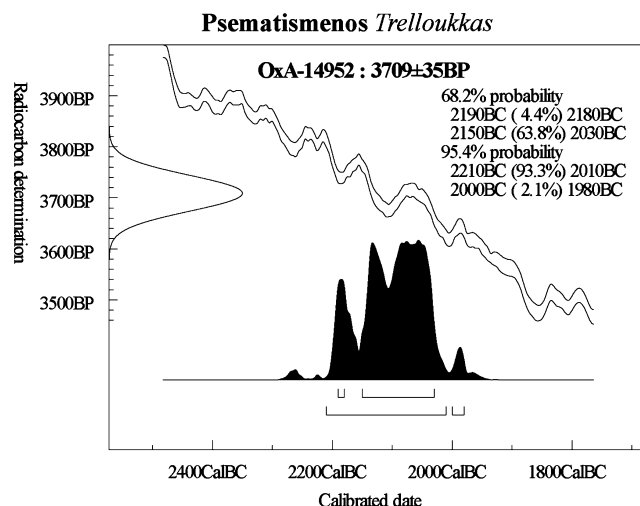




Calibrated calendar age ranges for charcoal sample OxA-14952 from Psematismenos Trelloukkas employing OxCal (version 3.10 Feb. 2005) and IntCal04. As a long-lived charcoal sample this date range – most likely around 2150–2030BC taking the most likely element of the 1 standard deviation range – is a terminus post quem for the associated archaeology. This independent date range found is entirely consistent with the ceramic and other material culture indicating an assemblage at the site from the Early through Middle Cypriot periods

With the survey data we collected we are able to estimate that the settlement at Trelloukkas was about 7 ha in size. It was likely an important regional centre for the EC-MC period with an interesting near-coastal location. The lithic material collected gave us a clearer understanding of how important this resource continued to be into the Bronze Age. Finally, the geomorphological assessment, through some augur transects and the couple of trials, showed that, although the stratigraphy of the site varies from non-existent through relatively shallow, important habitation layers are still preserved in places despite much erosion compounded by all the activity of quarrying in the last hundred years.

We were extremely lucky with the weather during our field season: enjoying the spring sunshine and wild flowers. Rain clouds could be seen gathering over the Troodos Mountains to the north, but the threatening clouds broke up as they approached the coast. In addition, because we were in Cyprus during the Easter celebrations we were treated to the sight of six foot high red chickens and eggs as we drove to site each morning!

Arediou-Vouppes Excavation Project

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The second season of fieldwork at Arediou-Vouppes was completed in August 2005. The site is situated at the edge of the Mesaoria Plain, just north of the foothills of the Troodos mountains. It was originally interpreted as Late Bronze Age (LBA) agricultural support village, which might have supported specialised mining villages in the foothills of the Troodos. As a result of discussions with the local priest in 2005, we

discovered that although the archaeological community know the site as *Vouppes* the local name is, in fact, *Lithosouros* (meaning mound of stones). Although it would be preferable to respect the local nomenclature we decided, given the number of publications already referring to the site as *Vouppes* and the material stored under this name in the Cyprus Museum, to continue to refer to it as Arediou-Vouppes.

The primary aim of excavations in 2005 was to test the survey results from 2004. The main focus was the exploration of a number of anomalies identified in geophysics that possibly related to architectural remains. We also tested the possibility of a LBA extramural cemetery at the SE edge of the site; namely, whether or not it extended into the southernmost field on the plateau. Consequently, 2005's excavations kept us largely on the southern periphery of the main settlement area, as identified by our survey results and also through detailed discussion with the local farmers. This was a conscious strategy; the year's excavations were intended to try to satisfy the anomaly posed by the very different results of the Sydney-Cyprus Survey Project (SCSP; Given and Knapp, *The Sydney Cyprus Survey Project*. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California 2003) of the main location of the site from that suggested by our surface survey and geophysics in 2004 (CBRL Newsletter 2005, pp. 62–3).

We expected that the southernmost field lay beyond the limits of the Late Cypriot (LC) settlement because very little diagnostic material was picked up here in the survey. To test this hypothesis we dug a test trench in field 7. The trench was completely sterile; however, we did uncover an earlier plough surface of uncertain date at a depth of around half a metre. The excavators noted that there was no pottery in the 'ancient' plough soil. Although we did not reach the natural in this trench we decided to close it at this point.

Possible tombs, represented by hollows in a rocky outcrop at the south eastern edge of the site, had been identified by SCSP in 1996. These were associated with concentrations of LBA fine wares but, unusually, no ground stone or *pithos*. This was reinforced by our own survey results, which corroborated SCSP's findings and geophysics. Moreover, discussion with the locals suggested that the cliffs at the edge of the site were the location of burials that had eroded away and fallen into the valley below certainly within the last fifty years. Two trenches were opened over the hollows, but both these trenches, although initially promising, ultimately proved negative. The hollows corresponded with shallow pits that bottomed out at less than a metre. In one trench we identified an earlier plough surface and another that we presume to be an ancient (Early Holocene) riverbed. Although there was a significant concentration of very worn fine wares on the surface in this area, nothing was found beneath the shallow topsoil. We suggest that the concentration of fine ware pottery in this area is due to selective processes of erosion.

