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New Perspectives on Household Archaeology

Edited by

BRADLEY J. PARKER AND CATHERINE P. FOSTER

Winona Lake, Indiana

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Contents

Preface	ix
Contributors	xi
Introduction: Household Archaeology in the Near East and Beyond . . .	1
CATHERINE P. FOSTER AND BRADLEY J. PARKER	

Section 1

Household in Theoretical Perspective

1. Between the Individual and the Collective: Household as a Social Process in Neolithic Greece	15
STELLA SOUVATZI	
2. Homemaking in the Early Bronze Age	45
MEREDITH S. CHESON	
3. Households through a Digital Lens	81
RUTH TRINGHAM	

Section 2

Methodological Advancements in Household Studies

4. Particles of the Past: Microarchaeological Spatial Analysis of Ancient House Floors	123
ISAAC I. T. ULLAH	
5. Household Matters: Techniques for Understanding Assyrian Houses	139
LYNN RAINVILLE	
6. Shifting Household Economics of Plant Use from the Early to Late Natufian Periods of the Southern Levant	165
ARLENE M. ROSEN	
7. Defining Households: Micro-Contextual Analysis of Early Neolithic Households in the Zagros, Iran	183
WENDY MATTHEWS	

Section 3

Food and Subsistence at the Household Level

8. Feeding Households: A Multiproxy Method for Analysis of Food Preparation in the Halaf Period at Fıstıklı Höyük, Turkey 219
MARIE HOPWOOD AND SIDDHARTHA MITRA
9. Integrating Household Archaeology and Archaeobotany: A Case Study from Ubaid Kenan Tepe, Southeastern Anatolia 247
PHILIP GRAHAM AND ALEXIA SMITH
10. Beyond the House and into the Fields: Cultivation Practices in the Late PPNB 267
CHANTEL E. WHITE AND NICHOLAS P. WOLFF
11. Domestic Production and Subsistence in an Ubaid Household in Upper Mesopotamia 289
BRADLEY J. PARKER

Section 4

Urban Households

12. The Challenge of Identifying Households at Tell Kurdu (Turkey) . . 321
RANA ÖZBAL
13. The Life of the Majority: A Reconstruction of Household Activities and Residential Neighborhoods at the Late-Third-Millennium Urban Settlement at Tiriş Höyük in Northern Mesopotamia 347
YOKO NISHIMURA
14. Households and Neighborhoods of the Indus Tradition: An Overview 373
JONATHAN MARK KENOYER
15. Changing Households at the Rise of Urbanism: The EB I–II Transition at Tel Bet Yerah 407
SARIT PAZ

Section 5

Synthetic Household Studies

16. The Uruk Phenomenon: A View from the Household 437
CATHERINE P. FOSTER

-
17. Household Continuity and Transformation in a
Prehistoric Cypriot Village 473
DAVID FRANKEL AND JENNIFER M. WEBB
18. How Households Can Illuminate the Historical Record:
The Judahite Houses at Gath of the Philistines 501
JEFFREY R. CHADWICK AND AREN M. MAEIR
19. Household Archaeology in the Southern Levant:
An Example from Iron Age Tell Halif 519
JAMES W. HARDIN

Section 6

Afterword

20. About the Archaeological House: Themes and Directions 559
ROGER MATTHEWS
- General Index 567



Household Continuity and Transformation in a Prehistoric Cypriot Village

David Frankel and Jennifer M. Webb

The small prehistoric village at Marki in central Cyprus was occupied from the beginning of the Early Bronze Age (about 2350 B.C.E.) to the middle years of the Middle Bronze Age (about 1850 B.C.E.). A decade of field research has exposed 2000 square m in one part of the site, providing evidence of household structure and development over some 500 years (Frankel and Webb 1996, 2006a). The sequence can be divided into nine phases of construction and use, showing a pattern of growth, development, and decline in the extent and density of buildings. In this essay, the approaches and concepts underlying the archaeological procedures used to explore this site are discussed, leading into a summary of the history of the village. Variability in house form and elements of continuity and transformation provide the basis for an exploration of dynamic adjustments at different scales, from individual domestic cycles to broader relationships. These observations allow insights into aspects of social organization and decision making within this community over many generations.

Adjusting the Focus

This discussion of a Bronze Age village in Cyprus, like all archaeological studies, draws on general principles of human behavior and relates them to a particular set of historical, technological, and environmental circumstances. These work in tandem, as analysis moves between the two poles of process and contingency. Similarly, our analyses operate at a number of scales of observation—spatially from regions to sites, areas within sites and individual households, and chronologically over centuries or, at our finest level of resolution, decades. Each set of observations and each scale of resolution permits or requires different modes of explanation. These are dependent on numerous factors, from initial processes of discard and site formation through subsequent natural and cultural transforms to the extent and style of excavation, documentation, and analysis. Each region, period, site, and site component, together with the array of material remains, also imposes its own constraints and provides its own opportunities for exploring aspects of past behavior. In this essay, we attempt

to link these varied issues of material, method, process, and scale through the investigation of households at Marki. Our concern here is with households as both architectural entities and behavioral units. The data on which the following discussion is based are presented in detail in the primary publications of the site (Frankel and Webb 1996, 2006a) and elsewhere (Frankel and Webb 2006b; Webb 2002, 2009).

Historical Context

The structure and changing pattern of households at Marki cannot be divorced from an appreciation of their historical context. In the mid-third millennium B.C.E., a generation or so before the site was first settled, significant changes marking the transition from the Chalcolithic to the Bronze Age took place in Cyprus. The difference between these archaeologically defined periods is characterized by the introduction of a wide array of new types of material culture and associated technologies (Bolger 2007; Knapp 2008; Peltenburg 1996, 2007; Webb and Frankel 1999, 2007). These reflect numerous domestic habits and techniques, such as ways of handling babies, of processing and serving food, of burying the dead, of manufacturing textiles, pottery, and other artefacts, and of constructing houses. These new patterns of behavior argue for the appearance of a new and different community on the island with a distinct *habitus*—a different way of being in the world (Frankel 2000). Of most immediate relevance here is the introduction of new animals (notably cattle and donkeys) and new agricultural techniques, especially the ox-drawn plow. These allowed an expansion of population, no longer constrained by the limits on productivity imposed by simpler technologies, and a spread of settlement into areas of low rainfall and poorer soils, which had been unattractive to those living a Chalcolithic way of life. In addition, the development of metallurgy—specifically the mining and working of copper—transformed perceptions of the value of some previously irrelevant landscapes and created different opportunities and incentives for developing intersite and interregional relationships.

It is within this period of dynamic transformation that we can place the foundation of the settlement at Marki by a small population operating within the closely knit social network characteristic of the Philia culture, the name by which the earliest facies of the Cypriot Bronze Age is known (Webb and Frankel 1999). Our current understanding is that slightly older, somewhat larger villages were already well established and that the move to Marki, located in an area of relatively low agricultural productivity, was prompted by its proximity to copper sources in the northern foothills of the Troodos range. A broken stone mold for casting copper ingots, reused in the construction of one of the earliest walls excavated at the site, is one indication of this (Frankel and Webb 2006a: 215–17).

At Marki, as at other sites, the increased productivity instigated by plow-based agriculture and other components of the newly introduced Secondary Products package was associated with continual population expansion. Over the next four centuries, the population of this and other villages increased consistently. Some time after 1950 B.C.E., however, a decline set in and Marki was gradually abandoned. This history of foundation, growth, decline, and abandonment is central to understanding both behavior within the Marki community and the changing relationships between the inhabitants of Marki and those of neighboring villages.

