

Elite Place-making and Social Interaction in the Late Cypriot Bronze Age

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Abstract

Monumental buildings constructed with ashlar masonry have long been recognized as a hallmark of the Late Cypriot (LC) period (ca. 1650-1100 BC). Yet little attention has been paid to the vital role they played in the (trans)formation of social structures and maintenance of elite power. I examine how these buildings were designed to facilitate social interactions, including ritual activities centred on feasting, through which social statuses, roles and identities were negotiated and reproduced. This was achieved through the purposeful arrangement of rooms to control access and encourage or discourage particular types of interaction, as well as the strategic placement of symbolically-charged architectural elements such as ashlar masonry as a means of reifying social boundaries. Following from that, I suggest that these monumental buildings were socially-constructed and meaningful places of action and interaction and thus a central component of LC elite identities and the strategy of place-making through which they derived and maintained their power.

Keywords: *monumental architecture, Late Bronze Age, Cyprus, place, social interaction, identity, memory, feasting.*

Introduction

The transition to the Late Bronze Age (LBA or Late Cypriot period) on Cyprus witnessed the appearance of widespread and institutionalized expressions of social inequality, sweeping away the ‘egalitarian ethos’ that characterized much of the island throughout the Early and Middle Bronze Ages (Peltenburg 1996: 27). Emergent elites, taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by agricultural intensification and the growing demand for Cypriot copper, increasingly controlled the island’s political, social, ideological and economic activities. It was then that Cyprus began its rapid development into a socially stratified, state-level society with extensive international contacts. At the same time, this period also saw fundamental changes to the

island’s built environment, including the first urban centres, settlement hierarchies and new forms of domestic and mortuary architecture. Elites made an indelible impression on the Late Cypriot (LC) landscape through the construction of monumental buildings, beginning with the so-called forts of the Middle Cypriot (MC) III—LC I periods and culminating with the large, court-centred administrative buildings of the LC II—III periods, built partially or wholly of ashlar (cut stone) masonry.

While the appearance of monumental architecture has long been recognized as a hallmark of the LBA on Cyprus, there have been very few attempts to understand the vital social role of these buildings. Until recently, most studies of LC architecture, informed by art-historical

and culture-historical paradigms, have been descriptive rather than explanatory, focusing on issues such as building function, stylistic classification and change, chronology, or the technical aspects of construction. Work in the 1990s, influenced by the processual paradigm, viewed the new LBA built environments as reflecting the emergence and development of socio-political complexity (e.g. Keswani 1993; Knapp 1993; 1994). Such approaches emphasize the function of settlements and their constituent buildings within systems of production and exchange, classifying them according to their position within a politico-economic hierarchy (Keswani 1993; Knapp 1997: 46-63; Negbi 2005; Peltenburg 1996). Acknowledging the failure of these approaches to address the social aspects of the buildings themselves, some scholars have taken a more agent-centred approach that recognizes the recursive relationship between architecture and social reproduction and the significant role that buildings played in the creation and maintenance of LC social identities (e.g. Bolger 2003; Knapp 2008: 206-49, 2009; Manning 1998). Although the latter studies highlight the importance of architecture as meaningful construction and space as a fundamental component of social organization, they do not address the dynamic role of particular buildings and their constituent spaces as contexts for specific interactions through which social reproduction and transformation occur. Knapp (2008: 239-49) certainly goes furthest in this direction, acknowledging how the performances and experiences that occurred in monumental structures helped LC people to make sense of their world.

In this study, I argue that we need to see LC monumental buildings as part of a process of elite *place-making*: the creation of meaningful contexts for social interaction through a combination of architectural design and ritual performance. Rather than merely symbolizing elite power, monumental construction played an active role in the constitution and reproduction

of asymmetrical relations of power and authority, facilitating the profound changes to Cypriot society that took place during this transformative period. In what follows I briefly outline an approach to LC architecture that attempts to repopulate these monumental buildings by integrating access analysis with an examination of how meanings were encoded in elements of the built environment and perceived by those who used the buildings as either inhabitants or visitors. Based on the application of this approach to a number of LC buildings, I then discuss how certain places were created through the purposeful arrangement of rooms to control access and promote or discourage particular types of interaction. I also consider the intentional placement of symbolically-charged architectural elements—such as ashlar masonry—as a means of reifying social boundaries. Finally, I address how these places might have been used as contexts for social occasions that centred on ritual activities such as feasting, which brought together building inhabitants and visitors, and created opportunities for the display and negotiation of social statuses, roles and identities.

Built Environments as Places

To see the design, construction and use of LC monumental buildings as an act of place-making implies a distinction between space and place, something now widely accepted in spatial studies across the social sciences (Feld and Basso 1996; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003; Preucel and Meskell 2004; Tuan 1977). While space generally refers to the static, physical setting in which everything occurs, *place* is the dynamic, socially-constructed and meaningful context of human action and experience. It is lived space, imbued with identity, memory and other intangible elements that make it an integral part of the social lives of those who interact with it. I would argue that seeing buildings as places is also to understand them both as objects of human agency and as agents in their own right. They are at once

products and facilitators of social life. This is not to diminish the uniqueness of human agency, but rather to emphasize the profound effects of our engagement with the material world.

Current approaches to the study of relationships between humans and things recognize the human body as a material object, and acknowledge the profound affects that objects have on people, highlighting the need to rethink traditional human subject–material object frameworks (Gosden 2001). While it is obvious that objects lack the intention of human actors, their agency lies rather in their ability to affect human behaviour and interaction. As Gosden (2001: 164–65) argues, ‘objects can be seen to be active, but they are active in the manner of objects not the manner of people...[T]he active nature of objects lies in their ability to elicit and channel particular sensory responses on the part of people’. As part of the material world, this is equally true of places. Research in environmental psychology demonstrates the importance of the affective relationships that people develop with places to their individual well-being and social life (Altman and Low 1992; Marcus 1995). Phenomenological approaches to built environments and landscapes (e.g. Tilley’s 2004 study of stone monuments in prehistoric European landscapes) remove the division between subject and object altogether. Because they have real material and ideological effects on persons and social relations, ‘... things and places can be regarded as much subjects as objects of identity’ (Tilley 2004: 222). In a similar vein, Basso’s (1996) study of people-place relations among the Western Apache introduces the concept of inter-animation, suggesting that as places animate the ideas or feelings of the people who interact with them, these same ideas and feelings animate the places on which people have focused attention. Kirk (2006) successfully uses the concept of inter-animation to examine the interrelationship between early Neolithic personhood and monuments in southern Britain.

The size, durability and public setting in which they are typically found amplify the potential effects that monumental places have on the people who produce, inhabit or visit them. That the consequences of human engagement with such places are both social and physical is seen in Foucault’s (1977) seminal study of the development of penal institutions. He demonstrates how these buildings serve as instruments of power through designs intended to discipline the body by the surveillance and control of its movement through space. Barrett (1994) suggests that the space within monumental architecture and the landscape surrounding it must be understood in terms of the patterns of movement that it imposes—what might be seen as a ‘monumental choreography’ (Richards 1993). According to Hodder (1996: 58), ‘[v]alues and meanings become embedded in the movements of bodies through entrances, down processional avenues, and in staged settings’. It remains to consider how these aspects of place manifested themselves in the monumental buildings of LBA Cyprus, and how we can detect them through the analysis of their material remains.

Analyzing Places: An Integrative Approach

I take an approach to investigating built environments that is ‘integrative’ (see Lawrence and Low 1990: 490–91), combining theory and analytical methods from a variety of disciplines including sociology, human geography, architecture, planning and environmental psychology. This integrative approach is informed on a theoretical level by the work of Giddens (1979; 1984) and others (e.g. Bourdieu 1973; 1977; Lefebvre 1991 [1974]), all of whom have demonstrated the recursive relationship between human (inter) action (‘agency’) and social structure. Giddens’s (1984) theory of structuration is particularly relevant in that it retains the linkage between routine actions and social reproduction developed by Bourdieu but, unlike the unconscious operation of Bourdieu’s *habitus*, it assumes

instead that human beings are knowledgeable agents, cognizant of the conditions and consequences of their actions. Built environments are more than mere settings for these actions, playing an integral role in the structuring and routinizing of human interactions through which the structural properties of social systems are produced, reproduced and transformed.

I have discussed the analytical methods of the integrative approach elsewhere in great detail (Fisher 2007a; 2009) and so provide only a brief summary here. I take Goffman's (1963: 18-24) important work on social interaction as a point of departure—particularly his concept of *co-presence*, a state in which individuals are mutually aware of one another's presence (see also Giddens 1984: 67-72). According to Goffman, social occasions tend to involve a plurality of co-present individuals, are usually specifically bounded in time and space, and are often facilitated by the use of fixed equipment or furnishings. They range from routine aspects of daily life, such as the preparation and consumption of food, to events such as funerals that are more irregular, formal and delineated in terms of their spatial and temporal boundaries and the composition of their participants. Given the importance of occasions to social life (Giddens 1984), a primary aim of the integrative approach is to determine the places in which particular types of social occasions likely occurred and provide insight into the specific nature of those interactions.

