been suggested by the manufacture of pottery specifically for inclusion with burials and the possibility of the exposure of corpses. Other evidence for activities associated with funerary practices which do not involve burial (burial is here taken to include cenotaphs) is also found at several sites and is summarized in Figure 3.29.

The evidence discussed in this section illustrates clearly the basic problems that were introduced at the beginning of the chapter. Measurement of temporal variability has proved particularly difficult in absolute and relative terms. This is one reason why measures of time have rarely been argued to 'reflect' aspects of social structure in the same way as spatial measures.<sup>20</sup> This section has itself added another level of complexity to the description of the evidence, however. The final section begins to draw together the various spatial and temporal elements discussed into a more complete description of the burial ritual and wider structures.

#### 4. *RITUAL FORM AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE*

The chapter so far has been a protracted examination of the physical evidence of burial practices in the Late Chalcolithic of north-east Bulgaria. The evidence has been structured by a number of interpretative devices: the state of preservation of the evidence; a differentiation by culture, site and grave; age and sex of the deceased; and distribution in time and space. Clearly, the choice of these axes for measurement, and the discussion of the evidence in separate categories, has restricted the comparisons made between the various elements of the burial rituals. Thus, for example, while orientation of the skeleton and grave depth have been related to age, sex and culture, they have not been compared directly with the distribution of grave good types. Similarly, grave good types have not been examined as assemblages or related to patterns of mutual exclusivity.

The discussion has suggested, however, that it is not necessary to compare each variable against every other variable independently. It has been shown, for example, that (at some sites) age and sex can be related to both body posture and depth of the

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<sup>20</sup> Arguments such as the series of chiefly successions envisaged by V. Nikolov (1991) have tended to assume a temporal sequence because of the social model adopted.

grave. There are therefore clear structures in the organization of the described categories of burial evidence. The purpose of this final section of the chapter is to clarify those patterns (and to some extent to specify where patterns do not occur) and to draw together the structures of the physical evidence as they may be related to the inclusive levels (ritual - code - social structure) adopted in this chapter.

The basic parameters of the burial ritual are essentially the same for almost every example of formal burial included in this study. Other than in a very small number of cases, each burial is of a single individual (or two or more individuals buried at the same time), so that graves are not disturbed by later burials. The body is interred in a simple pit, either in a discrete cemetery outside the settlement, or in an area of the settlement. Each burial is placed in one of two basic positions in the grave. The shape of the grave pit and the orientation of the pit and body are consistently used within the cemetery and have general parallels between sites that may be linked to a cultural (spatial - coastal/inland) division. The location of grave goods within the grave may similarly be related to two general cultural patterns. The two, culturally distinct, basic spatial and temporal sequences of excavation-burial-closure therefore apply to a large majority of the burials and are represented diagrammatically in Figure 3.30 and numerically in Figure 3.31. These elements of form indicate a high level of underlying uniformity to burial rituals, even though details vary between and sometimes within sites. At some cemeteries the available information accounts for all of the burials: all burials are single inhumations or have the same body position or orientation (and the same is probably true for grave pit form). Moreover, at all of the sites except Ruse, a large majority of the graves contain all of the elements measured in Figure 3.31.

This uniformity may be extended to include other aspects of form at some or all of the cemeteries. Most graves have a similar basic temporal structure. The depth of the grave pit may conform to a consistent pattern within each cemetery, either relative to other

graves or to defined horizons within the tell. Cenotaphs may also conform to the same basic elements of spatial/temporal form, especially in the Varna Culture cemeteries.

Nonetheless, Figures 3.30 and 3.31 represent only one description of ritual types. Other levels may also be distinguished. Thus, the broadest expression of type in the discussions in this chapter has been between burial and non-burial treatment of the corpse - the latter probably represented by some stray and 'accidental' burials (e.g. Hotnitsa). The location of burials is another broad aspect of type. The frequency and location of grave goods is a narrower dimension. These various elements may also be represented diagrammatically (Figure 3.32). The central section of Figure 3.32 is a summary of the largest part of the patterning presented in this chapter and suggests three broad ritual types, which are not absolutely distinct or exclusive, but which may be characterized as follows:

1) Exemplified by Ruse and Kubrat, with burials occurring within the boundary of the settlement (i.e. without clear separation of funerary and domestic space). Spatial aspects of burial are not strongly defined (orientation, posture, etc. are variable), but may be consistent to a greater extent within spatial or stratigraphic groups. There is little apparent spatial patterning by age or sex. Grave goods occur infrequently and in small quantities, with few types represented (but also little consistency in form), suggesting that artefacts are not a 'normal' element of mortuary ritual practice. Pairs of burials and multiple graves are relatively common and indicate temporal variations in the ordering of burials. Post-mortal treatment of the body itself, by trepanation, disarticulation, etc., is relatively common (compared to the other types). Cenotaphs, which form a peculiar and particular expression of the burial ritual in the following two types, are unknown in these cemeteries.

2) Represented by Vinitsa, Golyamo Delchevo, Radingrad, Sava-Tsonevo, Targovishte and, probably, Omurtag. Burials are located away from the settlement, but are placed

together in cemeteries. Both spatial and temporal dimensions of the burial ritual are strongly defined and ordered. Posture, orientation, etc., and also the sequence (and probably duration) of the burial, are therefore consistent. Double burials are rare and multiple burials unknown. Some partial (secondary) burials do occur, however. The uniformity of the ritual also extends to grave goods, especially pottery vessels, which are consistently located with regard to the corpse (and to the overall sequence of deposition). There is relatively little differentiation of artefact types or location according to the age or sex of the deceased. Cenotaphs occur at several of the sites and may contain different types of artefacts to burials as well as having a different spatial and temporal order to their deposition. Non-burial pits also occur in a number of the cemeteries and are possibly a further link between burial and other mortuary rituals.

3) Defined by the coastal extra-mural cemeteries at Varna, Durankulak and Devnya (plus Reka Devnya). Many spatial and temporal elements of the burial ritual are strongly institutionalized and apply to a large majority of graves (e.g. grave form, orientation). However, posture and many grave good types are differentiated by sex (although this is rarely reflected in other aspects of form such as sequence of deposition or location in the grave). Cenotaphs are relatively common but often also differentiated in terms of grave goods from burials. Grave goods are common and highly varied in material and form. Artefacts are therefore the greatest source of variation in the burial ritual. Cemeteries may be large (with a high number of burials per unit of time) and non-burial mortuary rituals may consequently be less common.

B) *Code:*

The different spatial settings and tempo of the ritual types described in Figures 3.30 to 3.32 may also be regarded as expressions of a symbolic code. Further variations, such as alternative arm and leg positions could also be described in this way (and will have some part in later discussions) but the concentration in this section will be on grave

goods. The presence and forms of some grave goods have already been shown to conform to patterns according to culture, site, age, sex, etc.. The following arguments concentrate on relationships between artefacts. The number of possible combinations of artefact categories is enormous, even disregarding (e.g.) multiple occurrences of a category in one grave or the presence/absence of artefact types in burials at all. However, distributions of some artefact types may indicate that non-random patterns of association between objects may be determined - i.e. that some forms of signification may be invested in assemblages of grave goods.

This chapter is not concerned to explain the *meanings* (*values*) of individual artefacts, attributes or assemblages as such, but to define and describe patterning in the data. Several forms of association may be used (some discussed already): co-occurrence; presence/absence; correlation (e.g. by chi-square); exclusivity (where a relationship always or never occurs); and exploratory (multivariate) analyses.

The simplest measure of grave goods - presence/absence - is depicted in Figures 3.13 and 3.25. Co-occurrence tables (Figures 3.33 and 3.34) describe presence/absence of two artefact types in a grave - here given as a count of the number of graves in which each co-occurrence is found. The tables suggest the overall density of artefact associations as well as their frequency and, more importantly here, may indicate exclusive relationships. Where an artefact type co-occurs with another type on each occasion it is found it is noted in Figures 3.33 and 3.34, with the artefact type occurring fewer times overall highlighted. Zeros in the table represent an absence of co-occurrences.<sup>21</sup> However, this and subsequent discussions will concentrate principally

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<sup>21</sup> The discussion ignores associations where one of the artefact types is found on only one occasion in total or for any of the age/sex categories. All analyses use counts of artefacts within each grave. Groups of beads (objects) found together (e.g. as a necklace) are counted as one artefact (as are, for example, beads or appliques attached to clothing). Hence artefacts are distinguished here, and throughout the thesis, from objects which comprise them. The definition of artefacts therefore follows the format used in Appendices 1 and 2, with artefacts effectively the separate listings of grave goods in Appendix 1. Here, double counting of artefacts is avoided, so that, for

on positive associations. The number of different artefact types included in burials (even without other cultural artefacts not found in burials) is so great that the decision to include an artefact in the grave is likely to be more deliberate (and meaningful) than the decision to omit it. How this relates to gender (etc.) will be considered in later chapters.

Overall, the table shows that for the Varna Culture (Figure 3.33a), most possible combinations of artefacts occur in at least one burial (80% of all possible combinations). However, very few associations are always found, and none where an artefact type occurs more than four times. For the Gumelnitsa Culture sites (Figure 3.33b), far fewer (35%) of possible combinations occur and invariable co-presence is found for only three artefact types found more than once (for adze and bead, and applique and bead, both occurring in two graves in total). The Gumelnitsa Culture table also includes fewer artefact types.

Figure 3.33 may be also broken down according to age and sex (and cenotaph) categories (in Figure 3.34). For the Gumelnitsa Culture cemeteries the composite results suggest a stronger differentiation of artefacts by sex than was apparent from the frequency counts or Chi-square statistics summarized in Figure 3.26. Far fewer combinations of artefacts occur in female graves (10% of all total possible combinations of two artefacts) than in male graves (20%). The figure for female grave is similar to that for child burials but is nonetheless higher than for cenotaphs (5%). In contrast, cenotaphs at the Varna Culture cemeteries contain the largest number of combinations (55%), but male and female grave contain a similar number of co-occurrences (45%). Child graves contain considerably fewer co-occurrences (17%), reflecting the results of Figure 3.26.

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example, the rare examples of dentalium shells being included in ornaments with other types of beads are counted as beads but not also as dentalium shells. Ochre is counted as a single artefact even if it occurs in separate lumps or as more than one type of ochre/colouring material.

The Gumelnitsa tables also show the infrequency with which artefact types are found together. Associations (co-occurrences) occurring more than four times are extremely infrequent. This suggests that there are very few consistently occurring 'assemblages' found (even at the level of two variables) with any age or sex category of burial. The tables in Figures 3.33 and 3.34 are nonetheless only a single level of association. Co-occurrences (using objects found in at least four graves) of three or more grave good categories are shown for the Gumelnitsa sites (including all graves regardless of age, etc.) in Figure 3.35. The most consistently occurring pattern is of dish, biconical bowl and beads. However, all seven graves containing these types are from Vinitza (and all are adults - five male, two female). Three share a further artefact type (chisel) in common. All of the elements of this possible 'assemblage' are also found singly or in pairs in graves at Vinitza (bead and dish once, biconical bowl and dish five times). Nonetheless, this evidence does suggest that some site-specific patterns of associated grave goods may be demonstrable at the Gumelnitsa sites.

For the Varna Culture the total number of co-occurrences is far greater and so the distinction of assemblages from the evidence presented in the table is more difficult. Nonetheless, the Varna Culture tables do provide stronger evidence for invariable association between artefact types than the Gumelnitsa cemeteries, both in the number of such highlighted cells in the tables, and the number of graves represented in many of these. Thus, in male graves, vessel supports are found in each of the sixteen graves containing pedestalled bowls, blades in the seven graves with rings, and vessel supports also in the seven graves with flasks. In female graves the most frequent invariable associations are between unworked shells and blades and pebble polishers (in 5 graves) - all are components of the 'sewing kit' (Dimov, Boyadzhiev & Todorova 1984). Unworked shells have been shown to be exclusively related, and pebble polishers statistically correlated, to female graves.

Most of the complete associations distinguished occur in cenotaphs, several being found in four or more graves (and up to 11 - pin and blade), suggesting that the inventories of cenotaphs may be more standardized than those in burials. However, this cannot be taken as demonstrating a necessary link in the meanings of these artefact types.

It is clear when discussing the sub-categories that the single level of association between artefacts that is being described in fact extends to another association with age, sex or the presence of a body. With the reverse case - where no co-occurrences (of commonly found artefacts) are represented in the table - it is possible to argue that the significant relationship is between each artefact type independently and the wider categorization of the grave (as male, female, cenotaph, etc.).

The measures presented in Figures 3.33-3.35 represent an increase in the complexity of analysis over the general distributions given in Figure 3.25, but are still restricted to a single dimension of comparison. Two multivariate techniques may be used may be used to further explore the data: cluster analysis and correspondence analysis.

Correspondence analysis is currently popular in archaeology for the investigation of complex, discrete data-sets. The nature of the technique (as a form of principal components analysis) and its archaeological applications are discussed by (e.g.) Madsen (1988) and Baxter (1994), although there has been little archaeological discussion of the merits of correspondence analyses and their respective weaknesses. Greenacre, for example, has noted that 'each generalization of correspondence analysis has some unique advantages, but none has all the properties that one would want of a single technique' (1988: 406). However, one weakness that is noted by Baxter, and is of particular relevance here is that analyses can be 'unduly influenced by rows or columns of a table with low totals' (1988: 115). Figure 3.36 shows the results of correspondence analyses of a sample group of 180 Varna Culture graves from Devnya,

Durankulak and Varna <sup>22</sup> and clearly shows the presence of a number of outlying artefact types. The solution to this problem offered by Baxter (and e.g. Shennan and Beck 1991) - amalgamation or removal of such variables - may be rejected here on both practical and interpretative grounds. The low mass of variables is not confined to those towards the edges of Figure 3.36. Nineteen (53%) of the defined artefact types occur in fewer than 10% of graves (see also comments below on the selection of only 'rich' graves). Many of the artefact types are themselves composites, including objects of several materials and functional uses (e.g. ear and finger rings). Further amalgamation of types is difficult to justify, therefore. Equally, a number of the uncommon artefact types (such as conical bowls, unworked shells, masks) have been argued to have significant associations with e.g. age and gender categories which suggest that they have definite *values* in the graves in which they occur.

The usefulness of correspondence analyses for my purposes is thus extremely limited. The problems of low numbers of counts are even more acute for the Gumelnitsa cemeteries and for individual age and sex categories and correspondence analyses of these groups are not included here. Figure 3.36 suggests a further problem with correspondence analysis of the data studied here. There is some grouping of pottery

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<sup>22</sup> All of the correspondence analyses have been achieved with the use of, and according to the procedures recommended by, the MVARCH package. Further details are given in the programme manual. The programme was run to account for 75% of the total variation. This resulted in 10 eigenvalues for Figure 3.36 and 18 for Figure 3.41a with no individual variable accounting for more than circa 10% of the total variation. As each eigenvalue could be plotted against each other, the plots shown represent only one description of the data, which differs nonetheless in details but not in overall patterning from that shown.

The sample group of 180 burials is selected as follows: all available graves with secure age/sex characterization from Devnya and Varna (plus a small number of probable female burials from Varna to reduce the bias towards male burials from the site) are included. The remaining graves, from Durankulak, are randomly selected from the known examples of each age/sex category (including cenotaphs) in proportion to the frequency of that category in the cemetery as a whole. This gives a weighted result, but which is considered to be acceptable, given the intention to explore grouping within the data, as each site is represented by an adequate number of graves. The same sample group is used in the other correspondence and cluster analyses in this chapter.

vessel types at the right hand side of the diagram which includes vessel types largely, or only, known from Durankulak. The difference between Varna, where pottery preservation is very poor and few vessels are published, and Durankulak, where pottery is well-preserved is thus an influence on analyses which compare overall inventories and combine graves from these cemeteries (including some cluster analysis forms such as group average: see below). However, Devnya is too small and Varna has only an unrepresentative sample (i.e. typically the richest) of published burials to warrant separate analyses (and analysis of Durankulak alone produces results very similar to Figure 3.36 - and is therefore not shown).

Despite the strong reservations as to the usefulness of correspondence analysis, however, the small amount of variation 'explained' by any variable and the plot of the results do suggest that there are no strongly defined, discrete assemblages of artefacts within the Varna Culture as a whole (or the individual cemeteries).

Figure 3.37a presents a cluster analysis of the same data using the Group Average/Average Link method (and MVARCH: Wright 1992).<sup>23</sup> The results confirm the absence of separate inventories of artefacts, or of very strong relationships between artefact types, at this level. Figure 3.37b applies the same technique to Gumelnitsa graves, where the evidence is reasonably complete, and shows a similar absence of clustering of artefact types.

The results of both cluster and correspondence analyses suggest few consistently occurring associations of artefacts (where 'meaning' is principally invested in the

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<sup>23</sup> The graves used in Figures 3.37a and b are the same as those used in Figure 3.41. Note may be made that Group Average cluster analysis produces results in this instance that are almost identical to those from Single Link analysis, shown, for completeness, as Figure 3.37a<sub>ii</sub> (see arguments below). Cluster diagrams produced by either method for age/sex categories are not shown because they produce minimal clustering and add nothing to the debate here.

assemblage) for either culture, or for any of the several age/sex divisions defined. The dominant associations of artefacts may well be with these age/sex categories (or with gender structures, etc. - discussed in later chapters), therefore. Artefact types thus to a large extent have individual, separate meanings which determine their overall frequency in burials. The ubiquity (and scarcity) of different artefact types may nonetheless obscure patterning in the analyses so far undertaken. Flint blades, for example, may be so common that the 'sewing kit' assemblage identified at Durankulak by Todorova on purely observational grounds is not represented in the analyses.

The loose characterization of code used here is that repeated patterns of the distribution of objects may indicate structured patterns of meaning and therefore have consistent values in social relations and strategies. The correspondence and cluster analyses are measures of relative similarity and not absolute relationships. They are also based on a single definition of the units to be studied. Other classifications are possible, as with the separation of form and material. This particular classification is not used because of the problem of double counting of artefacts (and because programme capacity would have permitted far fewer graves to be included). The importance of material, in addition to, or regardless of, the form of the object will be the subject of later discussions. Without preempting these, alternative classification schemes have no greater claims to validity than that used. However, one of the fundamental arguments of this thesis is that meanings do not have to be singular and may relate to overlapping structures and strategies. The limited results which the correspondence and cluster analyses permit *and* the relative absence of patterning which Figures 3.36 and 3.37 show are thus both (only) starting points for arguments presented in Chapters 4 and 5.

A further imposed limitation of the cluster analysis results is in the treatment of each grave as an equivalent and complete unit. This assumes equal preservation, recovery and availability of the evidence for all artefact types (although the same limitations also apply to the other measures of comparison of grave goods used). Similarly, the graves

are used regardless of their phasing and therefore assume that date does not affect the types of artefact found. In Section 3 of the chapter it was argued that other aspects of burial form do not vary with date. The limited temporal distribution of some artefact types (and decorative styles) has been outlined in Chapter 2. Conversely, the strong similarities in the *general* classifications of grave goods at those sites with a long duration of use (e.g. the use of axes rather than specific metal types), has also been noted.

The tables of co-occurrence, cluster and correspondence diagrams so far produced are measures of spatial similarity limited to a single unit of space - the grave. Variability and regularities of form have already been described for the location and sequence of inclusion of objects within the grave. It is thus possible to examine the juxtaposition of objects by a number of other criteria suggested by these measures - e.g. below, on, above the body; worn, held, or otherwise deposited, etc. - as well as immediate proximity. A number of these criteria provide measures of absolute relationship (as counts or percentages). Most, however are subject to judgements of how to describe location and proximity (as for Figures 3.17 and 3.18 above). Nevertheless, this means of describing associations of grave goods may avoid the problems caused by the high frequency of some grave goods (e.g. flint blades) in the broader techniques used above.

Objects found under or on the body are particularly difficult to classify. Most non-pottery grave goods lying on the body were probably worn or held and are considered here to belong with other objects similarly disposed. No further details are given, therefore, beyond those already presented in Section 3 of this chapter.

The association of objects may be more readily measured by reference to a part of the body. Figure 3.38 summarizes the number of graves in which two or more classifiable artefacts are found on or by a particular part of the skeleton (and only where the

position of the object is available).<sup>24</sup> Associations occurring once only at the Varna Culture cemeteries are not included but two objects of the same type found together are listed where appropriate. Pottery vessels are excluded unless found in a location other than the most common for the site (i.e. by the head in the coastal cemeteries, and legs/waist at the inland sites), in order to avoid obscuring possible patterning of non-pottery artefacts. The areas of the body used conform broadly to the most common locations employed/represented in Figure 3.17 and are subject to the same disadvantages as this table.

The summarized results in Figure 3.38 nonetheless probably do not involve undue distortion. The main result is the rarity with which non-pottery objects are found together in the same part of the grave. A large majority of the associated object types which do recur are from the Varna Culture cemeteries (i.e. - given the smaller number of burials with detailed positional evidence from Devnya and Varna - principally from Durankulak). The most common locations for recurring pairs or assemblages of artefacts are by the head and arms in these coastal cemeteries. Thus, objects located by the chest and waist do not seem to be related to each other in their overall distribution. Flint blades and biconical and footed bowls occur together by the legs and feet in a number of graves.

A wider range of objects and associations can be distinguished for objects found by the head. However, the total numbers of associated types involving rings includes ear and tooth rings, as well as hair rings in at least one case (Varna 43). Anthropomorphic appliques are typically found as part of a necklace rather than as a separate object. The

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<sup>24</sup> Note that the figures assume that the position of all types of grave goods is equally likely to be available and that the reported position of artefacts corresponds closely to their original location in the grave. These uncertainties, plus the problems of describing the location of grave goods, are further bars to the use of (for example) multiple correspondence analysis (Greenacre 1988) in addition to the weaknesses of the technique set out above. The same applies to the inclusion of other dimensions of the evidence alongside the basic data used for the correspondence tests.

relationships described in the table are reproduced also in the three 'mask' cenotaphs from Varna. Each of the various forms of decoration of the face, neck and head nonetheless occur more frequently on their own than in the combinations reported in the table.

The same is not the case for the objects found by the arms and hands of Varna Culture burials. Two or more bracelets, or rings, are found in approximately half of all burials containing such finds at Devnya, Durankulak and Varna. The results in Figure 3.38 reflect this high proportion and further divide the results according to the material from which the finds are manufactured. Pairs of copper or spondylus bracelets, and combinations of the two, occur almost equally (with one grave - Varna 43 - containing four gold and one spondylus bracelet). When found in pairs, most graves have one bracelet on each arm. Overall, copper bracelets are slightly more frequently placed on the right arm and spondylus on the left (at Durankulak). Most other objects are not distributed unevenly to left and right side, although flint blades are located almost exclusively by the left arm at Devnya and Durankulak, but by the right arm at Varna (in the few graves for which information is available).

Detailed evidence for the position of grave goods in the Gumelnitsa cemeteries is essentially limited to the finds from Golyamo Delchevo, Targovishte and Vinitza. Some consistencies in the location of individual artefact types have already been established for these sites but these do not also generate clear patterning of groups of two or more objects by particular parts of the body.

The differences between the Varna and Gumelnitsa cultural patterns which can be suggested from Figures 3.38 and 3.18 indicate variation not only in the forms and combinations of artefacts found in burials but also in the sequence and tempo of the burial rituals themselves. Ornaments and jewelry are worn on the body in a far greater

proportion of burials at the coastal cemeteries than inland.<sup>25</sup> Ornaments are as likely to be placed in vessels as worn at the Gumelnitsa extra-mural cemeteries, but are infrequently found in vessels in the Varna cemeteries (occurring in roughly 7% of Gumelnitsa burials, but in only circa 3% if copper and bone pins are regarded as tools). Objects held by the deceased are approximately as common in both cultures (being found in circa 10% of burials as far as it is possible to estimate).

Figure 3.39 illustrates the frequency with which elements of the 'sewing-kit' assemblage are found in vessels at Durankulak (the only comparable published find from elsewhere is the cluster of weight, awl, blade, polisher, chisel and animal bone, probably contained in a basket, from Devnya 10). The assemblage may be characterized by the co-occurrence of two or more of the following artefact types in a vessel: bone or copper awl, bone pin, flint blade (usually fragmentary), quartzite pebble 'polisher', and unworked shell. These objects may be found individually in vessels, but are more commonly found in combination, occasionally with the addition of beads or appliques. Exclusive and/or statistical relationships based on elements of the sewing-kit have already been commented upon. Most sewing-kits are from staged vessels or other enclosed vessel forms (see Figure 3.39).

The associations representing elements of the sewing-kit are the most common non-pottery 'assemblage' based on location in the grave (i.e. in Figures 3.38 and 3.39) - occurring in more than 40 graves at Durankulak, of which the largest number are adult females (43%: with 19% male, 5% child, 17% cenotaph and 16% unknown/unspecified). Proposed assemblages for artefacts located by the arms, head,

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<sup>25</sup> Detailed figures are impossible to calculate, but, from the evidence available, about one third of all burials from the three main Varna Culture sites are of individuals with ornaments worn on the body or clothing. This may be considered a minimum figure given the large number of burials for which the location of some or all grave goods is unknown. This figure compares to about 5% of burials wearing ornaments in the Gumelnitsa cemeteries, even excluding Ruse and Kubrat.

etc. are more evenly divided between adult males and females. Other patterning of artefacts by or in pottery vessels from the coastal cemeteries are rarer. A small number of burials include copper or bone pins found in bowls of varying type. These finds have analogies with burials at Golyamo Delchevo and Vinitsa where pins are placed on or under bowls in several burials. Flint blades and chisels are also placed on or below vessels in a similar number of burials from these sites. Other than these objects the only repeated pattern for the Gumelnitsa cemeteries is of spondylus beads also placed on vessels.

The final form of the direct comparison of finds undertaken (Figure 3.40) is for the co-occurrence of pottery vessels. Once again, the number and variety of repeated patterning of more than two vessel forms is low for the Gumelnitsa sites, and has already been included in Figure 3.35. Clear evidence for the three coastal sites from which pottery is known is again dominated by the finds from Durankulak, both in terms of the numbers of vessels of known type, and the typology of the vessel forms used. The high number of graves containing two or more vessel types is apparent from Figure 3.33. Rather than repeat the general statistics, Figure 3.40 summarizes the co-occurrence of three or more vessels (including in this case multiples of the same type), for male, female and cenotaph graves, where any combination occurs in at least two graves. Adult burials are not distinguished as a separate category as the evidence is essentially a composite of the male and female patterns.

The frequency with which combinations occur is considerably reduced by this additional level of complexity. The patterning is also more unevenly distributed. Child burials (not shown) produce no repeated association of even three vessel types. Male burials contain the widest range of associations and the greatest number in total. Further variation may be derived from the vessel types represented in each category. In female burials biconical bowls, staged vessels and biconical/staged vases dominate. In male burials, these are also important, but more of the associations involve vessel supports

and pedestalled bowls, which have a strongly male-biased distribution. Vessel supports and 'staged' vessels also occur most often in the table for cenotaphs.

The results of Figures 3.38 - 3.40 may be compared with the basic co-occurrence tables in Figures 3.33 and 3.34. Thus, in male Varna Culture burials the 'exclusive' relationship between pedestalled bowls and vessel supports (Figure 3.34e) is matched in Figure 3.40 by the common association of these with other vessel forms (biconical/staged vessels, flasks, etc.). However, other artefacts with possibly exclusive distributions (e.g. rings and blades) are not consistently found together in the same part of the grave. In female graves, the lone exclusive relationship in Figure 3.34f (unworked shell and blade), may be related to the patterning in Figure 3.39 and the 'sewing kit' assemblage. Exclusive relationships in child graves in the Varna Culture involve far fewer graves and may reflect a small number of child burials which contain abnormally diverse grave goods (but which are nonetheless similar). Equally, many of the exclusive relationships seen in cenotaphs apparently relate to a small number of Varna Culture graves (e.g. those containing masks), but also suggest some consistencies in grave contents matched by burials in some cases (pin and blade) but not in others.

The evidence suggests that in some cases artefacts such as blades may have 'meanings' independently of other artefacts, and perhaps of position in the graves, but may also reinforce the meanings of other artefacts (or gain new meanings by such associations) through associations with other objects and parts of the grave (and burial ritual). Meanings (and values) of individual artefacts and assemblages of objects are rarely or never singular (or random) and are subject to few prescriptive or proscriptive rules, therefore. This anticipates, and provides a starting point for, considerations of meaning in later chapters.

At a broader level the analyses in this sub-section provide empirical support for the asserted interrelationship of artefact 'codes' and ritual types. Differences in the ways in which grave goods are combined and included in burials confer and reflect variations in the sequence and tempo of the burial ritual. The analyses here also confirm and elaborate the relationship of grave good codes to age and sex divisions. The following sub-section continues the move away from grave goods in isolation and towards a consideration of the social structures underlying the codes.

### *C) Structural principles*

The significant differences in the forms of burial and uses of grave goods suggested to relate to biological sex, age, the presence of a corpse, and so on will form a substantial part of Chapter 4 as they relate to gender and other structural principles/properties. These axes for measurement were nonetheless chosen in advance, albeit because contextual and other evidence suggests that they are relevant/important and measurable. Other measures such as ranks or wealth have been rejected on theoretical grounds and have been omitted from the discussions. It is possible, however, to use exploratory multivariate analyses to explore these and other possible dimensions of variation among the graves (Figure 3.41). Furthermore, allowing that the categorizations of grave by sex (etc.) are valid, these may also be subject to examination (Figure 3.42). Gumelnitsa burials are not included in the latter figure as age and sex categories contain too few graves to make the analyses worthwhile.

The problems with the use of correspondence analyses for the data studied here have already been described. The problem of low mass applies to the results presented in Figure 3.41a. Almost two-thirds of the graves included in the sample contain 5 artefact types or fewer (and nearly 40% contain 3 or fewer). The inclusion of only 'richer' graves (those with more artefact types) is impractical, therefore, as well as interpretatively unsound. The analysis already excludes graves containing only one

clearly identifiable artefact type (and those with none) and may thus only be a partial description of social groups based on e.g. wealth.

However, Figure 3.41a shows little separation of grave goods, except as a result of the much fuller pottery assemblage available for Durankulak. Varna and Devnya graves (in the latter case reflecting the relative lack of pottery diversity at the site) are predominantly located on the left side of the diagram. There is slight evidence that female graves may be concentrated towards the centre of the distribution with male graves towards the edges (with a consequent division of male Durankulak graves on the left and right sides of the distribution, again, possibly, relating to the proportion of pottery vessels of types only known at Durankulak in the graves). Child graves and cenotaphs at Durankulak are scattered throughout the diagram. Again, however, it may be noted that the values which provide the axes for the diagram account for only a small percentage of the total variation in the correspondence analysis. Choice of other values produces different detailed patterns (not shown) but no greater degree of clustering.

Cluster analysis itself provides an alternative (and to some extent more satisfactory) means of exploring the data. However, the large number of objects (graves) studied makes the choice of clustering method particularly important, at least for the presentation of results. Figures 3.41b and c show the same data clustered according to the Group Average and Single Link methods respectively.<sup>26</sup>

Single Link cluster analysis has been criticized for tending to produce 'chains' of linkages with few distinct clusters. This is apparent in Figure 3.41c. Consequently, many archaeologists have preferred the Group Average statistic, although Single Link is by no means as universally rejected as Baxter (1994), for example, claims (it is, for

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<sup>26</sup> The diagrams shown in Figures 3.41 and 3.42 are again produced using MVARCH. It may be re-emphasized that the dendrograms indicate relative similarity and not absolute relationships between objects. Again, positive matches are counted.

example, the method of choice for the Institute of Archaeology's IAGRAVES package which is specifically designed to consider grave goods). Single Link analysis may also have greater mathematical validity than other methods (Everitt 1974). The Group Average method itself has potential flaws, most notably that it may impose structure on the data where no genuine structure exists (Everitt and Dunn 1991) and that it may have a bias towards the production of clusters with a similar variance (Hair et al. 1992). For my purposes the tendency of Single Link analysis to produce clusters only when these are distinct (Everitt 1974: 92) has interpretative benefits because it suggests that fixed and significant social structures (e.g. roles or ranks) marked by grave goods would be visible with this method, and not obscured by potentially excessive clustering produced by the Group Average method. Cluster analysis of graves has been undertaken in some studies specifically in order to find groups of graves which can be related to social structures. Here the negative hypothesis - that there is no grouping - is preferred intuitively (and accords also with the results of the correspondence analysis).

