

Changing pasts and socio-political cognition in Late Bronze Age Cyprus

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Abstract

Changes in burial practice and associated symbolic communication offer important evidence for socio-political history. A significant change in the relevance of the past, marked by a sharp break in funerary practice and a dramatic erasing of tangible memory and history, occurs in the Maroni Valley of southern Cyprus at the beginning of the main 'urban' Late Bronze Age phase, c. 1300 BC. It is argued that this may both be explained by, and help explain, the emergence at this time in the lower Maroni Valley of a radical new power structure: a single, central, ruling authority and figure. The combination of mortuary evidence, architectural history, and precise chronology through imported Aegean ceramics, allows us to approach a high resolution archaeology of socio-political development in the late fourteenth century BC in the Maroni Valley.

Keywords

Cyprus; Maroni; Late Bronze Age; mortuary practice.

Introduction

The autobiographies and biographies of individual human lives centre on, and at the same time are invented and reinvented by, key events and signs which signify. At the same time, the social personality of the individual is the creation of the thoughts of other people (e.g. Proust 1957–70), and hence also invented and reinvented by signs which signify. Together, and in a reflexive manner, these events and signs become, and inscribe, a social history and constitution. They range from those encompassing only family, kin, and associates, to those associated with an individual of renown whose life narrated forms a core to the social history of a wider group (for a literary exploration, see Henderson 1997). The set of such plural relationships across society and time forms reflexive structures of reference. Certain of these signifying/signified contexts and circumstances are common to many, and sometimes all, members. The most basic and pervasive usually involve nature, reproduction, and life:death, and the attempts of each human culture to rationalize, manipulate, control, or otherwise transcend these fundamentals. The basic axioms of human culture,

for example the differing roles of men and women, clearly stem from these structural realities (Ortner 1996). In farming societies, where there is inherently a delay between labour and return, and a reliance on past harvests both for present subsistence but also future planting, 'time' and continuity become essential features of the economic and social organisation (Meillassoux 1972: 99). In circumstances where there is no legal-bureaucratic framework and authority, reference to, rights over, success during, and control of, time and continuity invariably relate to, and involve reference to, the past. The past, inheritance, lineage, ancestry and mythology form the single common frame of reference in the present for the future for all members of the society: what is remembered, and what is forgotten. One of the more obvious times and places where these several areas of interest intersect, and receive expression, is the funeral. Burials, therefore, offer a history of social structure, a history of symbolic action (Morris 1992).

Death is, of course, a threat to the continuity of any human society (Bloch and Parry 1982: 3–4, summarizing Hertz 1960); especially a traditional agrarian society based around continuity through time and the entailed constructed social, economic, and political rights. Most societies thus attempt to assert control over the uncontrollable nature of biological death through rites of passage, rituals in which a social death enunciated by a society replaces biological death (Hertz 1960; Van Gennep 1909; Lewis 1980; La Fontaine 1985; Carr 1995). Typically, an individual is held to leave the society, and is then reincorporated as an ancestor or other spirit. Mortuary ritual is part of the creation and reproduction of society. It is actions in the present for the future. A dead body is very special in this regard; unlike a living body, it may be entirely controlled, made into subject and object. Likewise, the actual mortuary ritual, as all rituals, 'represents a situation in which a microcosm of the world can be manipulated within a bounded analytic space (Turner 1969, 39)' (Thomas 1991: 105). Finally, in a pre-modern farming society, the past is central, and death is the nexus between present and past. In these circumstances, mortuary ritual holds both a core position within the society, and at the same time offers an arena in which the technology of power may be concentrated and controlled as subject on object (Thomas 1991: 104–5). From an archaeological perspective, mortuary ritual will therefore form an important communication by the living using the dead; it informs us about the burying group, rather than the individual buried. As Thomas (1991: 107) argues, mortuary ritual is a 'strategy of representation'; it offers a material expression of the practices and strategies of competition, display, and hierarchy within the society at large (e.g. Pearson 1982). Marked shifts in long-standing funerary practice are therefore highly interesting phenomena (also Morris 1992: 27–8, 1987); they encompass significant change and a recreation of many social-psychological processes.

The Late Bronze Age (LBA) of Cyprus (c.1600–1100 BC) was a dynamic period. A village level society with relatively little indication of significant hierarchy was transformed with the emergence of a number of 'urban' centres or polities, most with élite/official and religious architecture and areas of specialized crafting or industrial activities (for summaries, see Keswani 1989, 1993, 1996; Knapp 1997: 46–72; Peltenburg 1996; Åström and Herscher 1996; Negbi 1986; Merrillees 1992a). A set of these urban entities, or polities, existed in the Late Cypriot (LC) IIC phase (Fig. 1). However, the anatomy of the processes of development in the various cases remains debated or unclear, just as it is debated whether each was a separate polity (as part of heterarchy: Keswani 1996, 1993),