Provided that the locations of a building's walls and doorways are known, or can be reasonably reconstructed, access analysis provides a useful starting point in determining likely contexts for social occasions. Derived from space syntax (Hillier and Hanson 1984), access analysis provides insight into likely patterns of movement and interaction by indicating how accessible a building's constituent spaces are from one another. This involves translating a building's ground plan into an access graph in which each room is represented by a circle, with direct access between

rooms represented as lines linking the circles together (Figure 1). It is then possible to quantify three syntactic properties that can be combined to isolate possible contexts for social occasions: *depth* is a measure of the number of spaces one must pass through to arrive at a particular space from the outside of the building; *integration* measures how accessible each space is from every other space in the building; and *control* is a measure of the degree of access that a space exercises over its immediate neighbours. This tells only part of the story, however, as access analysis fails to take into account important architectural and symbolic properties of a built environment mobilized by social actors in the creation and use of places for social interaction.

The built environment structures interaction not only through the physical layout of buildings, but also through the communication of meanings to a building's users. Rapoport's (1988; 1990) non-verbal communication approach provides a means of examining this process and is based on the premise that built forms are created in such a way as to provide cues to users that inform them of proper or expected behaviour (Figure 2). Such cues are an integral part of contexts for interaction, letting people know which type of context they are in and how they are expected to behave. Rapoport (1990: 87-101) categorizes elements of the built environment through which meanings are encoded and nonverbally communicated into three types: *fixed-feature* elements are relatively permanent architectural components integral to a building's structure, including walls, floors and ceilings; *semi-fixed-feature* elements are easily changeable and include various furnishings and portable artifacts; and *non-fixed-feature* elements include the physical and verbal expressions of the building's occupants and users. Redundancy in encoded meanings across these various elements is important to reducing ambiguity and thereby increasing the likelihood of successful interpretation and appropriate action. While each of these elements plays a role in the creation of place, it

is typically the fixed- and semi-fixed-feature elements that are directly attested in the archaeological record.

For each space in the buildings discussed in this study, I recorded properties of fixed- and semi-fixed-feature elements relevant to determining

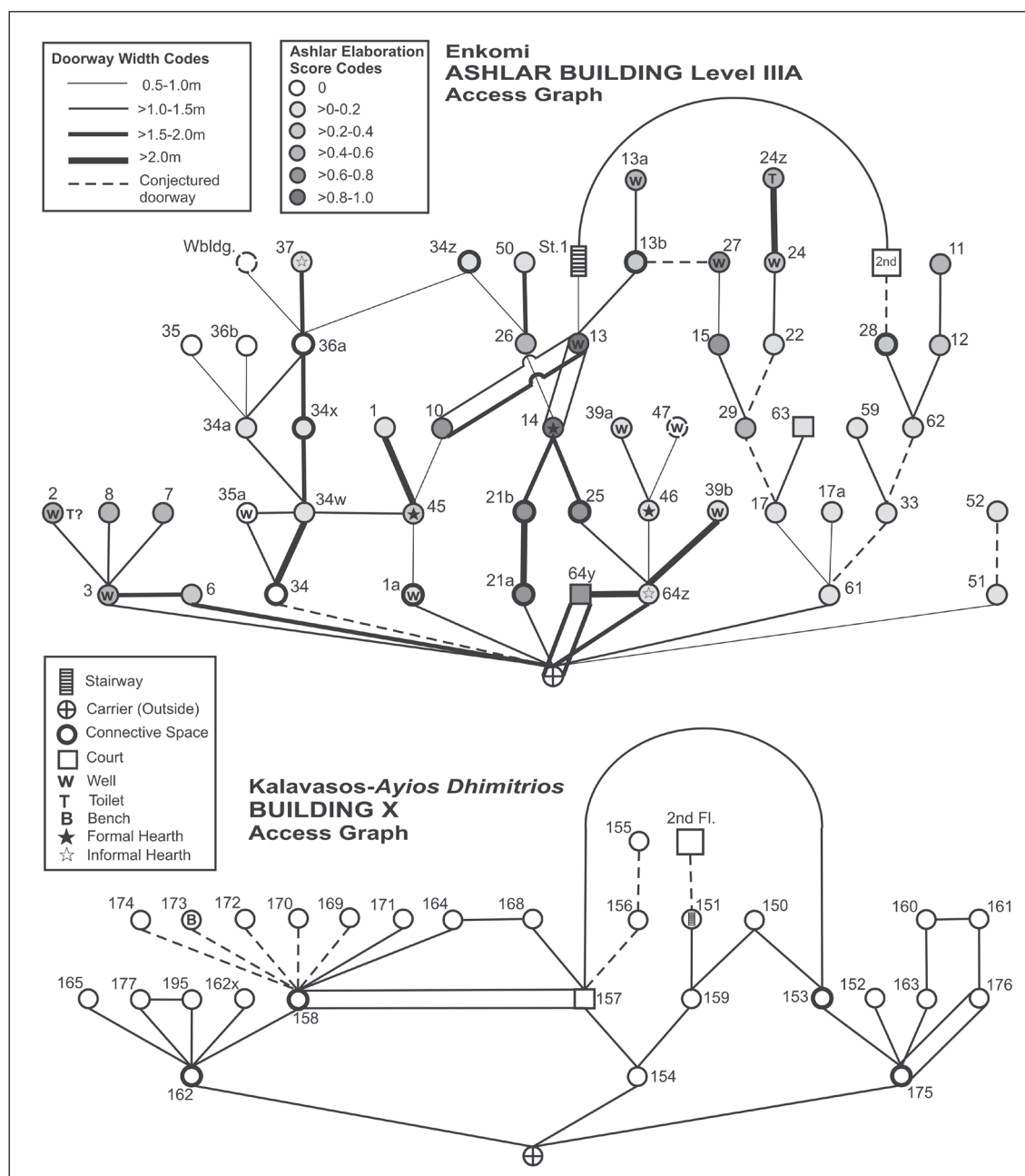


Figure 1. Access graphs for the Ashlar Building (Level IIIA) at Enkomi and Building X at Kalvasos *Ayios Dhimitrios*. The Ashlar Building graph is coded to indicate doorway width and the ashlar elaboration score (a calculation based on the length and elaboration of masonry types in each room; higher number = more elaborate masonry). See Figures 5 and 8 for building plans.

its potential as a venue for social interaction. These include room area and convexity (i.e., how 'square' the room is), the type and elaboration of masonry, as well as the location and characteristics of doorways, hearths, wells, benches and any associated artefacts. Decades of research in environmental psychology have generated a vast body of data that convincingly demonstrates the important influence that room size and shape, as well as the presence and characteristics of various architectural materials, features and furnishings, may have on human behaviour and interaction (e.g. Bechtel and Churchman 2002; Gutman 1972; Hall 1966; Stokols and Altman 1987; summary in Fisher 2007a: chapter 3).

While all of the human senses contribute to our perception of cues in contexts of interaction, it is clear that most information is gathered through vision. Isovists, isovist fields and viewsheds are analytical tools that begin to capture something of the visual experience of a place from a particular position or room, if only in two dimensions (Benedikt 1979; Fisher 2007a: 90-94; 2009). It is possible to construct these visibility polygons from any space in a building, although I use them in the analysis of LC architecture to examine visibility from or into spaces that were important for structuring social interaction within the building, or that contain significant architectural features (e.g. see Figures

5, 6, 8 and 9, below). Architectural controls over vision function much like the restriction of physical access, i.e. by excluding people from other people, actions, objects or information, or subjecting people to surveillance or display (Nielsen 1995: 57).

Combining the data derived from access, non-verbal communication and visibility analyses allows one to define the syntactic and architectural properties of rooms that would be likely to host either of two broad types of social occasions: public-inclusive or private-exclusive (Table 1). I use the terms public and private here in a relative sense, not implying that the 'public' occasions would be open to the entire 'public' of the society in question, but rather that they would have a larger and perhaps more inclusive group of participants, including visitors from outside the building. These two types of occasions need not be temporally separate, and could be different facets of a single occasion (see below).