A series of test trenches were opened in the main area of the settlement – in areas where there were rich deposits of archaeological materials on the surface

corresponding with subsurface anomalies. These trenches revealed clear evidence of LC habitation. The anomalies were clearly picking up readings of collapsed and/or robbed out walls built from diabase pebbles, presumably procured from the Alouppos riverbed. The excavations suggested scattered occupation or building activity in areas clearly associated with the anomalies identified by geophysics in 2004.

Walled stones were clearly identified in cuts in the natural (a sedimentary sandstone). These stones had been bedded in a basic mortar apparently made from the surrounding soils. The walls were of typical BA construction, consisting of an inner and outer skin with a bedded rubble core. Where surfaces have been identified these are either cut into the natural (presumably outside courtyard areas) or consist of a rude mud mortar. The architecture follows the norms identified for Cypriot Bronze Age constructions, albeit 'ruder' than attested in the contemporary urban sites.

A well-preserved building was identified in one trench. The bottom course of the external wall consisted of stones that were much larger than the diabase pebbles in the upper courses. The doorway had an unusual white stone threshold. These rough white stones had been deliberately bedded in mortar within the threshold, cobble-fashioned, but did not extend outside the line of the wall in either direction. The choice of stone used for this threshold was particularly striking as it has not been identified elsewhere on site in the walling. The door opening consisted of a stone of 60–70 cm, walled on end to form both the quoin and the lower part of the door jamb. This had collapsed, smashing a large quantity of pottery directly on the floor surface. On the other side of the doorway there

was what appears to be the base of a stone bench. There was also a pillar base bedded into the mortar floor. The exterior surface appears to be a courtyard cut into the natural. Rich deposits of pottery were found smashed on the floor; these were primarily utilitarian wares such as Plain ware and Canaanite jar. Surprisingly small quantities of *pithos* sherds were found. There was also significant evidence of copper working in the form of slag and one copper/bronze point.

The material associated with the wall collapse elsewhere on site was consistently thirteenth century BC. Occasional finds included dentalium shells, a stone weight and a gaming stone. There is also some intriguing evidence for Early Iron Age activity at the site that can be closely dated to the eleventh-tenth century BC; Black Slip sherds were found mixed in amongst the stone collapse in the easternmost trench and White Painted sherds mixed with LC pottery were found in a square pit adjacent to the collapse. Although the pit appears to have been emptied in the Iron Age there is some evidence to suggest that it may well form part of a larger tomb complex; a large flat stone disappearing vertically into a cut in the natural was discovered on the last day of excavation, probably the blocking stone of a tomb stonion.

The 2005 excavations Arediou are extremely promising. We have clearly identified a significant settlement of a type still poorly known in LBA Cyprus. The 2006 excavations will focus on establishing the ground plan of the well preserved building. We hope that the results will allow us to define the nature of occupation at the site, the architectural form and function of the buildings, and ultimately to develop an archaeology of household for the LC period.

Research Reports from Sinai

Holy Art in Transit — St. Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai in Egypt

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On the Sinai Peninsula which connects Africa and Asia, beneath the mountain (Gebel Musa) where Moses is said to have received the Ten Commandments, against the slope of a steep-sided wadi, lies Saint Catherine's Monastery, which for over 17 centuries has been one of the world's great centres of religious pilgrimage. Within its imposing granite walls rests a fortification like no other, incredibly rich in important religious and historical artefacts. Today, behind the monastery's ramparts, a small community of monks continues the traditional way of life in what is the oldest active Christian monastery in existence. The remote, bone-dry landscape of the desert, combined with the simplicity of the monastic life and the historical surroundings, transforms the place into a timeless miniature town from another age.

As the spectrum of the icons, manuscripts, and other religious objects encompasses important and unique representative pieces from all eras of Byzantine art, the monastery tends to be the epicentre of attention for

many curators who long to include parts of its treasures in their exhibitions. As a result, the monastery has participated in 11 international exhibitions since 1997, when a small group of icons left the monastery's premises for the first time.

This study, completed as a Master's dissertation at the University of Durham, sought to illuminate the procedures under which artefacts from the Sinai collection have been circulated in international exhibitions. We held extended conversations with the members of the community who were directly involved with each exhibition, and spoke to curators at the various museums where the icons and manuscripts of Sinai were on display. Panel paintings on wood are extremely sensitive to changes in humidity, and the monastery's icons and manuscripts have always been exhibited in sealed display cases, in which the low humidity levels of Sinai need to be maintained. In two of the exhibitions, a complex series of events beyond the monastery's control led to circumstances that were outside the guidelines established for the safe transport and display of the artefacts. By investigating all the related circumstances, it was intended to identify unfortunate contingencies that may have endangered the legendary collection, in order to avoid similar incidents in the future.