The respective merits of the two cluster statistics are best compared through direct referral to the data studied here (using Figure 3.41b and c), therefore. Selected clusters from both dendrograms are indicated and the major components (shared grave goods) outlined in the accompanying tables. Thus, it may be observed that the Single Link analysis produces pairs and small clusters of graves, typically defined by one to three artefact types that are relatively common in themselves (Cluster 6 - blade; Cluster 3 - bracelet, bead, blade, etc.). The total number of grave goods clearly makes a difference to the clustering, but 'richer' graves are neither clearly divided from 'poorer' nor divided into clear clusters, except in the case of Cluster 2 which is largely formed of the richest Varna cenotaphs. The same graves are largely clustered together in the Group Average diagram as the key indicates.<sup>27</sup> There is indeed broad similarity between the

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<sup>27</sup> It is of course the case that the definition of clusters is a matter of judgement. However, the following discussions will strongly indicate that the addition or subtraction of a few graves from particular clusters would not significantly alter the overall (possibility of) interpretation of the results. More or less inclusive clusters are

general patterns of similarity (association) produced by the two techniques. Although twice as many clusters can be identified for Figure 3.41b, few are characterized by more than two artefact types, and several clusters share the same defining artefact types (e.g. Clusters 13, 14, 15, 16 and 21 by bracelets). Some other clusters are partly defined by artefacts limited to one site (e.g. Clusters 12 and 15 - biconical/staged vessels which are only found at Durankulak).

Few clusters from either Figure 3.41b or c contain graves of exclusively one age/sex category (although, of course, most child graves have no sex information). There are clusters in both diagrams, nonetheless, which show a bias to one of the grave categories. The Group Average dendrogram in particular may show that some separation of inventory by sex in graves with few artefact types in total, and possibly without gender associated artefacts, that is not apparent in other analyses to date. This result must be viewed with caution, however, given the small numbers of graves in each cluster and the presence of several clusters with a high percentage of child graves that reflect the small numbers of grave goods in these burials compared to the cultural norm.

Group Average cluster analysis may thus suggest a slight tendency for graves (especially within each cemetery) to form groups with similar inventories. However, the Group Average method may visually exaggerate the clustering, where Single Link analysis strongly suggests the absence of discrete ranks, etc. in the data. Certainly I argue that rather than indicating any sort of social categories the clusters reflect the same diversity seen in Figure 3.33a, with a number of artefact types placed separately in the grave and producing a very wide range of combinations.

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selected in each diagram, and are apparent visually, as a means of recognizing and demonstrating this assertion.

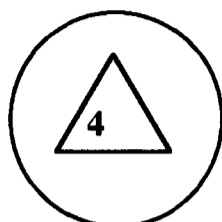
Figures 3.41d and 3.41e show the results of the two cluster statistics applied to Gumelnitsa Culture burials. The composition of some clusters is again broadly similar between the diagrams although the Group Average diagram shows a stronger differentiation between sites overall. This may be explained in part by the effect of the slightly different pottery assemblages typically found at Golyamo Delchevo and Vinitisa but also suggests greater variation between these sites and others. Clusters such as number 4 in Figure 3.41d echo the results of the co-occurrence tables and show the impact of a single artefact type - beads - on the patterning (predominantly) at Vinitisa. It is apparent that neither the Single Link nor the Group Average analyses add markedly to the results of the earlier analyses for (my) interpretative purposes.

Many of the same comments on the techniques and results apply to the other cluster analyses undertaken, especially for the Varna Culture categories in Figure 3.42 (a-d). Clusters produced using the Group Average method are typically quite diverse, where the graves contain more than three of four artefact types in total, and may not even have one artefact type shared between all graves in the cluster. Equally, several clusters may share the same artefact type as a common feature (Figure 3.42aii - Clusters 3 to 6 with vessel supports: several clusters in Figures 3.42bii (and bi) with elements of the sewing kit with or without a vessel type). Comparisons with results produced by Single Link analyses also resemble the results in Figure 3.41. Pairs or small groups of graves distinguished by the Group Average method are often found together in the clusters in the Single Link diagram, completely, or as part of a cluster (compare, for example, the composition of Figures 3.42ci and cii). Once again, with the exception perhaps of the richest Varna cenotaphs, no artefact types, or combinations of artefacts appear to be used to distinguish social categories within age/sex classifications beyond the patterning I have already explored via other techniques.

The previous comments have dealt in part with the respective merits of several statistical means of describing variability and their suitability for use with the evidence studied

here. This discussion is not intended to be a complete or detailed exploration of these techniques themselves, however, and results have been presented in several formats specifically so that they may be used investigate or illustrate different facets of the relationships between artefacts, graves and sites in later arguments. Nonetheless, the relative lack of patterning which all of the methods indicate may be re-emphasized. There are no strongly demarcated groups of graves divided by artefact types, or even, when only grave goods are taken into account, by age and sex. Some small groups of graves do show close similarities in their contents (usually sufficient to be apparent in both Group Average and Single Link cluster diagrams, for example), but these groups are commonly (though not always) composed of graves with few artefact types in total. The following chapters will address both this slight patterning and general variability in grave contents, suggested in this Section, and the more consistent findings of previous Sections of this Chapter.

## CHAPTER 4: PRACTICE



### 1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter followed a progression from *form* to *uniformity* and from these towards *conformity*. Conformity is also a theme of this chapter but the discussion will also address the *performance* of burial. 'Uniformity' describes the structural and spatial patterning of the data. Conformity and performance return to the core arguments of Chapter 1 - i.e. to *practice*. Giddens' division between quantitative and qualitative forms of study was adopted in Chapter 3 with the emphasis in that chapter placed on quantitative research, principally the specification of institutional orders (structures). Conformity implies (and this chapter - with Chapter 5 - addresses) the qualitative assessment of structures. That is, essentially, the exploration of the forms of practical consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

In Section 2 this is applied at a broad level to a number of categories or levels of social structure. Thus, the discussion moves from measures of spatial location, age, sex and so on to questions of community, gender, kinship (etc.). The hierarchy of interests adopted in Chapter 3 (from ritual to society) nonetheless applies here. The arguments remain confined to the burial evidence and therefore to roles and structural principles (plus material codes in mortuary practices) but not to structural properties, for example. These are the concerns of Chapters 6 and 7.

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<sup>1</sup> I have already noted that the other identified form of qualitative research - the hermeneutic issue - will not be discussed in depth (See Chapter 1).

Figure 1.8 illustrates the inseparability of structure and meaning/value in any qualitative account. Equally, the arguments in Chapter 1 which are summarized in Figure 1.8 require that the concerns of this chapter (with institutionalized values) and those of Chapter 5 (with individual values and circumstance) are essentially the same. The following discussions are split between the two chapters only as a convenience. The division is partly evidential (common patterns and dominant symbols versus diversity, innovation and so on); partly thematic (concentrating here on conformity, plus group identity, social reproduction, etc. and in Chapter 5 on topics including individual identity, competition and change); and partly arbitrary (see e.g. the consideration of grave depth). Section 3 of this chapter continues the examination of values associated with structures but is less closely tied to particular institutions and overlaps strongly with the discussions in the first half of Chapter 5.

There are no final conclusions to the Chapter 4. The conclusions reached are in terms of the forms and interrelationships of structures and meanings throughout the chapter. The final part of Chapter 5 discusses each of the cemeteries in detail in the light of the arguments of this chapter and the next.

## *2. SOCIAL STRUCTURES*

This section of the chapter is further divided according to a number of broad levels or categories of social structure. This is simply to address the question of conformity from the perspective of practice (and interpretation) rather than the empirical measuring of data. The structural principles adopted are suggested by the arguments in Chapter 3 (as, for example, gender differences in some aspects of burial - at least insofar as gender and sex are related); by contextual evidence (as with the recognition of an ancestral state: Chapter 1, Section 4); and/or by theoretical and comparative studies (as in the relevance of kinship to mortuary practices). Each heading is used to frame a discussion

of different potential facets of value and structure, but does not imply the existence or adoption of predetermined social forms or 'dominant' values (also see Chapter 1).

To a certain extent the arguments presented in this section reflect a separation of type from code. I have shown there to be far greater uniformity in the disposition of the body and form of the grave than in the distribution of grave goods. Moreover the structural principles discussed here are not argued to be the only existing or valid social forms. The possibility of defining and evaluating other roles (statuses, etc.) will be considered primarily in Section 3 of the chapter.

The notion of 'culture' (specifically of two cultures co-existing in the Late Chalcolithic of north-east Bulgaria) has been important throughout the study to date and will also be prominent in the accounts in this and later chapters. The evidence has been presented to date in terms of comparisons of form rather than interactions between sites. The characterization of culture adopted in Chapter 1 requires that cultures are defined and maintained across a number of fields of discourse. Thus, questions of cultural identity as determining values in burial practices (or interactions between different settlements of the same culture) will be deferred to later discussions.

#### A) *Community, kinship, the ancestors*

##### i) *Community*

Discussion of the relationship between cemeteries and (settlement) communities therefore does not (yet) take account of relationships between sites. There is good reason nonetheless to associate each of the cemeteries studied here with one settlement located from a few dozen metres to half a kilometre from the cemetery (Figure 3.2). This relationship potentially varies in the case of the intra-mural cemeteries (where the relationship between burials and settlement is even more direct); at Sava-Tsonevo,

where the excavator has named the site after the two settlements it lies between (though it is considerably closer to Sava); and at Varna, where some interpretations argue the cemetery is used by several settlements. Nonetheless, the evidence for proximity to a settlement suggests that interactions between individuals and groups, and therefore strategies in the performance of the burial, will primarily involve members of the immediate settlement community. The general importance of burial as a means by which social cohesion is maintained and social relations re-negotiated, discussed in Chapter 1, supports this view. People from other settlements are less likely to be involved in activities in/associated with the cemetery and to be involved less often than individuals from the settlement itself. The cemetery may thus partially define/signify the settlement population (and parts thereof) as distinct from other communities. Some variations in ritual forms which are consistent within cemeteries but are distinct from other sites have been noted (such as the flexed/left/down posture at Golyamo Delchevo, pottery types at Durankulak, etc.) and in turn imply that the ways in which resources are mobilized in the expression of meanings follow local (site/community) specific patterns of recognition and use.

The presence of cemeteries as opposed to separate groups of graves or lone burials further suggests that values may apply to the cemetery as a whole. At all of the sites except Ruse (and potentially Kodzhadermen) all of the remains are found within one discrete area - although in some cases this may be partly a function of the scale and form of excavations and ignores, for example, the distance between Devnya 14 and other burials from the site. However, access to the site is not controlled by constructed boundaries at any site, nor is any cemetery completely delimited by clear natural boundaries. This contrasts with the complicated boundaries erected around most of the settlements - see Chapter 6.

The location of the cemetery with regard to the settlement is also variable in detail (Figure 3.2). Several of the cemeteries are on higher ground than their related

settlements. All three Varna Culture cemeteries are on slightly raised land away from the lake/sea shore, but this and instances of Gumelnitsa cemeteries on slopes above streams may be pragmatically concerned with attempts to avoid periodic flooding which is suggested to affect a number of the settlements (Bailey 1990). At a number of the sites there are entrances to the settlement aligned towards, or close to, the cemetery. This is most marked at Durankulak where the cemetery is adjacent to the landward end of the causeway leading to the tell (but the location may also be linked to the earlier burials in the cemetery (see below) which lies immediately to the south of the Late Neolithic settlement). At Golyamo Delchevo, Vinitsa and Radingrad entrances to the settlement may be aligned with part of the cemetery. This possible patterning is nonetheless inconsistent and certainly does not in itself indicate control of, or restriction of access to, cemetery space by physical or symbolic means (Foster 1989; Bradley 1993). Neither is there good evidence for a highly formalized ritual 'landscape' (Ingold 1994; Barrett, Bradley and Green 1991) or 'cosmological' mapping of space (Kus 1983; de Montmollin 1988).

## ii) *Kinship groups and households*

Evidence for the involvement of different social groups within the community in the expression of meanings in burials is severalfold. The identification of such groups with kinship structures or households is less direct but is strongly supported by the burial evidence and information from other fields of discourse which will be addressed in Chapters 6 and 7.

Comparative evidence outlined in Chapter 1 suggested that burial rituals are likely to be performed by those closest to the deceased, and commonly, if not universally, by a kin group. That this group is not itself the (whole) community is indicated by the frequency and tempo of burials themselves. The number of burials per unit of time (and compared to the duration of use of the settlement) varies considerably according to culture (see

Chapter 3). In the Gumelnitsa Culture the cemetery typically has a limited span of use compared to the settlement and therefore a concentration of burials of a similar date. This strongly suggests that burial as a mortuary practice is adopted according to strategies existing *within* the community at a particular time, and thus the existence of a number of separate groups. This is supported by the variation between sites noted above. The small number of interred individuals in total and the imbalance of male and female, plus child and adult graves further suggests that the use of the burial ritual is selective and therefore that the groups involved exist over a period of time and cross-cut purely age/gender divisions. To slightly anticipate later discussions which return to this question in greater detail, there are two likely (non-exclusive) forms these groups may take: according to kinship and the household.<sup>2</sup>

The Varna Culture cemeteries do not conform precisely to the same pattern. The number of burials per unit of time is almost certainly far higher and a larger proportion of the total population may be buried. However, the elaborateness and variety of grave goods in Varna Culture graves in particular suggests the expression of complex strategies and therefore competition through burial practices within the cemetery. The acquisition and deployment of resources other than the body is most convincingly seen in terms of a close kin or residence group of the deceased. The elaborateness of graves is evidence that burial has an important role in defining social groups and structuring interactions between them.

The number of social groups existing simultaneously cannot be determined from the evidence presented to date (not least because the possibility of kin groups/households

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term household here to refer to a group defined largely by shared residence, but which of course may belong to a nuclear family or extended kinship group. Arguments in Chapter 6 do not support interpretations of 'quarters' in settlements and the household is thus probably the only level at which residence groups may be distinguished. I have discussed the relationship of kinship to mortuary practices in Chapter 1 but may repeat the observation that kinship ties may be both 'real' and 'fictional'.

not employing burial has not been considered) but in very general terms, the number of graves in Gumelnitsa cemeteries may be insufficient for the household level to be interpreted as the main, or highest, level of social structure within the community (which is manifest in burial practices).

Comparative studies, the frequency of burials, selection of individuals to be buried and evidence for competition all relate to the overall process of the creation of meanings in burials (for this discussion). A fifth factor - the role of ancestors - is considered below. The existence of social groups and their relationship to the community as a whole may also be approached by returning to the use of space and time within the cemetery.

Chapter 3 included few measures of spatial organization within the cemetery (Figures 3.3 and 3.23). Inadequacies in available site plans and in dating information for individual graves are major hindrances to interpretations of the use of settlement space (which has been ignored in most 'reflectionist' accounts, therefore). However, there is very little evidence for discrete spatial groups of graves at the extra-mural cemeteries which may be directly related to kinship groups (etc.). That is: spatial location within the cemetery is not physically/symbolically employed in the creation or maintenance of social groups (less than that of the community).

There are nonetheless potential exceptions to this statement. Double and multiple burials have been distinguished at a number of sites. In most cases these burials have been argued to be simultaneous - although different circumstances apply to the intra-mural cemeteries (see below). At Varna the relatively high concentration of cenotaphs in the south-east part of the site, where there are also few female and child graves, has led to interpretations of a 'ritual core' (an alternative explanation will be offered in Chapter 5). There is no strong evidence for grouping of graves by gender/cenotaphs, etc., or other spatial measures, for the rest of the cemetery. At Targovishte and Golyamo Delchevo a broad division of the cemetery by sex has been observed, with male graves principally

located in the west and east areas of the site respectively. The patterns suggest that the internal organization of space in these cemeteries result from local, specific 'rules' (codes) whose implementation exists at - and may specifically recognize - the level of the community as a whole (gender aspects of this spatial distribution are discussed below). Todorova's suggestion (1983) that there may be irregularities in the spacing of graves at Durankulak which correspond to kinship groups may also be noted, but is not related to known sources of variation, such as phase. In any case these possible groupings are not suggested to account for more than a small proportion of graves from the cemetery.

Space is a single dimension of variability, however. The importance of time and tempo in burials has been established in Chapter 3 and is illustrated at a broad scale by the evidence from Durankulak shown in Figure 3.3bi. However, the clearest relationship between space and a measure of time (i.e. stratigraphy) occurs at the two intra-mural cemeteries. Kubrat includes two 'groups' of burials which probably indicate interments separated by a short period of time - in the overlapping burials (Grave 2) and the two burials facing towards a partial interment (Graves 10, 11 and 12). More importantly here, the cemetery itself is divided into two groups slightly separated spatially and stratigraphically (and possibly by other elements of form). The consistency with which depth is applied in each group implies conformity to a recognized symbolic structure but the dating evidence alone does not indicate whether this applies to the community at different times or to two-co-existing groups within it (but see Chapter 5).

The distribution of graves in time and space at Ruse is shown in Figure 4.1. The figure shows some grouping of graves at a similar horizon within the tell but only at 2.2-2.45 metres depth is there any strong indication of distinct areas of graves. There is no good evidence that defined, discrete areas of the tell are used for burials (by one or more groups for example) during the Late Chalcolithic occupation of the site.

Spatial location and the date, sequence and tempo of burials are thus connected. In the cemeteries contained within a discrete area (i.e. all bar Ruse) the first burial determines the approximate location of all others. Spatial location may provide some legitimation of subsequent burials by their inclusion within the cemetery (for individuals, social groups and so on), but the cemetery itself (and communal meanings) only exist through the accumulation of burials over time. At both Omurtag and Radingrad dating evidence suggests that a single burial or small group of burials is from an earlier chronological phase than other finds. In these two cemeteries the temporal distance between the initial burial(s) and subsequent interments may be greater. At Durankulak the Late Chalcolithic cemetery partially overlaps with the Hamangia cemetery but also has some general trends in the location of burials according to phase which emphasizes the connection between spatial location and recent burials (rather than social groups, for example). The Ruse evidence suggests a similar process though the resulting distribution is more dispersed overall and suggests that the grouping of graves by space *and* date may occur on a relatively small scale. This argument moves the discussion towards the performance of individual burials and will be a significant component of the debate in Chapter 5.

### iii) *Ancestors*

An ancestral state (*role*: see below) and kinship are closely interrelated. Indeed evidence for consistent and important values associated with the ancestors (see Figure 1.9) is a further indicator that the groups performing burials are based on kinship structures. Equally, the totality of evidence suggesting the presence of kinship structures in mortuary practices supports the interpretation of the dead as 'ancestors' - i.e. of a certain social group.

However, the fundamental evidence that the corpse represents a particular state/status has already been suggested to be the strong degree of uniformity in the treatment of the

body at death (Chapter 3). Consistent spatial and temporal patterns in the treatment of the deceased individual in terms of ritual type and symbolic code imply that similar meanings are conveyed through the body in each burial, at this level. The discreet set of resources involved and their limitation (probably) to the mortuary field of discourse accord precisely with the definition of 'role' I have adopted. The archetype of burial as a rite of passage also suggests that the buried individual occupies a distinct state of being, which may be termed 'ancestor'. It is worth repeating, nevertheless, that I do not use the term to imply any particular (or even a necessary) set of beliefs about a supernatural state/afterlife, etc.. As Figure 1.9 shows, the body may be regarded as a medium through which social and material exchanges may be accomplished. However, many aspects of the burial, including the manufacture of artefacts solely for inclusion in burials, (etc.: discussed below, plus the values conveyed via the community itself) support the view that some values are strongly or solely identified with the ancestors: that is, that exchanges and strategies in burials may be directed towards the ancestors in addition to/instead of the living.

Cenotaphs offer support for the last point. Cenotaphs have been extensively described in Chapter 3 and separated as a distinct category of grave within the two extra-mural burial types. This has implicitly regarded cenotaphs as both a normal part of mortuary practice and as one which can be definitely distinguished from burials. Evidence has been presented in support of both assumptions: cenotaphs may have a different grave form and depth from burials; a different order to the placement and location of grave goods; and frequently also different types of artefacts. There is no *a priori* reason to assume that all cenotaphs have identical meanings, however. Some of the variation between cenotaphs may be associated with the two cultural traditions but there is considerable variation among the cenotaphs from Varna, for example (Figure 3.19).

The most commonly expressed explanation for all cenotaphs is that they are graves of individuals who died elsewhere and whose bodies could not be recovered (e.g.

Todorova 1978a; Best 1984). This is unlikely to be the case because they are structured and 'read' in ways which are consistently different from burials. In the Gumelnitsa Culture, cenotaphs have a limited distribution, a different grave form to burials and do not generally contain tools or ornaments. In the Varna culture, most cenotaphs resemble burials in overall form, but differ in grave good types found, and in some cases by their form or by having several stages of deposition. The relationship between the cenotaphs and burials is thus metaphorical. But whereas burials may be regarded largely in terms of the interactions between social groups, the resources in cenotaphs are directed to/through the mortuary sphere - i.e. ancestors. Where cenotaphs more closely resemble burials in form, grave goods, etc., the relationship between particular social groups (whether ancestors, the living or both) may be greater.

The level of inclusiveness of the group which creates cenotaphs is not determinable from their general forms. However, the infrequency of cenotaphs - in total circa 12% of graves from the Varna Culture cemeteries are cenotaphs, compared to less than 5% of Gumelnitsa graves, with cenotaphs only found at three of the nine cemeteries - does not support the view that they have a general or universal meaning at the level of the community (though see arguments below). Indeed, the sporadic occurrence of cenotaphs suggests that they are created according to particular (rare) circumstances in these processes of exchange/interaction. Moreover, the presence of cenotaphs in cemeteries where only a small proportion of the population may be buried may indicate that cenotaphs are created where interactions using the framework of mortuary practices, and therefore perhaps especially with regard to the ancestors, are required, or desirable, but where no individual is available or suitable. This also suggests that the patterns of interactions between social groups exist over an extended period of time.

Cenotaphs thus fit within the themes of kinship, sequence and tempo, the ancestors, etc. (plus later themes of competition, gender, and so on) through interconnected

structures and values. Further discussion of these links, as, for example, to other non-burial mortuary practices will be explored.

### B) *Gender, age*

A substantial amount of evidence discussed in Chapter 3 supports the separation of two genders based wholly or largely on biological sex. Differentiated body position by sex accounts for a large majority of burials in the coastal cemeteries. Grave goods associated with one sex, either exclusively or according to the statistical measures adopted in Chapter 3, are found in around half of all burials in this culture.<sup>3</sup> This figure may be increased further by considering grave goods which differ in the frequency of their location in particular parts of the grave according to sex (as in the location of flint blades in male and female graves at Durankulak: above). At the Gumelnitsa sites grave and body forms are less distinct between the sexes, although there are differences in posture at Golyamo Delchevo, and in location within the cemetery at Golyamo Delchevo and Targovishte. There are also more general differences in the overall frequency of male and female graves and in the (male biased) distribution of copper and gold artefacts, for example. The different values which these forms represent will be discussed below but may be related here to socially derived, consistent relationships - i.e. gender roles.

Child burials also differ from adults in consistent ways in both cultures. Child graves contain on average fewer grave goods in total and fewer artefact types than adult burials. Child graves are apparently underrepresented, at the Gumelnitsa cemeteries in particular, but also possibly at the Varna Culture sites (compared to expected child mortality rates).

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<sup>3</sup> This figure is only an approximation using some extrapolation of results from Durankulak to the smaller or less completely detailed cemeteries at Devnya and Varna. Further details for many of the graves are shown in Figure 4.2.

These two dimensions of structure are not exclusive (and both are certainly interconnected with kinship, community and ancestral structures). Neither are the forms which indicate gender themselves independent of other meanings. Figure 4.2 compares the distribution of four artefact types which have been exclusively or statistically associated with female burials, and four with males. Two or more of these object types are found in almost half of all burials of each sex from Durankulak (plus one third of male, and one fifth of female burials from Varna, but less frequently for Devnya). Nevertheless, a far smaller percentage of male burials contain all of the elements chosen (7% of male burials from Durankulak, none from Devnya or Varna), and no female burial contains all four artefact types together with the body in the flexed/right position. A similar comparison for the Gumelnitsa Culture is not undertaken because of the absence of clearly sexually distinct artefact types, body positions and so on. This makes understanding of the inter-relationship of gender and other dimensions no less important, however.

The body positions and artefacts in Figure 4.2 may be regarded in terms of 'ideal' gender types, therefore, but which actually account for few burials in all their details. To the slight overlap of artefacts between genders can be added the majority of grave goods types which are not as clearly associated with a gender. Individual meanings of artefact types and other overlapping symbolic structures and values will be considered in Section 3 of this chapter plus Chapter 5.

Child graves may also be viewed in the same terms, but are also directly compared with the adult pattern in Figure 4.3 (using the same criteria and having the same conditions). The figure shows that child burials from the Varna Culture cemeteries do generally repeat the exclusivity of male and female artefact types and associations with body position, where this is known (barring Varna 61 which has a probably male burial in the Flexed/Right position). Almost half of the graves cited only include one of the

artefact types, however. In contrast also with the adult pattern, the highest percentage of child burials which do conform to the sex divisions of artefacts and posture is at Varna (circa 70%), with the lowest from Durankulak (around 20%). Some child graves also include artefact types mostly associated with adults (Figure 3.26) but which are not themselves gender specific. In some cases these finds are in graves of individuals close to the chosen limit of adulthood (at 16, as used by Todorova 1978a and here: e.g. Varna 32, 151), but similar 'adult' items may also be found in the graves of younger children. This may indicate that there is no 'role' of child as such (child graves in neither culture contain artefact types exclusively), but, again, that the form and existence of child graves is determined by strategies in the wider (kinship) group.

The comparison of the two gender patterns (for the Varna Culture) may be taken a stage further by examining the distribution of the same artefact types in cenotaphs (Figure 4.4). Only three graves (Durankulak 452, #123, Varna 97) are exceptions. The figure shows a strong bias towards male-associated artefacts in the graves detailed, including each of the three Devnya examples, and all bar one of the cenotaphs from Varna (this bias is decreased by the addition of gold appliques and marble conical vessels, however). Nevertheless, other basic values of cenotaphs have already been established. Other criteria (including the presence/absence of specific artefact types, e.g. figurines: Vaysov 1992b; Todorova 1992) may be used to divide the cenotaphs instead of, or in addition to, gender associations. In the Gumelnitsa Culture cenotaphs have not been shown to contain artefacts which have clear gender associations.

The information reviewed in Figures 4.2-4.4 neither addresses the whole of the evidence for gender nor describes relationships between genders (which will be a topic of the remainder of this chapter and all subsequent chapters). It is possible to conclude nonetheless that gender is an aspect of social interactions as a role/roles or structural principle(s) that are used strategically. Artefacts which have a strong gender association may be found singly or in combination, including in child burials and cenotaphs, but

are not invariably found. Later discussions will consider a number of graves which reverse the normal body position by sex (for the Varna Culture in particular) or contain artefacts usually associated with the other gender and which may indicate that gender attribution may be flexible and/or circumstantial.

This last point also re-emphasizes the necessary relationship between gender and the sequence of burials and tempo of interactions in the mortuary field of discourse. Differences in the frequency of burials by gender plus the variations in contents according to both gender and age may also be used to propose (relative) general values commonly expressed through gender. Thus, the greater number of male burials at many of the Gumelnitsa sites, and greater diversity of artefact types, especially in certain materials (below), may indicate that males are preferentially buried. This may be because males are regarded as more important or powerful in certain interactions among the living and/or with the ancestors. In the Varna Culture male graves again have greater numbers and variety of grave goods on average, and cenotaphs are more likely to contain male-associated artefacts (including many of the 'richest' Varna cenotaphs). This may imply a similar relative scale of values. The relative infrequency and poverty of child graves in both cultures in turn supports the interpretation that child burials are less (often) valued.

The last paragraph thus begins to address broad patterns of meaning which intersect across a number of structural dimensions but also introduces new values - of raw materials and specific artefacts, for example - that are the subject of the following section.

### 3. OTHER STRUCTURES

The other structures which the title of this Section implies are broadly of two sorts. The first part of the Section considers values associated with consistent patterns of use of raw materials and artefacts, as introduced above - i.e. essentially the *langue* of material culture codes - and draws on the results of Chapter 3 to a large extent. The second subsection returns in part to the issues addressed in Section 2 of the chapter, but a broader level, relating burial structures to wider mortuary practices. Both themes necessarily intersect with, but therefore complement, the values described to date and are equally subject to modification in the light of the discussions of strategy and performance in the following chapter.

The absence of any evidence for 'statuses' or 'ranks' which the several forms of analysis used in Chapter 3, Section 4 all suggest may be restated here. The limited number of circumstances where graves do show clear parallels in grave goods (as clusters, etc.) may thus be related to the intersection of the structures identified above, processes of interaction and circumstance/strategy. Individual incidences will be examined in Chapter 5. Other, recurring differences in values will become apparent in subsequent discussions.

#### A) *Artefacts and raw materials*

There are seven basic categories of raw material found as grave goods at the sites studied here - copper, gold, flint, (other) stone, shell, bone and clay - though several of these may be further divided.<sup>4</sup> I have divided artefacts into thirty-six main types but the

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<sup>4</sup> Identified stones used are limestone, lignite, malachite, chalcedony, green schist, quartz/quartzite, turquoise, agate, lazurite, kaolin, obsidian and marble. Shell includes finds of *Spondylus*, *Dentalium*, *Glitsimeris*, 'river shell' and snail. Bone includes antler and tooth. Clay is both fired and unfired. Unmanufactured artefacts are of ochre, graphite, limonite, charcoal, stone (unidentified or quartz) and shell. Lignite is sometimes referred to as 'black mineral' and green schist as 'green mineral' or

number of categories rises to over eighty when form *and* material are distinguished. In addition to form and (raw) material two other major aspects of grave goods can be identified from the descriptions in Chapter 3: function, which is separate from form because similar forms may have different functions (etc. and because artefacts made specifically for burials may have no utilitarian function as such: discussion of this issue will be undertaken in Chapter 5); and location, within and between cemeteries (plus temporally, within the ritual: again considered principally in Chapter 5). The relationships between these aspects and the social structures outlined above has been consistently established through the evidence addressed in Chapter 3. Thus, for example, Figure 4.5 repeats the findings of Figures 3.13 and 3.25 with regards to the overall distributions of the main raw material classes and their distributions among various categories of grave. From the diagram, copper is clearly more common at the Varna Culture cemeteries (28-35% of graves contain copper objects) than at the Gumelnitsa sites (0-10%). Gold occurs at fewer sites but is markedly more common at Varna than any other site. Obsidian, marble and dentalium also have very limited distributions. Within sites, for example, 60% of gold at Varna is found in cenotaphs (Ivanov 1988) but no gold is found in cenotaphs at any other site. Copper is almost invariably found with adult males at the Gumelnitsa Culture sites, and so on.

Form and material are clearly not wholly independent. At Durankulak, for example, copper bracelets and finger rings are common and axes uncommon, while the reverse is the case at Varna. Values may also link material and form with function and location. Thus, hair rings are exclusively made of gold (though hair pins may be in copper and bone). Tooth rings are exclusively of copper but ear-rings in this material are rare (most are gold). Copper axes and gold ear-rings are primarily associated with male burials and copper tooth and finger rings with female graves.

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'agalmatolit'. Additionally, kaolin may be confused with (fired) clay in some cases and chalcedony is sometimes included in the category 'quartz'.