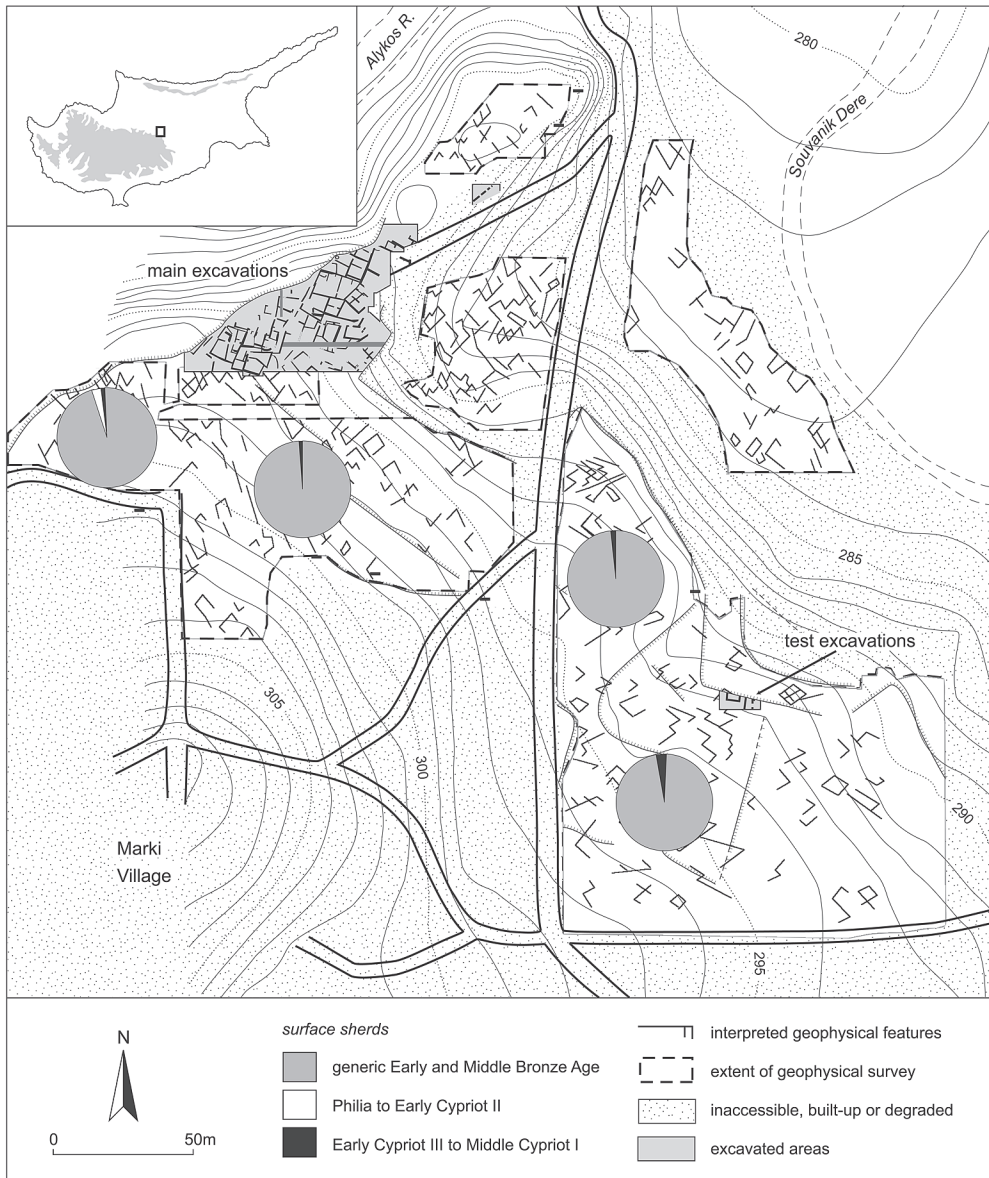


Fig. 1. The archaeological site at Marki, showing the location of the excavations, geophysical indications of unexcavated buildings, and the surface distribution of chronologically diagnostic sherds.

Marki: The Site and Excavations

Marki is the most extensively excavated Early and Middle Bronze Age settlement in Cyprus and the only one to have produced well-stratified deposits from an occupation of some 500 years. The archaeological site is spread over 5 to 6 ha of gently



Fig. 2. The main area of excavations, showing walls of different periods. Compound 7 is in the foreground, with features of Phase H exposed.

sloping and flatter fields at the confluence of the Alykos River and its smaller tributary the Souvanik Dere (fig. 1). At no time, however, was all of this area in active use. As noted above, our view of the site is of an initial, small foundation toward the northwest of the settlement area. Here a combination of full-scale and test excavations, surface collection, and geophysical prospecting shows that housing gradually increased in density, before this part of the site was slowly abandoned as the focus of habitation shifted toward the south and east (Webb and Frankel 2004).

Our understanding of the site is structured by our fieldwork objectives, as well as by the nature of the surviving remains. Unlike many areas of the Near East, Cypriot sites tend to be relatively short-lived, are often unconstrained by town or city walls, and spread horizontally rather than building up into high mounds. This expectation of the site and its potential for broad areal excavation influenced our initial research design, which was aimed at examining synchronous patterns of social interaction between households, especially through an examination of the decorated pottery of the Middle Bronze Age. Practical considerations, including the timing and other demands of applications for funding, saw the development of a strategy involving a concentration on the northwestern area, where the archaeological material was less deeply buried (fig. 2). It was only after several seasons of fieldwork that earlier deposits began to be clearly perceived, adding a new dimension to the project by providing an opportunity to trace the history of this part of the site over half a millennium.

Our first major report, fully compiling the results of the first four years of work, was seen as a necessary stage in demonstrating the potential of approaches and finds, justifying further excavation to ourselves as much as to funding bodies (Frankel and Webb 1996). At that time, it was not possible to identify a clear sequence of architectural development, but patterns of discard, both incidental and deliberate, led us to construct a specific model of site-formation. This involved separating out material from a defined set of sources, which reflect varied pathways by which material entered the archaeological context. These differ in integrity and duration, ranging from short-term, high-integrity assemblages associated with the final use and abandonment of buildings to construction fill, which includes chronologically mixed discard of varied origin (Frankel 1998; Webb 2006).

The more extensive area and greater depth of excavation over the later seasons of fieldwork provided the basis for a more conventional division of the site into the major phases of development reported in our final volume (Frankel and Webb 2006a). The complex history of fieldwork, however, meant that while sequences of construction, use, demolition, and rebuilding could be traced in specific places, we could not see the development of the site as a whole until after the excavations had finished. The integration of disparate information was only achieved through post-excavation analysis of architecture coupled with the construction of numerous localized stratigraphic sequences, each made up of numerous episodes of different significance and integrity. A key part of our post-excavation analysis thus involved the definition of different architectural developments and depositional environments and events, including construction, renovation, refurbishment, and abandonment. Not all sequences are fully complete, especially where the demolition of earlier buildings or major restructuring and renovation (typically of courtyard spaces) involved the wholesale removal of considerable quantities of deposit or in cases where older walls were entirely removed.

Once we established, to our own satisfaction, nine broad-scale site-wide phases, their plans revealed a new and unexpected pattern of architectural form that allowed us to identify discrete units. This provided a significantly different understanding of houses, households, and site history from our original expectations, which had been based on limited exposures within the few previously excavated contemporary settlements (Webb 2009). These phase plans became the basis of our further analysis and explanation of the social history of the village. We are under no illusion that they capture synchronous events or reflect structures and developments within the lifetime of any one individual. While they remain idealized time-transgressive models, however, they are at a relatively fine temporal resolution (of, perhaps, no more than two to three generations) and can be used to develop useful insights into the history and behavior of particular households and the village as a whole.

Field Recording

The principles of field analysis used at Marki derive directly from our overall understanding of site-formation and were designed to distinguish excavated deposits with regard to their degree of integrity and association (Frankel and Webb 1996; Frankel 1998; Webb 2006). All positive (and negative) residues were identified as “contexts,” including walls, pits, and other features as well as sediments. At a first

level, the latter were defined as having primary and secondary integrity. Primary depositional contexts are those where material was deliberately placed or discarded as sediment accumulated and remained without later disturbance. Within these parameters, a key issue was the identification of use and abandonment contexts and the further separation of use or systemic contexts from abandonment surfaces (Schiffer 1972, 1976). Given the nature of house construction and processes of gradual abandonment typical of all phases of occupation at Marki, the identification of material in systemic as opposed to post-abandonment contexts was often problematic. In general, however, such material was considered to have a high degree of integrity and association with original or immediate post-abandonment use of the structures in which it was found.

Contexts in which sediments or/and artefacts had been removed from their original location of manufacture, use, or discard and redeposited were identified as secondary (or tertiary) depositional contexts. These include fill, dump, demolition, and rebuilding episodes, all of which involve the disarticulation of artefacts from primary depositional contexts. Artefacts recovered in secondary or tertiary deposition are likely to have low chronological integrity and little or no association with each other or with original activity areas. Fill deposits, for example, may combine material from all earlier phases of occupation, including that in areas beyond the excavated exposure, and a variety of initially unrelated contexts.

The basic spatial unit of stratigraphic analysis was the individual room, yard, passageway, lane, or enclosed space. This accorded each structural unit an independent history of construction, use, and abandonment and allowed identification of specific, localized, and small-scale activities. At the finest level, this was understood in terms of a series of events and episodes. Events are identifiable short-term activities, such as the construction or collapse of a wall, reflooring, or reorientation. At the next level, related events were subsumed into an episode. Episodes are thus palimpsests of specific events and usually the smallest meaningful analytical unit. Most are construction or use and abandonment episodes. Construction episodes may involve demolition, rebuilding, and accidental or deliberate fill. Use and abandonment episodes are floor and immediate above-floor deposits. A final level of stratigraphic analysis combined groups of construction episodes within and between architectural units into our nine main phases.