Integrating the analyses outlined here permits a deeper reading of how past places were created and used. Indeed, the integrative approach allows us to educe a wealth of social information from the relatively scant remains of LC monumental buildings, now only shadows of their former grandeur. The remaining discussion is based on an ongoing study of the relationship between built environments and society in LBA Cyprus,

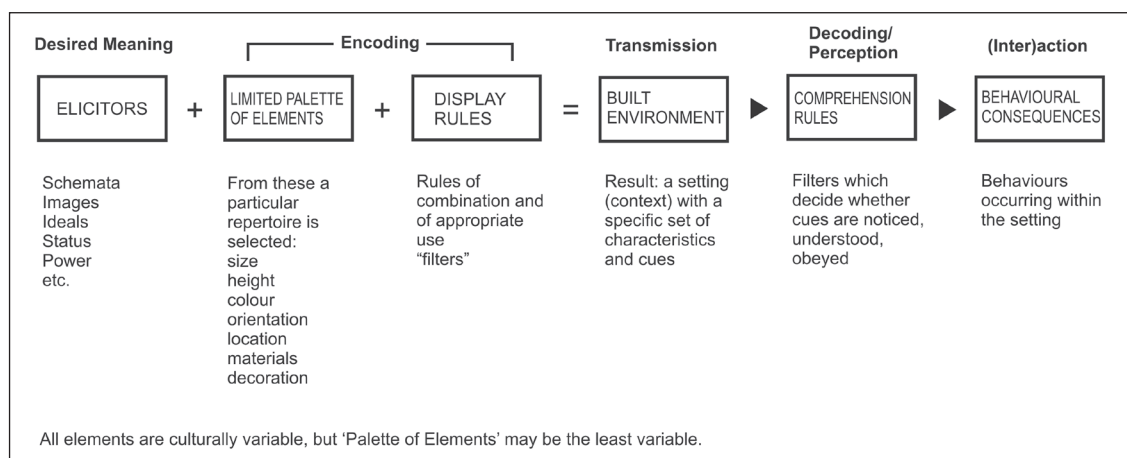


Figure 2. A nonverbal communication approach to the built environment (adapted from Rapoport 1990a: fig. 17).

“PUBLIC”—INCLUSIVE OCCASIONS

- The space will be controlling (directly accessible from neighbouring spaces)
- The space will be well integrated (easily accessible from the rest of the building)
- Space will be relatively large (>12 sq m) and highly convex (i.e., it will tend toward square)
- Generally low depth measure (i.e., space is shallow or close to exterior), but if depth measure is high, the space will likely be on a major route
- Space is more likely to contain important fixed- or semifixed-feature elements (e.g. ashlar masonry; formal hearths, etc.)
- Likely to have wider doorways

“PRIVATE”—EXCLUSIVE OCCASIONS

- Low control (space is less subject to intrusion)
- Not well integrated into overall plan (space is not easily accessible)
- Generally high convexity (i.e., will tend toward square), although size is not an important factor
- Likely to have high depth measure (not easily accessible from exterior)
- Likely to have more narrow doorways

Table 1. Architectural and syntactic correlates of types of social interaction.

drawing mainly on data from LC monumental buildings whose material remains and state of publication are sufficient to allow application of the integrative approach (Fisher 2007a). This dataset includes the Ashlar Building and its successors (Levels IIIA, IIIB and IIIC), and Levels IB, IIB and IIIA of the ‘Fortress’ Building at Enkomi (Dikaios 1969-71); Building X at Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios* (South 1984; 1997); the Ashlar Building at Maroni *Vournes* (Cadogan 1992; 1996); and Building II at Alassa *Paliotaverna* (Hadjisavaas 1986; 1994). I argue that these buildings and the contexts of interaction contained within them should be seen as places (in the sense discussed here), and that examining how they were created and used is vital to understanding the mechanisms of social reproduction and transformation during the LC period.

Creating Places

The act of place-making involved a number of stakeholders and the meanings encoded in a building are, to some degree, the result of their involvement in its design, construction and use (Locock 1994: 5; Markus 1993: 23). Yet, as Rapoport (1990: 15-16) argues, it is the occu-

pants’ and users’ meanings that are most significant. He provides a useful framework, cited above, for understanding the process by which these meanings are encoded in built environments, non-verbally communicated to users and (potentially) decoded (Rapoport 1990: 101-22) (see Figure 2, opposite). In trying to imbue places with meanings that both conveyed their power and identity and facilitated desired behaviours in those who used these places, elites faced a number of choices regarding building layout and materials. This choice was constrained to some degree by the nature of the building site (i.e. its size and shape; whether it was a ‘clean slate’ or there was extant architecture that needed to be incorporated into the design), as well as by the availability of various material and human resources, ranging from general labourers to specialists such as architects, engineers and stone masons. More importantly, perhaps, these choices were also constrained by the culturally determined ‘limited palette of elements’ and the ‘display rules’ by which these elements could be combined to encode meanings. Of course, initial choices in design would revolve around a building’s overall plan.

Appropriating Space

In the approach taken here, I see monumental construction as an appropriation of space that organizes and materializes social relationships and boundaries. This process began with the placement of walls and doorways, setting the size and shape of the building and its constituent spaces and thereby establishing its pattern of accessibility and control. Despite the contrasting architectural and syntactic properties, LC monumental buildings were largely planned around spaces that were suitable venues for social occasions (Fisher 2007a: 250-55, tables 8.1-8.3). The amount of space that might have hosted either public-inclusive or private-exclusive occasions ranged from 11 to 65% of the total area of each building, covering an average of 29% of the buildings' interior floor space. There are, on average, three public-inclusive spaces per building, occupying an average of 151 sq m, or 23% of the total area of each building. This compares with an area of only 37 sq m (or 6% of the area) for an average of five private-exclusive spaces per building. In addition to the contrasting characteristics that result from the parameters established in Table 1, the private-exclusive spaces were much smaller in size than their public-inclusive counterparts, were more deeply situated in buildings and had fewer and narrower doorways.

These various characteristics support the differing roles that the two types of spaces have in facilitating social interaction. Public-inclusive contexts are usually shallow (in terms of their location from outside the building), integrated and controlling spaces, designed to be relatively accessible to visitors, while private spaces are meant to be physically and visually less accessible to visitors and would likely require the cooperation of building occupants in order to find and enter them. It is important to stress that many of the social occasions that took place in the buildings analyzed in this study likely made use of both types of contexts. While social occasions can be spatially and temporally discrete, taking

place in a single space over a short duration, many are larger in scale, requiring use of more spaces over longer periods of time. Such occasions typically centre on a high-capacity, public-inclusive space, but also require adjoining spaces for associated activities, more private parts of the occasion and the storage of equipment used during the activities (Grahame 1997: 155). This sort of arrangement is evident in a number of the buildings in the dataset, including the Sanctuary of the Horned God in Level IIIB of the Ashlar Building at Enkomi (Figure 3). While Room 45 hosted the more public part of the rituals associated with the Horned God, Room 10, likely the 'holy-of-holies' and possible location of the cult statue, is clearly a private-exclusive context, entered through a liminal space (Room 9) and not readily accessible either physically or visually to those in Room 45. In addition, there are a number of other spaces that were likely employed for food preparation (Room 37 and possibly Rooms 35, 35z and 35a) and as additional space for participants who could not be accommodated in Room 45 (Rooms 26, 50 and 35).

The arrangement of public and private spaces varied among structures, but it is clear that facilitating social interaction was the primary purpose of LC monumental buildings—whatever economic, administrative, residential or religious functions we might ascribe to them. While the placement of walls and doorways delineated spaces that could potentially serve as contexts for social interactions, it is insufficient on its own to turn these spaces into places. One must also consider the means by which these contexts were animated and made meaningful through the interplay of fixed- and semi-fixed-feature elements.

Ashlar Masonry and Elite Identity

As we have seen, the design of a building in terms of the placement of its walls has a profound effect on spatial configuration, establishing patterns of movement and access and setting the size and shape of the places in which interaction