This interdependence of meanings according to the several aspects identified and occurring at several (social) levels simultaneously is fundamental. It reinforces criticisms made of explanations ascribing singular meanings to materials (e.g. Renfrew 1986, for gold), forms (such as sceptres: various authors, see Chapter 1), etc., but does not mean that each aspect may not possess values which are partially independent. The regular patterning of artefacts between social groups and for one or more aspect may allow the recognition of long-lived and/or widespread (i.e. structural) values.

One general aspect of a material which is not dependent on context is source (of the raw material, but also, potentially, of the finished object - see below). Most analyses of the origins of raw materials have been applied to finds from Varna but are also often applicable to finds from other sites (Figure 4.6). Thus, spondylus and dentalium shells are from the Mediterranean (Renfrew & Shackleton 1970) and copper is from the sources near Stara Zagora (Chernyh 1979; Gale et al. 1991) at all sites. The origin of gold is more problematic. Despite the original analysis by Hartmann (1978), and subsequent studies by others (Éluère 1989a; Echt, Thiele & Ivanov 1991), several possible sources have been suggested, including: local alluvial deposits (Avramova 1986; Renfrew 1986; I. Ivanov 1989a); the copper mines of the Stara Planina (Raduncheva 1992); Transylvania (Gimbutas 1977a); and Anatolia (WeiBhaar 1982; Zanotti 1984-5).

Given the uncertainties in the origins of many materials, especially gold, therefore, I only make a distinction between local goods - i.e. potentially produced in north-east Bulgaria - and exotic goods, with a definite origin outside the region. Local goods are essentially limited to those in pottery, clay, bone and flint, which are also the most common materials of finds in settlements. Materials which are certainly exotic are copper, spondylus, dentalium, obsidian and, probably, some stones including marble. This is at best a crude distinction, however. Flint found at Varna is from Novi Pazar,

60 km. from the site and 'local' to Kubrat, Radingrad, etc.. Gold, similarly, may be local to the Devnya region, but an imported item at Durankulak.

Distance from the source of a raw material is less important in specific terms here, nevertheless, than as a general index of accessibility and use in ritual practices. Accessibility may be associated in turn with the control of scarce resources, and hence the acquisition of prestige (in the sense of the 'Prestige Goods Model': Frankenstein and Rowlands 1978, etc.). A detailed consideration of exchange patterns or materials and/or finished objects are beyond the scope of this thesis and are, arguably, poorly understood for the Late Chalcolithic in the eastern Balkans. Examination of exchange is hampered by the limited evidence for forms of transportation (Frey 1991; Bailey 1993) and evidence for the place of manufacture of many artefacts is extremely limited (Chapter 6). The number of graves definitely containing exotic materials is uniformly high in the coastal cemeteries (45-50% - Devnya and Durankulak: 70% of graves with available information - Varna) and lower inland (from 0-21%, barring Targovishte - 36%). As a basic statistic these figures suggest that high prestige values through exoticness or scarcity are less likely to be applied to materials in Varna Culture burials, where exotic objects are commonly found, than inland.

Again, however, the specific distributions of materials argues against prestige (acquisition) as being the only, or prime, source of value for artefacts. Thus in the Gumelnitsa Culture cemeteries the male and adult dominated distributions of exotic materials (copper and spondylus, plus gold) suggests that any values based on acquisition were also primarily available to, or could be most readily expressed through adult male burials (Chapter 6 will also present evidence that some exotic materials may be common and more widely distributed between social groups in settlement contexts compared to cemeteries). In the Varna Culture gold is more common with adult males than with any other category of burial (differences in detail between the three sites notwithstanding). Equally, at Varna, but not at other cemeteries, spondylus occurs

rarely in cenotaphs (but does occur in Graves 24, 41, 49 and 97) whereas dentalium is almost invariably found in cenotaphs (exceptions include two partial burials - Graves 27 and 71, a child burial - 61 - and as single objects in two further burials - 8 and 19). The circumstances in which the use of materials is appropriate thus varies between sites, genders and so on. Moreover, the preponderance of finds in some materials in cenotaphs (or their absence) implies a less direct link between acquisition and disposal, at least in relation to one individual, and perhaps a lower or less frequent value in interactions between social groups among the living.

These arguments have been applied only to the presence/absence of a material. Figure 4.7 illustrates the number of separate artefacts in selected materials in graves for the cemeteries for which reasonably complete evidence is available. Taking the results along cultural lines, the Varna and Gumelnitsa Cultures are sharply divided at least for the first three materials (copper, gold, spondylus). In the Gumelnitsa cemeteries, for example, gold is invariably found as only a single artefact, and copper and spondylus most often as single artefacts but occasionally as two <sup>5</sup> (this also applies to the flint, bone and stone classifications in large part). Copper and spondylus may occur as up to three separate artefacts at Devnya, five at Durankulak and seven at Varna in any one grave. Gold usually occurs singly at Durankulak, and always at Devnya, but at Varna may occur in up to eighteen artefacts, in turn consisting of up to almost 1000 individual gold objects (in Varna 43). Nonetheless burials excluding Varna 43 (and, of course, cenotaphs) are more typically similar to the Devnya and Durankulak figures, containing a maximum of four gold and copper and seven spondylus artefacts. Exaggerated quantities of gold and other artefact types in a handful of graves will be considered in Chapter 5. For flint, stone and bone artefacts the position is similar, with graves in the

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<sup>5</sup> A gold anthropomorphic applique from Sava-Tsonevo is accompanied by a tack of the same material. Similar finds from Varna suggest that these objects may be considered to be a single artefact, however.

coastal cemeteries typically containing between nought and three artefacts of each material, with a slightly greater range at Varna, including cenotaphs.

There is evidence that the quantity of artefacts in particular materials (and presence absence of materials) is related to the overall form of the grave and burial ritual, therefore. In particular, there may be few circumstances in which large quantities of grave goods of any (local or exotic) material are appropriate (with acquisition of materials itself thus of only limited significance in determining the values of grave goods). Figure 4.8 expands the range of the evidence discussed by showing the average numbers of artefacts regardless of type in graves at each cemetery and the average number (and ranges) of those graves containing each material. The figure indicates that the number of grave goods in graves containing exotic raw materials is frequently twice the average number for the site. In the coastal cemeteries, the range of total numbers of grave goods containing exotic artefacts are nonetheless similar to the overall range. For gold, the range is from three or fewer to the maximum for the site. In the inland cemeteries, graves containing gold, copper and spondylus are almost invariably restricted to the upper part of the range.

Figure 4.8 also indicates that graves which contain large numbers of exotic artefacts (and/or gold) also tend to contain large numbers of artefacts of local origin - notably pottery but also clay and bone artefacts. The extent to which this is the case varies between sites and may be represented as an approximation, by comparing the average number of raw materials in graves with a greater than average number of grave goods, against those with fewer. Each different type of stone (etc.) is included. Although the average number of grave goods is lowered because of graves containing no artefacts, graves with more than average numbers of grave goods tend to have twice as many raw materials represented.<sup>6</sup> The difference is lowest at Golyamo Delchevo and Vinitsa

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<sup>6</sup> Figures are as follows: -

where several graves contain comparatively large numbers of pots but no other artefact types.

Figures 4.7 and 4.8 lead again to the conclusion that the overall quantities and *qualities* of grave goods are mutually dependent (and dependent on the group performing the burial). However, the figures suggest that certain materials are consistently employed in graves with a high total number and variety of grave goods. This may be taken as one measure of relative 'wealth' - where wealth describes the *overall* quantity and, to some extent, the forms and materials of physical resources employed in burials.<sup>7</sup> This issue will be returned to in Chapter 5, but clearly cannot be separated from the nature of the group(s) performing the burial (and its/their interactions with other social groups) and the sequences of actions between and within these institutionalized structures. This measure of wealth certainly cannot be taken as the most important value expressed through burial practices, therefore. Wealth does not take account of the function and location of artefacts, for example, which have been shown to have consistent associations and values.

Location may be introduced into a consideration of the relative values of both form and material where graves contain two or more artefacts of similar type, and where the artefact type is commonly found in one location in the grave. Such conditions are rarely met, however (and except for pottery which is not normally displaced to a secondary

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Average numbers of grave good types in graves containing more or less than the average number of grave goods per site.

	DEV.	DUR.	G.D.	TARG.	VAR.	VIN.
GREATER	4.56	4.37	2.54	3.75	6.72	2.26
FEWER	1.87	1.57	1.38	1.2	2.79	1.25
X DIFFERENCE	2.44	2.91	1.84	3.13	2.41	1.81

(Where Dev. = Devnya; Dur. = Durankulak; G.D. = Golyamo Delchevo; Targ. = Targovishte; Var = Varna; Vin = Vinitsa, and X = times).

<sup>7</sup> The body and grave pit may be included in this definition, particularly in light of the discussion of performance in the following chapter, but I am referring here principally to grave goods.

location), and are mostly limited to the coastal cemeteries (Figure 4.9).<sup>8</sup> The few artefact types included in Figure 4.9 must be considered against the apparent infrequency of preferences for most artefacts, therefore. At Durankulak, for example, copper and spondylus bracelets, and combinations of the two, are both approximately as common.

Amongst the artefact types considered in Figure 4.9 there is also little consistency. Axes are most often held (or placed as though held) either by the head or the shaft. However, in graves where two or more such finds occur, both may be held (Devnya 6), or be of the same material (Lilyak 3). In other graves, two or more artefacts may be placed close to the hands, whether held or not (Vinitsa 38: stone shaft-hole axe and copper chisel; Varna 14: stone chisel, stone adze and antler axe). In Varna 43 a copper axe is located immediately below the stone axe which is part of the sceptre. One copper and one flint spearhead are also placed side-by-side close to the opposite shoulder though neither was held. A copper chisel and two stone adzes are placed in secondary positions by the legs in the same grave. Pairs of axes (or spearheads in Varna 97) also occur in a number of cenotaphs from this site. The sceptres at Varna have gold plated shafts twice for stone axes (one with gilding), once for copper and once with a gold head. A final comparison, of diadems, is simply divided by site, with gold diadems at Varna (in cenotaphs, however), and more frequently occurring spondylus diadems at Durankulak.

A similar measure may be made using form (and apparent function) and location. This is not straightforward. Axes and adzes both may be wood-working tools, for example, but have different precise functions which again different from chisels, etc.. Other

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<sup>8</sup> Primary location is used here not to refer to particular parts of the body *per se* (as in Renfrew's cross-cultural generalizations about the importance of the face, hands, etc.: Renfrew 1986) but to the most common location of finds as summarized in Figure 3.18.

tools, such as the components of the sewing-kit from Durankulak, possibly have different functions within the same general process. The functions of ornaments and some other objects, including figurines, are more difficult to assess or compare.

Figure 4.9 suggests in this case that there may be some consistency in the placement of tools in the most common position for such (in/near the hands) in (male) graves. Thus, while axes are most often held, other tools may be held or placed near the body. However, in none of the grave are axes placed by the body and other tools held. The same pattern extends to the location of artefacts in some cenotaphs which resemble burials in their overall distribution of grave goods. In general terms flint tools - blades and scrapers - are least likely to be held when there are other tools in the grave. This may indicate that the association of axes and perhaps chisels with males (and perhaps cenotaphs) is the strongest factor determining the positioning of tools in the grave, although adzes, which are possibly also principally male-associated artefacts, may also be placed in secondary positions to axes and chisels. Varna 43 again exemplifies these patterns, but also contains copper and flint spearheads placed to be, or seem to be, held and has two more shaft-hole axes away from the normal location by the knees of the skeleton.

Comparative values in female graves (primarily in the Varna Culture) are based on a different set of relationships and artefacts. Tools in female graves are more frequently placed in or by vessels (with some exceptions: see Chapter 5). The most common forms are elements of the sewing-kit assemblage, at Durankulak, with few occasions where any clear preferences may be discerned. Value may be based on the presence of this assemblage and possibly its completeness or the presence of individual components. It may be repeated that the assemblage also occurs in a reasonable minority of male graves.

The sum of the evidence considered above supports the the statistical examination of grave good distributions in Chapter 3 in providing little indication of distinct assemblages (except the sewing kit) or artefacts/materials of 'prime' (pre-eminent) symbolic value. This suggests that meanings of individual artefact types are largely independent of one another at least insofar as these relate to forms (and apparent functions). This question has not yet been considered in depth because it is tied up with issues of manufacture for the individual grave, personal property, and so on, which are more usefully discussed in Chapter 5 but accords completely with the statistical descriptions of artefact distributions in Chapter 3. Equally, the evidence reviewed to date does suggest that the total inventory of the grave (i.e. wealth) may be an element in strategies at the wider structural levels I have proposed. I have not yet suggested what these strategies may be - not least because strategies must be circumstantial - beyond the reproduction of the social groups themselves (although this should not be considered to be of little consequence in itself). However, some general media for strategies have been introduced.

At the broadest social level so far examined - the community - consistencies within, and differences between, sites in relative wealth, etc. remain the main features of the artefact patterning without providing evidence for or against strategies emphasizing or minimizing this institution. The patterns of use of raw materials plus the total numbers of artefacts in burials do suppose that the immediate social (kinship) group performing the burial does so in accordance with strategies with regard to economic and ritual resources, perhaps involving competition (in interactions with other groups). However, there is no reason to believe that each burial maximizes the quantity/quality of available material resources, whether exotic, local or in total. With other information (e.g. for cenotaphs) economic/ritual meanings can also be linked to interactions with (or through) the ancestors and therefore with ongoing processes of interaction and exchange, legitimation, ancestral authority, and so on. The use of artefacts in relation to gender structures also imply generalized directions which strategies commonly take.

Thus, axes probably symbolize maleness, in whole or part, in both cultures and also possibly relates to the expression of (values associated with) the ancestors. This accumulation of meanings (values) may account for the greater consistency with which axes are located in particular parts of the grave compared to other tools. However, some other tool forms may be similarly associated in individual graves, and different separate and combined values may be apparent in other artefact distributions for different structures and roles.

### B) *Non-burial mortuary practices*

The chapter so far has been an attempt to identify groups (institutions) and other structures involved in performing, witnessing or being affected by burial rituals, and to ascribe values to some aspects and physical components of the performance. The following sub-section opens out the discussion to address mortuary practices other than the burial (and its immediate preparation) both as an addition to the previous arguments and as a broader area in which strategies may be apparent (and which will be further expanded by the consideration of settlement and other evidence in Chapters 6 and 7). Direct evidence for non-burial mortuary practices is slight but the strong case for arguing that only a fraction of the population is buried, especially in the Gumelnitsa Culture, requires that the values relating to burial are only adopted infrequently and/or are modified by other practices. Thus the argument that the placement of burials within a cemetery to an extent legitimizes and fixes in time and space the strategies employed - and the structures manifested - can be set against the apparent disposal of some/most of the population in a way that leaves no permanent trace. The role of the corpse has been suggested to be a fundamental structure in burials with the burial, as a rite of passage, a physical and symbolic means by which the deceased as a social individual is removed from society (with his/her rights and obligations) and certain resources redistributed in society as a whole.

The possibility that other forms of disposal exist alongside, or instead of, burial does not contradict the structures and strategies identified, however. Indeed, the differences in the frequencies of burial according to age or gender, for example, have been used to support arguments for the existence of these structures and the values which they permit. Thus, the formation of cemeteries, particularly extra-mural cemeteries occupying a fixed locale in the landscape, may re/produce the community in relation to neighbouring settlements. The presence of burials, with associations with the ancestors, continuity of the community and groups within it, and so on, may convey a broader legitimation for these groups, perhaps in terms of 'ownership' of land which is less (or not at all) symbolized by non-burial mortuary practices. This has particular significance for the limited temporal span of most of the Gumelnitsa cemeteries and for the uneven tempo of burials within (some of) these. This is returned to below. Similarly, the proposed greater importance of males burials may be taken as a response to certain commonly occurring strategies which perhaps specifically or implicitly fix some structures and relationships at a moment in time (i.e. similar to Harrison's (1992) disposition of tokens of power).

There are two main forms of evidence for non-burial mortuary practices, which relate in different ways to these issues. There is some evidence which may provide information on other forms of disposal of the corpse. A number of sites also have features not directly associated with burials which may indicate the existence of ritual practices occurring in the area of the cemetery.

#### i) *excarnation*

The only direct evidence for non-burial mortuary practices is provided by the 'stray' finds. Of these, Kodzhadermen and Hotnitsa are the best dated (to the Late Chalcolithic) but it is possible also that some or all of the other stray human remains (see Chapter 2) are not burials but do date to the Late Chalcolithic. However, the

Kodzhadermen finds are from within the settlement and therefore probably not from the actual location at which the disposal occurs. The Hotnitsa finds may relate to specific circumstances connected with the abandonment of the settlement. These sites nevertheless suggest excarnation/exposure as a widespread disposal practice in conjunction with the more substantial evidence from partial and mutilated skeletons.

There is no good evidence for there being a locale in which exposure occurred - or even that bodies were regularly left in a single location. There is slight evidence that it may have occurred in the area of the cemetery. Stray bones are found at Varna and Durankulak but could be from disturbed burials. Todorova (1982) has argued that some *Middle* Chalcolithic child skeletons at Polyanitsa were placed on the ground surface and covered with a mound. Similarly shallow burials may exist at other sites for adults and children and may suggest a blurring of the distinction between excarnation and inhumation.

The range of variation in partial skeletons is large despite the limited number and distribution of such finds (Figure 3.8). There is some consistency of forms within sites that may imply a consistency of meanings over time, however. At Kubrat, for example, the partial skeletons all involve special attention being paid to the head (skull only - Graves 23 and 24: skull and arm bones only - Grave 10). In the Varna Culture the skull is also given special treatment in Devnya 17 - by being the main part of the skeleton absent from the grave - and in Varna 63, where the skull of the partial burial is itself fragmentary. This last individual was probably epileptic (one of two 'Type D' cenotaphs where the individual is suggested to have suffered from a chronic illness: I. Ivanov 1988; 1991a). Details of most other partial skeletons from Varna are not reported so that it is not clear what bones are present.

Unusual treatment of the head is also common to many mutilated skeletons, particularly in the Gumelnitsa Culture. Post-mortal trepanations occur in 31% of examined skulls

from Ruse and two of the stray finds from Kodzhadermen (Boev 1972). Grave 1 at Kubrat has a complete skeleton but the skull is displaced, supporting the evidence from the partial burials at the site. No similar finds occur at the extra-mural Gumelnitsa cemeteries. A small number of burials at Durankulak dated by T. Dimov (pers. comm.) to the Late Chalcolithic contain individuals whose skulls had been deformed by binding in childhood. These burials are nonetheless entirely consistent with the normal burial forms for the site. The head has been widely argued to be an important motif in figurines from both cultures (Raduncheva 1981; V. Nikolov 1989; Todorova 1992) and is also depicted in the three masks from cenotaphs at Varna. Many artefact types have been shown to be associated with the head in burials.

The skull is not exclusively the subject of partial or mutilated graves, however. Crushing and breaking of long-bones are reported from Kodzhadermen, Devnya 17 and Varna 50. The Vinitza partial skeleton (in Grave 3) consists of leg bones. Figurines representing models of legs and feet, and foot shaped vessels, are found at sites in both cultural areas (Busch 1982). Other separate body parts are rarely modelled, except for the penis (Gimbutas 1974/1982).

The forms of partial burials and of mutilations to complete burials may thus be influenced by general symbolic structures which cut across several fields of discourse. However, the evidence itself suggests that the partial burials are deliberately created in relation to (possibly) consistent but infrequent strategies. The partial second skeleton at Vinitza and the mutilated Devnya burial are unique for their sites. The highest percentages are from Kubrat and Ruse where partial/mutilated finds include at least 15% of skeletons.

The unique features of these burials may be discussed most profitably in the consideration of circumstantial strategies in the next chapter. However, an examination of partiality and mutilation as an unified phenomenon also has a logical basis, in the

shared extended duration of the funerary rituals and in the incompleteness of the corpse. Partial and mutilated burials are not limited to one gender or age. Finds include male and female adults, with a slight preponderance of females at the intra-mural cemeteries and males at the Varna Culture sites (from available evidence). Child burials include trepaned finds at Ruse (and fractional long-bones at Kodzhadermen) but are not found as mutilated/partial finds at other sites.

Grave goods are absent from a considerable proportion of the burials (Devnya 17, Kubrat 10, 23, 24, Varna 20(?), Vinitsa 3, and many of the trepaned graves at Ruse). Fewer, essentially the 'Type D' cenotaphs from Varna have varied assemblages, including gold, marble, spondylus, etc. artefacts, but not copper (in Graves 27, 35, 63 and 71). The Varna partial burials, for which there is information available, in fact have contents which are similar to those in cenotaphs. Thus, the only published finds from (certainly) female burials at Varna of gold anthropomorphic appliques and dentalium shells are from partial burials - these artefact types being common in cenotaphs. The same burials are also distinguished by their unusual depth (see Figure 3.5b), at circa 3 m., which is deeper than any other burials from the site but closest to the depth of some cenotaphs.

Although these Varna burials are another example of site-specific patterns of meaning, the similarities with cenotaphs are also part of a wider structure of meanings which may deny or diminish (de-personalize) the individuality of the corpse. The more widespread pattern of excarnation or mutilation *and* absence of grave goods are both digressions from the normal spatial form of the grave in addition to the different temporal pattern of the ritual. Partiality and some forms of mutilation in reducing the body thus remove visible personal identity, gender and so on (though not perhaps age), plus other forms of value, such as through identification of artefacts with parts of the body, especially where 'worn'. Equally the essential role of the corpse may be modified or omitted - and resources redistributed differently in society. The removal or reduction in importance of

an individual identity does not imply a lack of identification with another level (or levels) of social structure, however. Indeed, I have already emphasized that the nature, and perhaps the existence, of burials depend in part on interactions between social groups and with the ancestors over time, with the corpse a member of a corporate kinship/household group (and perhaps the community) to a greater or lesser extent. The more obvious parallels between the partial burials and cenotaphs at Varna support the identification of the former strongly with this social level, and, especially, with the ancestors. The same associations may apply to the other sites. This may partially explain the absence of cenotaphs from the intra-mural cemeteries, where the higher proportion of partial/mutilated burials may be an alternative to cenotaphs, even if it does not wholly account for the presence of both forms at some extra-mural cemeteries. Studies which have linked settlement architecture or figurines, for example (Bailey 1994; Chapman 1990: see Chapter 6) to generalized and detailed (i.e. individual) ancestors and kinship groups in the Gumelnitsa Culture may thus be structured similarly to mortuary practices in the same culture where exposure and inhumation are at the ends of a spectrum of specificity of meanings and strategies in mortuary practices.

## ii) *non-burial finds in the cemeteries*

Figure 3.29 outlines the non-burial finds from the extra-mural cemeteries. The difficulty in attributing a mortuary context to finds from the area of intra-mural burials may be re-emphasized. Later discussions of settlement based ritual practices and the infrequent use of artefacts as grave goods at these sites may be noted, however. Finds from a number of the extra-mural cemeteries are more confidently associated with non-burial activities by their location in the area of the cemetery and their contemporaneity, at least to phase, as the burials.

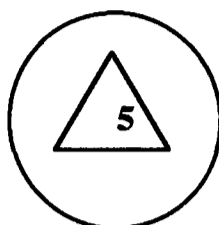
Pit finds at Golyamo Delchevo and the 'Offerings' at Vinitza are reported (Todorova et al. 1975; Raduncheva 1976). The Golyamo Delchevo finds contain pottery and flint but no more complete details are published. The Vinitza 'Offerings' contain animal bones and pottery plus some tools and two clay figurine fragments. Raduncheva suggests that these finds are linked to feasting, although few details are given of the bone assemblages (beyond identification of cattle bones and a dog skull) and there are no reported traces of burning or hearths. There are also no published accounts of excavations outside the settlement and cemetery with which these finds may be compared (but see Bailey 1995). However, the pits may relate to episodic activities, possibly including food preparation and consumption, connected with mortuary practices and occurring possibly on each occasion of a burial, or less frequently. Differences in the quantities of artefacts found in the Offerings at Vinitza (from published photographs, Offerings 2, 3 and 5 contain few artefacts; 1 and 4 contain many more: Raduncheva 1976) may suggest that the latter pits at least represent accumulations over time - i.e. multiple usage. There is no clear indication, however, whether this is by one social group within the community (and why in this case other pits are used less often). The pits do not obviously relate to individual burials either spatially or in their contents. Neither is there any published evidence as to whether the pits were wholly or partly deliberately filled. However, the contents of a number of cenotaphs do share similar features to at least one of the offerings. Thus, Offering 1 has stones in a circle round the base of the pit as does cenotaph Grave 24, and unworked animal bones and flint blades in common with Graves 43 and 48. However, Grave 21 - a child burial - also has unworked stones in a circle, and Graves 7 (child) and 10 (largely destroyed) have animal bones and other artefacts in the grave fill. None of these similarities correspond to close spatial proximity of the graves/pits. These similarities in artefacts and the use of poorly fired, funerary pottery in the pits may support identification with generalized meanings and wider values in mortuary practices, however. These may include ancestral and social continuity (through parallels to cenotaphs), and therefore also kinship and/or community structures.

Sava-Tsonevo is different in that five pits found in the cemetery are located adjacent to, and oriented the same as, specific burials to which they certainly relate (Toncheva n.d.). The finds from the pits include pottery and agricultural tools which are deposited in separate layers in at least one case. The finds broadly resemble the Vinitsa Offerings in the association of pottery and food production - though in the form of tools rather than animal bones - but more strongly indicate 'structured' depositional practices and perhaps a closer identification with (a) kinship group(s), through the proximity to burials. The burials themselves are still separate and have similar contents and form to other graves at the site.

There is considerably less evidence for non-burial practices at the Varna Culture sites. At Durankulak the details are especially complicated because of earlier and later graves in the same area, but the finds are principally of single objects, potentially from disturbed vessels. At Varna, along with stray artefact finds, one pit has been reported which contains a whole sheep/goat skeleton. This find may have the character of a sacrifice or offering but cannot be clearly related to other finds of bones in graves in the cemetery. The absence of strong evidence for ritual practices other than burial reinforces the results of previous discussions, of the frequency of burials, and so on, in suggesting that interment is the most important mortuary ritual in the Varna Culture and the primary medium for strategies in relation to all of the social structures identified.

The contrast between the Gumelnitsa and Varna Cultures in terms of non-burial mortuary practices and excarnation therefore add to, and reinforce the differences between the two cultures in the articulation of the other social and symbolic structures. The frequency of burials in the Varna Culture, emphasis on gender and so on, and the Gumelnitsa pattern of less frequent burials (and other disposal practices), etc. also provide the diverse circumstances in which meanings and values are structured and values deployed. These are the subject of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE



### 1. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 I described the purpose of this chapter as the exploration of individual actions and meanings, and change. The chapter will also be a complement and counterpoint to the previous chapter. I have already repeatedly argued against singular perspectives, whether concentrating on individual social structures, symbols/meanings or strategies.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Chapter 4 concentrated on identifying institutions and 'dominant' symbols but also sought to relate these to each other as networks of values (as between form, material, etc.) which are also located in time and space. In terms of the Giddens model, these may be regarded as describing (in large part) the limits of knowledgeability of agents. This chapter will concentrate on the unique circumstances of the performance of each burial (within these limitations, and as far as they can be explored archaeologically) and, therefore, also on the detailed sequences of change and interaction introduced in the last chapter.

There are two main elements to the arguments. Section 2 considers individual meanings (and strategies) of artefacts and ritual forms, particularly where these do not conform to the normal structures and dominant meanings established in Chapter 4. This applies to both empirical/statistical norms (on which the discussion remains heavily dependent) and to more interpretative dominant values, such as those relating to the ancestors. This

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<sup>1</sup> At this point the arguments may be taken as referring to only the data studied here. However, similar arguments may be applied to other data, just as models of the Bulgarian data which I have criticized have also been applied elsewhere. Chapter 7 will return to the broader implications of this study.

Chapter also retains the hierarchy of analysis from ritual to society and hence the discussions can be regarded as addressing (if only in part) the *parole* of material culture use and *token* rituals. Section 2 therefore continues to consider concerns of the previous chapter and follows on, for example, from the examination of unique forms and structured meanings of partial and mutilated remains. Section 3 overlaps with Section 2 but is principally concerned with the overall meanings of individual burials and thus issues such as competition, change and the interactions between the several institutions and roles manifested in mortuary practices. Section 4 seeks to incorporate the results of this Chapter and Chapter 4 in a more detailed interpretation of structures, values and strategies as they relate to each of the cemeteries - and individual burials - studied here. This will provide both conclusions to the study to this point and the basis with which to examine the wider context of the burial finds (and to re-examine the conclusions reached) in Chapters 6 and 7.

## 2. TOKEN AND PAROLE: INDIVIDUAL FORMS AND MEANINGS

The discussion of partial/mutilated burials in Chapter 4 cited the partial burials (type D cenotaphs) from Varna as one example of the interrelationship between structures and unique forms/meanings. The graves were suggested to deviate from normal patterns in the incompleteness of the skeleton, the unusual depth of the grave pit and in the presence of artefact types typically associated with cenotaphs. These features of the burials illustrate several general ways in which the graves may vary from normal patterns. Deviations may represent a deliberate alteration or inversion of the normal form (as with greater depth: this corresponds to the discussion of temporal variation in Chapter 3 where resources were argued to be omitted, added to or substituted during the ritual performance). Some variation may also reflect the degree to which received norms are specific and/or sanctioned. This is nonetheless a choice between generalizing and specific explanations - both archaeologically, and in that norms in one aspect of ritual may be referred to wider structures (as in the relationship of partial burials to non-

mortuary disposal practices) - *and* depends on the degree to which different structures are employed/excluded strategically. These forms of deviation are clearly not exclusive of one another and certainly cannot be selected for discussion in advance. The following arguments are divided according to the nature of the evidence, therefore. The first sub-section concentrates on the body and grave form and the second on grave goods.

#### A) *body and grave form*

The most widely available evidence for an aspect of grave form is for depth (see Figure 3.5). However, as noted, the original depth of any of the graves is difficult to establish because of chance factors of preservation. The range of depths of graves is commonly greater than one metre at any site, although the differences between categories of grave are typically far smaller, when averaged out. This applies especially to the Gumelnitsa extra-mural cemeteries. Grave depths within the gender and age categories for the most part overlap considerably and include a spread of values within the range. It is thus difficult to argue that the depth of any individual grave conveys a singular meaning or results from a specific strategy (which would require a precise control of the depth of the grave).

Devnya is similar in the range and overlap of values, although some child graves are shallower than other burials, but has too few burials to provide clear evidence for patterning (or deviations from norms). At Durankulak the reported evidence for depth suggests a consistent application as a component of normal burial type. There is no published evidence for graves which do not conform to the sanctioned meanings and/or preferred strategies within the limits of knowledgeability which the patterns suppose.

Varna differs from the other cemeteries in two ways. There are a small number of burials which are considerably deeper than all others at the site. Also, uniquely,

cenotaphs are found in two groups, shallower and deeper, with an average difference between the two of greater than 1 metre. The deeper cenotaphs are also deeper in absolute terms than all but four burials for which details are known (Graves 23, 27, 35 and 43).<sup>2</sup> Of these, Varna 43 is distinguished from all other burials by the quantities of gold and copper it contains. Graves 27 and 35 are both partial burials (and therefore cenotaphs according to the excavator) and are the deepest of all graves at circa 3 metres.

There are few physical features, other than depth, shared by the deeper graves, or shallow cenotaphs. Some of the shallow cenotaphs, for example, include few artefacts in total, but this does not apply to Varna 36, which is included in this group. The deeper graves also vary in the way in which depth is incorporated into the performance of the ritual, although they may also have similar associated meanings. The three deepest cenotaphs are among those with two or more layers of finds, a feature which I have linked to the extension of the ritual in time. Ancestral interactions may also be strongly associated with the partial burials, and perhaps also with the unique wealth of Grave 43.