In our final publication, stratigraphic analyses were presented using Harris matrices. These were developed during excavation but substantially revised afterward. They provide a diagrammatic impression of relationships between contexts and the grouping of contexts into episodes and phases within each unit and were the principal analytical framework used in all subsequent discussions of depositional integrity, building history, and chronology. In combination with a single-context recording system, they present the history of the site as a palimpsest of discrete events in which contexts of removal and deposition are equally visible.

The ascription of excavation contexts to events, events to episodes, and episodes to phases involved a series of increasingly complex analytical abstractions. Much of this took place after excavation in conjunction with broader-scale analyses of architectural sequences. The field recording system, designed to provide maximum flexibility within the bounds of efficiency, allowed us, during post-excavation analysis, to lump contexts into behaviorally significant episodes within each architectural

unit and attribute finds to specific types of deposition. This in turn allowed us to assess the relative chronological and systemic integrity of deposits and to look for meaningful links between consumption behavior, disposal strategies, and recovery contexts.

All archaeological fieldwork involves a complex negotiation between ideals and practical reality and is affected by attitudes, resources, aims, and abilities. Our primary strategies and aims at Marki did not involve the systematic sampling of deposits for tiny sherds, microdebitage or other forms of microartifact. While such analyses might have been useful in identifying fine-scale activity areas and varied depositional environments, many taphonomic processes, from the major cultural transformations of renovation, demolition, and construction to the finer-scale movement and mixing of material in standing ruins, may have seriously affected the success of these techniques. Nevertheless, the varied density of microdiscard in different layers or the identification of spatial distribution patterns may have provided an independent base for examining aspects of room or household forms and functions. At Marki, activities and activity areas were, alternatively, explored by contextual analysis of *de facto* refuse and built-in features (Schiffer 1976: 33; Webb 2006).

Site Formation Processes and Curate/Discard Strategies

Abandonment processes lie at the heart of any understanding of site formation. At Marki, there is no evidence for localized catastrophic events or sudden site-wide abandonment. Instead, our view is of a continual process of change as individual rooms or areas were renovated, reorganized, rebuilt, demolished, or left as standing ruins. During the course of excavation and in later analysis, we took care to identify different contexts of deposition and discard in order to understand the relationship of architectural units, features, and finds to one another. Each of the nine broad phases identified at the site can be understood as having two main components: episodes of construction and episodes of use and abandonment. Within this, a number of different formation or depositional contexts can be defined, including construction, renovation, use and abandonment, collapse, and other disturbance. The finds within each of these depositional envelopes have, naturally, varied degrees of chronological and behavioral integrity, association, and significance. While there were some instances of complete pottery vessels and other items in primary abandonment contexts (thus comprising a subset of original systemic inventories), most finds at Marki, as at other sites, represent secondary or even tertiary deposition (Webb 1995).

In the main, it is only the latest or final use and abandonment episodes that preserve assemblages closely related to room or area function and activity. Here the distinction between *de facto* refuse, left at the position of last use, and normal refuse, discarded onto middens or the floors or accumulation surfaces of abandoned buildings or open spaces becomes critical. One useful insight into the distinction between these contexts is provided by the ground-stone tools. Although often consigned a lower place within analyses and publications, these artefacts have considerable value for understanding assemblage structure and identifying activity areas and other aspects of consumer behavior. In this respect, the distinction between expedient and curated tools is particularly useful (Frankel and Webb 2006a: 197–248; Webb 1998,

2000, 2006). Curated tools are those that were formally shaped prior to use, maintained, or/and reworked and retained, as a general rule, until exhausted or broken. These tools have specific task-oriented features, such as sharp edges, perforations, or grinding surfaces, the production of which involved a time and energy cost that was recouped by long-term use and recycling. Expedient strategies, on the other hand, were a response to more immediate needs and involved minimal preparatory effort. Expedient tools are recognizable in most lithic assemblages as unmodified hand-sized pebbles used for a variety of tasks. Few show intensive use and most were acquired and discarded opportunistically.

Behavioral strategies associated with curation, expediency, and recycling played a significant role in determining the use trajectory and depositional history of stone artefacts at Marki (fig. 3a and 3b). Most curated tools were maintained for the duration of their use-life or recycled to other tasks. They are likely to have spent longer periods of time in systemic contexts, to have been used in multiple activity areas prior to final deposition, and to have been discarded in or near their context of final use when damaged, broken, near exhausted, or exhausted (i.e., as normal refuse). They are, therefore, less sensitive as fine-scale chronological indicators and more likely to be absent from, rather than present in, residual artifact assemblages. Expedient tools, conversely, were typically discarded after a relatively short use-life while still intact (i.e., as *de facto* refuse) at or near their location of original use. Expedient tools are, therefore, likely to have been associated with single or short duration events and may be expected to be sensitive indicators of moments in archaeological time and of use rather than disposal contexts.

Recognition of these and other normative patterns of consumption allows the identification of anomalous depositional behavior, with important implications for understanding the evidential value of specific artefacts. Both require an understanding of the mechanisms of site-formation and systemic inventory depletion, which are responsible for generating much of the variability within the archaeological record.

Buildings, Features, and Spaces

Buildings at Marki were constructed of mold-made mud bricks laid on lower courses of stones collected, for the most part, from the nearby river bed or surrounding hills. Elsewhere, contemporary sites show less evidence of the use of mud brick, especially where there was less available raw material or more abundant stone (Coleman et al. 1996; Swiny et al. 2003). So far as we can tell, buildings were only one storey in height. Mud-brick buildings typically require constant maintenance and frequent repair. Every so often, more extensive episodes of construction took place, as walls were built entirely anew. New walls for the most part retained the same orientation as their predecessors and nearby standing structures, and more often than not were built immediately above or slightly offset but still partially on top of the stone stumps of the demolished walls (fig. 4). In these cases all, or all but one or two courses, of the old mud-brick masonry was cleared away or spread out as subfloor leveling fill, running up to the stone courses of the replacement wall.

Internal features include several types of built-in installations, the most common of which were deep conical emplacements dug into the floors and lined with a thick concrete-like packing of small pebbles in clay or plaster. These may have

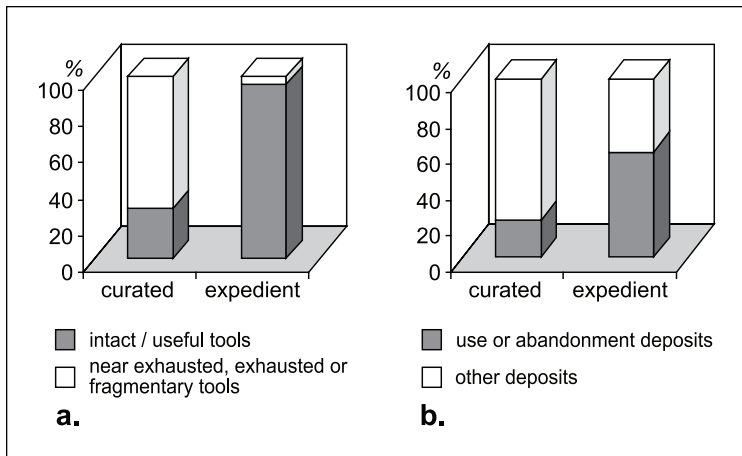


Fig. 3. Patterns of discard.
 a. Incidence of intact versus exhausted, near exhausted and fragmentary curated and expedient ground stone tools
 b. Incidence of intact curated and expedient ground stone tools from use and abandonment deposits.



Fig. 4. Three superimposed walls showing continuity of building location and alignment.

been used as holders for large storage jars or possibly as floor mortars or for other purposes. Narrow, low, plastered benches were sometimes set along walls, often in conjunction with hearths with circular or square fenders made of similar materials. A few examples of small mud-brick or stone-lined storage bins and rectangular clay ovens also survive (fig. 5).