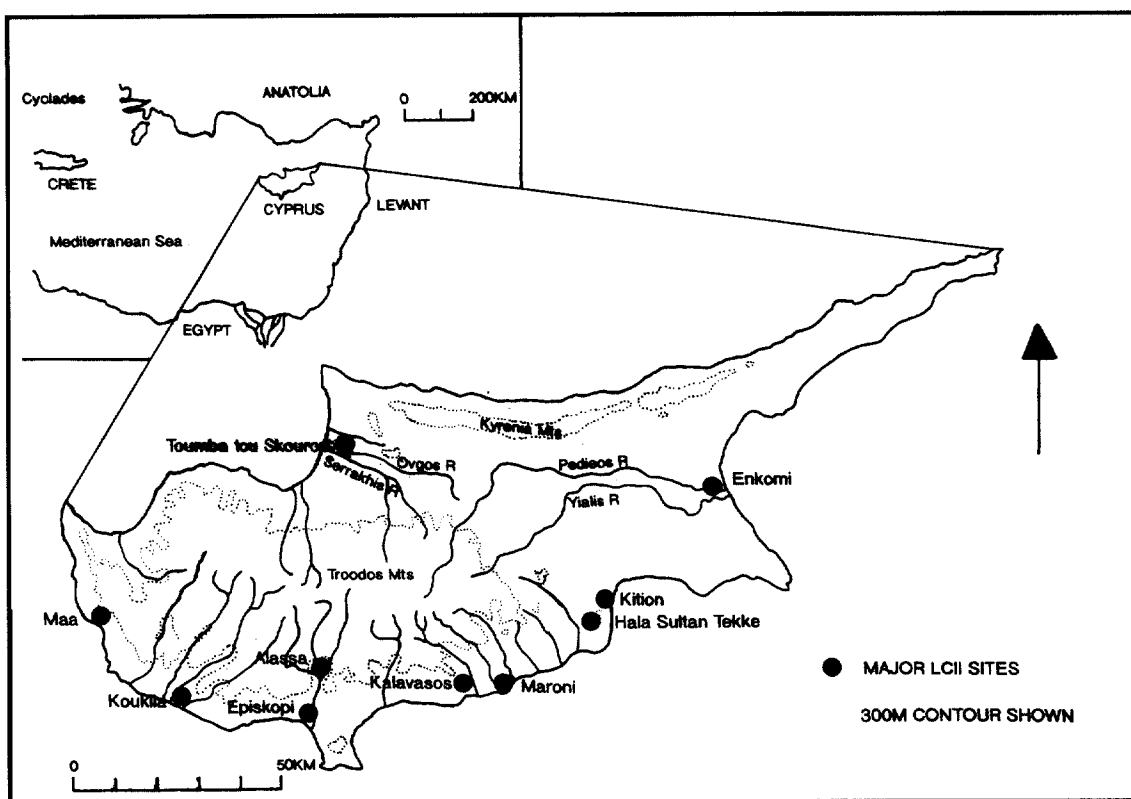


Figure 1 Map of Cyprus showing the location of the main Late Cypriot 'urban' sites. Drawing by Joanne Goffee.

or complex chiefdom (as part of a set of such chiefdoms: Smith 1994), or whether there was not some form of central control exercised by a site such as Enkomi *Ayios Iakovos* (Peltenburg 1996: 27–37).

The development and nature of these emergent LC settlement units in social and political terms should be reflected in the mortuary record. The sites in question have been very broadly broken into two categories by Keswani (1996: 236): the first involves the foundation of new 'frontier towns' by people wishing to become involved in foreign trade (Morphou *Toumba tou Skourou*, Enkomi *Ayios Iakovos*, Hala Sultan Tekke *Vyzakia*, and perhaps Kition *Chrysopolitissa* are listed as the examples), and the second involves urbanization in valleys with long sequences of occupation prior to the LBA (Kalavassos, Maroni, and Alassa are listed as examples). The mortuary record of the best known site in the first category, Enkomi, has been examined in a processual fashion by Keswani (1989), and was found to reflect the development of élite groupings early in the LBA. However, the mortuary data from sites in the second category have been held to be problematic. For example, Keswani complains that 'the spatial relationships between buildings and tombs at Maroni have not been fully elucidated, but presently it appears that the tombs ... largely predated the construction of the architecture at these sites' (1996: 229–30), and while she expects 'a continuation of the prehistoric Bronze Age tradition of corporate burial grounds' at these sites, she has to confess that at Kalavassos and Maroni

habitation areas 'did encroach on earlier tombs at both sites' (1996: 236). In fact, the notable feature of the evidence from both sites is the construction of LCIIIC buildings directly over (and frequently destroying) earlier and long-used LCI-IIB/early C tombs, and so a sudden rewriting (and collective forgetting) of the visible and perceived past.

This paper examines the evidence from the Maroni Valley in southern Cyprus, and explores how funerary practice reflects changing social, political, and economic expression and cognition. In particular, it seeks to show how the difficulties identified by Keswani – her discomfort at evidence of a changing past – in fact provide a likely high-resolution history of political evolution in the valley.

Context

The Maroni Valley in southern Cyprus (see Figs 1 and 2) is one of a number of north–south river valleys along the south coast of Cyprus. It offers a large agricultural zone, both along the actual water courses, and in the flat coastal plain of rich alluvial deposits. It has a long settlement history. The upper Maroni Valley was home to one of the main Neolithic settlements in Cyprus at Khirokitia *Vouni* (Dikaaios 1953; Le Brun 1984, 1989, 1994). The lower valley saw a Middle Chalcolithic settlement at Maroni *Karayiannidhes* (Manning et al. 1994a: 348–53; Manning and Conwell 1992: 279), and then a major Early–Middle Cypriot settlement at Psematismenos *Trelloukkas* with associated cemeteries at both Psematismenos *Trelloukkas* and adjoining Psematismenos *Kaliokremmos* (Todd 1985; Coleman et al. 1996: 336; Manning et al. in prep.), along with another Early Cypriot–Middle Cypriot cemetery (and so site) at Maroni village itself (Johnson 1980: 39–40, Maroni Village Tomb 1; Herscher 1984: 23 n. 4; Fig. 2). The close of the Middle Bronze Age (MBA) and the very beginning of the LC period, as elsewhere across Cyprus (Knapp 1986, 1997: 46–7; Merrillees 1971), saw a move to more coastal locations, and a new phase of settlement activity. Two Middle Cypriot (MC) III/LCI tombs have been excavated at Maroni *Kapsaloudhia* (Cadogan 1984: 2–3; Herscher 1984), late MBA Syro-Palestinian Canaanite jars and late Middle Cypriot–LCI ceramics have been recovered from a deposit on the seabed off Maroni *Tsaroukkas* (Manning, Sewell and Herscher in prep.; Manning and De Mita n.d.), and LCI remains are attested at Maroni *Vournes* (Cadogan 1983: 160–1; 1984: 2; 1992b: 51–3; 1996: 15; Fig. 4). LCI-IIB tombs occur at, and around, a number of areas in the lower Maroni valley forming the greater LC site at *Tsaroukkas*, *Vournes*, *Kalones*, *Kapsaloudhia*, 'Site 2', and *Aspres* (Johnson 1980; Cadogan 1984, 1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1996; Crouwel and Morris 1987; Manning and De Mita n.d.; Manning and Monks et al. 1998) over some 25ha. Architectural remains of LCII date have been excavated at *Vournes*, *Tsaroukkas*, and *Aspres* (Cadogan 1996; Manning et al. 1994b; Manning and De Mita n.d.).