Enkomi ASHLAR BUILDING Level IIIB

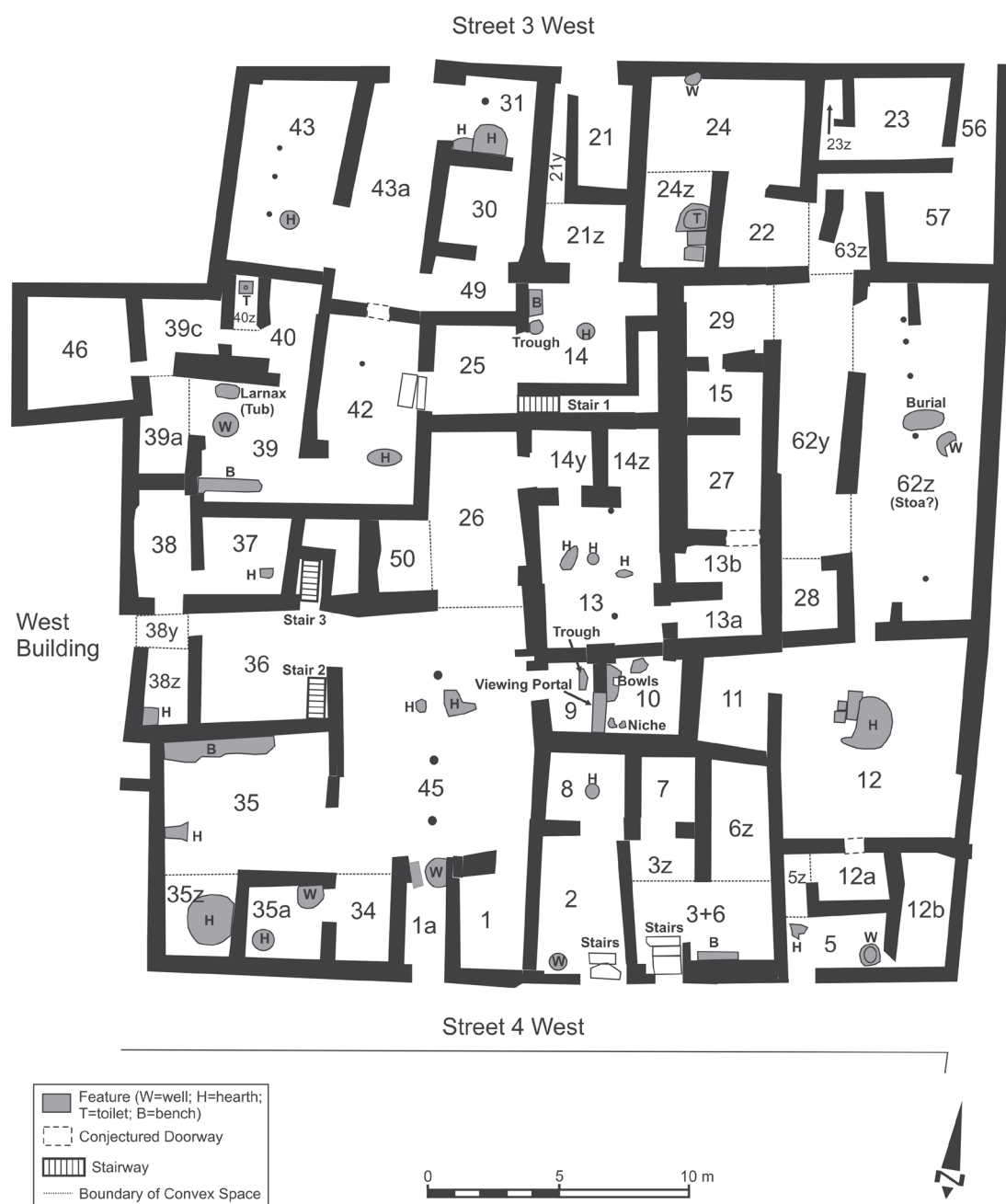


Figure 3. Enkomi Ashlar Building Level IIIB schematic plan (drawn by author based on Dikaios 1969-71: plate 276).

occurs. The characteristics of these walls, including the materials of which they are made and the use of elaboration or decoration, are, however, an equally essential aspect of place-making. I would argue that during the LC period, the strategic placement of ashlar masonry was the primary way for Cypriot elites to encode messages that reminded occupants and visitors (and even those who saw the buildings but never entered them) of their relative socio-political positions. Once thought to be an innovation brought to Cyprus ca. 1200 BC by Aegean immigrants (e.g. Dikaios 1969-71: 519-21), it is now clear from the discoveries at Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios*, Maroni *Vournes* and elsewhere that ashlar construction was well established on the island by the LC IIC period (beginning ca. 1340 BC) (Fisher 2007b). It is not coincidental that ashlar masonry makes its first appearance at the LC I fortress at Nitovikla, one of the island's earliest monumental buildings, where rubble walls incorporated marginally drafted blocks for coigning and jambs (Wright 1992: 410). Both Hult (1983) and Wright (1992: 520) suggest that Syrian influences were likely behind the introduction of this masonry. Wright (1992: 520-1) concludes, however, that the LC ashlar style seems to be its own creation using basic masonry devices common to an extended area and that, during its brief floruit on the island, 'Cyprus became perhaps the leading province in this manner of construction'.

Ashlar masonry was a clear manifestation of elite control over labour and technical knowledge (Trigger 1990: 127), both in terms of the procurement of large unfinished blocks from quarrying sites and the technical skill required to cut and lay the blocks to exacting measurements (Nelson 2003; Wright 1992: 89). Stone is the most difficult building material to work and the extent of its use provides some indication of the amount of labour invested in monumental construction (Trigger 2003: 567). In addition, the stone blocks embodied a permanence that elites no doubt used to communicate an im-

pression of the immutability of the social order and its inherent inequalities. The solidity and material permanence of monumental buildings is essential to convincing spectators and users of the reality of the power that created them (Wilson 1988: 179).

While these symbolic aspects of ashlar masonry are fairly apparent, stone can have other significant meanings that are less obvious. In the phenomenological study noted above, Tilley (2004: 35) argues that the significance of stone derives from 'an interlinked combination of multiple sensorial characteristics', including its visual, tactile and acoustic properties. Discussing the monumental stone temples of Late Neolithic Malta, he concludes that 'a very significant aspect of the manner in which the temples were experienced relates to the qualities of stone from which they were constructed' (Tilley 2004: 97). The association of an individual or group with specific types of stone is evident in attempts by many contemporary pre-industrial societies to relate themselves both practically and ideologically to their landscape (Bukach 2003: 30). Parker Pearson and Ramilisonina (1998) draw analogies between the use of stone in Madagascar and the construction of Stonehenge and similar monuments in Neolithic Wessex. In Madagascar, stone is thought to have eternal durability and is associated with the passing on of messages while also symbolizing the ancestors, the metaphorical hardening of the living, and the social unity mobilized in stone construction. On Minoan Crete, different grades of stone masonry, ranging from rubble through gypsum slabs, may have indicated different levels of administrative buildings, providing important visual cues to a largely illiterate population (Rehak and Younger 2001: 402). In his study of the social dimensions of stone used in the construction of Neolithic passage graves on the Channel Islands, Bukach (2003: 31) views the use of particular types of stone as an expression of identity and a means of negotiating power among passage grave build-

ers. Ashlar masonry undoubtedly played an analogous role in LBA Cyprus. Much more than simply a prestige symbol, it became an integral part of the identities of urban Cypriot elites.

The exterior façades of many LC monumental buildings, with their long stretches of massive ashlar blocks (e.g. the south façade of Building 18 at Enkomi [Figure 4], Temple 1 at Kition, or the ‘west’ façade of Building X at Kalavassos) could not have failed to leave an impression of elite power on those who passed by them (see Tuan 1977: 108). While the building exteriors were seen by the widest possible audience, the messages encoded in the masonry of building interiors were clearly directed at the occupants of these buildings and those who entered as visitors. In order to examine this phenomenon, it is possible to calculate an *ashlar elaboration score* for each of a building’s rooms by assigning a masonry type to each length of wall in the room in

question. Each masonry type is given an elaboration multiplier based on such factors as block size, arrangement of courses, and the presence of labour-intensive elaborations such as drafted margins. The ashlar elaboration score is calculated by dividing the length of wall constructed with each type of masonry (whether ashlar or non-ashlar) by the total wall length of the room’s interior, and then multiplying this by the appropriate elaboration multiplier. The results for each type of masonry are added, yielding a measure between 0 and 1 that indicates how elaborate the masonry is in the room in question (see Fisher 2007a: 102–103).

Important contexts for social occasions were often constructed with the most elaborate types of ashlar masonry, such as the walls, built using plinth blocks with drafted margins and topped by a layer of orthostat blocks, found in Room 14 of the Level IIIA Ashlar Building at Enkomi.



Figure 4. The massive ashlar blocks of Building 18’s south façade, Street 5 West, Enkomi (photo by author).

These elaborate forms of ashlar masonry often served as the background to important viewsheds. This is seen in the same building where views from Rooms 21 and 25 into Room 14 converge on the 'focal point' of the monumental hearth and would have been backgrounded by the impressive masonry (Figure 5).

In contexts where elites did not have the resources necessary to produce ashlar masonry, it was (re)used strategically for maximum visual impact. This is evident in the Sanctuary of the Horned God in the Level IIIB Ashlar Building at Enkomi where the side of what I have described as a 'viewing portal' (the wall and high threshold between Rooms 9 and 10) that faced the viewers in Room 9 was of re-used ashlar, while the side facing the occupants in Room 10 (those being viewed and presumably performing rituals associated with the Horned God) was of rubble (Fisher 2006; 2007a: 165-67) (see above, Figure 3). A similar emphasis on the visual impact of masonry may also be seen in Room 2 of the Level IIIA Fortress Complex at Enkomi (Figure 6). Roughly dressed slabs on the wall separating Room 2, a large hall used for public-inclusive occasions, and Room 2x, a small adjoining room used for libation rituals, faced the larger audience in Room 2, while the interior of the wall (facing Room 2x) was merely of rubble.

It is evident that walls, ashlar or otherwise, are important as both physical and symbolic boundaries. In addition to their role in determining the syntactic properties of spaces, they materialize boundaries between domains, such as inside/outside, public/private, male/female, sacred/profane and elite/non-elite (Parker Pearson and Richards 1994: 24; see also Lang 1985). Doorways, as the points of access between these domains, have a particularly important symbolic role in the creation of places.

Doorways as Physical and Social Boundaries

In order to understand how places were created and their effects on social interaction, it is

insufficient simply to make note of the points of access between a building's spaces; one must also consider the physical and symbolic nature of the doorway itself. Earlier I noted the importance of the number and width of doorways to assessing the interaction potential of any space. Public-inclusive contexts typically had more and wider doorways than their private-exclusive counterparts (Fisher 2007a: tables 8.2-8.3). The presence of doors would obviously have an effect on the effect on the public or private nature of any space; even a public-inclusive space with a number of wide doorways could be made physically and visually less accessible by closing its doors. While it is likely that many of the interior and exterior doorways in this dataset were fitted with doors, there are few instances where their presence can be attested unequivocally. In some cases there are rabbets cut into ashlar jambs or thresholds that would have supported a wooden door frame (and, one would assume, a door; e.g. the doorways to Rooms 7 and 8 in the Level IIIA Ashlar Building at Enkomi), or the door pivots have survived, either as separate stones or holes drilled into ashlar thresholds (e.g. the doorway between Rooms 25 and 64y in the Level IIIA Ashlar Building at Enkomi.)