Floors were made of hard-packed mud, which often could not be distinguished from underlying leveling fill or overlying layers of post-abandonment sediment

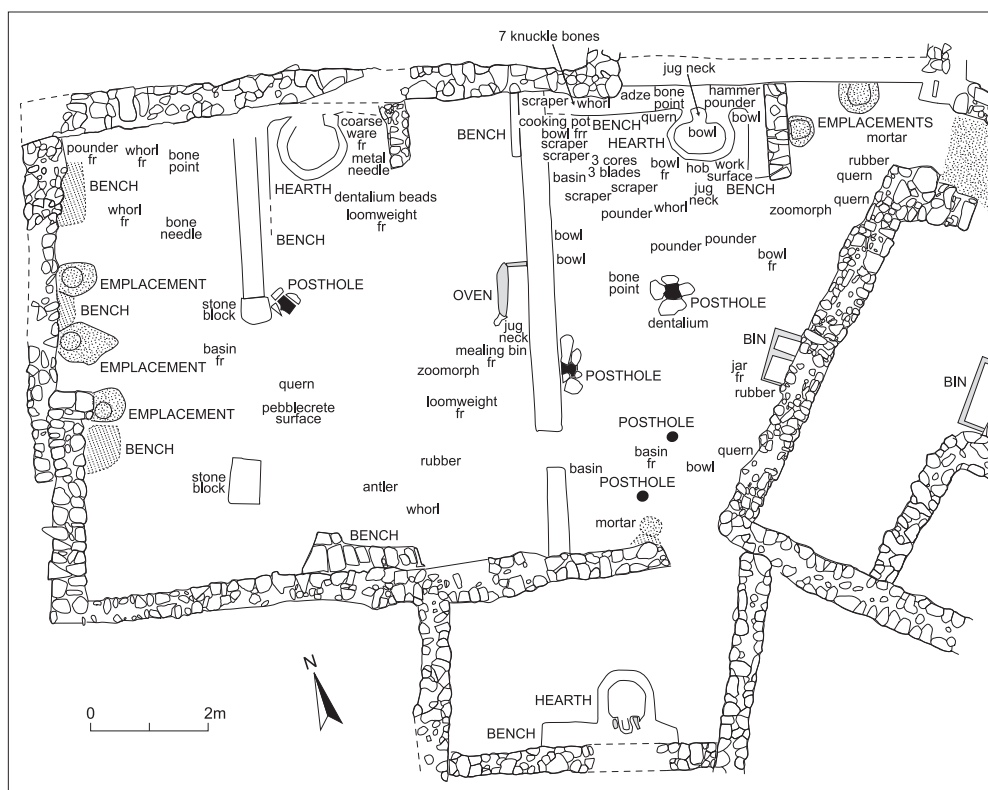


Fig. 5. Plan of Compound 29, Phase G with associated features and artifacts.

eroding and accumulating as walls and roofs collapsed, washed in, and decomposed. Where they could be traced as relatively smooth, harder surfaces, they were often sloping and uneven, both due to varied packing and wear during use and the effects of natural post-abandonment processes. The latter include the invasion of weeds, which broke up deposits, and the effects of rainwater, creating gullies or pools within standing ruins.

Although we could not see patterning in room form or features during the course of excavation, the phase plans revealed consistent architectural systems and structures that led to the identification of units as interior or open spaces and the grouping of sets of units into compounds. In total, 33 compounds were identified, most comprised of two or more covered rooms set within a partly or fully enclosed courtyard. Other types of space alongside the compounds could also be recognized, including access routes, general open space, and standing ruins.

We made use of different criteria working in combination to define each of these types of space. For example, from a structural point of view, interior spaces—especially the larger rooms—often have central posts to support the roof, are more likely to have smooth, hard-packed floor surfaces, include benches and hearths, and have emplacements along the walls. In contrast, the larger, open courtyards lack most of

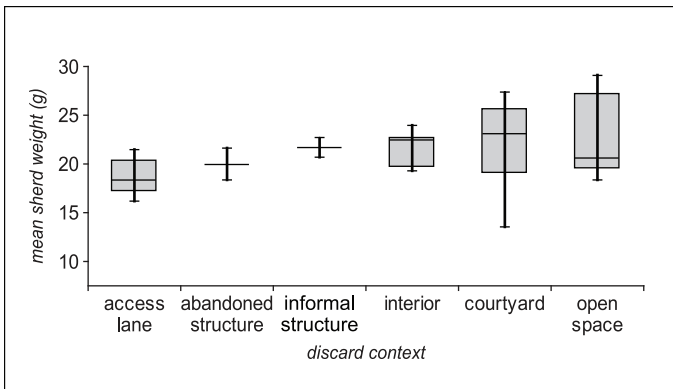


Fig. 6. Relative sizes of sherds in different spatial areas.

these features, while emplacements tend to be spread across the area rather than set along the sides. Additional support for our identification of these spatial forms is illustrated in fig. 6, where the nature of the original discard, coupled with later trampling and breakage, results in differences in the degree of fragmentation of sherds. Courtyards are also more likely to have suffered from episodes of major soil removal. The extent of this aspect of cultural transformation is well illustrated by the deep, solid floor emplacements. In many cases, only the lowest sections of these features survive, indicating the removal of some 30 to 40 cm of sediment.

Compound Variability and Social Relations

The general phase plans reveal architectural units which, as noted above, can be grouped into defined compounds. These vary considerably in size and composition. Some have courtyards, others do not; some have several interior rooms, others only one or two; some were short-lived, others lasted through many generations, albeit with internal changes and restructuring (figs. 7 and 8). However, within this wide array of forms there are some common general principles. All compounds were entered through the courtyard, either directly from open space or a public access route or in a few cases through a private passageway. Interior rooms in most cases led one from another, providing increased privacy with access depth. Hearths, wall benches and bins were exclusively located in inner rooms. Ovens, built in the courtyard in the earliest phases, are regularly present in interior rooms from Phase C onward and internal screen walls appear, apparently to conceal hearths from exterior view (these features are best seen in the well-preserved Compound 29 shown in fig. 5). Small sheds and animal pens, also located in courtyards in Phases B and C, are not obviously present from Phase D onward. The dense clusters of emplacements, which are one of the most characteristic features of courtyards, also decrease in number through time and were at times relocated to inner rooms. Alongside these developments, interior space was progressively subdivided and there was an increased reliance on prescriptive access routes.

The reduction in the number and variety of tasks carried out in courtyards is matched by a decrease in courtyard size through time and the development of compounds without courtyards (see Frankel and Webb 2006a, 2006b; Webb 2009).



Fig. 7. Internal changes within Compound 6, from first establishment in Phase C to abandonment in Phase I.

The decrease in the importance of courtyards and the changing nature of courtyard activities suggest that some tasks performed there in initial phases were either no longer carried out or moved to other locations. It appears that by Phase D not all households were engaged in the same set of production and maintenance tasks. This implies an increasing degree of economic specialization and a greater diversity of household types, perhaps directly related to the increased population in the village. It is worth noting, however, that the longest-lived house compounds (6 and 7) maintained the full or near full extent of their courtyards and that households without courtyards were in all instances either newly established or a result of the breakup of earlier households. The emergence of some households without courtyards in Early Cypriot II (about 2300–2100 B.C.E.) may also signify an increasing differentiation in land ownership through time. Some households perhaps continued to own land, while families without land engaged in more specialized activities, in which case the latter may have provided a market for the surplus produce of the former and a source of seasonal labor. This situation is likely to have led to an increasing divergence of household activities and to changing and increasingly complex relationships between households. These structural changes may also reflect an increasing need or desire for inter-household privacy and security, perhaps linked with a growing emphasis on private property, intergenerational inheritance, and the control and manipulation of space and other resources.

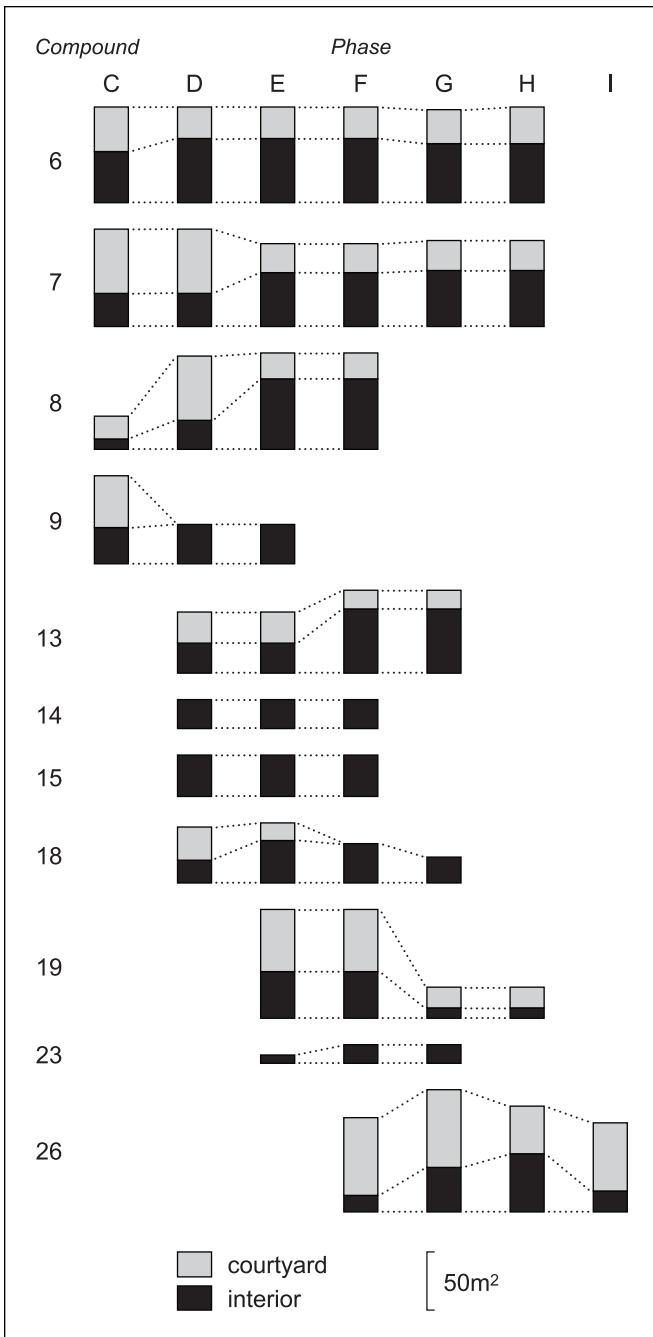


Fig. 8. The varied size, structure, and longevity of selected compounds.