Depth is not consistently related to equivalent variation in other dimensions of the grave pit at Varna (despite problems of differential erosion, sloping sides, etc.). Two of the deepest grave pits, (Graves 41 and 43) are also unusually long and wide, but other exceptionally long graves are of less than average depth. There is some association between the shallow cenotaphs and smaller grave pits. This is true for Varna 36 and some of the graves with an '0' prefix, but is not, for example, for Varna 53, which is

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<sup>2</sup> The deeper group of cenotaphs comprises Graves 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 15, 40, 41 and 53. The shallower group consists of Graves 36, 03, 06, 07, 08 and 011. These graves are all from the southern half of the cemetery and the differences in depth are therefore unlikely to be due to differential deposition and/or erosion. The shallow graves are more likely to have been disturbed by agricultural practices, however.

of greater than average depth.<sup>3</sup> The evidence for grave pit form is poorly known/reported for most sites but variations from the normal forms at other sites may only apply to some cenotaphs at Devnya and, perhaps, the Gumelnitsa extra-mural cemeteries (see Figure 3.29).

Other forms of variation from the normal types involve the body in addition to, or instead of the grave pit. Graves which vary in orientation and/or body posture from site norms are summarized in Figure 5.1. The figure shows that variations in either can be found with burials of any age/sex category, including cenotaphs (as Varna 1, which has an oval pit form and east-west orientation). Abnormal orientations nevertheless often extend just beyond the normal range of values (e.g. north-west rather than north at Durankulak). The sites where there is least uniformity in grave form (Kubrat, Ruse, Omurtag) also have the least consistent use of one orientation. Shifts in body position at Ruse and Kubrat over time (at least according to stratigraphic location) have already been noted.

These points illustrate the wider interpretative problems which apply to all of the discussions in this sub-section. Similar deviations from empirical 'norms' do not necessarily express identical values - or indeed have to represent conscious, strategic decisions. Equally, an overdependence on norms of meaning/value may obscure variations in strategy. Subsequent arguments, nonetheless, are informed by two assumptions: that the more highly structured an aspect of form, the more likely deviation from it is to have a particular intended (strategic) value; and that more extreme deviations are also more likely to be deliberate. However, interpretations must depend fundamentally on the individual circumstances of each grave and cemetery. Thus, the western orientation of Kubrat 2b may be related to the unique location of the grave

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<sup>3</sup> Graves 41 and 43 are respectively 2.7 x 1.2 x 2.8 (depth) m. and 2.7 x 1.05 x 2.2 m., but Grave 8 is 2.2 m. long and only 0.75 m. deep, and Grave 14 is 2.3 m. long and 0.88 m. deep. Grave 53 is 0.75 x 0.35 m. in size and 1.66 m. deep.

beneath another burial (2a, which has a 'normal' orientation: see also comments on e.g. Golyamo Delchevo 10 below and in Section 4 of this chapter).

Similar arguments apply to the data included in the second part of Figure 5.1 which details variations from normal burial posture. Some of these finds may again be extreme versions of the range of variation included within the defined 'normal' patterns (as, perhaps, Radingrad 8, Varna 46). Some may also be the result of post-depositional disturbance. However, the flexed/left burials at the coastal cemeteries, and the flexed/right burial at Golyamo Delchevo, suggest a deliberate inversion of type. Todorova (1978e) has argued that these are burials of individuals from the other cultural area who are given the burial rite of their original community. In the case of the flexed/right burial from Golyamo Delchevo (Grave 10) this view has some support, as the corpse is also oriented north. However, the grave contains no artefacts or other features which could strengthen or weaken this proposition (and other explanations may be more appropriate: below).

The flexed/left coastal burials are found at all four sites and include the only known burial at Reka Devnya. Most of these burials are oriented north (although Reka Devnya is oriented east and Varna 38 to the east or south-east). The position nonetheless accounts for only around half of the bodies with abnormal posture from these sites. Flexed burials placed on the back have no direct parallels in Gumelnitsa cemeteries (with possible exceptions at Ruse). Grave goods found in these graves are invariably of Varna Culture forms (where these differ from Gumelnitsa forms). Again, therefore, there is no necessary reason why variations in one aspect of form (or occasionally more, as Golyamo Delchevo 10, or Devnya 17 - mutilated and oriented east-west) should be regarded as providing the exclusive, or dominant, expressions of strategies.

The same issues apply to the evidence summarized in Figure 5.2, which lists Varna Culture graves with inverted body position for the sex of the deceased. Deliberate

inversion of forms can be argued to occur in a small number of Varna Culture burials where males are found in the flexed/right position or females in the extended posture. In most cases these burials are identical in the form and sequence (tempo) of the burial to other flexed or extended burials. The sexual characteristics of the body position may only be compared with the normal sexual pattern by their grave goods therefore. Five of the graves contain artefacts which are predominantly associated with one sex. Varna 146 (female) contains a copper shaft-hole axe, and Devnya 6 (female) an antler pick, both of which artefact types are strongly associated with males in other burials. One male flexed/right burial from Durankulak contains a pebble polisher and flint blade fragment - both components of the 'sewing-kit' assemblage, which is most commonly found in female graves, but also occurs in male (extended) burials. A female extended burial from the site also includes a bone awl and flint blade. Varna 82, a flexed/right male burial, includes the only marble vessel from a male grave but this find and a bone anthropomorphic figurine in the same grave are examples of uncommon grave goods which may themselves have strong general (e.g. wealth) or specific meanings in burials.

There are no direct equivalents to these burials which reverse the normal sex patterning at the Gumelnitsa sites. At Golyamo Delchevo, a single female burial is found in the prone variant of the dominant flexed/left posture, but contains no artefacts which can be suggested to have a distribution biased in favour of either sex. However, this may be partly because few grave goods occur frequently enough to make statistical analysis of their distribution possible. The other principal categories of grave also show no equivalent circumstances of the inversion of normal associations, other than in grave goods. Child and adult burials do not differ in measured aspects of grave form in either culture, other than in the case of the few extended child burials at Ruse.

Figure 5.2 may also be compared with Figure 4.2 listing the occurrence of gender related artefacts at the same sites. The two figures can be seen to overlap only rarely in

the graves included. That is: graves with inverted burial posture infrequently also include inverted gender associations in grave goods. Of the exceptions, one (Durankulak #180) is a male, found with a stone polisher, and two (Varna 146, Devnya 6) are female.

The last of these has largely been discussed in terms of the placement of artefacts - an antler pick and stone adze - by/in the hands of the corpse (also typical of male graves). The individual was heavily pregnant at the time of death and may have died in childbirth (see Appendix 1). The evidence from this grave, and the others discussed, indicates that gender may have been strategically manipulated for or during some performances of the burial ritual, therefore, using posture, or artefacts, or, rarely, both. Equally, the evidence suggests that gender may have been emphasized at some points during the rituals in particular. Male associated artefacts found in female graves (etc.) may have been placed in the grave with the body, or been worn prior to deposition in the grave, or have been placed in the grave with vessels after the corpse (see arguments on 'display', below). This supports previous arguments about the ritual as possessing multiple layers of meaning overlapping in time and space.

A possible example of the strategic use of gender categories at the inland cemeteries may also be noted. At Vinitsa, copper chisels are found in two female graves (but more commonly in male burials), both of individuals over 50 years of age. The two finds of spondylus beads in female graves at the same site (where the artefact type is again more common with males) include one of the same graves (42) and another older female of at least 40 years. The age of the deceased in these graves may suggest that gender roles themselves vary with age, but will also be argued later to be linked to interactions between different social groups at a particular time during the use of the cemetery.

Thus, as partiality/mutilation has been linked to some extent to ancestral associations, gender representations are also in part determined by processes of interaction through

time. I have argued, for example, that male graves may have the greatest general importance. The adoption of male forms in female graves thus possibly occurs in response to circumstances where such values were desirable or necessary, but a male was not available for burial. Equally, female associated values may have been emphasized in some male burials.

The arguments in this sub-section are in part parallel to those in Chapter 4 concerning the 'wealth' of burials. However, discussion of depth, for example, has begun to explore meanings for individual graves. Equally, the largest part of the variation involving inverted gender forms (especially) is in grave goods, which also provides the greatest source of variation between all graves. The following sub-section concentrates in more depth on the meanings of different artefacts, and the strategies employed through these in individual burials.

#### B) *Artefact form*

The relationship between structures and individual meanings of grave goods is complicated simply because there are fewer straightforward measures of structure, and greater total variability, than for grave form. Deviations from, or inversions of, norms are therefore harder to demonstrate. Nevertheless, the link between grave goods and, for example, gender, in creating and representing unique values has been introduced already. Artefacts which are unusual in one or more of the dimensions introduced in Chapter 4 (form, material, location, function, etc.) have also been noted. The unique obsidian artefact in Varna 41 may be cited as an example. More generally, the rare occurrences of gold at the inland cemeteries has been linked to concepts of wealth, the sequence of interactions between social groups and so on. Equally, unusual forms have been identified, either as rarely occurring artefacts (see Appendix 2 and Chapter 3) or as variants of more general artefact types (e.g. Figure 3.16). The location of artefacts in the grave may also include some 'abnormal' positions (as pottery vessels located by the

feet in Varna Culture graves - see Chapter 3, Footnote 16) or as part of the variations in other structures (such as Devnya 6, above).<sup>4</sup>

Quantity is another aspect of form which has been argued to be structured (see Chapter 4) but which has fewer direct parallels with grave/body forms. Unusual variations in quantity may be of four main types. Artefact types may be absent, which perhaps has particular significance where no grave goods are found (at the extra-mural cemeteries), such as with many partial and mutilated skeletons. The total number of grave goods may also be larger than average, leading to issues of 'wealth' and 'display' (see Section 3 of this chapter). Variations in quantity can also involve combinations of artefacts, as assemblages (and despite the limited evidence from statistical and other measures for such). This is also returned to below. Finally, there are greater than normal quantities of single artefact types. Exaggerated quantities of artefacts in Varna 43 have been discussed previously. Other examples also occur, at Varna - 900 mineral beads (Grave 11); 317 fired clay beads (Grave 14); 4500 dentalium shells (Grave 41) - and other sites - 10 flint blades (Lilyak 4).

The examples given demonstrate the same duality of strategies - at the level of the individual artefact and for the grave as a whole - as the previous discussion of grave/body forms. A link between the two can be provided by a consideration of 'function' which I use most loosely as equivalent to value, but also implies 'natural', practical meanings of artefacts. Function may also be taken to include such concepts as the 'biography' of artefacts and - here - questions of the manufacture of objects solely for burials and personal property. The argument that artefacts like people possess biographies has been made by Kopytoff (1986) and others. Thus, Appadurai (1986:

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<sup>4</sup> Other exceptional locations of tools may also be cited: in female graves, a flint scraper found on the chest of a flexed burial at Durankulak (558); flint blades by the waist of two burials (Devnya 8, Golyamo Delchevo 18); and, possibly, a bone projectile point placed by the legs (Golyamo Delchevo 20).

13) has suggested that objects can be regarded as having a trajectory during which they may be, become, or cease to be, commodities. Inclusion in a burial can be seen as *an* end point in the social life of the object, therefore. I do not wish to dwell at length on this subject because the subject of commoditisation may tend to reduce to a single, reified dimension the social interactions in which artefacts are involved. Equally, the manufacture of artefacts specifically for burials (and potentially for individuals) is a significant exception for the tendency for artefacts to become commoditised. Nevertheless, biographies usefully illustrate that the various meanings that may apply to artefacts and materials according to the different circumstance of burials thus also involve different relationships with the meanings of similar finds in other social contexts.

Pottery vessels are the clearest examples of artefacts which have no evidence of use prior to their involvement in mortuary rituals. No finds of the poorly fired cemetery pottery are reported from any settlement context, which also suggests that burial pottery was not stored for any considerable length of time before use.<sup>5</sup> Most of the pottery forms in burials nonetheless do have close parallels with vessels found in settlements. This applies in particular to the most common Gumelnitsa vessel forms (bowls and dishes) and to bowls from the Varna Culture cemeteries. However, staged vessels have equivalents in settlements only as large storage vessels which may be one metre or more in height. The elaborate vessel supports found in some Durankulak and Varna graves (predominantly males and cenotaphs) have only rare analogies in settlements. These vessels have been suggested to have been used to hold ashes to heat the flasks or vases placed over them but no traces of their use for this have actually been reported.

The short 'life-span' of vessels before being sealed in the grave may suppose that pottery is produced for a specific burial. This is reinforced by the patterns of

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<sup>5</sup> These comments do not apply to Ruse or Kubrat.

distribution related to gender, etc. However, the generality and frequency of most forms does not indicate that vessels strongly reflect the unique identity of the deceased (as well as not being personal property of the individual in life). Moreover, the functions which the vessels suggest - typically food serving or storage - are also very general and may be associated with the group as readily as, or rather than, the individual. Some more specific forms, such as vessel supports and pedestalled bowls, have an especially strong gender association and possibly symbolize maleness, etc. (but also convey these qualities, or a claim on them, on the individual and/or group).

The pottery evidence suggests a number of general points. The issue of personal property may be regarded in part in terms of the extent to which grave goods symbolize personal qualities of the deceased. There can clearly be no absolute measure of the degree of individual identity expressed in/by grave goods as each burial (token) is also an example of type. Personal identity is necessarily based in large part on institutionalized structures (including the 'role' of the corpse in burial). Thus, where an artefact can be suggested to be implicated in the representation of an aspect of type - that is, is strongly associated with institutionalized structures of culture, age, sex, etc. - meanings in individual graves are likely to refer to the wider patterns of meaning.

The idea that symbolic meanings of an object will tend to be based on practical uses has been discussed in Chapter 1. Thus, in the case of tools, symbolism may relate to craft and/or agricultural uses of an object, but possibly also claims to the possession of associated skills and resources. The meaning of an axe, for example, may be related to the expression of maleness, agricultural and/or craft production, force and violence and so on (meanings of artefacts in contexts other than burial will be addressed in Chapter 6).

As far as the limited evidence permits detailed comment, it may be argued that the stronger the association of an artefact type (or assemblage where appropriate) with a

particular social role (or structural principle in general), the less significant is the use or otherwise of an artefact prior to its inclusion in the burial in symbolizing that role. The functional utility of the axe - in the example used - may be less important than its presence. Hence axes may be of copper, stone, flint, antler or gold; used or unused; or even miniature (copper - Devnya 4; marble - Varna 04). Pottery is also dissociated from the individual by the non-utilitarian nature of the vessels and by its general association with all aspects of burial practice (as well as to roles/structural principles in some cases). Around a quarter of all Gumelnitsa (extra-mural) graves and one-sixth of all Varna Culture burials (for which I have details) contain only pottery as grave goods.

The argument that personal identity is largely defined by institutionalized structures (the unacknowledged conditions of action) suggests a further point - the stronger the association with a role in burial, the less the scope for individual meanings (and strategies) which diverge strongly from this value. However, as the pottery evidence shows, the converse is not necessarily also the case. Grave good types which are not strongly associated with a demarcated category of burial (other than at the widest level of 'culture') are not necessarily freer in the meanings they may convey about a particular individual.

The limited amount of technical evidence for the use or otherwise of tools and ornaments, or for their methods of manufacture) hinder detailed discussions here (though see Figure 3.27 and also in Chapter 6). It is possible that the heavy use of tools in graves at Golyamo Delchevo indicates that they were used by and perhaps belonged to the group and/or the individual. The slight evidence from Targovishte nonetheless mitigates against applying the Golyamo Delchevo finds to the rest of the Gumelnitsa Culture.

Evidence from the Varna Culture is similarly mixed. Kanchev (1978) notes that most copper and flint tools from Varna have use-wear traces but may have had only a short,

possibly symbolic, use-life, while I. Ivanov (1991b) implies that most ornaments and some tools are unused. At Devnya and Targovishte the evidence suggests that most tools are unused. Some tools may have been unsuitable for practical use because of their material or design. Although there is no use-wear evidence available for Durankulak the fact that parts of the sewing-kit are found more often than the whole further suggests that the relationship between artefact and individual is metaphoric rather than literal. The many fragmentary grave goods in both cultures may convey a similar meaning to complete examples and (in limited circumstances) single objects may substitute for assemblages.

The evidence for ornaments is equally ambiguous. Copper tooth rings at Durankulak were placed on the teeth of the individuals while alive, but ornament pins (for example) at Varna are unused. Copper bracelets included in a number of child burials at Durankulak typically have a diameter of three to five centimetres whereas spondylus bracelets in the same inhumations have the same dimensions as in adult graves - around six to eight centimetres. It is likely therefore that the copper bracelets were made for the graves, or the individuals, and that the spondylus finds were not worn by the children in life.

Lack of consistency extends to individual graves at Varna where used and unused artefacts both occur. Varna 4 and 43 both contain used copper chisels in secondary positions (by the feet in Varna 43; with the vessels in Grave 4) and both contain stone shaft-hole axes with gold plated shafts, which were held, or placed as though held. However, the axe in Grave 4 was reportedly used while the axe in Grave 43 is suggested to be unsuitable for use. The finds of used artefacts in cenotaphs <sup>6</sup> itself

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<sup>6</sup> All of the detailed evidence for individual objects is from adult male graves and cenotaphs although much of the less specific information may also apply to child and female graves. The few available details from Gumelnitsa sites, where distributions of artefact types are themselves less markedly sexually distinct, suggest few differences between categories of grave.

lends support to arguments that (many) meanings of objects, materials, and so on are primarily created during the ritual.

A few artefacts do not have 'natural' functional meanings. Figurines, for example, depict humans, animals, etc., but their use is probably confined largely or wholly to ritual contexts. An association with cenotaphs, rather than individuals (for the Varna Culture at least), has already been commented on. Ochre is also frequently found in ritual contexts although it is also commonly used to decorate vessels. Ochre is found at all of the cemeteries but in a minority of graves at each and without a clear association to age/gender categories, measures of wealth, artefact assemblages, and so on.

The possibility that ochre and figurines express personal qualities in some burials cannot be excluded, however. Indeed the enormous variety of grave good forms and combinations strongly suppose that qualities of the deceased and of those performing the burial must be considered alongside those values derived from structures and also those resulting from circumstantial decisions in deciphering the overall meaning(s) of the burial. The following section returns to a focus on the grave as a whole, drawing together some of the values already discussed, and adding new ones, but also moves towards an investigation of dominant strategies for single graves - including those based on personal and other unique circumstances - within the spatial and temporal processes of funerary practices.

### 3. *PERFORMANCE AND DISPLAY: OVERALL FORMS AND MEANINGS*

A dimension of the form of pottery vessels that has not been considered previously in depth is decoration. Details of the number of decorated vessels are given in Figure 5.3.<sup>7</sup> General comparisons are more instructive than the precise figures themselves in this instance. The highest percentages, for Ruse and Targovishte, are from cemeteries where very few vessels are found in total, for example. Other than these sites the three coastal cemeteries contain a consistently higher proportion of decorated vessels than the Gumelnitsa sites except for Lilyak. Vessels in the coastal cemeteries also include a greater variety of decorative techniques, and, on average, more different techniques are applied per vessel.<sup>8</sup> This is most extreme at Durankulak where vessels may combine excised, incised and polychrome incrustated and painted decoration.

Graves in the coastal cemeteries contain more vessels on average and a greater variety of forms and decoration than inland, yet vessels in both areas are produced solely for mortuary purposes. These details suggest a fundamental difference in the overall meaning of artefacts in burials between the two cultures, and therefore of specific meanings in individual graves, which may be related to their 'display' in the performance of the ritual.

Display has two senses as I use it here. The first includes the generally accepted sense of the public deposition/consumption of artefacts which have, or are intended to

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<sup>7</sup> It may be noted that the figure for the total number of vessels is a minimum number for Durankulak, Omurtag, Radingrad and Sava-Tsonevo, while only published vessels are used for Varna. The total number of decorated vessels is also a minimum, based on published details or, for Durankulak, my examination of excavation records and the vessels themselves where possible.

<sup>8</sup> Decorative techniques certainly vary through time at Durankulak, however, as noted in Chapter 2 (Figure 2.15).

demonstrate, wealth or status and include models based on control of scarce resources or competitive emulation. The second form of display is in the sense of ritual as a performance, of which the artefacts are one component, and where their inclusion and arrangement are part of the strategies employed in the ritual. I am concerned principally with the second of these in this section. However, the second definition may also be taken to include evaluation of the skill of the performance and competition. The discussion indeed inevitably moves towards this (and certain other) dominant strategies, as noted above, but as they apply to individual graves. The second sense of display both reinforces the circumstantial nature of action and reemphasizes time, and sequence, as a key factor structuring strategies. One aspect of this which has not been explored in detail in previous discussions is the shift in prominence and meaning(s) of objects during the process of the mortuary rituals and according to the sequence and tempo of deposition in the grave (at least prior to its final closure).

One of the simplest measures of overall form, and display, that I have used is the relationship of objects to the body. Thus, I have argued that objects worn or (placed as though) held by the deceased are likely to have been arranged prior to the placement of the body in the grave, at least in its final position, whereas all pottery vessels, and some other artefacts, were probably placed in the grave after the body had been placed in its final posture. These items are likely to have been taken to the grave apart from the body (although the same may also be true for grave goods eventually worn or held) and to have been placed individually in the grave.

Pottery, for example, is often placed on the corpse in Gumelnitsa burials and on top of other vessels in both cultures. At Durankulak and Varna the superimposition of vessels includes the placement of a flask or vase on top of a vessel support. This may draw attention to the 'functions' of the vessels (in this case possibly heating liquids) and to additional meanings such as 'maleness'. In the Gumelnitsa Culture the commonly occurring stacking of vessels over the corpse does not in most cases

obscure any of the vessels as smaller bowls are typically placed over larger bowls or dishes (Golyamo Delchevo 7 is an exception). In several graves the secondary deposition of vessels obscures other artefact types (e.g. Golyamo Delchevo 1, 7, 25, etc.), including copper tools and shell ornaments. The sewing-kit assemblage in Durankulak burials is similarly found inside an enclosed vessel type which sometimes also possesses a lid. Objects may also be obscured in the final grave form by the body (as is the case with gold ear-rings in Golyamo Delchevo 2, Vinitsa 36, 38, etc.).

These situations all emphasize that the meanings and values of objects in a grave are not limited to the final display of the grave prior to its closure. The sequence and tempo of the closure of the grave itself is another factor which may affect the display of artefacts. A number of graves were noted in Chapter 3 for which there is a longer than average interval between the deposition of artefacts and the infilling of the grave. At Devnya the post-holes in some graves may be from canopies and may suggest that the display of the final grave form was extended (and added to by the structures themselves), although the graves do not contain exceptional wealth (etc.).

Opposite circumstances apply to the cenotaphs from Varna which have two or more discrete levels of finds (Figure 3.28). Whilst there is no chronological evidence to demonstrate that the first level of finds was covered after a shorter interval than in the Devnya burials (for example), these graves are again different in their use of sequential display. Sequence is a necessary component of deposition in all cenotaphs, as no objects were included *en masse* with a body, but is taken to extreme lengths in these graves.

The objects found in the upper levels are not identical in each case. In Varna 1 a single flint blade is at a higher level (although it should be noted that this grave was extensively destroyed by modern workmen), while a single bowl at a higher level in

Grave 15 approximates to the general sequence of deposition of most burials. In three other graves the highest deposits contain ochre (only in the highest of three levels in Grave 5), beads and an anthropomorphic figurine. Bone figurines are statistically associated with cenotaphs at Varna. Their placement either on the base of the grave or in a second layer of finds represents two alternative strategies for their display. No grave contains figurines in both base and higher deposits, although the three mask burials contain figurines in addition to the masks.

Variations in the display of artefacts in partial, mutilated and multiple burials can also be distinguished. I have argued that these variations in grave form necessitate a different temporal and spatial patterning of grave goods. I have also shown that all three grave forms often do not contain grave goods at all.

The display of grave goods is closely related to the display of the body, therefore, including through the completeness of the corpse or the degree to which a cenotaph resembles a burial. Display thus mediates between burial types and the individual - and often interchangeable - meanings of artefacts. From this the main burial types may be used to suggest, to some extent, the importance of some separate components of grave form in expressing values other than those already identified.

As an example, ornaments occur in circa 10% of Gumelnitsa graves (and are worn in half of these) compared to almost half of all Varna Culture graves. Ornaments are more varied in forms in the coastal sites and are used to decorate a larger number of parts of the body. Their distribution is also different. Only one Gumelnitsa Culture cenotaph contains an ornament: a single bead in Vinitza 24. Cenotaphs at Devnya also include no ornaments, compared to around half of the cenotaphs from Durankulak, and over 90% of the fully or partially published cenotaphs at Varna.

I have shown that decorated pottery, as well as ornaments, is relatively rare in the Gumelnitsa cemeteries. Moreover, such objects are often placed in the grave so that they are not visible when the grave assemblage is complete. The relative simplicity of the visual aspect of display thus also applies to graves containing such grave goods. display is also simpler in time. In the Varna Culture cemeteries, the greater variability by (e.g.) gender is matched by greater complexity of visual and temporal conjunctions in the grave. There are more ornaments, more objects combining two or more raw materials, etc..<sup>9</sup> The sophistication suggests that visual (and potentially tactile and other sensory) meanings are important as a whole and/or at different stages of the ritual. Meanings expressed through display are again transient and contextual, therefore.

Several possible general goals of strategic decisions have already been introduced into the discussions. These include the acquisition of particular economic resources ('prestige goods'), physical resources in general ('wealth') and also less tangible, authoritative, aims such as status, prestige, influence, etc.. Some of these have been argued to be unimportant. I have stressed, for example, that no evidence of consistent social ranks can be found in the burial evidence from either culture. Equally, previous discussions indicate that wealth may be more important in the Varna Culture where large numbers of grave goods are routinely found. However, in both cultures, the control of physical resources is not an independent goal but is tied up with gender (etc.) and cycles of interaction which exist at several overlapping levels of social inclusiveness.

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<sup>9</sup> Artefacts with two or more materials are found only twice in the Gumelnitsa cemeteries. Vinitsa 42 includes spondylus with a 'river shell' and an unnumbered grave at Ruse has clay beads with a shell figurine (but see also Footnote 9 to the Ruse entry in Appendix 1). There are at least 30 such finds between Durankulak and Varna (though none at Devnya).

To briefly repeat arguments made above, all strategies reinforce some structures whilst challenging others. Dominant strategies can be taken as those which are consistently followed and which (probably) use resources that are prominent in the ritual in time/space. Thus, gender has been shown to be both consistently distinguished in the Varna Culture and represented by a number of authoritative and allocative resources. Varna Culture cemeteries, with their comparatively rapid rate of burial, elaborate grave goods, etc. may indicate a greater emphasis on the immediate, limited social group ('household') of the deceased whereas the less differentiated Gumelnitsa cemeteries and few grave goods supposes that a broader social level ('kinship group'/'community') is dominant in strategic terms.

Strategy must also be distinguished from competition. Knowledge of how to act, I have accepted, is largely unconscious and all strategic decisions are thus only made with a limited anticipation of the future. Much of strategy will therefore be directed towards the status quo - the unacknowledged conditions of action - although long-term, stable structures (as above) can of course also be the object of conscious strategies. Competition is here defined as that part of social interaction which relates to contested resources. In practical terms, given that I do not accept permanent statuses, competition will be used as a means of considering relative differences between burials over a short period of time. Much of the subsequent debate will concentrate on identifying and examining those strategies that *are* used competitively and suggesting what forms this advantage may take.

Where such meanings are stressed it is not my intention to suggest that such avenues of strategy are most important but to emphasize the dynamics of social interaction and, importantly, change. I have placed considerable emphasis on the accumulation and drift of meanings over the lifespan of the cemetery (and settlement) even where the exact chronology of graves cannot be established. The unintended consequences of strategies, including those which are competitive, include the altering of the conditions

in which subsequent burials occur. Contradictions (and conflict: see Chapter 1) may also arise in this way. *Bricolage*, or innovation, is likely to occur in peripheral forms/meanings which are less highly structured and less likely to be part of the unacknowledged conditions of action.

The relationship between change and competition is apparent in both the long and short term. The short duration of use of many Gumelnitsa cemeteries in relation to their associated settlements is one of the concerns of the next chapters. At Durankulak, the only site with a long period of use and adequate dating evidence, further patterns may be apparent. The 'richest' burials tend to date to the first and third phases of the Late Chalcolithic.

#### 4. *INTERIM CONCLUSIONS*

The following arguments are a summary of a substantial part of the thesis to date and, equally, will serve as introduction to those issues, such as the long-term origin of the forms, meanings and strategies, that remain to be resolved. This section is also necessarily more speculative than I have been to date because I hope to relate meanings and strategies to (some) individual graves, notwithstanding a certain exaggeration of the element of competition (and, more generally, circumstance) in burial practices for reasons discussed above. Large scale structures in the form of two cultures and three main burial 'types' are essentially taken as read and provide sub-headings to divide the discussion.

## A) *Gumelnitsa Culture*

### i) *intra-mural cemeteries*

Apart from the similar location of burials within the tell the intra-mural cemeteries at Ruse and Kubrat share a number of other features in common: diverse body positions and orientation; few grave goods; a high proportion of mutilated or partial finds, especially where attention is paid to the skull, and so on.

Age and sex details from Kubrat and Ruse are only peripherally related to the other published details. It is possible to argue nonetheless that children are treated differently to adults, as at the other Gumelnitsa cemeteries. Child burials at Ruse are more likely to be in multiple graves than adults and less likely to contain grave goods. No child grave at Kubrat contains an artefact. Gender relations cannot be discussed from the evidence available from these sites alone. However, the five flint axes in burials at Kubrat may reproduce the predominantly male distribution of axes from other sites and so follow the symbolic associations of such finds that I have considered previously. The finds from Hotnitsa include a copper axe, though this is doubtfully regarded as a grave good given the interpretation below.

The spatial and stratigraphic separation of the two groups of burials at Kubrat provides the best evidence from any site for the division of use of the cemetery by two or more social groups over an extended period of time. Typological evidence does not indicate a clear temporal gap between the groups. Both include partial burials which are related to each other (Graves 2a and 2b in the eastern group, and Graves 10-12 in the western group). Both also contain the same number of graves with artefacts (five: see Figure 5.4), and both include flint axes. Other types of artefact are not shared by both groups. Thus, the eastern group contains flint blades, cattle phalanges and pottery, whilst the western group has two graves with a single bead.

Unlike other sites where similar grave good types may be argued to indicate competition or emulation over a short period of time (see below), the separation of types at Kubrat may refer to a/the previous burial within the same social group.<sup>10</sup> The use of the grave goods may thus reinforce meanings along the ancestral axis as well as between living groups. Axes, probably associated with adult males, crosscut the division because they possess a strong symbolic identity which is universal among the sites studied here.

Detailed interpretations for Ruse must account for the absence of a discrete cemetery within the tell and acknowledge also the absence of full publication of the location of many of the burials. The clustering of burials of a similar depth can be seen most clearly in the finds from 2.2-2.45 m. in Figure 4.1. One group in the south-west corner of the tell may be separated from another in the north-west area, or, more convincingly, from the burials near the central profile of the tell (which are probably separate from the burials at the same depth in the eastern half of the site). Other clusters of graves are considerably smaller, however (e.g. at 1.8 m. or 1.1 m.: Figure 4.1). Despite the suggested average depth for the grave pit the clustering may only be an approximate guide to date. The double and multiple burials and the three superimposed burials may therefore provide the only clear evidence for association and sequence.

Clustering of burials, particularly in 'rubbish pits' (the excavators' term), commonly involves child burials. The duration of use of these pits is not specified by the excavators (i.e. whether they persist through several settlement layers or are confined to one). However, despite the evidence for sequential burials in at least some cases, the child burials may date to a relatively short period of time and perhaps include

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<sup>10</sup> I am in no way suggesting that the artefact types used can be regarded as badges of different social or other kinship groups. All of the artefact types are found commonly and widely at Kubrat and other settlements.

individuals from more than one social group. This reflects the different treatment of child burials at the site (and may be referred to more general burial patterns involving the inclusion of child skeletons in settlements: Chapter 7). However, none of the burial finds (child or adult) are certainly from beneath house floors and the group burials are part of the general patterns of burial and meaning at the site.