Ashlar stonework was often used to embellish particularly important doorways, adding the symbolic aspects of the masonry discussed above to the boundary between spaces. In some cases, such as the entrances to Rooms 7 and 8 in Enkomi's Ashlar Building previously noted, doorways were provided with purpose-built ashlar jambs. Even in buildings where ashlar was not in general use, ashlar blocks were still used to mark significant doorways. In the Sanctuary of the Horned God (Level IIIB of the Ashlar Building), ashlar blocks were re-used as orthostats to mark the doorways that joined the central hall (Room 45) to Rooms 35, 9 and 1a. I would suggest that the ashlar masonry was marking the transition between spaces of differing ideological significance (perhaps profane and sacred in this

particular case), a point I return to below.)

Thresholds of ashlar or uncut slabs were perhaps even more effective in marking boundaries in that they provided contrast in both colour

and texture with the surrounding floors, which were typically of plaster-concrete or earth. As Lang (1985: 206) notes, the threshold is really the central structure of the doorway—the fea-

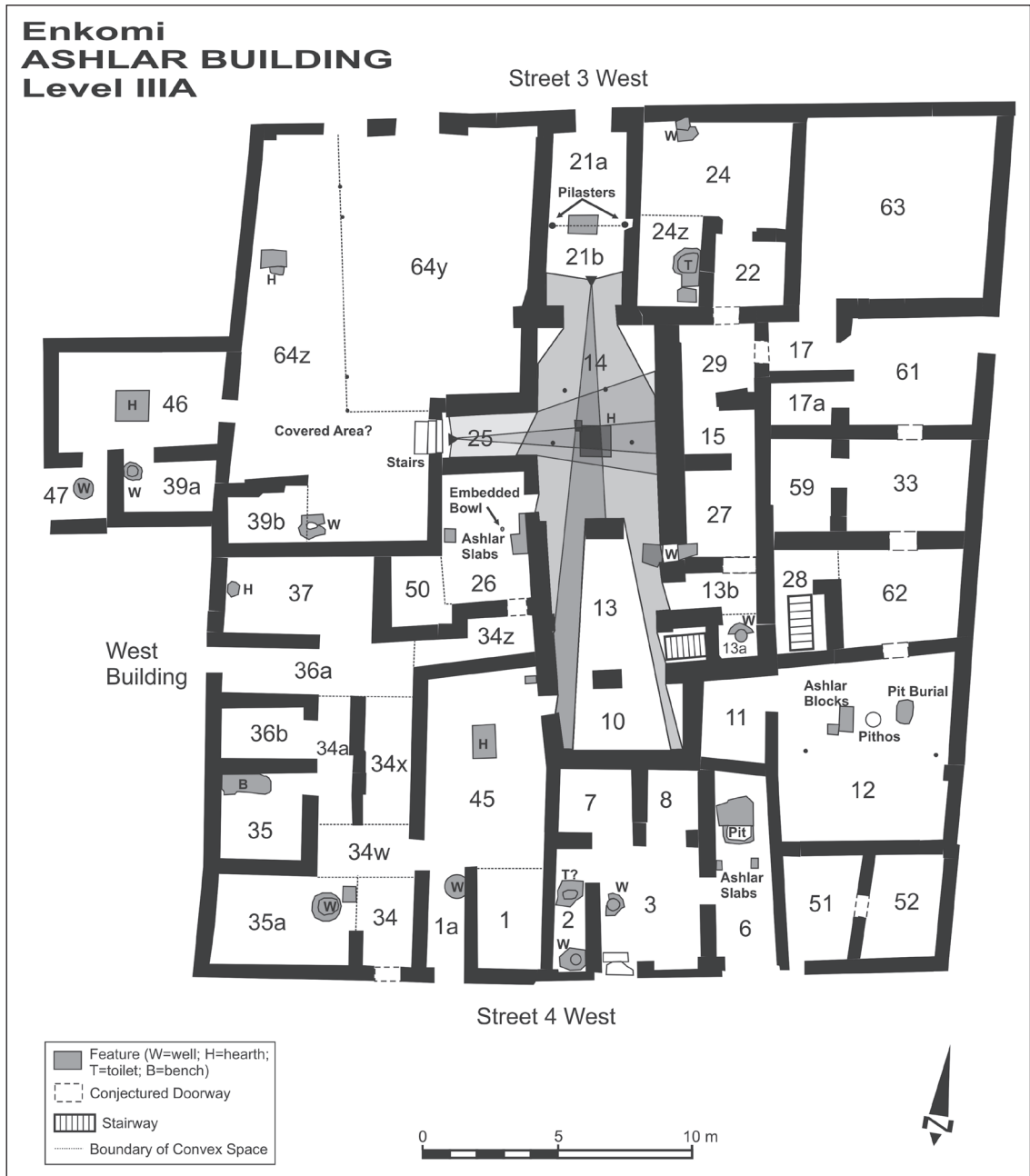


Figure 5. Enkomi Ashlar Building Level IIIA schematic plan showing viewsheds into Room 14 from Rooms 21b and 25. Note convergence of viewsheds on the focal point of the hearth. Viewsheds cover the 200-degree range of human binocular peripheral vision; darker portion of the viewshed indicates 10-degree range of more detailed vision (drawn by author based on Dikaios 1969-71: plate 273).

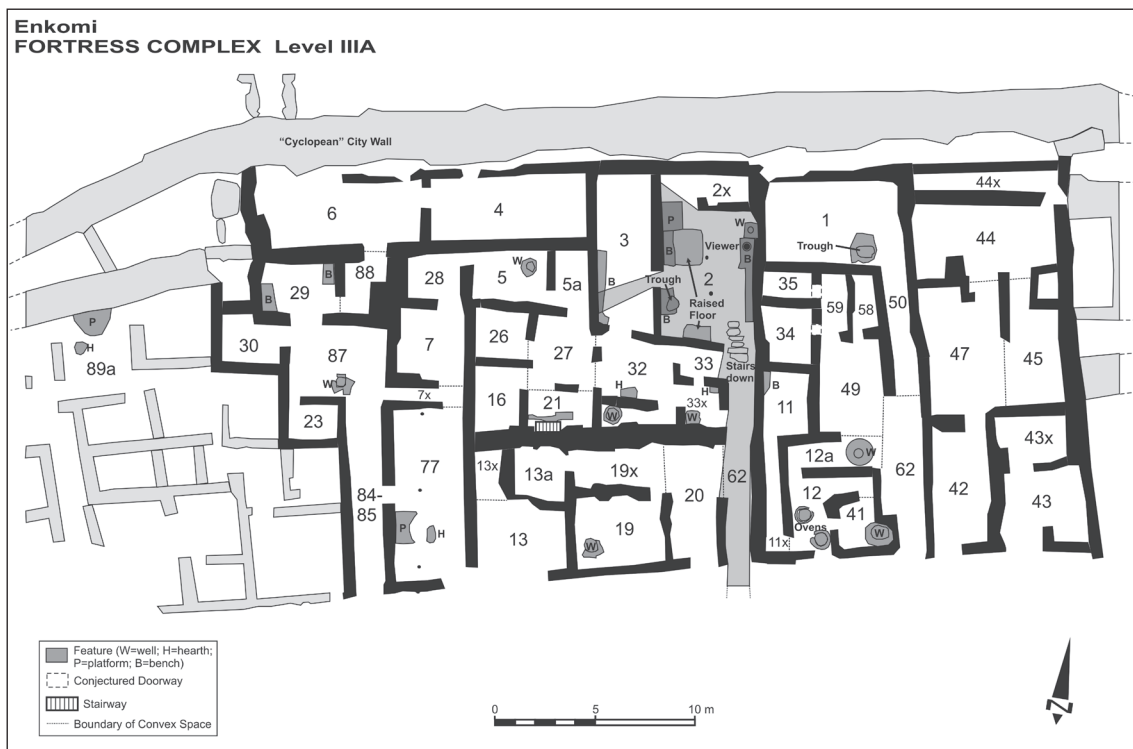


Figure 6. Enkomi Fortress Complex Level IIIA schematic plan showing isovist (all points visible from a particular vantage point) from the perspective of a person seated on the eastern bench in Room 2.

ture in which the uniting and separating aspect is most clearly visible. The entries of many important public-inclusive spaces were marked by stone thresholds, including the north entrance to Room 14 in the Level IIIA Ashlar Building and the doorway between Rooms 45 and 35 in the Sanctuary of the Horned God. In some buildings, such as Building X at Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios* and Building II at Alassa *Paliotaverna*, important doorways were flanked by ashlar blocks or uncut stone slabs set into the floor (Figure 7). These inset slabs, some of which may have been the terminals of wooden thresholds, were likely used as non-verbal cues to direct the movement of visitors and to indicate the relative importance of spaces within the building. In some cases, important thresholds were emphasized further by the presence of symbolically important semi-fixed-feature elements, such as the pithoi that flanked the doorway to the Pithos Hall (Room 152) in Building X at Kalavassos (Figure 8).