In each compound, at least one interior room was furnished with a hearth with a semicircular or rectangular plaster fender, set against a low bench. In earlier phases households were typically furnished with one hearth room; later, two or three are more common. This changing internal organization of compounds is likely to be

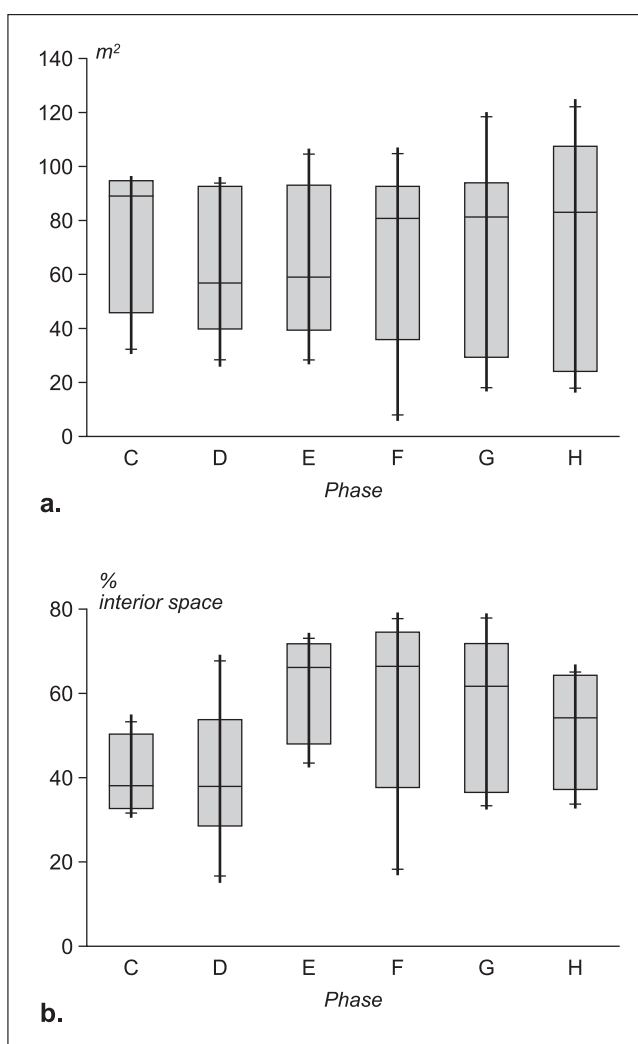


Fig. 9. Changing average size and variability of compounds through time.
 a. Overall size.
 b. Proportion of courtyard to interior space.

related to straightforward developments in the size and structure of residential units. The distribution of artefacts suggests that processing and small-scale storage of cereals and other commodities, spinning and weaving, chipped and ground-stone tool production, and perhaps wood and hide-working were routinely carried out in hearth rooms, along with food preparation, serving, and consumption (Frankel and Webb 1996, 2006a). Other interior spaces were probably reserved for storage and sleeping, at least during the winter. During the long, dry Mediterranean summer, more activities may have taken place outdoors and on rooftops.

There is a tendency toward greater variability in compound size through time, but this was relatively minor compared with the general uniformity of compound size and structure, with most occupying between 60 and 80 square m (fig. 9a). Similarly, while there is some variation in the number and size of facilities and rooms, there is nothing in the nature of the internal fittings or discard residues to suggest

significant differences in economic capacity and storage. None of the compounds were substantially larger or better built than others, and no systemic differences in household function or in the wealth and status of the occupants can be identified. Individual compounds had their own histories (discussed later) but there were, over time, some general trends in the organization of space. In the middle phases, a higher proportion of compound area was devoted to interior rooms, with a slight reversion to the earlier pattern of more courtyard or open space in the later periods (fig. 9b).

The definition of compounds and the understanding of architectural components within them provide, together with the finds, the basis for understanding the nature of society and economy at Marki. The history of this village, growing from a small founder population to a substantial settlement of several hundred people, probably mirrored that of similar villages across the island. While these no doubt varied in size and density, depending on individual histories, location, and resources, few are likely to have been significantly larger than others. In common, also, with other villages of the period in Cyprus, the people of Marki based their livelihood on a broad-spectrum agricultural strategy, with an emphasis on cereals such as wheat and barley. Sheep and goats were herded for meat, milk, and wool. Cattle contributed both primary and secondary products and were important both symbolically and practically in farm work. Donkeys, too, allowed heavy loads to be transported.

Within this predominantly rural economy, other materials and products served to link communities in different ways: these relationships evolved through time. The small founding populations of communities like Marki are unlikely to have been viable as biological populations or large enough to ensure the transmission of craft skills and specialized technologies. They were therefore dependent on others for exchanges of people and goods. Its proximity to copper sources in the foothills of the Troodos and the presence of molds for casting ingots suggests that Marki probably served as a base for the distribution of copper in return for other products, including pottery (Frankel and Webb 2006a: 215–17). Later, as the population of this village expanded, there may no longer have been the same imperatives for exogamous marriage partners. We can identify a contemporaneous increase in local craft production, especially of pottery. Even so, kinship through intermarriage probably still served as the primary mechanism linking villages and facilitating the flow of goods and concepts.

The broad-scale evolution of patterns of relationship and interaction between villages was matched by equivalent changes within the community itself. Fig. 10 gives two views of the changing nature of the built environment in the excavated area at Marki. There was a gradual increase in the amount of enclosed space, with a concomitant reduction in open, presumably communal areas. By Phase D, the increased density of housing made it necessary to create lanes to provide access to houses and across the area. As the site continued to evolve, some buildings went out of use, remaining as standing ruins before either reverting to open space or being reincorporated into new or renovated compounds.

These changes have social implications. During the first century or two of its existence, the population would have been small enough, and the size and structure of the settlement open enough, for regular if not daily interaction between people. With the expansion of population, the increased density of built-up areas and associated