The mortuary data

In 1897 a team from the British Museum searched for, and excavated, LBA tombs at Maroni *Tsaroukkas* and surrounding areas (Johnson 1980; Cadogan 1992a; Manning and Monks et al. 1998). As stated in letters to the British Museum (discussed and quoted in the

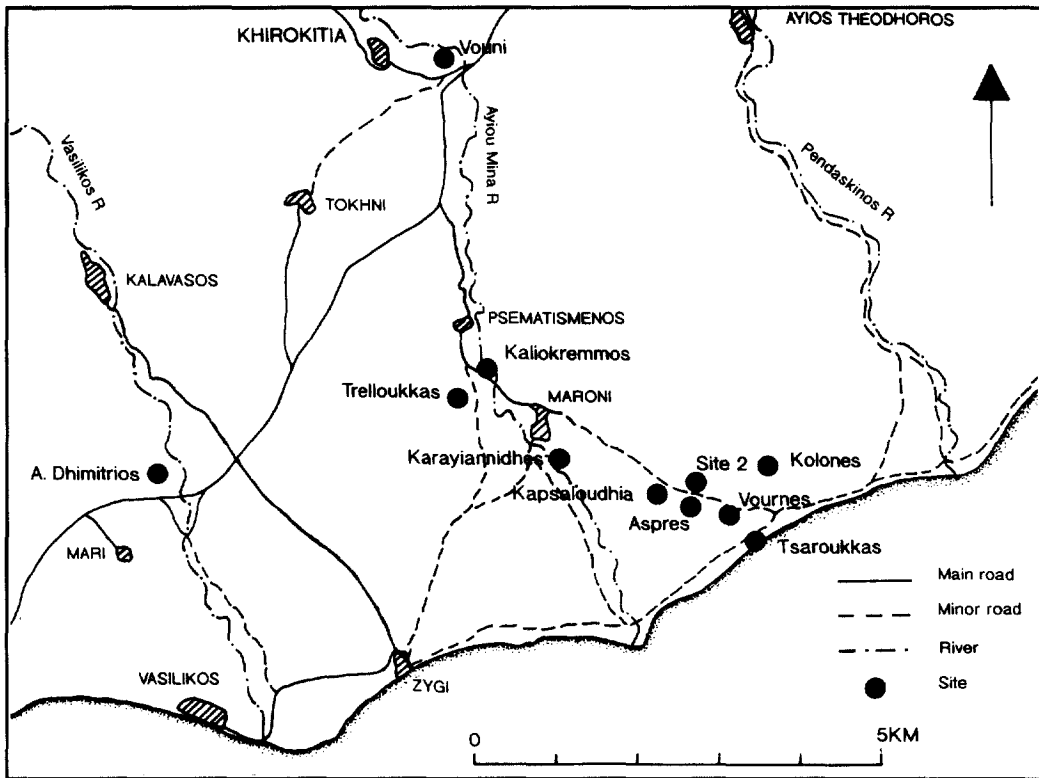


Figure 2 Map of the Maroni valley showing the sites/locations discussed in the text. Drawing by Joanne Goffee.

preceding three references, and preserved at the British Museum), they were specifically looking for tombs with impressive imported Mycenaean vases and other valuable objects. In other words, they were looking for the select élite tombs of the LCII era, as discovered in 1896 at Enkomi (Murray et al. 1900; in general, see Keswani 1989). At the end of the work at Maroni it is stated that 26 'productive' tombs were opened, but it is also stated that there were many other tombs but these were not recorded because they 'only contained local wares or fragmentary specimens of pottery ... nothing worth preserving' (H.B. Walters, Letter 3 December 1897, P No. 3671, from Limassol). The British Museum work appears to have been fairly thorough. Some 60 to 80 workmen were employed for three weeks, and the evidence from recent archaeological investigations at both Maroni Vournes and Maroni Tsaroukkas confirms systematic pitting across all areas with archaeological features. Thus it would be fair to assume that the 26 'productive' tombs represent a reasonable (even significant) sample of the 'richer' – i.e. élite – tombs of the region.

How many people and families are involved? Skeletal data were not of course recorded by the British Museum team at Maroni. However, similar élite or impressive LC tombs elsewhere on Cyprus usually provide evidence of several burials per tomb where data are known. At nearby Kalavasos Ayios Dhimitrios, for example, recent excavations of six impressive LCII tombs provided evidence for a minimum of 34 individuals (Moyer 1989). At Enkomi the estimated number of burials (where known) per LCI–IIC tomb ranged

from a similar number up to 21 or more in a few cases, with an average of *c.*10 as the minimum per tomb (Keswani 1989: tables 1 and 2). Comparison with some of the much 'richer' and architecturally larger and more sophisticated tombs at Enkomi is not appropriate/contemporary for those found at Maroni, and estimates of typically 4 to 15 bodies would be reasonable for the Maroni tombs. The 26 tombs may thus represent anywhere from, say, about 100 to maybe 400 burials, give or take a few. The chronology of the tombs is relevant at this point. Imported Mycenaean ceramics from these tombs range from Late Helladic (LH) IIA (in a context associated with local WSI in one case: MT Tomb 6, see Manning and Monks et al. 1998), to LHIIIA1, to LHIIIA2 and finally to White Painted Wheelmade III (usually seen as equivalent to LHIIIB) (Johnson 1980; Manning and Monks et al. 1998). According to conventional studies of Aegean chronology (Warren and Hankey 1989), this implies an overall chronological span from the fifteenth through to the thirteenth centuries BC. The local ceramic types likewise cover LCI to early LCIIIC, and at a minimum represent depositions from the sixteenth through to the thirteenth centuries BC (Johnson 1980: 64, 66; Warren and Hankey 1989: 116–18, 169; Merrillees 1992b; Eriksson 1992). A few tombs were used primarily in the earlier part of this time range, LCI–IIA, and over a third belong primarily to the later part of this time range, LCIIA–IIC (Johnson 1980: 64). The LCII period is usually dated from around the end of the fifteenth century BC to the late thirteenth century BC, or a period of (broadly) *c.*200 years.