Thresholds that projected above the floor level required those crossing them to adjust their movements, adding a corporeal awareness to the transition between spaces. In some cases the boundary was further emphasized by the use of differential elevation. For example, in Building X at Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios*, the transition from the vestibule (Room 154) to the central court (Room 157) required one to ascend a few steps, flanked by inset ashlar slabs (Figures 7 and 8). This particular transition was also marked by a textural change to the pebble floor of the central court. In the Level IIIA Ashlar Building at Enkomi (see Figure 5, above), the entrance from the large court (Room 64y) into the hallway (Room 25) that led to Room 14, was marked by ashlar steps leading up to an ashlar threshold (the one noted above, into which a pivot hole was drilled). I suggest that this entry was likely used by lower-status individuals, in contrast to the entry through the vestibule (Rooms 21a

and b) to Room 14, which has no such elevation change and was likely a ceremonial entrance used by higher-status individuals, perhaps on particular occasions. Rapoport (1990: 107) observes that height is a nonverbal cue relating to social position in many cultures and that typically, 'the higher off the ground, either in person or in building form, the higher the status'. In his study of the Early Minoan site of Myrtos, Sanders (1990: 61) concluded that elevation changes, particularly steps, were an important boundary marker and behavioural cue in the regulation of movement through the settlement.

The aforementioned examples from Kalavassos and Enkomi are also important as illustrations of the use of entry halls or vestibules. These spaces essentially extended the role of the threshold over the length of a hallway and by doing so

increased the consciousness of the transition for those who moved through them. In the Ashlar Building this transition was, on one level, from outside to inside and therefore marked an entry from what was likely public space (the street) into that which was privately owned or controlled. I have also argued that, on another level, the transition was from space that was common or utilitarian to a place that was ideologically important and symbolically-charged, and thus that these types of hallways might be seen as liminal spaces (Fisher 2009). Their long, narrow shape not only encouraged forward movement through the liminal space, but also served to focus important viewsheds (e.g. Figures 5 and 8). The importance of the transition manifested in these liminal spaces is seen in the demarcation of the boundaries at either end with ashlar thresholds

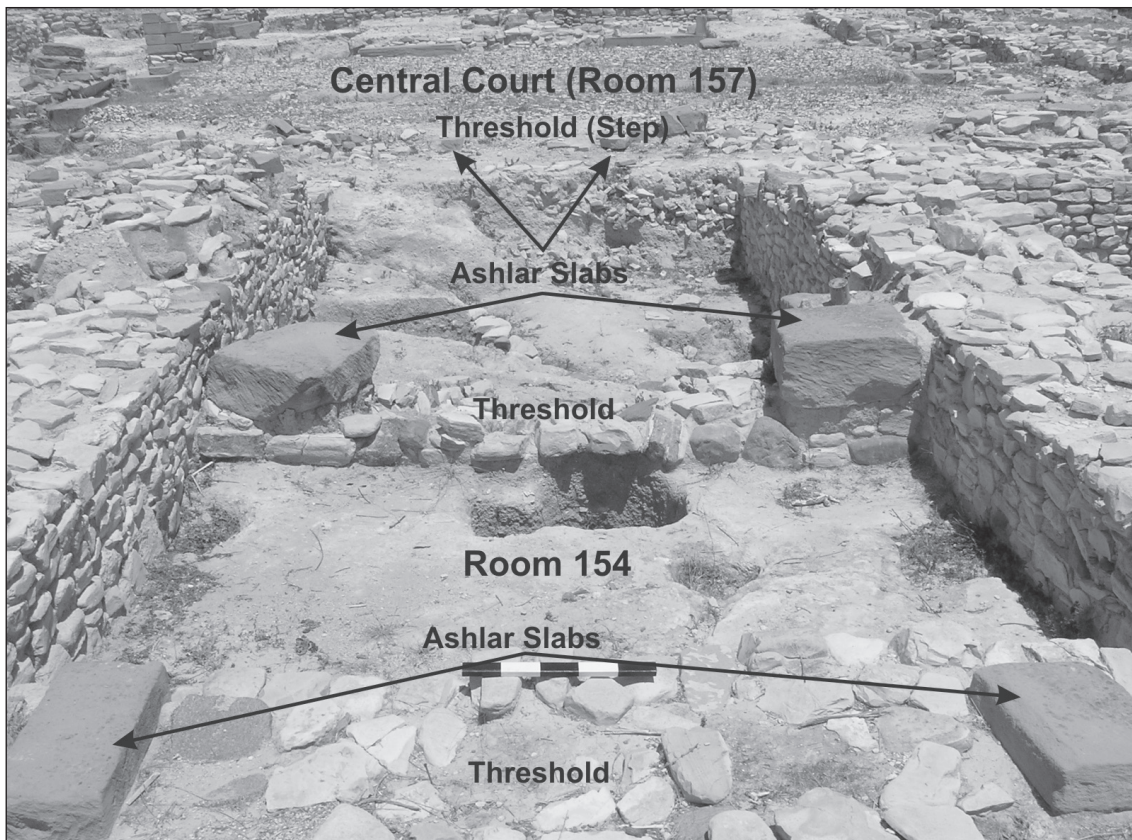


Figure 7. Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios* Building X main entrance; view looking northwest through Room 154 toward the central court (photo by author).

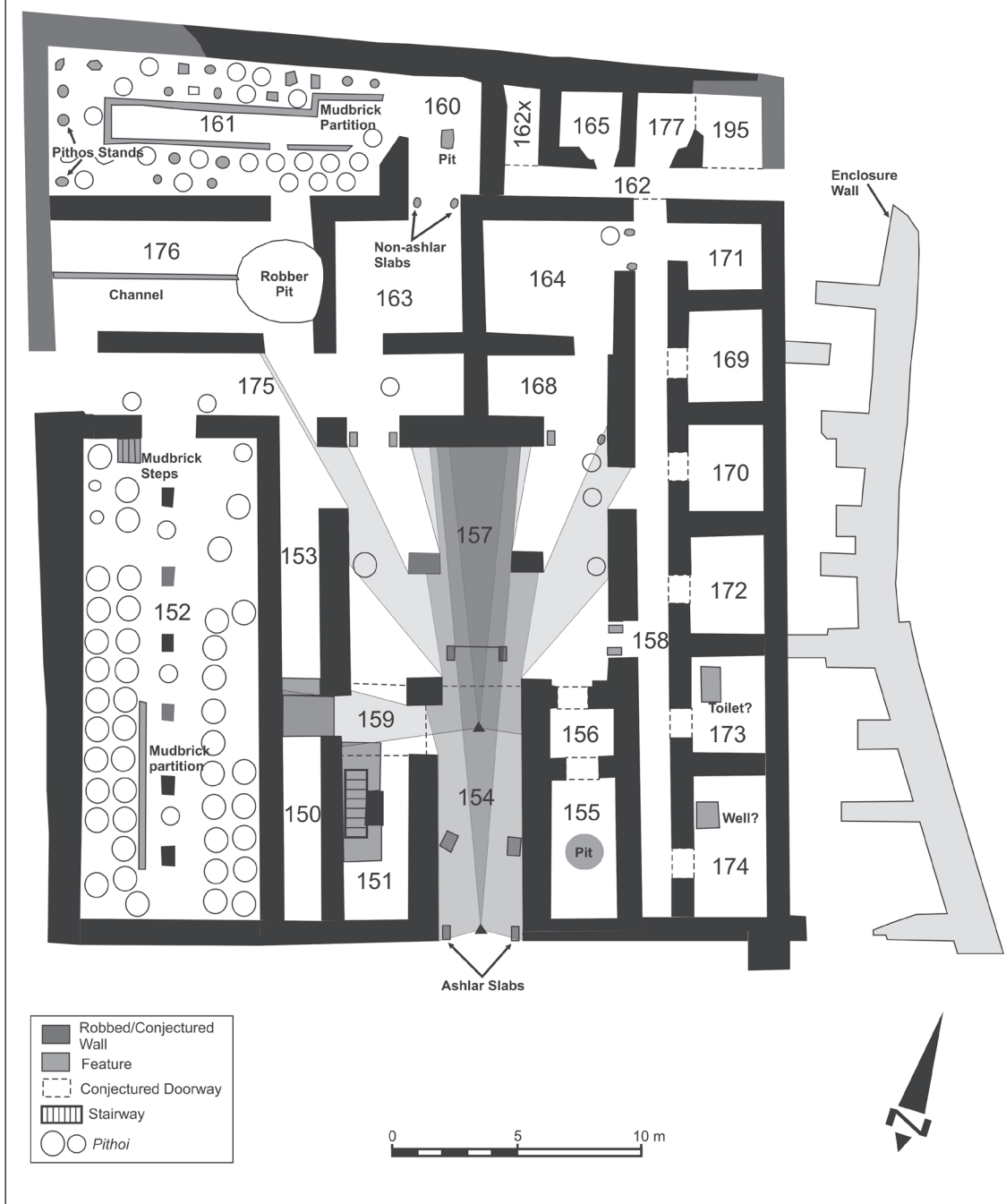
Kalavassos-Ayios Dhimitrios BUILDING X

Figure 8. Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios* Building X schematic plan showing viewshed from two points in Room 154 as one moves toward the central court (drawn by author based on schematic plan provided by A. South).