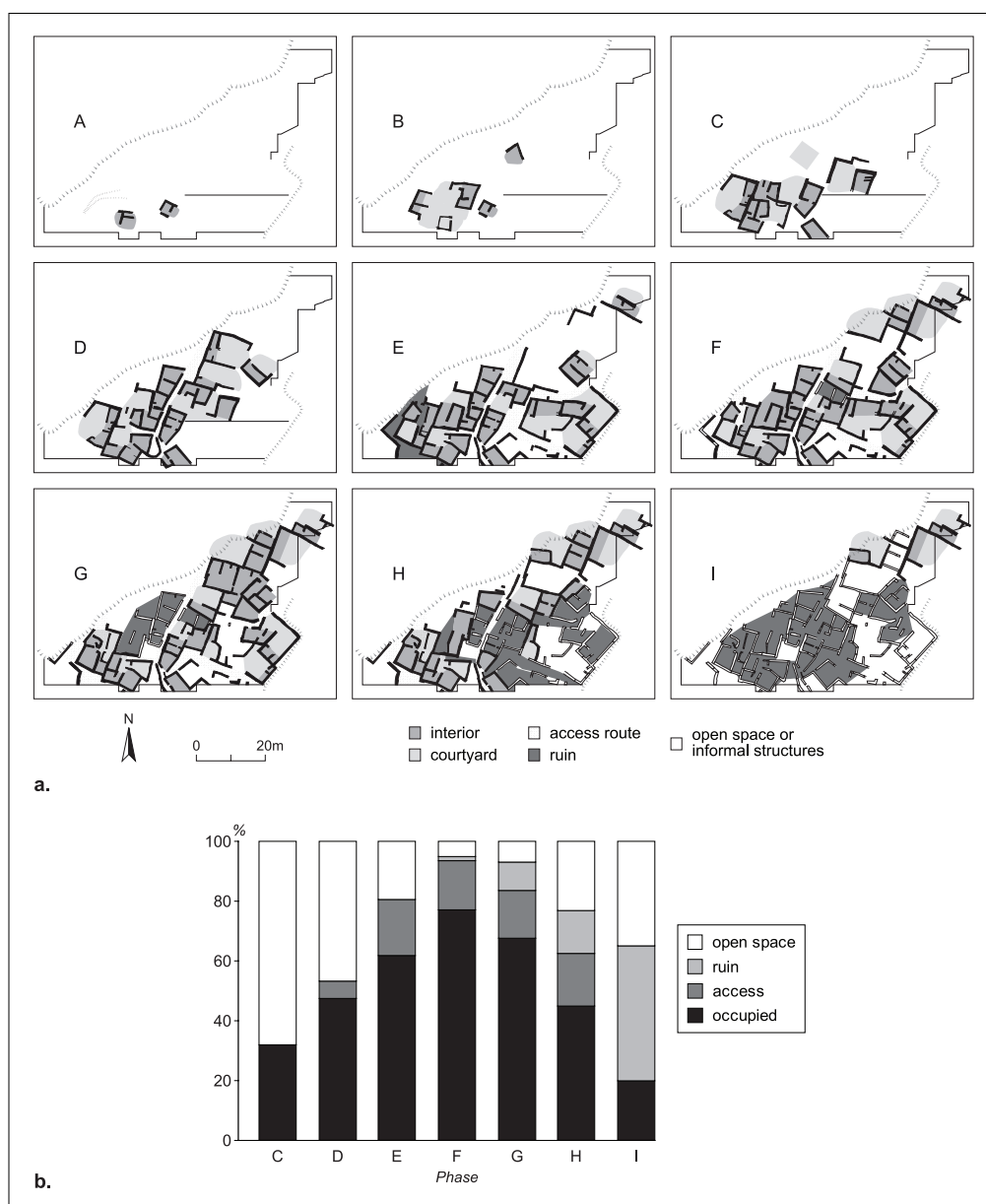


Fig. 10. a. The changing structure of the built environment in the excavated area.
 b. The relative proportion of the excavated area taken up by different types of space in successive phases.

barriers to sight and movement, this would no longer have been the case. Although significant regular contact would have been maintained within local neighborhoods, there is likely to have been relatively little communication with people from the other side of the village. Different forms of communal decision-making may have

been developed, but at no time is there evidence for centralized authority or institutionalized control of wealth and political power.

From Architecture to Family and Gender

The changing size and increasing variety of compounds are one consequence of an evolving community, as the specific structure of individual households moved through cycles of expansion and contraction. Locating people, both at the individual and household level, within this physical landscape is, of course, difficult (Webb 2002). Nevertheless, as our focus moves from broad trends to more detailed discussion, we may make a significant shift in our language and understanding: moving from the more neutral architectural form, “compounds,” to the more social, “households,” and thence to discussing individual “families.”

The spatial patterning and co-occurrence of facilities, together with the distribution of residual artefacts, provide an important indication of the range of domestic tasks carried out within compounds. From Phase D onward, these are characterized by the widely distributed, small-scale, private domestic storage of foodstuffs, typically in storage jars set in the floor emplacements or in three-sided rectangular bins. Emplacements are commonly located in discrete rows along walls in rooms without hearths. Rectangular bins, on the other hand, are consistently associated with hearths and may have provided short-term storage for more immediate needs. There is no evidence for communal, supra-household or external storage facilities, suggesting that economic risk and control of subsistence production were maintained at the individual-household level. Cooking was also a small-scale, intra-household activity. Small hearths, surrounded by low semicircular kerbs of plaster or stone, are located in designated areas and associated with benches, bins, hobs, cooking pots, and serving vessels. This suggests that both production and consumption networks were restricted to immediate household members.

The household also served as the primary unit for domestic production and maintenance of textiles, ceramics, and lithics. Clay spindle whorls and loom-weights and metal and bone needles were recovered from most units. Even more common are stone querns and rubbers used for grinding cereals. Broad-based arguments for household pottery production are supported by the widespread recovery of clay and stone burnishing tools, sherds with mend holes, and over-fired and “non-professionally” made vessels. On-site knapping of chert and the manufacture of ground-stone tools are also indicated in a number of rooms.

Our observations so far suggest a relatively egalitarian society, at least in terms of differential wealth and the control and distribution of resources. Whether this was matched by symmetry in gender or other relationships within the household is, however, another question. In a study of gender in ancient Cyprus, Bolger (2003: 21–50) traces changes in the spatial configuration of domestic structures from the Neolithic through the Bronze Age, noting a shift in emphasis from exterior to interior, open to closed, and public to private. Among the formal mechanisms used to regulate social interaction are the isolation of households, the compartmentalization of interior space, the location of storage facilities within buildings, and an increasing focus of domestic activities in interior locations. These are all visible at Marki. They were not, however, in place when the village was founded but emerged over time,

leaving open the possibility that changes in the nature and structure of households and gender relationships were driven as much by local factors as by wider socio-cultural imperatives.

The privatization of domestic space at Marki coincided with increases in the size of the community and of individual families and with improved economic security at the household level. The social and economic cooperation visible in Phase B may have been a survival mechanism in a community perhaps numbering only a few dozen people, dispersed among a handful of households in relatively inhospitable terrain. Within a hundred years or so, this was replaced by self-contained semi-enclosed house compounds, suggesting that residential units were now secure enough to meet the majority of their needs and survive as independent economic entities. This is likely to reflect the creation of reliable production and risk management systems and to have been accompanied by a desire to establish and maintain private ownership of buildings, land, livestock, and other resources. As the population of the village continued to expand, perhaps to 300 or 400, the nature of interpersonal relationships must have changed further as distances increased and access between compounds became more difficult. This is likely to have given rise to mechanisms of social cohesion and control operating beyond the level of the household and to be reflected in the development of privacy devices, formal access routes, and fully enclosed households.

Other observations relate these developments to the artifactual data. In Phases A and B, the structural evidence suggests cooperative storage, preparation, and consumption of food between several, probably kin-related, households. From Early Cypriot I (about 2300–2200 B.C.E.) onward, however, staples were stored in closed courtyards and interior rooms, and ovens were reduced in size and moved into kitchen extensions. At the same time, decorated table ware, which had been prominent during the earliest, *Philia*, phase of occupation virtually disappears (Frankel and Webb 2006a: 147–48, 315–17). This suggests that social interaction between households was more restricted in Early Cypriot I and II (about 2300–2100 B.C.E.), in keeping with the increased architectural isolation of house compounds and the location of hearths and ovens in interior rooms.

A significant innovation in Early Cypriot III (about 2100–1950 B.C.E.), when courtyards were fully enclosed and the process of privatization of the household appears to have reached its maximum extent, is the introduction of anthropomorphic figurines, primarily if not exclusively depicting females and infants, and small models of cattle. This may reflect, in the first instance, an increasing desire to control the source of future labor (i.e., the reproductive potential of adult female members of the household) in an intensive agricultural economy. Cattle, also, are a valuable form of capital and likely to have served as a form of “indirect storage” against the periodic failure of crops as well as a means of establishing social ties through exchange. They also provided more than half of the meat supply at Marki and were clearly of paramount economic importance (Croft 2006).

The introduction to Cyprus of intensive agricultural technologies at the beginning of the Bronze Age significantly increased the capacity for both household and settlement growth. Agricultural intensification and accelerated birthrates gave rise, at the same time, to an increased focus on economic production at the household level and an expansion in the range and probably the duration of domestic activ-

ities, particularly cereal processing and storage. These key elements of Bronze Age society were present from the foundation of the village at Marki. Subsequent localized changes in the nature of the household may be seen as a result of demographic growth and emerging concepts of private property rather than, or alongside, wider changes in socioeconomic structures and concepts of the social household.