Thus, on the various rough rules of thumb for pre-modern situations, where it is estimated either that a nuclear family (of on average *c.*5 or 7 contemporaneous persons) contributes about 20 deaths/bodies per century (e.g. Broodbank 1989: 323 summarizing Bintliff 1977: 639–40; Whitelaw 1983: 332–3), or that the burying population can be calculated from the number of burials over time against typical death rates of *c.*30 per 1,000 per annum in agricultural societies (Morris 1987: 74), the only plausible scenarios are either: (i) that only a very few selected members of up to 26 single family units are so buried over the required one to two century time span, or, (ii) that all or most members of a few selected (i.e. *élite*) families are buried over time and hence several different graves must belong to each *élite* family unit. In that case the whole set of 26 *élite* tombs from a 200+ year time span only represents some *c.*2 to 10 *élite* families (and lineages), or a contemporaneous burying population of just *c.*17 to 67 persons.

At Kalavassos the evidence shows male, female and, notably, juvenile and child burials (Moyer 1989; South 1997). This runs strongly against the first scenario above (although some mixture is of course possible). Instead, relatively complete burial of the *élite* grouping(s) seems likely. We must therefore conclude that only a few families are represented by the British Museum tombs at Maroni. The rest of the society are buried in the other tombs without obvious prestige goods, or in other non-formal circumstances. We have no spatial data from the British Museum work at *Tsaroukkas* on the location of these other tombs, but it seems likely they were merely around and in the same areas as the 26 recorded tombs. H.B. Walters, director of the British Museum team, described the overall cemetery-site at *Tsaroukkas* in the following terms:

The first site chosen, designated site A, lies along the sea-shore, on a low cliff, about a mile and three quarters in a south-easterly direction from the village of Maroni, on

either side of the bridle-road from Limassol to Larnaka. As we expected, the cemetery is wholly of the Bronze Age period, with a considerable admixture of Mycenaean importations, but, as at Episkopi (Curium) the tombs have been mostly rifled in ancient or in recent times. Moreover they appear to be very much scattered over the site.

(H. B. Walters, Letter P, No. 3480, 18 Nov. 1897
from Limassol to the British Museum)

Allied with a sketch map of the British Museum work (Johnson 1980: pl. IV; Manning and Monks et al. 1998: pl. 1a) – despite the absence of a scale and a less than decisive north arrow – the clear impression is of a large area of tombs of which a small number proved ‘productive’ in terms of the British Museum team’s search for prestige objects. Recent intensive investigation of just one small part of the overall *Tsaroukkas* area searched by the British Museum has already produced evidence for 14 LC tombs (Manning and Monks et al. 1998; Manning et al. in preparation), and thus appears to confirm this hypothesis of a much larger cemetery within which select élite tombs were located.

It is important also to note that there was more than one LC cemetery in the lower Maroni Valley. Another existed a few hundred meters inland at *Vournes*, and was again the subject of pitting by the British Museum team (Cadogan 1992a: 125, 1989; 1992b, 1996, Cadogan and Domurad 1989). A further set of tombs is known some 300m to the west-north-west of *Vournes* at ‘Site 2’ (Cadogan 1992a: fig.2 no. 2) (‘Site 2’ in Figure 2). The tombs another half kilometer away at *Kapsaloudhia* (Cadogan 1984) may well indicate a further cemetery, and finds at both *Aspres* and *Kalones* would indicate additional LC tombs at both these locales (Manning et al. in prep.). The locations are all some 300–500m away from each other, and surround the central locus of *Vournes*. In each case, there are also indications of LC settlement. For example, the tombs at *Kapsaloudhia* on the south side of a road are matched by an extensive area of occupation debris just on the north side of the road (Plate 1). A comparison might be made both with the similar dispersed set of units which comprised the greater settlement at *Morphou Toumba tou Skourou* (Vermeule and Wolsky 1990: 14–15), and the LCI settlement at *Enkomi* which comprised spatially dispersed household and industrial complexes each with associated cemeteries (Dikaïos 1969–71: pls 247–8, 267–8; Courtois 1986: 5). One does not need to cite arguments from ethnography to suggest that it is likely that such spatial organization reflects the social organization of the region in LC times (compare e.g. Savage 1997 and references cited at p. 232).

Competition and funerary ritual

The élite LC tombs recorded by the British Museum at *Tsaroukkas* are notable for what archaeologists and anthropologists term prestige goods, and quantities of them. LCI–IIB social, economic, and political competition, as expressed in mortuary practice, appears directed at conspicuous consumption, with increasing quantities and types of goods and especially exotica through time under the inherent competitive, and so inflationary, pressures of such economies. In the developed LCII form, the particularly favoured currency of the LC élite across Cyprus for funerary ritual consisted of imported Mycenaean



Plate 1 View of the LBA (and later Iron Age) debris at Maroni *Kapsaloudhia* during survey.

ceramics (Steel 1998). These began as a trickle of Aegean imports in LHI-IIA (and LMI), increased in LHIIB-III A1, and reached a conspicuous peak in LHIIIA2. At *Tsaroukkas*, the British Museum team of 1897 found some 90+ Mycenaean vases or part vases, and two Late Minoan III vases (Johnson 1980), and numerous other finds of imported Aegean material have been made since then (Catling 1962: 148; Manning and Conwell 1992: 281-3; Manning et al. 1994b; Manning and Monks et al. 1998; Manning and De Mita n.d.). This situation in the LCI-II B period is typical of emerging polities in many areas of the world. Ranked societies embody and foster competition for the relatively few valued positions, and funerary deposits usually reflect such competition (e.g. Savage 1997 and references).

Such competitive conspicuous consumption occurred, and developed, from LCI to LCIIB, or over a period of some 250 or more years (i.e. 250 years on the shorter chronologies, and 350 years on the longer chronologies: Eriksson 1992; Merrillees 1992b). LCI is usually regarded as rather more than half of this overall span, and an exponential pattern of a long, relatively gradual, process of competition and display which then went into rapid overdrive is evident (and of course typical of such processes the world over). Several centuries is a long time; a collective memory would be well entrenched, and the social geography inscribed and mapped (Halbwachs 1992; Fentress and Wickham 1992; Gregory and Urry 1985; Bradley 1993; Gosden 1994; Tilley 1994; Barrett 1994; Thomas 1996).