The greater total frequency of burials at certain depths, especially at 2.2-2.45 m., may indicate that burial was more important at certain periods during the occupation of the settlement, in response to changing relationships between different kinship groups. The same applies to Kubrat to some extent. The duration of use of the cemetery in this case is even more limited but the known finds are unlikely to represent more than a fraction of the population of the site even for the limited period it is used. Child graves are especially underrepresented.

The paucity of grave goods which is such a feature of the intra-mural cemeteries strongly suggests that economic competition - or any strategies involving prestige derived from economic resources in burial - is of little importance. No grave at Kubrat contains an exotic artefact although there are copper and shell finds from the same period elsewhere in the tell. Copper is found occasionally in graves at Ruse (although none whose exact location is well recorded) but is still much more frequent in 'stray' domestic contexts (see Chapter 6). Grave goods in the western half of the site are distributed relatively evenly in space and by depth and forms change only slightly through time. Pottery occurs throughout the profile, as do ornaments (although the identification of some as grave goods is uncertain). However, ochre in vessels is mostly found with burials at depths between 2.2 and 2.45 m. and suggest a strategy which has a limited temporal span (among more than one kinship group). The common association of raw ochre with generalized ritual contexts is one possible source of meaning (see Chapter 6).

However, whilst these or individual meanings unique to the person or the artefact may be interpreted from the rare inclusion of grave goods, I argue that the dominant level at which strategies are manifest is the lineage group. Moreover, the infrequency with which burial becomes overtaken by other strategies, at both sites, again implies that the longer-term and ancestral dimensions are fundamental. There is further support for this view in the focus on the elaboration of the corpse itself. All age and gender categories at Ruse (and possibly Kodzhadermen) show post-mortem trepanations which perhaps diminish the qualities of the individual in favour of that of the group. Mutilation and disarticulation at Kubrat (and, again, perhaps at Kodzhadermen) are similarly, selectively, important during the use of the cemetery.

Competition, therefore is concentrated on the body itself and the means of its disposal. The reasons why burial is used so sporadically (or at all) are in this sense a dominant level of strategy which goes beyond the limits I have set for the arguments so far, but which will be returned to in subsequent chapters. Nonetheless, the proposal that burial emerges from tensions (contradictions and conflict as well as competition) has been rehearsed. The Hotnitsa finds, of bodies left in a house in an abandoned settlement, can be regarded therefore as another, albeit catastrophic, example of the relationship between burial and social change.

## ii) *extra-mural cemeteries*

Although distinguished as a 'type' in Chapter 3 the seven extra-mural inland cemeteries are not similar in all respects in their grave forms (or the degree of conformity to a single pattern) or their grave goods. The sites also vary considerably in the amount of information available to this study and, so, in the detailed interpretations which may be proposed. Fewest specific details are available for Omurtag, Radingrad and Sava-Tsonevo but the small number of excavated graves at

Lilyak also makes interpretation of the meaning of individual burials difficult. Accurate plans are only available for Golyamo Delchevo, Targovishte and Vinitsa.

The removal of mortuary practices from the immediate proximity of the settlement changes the regionalization of burial, but also, possibly, the context of interactions with the ancestors and between the living. The high degree of organization of space in some settlements has been noted and may not allow burial within the settlement (physically and symbolically: see Chapter 6). More importantly here the creation of a cemetery provides a location in which interactions between social groups are clearly distinguished and separated from other forms of activity.

There are, as demonstrated, parallels between the intra-mural and extra-mural cemeteries, individually and together. Omurtag, for example, resembles the intra-mural cemeteries in the higher degree of variability in body posture and orientation. The cemetery also includes few grave goods. Copper pins (listed in Appendix 1) are the only metal grave goods, although spondylus beads and pottery are also found. Pebbles found on the base of two graves have parallels at Golyamo Delchevo and Targovishte although I have not suggested a specific explanation for this alteration of the normal sequence of burial.

Omurtag and Targovishte also resemble Ruse in the apparent uneven distribution of graves through time. The two extra-mural cemeteries both contain one or more graves from an earlier chronological period than the majority. I have argued that the initial burial is significant in establishing the forms and meanings of the cemetery as well as its location. The consistency of these meanings over a long period of time may suppose the continuity of the social groups performing the burial (for which there is also evidence from some settlements - see next chapter) which are perhaps limited to one or a small number of lineages. Cenotaphs, partial and mutilated burials and non-burial

pits, which I have argued all involve the manipulation of tempo, sequence and social (ancestral) interactions, are absent from these sites (and Targovishte and Lilyak).

Radingrad and Targovishte show the greatest uniformity of burial type. One burial posture and orientation is shared by all graves in the cemetery (bar one burial at Radingrad). Both graves also contain one grave which is richer than the remainder (Targovishte 9 and Radingrad 4). I have emphasized several times that these graves cannot be seen as representing a higher status. If burial was a means to mark or create such a permanent status other burials of similar wealth would be expected during the lifespan of the cemetery (the Radingrad chronological evidence at least indicates that the graves cannot all belong to a single generation). The unique circumstances in which graves occur may, of course, include expression of personal qualities, possibly including 'prestige' in (some) other fields of discourse. However neither Targovishte 9 nor Radingrad 4 contains artefacts which are especially rare from settlement contexts, for example (the gold applique at Radingrad is an exception which may have an unique context, considered below). From the common structures of meaning I have proposed, therefore, processes of interaction with the ancestors or external to the immediate community may be suggested as provoking the peculiar features of these graves. Given the Radingrad gold find and the uniformity of the burial ritual, the former may be more likely, although neither is exclusive to these burials.

The conformity at Targovishte extends to a spatial separation by gender (Figure 5.6). Adzes are found in all male graves, bone rings in all but one female grave and pottery only in child and female burials. The degree to which gender is marked is unusual for the Gumelnitsa Culture but is nonetheless consistent with the lineage (perhaps one, equated with the community) as the dominant social structure at which strategies in burials operate.

Radingrad 4 is probably a male burial. The excavator notes that axes are found in most male graves (T. Ivanov 1980) and that male graves are comparatively rich. The site may resemble Golyamo Delchevo and Vinitsa, therefore, in the addition of gold ornaments to a small number of male graves and (possibly) the replacement of stone axes with copper. In Grave 4 a copper chisel is found alongside a stone shaft-hole axe. Grave 2 also reportedly includes a copper axe. There are no published details which allow the spondylus finds from Grave 4 to be compared with other burials.<sup>11</sup>

At Lilyak, poor preservation and the small number of excavated burials do not allow confident statements to be made about the sequence of change of burials or the relationship of forms to particular structures or strategies. Some observations may be made, however. The average number of grave goods is high for a Gumelnitsa Culture cemetery. There are no exotic or metal artefacts but stone axes are found in two graves and pottery decoration is relatively common. It is conceivable that the display of the grave and goods involves an element of competition, therefore. The several flint blades in Grave 4 and three stone axes in Grave 3 are the largest totals of their respective artefact types in any Gumelnitsa Culture cemetery. The exaggeration of the quantity of an artefact type may resemble the addition of metal and some ornaments to graves at Golyamo Delchevo and Vinitsa.

Golyamo Delchevo is similar to Targovishte in particular in that there is some separation of male and female burials within the cemetery. There are two exceptions to the pattern - Grave 22 (male) in the western part of the cemetery and Grave 10 (female) in the eastern half (Figure 5.7). This last grave has been singled out because it deviates in both posture and orientation from other burials at the site. Parallels with Varna Culture burials have been drawn by the excavator (Todorova et al. 1975) but the grave

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<sup>11</sup> However, there were no other spondylus objects in the material listed as from the area of the cemetery in the museum finds and records I was able to examine.

may also be related to Grave 24 which it partially overlies. The reversal of normal form is seen in overlapping graves in Grave 2 at Kubrat and, I suggest, indicates that burials which are closely related in time are deliberately spatially demarcated, possibly especially where the individuals belong to the same kinship group. Golyamo Delchevo shares the characteristic of having no grave goods with many double/multiple graves. I take these to indicate deaths within the same social group that are even closer in time, or simultaneous. The closeness of deaths in time may shift strategies away from meanings aimed at other social groups to the ancestors.

Graves 10 and 24 are the only occasion at the site where the sequence of burials can be reconstructed with any confidence. Nonetheless the partitioning of the site by gender indicates that the placement of burials is neither wholly random nor spatially linear. The three graves with metal artefacts are clustered together at the eastern edge of the excavated area. These graves may be (relatively) close in date and interlinked sequentially and strategically.

Two of the copper finds are exes (or chisels). There are no shaft-hole axes in any material at burials from this site but two further graves contain stone (Grave 5) or antler (Grave 7) chisels. These forms may possess the same general symbolism as axes but they emphasize again that particular meanings for material forms build up through time within each cemetery. Later discussions (Chapter 6) will show that copper is not uncommon in the settlement at Golyamo Delchevo and thus that prestige based on the possession of copper axes does not depend on any intrinsic value of the metal or scarcity. The clustering of copper axes may nonetheless represent an increase in the prominence of the display of economic resources as a strategy, possibly involving competition between a small number of lineages, and over a limited period of time. The same strategies may have consequences in, and/or indicate changes in, other areas of social interaction, including increased differentiation between genders in ancestral and perhaps other social interactions.

Similar site and time specific meanings may apply to other artefact types and materials. The only spondylus find at the cemetery is with a child (Grave 8). Ornaments occur in only four burials - fewer than at the smaller Targovishte cemetery where spondylus alone is found in four burials. At neither site is ornamentation related to display or economic competition between lineage groups (Targovishte has already been discussed). Spondylus and other ornament types are again far more common from settlement contexts.

At Vinitza, as at Golyamo Delchevo, there is a concentration of metal artefacts in the eastern part of the site (Figure 5.8).<sup>12</sup> Unlike Golyamo Delchevo, however, male and female graves are not separated. Spondylus is also evenly distributed in space but the only female graves with the shell are from the eastern group (Graves 37 and 42). The latter grave, and another nearby (Grave 41), are the only female graves with copper objects. Cenotaphs and non-burial pits, in contrast, are grouped in the western part of the cemetery, except for Grave 43, which contains an antler axe and adds to the concentration of this type of artefact in the eastern part of the cemetery. A separation of meanings, between expressions of continuity and ancestral authority represented by the cenotaphs and non-burial pits in the west, and short-term competition in the copper and gold finds in the eastern part of the site, is simplistic. However, the proximity of burials containing gold and copper may again suggest that the burials are close in date and relate to similar strategies over a limited period of time.

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<sup>12</sup> The direction may have no particular significance although it does match the most common orientation of the burials. Orientation of settlement entrances to the cardinal points can be demonstrated in a number of cases but I have shown that this does not extend to a fixed relationship with the location of the settlement. At Vinitza the eastern part of the cemetery is furthest from the settlement whereas at Golyamo Delchevo it is closest (Figure 3.2).

Specific details again reflect local variations in the ways in which meanings and therefore strategies are constructed and become institutionalized through the sequence and tempo of burials. There are few shaft-hole axes at Vinitza but Grave 36 contains a stone shaft-hole axe with a copper flat-axe. Both are placed near the hands of the corpse and may reinforce both meanings and display by the multiplication of an artefact type (as at Lilyak). The concentration of male graves and male symbols (axes) in the eastern group, together with copper and gold artefacts, can be taken to indicate a consistent elaboration of some meanings (as dominant) during a part of the cemetery's use. The finds of female graves and one cenotaph with these characteristics in the same part of the cemetery supports a link between the use of economic resources competitively and the kinship/ancestral groups I have determined.

Spondylus at Vinitza is found almost exclusively with males (unlike Targovishte) but is rarely worn by the deceased and is most often found hidden from view in or below vessels. Finds are located spatially throughout the site but again with a concentration in the eastern area. A general association with maleness (and associated values), rather than economic display, may be the predominant motive behind its use, therefore.

Pottery at Vinitza and Golyamo Delchevo typically consists of one or more large bowls/dishes and a number of smaller vessels. A similar pattern occurs (where evidence exists) at Radingrad and Sava-Tsonevo.<sup>13</sup> Sava-Tsonevo also resembles Golyamo Delchevo and Vinitza in the numbers of metal finds. Two graves contain flat axes and a small number of other copper artefacts are reported (site records I have seen suggest three pins and an awl). Similar patterns of meaning and strategy are probably apparent in their use as for the other sites discussed above (and notwithstanding comments below).

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<sup>13</sup> The details for Sava-Tsonevo are from unpublished site records. For Radingrad the assessment is based on published details and photographs of burials (see Appendix 1).

One grave at Sava-Tsonevo contains a gold anthropomorphic applique (plus a small gold tack). The position of this find in the grave is not published, but the find is from an adult male burial, as are the three other gold finds from Gumelnitsa burials for which anthropological details are known. In three of the burials the find is an ear-ring found by the left ear and therefore underneath the body in the grave (Golyamo Delchevo 25, Vinitza 36 and 38). The Radingrad 4 find is also from the skull of the individual. These finds may again relate to symbolism giving particular importance to the skull but are the only ornaments found by the head anywhere in the Gumelnitsa region other than spondylus beads in two Targovishte burials. Whatever other associations the gold finds possess, the gold finds are sufficiently similar to suppose they share a general meaning - which may itself be expressed uniquely or especially through gold. The four graves also contain copper axes which have been linked, via maleness, etc., with prestige channelled through and to the ancestors. Gold may be similarly prestigious through a particular identification with ritual contexts (see next chapter). In the absence of ranks or statuses the use of gold in burials may be identified with specific individuals and convey prestige but the dominant meanings of group, gender and so on remain. In this context it may be noted that the Golyamo Delchevo and Vinitza finds are from the rich eastern group of graves in both cemeteries.

Cenotaphs at Gumelnitsa sites are only known from Sava-Tsonevo, Golyamo Delchevo and Vinitza. I have suggested that cenotaphs are part of the cycles of interactions between groups, living and dead. If cenotaphs only fill gaps in the appropriate sequence of burials, they might be expected to be more common and found at the other cemeteries. Their presence, therefore, may indicate a more complex network of interactions between the social groups using the cemetery, including, potentially, contradictions or competition. Cenotaphs are included in but not limited to the rich grave groups at Golyamo Delchevo and Vinitza.

The sites containing cenotaphs also include non-burial pits. Whereas cenotaphs create a 'grave', non-burial pits may be used more than once, perhaps for feasting, and tend to be irregular in size, shape and contents. Detailed circumstances of the use of such features cannot be determined from available evidence at Golyamo Delchevo but further support the view that the users of these sites employed a greater range of strategies towards death than burial practices alone provide.

At Sava-Tsonevo the non-burial pits found beside five graves are a unique feature of the cemetery. The pits contain pottery, ornaments and tools and, in at least one case, have several separate layers of deposits. The association of these pits with individual burials is clear although the exact chronology of this relationship cannot be determined. The pits may represent the extension and elaboration of the burial in time. It is possible that the pits are themselves restricted to one phase of the cemetery and may therefore be employed competitively. Any more detailed explanation must remain speculative in the absence of sufficient published evidence.

Despite the gaps in the evidence, I have shown some of the ways in which the identified structures of gender, kinship, etc., are interpreted and expressed through strategies in the individual circumstances of graves and cemeteries. This mosaic of strategies which cross-cut grave, cemetery and burial type may be compared with the patterns from the Varna Culture.

## B) *Varna Culture*

Burial forms at the four Varna Culture cemeteries studied here are well documented and the abundance of detail has allowed statistical analyses which are often not possible for the Gumelnitsa sites. Equally, however, the complexity and size of the evidence makes detailed examination of all individual graves impractical. Particular problems are apparent in considering Durankulak where detailed spatial and chronological evidence is available for only part of the site, and Reka Devnya, a single burial which does not conform to the normal grave form of the coastal cemeteries.

The distinction of age and gender roles in the form of the burial, and the probable burial of a large percentage of the total population, are further basic differences from the inland cemeteries. At Durankulak the number of artefact types which are gender or age specific is greatest, but the stone covers over most graves are another level of conformity in the structure of burial practice, which is not found at other sites. In particular I have linked gender differentiation, the frequency of burials and the diversity of artefacts in the grave to interactions between household (small lineage) groups and with ancestors where display describes the ways in which allocative resources are used. This does not imply greater competition than in the Gumelnitsa burial practices. There is a long tradition of using ornaments, decorated pottery and so on in coastal culture graves (Chapter 7). There is also, as I have argued, a quicker tempo of interactions, involving smaller social groups. These are combined in strategies which are more reliant on overall visual forms but which also more strongly reproduce some structures, such as gender.

Examination of the circumstances of strategies in individual burials in these conditions is hardest for the solitary known burial at Reka Devnya. The recorded burial posture (Flexed/Left) and orientation (East) have infrequent parallels at the

other coastal sites. Some of the grave goods are types not found elsewhere. Others, however, do have similarities to finds from Varna, including two of the copper objects (Figure 2.9), flint spear heads and copper rings. The latter two and copper axes are typical of male graves at Varna, though rare in such quantities. It is likely, therefore that the structures of meaning are at least broadly similar to those at the other Varna Culture cemeteries.

The closest site to Reka Devnya geographically is Devnya. Figure 5.9 shows the location of chosen artefact types within this cemetery. General and some specific meanings have been commented on (e.g. the miniature axe in Grave 4). The diagram shows that there is no spatial concentration of gold, copper and spondylus artefacts. The same is true for particular artefact forms, such as axes, and other features of burial (including the post-holes which are unique to the site). I have already noted the absence of clusters by age, etc., which could be related to kinship groups. The equal lack of separation by artefact forms suggests that the general importance of economic resources persists throughout the use of the cemetery and includes all of the social groups using it. In addition to the display of economic resources, the burial 'inverted' by gender (Grave 6) and the mutilated burial (Grave 17) may also involve an element of competition between kinship/household groups.

Similar processes of competition and reproduction can be proposed for Durankulak, though with differences in the ways in which they are enacted. As at Devnya, there is no good evidence for strong clustering of graves by wealth (for those burials for which I have evidence of both date and location). There are, however, more rich female graves than at Devnya (or Varna). Some gender related artefacts are particularly frequent at Durankulak, such as the sewing-kit (unknown elsewhere - possibly excepting Devnya 10 and see comments below on Varna), vessel supports (also common at Varna) and pedestalled bowls (only known from Durankulak). The ways in which women are symbolically involved in strategies which enhance the

prestige of the group may be related to the greater stability of the community at Durankulak.

The high proportion of child graves at Durankulak and the long-term trends in the overall wealth of grave goods have been noted above. Both can be regarded as additional evidence that the tempo of interactions along both main axes (among the living/with the dead) are comparatively stable at Durankulak. The evidence available to me does not suggest occasions during the long life-span of the cemetery when competition using/for any particular resource (allocative or authoritative) becomes the dominant strategic goal over a protracted period. Variations in wealth, the diversion and inversion of gender of gender and age structures, etc., do occur, and have been described above, but other possible indicators of extensive conflict/competition (e.g. cenotaphs, mutilated burials) are infrequent or missing. Potential links between the stability of the settlement and that of the cemetery will be addressed in Chapters 6 and 7.

Figure 5.10 shows the distribution of some artefact types and raw materials at Varna. Other graves with published details are represented by a double line, and all other graves by a single line.<sup>14</sup> From the figure it is clear that gold, for example, is found throughout the cemetery. The northern half of the cemetery is far less well published than the southern half. Some details of the finds can be reconstructed nonetheless from yearly work-in-progress reports (I. Ivanov 1980a; 1981; 1982a; 1983b; 1985; 1986b; 1992). Details are given in Figure 5.11. From the details given in this figure, and from material which I have been able to examine courtesy of Mr. I. Ivanov, it is possible to suggest that burial assemblages are broadly similar to those from Durankulak (and notwithstanding other differences outlined above). This is based on

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<sup>14</sup> Note that some graves containing gold artefacts which are not published, but which are on display in the Varna Museum, are included in the figure.

a limited range of criteria, however. Pottery was not available for examination, for example, but the material includes copper rings and bracelets, spondylus bracelets, stone beads and adzes, etc., which are all common at Durankulak. However, copper axes are commonly found in this part of the site also, unlike at Durankulak, where antler axes prevail.

Although many of the artefacts shown have their densest concentrations in the southern part of the site a south-eastern 'core' (Lichardus 1988; 1991a; I. Ivanov 1991a) is impossible to define (except arbitrarily as Lichardus does: *ibid*). The southern area of the site also contains a high proportion of cenotaphs including most of the rich graves. Cenotaphs in total are far more common at Varna than at the similarly sized cemetery at Durankulak (but roughly the same proportion of the total number of graves as at Devnya). This suggests that alongside differences in the performance of ritualized gender roles in burial there may also be variations in strategies towards the ancestors. One element of this is the inclusion of gold in cenotaphs at Varna only. The high frequency of cenotaphs, and the inclusion of gold, is most acute at the southern edge of the known cemetery, but gold is found in cenotaphs throughout the site (e.g. Graves 195 and 201).

Similarities in the contents of some of the cenotaphs are well recorded and can be seen statistically in the cluster analyses undertaken in Chapter 3). The proximity and similarity of the three mask cenotaphs (Graves 2, 3 and 15 - which are strongly clustered even using Single Link analysis) provide the best evidence for suggesting a strong symbolic and strategic link, over a limited period of time, between graves at the site, although the interrelationships may be extended outwards to a number of other graves which are slightly less close in space and form. Thus figurines, a central motif in the mask cenotaphs, are also found in several nearby cenotaphs (Graves 1, 4, 5, 36 and 40). Excepting Grave 36 these latter graves all have two or more layers of deposits and are amongst the deepest graves. These graves may symbolize two

(sequential) burials. In three (Graves 5, 40 and 97) the figurine is placed in the higher level of finds with copper tools and in some cases pottery (Figure 3.28). The resemblance to burials in the initial layer of deposits is therefore modified in these cenotaphs by the quantities of gold, the presence of spondylus, marble (etc.), and also by the multiple levels of deposits, masks and organic material lining the graves (and sometimes found with the upper deposits).

I have argued that these graves must be understood in the terms of the same structures which apply to other graves at the site both in terms of their overall forms and the artefacts that compose them. However, the unique features of these graves also imply circumstances and strategies which are radically different from those employed in other graves. The extension of the ritual process with several layers of deposits and the large quantities of certain grave goods suggested to have general ritual significance (such as gold and figurines), can, I believe, be explained as the creation of and by a larger social group. The cenotaphs, masculine symbolism, etc. suggest that the groups are kinship based - i.e greater than the single household. Interactions between groups spanning more than one community may be involved. However, these social groups must differ in scale only and not in kind: considerations of symbolic meanings and analysis of grave contents have both failed to provide evidence that other structures than kinship, etc., do exist. These social groups may not be stable and the extent of the group brought together may vary according to the specific circumstances and strategies of those involved. The graves may, of course, involve strategies that are competitive at the level of the grave as a whole or for elements within it.

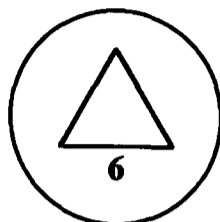
I have argued that Grave 43 contains artefacts otherwise only found in the richest cenotaphs. I suggest, therefore, that it belongs to the same processes of interaction as the richest cenotaphs. The similarity of contents with cenotaph Grave 97 (including copper spearheads not found in any other grave) may indicate a particular symbolic

reference which can be created with or without a body. The fact that this grave is a burial and not a cenotaph means that different specific meanings may be enacted in the ritual performance but the burial also employs the general symbolism of male graves in the Varna Culture. The particular association of adult males with ancestral authority and power has been argued in this chapter and is represented in the axes and other male associated objects in many of the rich cenotaphs. Similarly, at Varna, gold is associated consistently with cenotaphs, whether resembling burials or not, and also with some partial burials. The burial may thus combine household, gender and lineage symbolism, and possibly also personal qualities (perhaps connected to the several weapons in the grave), which are able to be represented and appropriately employed within the various patterns of reciprocity.

The normal process of burial and the richest graves exist alongside one another and interact. Indeed, the processes of accumulation and disposal of resources must be related and may account in part for the richer (in terms of gold and copper artefacts) burials in the southern part of the cemetery. Similarly, individual artefact types may become integrated into the normal burial pattern and the sequences of burial and strategies of individual kin groups. Thus, Graves 8 and 19 are among the few burials containing dentalium shells and are found in the south-eastern section of the cemetery close to the richest cenotaphs. Graves in the same area of the site also in some cases also contain large quantities of individual artefact types (Grave 11: 900 mineral beads; Grave 14: 317 clay beads, etc.). There is also a very high proportion of male graves in the immediate vicinity of the richest cenotaphs and the published partial burials (which themselves resemble cenotaphs) and within the southern area of the site. These suggest again that kinship/ancestral strategies become even more strongly emphasized at one or more stages during the use of the cemetery though a wide range of different meanings and strategies I have identified (including those that are competitive) may be expressed in individual graves.

I will suggest in future discussions that the peculiar dominance of some strategies during the lifespan of the Varna cemetery may be related to contradictions in the wider community (at the broadest level of explanation). However, it is clear that Varna conforms to the same structures and processes I have identified at other cemeteries of the same culture: strategies are manifest through structure of kinship, gender, etc., and according to circumstance. The following chapters seek to explore the nature of these structures and strategies by exploring a wider context than burials alone. The form and detail of conclusions to this study will be returned to in Chapter 7.

## CHAPTER 6: CONTEXT



### 1. INTRODUCTION

To this point, the thesis has taken a very narrow focus on the forms and practices of burial. According to the scheme adopted in Chapter 3, this focus is specifically on ritual (type and token), although it has necessarily touched upon wider concerns - the schemes of symbolism of material culture, the structural properties of society, and so on. The latter are the main concerns of this chapter. They may be described as the *context* of burial practices.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter is not intended to be (indeed cannot be) a full description or explanation of social organization (defined in Chapter 1). Clearly, I cannot hope to discuss in depth all other aspects of social structure and must rely to a greater extent on the specific studies and syntheses of others. Several aspects of social structure will be considered below. The emphasis in each case will be the interrelationship between burial (and related mortuary practices) and these other fields of discourse.

There are essentially two forms of analysis implicit in this outline of intent - derived from the more general metaphors of practice and symbolic codes mentioned above. Thus, the structures of kinship, gender, age, and so on, which have been identified in burial

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<sup>1</sup> Context has been defined in Chapter 1. In the sense that I am using 'code' in this thesis to relate to structures of meaning within an individual field of discourse, this chapter (and Chapter 6) may be regarded rather as explorations of 'intertextuality', in the sense used by Tilley (1994: 11-12). Context is used here, nonetheless, as the simplest form of description of both the data to be studied and the general aims of the analysis.

practices, will be reconsidered through the evidence for other activities. One aim is to define structural properties of the social system (where structural properties are structural principles reproduced through many areas of practice within a social totality). Equally, the examination of other fields of discourse may reveal sources of contradiction with, or in, mortuary practice. The discussions will be concerned with the origins and meanings of strategies, therefore, and the broad processes of change which alter the circumstances in which burials occur.

The nature of the evidence will largely confine the discussion to the broader levels of social interaction (household, lineage, gender, etc.) rather than the individual. Unavoidably this means generalization rather than specifics of interaction will be focussed on in most cases. The first part of Section 2 looks at social structures through these constraints. Section 3 takes an even broader perspective in concentrating on the relationship between communities and between the Varna and Gumelnitsa Cultures. Section 2b assesses the networks of value and meaning of material culture and how meanings in the broader social context interact with those in the mortuary sphere. As the eventual goal is the better explanation of mortuary practices the structures identified in Chapters 3-5 will be used to inform and channel the discussions. Moreover, this chapter will be only a partial account of the context of burial practices and the conclusions reached will be limited accordingly. Chapter 6 will be concerned with a wider context, taking a larger geographical region and a longer-term perspective of the burial and other data. However, the arguments presented in the last chapter will compliment those of this chapter and suggest the final conclusions to the study.

## 2. *SOCIAL LIFE*

Social life encompasses all social interactions and therefore all *practice*. It may also refer - to borrow from the title of the book edited by Appadurai (1986) - to the role of 'things' in these interactions. Both senses are apparent in the following, with the second sub-section specifically concerned with artefacts. The evidence considered is selective, according to the criteria discussed in the introduction, and by its source. Where possible evidence is used from those settlements which have associated cemeteries. Details from other sites in north-east Bulgaria and occasionally outside this region are used (according to my judgement) where they provide additional information. Three main types of evidence will be considered: the settlement itself; agricultural and craft production; and other (non-mortuary) ritual practices.

### A) *Structures, institutions, structural properties*

#### i) *settlements*

Published settlement evidence varies considerably from site to site and region to region. Details are particularly scarce for the Varna Culture sites. There is no known settlement associated with Reka Devnya and traces of only two houses at Devnya. The suggested lake settlement to the south of the Varna Cemetery is unexcavated (I. Ivanov 1989a) though other lake settlements are known from recovered artefacts. Durankulak is different in that the whole surface area of the tell has been excavated for several horizons including the Late Chalcolithic, but these excavations are continuing and only general details of the site have been published. Inland, a number of sites are fully or extensively published, including Golyamo Delchevo (Todorova et al. 1975), Radingrad (T. Ivanov 1980; 1982), Targovishte (Angelova 1982; 1986b) and Vinitsa (Raduncheva 1976b). Detailed accounts of finds are included in the publications of Kubrat (Mikov 1926-7), Ruse (Georgiev and Angelov 1952; 1957) and Sava (Mirchev and Zlatarski 1960) but these publications give

few details of buildings or the exact location of many of the artefacts found. Similar details are published for the more limited excavations of the tell sites at Hotnitsa (Angelov 1959) and Kodzhadermen (Popov 1916-18). Almost no details are published for Lilyak, Omurtag and Tsonevo. Not all of these sites are fully excavated. Stratigraphic and chronological details for these sites and some other excavated sites in the region are shown in Figure 6.1.

In recent years the interpretation of settlement evidence has concentrated on the forms of buildings, the internal organization of activities within the site and the organization of space itself. There have been two main types of explanation although the results from both have often been similar (with the exception of occasional digressions into e.g. 'proto-urban centres': Todorova 1989a). A number of authors, including Todorova, have assumed a straightforward equivalence between building/settlement form and units of social structure: that is, a *reflectionist* approach. In such models small houses are occupied by nuclear families while extended families may occupy multi-roomed houses (e.g. Todorova 1978a; 1982). Larger, central or two-storied houses are those of leading families or lineage chiefs who may also be involved in the planning and creation of regular, ordered settlement layouts.<sup>2</sup> In some cases sections of the settlement are equated with different lineage segments (Todorova 1982). Todorova and others have argued nonetheless that the architectural variations are minor, and that settlement evidence suggests a basically egalitarian social structure with equivalent domestic groups, at most sites (e.g. Todorova 1978a; Pernicheva 1978).

The second main form of interpretation has sought to combine an understanding of the symbolic importance of settlement architecture with complex measures of the structure of space (Chapman 1989; 1990; Bailey 1990). These approaches also stress the absence of social ranking in settlement forms and the existence of households with equal status, and

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<sup>2</sup> With the rectangular perimeters of some sites, and entrances at cardinal points, this may involve a 'cosmological' ordering of domestic space, which I have noted in the previous chapter does not extend to include the cemetery.

perhaps communal 'ownership' of tells, therefore (Chapman 1989). However, Chapman also sees evidence of greater complexity: in two-storied structures; multi-roomed buildings; houses with multiple entrances; and/or elaborate furniture (1991). Chapman and Bailey both stress the temporal component of tell use, including through the rebuilding of houses exactly over the remains of the previous structure.