The enclosure of the household, in Cyprus as elsewhere, is likely to have led to a relegation of women and women's activities to the interior and to increasingly sharply defined gender identities within and beyond the domestic sphere. Citing both ethnographic and archaeological studies, Bolger (2003: 37–38) suggests a correlation between the increasing segmentation of domestic space and a gender-based division of labor. This is supported by the representational data (Bolger 2003: 39–41; Webb 2002: 93–94). Early and Middle Bronze Age Cypriots produced an array of modeled clay figures, either free-standing or attached to pottery vessels. These suggest that certain tasks were consistently performed by women who are repeatedly represented as active agents in one or another of three major capacities: as lovers or partners; as mothers (or child-minders); and as a source of productive labor. This last category includes specific depictions of grinding (e.g., Karageorghis 1991: pls. 70, 75), pounding (e.g., Karageorghis 1991: pls. 74.3, 77.1), baking (e.g., Karageorghis 1991: pls. 74.2, 85.5), and perhaps pot-making. Where sexual characteristics are indicated, they are female. Even where they are not, it is likely that figures were identified as male or female by virtue of the tasks they are engaged in—that is, it is likely that particular activities were so categorically gendered that the depiction of primary sexual characteristics was not necessary. These models may indeed not only reflect gender categories, as these were understood by the people who made and viewed them, but have informally served to reinforce gender identity as a social fact.

The repeated portrayal of women in secondary food-processing activities and the lack of overlap between male and female tasks implies a sexual division of labor in which men and women had consistent gender identities that were related to their production roles. Residual systemic inventories and nonportable facilities from Marki suggest that the activities depicted (grinding, pounding, baking) were primarily carried out in hearth rooms, allowing us to link female tasks with interior household space. Whether this signifies gender segregation or even seclusion remains uncertain but seems unlikely. Hearth rooms at Marki and elsewhere also produced residues from flint-knapping, wood-working, and ground-stone artifact production, suggesting that they were used as work spaces for a wide range of domestic maintenance activities probably involving both male and female members of the household.

Evolving Structures and Relationships

Having established a broad history of the site and situated idealized households within it, we turn our attention to a finer-scale analysis of one part of the excavated area at Marki. Although only observable at the scale of two or even three generations, the model of architectural development that we have constructed allows us to explore the dynamics of some relationships within this neighborhood (fig. 11; Frankel and Webb 2006a, 2006b). One aspect of this is the varied patterns of continuity, longevity, and change in the size of individual households, revealing the control of some areas by particular families, the changing structure and needs of others, and



Fig. 11. Changing compound structures and relationships in one part of the excavated area from Phase B to Phase H.

the negotiation of property rights between them. These decisions may have been made at the individual, family, or community level.

We take up the story during Phase B, a generation or two after the site was first settled. The preceding Phase A architecture is similar but not well preserved; indeed, we are fortunate to have any buildings that we can clearly identify as belonging to these earliest times. Although no complete Phase B compounds survive, it is clear that the buildings revealed in our excavations were on the edge of what was probably still a very small village. To the northeast of the stone and mud-brick houses was open space, where pits, post-holes, and other features indicate the presence of light, temporary, or informal structures such as small pens and sheds and associated activity and discard areas. The compounds do not have the same clear boundaries or enclosing walls that appear later; perhaps only light fences defined household territory or space, with open access between houses. Compounds 3 and 4 may be viewed as two houses with separate private, covered space but shared courtyard resources, forming a closely allied residential and economic production unit. The presence of communal facilities located in the courtyard, such as a large bread oven, also suggests cooperation. Such a cooperative system is appropriate for a small population, where individual households—indeed the community as a whole—lacked the resources to be fully independent.

As the population of the village increased, the built-up area expanded beyond its original limits to occupy a greater part of the excavated exposure. Though there was little specific reuse of walls, continuity in the location and alignment of the new structures suggests the inheritance of some spaces. Two large and well-defined compounds (Compounds 6 and 7) in the southwestern part of the excavated area are of particular interest. In Phase C, these took over the space of the earlier Compounds 3 and 4. Both continued with only minor changes and internal renovations for several centuries, until the end of Phase H (figs. 6, 7, 10). These primary establishments may be regarded as belonging to founding families, which kept control of these domains for many generations. The remainder of the space previously used by Compound 4 was subdivided with the western part becoming Compound 8 and the eastern area taken over as courtyard space by Compound 9. The light dividers between compounds that were a feature of Phases A and B were replaced by more substantial walls. This restricted access and provided greater privacy, including more hidden, rather than publicly visible, storage. Some compounds, however, were not entirely cut off from one another. The courtyards of Compounds 6 and 8, for example, were interconnected. This suggests a particular relationship between these two households, perhaps that of an extended family. In any case, it is possible to argue that the two equally-sized households with communal courtyard space that existed here in Phase B (Compounds 3 and 4) were replaced in Phase C by two equal-sized, non-communicating households (6 and 7) and a smaller household, Compound 8, which appears to be an offshoot of the parent Compound 6. Although a larger area was now built over, compounds were not all adjoining, allowing relatively free and open access between them and across the village area.

The inhabited area expanded farther in Phase D, making it necessary to create a formal north-south laneway to provide access through this part of the settlement. This must have involved considerable renegotiation of spatial boundaries and, presumably, of property rights. Decisions of this sort may have been at a community,

rather than at an individual, level. Some preexisting compounds were substantially restructured. Compound 9, for example, lost its courtyard and was reoriented to become a three-roomed house entered directly from the laneway to the south, and a number of new compounds were built on either side of the lane. Compound 8 was enlarged to the north and east, taking in some of the area previously held by Compound 9. Compounds 6 and 7, however, retained their overall size and position, although there was some modification to the former (see also fig. 7). The close relationship between Compounds 6 and 8 continued, with both now entered through a short passage leading in from the main laneway. Although there was still close cooperation between these two families, the expansion of Compound 8 to much the same size as Compound 6 suggests that the earlier dependent relationship had altered to one of greater equality.

The western half of the courtyard of the earlier Compound 11 now became the inner hearth room of the new Compound 13. This transference of property and the open access that existed between the courtyards of Compounds 11 and 13 in Phase D suggest a similar inter-household relationship to that of Compounds 6 and 8. They likely in both cases reflect the periodic sharing of built space over time between closely related families or/and within expanding, fissioning, or contracting family units.

The general trend toward greater separation and privacy continued with the increased density of building in Phase E. Compound 7 was now completely walled off and reoriented to the north. In Compound 8, the two inner rooms were enlarged, and a third room was added to the west. The opening between Compounds 6 and 8 was closed, and these compounds were fully separated from one another: indeed movement from one to the other would now have required a long detour, making use of the more extensive system of laneways. These families were now physically if not socially separated and presumably wholly independent. Internal developments within Compounds 6, 7, and 8 may therefore reflect changing needs within family units as well as the repair and replacement of older walls and features.

Similar developments characterize the succeeding Phase F. These involved internal renovation, the construction of new compounds, and the reallocation of space between compounds. Major changes included the construction of Compound 28 on a substantial platform, which partly took over open space to the north as well as the two interior rooms of Compound 13 to the south. This involved the partial demolition of older walls, which remained in place as abandoned ruins. Compound 13 itself expanded to the south and east, taking over two rooms of the old Compound 9 and part of the access way between Compounds 13 and 19 on the east. The incorporation of the latter suggests that Compound 13 may have retained or reasserted "rights" to the use of this space, which it shared with Compound 11 in Phase D. This restructuring of Compound 13 led to an overall increase in size and a substantial increase in the ratio of inner to courtyard space. The loss of the two original inner rooms to the new Compound 28 was amply compensated for by the appropriation of the two rooms belonging previously to Compound 9 as well as the open space to the east. Thus, Compound 13, which had been a two-roomed household in Phases D and E, became a three or even four-roomed unit in Phase F. The losers in this process, if there were any, appear to have been the owners of Compound 9, which was now subdivided to produce a new form—the single room household (Compound 23).

This reorganization had a substantial effect and must have involved considerable negotiation of rights of ownership and access. It also had broader implications, as the appropriation of what had earlier been open space between Compounds 13 and 19 cut off this communication route between the southeastern and northeastern sectors of the village.

During Phase G, the center of village activity probably began to shift southward, away from the excavated area, starting a slow decline as some compounds fell out of use and were not replaced. The oldest compounds (6 and 7) continued to be occupied within their original boundaries. Compounds 8, 14, and 15 on the west of the north–south lane were abandoned and left as standing ruins, gradually crumbling into open space. Compound 19 also contracted significantly at this time, creating a new open area to the east.

The overall density of occupation continued to decline in Phase H. The long-lasting Compounds 6 and 7 remained in place, while there was some reuse of the space to the west of the north–south laneway with the construction of Compounds 30 and 31. To the east of the laneway, Compound 13 was abandoned, and others retracted in size.

Phase I saw the last activity in this area with only one or two rooms showing evidence of minimal occupation. This represents the final phase in an on-going process of localized abandonment associated with a gradual shift in the main focus of occupation toward the south. Surface and subsurface surveys, together with trial excavations 200 meters to the south of the main exposure, suggest that occupation continued at Marki for another generation or two before final abandonment. No simple explanation can be given for the cessation of occupation. It may have been the result of centuries of over-grazing and soil depletion driven by the increasing demands of an expanding population, perhaps exacerbated by a short-term drought. It appears also, however, to have been part of a broader restructuring of settlement across the island in the Middle Bronze Age with evidence elsewhere of a rapid rise in population that can only be explained by the movement of people from smaller villages into strategically located regional centers (Frankel and Webb 2007: 159–61).