Archaeological information from the Maroni Valley of a non-mortuary nature for the LCI–IIB periods is noticeably relatively limited. Some structures underneath a subsequent monumental Ashlar Building at *Vournes* provide evidence at this location of LCI–IIB occupation (Cadogan 1989: 48, 1992b: 51–3, 1996: 15–16), but no similar architecture is yet known elsewhere. Instead the primary evidence consists of tombs. The visible importance of formal funerary practice allows us to guess at the importance of lineage, and family history, for present status and rights in LCI–IIB society. As noted in the introduction above, this is a common situation in emergent, complex, agrarian but pre-polity or pre-state societies, where there are no permanent secular institutions or authorities, and the only common referential structure, and source of diachronic rights, is the past (as narrated, reiterated, ritualized, made visible, and so on). Typical of a developing lineage system, the *Tsaroukkas* tombs are used for a restricted number of multiple interments over relatively long time periods. Funeral feasts would seem likely from the assemblages, which include plentiful imported and local drinking and mixing vessels and containers (cf. Steel 1998). Such signifying events create a social narrative, both within and about the lineage grouping and its members. As this conspicuous consumption funerary display competition developed, inflationary pressures led to an expanded range of prestige items, and, in particular, the increasing use of imported Mycenaean objects (adding to and replacing local types from LCIIA to LCIIIB), along with other foreign exotica. The several separate LC cemeteries in the lower Maroni Valley indicate a contemporary set of groups each involved in similar practises and processes (Goldstein 1981), and we may therefore assume not only intra-local descent group competition, but also valley-wide inter-group competition.

It is therefore a notable feature in the lower Maroni Valley that tombs used for some period of time up to a peak in LCIIIB, even early LCIIIC, are suddenly built over or destroyed in LCIIIC. A typical example occurs at *Tsaroukkas* in Building 1, Room 5, where Tomb 13 was partly destroyed (the top of the chamber was removed – levelled) and covered by the LCIIIC structure (Fig. 3). At *Vournes* the tombs are emptied/destroyed and the foundations of the LCIIIC Ashlar Building constructed down on to their floors (Cadogan and Domurad 1989; Cadogan 1992a: 125, 1992b). In fact, at present, *no* tombs are known of mature LCIIIC date in the Maroni Valley. How, and why, were several centuries of socio-political structure so totally erased? An important process is clearly indicated. After centuries of memory, there is a deliberate forgetting. A similar but slightly different situation appears to exist in the nearby Kalavassos Valley. Some earlier tombs are covered by and buried beneath parts of LCIIIC buildings (e.g. Tombs 6, 7, 10: South et al. 1989: 54–6, fig. 2). However, a few other notably important tombs (e.g. Tombs 9, 11, 12, 13, 16) are incorporated in the street plan adjacent to (and partly under), and around, the monumental Building X complex (South 1997: fig. 1). This is the problematic situation mentioned, but avoided, by Keswani (1996). She finds this record odd when compared to Enkomi (Keswani 1989) where, although there is some change (reorientation) between LCIIA–C and later LCIIIC–LCIII, there is none the less a continuous funerary tradition (as also at Kition and Hala Sultan Tekke: Keswani 1996: 226–8). Why the sudden change at Maroni, and the differing records at Maroni, Kalavassos and Enkomi?

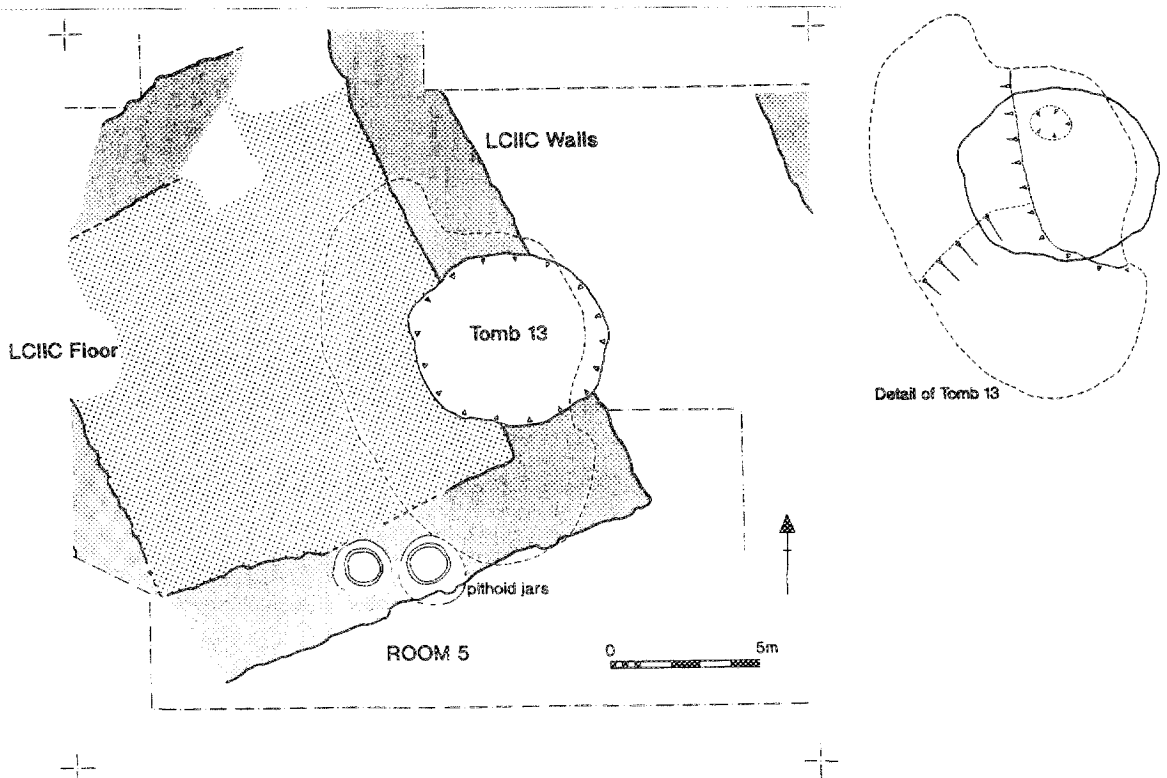


Figure 3 Plan showing Late Cypriot MT Tomb 13 built over (sealed) and partly destroyed (top of chamber removed in levelling) by LCIIC Building 1, Room 5, at Maroni *Tsaroukkas*. Drawing by Sarah Monks.