(e.g. Room 21a+b in the Ashlar Building), or with inset ashlar slabs (e.g. Room 154 in Building X). Attempts were made to indicate further the significance of passage through these spaces by marking the midway points. In Room 154 in Building X, inset ashlar slabs indicated the midway point of the hall, while in Room 21a+b of the Ashlar Building, it was demarcated by wooden pilasters on both the east and west walls and also by a low, rectangular platform in the middle of the floor that may have been a symbolic hearth (Dikaïos 1969-70: 173).

Pellow (1996: 2) suggests that boundaries are socially constructed and therefore invite ambiguity. The built environment, however, provides a vital physical dimension to boundaries that mutually reinforces the social one. Often a redundancy of visual cues is used, particularly at important doorways, to reduce ambiguity and increase the likelihood that the encoded messages are transmitted, understood and will result in behaviour that the building occupants desire. Members of strongly integrated social entities are known to demarcate boundaries between themselves and other social entities by using decorative elaboration as material communication (Blanton 1994: 117). The boundaries not only marked transitions such as outside to inside or profane to sacred, but also were important in regulating social interaction by delineating territories over which occupants had varying degrees of control (Altman 1975: 111-20; Brown 1987). These mechanisms were intended to ensure that physical and visual communication and interpersonal contact were socially controlled, predictable and repetitive so that stress could be minimized (Sanders 1990: 71; see also Rapoport 1990: 81-86). They were particularly important in densely occupied urban environments, like the LC II-III cities, where personal space was likely at a premium and persons of various social groups were co-present in a range of contexts. In this way, undesired contact was avoided, while interactions that promoted the social goals of

those in power were encouraged. Of course, this did not always ensure comprehension of, or compliance with encoded meanings, and we should keep in mind that they could be misinterpreted, ignored or actively resisted.

The clear definition of status was undoubtedly a primary objective of interactions controlled by elites. The provision of multiple doorways in the exterior boundaries of LC monumental buildings was a means of 'filtering' visitors according to status, permitting them access to particular parts of the building, a point that I return to below. The Level IIIA Ashlar Building provides multiple examples of this phenomenon (see Figure 5, above). On the north street, the 'ceremonial' entrance vestibule (Rooms 21a+b) was clearly marked by the (robbed-out) ashlar threshold, in addition to its other features such as the wooden pilasters and symbolic hearth at the midway point. To the west, the more public entrance was apparent by the provision of two wide doorways side-by-side that led directly from the street into the large, open court (Rooms 64y+z).

Boundaries and points of access, as represented by walls and doorways, played a fundamental role in the creation of places for social interaction in LC monumental buildings. These architectural features served to reify social boundaries, a process that manifested itself most visibly in the strategic placement of ashlar masonry in important interaction contexts and at significant transition points as people moved through space. Having examined the boundaries of places, I now discuss the contexts themselves, focusing on a particular feature that defined one important type of place and influenced the nature of interaction within it.

Hearths and Hearth Rooms

While many fixed and semi-fixed-feature elements combined to turn spaces into places of interaction, hearths appear to have been particularly significant. Among the hearth rooms examined in this dataset, a number of common

characteristics are evident. The rooms are usually rectangular and the hearths are typically located on the rooms' longitudinal axis. The hearths are not usually centred along this axis, but are located somewhat closer to one end of the hall. I have referred to some of the hearths as monumental, although this is due less to their size (the central hearth in Room 14 of the Level IIIA Ashlar Building, for example, is only 1.2 m on each side) than to their position and elaborate construction. The precise details in the fixed- and semi-fixed-feature elements of hearth rooms differ among the various buildings (e.g., the size and shape of the hearth, its location along the central axis, the types of masonry used in constructing the room, or the presence or absence of columns), perhaps reflecting what environmental psychologists refer to as *personalization*, a form of territorial marking by the owners or occupants of a space that encodes messages regarding their identity (Brown 1987: 519-21). The monumentalization of the central hearth through its incorporation into a stylobate in Room 1 of Building II at Alassa *Paliotaverna* might be an example of this phenomenon (see Figure 9, below).

The hearth, particularly in its monumentalized form, was a highly symbolic feature, representing the transformative power of fire associated with the cooking of food and the production of ceramics and metals (Fisher 2007b). In addition, fire and smoke are known as purificatory agents in many cultures (Parker Pearson and Richards 1994: 25). The hearth's central placement in a monumental setting, such as Room 1 at Alassa *Paliotaverna* or Room 14 of the Level IIIA Ashlar Building at Enkomi, with their elaborate ashlar masonry, clearly connected the control of these transformative aspects of fire to the elite occupants of the building. The latter example illustrates the key symbolic role played by the hearth itself. The monumental hearth in Room 14 not only occupies a central position within the room, but was at the physical (and likely

symbolic) centre of the Ashlar Building as whole. Its importance as an ideologically-charged space and the focus of the highest level public-inclusive interactions is emphasized by the various liminal spaces that isolated it from direct entry (Rooms 21a+b, 25, 10 and the north part of Room 26). As previously noted, it was also the focal point of viewsheds from the Ashlar Building's north entries. Its symbolic importance was reinforced by the foundation rite undertaken during the hearth's installation. The original floor and the underlying soil down to bedrock were removed and replaced and the hearth was installed on a layer of red mud mortar (Dikaios 1969-71: 176). The fact that this hearth was deliberately destroyed during the Level IIIB reconstruction by the new occupants, who installed a stairway directly over it, likely also reflects its vital symbolic value.

Given the central importance of hearths, I have little doubt that many of the public-inclusive spaces discussed in this study lacking evidence for formal hearths probably contained portable hearths or braziers during the social occasions they hosted. Bronze braziers were found in a hoard from Sinda and at Enkomi in 'La Maison des Bronzes' (Catling 1964: 74-75; Karageorghis 2002: 108) and as a fragment in Room 1 of the Level IIIA Fortress Complex. They are also attested elsewhere in the Bronze Age eastern Mediterranean (e.g. see Muhly 1984 for a discussion of Minoan hearths). In addition to their association with fire, such hearths, like tripods, stands and other elaborate works of bronze characteristic of the end of the Bronze Age on Cyprus (e.g. Karageorghis 2002: figs. 198-204), were symbols of prestige in their own right. They were also emblematic of elite control over the economic resources and metallurgical technology and skill required for their production. In addition, the use of portable hearths would allow a greater degree of flexibility in how a space could be used both during social occasions and at other times.

As formal or monumentalized features, hearths added powerful elite symbolism to the more mundane (though no less important) functions of warmth and light that made them the primary focus of routine 'maintenance activities' related to the care and sustenance of group members (see Picazo 1997). The hearths were clearly important elements in the creation of monumental places and, combined with other fixed- and semi-fixed-feature elements, they encoded messages integral to the promotion of social occasions that supported elite power. The most significant occasions that took place in the hearth rooms, and similar large, public-inclusive spaces of LC monumental buildings, were ritual activities focused on feasting. These activities were an essential part of the inter-animation of people and place during the LC period.

Using Places

Broadly defined, ritual is a culturally constructed system of symbolic communication consisting of patterned and ordered sequences of words and acts, often expressed in multiple media, whose content and arrangement exhibit varying degrees of formality, stereotypy and redundancy (Tambiah 1979: 199). There is a growing recognition of the importance of rituals involving the consumption of food to the maintenance and reproduction of social life. As Hamilakis (1999: 39) argues, consuming food acquires such immense significance in societies because it involves the human body; it expresses human embodiment and is an act of incorporation that involves emotions, pleasures and feelings. The social and experiential elements of food consumption are emphasized in the concept of the feast—a social occasion that involves the communal consumption of special food and drink, often involving social display (van der Veen 2003: 414-15). Dietler (2001: 67, 71) sees feasts as a form of 'public ritual activity' and stresses the importance of performance, which frames feasting occasions in 'symbolically pregnant action

marked off from other kinds of daily practice, thus focusing people's attention and rendering them receptive to episodes of heightened emotional experience'.

The role of public ceremonial feasting in the negotiation and establishment of socio-political power has been well established and need not be reiterated in detail here (see various papers in Dietler and Hayden 2001; Halstead and Barrett 2003; Wright 2004). It can be summarized by stating that feasts are important as both a means of binding individuals and groups together in multi-scalar social networks and as venues for 'commensal politics' aimed at the acquisition of power or the symbolic reiteration, naturalization and legitimization of existing or institutionalized asymmetrical power relations (Dietler 2001: 68-69, 76-94). As such, feasts were important arenas for display and competition for resources and power among various individuals and groups.