This narrative provides a general developmental sequence within which we can see fine-scale changes in social relationships over several centuries in an evolving social and economic system.

Concepts, Cycles, and Decisions

In this section, we turn our attention to the broader implications of the primary narrative outlined above. Rectangular house compounds comprising two or more inner, covered rooms set at the rear of a larger courtyard were built at Marki from first settlement until final abandonment. Although some different compound types, such as single-room units and larger compounds with no courtyard space, did develop or evolve, the majority of newly established compounds through Phase H, especially those erected in open areas not constrained by existing structures, took this traditional form. This suggests an idealized concept of a physical household that remained in place throughout the life of the village. The introduction of new household types and the reconfiguration of spatial arrangements within existing compounds can be seen as specific responses to particular needs at an individual

household level rather than a result of broader-scale changes in the concept of what constituted a household.

The maintenance of a fairly standard alignment of walls reflects the embedded influence of the existing structures, which exerted an unconscious influence on builders. Within this general pattern, the specific rebuilding of replacement walls above remaining stumps may represent both a symbolic incorporation of memories of the past and an assertion of ownership or control of space and perhaps also the inherited rights to particular plots and structures. General developments in the excavated exposure appear to be the result of gradual demographic growth and the constant need to maintain mud-brick structures.

Natural processes of physical decay within existing compounds led to a regular cycle of renovation and internal restructuring and sometimes more major rebuilding. Overriding the specific episodes of renovation and rebuilding, however, there are long-term continuities of spatial order, alignment, and structure. Where buildings and features remained in use over many generations, it seems reasonable to argue for continuity of ownership as well as of social attitudes and relationships. These long-lasting associations can be understood as implying inherited rights to both space and built property.

Although the specific processes will never be visible archaeologically, the periodic reorganization of space can provide a basis for thinking about the ways in which decisions were made and rights and ownership assessed and negotiated within this community. As noted above, longevity of use is most evident in the case of Compounds 6 and 7, which maintained their physical boundaries for three or four centuries while other, newer compounds went in and out of use (fig. 7). If we are correct in arguing for intergenerational ownership of property, then these households can be thought of as remaining in the hands of well-established families, perhaps even the descendants of the pioneer occupants of Compounds 3 and 4 in Phase B. Taking this further, we may suggest that these families enjoyed considerable social prestige. This may have allowed them to resist subdivision and retraction and is perhaps also manifested in features such as the private access passage to Compound 6 and the ability of this family to establish and maintain an offshoot compound (Compound 8). Indeed, legitimization of status and authority in the village may have been closely linked with ancestral legacy and reinforced through the longevity of house compounds.

Although the scale of observation—at intervals of perhaps three generations—makes it difficult to see the evolution of a domestic cycle at an individual or anthropological time-scale, some such processes can be identified. For example, the initial disparate size of the interconnected Compounds 6 and 8 in Phase C, followed by the growth of Compound 8 in Phase D and its later physical separation from Compound 6 in Phase E, may be seen as involving the establishment of a subsidiary family, its expansion over several generations, and ultimately its separation as it became a fully independent entity. A similar though less lengthy process is visible in the case of Compounds 11 and 13 in Phase D, where restructuring took the form of a drastic subdivision and retraction or enlargement of space. This must have involved complex individual negotiations between neighbors or family members working toward private agreements. In some cases, as with the establishment of the north-south laneway in Phase D, this may have involved more communal decision-making.

Some observations may be proposed with greater confidence. There is, for example, an increase over time in inter- and intra-household privacy. This is expressed in the full enclosure and decreasing size and importance of courtyards, the establishment of controlled access routes, and, in some cases, private entry passages and the development of the single-entry non-courtyard house with multiple rooms leading progressively one from the other. It may also be manifest in the increasing visual and spatial separation of compounds by access routes, open space, and standing ruins.

Of particular interest are the changes in social structure and relationships implied by structural developments from the earliest Phases A and B to Phases C and D. In Phase B, the inner rooms of Compounds 3 and 4 faced onto a minimally enclosed communal courtyard where a wide range of maintenance and production activities were carried out. This high level of social and economic cooperation between households may be viewed as a survival mechanism appropriate to a newly established pioneer community, perhaps numbering only two or three dozen people dispersed among a handful of households. In Phase C, this cooperative system was replaced by two new, noncommunicating compounds (Compounds 6 and 7) of roughly equal size with almost fully enclosed courtyards and opposing orientations.

The establishment of self-contained house compounds within a century or so of first settlement shows that individual residential units were now secure enough to meet their own physical needs and survive as independent economic entities. This is likely to reflect an overall increase in population and perhaps in family size, as well as the development of efficient and reliable production systems and inter-site relationships. It is also likely to be related to an increasing desire by individual households to establish and maintain private ownership of buildings, land, and other resources. The establishment of Compound 8 as an offshoot of Compound 6 at this time further suggests that the breakdown of inter-household cooperative systems coincided with an increased emphasis on extended family relationships and the establishment of a new generation of independent households.

The nature of interpersonal relationships within the village as a whole must have changed considerably through time as the population expanded and access between compounds became more restricted or more difficult. In the early phases, with only four or five households and a population of a few dozen, individuals would have had face-to-face interaction with fellow-villagers on a regular basis. Later generations of people living in a larger, more densely inhabited settlement, are likely to have had significantly fewer occasions for interaction beyond their immediate neighborhood. This increase in interpersonal distance coincided with the development of more enclosed household and access systems and may have been accompanied by the establishment of new mechanisms of social cohesion and control. These presumably operated beyond the level of the individual household and are not visible in the excavated exposure.

Structural Continuities and Transformations

The intimate history we have constructed for Marki provides an opportunity to move beyond the formal archaeological production of sequences and descriptions to an exploration of social processes and dynamics. We are of course aware of the many decisions and assumptions made at every level of this process and of the way

in which the understanding we now have of this site feeds back into our general models of Cypriot Bronze Age society and its development during the lifetime of our small village. We must also recognize that these broader models are not independent of our understanding of events at Marki but have been substantially influenced by the results of these excavations.

Developments in Bronze Age Cyprus as a whole provide a background but are also crucial factors leading to the initial establishment, later patterns of interaction, and final demise of Marki. Of particular importance is the growth in population, both generally and within the village. This slowly transformed the nature of relationships within the community and interconnections with other places. From its small beginnings, when the settlement was dependent for survival on other communities and had too few people to sustain local craft production, the village grew increasingly independent, with associated changes in the nature of its external relationships. These changes were mirrored within the community, with a move from cooperative relationships toward greater privacy and separation over time. Other aspects of households show strong conservatism in the structure and organization of space and facilities.

The development of the built environment at Marki gives us an opportunity to see ways in which the past influenced decisions and structured or limited opportunities for change. It seems clear that decisions made when the first buildings were erected about 2350 B.C.E. had a continuing influence on later patterns. In this way, the general uniformity of building alignment may reflect the unconscious influence of the past. However, specific instances of the building of new walls directly above earlier demolished structures are more likely to be related to availability of space and a continuity of property rights, if not inherited ownership, of land. The long continuity of some compounds over many generations provides additional support for seeing households or families as dynamic rather than static entities.

There is no evidence of formal planning; rather, changes appear as short-term, contingent decisions made to address needs at particular times. These included the expansion and contraction of house compounds, reflecting cycles of household growth and decline. Processes of decision-making are revealed by variations in the size and organization of compounds. Some would have been individual or family decisions during minor renovations or rearrangements within a compound; others must have involved negotiations with neighbors, or the assertion of control over abandoned areas or buildings; others again—as in the establishment of formal access lanes—may have been organized through more communal decision-making. There is no evidence, however, for more formal authority or hierarchy beyond that of a relatively egalitarian, kin-based system.

At Marki, we can trace a complex interplay between systemic and contingent change. Embedded traditions and the influence of older buildings provided a strong degree of continuity in the ideal house form. At the same time, the demands of household and family developmental cycles, together with broader changes in community size and structure, required numerous *ad hoc* and immediate responses to particular circumstances. Thus, while there was an ideal Bronze Age household, there was no standard building. The village and the families within it were in constant flux, balancing practical, social, and conceptual factors from one generation to another. These aspects of households as architectural entities and behavioral units are

likely to be typical of small-scale agro-pastoral settlements well beyond Cyprus. The principles that underpin their observation, recording, and presentation at Marki may thus be seen as having broad application.

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