Pasts, present and chiefs/kings

The obvious hypothesis for the Maroni case appears to be to suggest that the change represents the transition from an on-going (unresolved) competition among several descent groups for dominance to a situation where one group (or individual therefrom) established permanent control over the entire region and so ended the previous form of competition (one might compare, although at a rather different scale, Caesar Augustus and the end of the Roman Republic: Syme 1939; Zanker 1988; Lacey 1996). Once such a regional ruler and polity is established, the rest of the society can no longer go on defining their relations, rights, and status in relative ways *vis-à-vis* each other as 'peers' through their local burial practices and lineage. Instead, a new supra-kinship, regional, society exists, and what matters are present relations with this living ruler(s), and relations with and within the institutions and infrastructure of the new polity. The human geography of the region also now perforce centres on the ruler and his/her location, and previous local group geographies are redundant. The living ruler(s) and the institutions of the polity have become the key framework and structure of reference, rather than the past and the local social space. Hence the whole system of previous LCI–IIB funerary competition and practice are suddenly irrelevant, and, indeed, the new ruler(s) probably encourage this

realization as they do not want there to be potential alternative sources of power, and so an obvious source of potential rivals. The only important ancestors now remaining are the specific ancestors of the new ruling family, who have become the ruling lineage.

Consistent with such a model, the LCIIC period across Cyprus is characterized by the development of 'urban' sites, a set of large 'ashlar' buildings, evidence of specialist craft production, the development of seals-writing and bureaucratic administration, and other signs of new complex regional political entities (Negbi 1986; Merrillees 1992a; Keswani 1993, 1996; Smith 1994; Åström and Herscher 1996; Knapp 1997: 48–63). Maroni is no exception. Very little pre-LCIIC architecture is known outside *Vournes*, but in LCIIC new architectural complexes appear over the greater LBA site area. Some of these are special purpose crafting-production facilities, such as Buildings 1 and 2 at *Tsaroukkas* (Plates 2 and 3) respectively concerned with textile manufacture and the processing and packaging of a liquid, typical of a developed, differentiated, complex society with specialist crafting. A monumental Ashlar Building is constructed at *Vournes*, the only low hillock of the region (Fig. 4). This building was some 30 × 20m in size with foundations up to 2–3m deep and partly built with finely dressed ashlar blocks. 'Walls up to 2m thick make it easy to imagine an imposing edifice of two or more storeys. This monument would have been visible far and wide' (Cadogan 1996: 16; for plan, see Cadogan 1992b). Across a street to the west, another large, more utilitarian, four-aisled building was also constructed, the West Building, and it is likely that a significant element of regional storage was concentrated inside (Cadogan 1996: 17). Among other things, the architectural plan of the Ashlar Building further shows that its owners have exclusively annexed, and control, some key set of specialist craft production activities inside the east wing of their Ashlar Building. Here there is a set of rooms with an olive press, plaster drainage area and related sunken pithos, Cypro-Minoan inscribed pithos, and other production equipment; it is notable that there is but a solitary entrance to this wing, and that this is from *within* the Ashlar Building itself, from the north corner of the main large room, 20, into passage 19, and then into room 6 and the rest of the east wing (Cadogan 1992b: 53–4, figs. 1–3 – note that, although fig. 2 shows an apparent opening of passage 19 to the outside [next to the main entrance to the Ashlar Building], Cadogan in fact writes on p. 54 that 'It is possible, *but unlikely*, that passage 19 also opened onto the outside of the Building' [my italics]). The LCIIC evidence from Maroni is therefore consistent with the development of a complex regional polity with a ruling individual (a chief, king, etc.) or group and attached specialists based in the Ashlar Building at *Vournes*.

The consideration of the mortuary data allows us to follow, and be specific about, the timetable for these developments. They happened suddenly at the very start of LCIIC. The rapidity and completeness of the changes argue for the role of a key individual (also Cadogan 1989: 50–1). We can follow the course of change. We know little from the long LCI period. Architecture is at present known only at *Vournes*, but the tombs of this period at *Kapsaloudhia* and *Tsaroukkas* appear no less impressive, and it would appear that a set of groups within the lower valley are more or less equivalent at this time (sixteenth through to the fifteenth centuries BC). Fortunes may have varied. MBIIC-LB1 Syro-Palestinian imports on the seabed off a gully-inlet at *Tsaroukkas* might indicate an important initial link with the east Mediterranean trading world of the Hyksos period in Egypt (the Hyksos capital of Avaris was a major port with the Hyksos probably controlling all

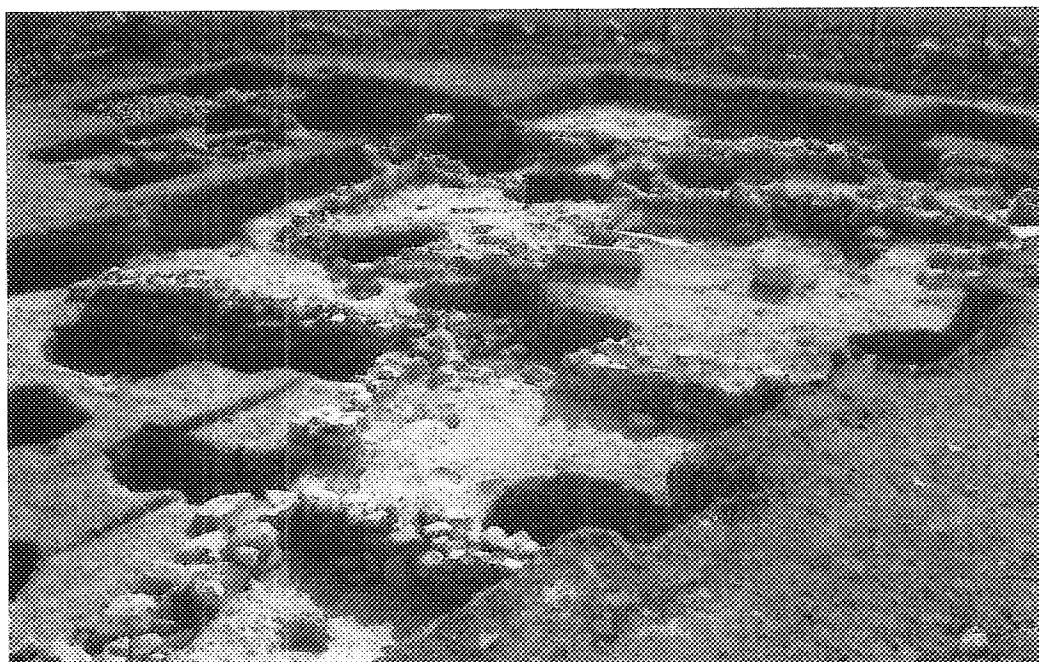


Plate 2 View from the north-east of LCHC Building 1 at Maroni *Tsaro-ukkas*. This building is built over the LCI-IIB cemetery at the site. The pits visible are either LC tombs under the building, or robbing pits cut to find tombs under the building.