There are problems with both types of approach. The models which rely on some degree of reflectionist reasoning can be criticized for the same reasons as those which employ similar logic in the interpretation of burial evidence. The use of measures of space syntax (of Hillier and Hanson 1984, for example) has also been criticized on methodological grounds and, again, for often assuming a direct equivalence of spatial form and social structure (Brown 1990). A specific difficulty with accepting either approach here is that the (Bulgarian) evidence considered is almost entirely from five sites (although including Golyamo Delchevo, Radingrad and Targovishte) which may not be representative of all settlements in the region. Further, much of the specific detail relates to Early and Middle Chalcolithic horizons at these sites. There is a danger that meanings are transferred uncritically from one site or period to another.

Nevertheless, elements of Chapman's model (in particular) are compelling - not least the description of tells as symbolizing 'a denial of the new dead and an emphasis on timeless, tradition-filled relations with the omnipresent ancestors' (1991: 164). Similarly, the model of lineages competing through the symbolic use of space and architecture is compatible with the model of burial practice developed here (as Chapman's interpretation of burial practices is similar in outline, if not always in detail, to the arguments I have presented above). However, these insights into the importance and meaning of settlement forms needs to be related to the individual circumstances of particular sites to be of direct relevance to this study.

Basic details of the settlement evidence from the sites with Late Chalcolithic cemeteries in north-east Bulgaria are presented in Figure 6.2. In general, the settlements are all of similar surface size (excepting Devnya for which too few details are known), but with greater variety in the height of the tell and the number of Late Chalcolithic settlement horizons.<sup>3</sup> The differences in the height of the tells may be significant at least insofar as they can be regarded as 'monumental' (Bailey 1993) by or during the Late Chalcolithic. The large surface area of some of the submerged settlements in the Varna Lake (I. Ivanov 1989b) may be due to the spread of occupation over time rather than to simultaneous occupation of the whole area. The movement of finds through the action of the water may be a significant factor also. Where remains of house wall-posts have been discovered, settlement traces typically cover an area similar to that of the other sites shown in Figure 6.2 (Todorova and Toncheva 1975).

The number of houses in settlement horizons (at those sites with full plans) is similar, with around ten to fifteen houses in use at any one time. The sizes of buildings also fall within the same general range at all of the sites with available evidence.<sup>4</sup> Todorova (1989a) has described the largest building in Horizon IV at Durankulak as a 'palace' but this grossly exaggerates the difference in size between this house and others at the site, as well as assuming a direct reflection of status in house size. Stone socles used in the construction of all houses in (at least) one horizon at Durankulak (Horizon IV) are considered by Todorova (*ibid.*) to be another sign of incipient urbanization. They are more convincingly regarded as a peculiar local development, akin to the use of stone covers over burials, and equally devoid of any universal significance.

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<sup>3</sup> None of the sites reach the size of some tells in Thrace in their surface areas. Ezero, for example, measures 200 x 145 x 10 m. (Georgiev and Merpert 1966) and Karanovo 250 x 150 x 12.5 m. (Mikov 1959). Some other tells are larger still.

<sup>4</sup> The statistical and graphic measures used by Chapman and Bailey suggest far greater complexity in (Middle Chalcolithic) buildings from Polyanitsa and Ovcharovo, for example, than from the sites studied here.

Other buildings argued to be the residences of lineage heads or important families (as opposed to buildings with special purposes such as workshops or cult structures - both considered below) are few. One building at Radingrad which survives for three settlement horizons to Horizon IV (the first Late Chalcolithic level) is suggested to be two-storied, but is otherwise of average dimensions (c. 6x6 m.) and has a single (lower storey) room, and therefore does not combine the second storey with other possible architectural indicators of complexity (but see below). Radingrad is one of the sites specifically considered by Chapman (1990) who regards the site as showing little household competition - without control over settlement space being in the hands of dominant lineage/household heads. A similar interpretation may be applied by extension to the other settlements considered here (at least those with complete settlement plans).

The arguments are partly dependent on an assumption of scale. It is possible to accept from the above review that there is some competition between households which may be *performed* through the elaboration of architecture and space. It is also possible that the community itself may be a recognized (self-defined) social unit for the planning and construction of the settlement, through fortifications and so on.<sup>5</sup> At this level, strategies may be directed outwards - to neighbouring communities - and involve symbolic expressions of monumentality, continuity, ownership, etc.. Space is undoubtedly important in structuring relationships at other levels of social structure (including gender, etc., discussed below).

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<sup>5</sup> Of the settlements under consideration, the following have known palisade or bank fortifications from the Late Chalcolithic: Golyamo Delchevo (Todorova et al. 1975); Hotnitsa (Angelov 1958); Radingrad (T. Ivanov 1980); Ruse (Kanchev et al. 1987 - date uncertain); Targovishte (Angelova 1986b); Vinitza (Raduncheva 1976b). Durankulak is naturally bounded by the lake and causeway. At Devnya the settlement is only partially excavated and at Varna the nearest lake settlement is unexcavated. Whether these constructions are actually primarily intended as fortifications has been widely discussed (e.g. Todorova 1982; Todorova and Vaysov 1986; Chapman 1991; Bailey 1990).

However, there is a potential problem in the equation of settlement structure with (certain) strategies. Bailey (1990), for example, has discussed the reconstruction of houses directly over the remains of those in the previous horizon at some sites. These 'ancestral houses' (Chapman 1991) may exist for several settlement horizons. Chapman has argued (*ibid.*) that architecture is important in (apparently) short-term competition (as in burial practices) between lineages for the position of 'alliance paramount'. However, the architectural indicators of status may exist for many years. The two-storey house at Radingrad (House 4: Horizons II-IV) and the largest house at Golyamo Delchevo (House 7: Horizons X-XII) are examples, although both are also suggested to have other 'functions' as workshops and/or cult structures. Even within a single settlement horizon - lasting perhaps 20-30 years - the various tempos of interaction in architecture, burial practice, etc., need to be reconciled.<sup>6</sup>

More recently, Chapman (1994) has adopted the idea that houses also possess 'biographies' (see also Bailey 1990: similar arguments have been discussed above for other kinds of artefacts). This argument acknowledges the variety of functions and meanings that buildings may carry simultaneously and sequentially. Thus, architectural differences may indeed be linked to competitive strategies, during the construction of the building, or, at other times, through decoration, etc.. Competition may involve the right to have/continue to have certain roles, perhaps including lineage/community head, but this probably only applies to specific, regionalized, practices. The tendency for large or two-storied structures to have other functions, as workshops, etc., further suggest that several roles may be represented via architecture. None of these roles necessarily indicate that (a) status in one practice is reproduced in other areas of practice (i.e. is a structural property). There is

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<sup>6</sup> Todorova (1978a) suggests an average life-span for a house of 25-30 years, although re-plasterings of house walls at Ovcharovo up to 47 times have been suggested to show annual renewal (Todorova 1982). Bailey uses radiocarbon dates to double the duration of use of the same house. Todorova (1989a) gives an estimate of 50-60 years duration for Horizons III and IV at Durankulak, but provides no reasons for this suggestion. The assumption of annual re-plasterings, and the use of radiocarbon dates for such precise purposes, are questionable, hence the reliance on the looser term 'generation' here.

certainly no evidence from Targovishte or Radingrad (etc.) for the role of 'lineage head' in burials (according to the arguments I have made). Neither is it the case that buildings, or the occupants of buildings, must be identified with the same roles for the whole span of the use of a settlement level or structure (whether or not rebuilt over more than one level).

The circumstances in which competition may occur do not preclude the earlier suggestions by Chapman (1990) of egalitarian, communally-owned settlements, therefore. The community may ritually define itself through the destruction, rebuilding and maintenance of settlement horizons and fortifications at one level of inclusion. Equally, the differentiation of architecture and site boundaries may define the community with regard to neighbouring settlements, including the possibilities of competition (for land or other allocative resources) and conflict.

The use of settlement space and the relationship between living and funerary locations are closest in the case of the sites with intra-mural burials. Although there are few recognized buildings at Ruse, and only a limited excavation of the tell at Kubrat, both sites probably have burials in unoccupied parts of the site. These sites differ from the Gumelnitsa settlements with extra-mural cemeteries (except perhaps Sava) where the surface area of the tell is intensively used. The two forms may indicate differences in the ways in which social groups constitute themselves, therefore. Ruse and Kubrat both have evidence for the grouping of burials (other than by sex), which may demonstrate the absence of recognition/acceptance of the community level of structure in most practices (though not, perhaps, in the construction of fortifications, etc.). The uneven distribution of burials of burials in space and time at Ruse may be taken as additional evidence in support of this view.

A further aspect of the tempo of use of settlements has already been introduced. The period of use of the cemeteries is compared to the detailed stratigraphy of the associated settlements in Figure 6.3. At three of the sites (Radingrad, Sava and Vinitsa), settlement

evidence is absent or sparse for the second half of the Late Chalcolithic - and therefore from the likely date of (part or all of) the cemetery.<sup>7</sup> However, at all of the Gumelnitsa sites there is a long duration of occupation before the earliest burial finds. At Golyamo Delchevo, the use of the cemetery (possibly) in Gumelnitsa 3 corresponds to the destruction of the site at the end of Gumelnitsa 2 and subsequent reoccupation in Horizon XI. However, there is no evidence that the destruction and the beginning of use of the cemetery are related at this site or any other where similar destructions occur (e.g. Targovishte Horizon IV). Bailey (1993) has emphasized the frequency with which tells may be flooded and temporarily abandoned, but this pattern of use applies equally to all phases of use of the site, and is also not clearly associated with the use or otherwise of the cemetery.

The issues, but not the data, are the same for Devnya and Varna (plus Reka Devnya) which are not cemeteries for tell settlements. If some of the Varna Lake settlements do indeed represent a spread of buildings over time then these sites may have relatively permanent occupation but without the same vertical or structural continuity as tells. The lake settlements have not been demonstrated to exist prior to the Late Chalcolithic and may represent a particular development in this period. There are tells occupied in the Sava and Varna Cultures (as at Durankulak, and including Sava and Golyamo Delchevo in the Early Chalcolithic: see below), but the nearest tells to the Varna Lake are at Banovo and Provadia, respectively 15 and 25 km. from the lake (from Todorova 1986a: both unexcavated). Other settlements of Chalcolithic date are known only from stray finds and flat settlements which do extend back to the Middle Chalcolithic at least (as at Varna-Batareyata: Mirchev 1961).

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<sup>7</sup> At Radingrad the metal finds in Grave 4 are likely to date the grave to the second half of the Late Chalcolithic (see Figure 2.9) although other graves are reportedly earlier. It may be noted also that Todorova (1986a) reconstructs an hiatus in occupation between Gumelnitsa 1 and 2 which is not apparent in T. Ivanov (1980) where Gumelnitsa 2 material is reported as being found only in pits on the periphery of the tell. At Sava, Todorova (1985) notes the existence of Gumelnitsa 3 period occupation which is nevertheless not included in the stratigraphic summary in a later publication (1986a).

The internal organization of the lake settlements is very poorly known but the actual or symbolic continuity of structures and settlement plans is unlikely. Durankulak nonetheless precludes general explanations which derive social structures from settlement forms at a cultural level. The available evidence may suggest, however, that the Varna Culture pattern is one of less unified communities in which households or other social groups are less strongly identified with real or symbolic lineages than is the case in the Gumelnitsa Culture. There also may be a looser identification of a community or lineage with an area of land. This coincides with the greater frequency of burial rituals, and the greater overt competition within Varna Culture cemeteries, including Durankulak, where burial perhaps becomes the principal means by which groups are constituted and maintained. These arguments clearly overlap with the concerns of the second section of this chapter, and will be returned to below.

## ii) *production*

Bailey (1993) has recently argued that two 'chronotypes' can be identified in the Chalcolithic. These chronotypes - the 'cyclical' of (e.g.) agricultural production, and 'linear' of burial practice (for example) - are argued to 'drive' different areas of social life, either together, or in opposition to one another. This argument is difficult to support. To suggest that the chronotypes drive areas of behaviour unnecessarily and falsely implies determinism (by agricultural cycles for example) to my mind. More basically, the two chronotypes are incompatible with the model of practice adopted here (except, perhaps, as a reified abstraction of it) in which cycles of reciprocity and linear processes of change are integral to *all* social behaviour. Thus, Bailey's study of the evidence for 'secondary products' (after Sherratt 1981), traction animals and so on are useful here only to the extent that they may suggest insights into the forms of interaction in and between communities.

Some basic details for the sites in question and (some) others in north-east Bulgaria are given in Figure 6.4. Interpretations of social structures based on agricultural evidence have

been limited in number and scope. Todorova (1982), however, has linked the control of communal grain storage to status differences within settlements. Chapman (1991) has linked agricultural surplus to his model of lineage competition, and to changes in gender relations (see below).

Other forms of production - of artefacts for example - have been treated similarly in the archaeological literature to date. There is in fact very little evidence for the place of manufacture of most artefact types (beyond evidence for local manufacture of pottery, etc., as described in previous chapters). There are a small number of possible workshops in the settlements of principal concern here. Details from these sites and other Late Chalcolithic settlements in north-east Bulgaria are summarized in Figure 6.5. Production of artefacts has been seen almost invariably in terms of exchange and craft specialization (e.g. Lichardus 1982), and, from these, to statuses based on 'professions' and possession of prestige goods. As I have already briefly argued, the process of change has been well documented, but the mechanisms and social context of exchange are poorly understood. This aspect of context will be returned to below.

The agricultural evidence included in Figure 6.4 suggests that similar mixed agricultural practices existed throughout the region, though with variations in the relative importance of different wild and domestic species. The evidence Todorova uses to indicate centralized storage is predominantly from Ovcharovo and Polyanitsa, where some small rooms, walled storage-spaces in houses and free-standing buildings are argued to be communal stores. Grain remains have indeed been found in some of these locations. Some two-storey structures containing large numbers of vessels are also interpreted in this way. There are nonetheless other storage facilities within the settlements, including ceramic vessels and pits. It is difficult to accept the existence of the centralized storage and control of grain (plus implied control over redistribution) that Todorova reconstructs. Without clearer evidence of how all agricultural products (including livestock and meat) were stored, it is difficult and

probably unnecessary to suggest clear structures of organization beyond the household level.

The different forms of (grain) storage that can be observed may indicate competition between households, nonetheless - and account for the occasional correspondence of communal storage facilities with large or two-storey buildings. However, this again runs the risk of using long-term architectural features as a measure of short-term competitive success, and equates agricultural production with statuses (as structural properties).

It is possible also that some exchanges of agricultural products were included in general patterns of exchange within and between households (see Section 2) and it is conceivable that some agricultural activities (e.g. 'ploughing': Bailey 1990) were undertaken jointly between households. Nonetheless, the structures and symbolism of agricultural practices can be observed only indirectly. Turning the discussion around it is possible to use the burial evidence to look at the distribution of evidence for production in the wider community. Production of artefacts has already been discussed in the context of burial evidence: as artefacts made *for* burials; use before inclusion in graves; symbolic associations of tool forms, etc.. The burial evidence also provides some finds which may relate to agricultural production.

Antler picks are the most common possible agricultural tool.<sup>8</sup> Most of the finds are from male graves, with one find from Devnya in a female (extended) grave. Finds in the Gumelnitsa cemeteries are from one cenotaph (Vinitsa 43) and the fill of one destroyed grave (Vinitsa 10) and may have been used in the digging of the pit. Another 'modified antler tool' in Golyamo Delchevo 30 is also from a cenotaph. The actual use of any of these tools for agricultural purposes cannot be demonstrated, nor do they certainly symbolize

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<sup>8</sup> I have not distinguished antler picks from the so-called 'battle-axes' from Durankulak. Both are nonetheless far more common with adult males than any other age/sex group.

agricultural production. Axes have also been suggested to be commonly used in agriculture (Kanchev 1967) although other meanings for axes in burials have already been considered. Perhaps the clearest example of an agricultural implement from a burial context is the suggested ard from a non-burial pit found beside Grave 5 at Sava-Tsonevo (Toncheva n.d.). The grave is of an adult female.<sup>9</sup>

Harvesting tools are also rarely found in graves. Flint objects in Varna 13 (male) and Devnya 6 (female, but in the extended position) have been identified as sickles. Arrow and spear points (plus two harpoons at Ruse, and the gold plating possibly from a bow in Varna 43) are the total potential evidence for hunting from burial contexts. Graves with such finds include adult male and female and child burials, plus cenotaphs, but are again few in total.

Other artefacts in burials may provide some evidence for the gender association of different forms of production. However, most tools with a clear and specific function are very rare in graves. Spindle-whorls/weights only occur in three cenotaphs (Varna 2, 15 and 41) and one female burial (Devnya 10), for example. Use-wear traces are even less forthcoming. Despite the many artefacts shown to have been used, the only suggested specific use of an object (hide tanning - on an adze) is from a cenotaph (Varna 4).

It is equally difficult to suggest how production of artefacts was organized from the available evidence for workshops. Even with the addition of evidence from outside north-east Bulgaria (e.g. Lichardus 1982; 1988; Ellis 1984; Evans 1978), the evidence is largely unspecific or peripheral. Thus, loom-weights, for example, are known from some houses at a number of sites and may suggest that textile production was carried out by a limited number of households at any one time. This may indicate some degree of specialization,

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<sup>9</sup> From information made available by the excavator.

but does not consider factors of deposition and preservation, or how materials and finished products were obtained and exchanged.

Hodder (1992) has suggested that control of specialist knowledge, including of production techniques, may be an important means of establishing relations of dominance (discussed more fully in Chapter 1). In this context, the continuity of use of a workshop at Golyamo Delchevo for three horizons may indicate the passing on of skills within a particular household. The values associated with particular skills must also be set alongside the wider values found in the division of labour between genders, and those of certain artefacts and raw materials, nonetheless.

Tools in general have been shown to be widely distributed in graves of all age and sex categories, although with a tendency for some tools (e.g. flint blades and all axes at Durankulak) to be under-represented in child graves. Other tools are gender associated to a greater or lesser extent, but this is complicated by other factors, such as the general bias in distribution of copper to males in the Gumelnitsa Culture. Certain tools and assemblages, notably the sewing-kit, may indicate a real or symbolic association between this craft activity (possibly sewing) and female activities in life, but this assemblage is specific to Durankulak (or perhaps the Varna Culture), and is also included in a significant minority of male graves.

The metaphorical reference to valued skills may convey meaning at the level of the group rather than the individual. Some specific tools (e.g. spindle-whorls) are more common in cenotaphs than burials. The variety of tool types in burials is wider in the Varna Culture, reflecting a greater concern with the individual burial performance, but not necessarily more directly indicating division of labour by household or gender. A similar situation occurs with the pottery vessels found in burials. By far the greatest variety exists in the coastal cemeteries. At these sites, staged vessels - miniature copies of storage vessels - are marginally more common in female graves (at Durankulak), and significantly more

common with adults than children. This vessel form has been linked (above) to general symbolism of storage and productivity, but does not clearly suggest a gender association for this activity, for example.

General accounts of gender relations have tended to rely on the burial evidence to suggest the division of labour, relative political importance (based on wealth), and so on. Many have also considered a far wider period and area than addressed here. Thus, many studies of the Bulgarian Chalcolithic accept a broad, progressive transition from matriarchy to patriarchy, but with the Late Chalcolithic placed at various points along the process (e.g. Todorova 1978a; Gimbutas 1989). These models rarely explore in depth what (e.g.) matriarchy *means*, in terms of political power, resources controlled, etc..

There have been a number of attempts to describe gender relations other than in these terms, however. For Chapman (1991) a shift to arid agriculture in which men have a more significant role may lead to greater control by males of larger agricultural surpluses, and so lead to a more prominent role in exchanges which are central to the competition between lineages, and are seen also in architecture and burial. Sherratt (1981; 1983) similarly proposes an expansion of exchange and agricultural change as factors in a shift towards male associated forms of prestige. These two models are concerned nonetheless with long-term changes, respectively to, and (largely) after, the Late Chalcolithic. Gender is also an explicit concern in the recent account by Hodder (1990) that considers south-east Europe as a whole. Hodder follows arguments which link women to hearths, pots (including storage), the household, and also to some activities such as weaving, food processing, etc.. Male activities are by contrast primarily associated with the 'agrios' - hunting, stone tool production, weapons, animals, exchange, and so on (see diagram, *ibid.*: 69).

Some of these models have been the subject of a critique by Tringham, who argues instead for 'microscale archaeology of the relations of production' (1991: 125). As an attempt to avoid broad-scale or long-term generalizations, this argument has merits. Equally, the

emphasis on the positive contribution of women and female activities, as possessing 'real' power (a concern shared to some extent by Hodder 1990; 1992), is also relevant to this study. However, beyond suggesting shifts in terminology (to e.g. the household as 'coresidential cooperative production unit': Tringham 1991: 113), the critique has few results which may be used here, or clear guidelines as to how to achieve them.<sup>10</sup>

The evidence already considered for production and exchange therefore provides a limit on the extent to which these general models can be adopted as accurate guides to the interaction between genders within specific contexts. Another, the long time-span of several of the models, will be of concern in the final chapter. The burial evidence offers only ambiguous support for any of the models (axes with males, etc.), but conversely, the gender models are sufficiently general not to contradict the interpretations that have been put forward here from the burial evidence alone. The interpretations of male control of long-distance exchanges, for example, have some support in the distribution of finds in (particularly Gumelnitsa) burials, but this must be seen in the light of wider kin-group involvement in the performance and strategies of burial practice.

A clear comparison to burial in the *representation* of gender, which may also allow comparisons between households and communities, is provided by evidence for (non-burial) ritual practices.

### iii) *non-mortuary rituals and cult*

Religious beliefs and cult practices have been a significant element in many models of social structure (including gender relations) in the Late Chalcolithic of north-east Bulgaria. Most are based on the 'Great Earth Mother' cult championed by Gimbutas (1974/1982;

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<sup>10</sup> Specific interpretations proposed by Tringham (1991 and elsewhere) are not based on Bulgarian evidence and concentrate on the issue of how archaeology is written - which is beyond the scope of the discussion here.

1989; 1990, etc.). I have already commented on the weaknesses of this model with regard to burial practices and will not repeat the arguments here. However, the most common evidence cited for the Earth Mother cult is provided by figurines, which must be considered in any assessment of non-mortuary rituals.

Figurines are found in a majority of houses at most sites (e.g. at Vinitsa 8 of 10 houses in Horizon II; 2 of 6 in the partly destroyed third horizon), and may be part of everyday practices in these domestic contexts. There is some evidence that figurines may have had a typically short use-life (from the large number of finds in rubbish contexts and the deliberate breaking of many finds: Bánffy 1990-1). Bailey (1991) has confirmed the strong association of figurines with domestic contexts, in a detailed study from north-east Bulgaria. Bailey links the *meaning* of figurines explicitly to burial by arguing that figurines symbolically reincorporate individuals into society after their death. Whilst this argument avoids the religious overtones of Gimbutas' model, it does not explain the (albeit rare) finds of figurines in burials, particularly in the Varna Culture, nor the close similarities of many figurine types in coastal and inland sites despite the strong differences in burial practices between the two regions.

More recently, Bailey (1994) has directly linked the gender of burials at Golyamo Delchevo to the representation of gender in figurines from the settlement. Bailey suggests that there are asexual figurines and burials in equal proportions which may thus indicate the existence of at least three socially defined genders. Part of the reasoning on which this argument is based is doubtful, however. The figure of 32% of burials which are asexual according to Bailey is derived from anthropological identification of the burials by sex, so that the total consists of individuals too poorly preserved or too young to be accurately sexed. I have proposed that gender is important in the preparation, and indirectly in the meanings invoked, in Gumelnitsa burial practices, but is not strongly symbolized in the final form of the grave.

However, this does not itself disprove the existence of more than two genders (and/or sexes) - either as structural principles in certain fields of discourse or as structural properties - or their representation via figurines. Indeed, the representation of gender must be central to any explanation of figurines. The prime symbol employed in figurines, as in burial, is the body (with zoomorphic and house or furniture figures far less common than anthropomorphic models). A majority of figurines show female characteristics. This may support Hodder's identification of women with the domestic contexts in which figurines occur (1990). Although, as Hodder states, female production of, or control of, figurines cannot be clearly demonstrated, the dominance of female representations as a symbolic resource may suppose an identification also with authoritative resources in ritual practices.

This may be compared nonetheless with the limited evidence for figurines in burial contexts. Most of the finds are from cenotaphs, and may therefore indicate a link between domestic and mortuary rituals, and perhaps, as Bailey argues, a shared association with the ancestors. Of the finds with burials, all but two are found with adult males: the other two are from child burials at Varna (and a few have no age/sex information). Similarly, many of the cenotaphs containing figurines have been suggested to contain male-associated artefacts rather than female.<sup>11</sup> The other forms of miniature models - zoomorphic figurines and house models/furniture - are found only at Varna, and only in two (Graves 26 and 36) and one (Grave 15) cenotaph, respectively.

Non-burial pits also contain figurines at Vinitsa (one anthropomorphic and one zoomorphic figurine) and Sava-Tsonevo. Although such finds are rare they expand the range of contexts in which figurines occur and may suggest that (anthropomorphic) figurines do not

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<sup>11</sup> The figurines are predominantly of the bone 'T' form in the cenotaphs at Varna, which has no body features depicted, but there are also 'en violon' and clay figurine types at Varna, Durankulak and Golyamo Delchevo which have female characteristics. The so-called 'anthropomorphic appliques' in gold at several sites are found with adult male and female and child burials as well as in cenotaphs. Alternative explanations for the form, e.g. as a sun symbol, as well as the widespread distribution in time and space of the form, are considered by Zanotti (1982), for example.

have a single symbolic meaning, but rather have a range of metaphorical associations. One such is gender. The predominance of female characteristics may refer commonly to some of the attributes described above in the general models of gender. These may include the household, productivity, fertility, and so on, with male and animal figurines having a more restricted range of contexts and meanings.

The relationship between the domestic (household) level of ritual and mortuary practices differs between the two cultures. Inland, the separation of domestic and funerary rituals is almost complete. Figurines are separated from burials in time and space by their inclusion in non-burial pits. The one figurine certainly from a burial (Vinitsa 22) was possibly deliberately broken and lies underneath the body - i.e. predates the actual interment. At the Varna Culture sites the inclusion of figurines in cenotaphs is also (in some cases) a referral to communal forms of interaction. However, the cenotaphs, and less frequent placement in male graves, may also be part of competitive interactions expressed through burials. The smaller interval between burials on average may allow the everyday, domestic symbolism of figurines to be employed more readily in these graves.

These arguments return to points made above. In the Varna Culture, burials are more important in mediating everyday social interactions than in the Gumelnitsa Culture. Similarly, inland, the possible contradiction between female representation in figurines and male symbolism in burials is removed by the separation of these in different activities. In the Varna Culture, 'T'-form figurines have no gender specific characteristics but female (and no male) figurines occur and may be a further claim on powerful female qualities. More generally, the use of figurines in some mortuary practices, and possibly the richest Varna cenotaphs, represents an appeal from the specific (household, every-day practices) to the general (community, ancestors). However, in some Varna Culture graves, the reverse may be true: broad qualities are 'possessed' by the individual, perhaps as a claim on ritual resources and power.

Whilst figurines are the most common and widespread evidence for specifically ritual, domestic practices, there are also a number of possible altars and sanctuaries at both coastal and inland sites (summarized in Figure 6.6. The nature of the finds (for a wider area and period) has been discussed by Bánffy (1990-1), who classifies the evidence into sanctuaries, 'cult corners', and so on, but argues that there is no clear separation between these. Certainly, not all of the evidence included in Figure 6.6 is unambiguously ritual in nature. Thus, for example, the decorated plaster from a house at Targovishte is not associated with other cult objects other than figurines. Equally, the platform altars at Vinitsa and Radingrad may be furniture, although several are associated with figurines directly. It is, of course, the case that the structures may have both a ritual and non-ritual function. The ubiquity of figurines in settlements may suppose that ritual practices occur periodically or circumstantially - i.e. are largely demarcated in time rather than space. This corresponds with the irregular tempo (in the long-term) and cyclical nature of burials and has the same potential for strategic manipulation and, therefore, possibly, competition.

The Hotnitsa building containing the gold finds (House 4), which lacks a hearth but contains pottery vessels and grind stones similar to those found in other buildings at the site, is the most likely example of a specifically cult building, although the open air altars at Durankulak, which continue for at least two settlement horizons, also do suggest the localization of some ritual practices in specific areas of the settlement. House 4 at Radingrad exists for three settlement levels and has also been suggested to be two-storied and perhaps a communal store. These finds may indicate another scale and tempo of ritual practice, which follows the long-term continuities of architecture (and the control of space), and so may involve the community as a whole. Bánffy (*ibid.*) implies this by describing such structures as 'meeting houses', and linking them to initiation rituals (which may be taken more generally as referring to rites of passage, etc.). It is possible that the settlement itself is also the object of communal ritual practices. The general destruction of settlement horizons (sometimes by fire) and subsequent complete rebuilding as a single event may have the character of a communal reordering and renewal at the level of the community.

The Radingrad two-storey house is the most likely evidence cited for the control of ritual practices by a particular household. However, this is again one function of the building and may be compared to others discussed above. The ritual practices suggested by the finds also may be limited to a particular phase of the use of the structure. There may be competition for the control of roles in domestic rituals, however, possibly at the level of the household, or individual, within the overall communal meanings of domestic (settlement) rituals. As with figurines, there is little in the evidence reviewed which suggests that ritual knowledge was strongly exclusive of gender(s) or households. There is evidence nonetheless that gender, the household, lineage and community are important in structuring ritual practices (and see below). At the widest level, however, figurines and cult buildings are similar in both cultures, matching the parallels described in settlement forms, agricultural practices, and so on. This level will be returned to in the following section of this chapter. One further source of comparisons will be addressed first, however - the contexts, and meanings of individual artefacts and materials.

### B) *Material culture*

Some artefact types, including figurines, have already been considered in some depth. I do not intend to undertake a general review of all other archaeological finds from the fifteen sites of direct interest to this study. Rather, I shall concentrate on selected artefacts and material types, particularly those which have been discussed because of their presence and proposed meanings in burials. One difficulty in comparing between sites is again the variation in the completeness of preservation, excavation and publication. However, a comparison between sites is less important for my purposes here than an examination of how the contexts and meanings of artefacts in other fields of discourse can inform the interpretations of the burial evidence. The major problem which the state of the settlement evidence poses is the absence of a large published body of data for the Varna Culture.

Some artefacts from the lake settlements in the Varna Lake are included in the evidence presented in Figure 6.7, but the context of these finds is especially poorly known.

Figure 6.7 records finds of gold, copper, spondylus and certain other artefacts, and details the specific location of the find if this is recorded. The table shows that most of the finds are from unspecified or stray locations, although the site formation processes applicable to all of the finds are not considered in detail here. Only a small number of the finds are from hoards, or other deliberate, non-rubbish depositional contexts. The table may be taken only as representing the minimum number of such artefacts found in the settlement over any chosen unit of time.

Copper artefacts are found at all of the settlements with available evidence, spondylus in half, and gold at three sites. The finds are broadly similar to those from the cemeteries (gold rings and appliques, copper axes, awls, etc.), but their distribution in settlements differs markedly from that in the cemeteries at the same sites. Thus, Ruse has produced around 80 copper artefacts, 30 spondylus bracelets and 2 gold ornaments from the settlement, compared to 2 copper, 3 spondylus and 0 gold artefacts with burials. Copper bracelets and rings and stone bracelets (etc.) are found at the Golyamo Delchevo, Kubrat and Ruse settlements but are unknown from Gumelnitsa Culture burials.

Chapman (1983) has suggested that the frequency of ornament finds from settlement contexts in the Gumelnitsa Culture (compared to burials) is evidence of a different 'symbolic order' - by which he means a different focus for competition, or expression of prestige by social groups other than those buried. Certainly, the existence of these finds re-emphasizes the argument that the copper artefacts in burials (for example) derive their meaning from their form, material *and* the specific symbolic code of burial practices. The frequency of the finds and materials does not itself indicate the values or prestige that they convey, therefore. However, comparison with meanings in burial practices does suggest

that values may be related in many cases to specific structures (roles), and also to their use in performances (e.g. display).