Based on the architectural and syntactic properties of spaces, in conjunction with ceramic finds and faunal evidence, it is possible to isolate probable contexts for feasting within LC monumental buildings (Fisher 2007a; 2009). Some of these materials are found within the feasting rooms themselves, such as the numerous imported and local Mycenaean vessels found around the hearth in Room 14 in the Level IIIA Ashlar Building (Dikaïos 1969-71: 314-15, pl. 94). Feasting paraphernalia are sometimes recovered in adjoining spaces where they may have been stored when not in use, as I have argued for the 276 cups found piled in Room 10 of the Sanctuary of the Horned God (Dikaïos 1969-71: 196; Fisher 2007a: 161-69). Other materials were discarded in accordance with culturally constructed methods of disposing of feasting debris (Steel 2004: 171-72), explaining the deposit of animal bones and some 85 ceramic vessels, including numerous Mycenaean imports, found in a pit in Room 173 of Building X at Kalavassos (South and Russell 1993: 304-06). These were likely the

remnants of a feasting event held nearby, probably in the central court (Room 157).

The importance of places in which feasts were held is due as much to their delineation and reification of social boundaries as it is to their role as suitably impressive contexts for interaction. Dietler (2001: 88) argues that nearly all feasts serve in some ways to define social boundaries while simultaneously creating a sense of community. While mechanisms that both created and downplayed social distance between hosts and guests were in operation during the same feasting occasions, it is also likely that feasts emphasizing either one aspect or the other were held at different times and perhaps within different contexts. Some occasions were likely *diacritical feasts* during which distinctive foods, elaborate dining sets, prescribed standards of etiquette and reference to exotic social practices served to naturalize and reify concepts of ranked differences in status (Dietler 2001: 85-88; Steel 2004: 164; Wright 2003). The primary participants in these ceremonial occasions were undoubtedly elites (both male and female—see Steel 2002: 110-11), some of whom would have competed with their hosts for power.

Other occasions involved the participation of non-elites, changing the dynamic from diacritical feasting to a 'patron-role' mode of commensal politics in which a relationship of reciprocal obligation was engendered through hospitality (Dietler 2001: 82-85). During such occasions, the host provided for guests of lesser status who reciprocated not in kind, but by assuming the obligation of social indebtedness. This established a patron-client type of relationship between host and guest, as the guest's acceptance of a predictable pattern of hospitality naturalized and formalized the unequal relations of status and power (Dietler 2001: 83). While there are no finds mentioned in the published material to suggest what the massive central court in Building II at Alassa was used for, its architectural and syntactic properties would

have made it an appropriate venue for such occasions (Figure 9). The same applies to Room 64y+z in the Level IIIA Ashlar Building. Both contexts would have allowed the hosting elite(s) to enter from parts of the building not accessible to other guests, further emphasizing their social distance.

The provision of multiple venues suited for feasting or similar types of occasions within the same building suggests that buildings were a means of 'filtering' or, to use Markus's (1987) term, 'classifying' participants, on the basis of status. This is seen most clearly in the three hearth rooms (each with their own entrances) incorporated into the Level IIIA Ashlar Building. As noted above, Room 14 was clearly the most important of the three, given its architectural and syntactic properties, and likely served as a venue for the most formal or ceremonial (i.e., highest-level) occasions.

The contexts for feasting were intended to be impressive spaces, combining symbolically-laden fixed-feature elements such as ashlar masonry and hearths, with equally meaningful semi-fixed-feature elements such as imported Mycenaean ceramic vessels used for the communal consumption of wine (Steel 2004: 172). Just as important, especially at intimate through social ranges of interaction (0-3.65 m; see Hall 1966: 121-25), were non-fixed-feature elements such as participants' clothing, hairstyles, bodily markings, use of perfumes, and the wearing or carrying of other symbolically-charged items such as jewellery, weapons, sceptres or other exclusive items attested in LC elite burials (e.g. Keswani 2004: 121-29, 138-39, 158-59). It is through the combination of these disparate elements and their use in social interaction that places are created, identified with and remembered.

Remembering Places: Sense of Place, Identity and Memory

Monumental buildings are among the most powerful expressions of identity. At the same



Figure 9. *Alassa Palio taverna* Building II schematic plan showing the isovist field (all points visible from a particular space) from the central court (note that southern extent of isovist field beyond building is uncertain) (drawn by author based on Hadjisavvas 1994: fig. 2; 2003: fig. 2).

time, they also shape the identities of those who live in and around them. This dynamic operates on a number of levels, from the wider community to the individual occupants of a space, but is always linked to the meaning that a place has for those who use it—a manifestation of what is commonly referred to as *sense of place* or *place attachment*. Lynch (1981: 131–32) defines it as ‘the extent to which a person can recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places—as having a vivid, or unique, or at least a particular, character of its own’. Sense of place is intimately tied to memory. Given their seeming permanence and stability (or ‘constancy of place’), monumental buildings become appropriate foci for memories and personal and group nostalgia (Zerubavel 2003: 41). For many LC monumental places, this permanence was enhanced by the symbolic importance of ashlar masonry, the use of which gave buildings an air of permanence that their size alone could not provide. The memories embedded in or elicited by such places are an essential component in the construction or reconstruction, or claiming or rejecting of group identities (Cattell and Climo 2002: 33–36). These social or collective memories can also be used to legitimate or naturalize authority, smoothing over ruptures and creating the appearance of a seamless social whole (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003: 3).

I would suggest that the same qualities of monumental structures that imbue them with seeming permanence in times of relative stability also make them targets for destruction, appropriation or alteration in the process of social change or upheaval when identities are subject to re-negotiation (also Knapp 2009: 49). Undoubtedly, the deliberate alteration of the central hall (Room 14) in the Ashlar Building at Enkomi, including the obliteration of its symbolically important monumental hearth during the Level IIIB reconstruction, can be seen in this light. In his study of Irish megalithic tombs, Thomas (1990) notes that the identities and

memories associated with structures that have long use-lives are subject to continual reinterpretation by different people in the course of different practices (also Bradley 2002).

The social interactions that took place within the LC monumental buildings were also an integral part of the negotiation of identity and the formation of individual and collective memory for both hosts and participants. Places (as well as physical objects) gradually acquire social meaning through their association over time with group activities and experiences (Stokols 1990: 642). The repetition of these activities over time imbues places with *tradition*, the historical associations of a place (Jacobi and Stokols 1983). Tradition has three dimensions: the association with historical events, traditional rituals and meaningful actions; the association with an identifiable group, culture, family, organization or individual; and the role of a place as a symbol of values, ideas, beliefs or ideologies. Undoubtedly, these aspects combined to establish tradition in LC monumental buildings and were a key element of elite identities. Tradition and place attachment no doubt accounted to a significant degree for the longevity of occupation of the sites upon which these structures were erected and the association of certain social occasions with particular places over extended periods of time (also Knapp 2009: 50). Lynch (1981: 132) argues that occasion and place reinforce each other to create a vivid present. But the effectiveness of a place as the context of interaction also draws on the past through the development of tradition, linking a place to the identity and memory of its occupants and users.

Conclusions

The fortresses that appeared with the transition to the LBA mark the origin of monumental architecture on Cyprus. Whatever their precise function, they signified the first attempts by an emerging elite at the large-scale control of movement and interaction through the appropria-

tion, enclosure and monumentalization of space. Thus began a process of place-making that culminated with the urban built environments of the LC II-III periods, where monumental ashlar buildings came to supplant the funerary realm as the primary arena in which LC social dynamics were enacted. I have tried to demonstrate the effectiveness of investigating this process using an agent-centred approach that recognizes not only the actions of those who created and used LC monumental buildings, but also the agency of the buildings themselves—their ability to profoundly affect the social lives of those who used them. They were more than simply the stages on which the daily encounters and planned interactions of LC life took place. They were also active and dynamic participants in the actions through which power and identity were negotiated and materialized, and social structures were (re)produced.

Through the dynamic interplay of architectural elements, such as ashlar masonry and hearths, and ritual performance, such as feasts, monumental spaces were imbued with meaning—that is, they became places. Undoubtedly all of the various elements discussed above—the architecture and decorative elaboration of the room itself, its furnishings, the ritual paraphernalia, the personal appearance of the participants, the smells, tastes and intoxicating properties associated with the food and drink, the conversations, songs or other performances that were undoubtedly part of such occasions—combined to create places and defined these occasions as sensual and memorable embodied experiences. When we attempt to explain such occasions solely in terms of wider socio-political or economic processes and strategies, it is all too easy to lose sight of the vital experiential fulfilment that they must have provided for their participants. Through a process of inter-animation between people and place, the buildings in which these interactions occurred actively shaped LC Cypriot society at the same time that they were products of it. These monumental buildings, ruined

as they now are, are still places, ever-engaged in the identity formation of an island on which the Bronze Age past continues to have resonance amid the social, political and economic tensions of the present.

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