Plate 3 View from the north of LCHC Building 2 at Maroni *Tsaro-ukkas*. This building is built over the LCI-IIB cemetery at the site.

Mediterranean trade into Egypt (Kuhrt 1995: 180); Kamose lists 300 ships in the port when he attacked – and a number of late MC to early LCI imports are known (Maguire 1995), while a network of other major port/trading sites of Hyksos date exist around the east Mediterranean (Niemeier 1995; Negbi 1994)), and perhaps a prominence for the coastal *Tsaroukkas* group, for example, but the demise of the Hyksos and the revised east Mediterranean political and trading situation may have subsequently favoured a group building long-term control of regional agricultural production, and the means to acquire key raw materials from inland Cyprus. Whatever the exact course of affairs and oscillations, over time, the one low ‘hillock’ in the area of LBA occupation with a prominent position, *Vournes*, seems to have become more and more important, and it is the only site with a long history of architecture from LCI through LCIIC in the one place.

In LCIIA–B (late fifteenth/early fourteenth through to the fourteenth century BC) larger, or special purpose, buildings appear here: the so-called ‘Basin Building’ (with sunken basin with paved floor: Cadogan 1986: pl. 6.1) and small adjacent structure (Cadogan 1992b: 53, pl. 8.1), and another building ‘of some grandeur’ with plaster floor and evidence for some storage (a sunken pithos) of which only traces remain under the subsequent Ashlar Building (Cadogan 1996: 16). More particularly, this LCIIA–B architecture is constructed close to, and in/on, the cemetery at the site with its evidence of conspicuous consumption. A particular, successful, lineage may already have been asserting its special prerogatives, the superiority of its ancestors and their ability to offer a degree of power over the world. We can assume this was not in isolation, but set within local and inter-descent group competition across the region. It might be suspected from the larger and special purpose architecture constructed at *Vournes* that this assertion by a group at *Vournes* was not just limited to the local *Vournes* group, but instead included a claim now to some extra- or supra-group status over the wider region. Given the location next to, and indeed in/on, a cemetery, and an unusual construction like the Basin Building, a claim to, and articulation of, such ancestral authority via ritual practice might be considered likely (and subsequent power structures may well have been based in ritualized authority). From LCIIIB, if not earlier, there is also evidence of copper working at *Vournes*, and so evidence of specialist craft production, presumably of the materials and types of crafted goods that would be necessary in order to engage in exchange with the foreign traders who were the source of the desired prestige imports buried in the contemporary tombs. The head of the *Vournes* group/lineage is now asserting big man, great man, and chiefly claims and station. This is clearly at the expense of others. A period of intensifying, spiralling competition might be expected as such claims are made, contested, and resisted, leading either to an inflationary bust-collapse (as typical of prestige goods economies), or resolution through the establishment of a new political order. The peak LCIIIB–LHIIIA2 period of prestige goods deposit in tombs at *Tsaroukkas*, *Vournes* and elsewhere belongs to this brief but intense phase of activity in the middle and later fourteenth century BC (for LHIIIA2 chronology, see Wiener 1998).

Then, early in the LCIIC period, the Ashlar Building is constructed over the previous cemetery and LCIIA–B buildings at *Vournes* (Fig. 4). Its builders therefore specifically incorporated and subsumed the authority of the previous *Vournes* cemetery, and the previous buildings of the site, under, and as part of, this building (Cadogan 1996: 15–18). From this point the only important (powerful) ancestors are the specific ancestors of the