Comparisons between the wider patterns and the burial data are hampered by the disparity between the quality of finds in settlements and cemeteries in both cultures. Most of the settlement evidence is from Gumelnitsa sites where the cemeteries show little clear differentiation of artefacts by age/gender except for a general bias towards adult males for metal and spondylus objects. Thus, copper axes are found at most of the sites but cannot be certainly identified with males or male related activities (and roles). One copper axe at Hotnitsa is found in a building possibly used to manufacture (female) bone figurines (House 8: Angelov 1961) but has no certain association with this activity or the gender of the craftsperson. The gold finds from the 'sanctuary' at the same site (House 4: Angelov 1959) also provide only a circumstantial link between the exclusively male distribution of gold in Gumelnitsa burials and gender roles in other forms of ritual. Finds from the Varna Culture settlements are too poorly detailed to relate the stronger gender/age association of many artefacts in burials to the settlement finds, except to note the presence in settlements of axes (Devnya; Varna lake settlements) and copper rings and bracelets (Durankulak). The child's copper bracelet from Golyamo Delchevo is unique for the inland region, from the finds detailed, but further supports the view that ornaments have strongly circumscribed meanings in burials.

Variations in access to materials at the household or community levels are only peripherally visible in the available data. Settlement and cemetery finds combined show that all communities (using cemeteries) had access to copper, gold and spondylus as raw materials or finished artefacts (and which may be used as general guides to the availability of most other materials). Within sites there is also some evidence that rare/exotic materials (those illustrated in Figure 6.7) were not strongly limited in their distribution at any one time. At Vinitza, for example, spondylus bracelets are found in 4 (40%) houses in Horizon II. At

Hotnitsa, two buildings in the final settlement level contain copper axes and a third includes the gold hoard.

Access to, and the meanings of, certain raw materials must also have a temporal dimension, both long and short term. I have emphasized the importance of exchange (of artefacts as well as in the broader sense as a metaphor for practice) in burial contexts without the need for a model in which control or exchange of certain artefacts is the dominant strategy. The settlement evidence, as far as interpretation is possible, suggests similarly complex networks of interaction and meaning at several levels of structure. The uneven distribution of artefacts at the few sites with long, published, stratigraphic sequences may largely depend on differences in the duration of settlement horizons, preservation, etc., but real differences in the availability of materials through time are possible nonetheless. Copper, for example, has been argued to become increasingly common during the Late Chalcolithic (Todorova 1981b; Chernyh 1979). The largest part of this increase is accounted for by axes (*ibid.*) and may suppose a greater association of the metal with male contexts and values (although an equivalent identification of males with axes in circumstances other than burials is hard to demonstrate as I have noted). The number of burials in both cultures also increases over time in both cultures, suggesting that there may be related changes over time in the ways in which gender and kinship are symbolized and manipulated.

Long-term patterns are more fully discussed in Chapter 7. However, the increase in the quantities of copper found towards the end of the Late Chalcolithic is matched by an increase in gold even without the Varna evidence (Éluère 1989a; Comsa 1974b). The symbolism of gold in the Varna Culture has been discussed at length. There are no substantial settlement finds with which to compare these. The Hotnitsa hoard is the largest non-burial gold find from north-east Bulgaria and is from a building interpreted as a sanctuary. The linked rings, bracelets and anthropomorphic appliques may thus have been worn in a communal ritual context. Thus, most gold finds of more than a few objects occur in circumstances which suggest accumulation by a/the lineage or community. Smaller

numbers of gold finds may often have similar associations, including in burials. Anthropomorphic appliques are widely distributed in time and across the eastern Balkans (Comsa 1974b; Zanotti 1982), with Varna Culture examples strongly associated with cenotaphs at Varna itself. One gold example is reported from an unspecified context at Ruse. The only comparable gold find at the site, a ring, is from House 1 at 4.7m depth - also at Ruse.

I have concentrated in gold and copper in part because they have been argued previously by many authors to be of high intrinsic value, but also because, as a consequence, they have been well-documented and studied. They constitute, nonetheless, only a fraction of the artefact assemblage. Pottery, flint (and so on) have been the subject of fewer detailed studies - which are also beyond the scope of this study.

Some indications of the meanings of both exotic and non-exotic artefacts may be suggested from hoards, however. Unfortunately, hoards are poorly investigated in terms of their occurrences and meanings (Lichardus 1982; Chapman 1983: also, more generally, e.g. Bradley 1990). For Lichardus, hoards include 'catastrophe hoards' as well as stores of material or artefacts in workshops. Given this variety of contexts the Bulgarian term translating as 'collective find' is preferred here. The variety of finds is exemplified by the evidence from Ruse. At this site there are several collective finds of up to 30 finished flint blades and scrapers found in houses (e.g. House 2 at 4.7 m.) and 'rubbish' pits (Georgiev and Angelov 1952; 1957). There is also a collective find of 11 copper artefacts from near a pit associated with House 1 at 1.8 m.. The majority of collective finds at this and other sites do not occur in contexts which suggest ritual deposition. There are undoubtedly some pits which do suggest a ritual character (beyond the non-burial pits in several of the cemeteries) in other Gumelnitsa and Varna Culture contexts (Bánffy 1990-1; Raduncheva 1991), but this goes beyond the limited scope of this chapter.

The flint finds are not obviously of a rare or prestigious material (compare to suggestions in Chapman 1983), but are also not evidence for production in this location, as they comprise finished tools. At Ruse both flint and copper both may be imported items, though from different distances, and may be evidence of small-scale exchanges between and within communities. Strategic calculation is inevitably part of such exchanges. The lack of ritual formality, and the rarity of such finds in general indicates that, as with burials, accumulation and disposal of economic resources in a collective find may be an opportunistic rather than structured strategy within continuing processes of exchange.

### *3. INTERACTIONS BETWEEN SITES AND CULTURES*

This last example is typical of the discussions in this chapter to date in which the non-mortuary evidence is frequently too sketchy or weak to offer detailed interpretations of meanings in other fields of discourse than mortuary practices. However, it does provide some, broad support for the structures and strategies suggested from the burial evidence. The same basic problems - how variations in material culture in settlements and cemeteries relate to these structural properties and meanings, and the limitations of the available evidence - apply also to the following arguments. In this section, however, the scale is widened: first to consider relations between settlements within the same culture; and second to examine interaction between the two cultures.

The former problem is the more difficult to address, beyond the comparisons made in previous chapters (between intra-mural and extra-mural cemeteries, for example). Within each region material culture forms are very similar, so that in the absence of detailed evidence for the location of the production of artefacts, or the forms and mechanisms of exchange, there is very little direct evidence for the interactions between sites. Some exchanges between the coastal and inland cultures can be seen in decorated pottery vessels, etc., and will be considered in the second half of this section. Moreover, in the arguments for social structures and meanings in non-burial practices presented above, I have been

forced by a shortage of evidence (in many cases) to extrapolate interpretations for specific sites from published details of others, including some from outside north-east Bulgaria.

There has been little detailed work on small-scale settlement patterns. Although there has been extensive registration of prehistoric tell and open sites and stray finds (Mikov 1933; Todorova 1986a), only around 10% of known sites have been excavated in part or whole (Todorova 1986a). Until very recently there has been almost no systematic investigation of settlements as parts of *landscapes*. The most detailed work undertaken in north-east Bulgaria is for the area south of Targovishte (Todorova et al. 1983; Valev 1986: but see also Dennell 1977 for southern Bulgaria) and the region of the Varna Lake (I. Ivanov 1989b; Margos 1960; 1961a; 1961b; 1961c; Minchev 1973). The finds from these two regions are included in Figure 6.8.

For the former area, Todorova is most concerned with agricultural practices, population size and nutrition in detailing interactions between the sites (Todorova et al. 1983).<sup>12</sup> Other interactions between these sites are subject to the same shortage of detailed evidence described above. Nonetheless, four of the sites have cemeteries - two from the Middle Chalcolithic (Ovcharovo and Polyanitsa) - and two of those studied here (Targovishte and Lilyak). The Polyanitsa and Ovcharovo settlements continue in use after the date of the known cemetery finds, though the former for only a single settlement horizon. The shift in the location of known cemeteries to Targovishte and Lilyak, which are possibly only slightly later in date, could be seen as a direct continuation of the practices at the earlier sites, possibly involving the same or related lineages.

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<sup>12</sup> The diagram showing the distances between sites (Todorova et al. 1983: 83) does not take into account differences in the *known* dates of the sites (ibid.: 15). Most of the settlements may be occupied in the first part of the Late Chalcolithic, however, and so the diagram may represent the approximate settlement pattern during the use of the Targovishte and perhaps the Lilyak cemeteries.

This explanation accounts for similarities but not differences between the cemeteries and settlements. An exclusively flexed/left position and eastern orientation are shared by Targovishte and the two Middle Chalcolithic sites, but orientation differs at Lilyak. Similarly, pottery is common at Polyanitsa but not at Targovishte. The Ovcharovo and Polyanitsa settlements display more of the possible indicators of architectural complexity than Targovishte in both the Middle and Late Chalcolithic periods. It is possible nonetheless that the shift to (and from) burial as a mortuary practice and the forms that burials take are subject to patterns of interaction between sites. This can be supported more readily where cemeteries are closer in space (and necessarily in time), and where burial forms are similar between sites. These local patterns of interaction are also relevant to the discussion of settlement form (and especially the use of these sites to describe patterns throughout north-east Bulgaria). Similarly, the detailed symbolism of architecture and settlement forms in the Targovishte area may be specific to, and illustrative of the interactions within, this area alone.

The evidence from the Targovishte region can be compared with the finds from near Dalgopol (the Longoz region: Todorova 1978f) which are also shown in Figure 6.8. Excavated sites in this area include Sava and Golyamo Delchevo with cemeteries and Tsonevo, Zavet and Komunari also with excavated Late Chalcolithic finds. The two cemeteries are again broadly similar in form - with non-burial pits, cenotaphs, gold jewelry, copper tools, etc. - though again with specific differences in forms and contents. The five settlements also have similarities, notably in the presence of Varna Culture pottery (see below). The similarities suggest that material culture forms acquire similar meanings (at a similar date), whereas the differences may reflect the significance of local sequences of actions, in burial and non-burial practices.

Settlement patterns as well as burial practices may differ in the Varna Lake region. I have suggested that the lake settlements may be used for shorter periods of time than most tells, and perhaps involve the spread of occupation through time rather than the vertical,

monumental accumulation of tells. There is also evidence for a more mobile population, in the open sites at Devnya, and on the Varna Plateau. This has implications in turn for the interaction between kin and other social groups and may be a factor in the greater wealth, particularly in cenotaphs, at Devnya and Varna. The same basic pattern exists as at Durankulak, where the cemetery exists for the whole duration of the settlement, but kinship may be different in the extent to which the past is conspicuously used and created in the support of strategies at the lineage level. The settlement evidence thus may be consistent with the evidence discussed in the previous chapter for the greater frequency and wealth of cenotaphs in the Varna region than (e.g.) for Durankulak.

I have already noted that some of the Gumelnitsa settlements may be occupied by a single real or artificially created lineage, or, more generally, that the whole settlement is a self-defined social group for some practices (including burials and some aspects of architecture). The suggestion of communal strategies in the interactions between communities is thus only a description of the broadest level of the regionalization of practices and shared knowledge and intent. The Varna Culture pattern may show the greatest dislocation between the lineage and the settlement community, in terms of membership and the practices (fields of discourse) in which each is reproduced.

Other (levels of) contacts undoubtedly exist between settlements. Exchange of exotic raw materials or certain artefacts is one such area where reciprocation between individuals and groups may (indeed to some extent must) extend beyond individual settlements. Collective finds may be part of this interaction.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Exchanges, other than of durable goods, are probable, but beyond the scope of this study. Suggested marriage patterns (e.g. Todorova 1978a) have been based on assumptions of matriarchy or patriarchy which I have rejected. Exchange of agricultural products, or perhaps Halstead's social storage model (1984), are possible also, and would extend the range, but not the general character, of the argument.

These arguments provide the basis for examining the widest scale of social structures and institutions considered in this thesis - the culture. I have briefly examined the nature of the boundary between social totalities, in Chapter 1. The ideas of permeable boundaries and of social groups existing at many levels, including across the edges of social totalities, are essentially the same issues of regionalization and inclusivity/exclusivity that I have considered above.

Similarities between the coastal and inland regions have already been discussed. Thus: settlement patterns may differ in some respects, but settlement forms are probably similar; agricultural practices vary in detail but not in general character; many figurine types are shared, suggesting that some forms of symbolism and perhaps ritual may also be structured in the same way, etc.. To these parallels may be added the strong similarities in the forms and (in)frequency of coarse-ware pottery (Todorova 1978a). Burial practices and fine-ware pottery decoration are therefore perhaps the clearest sources of difference between the cultures.

In the area of this study, the boundary between the Gumelnitsa and Varna Cultures can be seen most clearly in the same region depicted in Figure 6.8 (and shown in Figure 6.9). Evidence for the permeability of the boundary is provided by the details of the source of raw materials at Varna (Figure 4.6), and by Todorova's definition of a mixed Gumelnitsa/Varna assemblage at sites in the Longoz region, including Golyamo Delchevo and Sava. In fact, the best published of the sites - Golyamo Delchevo - has closest parallels in pottery forms and decorations, etc., with Gumelnitsa sites, rather than known coastal settlements such as at Ezerovo (Todorova and Toncheva 1975). The more limited published evidence from Sava, Zavet and Komunari also suggests a predominantly Gumelnitsa culture assemblage. At Golyamo Delchevo, Varna Culture pottery types are restricted to a small number of (almost certainly) imported vessels (Todorova et al. 1975). These and other parallels with coastal sites are summarized in Figure 6.10.

Non-ceramic artefacts include the Coka-Varna type axe from the settlement which is of a sub-type most often found in burials in the Varna Lakes area. The Coka type is nonetheless a very common and widespread axe type (see Figure 2.9), and the concentration at Devnya and Varna may be the result of depositional practices rather than the local manufacture of the form. Gold artefacts from the settlement are also included in Figure 6.10, but the uncertainty as to the origin of the gold has been previously described in detail. The same problems apply to the identification of non-pottery imports into the Varna Lake area. Pottery from the lake settlements includes graphite decorated vessels, bowls and dishes etc., with forms and decorative motifs similar to Gumelnitsa sites, but which may be locally made (Todorova and Toncheva 1975).

The locations of the imported vessels at Golyamo Delchevo are not all reported in detail. From the limited available evidence, however, the imported vessels are found in contexts similar to analogous local forms. Together with the uneven numbers of vessels with coastal type decoration over time, this may indicate that pottery (and more rarely figurines) were part of general patterns of exchange. The symbolic associations of vessel forms and decorative techniques/motifs are adapted from, rather than adopted with, these exchanges, therefore. The same arguments have been made for some cross-cultural similarities in burial forms.

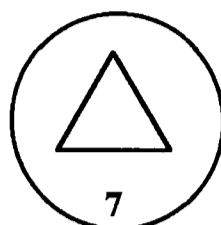
The Longoz and Varna Lake settlement groups are not adjacent. The stray finds shown lying between them in Figure 6.8 are of flint and stone tools which do not differ between the two cultures. I have suggested that there are differences in structural properties of the two cultures and in the regionalization of practices. This is further explored by considering the interactions between the two areas in the long-term in the following chapter.

The arguments in this sub-section to some extent satisfy one of the objectives of this thesis, outlined in Chapter 1 which was to explore the nature of the cultural division. The discussions in the chapter as a whole have also gone some way towards addressing the

social organization of both cultures, albeit with the main focus on trying to better understand burial practices. The arguments nevertheless remain incomplete. I have yet to account, for example, for the origins and long-term patterns of change in the evidence.

The evidence from Golyamo Delchevo and Sava illustrates this problem. Both sites have assemblages of pottery and other artefacts from Early and Middle Chalcolithic horizons which are predominantly of coastal cultural types (for which Sava is indeed the type site). Golyamo Delchevo has an hiatus in occupation between the Middle and Late Chalcolithic levels, which may be interpreted as the abandonment of the site and reoccupation by a Gumelnitsa community. Sava has no clear hiatus during the same period, however. At both sites it is significant also that the cemetery probably does not date to the earliest period of use of the settlement in the Late Chalcolithic (the first Gumelnitsa occupation). It is thus necessary to examine the long-term sequences of change in which the institutions and practices described above have their origins. The final chapter therefore will take a wider perspective in time and space in order to consider these issues.

## CHAPTER 7: PERSPECTIVES



### 1. INTRODUCTION

A central theme of this thesis has been change. In Chapter 1, I identified three forms that this could take: incremental, through the unintended consequences of action and by conscious manipulation of resources in circumstances of limited knowledgeability; change due to external factors; and change resulting from contradictions in the articulation of structural principles. Incremental change was the focus of Chapter 5. Whilst it was not always possible to define the precise sequence and tempo of graves, I have advanced explanations for each of the cemeteries considered. I have also discussed to some extent the role of external factors and possible contradictions in Chapters 4 and 5. The latter two sources of change are also of central concern in the following arguments. Section 2 looks at a wider area of the eastern Balkans and at a longer time-scale, retaining the focus on burial evidence. The discussions provide another level of comparison and context for the main body of data studied and will lead on to some general conclusions, presented with the other final conclusions to this study, in Section 3.

## 2. CHANGE AND THE ORIGINS OF BURIAL PRACTICES

In the introduction to Chapter 1, I noted that north-east Bulgaria has the largest number of published burial finds from the Neolithic/Chalcolithic in the Balkans. This was used as one criterion for choosing the data to be studied. There are other finds, from southern and western Bulgaria, and southern Romania, nonetheless, which are listed in Appendix 3 and whose location is shown in Figure 7.1 and chronology in Figure 7.2. The discussions use all of the available data from these areas (Thrace, western Bulgaria, Oltenia, Muntenia, Dobrogea) from the Chalcolithic and Transitional Period (using Bulgarian terminology) and from the Neolithic for north-east Bulgaria.

The absence of Gumelnitsa Culture cemeteries in southern Bulgaria is one of the most striking differences from the main area I have studied. South Bulgaria also differs from Muntenia, where Gumelnitsa burial sites are as common, or more so, than in north-eastern Bulgaria (although very few are fully published). Details of these finds are given in Appendix 3, and summarized in Figures 7.3 (basic forms) and 7.4 (broken down according to age/sex categories where these are known).

The finds from southern Bulgaria are very varied in forms and contexts. A number of the human remains are stray finds, or from burials within settlements, which are both difficult to date accurately (e.g. Bikovo, Racheva Mogila). These finds, and the 'burial' from Dolnoslav nonetheless have parallels in north-east Bulgaria and may represent similar patterns of sporadic, ritual interments in settlement contexts, re-inclusion of human bones after excarnation/exposure, and so on. These skeletal finds belong to the normal (i.e. most widespread) mortuary tradition suggested to exist in the Neolithic/Copper Age of Bulgaria, therefore.

The Yunatsite finds are probably not formal burials. The location of some or all of the skeletons on top of the final Late Chalcolithic occupation level at the site may be the

result of sudden accidental or violent deaths. However, the bodies were not removed, or otherwise treated, after this date and may also therefore be evidence for the exposure of corpses as a mortuary practice, in this case, as at Hotnitsa, being perhaps symbolically associated with the abandonment of the settlement. Aibunar is thus unique in southern Bulgaria in comprising formal burials, although the location of the find, the extended posture of two of the corpses, and the associated artefacts, have no parallels in Gumelnitsa burial practices in north-east Bulgaria.

Gumelnitsa Culture burials in Romania are poorly dated by phase, but the evidence may indicate an increase in the number of sites and burials in the second half of the period, corresponding to the situation in Bulgaria. Again, many of the finds contain only stray or un-provenanced human remains. Where deliberate burial can be demonstrated, finds are similar to Bulgaria. Flexed burials predominate (though the flexed/right position is more common). Orientation is most frequently to the east or south-east. Partial/mutilated (including single skull) burials also occur and again suggest similar institutionalized ritual (and social) structures and symbolic codes to those I have detailed previously for north-east Bulgaria.

In these general features, the Romanian sites resemble some aspects of the Ruse and Kubrat cemeteries (plus Isperih for these purposes). There are also other, specific, parallels (in the skull burials at Cascioarele and Kubrat, for example). Equally, however, the multiple phases of use of some of the sites is similar to the Radingrad and Omurtag finds in Bulgaria (plus Durankulak). Thus, Glina has Early and Late Chalcolithic burials; Cascioarele has intra-mural burials from the Middle and Late Chalcolithic, plus the skull burials from the later period; and Varasti has finds from all phases of the Copper Age. These sites provide the most direct evidence for changes in burial practices through time, although at Glina and Cascioarele the later finds are stray human remains or partial burials. These last sites represent the apparent abandonment

of the use of cemeteries at these sites (as also at Polyanitsa and Ovcharovo), and, thus, different trajectories of mortuary practices through time.

Varasti is the largest known Gumelnitsa cemetery, but also one of the least fully published. The site contains a small number of Middle Chalcolithic burials, including one with pottery, and is close to the earlier Boian A site where Boian-Vidra period burials were found. The Boian A and B sites are basically similar in forms. Grave goods may become more common through time and it is possible also that the frequency of burials (within a social group), and/or the number of the social groups performing burial as a mortuary ritual, also increases during the Gumelnitsa period.

Grave goods are apparently rarer than in north-east Bulgaria, however, and only a very small number of gold and copper artefacts are reported from graves. The infrequency of grave goods is most noticeable at Varasti, where Comsa lists only six graves as containing grave goods from the 129 excavated burials. In this respect, and in the size of the site, Varasti may be likened most closely to Ruse. The infrequency of tools as grave goods and the types that are found (a copper awl, two flint tools) are also similar to the Ruse evidence.

Grave 55 from Varasti has no parallels at Ruse, however. Indeed, the grave is unique for the Gumelnitsa Culture in that the five gold artefacts are found with an adult female burial (Comsa 1974b).<sup>1</sup> The nature of the find may be explained by the arguments presented in Chapter 5 where gold was suggested to be strongly linked to communal, probably ritual, practices in the Gumelnitsa Culture. The finds include an anthropomorphic applique and two other appliques (i.e. objects that were worn) and are similar to the Hotnitsa gold find. The female burial may thus demonstrate the

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<sup>1</sup> The finds are only reported in a review of gold finds from this period in Bulgaria and do not indicate whether other grave goods were also included with the burial. This grave is probably not one of the six outlined by Comsa in the other publication cited.

importance of females (or female symbolism) in rituals at the level of the community. Equally, the singular nature of these finds compared to other graves at the site (and also at the north-east Bulgarian sites) may suggest that the use of gold in burials is the result of specific circumstances or events, perhaps relating to the breakdown of the continuity of domestic ritual practices (as with the abandonment of the gold finds at Hotnitsa with the abandonment of the settlement).

There are fewer known burial sites in the Dobrogea in this period and none which can be unequivocally attributed to the Varna Culture. The Hamangia cemetery at Cernavoda may include one burial from the Late Chalcolithic according to Comsa (1974a), although this is not suggested, or confirmed, by the excavator. The artefacts found in the grave are not outlined in sufficient detail to demonstrate whether the burial most closely conforms to Varna or Gumelnitsa forms. The flexed/right posture of the burial is more common in the inland region in Romania at this date, as I have described above. The Luncavitsa, and possibly the Palazu Mare, finds are from an intra-mural location, which is unknown at Bulgarian Varna Culture sites. The absence of grave goods is also atypical for the Varna Culture.<sup>2</sup>

Salcutsa-Krivodol Culture burial evidence is extremely limited in quantity. Individual finds within settlements and stray finds are most common. Only at Ostrovul Corbului is there a possible cemetery from this culture. The body postures found and the infrequency of grave goods are nonetheless similar to finds from the Gumelnitsa region.

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<sup>2</sup> The finds from Luncavitsa and Garvan in the extreme north of the region are in the area of the Stoicani-Aldeni Culture (see Chapter 2) which also includes the sites of Aldeni and Balanesti that are included in Appendix 3. There are also other burials known from the Stoicani-Aldeni group (Dragomir 1977) which are not included in this discussion.

Although brief, this review of Late Chalcolithic burial practices in the regions neighbouring north-east Bulgaria does indicate the particular concentration and unique character of the finds in this area (and the lowlands north of the Danube). Figure 7.5 extends the area even further and gives an approximate indication of the frequency of burials in the Balkans as a whole in the second half of the Fifth Millennium Cal. B.C..<sup>3</sup> At the simplest level, Figure 7.5 suggests that the Gumelnitsa/Varna burial forms are not explicable by reference to contemporary external influences. Conversely, Figure 7.5 may indicate that the burial patterns within the region can be seen in terms of influences on individual communities by their neighbours. Localized interactions in north-east Bulgaria were described in Chapter 6, where I also stressed the importance of the historical dimension to these patterns. External and internal (cumulative) processes of change are clearly not exclusive in the development of any one cemetery or regional burial pattern (again argued in the context of the Varna Lake and Targovishte groups of sites in Chapter 6). This scale of external causes of change will be returned to below, but the brief review of Bulgarian and Romanian evidence above has also suggested that at least five more general historical and regional patterns may be distinguished: for the Varna Culture; Dobrogea; inland north-east Bulgaria; Muntenia; and southern Bulgaria.

The historical aspect of the last of these is the easiest to describe because there are no certain burial finds from southern Bulgaria between the Middle Neolithic (Boev 1972) and the Late Chalcolithic (Bereketska notwithstanding). The greater number of finds from the second half of the Late Chalcolithic may be due to the abandonment of many sites at the end of this period, and consequent diminishing of the disturbance of human bones in settlement contexts by later occupation, as well as the unique factors apparent at some of the sites. The reasons why this area does not develop cemeteries in the same

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<sup>3</sup> This figure is based on a general survey of available evidence and is not necessarily comprehensive. It does suggest regional, relative differences in the known finds, however.

way as north-east Bulgaria over the whole period is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, arguments presented above relating to north-east Bulgaria, where a large majority of known sites also do not have known cemeteries, may suggest that interactions between social groups are mediated through other ritual practices, and perhaps through control of settlement space, rather than through burials, in many circumstances.

The earliest known burial finds in north-east Bulgaria coincide with the first phases of Neolithic occupation for both the inland and coastal areas. The burials at Malak Preslavets (Figures 7.1 and 7.2) are from within, and on the fringes of, a settlement of the local variant of the Early Neolithic Starcevo-Körös-Cris-Karanovo I-II Culture. The Samovodene finds are later in date - from Karanovo II-III (Ovcharovo/Samovodene Culture). In Dobrudzha, the earliest burials and settlement evidence at Durankulak are dated to the Hamangia I phase (Dimov 1992b) which is synchronous with the end of the Early Neolithic or the Middle Neolithic in the rest of Bulgaria (*ibid.*; Hasotti 1982; Price 1993). The only securely dated finds from the Late Neolithic are from Durankulak. Early Chalcolithic finds are also only represented by this site, but there are several Middle Chalcolithic cemeteries in both inland and coastal areas.

Figure 7.6 briefly summarizes the forms of burials at each of these sites, and for each period. Inland, the flexed burial position is exclusively found from the Early Neolithic onwards, but burial on the left side becomes the dominant form only in the Middle Chalcolithic. There are also other changes through time. There is no consistent orientation at Malak Preslavets, but all Middle Chalcolithic graves are oriented to the east. Over the same period grave goods become more common (Figure 7.7) and the location of burial shifts to extra-mural cemeteries.

There are also changes in form in the coastal area. At Durankulak the extended burial form (mostly for males) is consistent throughout the Hamangia Culture, as is the

orientation to the north for all burials. Flexed burials on both sides occur during the Hamangia I-III periods, and the flexed/right side only becomes dominant in the Middle Chalcolithic (Hamangia IV-V). Grave goods also change in the Middle Chalcolithic from the large *pithoi* and other earlier forms to vessels which are similar to those from the Late Chalcolithic (including pedestalled bowls, vessel supports, biconical/staged vessels, etc.: see Todorova and Dimov 1989b). Elsewhere the extended position is found for the rich female and male burials at Varna II, but the Druzha and Varna-Batareyata finds are of individuals in the flexed position.

Figure 7.6 also includes the same details for the Early and Middle Chalcolithic finds from the Boian and Hamangia Cultures in Romania. The Boian Culture finds generally correspond to the patterns from south of the Danube, with burials flexed on both sides (but the left side more common). An eastern orientation is most common. There are intra-mural and extra-mural finds in both cultures. The Romanian Hamangia sites are only partially published but the dominance of the extended position at Cernavoda corresponds to the Durankulak pattern. However, the south to south-east orientation at Cernavoda and Limanu is different from Durankulak. The multiple and partial burials at Cernavoda and Mangalia also have no direct parallels at Durankulak.

Similar patterns emerge from a consideration of the age/sex details summarized in Figure 7.7. Inland in Bulgaria there is no clear division of grave form by sex at most sites, though Todorova (1976a) describes the more common posture for male burials at Polyanitsa as the flexed/left/down position (compared to flexed/left for females). There is more consistent evidence that children are treated differently to adults in the Early and Middle Chalcolithic. At Polyanitsa, child graves are shallower than those of adults, with some child skeletons possibly laid on the surface and covered by mounds of earth (Todorova 1982). There is some suggestion in the information presented in Figure 7.7 that child burials are more likely to be laid on the right side, but the evidence is limited and does not apply to the Bulgarian sites. Child burials contain artefacts approximately

as frequently as adults, including copper and shell beads, but contain fewer different object types. Few of the graves in this area or Muntenia are sexed, however, and there is no clear information that might suggest that male burials are more common (for example). No identified male graves definitely contain grave goods. Female graves contain copper beads and rings at two sites (Polyanitsa and Farcasul de Sus).

Overall the number and variety of grave goods is low. Beads are the most widespread artefact form, but are found in small numbers except in two adult burials at Andolina. Tools are rare but may be restricted to adult graves. Pottery vessels are only found in the Middle Chalcolithic. The vessels from the Bulgarian sites (at least) are poorly-fired. Some grave good types - notably the charred grain at Glina - have no parallels in the Gumelnitsa Culture. The infrequency of the grave goods at most sites does not suggest strongly competitive strategies in the use of material symbolism in burial practices. Furthermore, the even distribution of grave goods between age and sex categories (including copper objects) may suggest that males are less strongly associated with the reproduction of the lineage. This may be extended into the Late Chalcolithic (with the evidence from Varasti, for example).

The increase in the use of materials and artefacts to distinguish the gender or age of individuals, as well as to claim/symbolize prestige, thus provides the major distinction between the southern part of north-east Bulgaria (Golyamo Delchevo, Sava-Tsonevo, Vinitza, Radingrad and the sites in the Targovishte area) and Muntenia. Ruse and Kubrat (and potentially Isperih) may be linked more closely to the Romanian pattern, with few grave goods, greater variation in orientation and posture, etc..

In the coastal area, almost the only available age/sex details are from Durankulak. Figure 7.7 presents some information, but is based on a few published graves and analyses, and a limited number of burials for which I was able to study site records. The details of grave goods found with each category is approximate, therefore. Pottery

is by far the most common artefact type with all categories.<sup>4</sup> Child burials again contain fewer artefact types, but the number of artefact types increases for all categories in the Middle Chalcolithic. Copper artefacts are found in all categories of burial (but not *trizni* or cenotaphs).<sup>5</sup> Copper bracelets and rings occur in male and female graves. Some other artefacts with a limited distribution in the Late Chalcolithic also have different distributions in the earlier period. Thus, figurines are found in male *and* female graves (Vaysov 1987; 1992b). Others have similar distributions (e.g. stone and antler axes, found with adult males, particularly in the Hamangia IV-V phases). The differentiation of gender which marks the Varna Culture burial pattern is thus apparent in the Hamangia Culture (at Durankulak) in grave form and artefacts. However, the differences between the genders become more marked in the final stages of the Hamangia Culture and also become more similar to the Late Chalcolithic pattern.