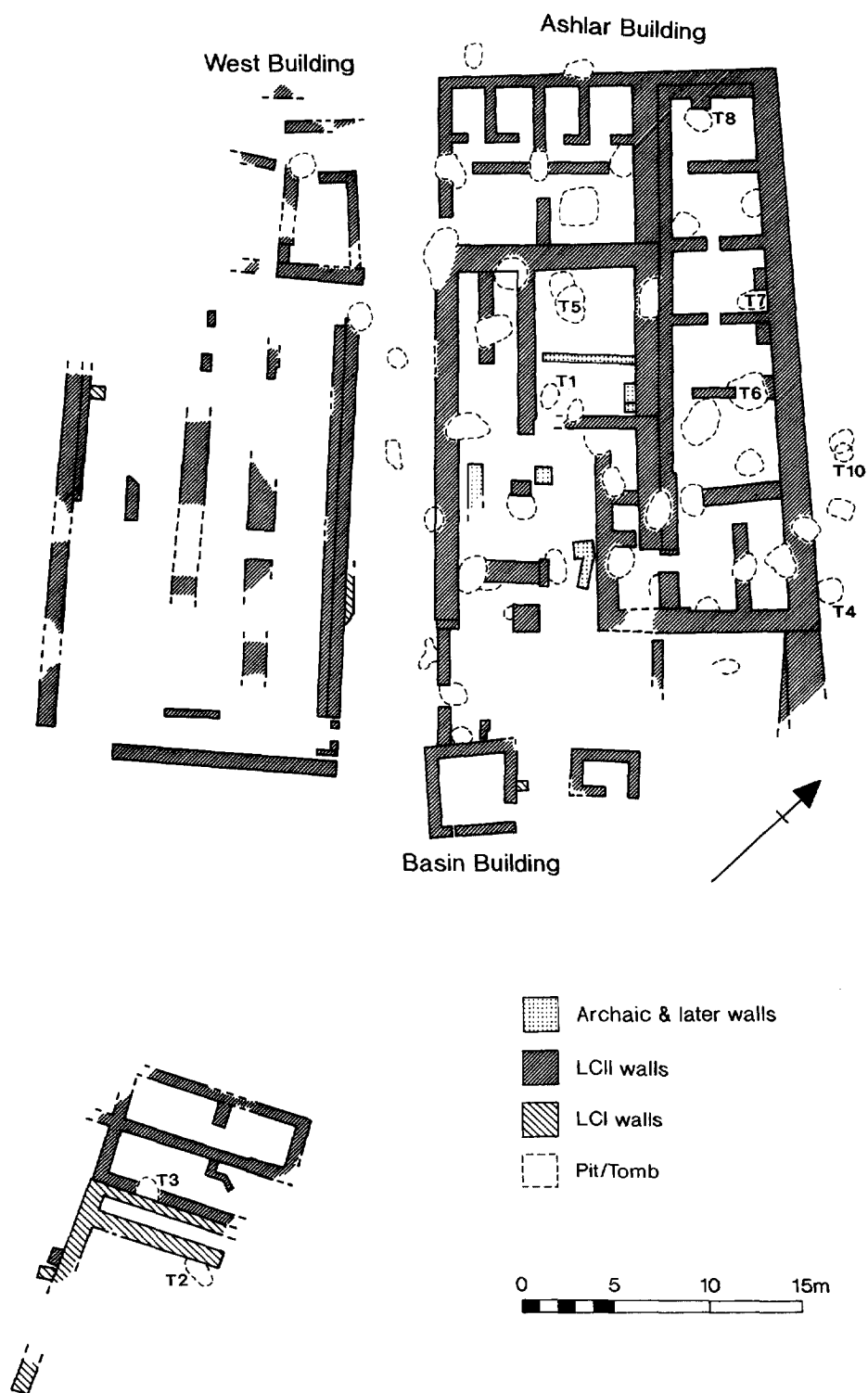


Figure 4 Schematic plan of Maroni Vournes (after Cadogan 1992b). Drawing by Sarah Monks.

new ruling family. Only this group continues to receive formal, public, display-oriented burial. Other ancestries, burial grounds, and narratives are actively forgotten, renegotiated, and rewritten (and at this exact time). The few highly impressive tombs in the street alongside the monumental Building X complex at Kalavassos *Ayios Dhimitrios* (South 1997: fig.1) probably offer evidence of just such 'royal' burials (which are either respected/kept, or continued). The British Museum team of 1897 searched the lower Maroni Valley for such a 'rich vein' of tombs, but were not able to locate them – perhaps they were already robbed, or they were missed. We may guess at an original location close to, or overlooking, the Ashlar Building at *Vournes*.

The contrasting history of mortuary practice at Enkomi in LCIIC has been mentioned earlier. This appears to be explained via reference to the notable feature of this major urban site – often hypothesized to be the capital or centre of LBA Cyprus (e.g. Pettenburg 1996: 27–37) – namely, that it in fact lacks indications of a single ruling individual/institution. In the main LCIIC period, there are a number of impressive complexes ('ashlar mansions') in several areas of the city, but, as Keswani (1996: 224) notes, 'there is no single complex among all of these that can be clearly identified as the centre of an administrative control hierarchy or a 'palace', that is, a structure with an archive or other notable concentrations of administrative and ceremonial paraphernalia, centralized storage facilities, etc.' Similarly, the proliferation of different sanctuaries in different areas of the city suggests 'that there was no single, centralized religious authority either' (Keswani 1996: 226). The evidence from Enkomi thus suggests that there were multiple, competing, elite groupings at this site in LCIIC variously controlling a range of crafting and production activities, associated with a diverse range of religious practices, and each asserting their status through impressive architecture and (continuing) conspicuous consumption in funerary practice. This situation of on-going plural power groupings (an oligarchy) appears in marked contrast to Maroni (and for example Kalavassos and Alassa), and accounts for the continuation of forms of conspicuous consumption funerary practice at Enkomi. In general, several Cypriot sites/areas exhibit evidence for conspicuous consumption funerary competition, and some signs of one (or more) groups engaging also in architectural elaboration in LCI–IIB. But the resolution, or non-resolution, of such competition varies from place to place (Keswani 1996: 236–9). We may suspect that the difference was the ability/inability to establish an effective monopoly on a sufficient set of power resources (from foreign trade, ritual authority, copper, agricultural production, craft production, etc.). At Enkomi, *Toumba tou Skourou*, Hala Sultan Tekke and Kition no single figure appears to have established (or have been able successfully to establish) permanent control (the history of the 'Fortress' at LCI–IIB Enkomi may represent a failed attempt: Keswani 1996: 222–4), in contrast, for example, to the situations at Maroni, Kalavassos, and Alassa.

On present evidence we may note that the Ashlar Building at Maroni is as old as, and probably even a little older than (Cadogan 1992b: 57), the equivalent structures at Kalavassos or Alassa, and its continuous building-architectural heritage, from LCI through LCIIB at the same locus, is unique. A key individual in Cypriot prehistory may have been based in the lower Maroni Valley at *Vournes*. If the Alashiya of Near Eastern texts is Cyprus (or a part thereof) (see Knapp 1996: 3–11, 1985), then this pattern of political structures on LBA Cyprus raises an interesting issue when one comes to consider the identity and

especially location of the 'king' of Alashiya referred to in texts of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC (Knapp 1996). Is a south coast, or western (cf. Merrillees 1971), location possible? The Iron Age Archaic-Hellenistic reuse of the main part of the Ashlar Building at *Vournes* as a shrine (Cadogan 1983: 156–7, 1988: 231, 1992b: 57), further suggests, and attests to, a considerable memory and specialness of place and role at *Vournes*, for example.

Conclusions

Study of the role of the past and process as articulated through the symbolic social history of mortuary practice offers important evidence for the recognition and analysis of socio-political change (e.g. Morris 1987, 1992). A significant change in the relevance of the past, marked by a sharp break in funerary practice and a dramatic erasing of tangible memory and history, appear both to be explained by, and help explain, the emergence in the lower Maroni Valley during the early LCIIC period of a radical new power structure: a single, central, ruling authority and figure (a chief or king, or equivalent). Further, the rapid and complete nature of the change would suggest that it was personal, and associated with a key individual or generational pairing. The combination of the change in funerary practice at the beginning of the LCIIC period, the new buildings of the LCIIC period, and the ability to date this change with some precision via Aegean imports, allows us to approach a high-resolution archaeology of socio-political development in the late fourteenth century BC in the Maroni Valley.

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