The disuse of the *trizni*, which are suggested to be the result of ritual feasting, possibly performed by the open grave, coincides with the other changes in burial practice in the Middle Chalcolithic. Cenotaphs resembling graves in their form and artefacts do not directly replace the *trizni* as such, because they are not tied to the burial of an individual, but may become a more prominent aspect of the use of the cemetery in the Middle Chalcolithic. Cenotaphs also include some artefacts, such as antler axes, vessel supports, etc., which may indicate a more overt identification of adult males with the ancestors during this period. Cenotaphs may also indicate a change in the symbolic expression of the wider social group. The *trizni* are limited in time to the immediate

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<sup>4</sup> Those graves included in Figure 7.7 which are based on details I have obtained from site records are included because they contain datable artefacts, and are not representative of the whole site, therefore. Around half of all Hamangia burials do not contain artefacts (Dimov, Boyadzhiev and Todorova 1984).

<sup>5</sup> *Trizni* are shallow pits located beside graves which contain pottery and often animal bones and have been suggested to be debris from ritual feasting. Similar finds also may be placed in the grave after the body (Dimov, Boyadzhiev and Todorova 1984). The location, function and forms (i.e. lack of resemblance to a burial) distinguish these finds from cenotaphs.

duration of the burial, and, perhaps, socially to the immediate household and/or kin of the deceased. Cenotaphs, by contrast, separate the creation and expression of the ancestors and lineage from the event of death and possibly relate to cycles of reciprocation for (and the accumulation/consumption of resources by) a larger social group.

The Varna II finds emphasize this process. The two well-preserved graves (one male, one female) contain a large number of artefacts and prefigure the rich graves of the main Varna cemetery. It may be noted that only the male grave contains gold and copper artefacts, for example. However, unlike the later burials, the female grave contains a stone flat-axe, adze and chisel. Both graves are in the extended position and thus differ from contemporary burials in the Varna area. The concentration of resources and the possible combination of male and female associated artefacts in the same burial may again suggest that larger social groups than the household are signified and recreated in these graves. The graves suggest the transfer of meanings from the individual through the use of objects rather than the body. It is likely therefore that the graves represent the same process of social aggregation later transferred primarily to cenotaphs. However, the shortage of contemporary, comparable evidence for the Varna II finds must make any detailed interpretation uncertain.

In both cultures, therefore, there is an expansion in the range of material symbolism in the Middle Chalcolithic which may indicate a greater investment of resources in strategies enacted through burial - and thus potentially a greater importance for burial in defining and renegotiating social identity. The most general comparison is the reaffirmation that the cultural division in burial practices between the coastal and inland regions (in Bulgaria, and between Dobrogea and Muntenia in Romania) exists prior to

the Late Chalcolithic. The details of body position, orientation, grave goods, etc., do differ between the regions throughout the Neolithic and Chalcolithic.<sup>6</sup>

Equally important are the basic structures of the cemetery in both cultures. Durankulak (plus Cernavoda and, probably, the other Hamangia sites) are large cemeteries, most likely for a single settlement, and probably account for most or all of the population of the site. The Durankulak cemetery continues in use during the occupation of the 'Nivata' site and then during the occupation of the 'Golemi Ostrov' tell. The inland sites (Cernica excepted) are typically small cemeteries or isolated burials in settlements and have a limited duration in time as well as containing only a small proportion of the population. This evidence suggests that the regionalization (the location and timing) of burial, and perhaps some of the same structural principles (kinship, gender, etc.), are reproduced similarly from the Neolithic through to the Late Chalcolithic in Bulgaria and southern Romania, with the greatest variation in the coastal area. The examination of long-term changes in burial forms therefore provides a general context which both limits and partially defines the impact of external change on individual sites, although the resolution of interactions between sites is necessarily coarse.

Sudden changes which determine the existence or otherwise of burials are least apparent in the Varna Culture area. The formation of cemeteries may be linked to the movement of settlements rather than to an overall change in mortuary practices. Particular features of the cemeteries, notably the extravagance of some cenotaphs at Varna, have already been argued to result from contradictions between the dispersal of lineages and household control of resources, where this process is exacerbated by, and encourages, the increased use of gold and copper (and see below).

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<sup>6</sup> Cernica is an exception to the general rule - a large early Boian cemetery predominantly with extended supine burials (Cantacuzino 1965; 1969; Cantacuzino and Morintz 1963). However, this site is outside the limits I have chosen for the context of the Late Chalcolithic burials and will not be considered in detail in this study.

Gumelnitsa burial patterns can also be included within long-term processes of change, but the appearance and disappearance of cemeteries is a more visible measure of change. There is some general evidence nonetheless that the adoption of burial was a relatively slight step from the existing pattern of occasional ritualized deposition (burial) of corpses in settlements and exposure of corpses perhaps in the same area as the cemetery. The long-term pattern of burials at Glina and Cascioarele show the adoption and then the abandonment of formal burials during the span of use of the settlements. At Radingrad and Omurtag, the earliest burials probably have fewer grave goods than at least some later burials (this pattern is repeated in its general outline in the Romanian evidence). The codes of meanings of physical artefacts in the grave are therefore simple and perhaps limited to the body alone. The chronological evidence from several sites also supports the suggestion that exposure and/or other non-burial practices continue alongside burial (and sometime combined with burial, as with the partial/mutilated finds). The adoption of burial can be regarded as a change which becomes possible within existing structural principles because of transformations of the conditions of action in other fields of discourse.

Simple solutions to the precise timing of the first burial at the Gumelnitsa cemeteries are impossible, because they rely in large part on other aspects of behaviour, which it has not been possible to consider in depth in this thesis (and which may not always be adequately described in other accounts). Nonetheless it may be possible to relate the cemeteries in the Targovishte region to pressures on households and lineages where architecture and control of settlement space becomes a central symbolic element in interaction, for example. Ovcharovo and Polyanitsa are the principal sites at which this process may be identified (especially during the Middle Chalcolithic - the date of the cemeteries at these sites), but echoes can be seen in the contemporary and later sites nearby - i.e. Targovishte, Lilyak, and possibly Omurtag - which may also adopt the symbolic and structural principles of burial from the earlier sites. At one level the

cemeteries at these sites may symbolize the unity of the community where this is threatened, including by the symbolic identification with a single lineage.

At the later sites to the east of Targovishte (Vinitza, Sava-Tsonevo and Golyamo Delchevo) there may also be a significant contradiction between the communal and the household levels of expression which also becomes manifest in burial practices. Exchanges of metal objects (and contacts with the Varna region and other neighbouring sites) may be one element of this interaction but do not alone define the contradictions or cause them to arise (also, see below).

Ruse and Kubrat belong to the group of sites near the Danube which have a continuous tradition of burial (overall) from the Early Neolithic. However, settlement and other evidence from these sites does not provide any clear indication of why burial is only adopted in the Late Chalcolithic (although earlier horizons are only fractionally excavated at Kubrat). Radingrad falls between the three areas defined, having one early (Middle Chalcolithic) burial, but also possible evidence for competition (despite incomplete published details). Each of these sites may be related to the elements of change I have described above, where local sequences of interactions determine the frequency with which burial is performed, and where regional patterns are apparent in the greater importance of burial towards the end of the Late Chalcolithic.

The patterns of social change identified in the above discussion are a further aspect of social structure apparent in burial evidence, and a further step towards an understanding of social organization, through the interrelationship between fields of discourse, long and short-term processes and local and regional interactions. From these results and the greater detail of previous chapters it is possible to suggest a number of consequences of, and conclusions to, this study.

### 3. CONSEQUENCES AND CONCLUSIONS

The following arguments are intended as a commentary on the discussions so far as well as presenting an outline of the ways in which I believe further studies of the data could usefully go. I do not intend to summarize the conclusions of previous chapters to produce a final model of social organization. Indeed, to do so would be contrary to the reasoning I have pursued throughout the study. Nonetheless, some additional, overall, conclusions are suggested. These are presented according to which chapters they most closely relate.

#### A) Chapter 1

There were two main strands to Chapter 1: to knock down previous explanations of the burial evidence (and social organization) of the Late Chalcolithic in north-east Bulgaria which I feel to be flawed; and to build up a new theoretical model with which to generate more satisfactory interpretations of these. Clearly, I argue, Chapters 2 to 7 have achieved the latter.

However, the consequences of the first strand undoubtedly extend beyond the mortuary sphere alone. I have given examples of how in recent years Late Chalcolithic society has been re-written as a 'proto-state', or as 'proto-urban', or, more commonly, as a chiefdom. I have argued that such forms of social complexity are inaccurate for Varna or any site in the region at this time. There is no evidence (Chapter 6 and below) that significant political or economic authority lies in the hands on one individual or group who has legally sanctioned and permanent control over it, or even that there are fixed status positions with the character of structural properties.

Furthermore, Varna cannot be used to *explain* social organization in other areas of south-east Europe. I have demonstrated (contra to most models of burial practices using

the same data) that the Gumelnitsa cemeteries differ in their forms and meanings from the Varna Culture sites in many important respects and must be seen in terms of different structural principles and social institutions. There are undoubtedly contacts and influences between the two cultures (some of which have been discussed), which allow north-east Bulgaria to be regarded as a single region for many purposes, but not to the extent that there is an integrated political center (e.g. tribal alliance) or economic 'core' at Varna. I have demonstrated additionally that there are differences at regional and site levels within both cultures. These point to specific historical and social conditions, and to processes of change internal to the societies using cemeteries, that previously have not been recognized or adequately explored. Many of the models that have been based on the finds from Varna, in particular, have included an overall increase in social complexity during the Late Chalcolithic and a supposedly dramatic collapse of this society at the end of the period. This study suggests that neither the beginning nor the end of the Late Chalcolithic should be seen in these terms.

With regard to the second main strand of the chapter, structuration/habitus has been shown to be a very powerful interpretative framework for archaeological studies (if not for the first time certainly for the first time applied to a sizeable body of data collected in the very different east European tradition of research) - when applied appropriately.<sup>7</sup> There are of course other valid means and motives for explanations but structuration provides a flexible, dynamic and simple way of approaching both social organization and the peculiarities of individuals' actions in the past. Every conclusion generated in this thesis that is not purely factual or descriptive conforms to the framework summarized (and simplified) in Figure 1.8.

A consequence of adopting structuration as a description of behaviour is that complete explanation is impossible and that interpretations based on a single cause (dominant

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<sup>7</sup> I have given examples where I consider structuration to have been incompletely or incorrectly used in Chapter 1.

motive/meaning) are almost certain to be unsatisfactory. Neither the precise circumstances in which actions occur nor the decisions that lead to them are reconstructible - even ignoring the hermeneutic dimension of archaeological study. This is why I have accepted Barrett's exhortation (1988) to study how it was possible to act rather than to impose definite explanations as correct. The model of structures (including code and type) as likely to be overlapping between and within fields of discourse further broadens the range of possible explanations for an action or a set of actions such as burial. I argue that where social organization is a/the principle goal of archaeological study (even if only nominally) then this multi-dimensional approach to interpretation is most satisfactory. I have proposed explanations for the same data taking variously as starting points structures, symbols, strategies and actions. These may stand alone to some extent, or be emphasized in the interests of specific interpretations, as long as their place within the whole is recognized. Contradictions occurring through the articulation of structures and/or through individual actions are thus integral to any interpretation.

Empirical data, which help to define forms, actions, sequences and relationships (including structures), provide a control by which to achieve coherence in interpretations through these dimensions and across contradictions: that is, those internal to the society but also, potentially, between the past and the present. It is clear that structuration/habitus is not sufficient for archaeological purposes in itself. Structuration is not concerned with a key element of archaeological research - material culture - nor, indeed, with investigating past societies. However, ideas of how material culture contains meanings, and how this is used, do, I believe, complement the structuration model's account of behaviour. This applies in particular to models I have described that derive from linguistic studies. I have also used discussions about ritual which incorporate the discursive interrelationship of type and token and help to further define the particular context of the archaeological data studied. The combination of a structuration derived understanding of behaviour, code model of symbolism and

Lewis's (1980) insights into ritual (where appropriate) could, I suggest, be productively applied to other bodies of archaeological evidence.

### B) *Chapters 2 and 3*

Conclusions to Chapters 2 and 3 are largely factual and require little further comment here. Nonetheless, it is possible to note that the examination of the data in both chapters is considerably more detailed in breadth and depth than has been attempted in any other survey to date. Much of the evidence from Durankulak, Sava-Tsonevo and Omurtag, for example, has not been included before in either general or detailed chronological study. Equally, the spatial organization of the grave, age/sex variation, the internal chronology of the burial ritual and the interrelationship between formal components of the grave are all described and examined systematically for the first time for all of the cemeteries. The arguments can provide a starting point for future studies, therefore, hopefully based on new or fuller information than is presently available.

My preferred methodology throughout has been to present data in a straightforward manner (as counts, etc.) which both makes clear general patterning and exposes the nature and range of variation in the evidence - with both as sources for interpretations. I have also used a number of more sophisticated (e.g. multivariate) statistical techniques. This study is not the correct place for general statements about the usefulness of such techniques in archaeology although they have proved to be of limited use here. Some weaknesses, such as the unsuitability of correspondence analysis when used with data in which many variables have low counts, may be commonly found in other studies when applied to burial (or other) evidence, however. It is also worth repeating some comments in light of the theoretical summary above. In particular, the argument that meanings and strategies operate on several levels within a burial (ritual) requires that extreme caution must be used in interpreting the results of cluster analyses (for example) in order to reduce many variables to one social

dimension (such as wealth or prestige). Further, I suggest, groups (clusters) derived from measures such as the Group Average statistic, that impose clusters on the data, must be interpreted sceptically without supporting evidence if taken as representing social or symbolic structures in the past.

### C) *Chapters 4 and 5*

Chapters 4 and 5 are based on the results of the analyses in Chapters 2 and 3 (and bearing in mind the comments above). They provide the core interpretations of this thesis and are again essentially self-contained in their conclusions. Where it has been possible to suggest specific, detailed interpretations I have done so. Where the evidence is incomplete or inadequate, interpretations have been restricted accordingly. It is not possible to summarize here all of the conclusions reached in these chapters. However, I regard the following as central to a reading of this thesis.

Chapter 4 identifies and explores structures reproduced in burial practices. These include the culture, community, kinship group, ancestors, age and gender. Structures in material culture, relating to these, patterns of association between artefacts and so on are also the subject of particular conclusions. As described above, the structures are strongly interwoven. Thus, the existence of the ancestral state is supported by evidence for, and has consequences for the reproduction of: kinship; uniformity in the structure of the mortuary ritual; variations in the treatment of the dead according to age and gender; the presence of cenotaphs; partiality/mutilation, and so on. Similarly, structures of meaning for (e.g.) shell artefacts are dependent on form and function, position in the grave, age and gender of the deceased, etc.. These interrelationships - the coherence within the data - have been used in addition to show that other structures (whether specified or by implication) do not exist in mortuary practices.

Chapter 5 considers the grave in terms of the strategies employed in its creation, through the identified structures and as they apply to the individual person, artefacts and circumstances pertaining. As I have repeatedly stressed, power, because it is power to, and therefore strategy, is dispersed through these dimensions. Thus not all burials seek to maximise the same resource (e.g. mutilated burials which deny the personality of the deceased and typically contain few or no grave goods).

Chapter 5 also places time at the centre of interpretation. I have argued that the differing tempos of the identified structures are central to the interpretation of individual burials, including at the widest level the persistence of non-burial mortuary practices. Of fundamental importance too is acknowledgement within the interpretations of the change of meanings and strategies through time. Several of the cemeteries show instances where certain resources become more important strategically during the use-life of the cemetery.

The extent to which this is the case varies in part according to culture. An unequivocal conclusion of this study is that coastal and inland mortuary practices differ in their structures, strategies and tempos. Cultures are, by the definition I have presented, not reducible to a single field of discourse but Varna clearly cannot be used to explain Gumelnitsa Culture burials, and vice versa. Broad regional patterns have also been established within the Gumelnitsa area, between a south-eastern group with conformity in burial form but greater variety of grave goods (Vinitsa, Golyamo Delchevo, Sava-Tsonevo) and a north-western group with diversity in body form and few grave goods (Ruse, Kubrat, Omurtag). This has been linked in this chapter to wider patterns in the eastern Balkans.

Interaction between communities has been discussed but is hampered by the limited evidence for production and exchange. I suggest that research in this area would be a particularly fruitful avenue for future studies. The community itself is apparent but is

rarely the dominant level at which strategies are played out. Exceptions, I have suggested, are mainly from the Gumelnitsa Culture. The adoption regionally of burial as a mortuary ritual at certain periods and the placement of the cemetery in the landscape may be indicative of a desire to assert the community in relation to others. Division of cemeteries by gender (especially at Targovishte) may also suppose that the community imposes structure on burial practices, in this case perhaps closely identified with lineage membership. The community is at least implicit in most other circumstances. Consistencies of form within cemeteries (and differences from practices at other cemeteries), and the continued use of a single location for burials indicate the persistence of ideas over long periods, in some cases generations.

Cemeteries in both cultures are not divided into family groups (comments above notwithstanding). Nonetheless, I have argued that small kinship groups of one form or another are the dominant level of structure at which strategies are conceived and deployed in both cultures. The variations according to gender and age and other variations in the physical disposal of the body (mutilation, etc.), cenotaphs and the use of grave goods to emulate and or compete are all persuasive - to my mind - indicators that a group between the individual and community plays a significant part in the generation of most or all physical elements, and values, of the grave. Added to this is the strong evidence for the extension of these groups back in time (via the ancestors).

Although similar in outline, the differences in the (re)production of this basic social group provide the most significant separation of the Varna and Gumelnitsa Cultures. In the Varna Culture, I have suggested, the kinship group is smaller - perhaps only the immediate household of the deceased. The tempo of burial is fast and grave goods play an expressive role in the display of meanings before and during the burial. In the Gumelnitsa Culture, by contrast, the ancestral group is symbolically more distant, the wider kinship group maintained by a representation of continuity over the longer term

(that is, with the settlement evidence more directly tied to one place and therefore the community).

The individual is thus secondary, in terms of the dominant meanings of mortuary practices, to the role of the corpse as ancestor. Gender and age structures may be manipulated, the body de-personalized by excarnation or dismemberment, and so on. Grave goods and grave forms are usually highly standardized. Evidence that almost all pottery, and (perhaps) a majority of all grave goods are unused further supports the argument that graves are not a palimpsest of the personality and power of the deceased. Artefacts which possibly represent a guide to resources controlled or claimed may be standardized (as with sewing kits) or alternately may be represented simply by a form which may be in several materials, used/usable or otherwise, miniaturized, etc. (as axes). Figurines are one possible exception. Objects such as ornaments are subject to a detailed code of location, material and form which is not necessarily matched in life, as discussions in Chapter 6 have shown.

There are differences between and within the two cultures. I have proposed that male graves are more powerfully and directly associated with the ancestral role. This is particularly true of Varna Culture cemeteries and may be less strongly emphasized in mortuary practices at some Gumelnitsa cemeteries (Ruse, Kubrat, Targovishte). Varna burials also have more grave goods, and more variety in artefacts, and therefore potentially more layers of meaning and strategy between artefact, the household and the community (with evidence that this is exploited given in the detailed arguments of Chapter 5).

Gender and age are thus fundamental structures in the determination of meanings and strategies. Treatment of the corpse varies according to the biological sex which is, unsurprisingly, part of the culturally determined definition of genders, therefore. Variations and inversions of gender structures do occur and could indicate the existence

of more than two gender roles in the mortuary field of discourse and/or others. However, I have argued that the removal of gender is a component in many partial burials and that the inversion of forms in the Varna Culture is primarily related to the tempo of reproduction of the social group.

Age has a particular and limited impact on burial practices in that child burials are clearly distinguished from adults. This applies to both cultures, though the proportion of child to adult burials and grave forms vary between sites. Adults - over 16 or so - are not distinguished in their grave goods or forms by age. The adult in life, and the qualities and resources s/he possesses, are secondary to the role (ancestor) in burial, as I have shown. This applies to the child as well, but children are less powerful in the reciprocal relationships both with the ancestors and with other individuals and kinship groups.

I have less to say here about material culture. Although specific conclusions have been advanced they typically have only limited wider consequences that need to be expanded upon here. The code of material culture use and meaning in funerary customs has connections and expressions that are often unique to this field of discourse. Pottery forms resemble those probably used for food storage and serving, though the vessels themselves were manufactured for burials. Tools are normally of unspecific types functionally (whether used or not). Ornament types may differ from, or be only a subset of, those found in settlements. Materials also hold values in burials, whether by being interchangeable or exclusive, that probably develop over time in the ritual context of burial. The link made between gold and limited but powerful contexts is probably the most important general conclusion, therefore, if only because the metal has been such a significant element in many previous accounts of the data. Nonetheless, my argument here is not that gold creates radically new ritual forms, strategies and values, but that it becomes, in some circumstances, the dominant way of expressing and exploring existing structures.

Competition using economic resources occurs and may become more important at certain times during the life-span of several of the cemeteries, as I have shown. However, neither the allocative resources deployed nor wealth are the dominant motive in the performance of the mortuary rituals. Even in the Varna Culture, where a case can be made for regarding burial as the central occasion for the definition and renegotiation of social groups, there is no evidence that the ability to deploy certain resources is the determining or dominant component of strategic decisions and meanings.

#### D) *Chapters 6 and 7*

The social context of mortuary rituals is considered in Chapters 6 and 7 within the constraints posed by the limited evidence and the space available: other than, for example, ethnicity and typology, there are very few other topics (and therefore presentation and discussion of evidence) than those I have considered. Although in neither chapter could I hope to discuss social structures and strategies in other fields of discourse (or periods) in as much depth as I have done for the main area of study, I contend that the evidence considered is consistent with the conclusions about social organization that I reached in earlier chapters.

Thus, settlement evidence strongly supports the existence within the community of a number of equivalent households and (or) kinship groups. Architecture is essentially similar at all of the sites considered. Renewal of settlements and houses, in some cases, over long periods of time, and despite frequent hiatuses at some settlements, can be taken as further evidence for the persistence of kinship groups and the importance of the ancestors in their formation and articulation. The monumentality of tells and the presence of fortifications suggest that the community is itself recognized and maintained. This varies culturally and regionally, however. In the Varna Culture, there is less continuity in settlement form and location, especially in the Varna Lakes area

(and is a factor in creating the peculiar circumstances at Varna itself, as argued above - and see below). In the Gumelnitsa Culture, there is evidence for regional patterns of interaction in settlements as well as in cemeteries. In the Targovishte area, where the most ordered settlement layouts occur, grave forms are also highly standardized (e.g. at Radingrad, Targovishte and, from the Middle Chalcolithic, Polyanitsa). Ruse and Kubrat, do not appear to have the same rigid internal organization of settlement space (which itself allows the room for intra-mural burials). I have suggested that the adoption of burial as a mortuary practice in the inland zone may strategically reinforce fundamental social structures, possibly where a key resource, such as land, is contested.

Several settlements show variations in architecture between houses or in the tasks carried out within them. Workshops, for example, may indicate some specialization of production within the community. Both may convey prestige between household/lineage groups and between individuals. However, despite the longevity of some of the buildings (e.g. two-storey buildings rebuilt over more than one settlement horizon) I do not believe that these provide any evidence for permanent statuses or ranks.

Domestic ritual practices provide a further example of the social life I suggest is emerging. There are indications that rituals are practised both communally, in shrines, and at the household level. Figurines are very commonly found in the remains of houses. Some altars in houses suggest these ritual practices may have had a more prominent expression in some households at some times but not that there was any permanent association between the practice of the ritual and any kinship group or individual. Ritual practices, I suggest, are another example, like architecture and burial of a form of interaction that changes (evolves) over the life-span of the settlement.

Figurines are also the most visible evidence for the recognition of gender outside burials. Unfortunately there is very little evidence yet available to suggest if/what other activities, resources and strategies might be gender related. Identification of female representations in the majority of figurines, and the domestic contexts in which they are found - with all the additional symbolic associations this implies - may be tentatively advanced as a possibility.

Artefacts, whether divided by form or material, or both, are uniformly distributed through settlement horizons where these have been extensively excavated, despite the uncertainty of preservation. This applies to exotic as well as local materials. Consequently I think there is again no case for regarding exchange of such resources as the dominant mechanism by which authoritative resources are contested. Collective finds and occasional ritual deposits of artefacts other than in burials suppose structured but circumstantially employed display and consumption. Exchange is again a medium for strategies across several levels of structure and according to circumstance.

Further exploration of the ways in which actions and structures interact and inform each other for exchange, or any of the other types of evidence I have considered, would need more space and information than I have available. As a final level of conclusions, therefore, I offer the following sketch of the processes leading to and following from the burial practices in the Late Chalcolithic of north-east Bulgaria. Although speculative in parts I offer it as a starting point for a wider re-examination of social organization in the later Neolithic of the eastern Balkans.

Both the Gumelnitsa and the Varna Culture burial patterns derive from traditions reaching back to the earliest farming communities in each area (and possibly even earlier: Price 1993). Inland, this consists of relatively stable communities, linked by broad kinship networks and focussed around a settlement location (regardless of how long or continuously this was actually occupied). In the coastal cultures, kinship

groups are dispersed beyond the household level and settlements typically short-lived except in some favourable locations.

From a long-term perspective, the major cultural change occurring during the Chalcolithic in north-east Bulgaria may be the transformation of the Sava to the Varna Culture. The area of the coastal culture contracts during this period (compare Figure 7.8 showing the approximate boundary of the Polyanitsa IV and Sava IV Cultures in the Provadiyska and Kamchia Rivers region with the map of the Late Chalcolithic in the same area - Figure 6.9).<sup>8</sup> This is part of a wider process. The Hamangia Culture is incorporated similarly into the Gumelnitsa Culture in Dobrogea, and eventually into the Cernavoda I Culture which replaces both Gumelnitsa and Varna Cultures in the Transitional Period. Galbenu (1966) argues that the Boian Culture expands into Dobrogea in the earlier Chalcolithic and initially exists alongside the Hamangia Culture with little mixing of assemblages, and Comsa (1972b) that the Gumelnitsa Culture assimilates most of the Hamangia population, leaving a remnant Varna Culture area.<sup>9</sup> A particular consequence of the overall process is that in the Varna Lakes area, populations become more concentrated around Varna Lake - there is little evidence for settlement even on the plateaux before the Middle Chalcolithic - resulting in longer lived settlements, contradictions between kinship structures and other forms of social interaction and, ultimately, the extravagant cenotaphs at Varna by the processes I have outlined.

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<sup>8</sup> This figure is based on the dominant cultural assemblages of excavated sites. Other finds which cannot be precisely dated or attributed to either culture are included as small dots.

<sup>9</sup> Simon (1983) disputes the existence of a Varna Culture in Dobrogea, but his argument is based on the use of material from Golyamo Delchevo to represent the coastal culture, rather than seeing this as a Gumelnitsa site with some coastal imports as I have suggested. It is true nonetheless that there are no well-published sites which have a clearly (predominantly) Varna Culture material assemblage in Romania. The process of integration of the coastal and inland populations may begin earlier in Romania.

An increase in both the diversity and specificity of meanings expressed by grave goods and other material elements in burials is also a characteristic of the long-term changes occurring in the inland area. Certainly, the (unintended) consequences of the adoption of burial include the potential for (relatively) greater competition through economic and ritual display, shifts in the meaning of material culture in other areas of practice and a transformation of the role of the ancestors (with a closer identification of the individual and males generally with the ancestors). An increase in the number of copper artefacts, especially axes, goes hand in hand with these changes. So do probable changes in agricultural practices, notably the introduction of the ard, which could be also a factor in the expansion of the Gumelnitsa Culture. Contacts between the two regions include the exchange of gold (?) and shells brought into the coastal sites via long established coastal routes among items moving inland and copper from the Sredna Gora travelling in the opposite direction. Knowledge of the rich coastal burial tradition, but more importantly, perhaps, interactions between Gumelnitsa communities along the rivers that may well carry this exchange, possibly contributes to the relatively artefact-rich cemeteries in the Longoz region (Sava-Tsonevo, Golyamo Delchevo, Vinitsa). Wider patterns of interaction, reaching into southern Romania, may also help to spread the use of burial in the Gumelnitsa Culture - i.e. help to create the circumstances/knowledgeability in which burial may become desirable.

Overall, however, the basic forms of social structure at the end of the Late Chalcolithic are, I argue, broadly the same as those at the beginning of the period (a conclusion supported by the evidence from the burials studied here). The Transitional period is thus the result of gradual change of the Gumelnitsa Culture rather than a sudden collapse. Indeed, I suggest Cernavoda I may be a result of the merger of the Varna (Hamangia) and Gumelnitsa derived populations in Dobrogea, undermining the

kinship/ancestral/community structures of both and taking with it the ancestral tell, figurines, decorated pottery, and, of course, cemeteries.<sup>10</sup>

Sherratt has identified further elements in the social changes occurring in the Transitional Period which may be a part of these general patterns, including the greater use of 'secondary products' (1981) and the re-alignment of contacts and exchange networks towards the North Pontic Steppes (1983). There are also potentially environmental shifts which may affect specific areas within the region I have studied, such as sea-level rise at the Varna Lakes (Ivanov 1989b). The development of Bronze Age cultures from these origins goes beyond the boundaries of this study.

There is a growing acceptance in archaeology, I believe, that absolute, complete, explanations of the past are impossible - and undesirable.<sup>11</sup> I propose that the way forward in the investigation of social processes and change in the Transitional Period, the Late Chalcolithic, and the wider Balkan context, therefore, is through the adoption of both the results of this study and the theoretical approaches I have applied to the burial evidence. That is: by starting with a simple but powerful means of understanding of how people communicate, and, by detailed referral to data, building up new interpretations of actions, the circumstances (including structures) in which they occur, and the immediate and long-term changes they create - for any scale from the single object to the culture. The result is an account that is flexible, multi-textured and capable of accommodating multiple perspectives in both the past and the present, and is, fundamentally, dynamic.

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<sup>10</sup> As more evidence becomes available from the Pevets region the support for a gradual change in pottery forms becomes more compelling. Added to this are the burials at Reka Devnya, and Durankulak (and perhaps elsewhere: Appendix 3) and evidence for the persistence of Gumelnitsa forms in parts of Romania (Bratesti Group: Tudor 1978).

<sup>11</sup> This applies to accounts derived from processual, post-processual and other standpoints (apart from e.g. Barrett 1994, Renfrew 1985 and other sources mentioned in Chapter 1 see also: Thomas 1993; Thomas and Tilley 1993).

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A. Arheologia, Sofia.

AOR Arheologicheski Otkritia i Razkopki (na Natsionalna Arheologicheska Konferentsia). †

BAR British Archaeological Reports British Series, Oxford.

BAR (S). British Archaeological Reports International Series (Supplementary), Oxford.

*Dacia n.s.* Dacia new series, Bucharest.

*Dacia o.s.* Dacia old series, Bucharest.

GNM. Godishnik na Narodnia Muzey, Sofia.

IBAD. Izvestia na Balgarskoto Arheologicheskoto Druzhestvo, Sofia.

IBAI. Izvestia na Balgarskia Arheologicheski Institut, Sofia.

INMV. Izvestia na Narodnia Muzey Varna, Varna.

IVAD. Izvestia na Varnenskoto Arheologicheskoto Druzhestvo, Varna.

JIES. Journal of Indo-European Studies.

*Materiale.* Materiale si Cercetari Arheologice, Bucharest.

Razk. i Prouch. Razkopki i Prouchvania. Balgarska Akademia na Naukite, Sofia.

SCIV. Studii si Cercetari de Istorie Veche, Bucharest.

Sov. A. Sovetskaya Arheologia.

*Stud. Prae.* Studia Praehistorica. Balgarska Akademia na Naukite, Sofia.

† The publisher varies according to the location of the conference. This is given in parentheses.

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