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coast of the island. The evidence from the Ironbark Site Complex also conforms with evidence from other sites in southeast Queensland suggesting continuing Aboriginal use of places and landscapes in the post-European period (e.g. Lilley and Hall 1988; Neal 1984). Identification of starch grains adhering to the surface of glass artefacts also illustrates the potential of residue techniques in the study of contact period materials.

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AUSTRALIAN EXCAVATIONS AT MARKI, CYPRUS

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From November 1998 to January 1999 the Australian Cyprus Expedition continued work at the Early to Middle Bronze Age settlement of Marki Alonia in central Cyprus. Dr Jenny Webb and I were once again fortunate in having an enthusiastic and talented team of students from five Australian universities – over 100 students from around the country have now participated in this project.

The Bronze Age settlement of Marki Alonia was occupied for some five to seven hundred years from about 2500 BCE. The archaeological site extends over some five ha, but it is very unlikely that more than a small part of this area was occupied at any one time. The architecture consists of multi-roomed rectilinear buildings with the lower courses of stone and upper sections of mud-brick. In some cases the stone walls are preserved to well over a metre in height. While the earthen floors are often very difficult to identify, other built-in features are found in many rooms. The most common are solidly built emplacements for storage jars and semi-circular or rectangular plaster hearth-surrounds often associated with low plaster benches along the walls. The most common artefacts are, of course, ceramic – an array of storage and cooking vessels, bowls, jugs and jars, of which very few were discarded when still complete or usable. Curated ground stone implements, such as querns and rubbers are well represented, as well as many expedient tools. The most common chipped stone tools are flint sickle blades, and there is a small number of copper pins and needles. The very large quantities of animal bones (primarily sheep and goat, cattle, fallow deer and pig) provide the largest sample of fauna available for the Cypriot Bronze Age.

In our latest (1998-1999) season our very large team (reaching 38 at its maximum) of students from La Trobe, Melbourne, University of New England, Queensland, The Australian National University and Monash enabled us to undertake work on a far more substantial scale than ever before. We opened up an additional 1000 square metres of the site, doubling the area previously examined. In most of this new area excavations were stopped when the uppermost courses of walls were exposed, but one building complex was more completely excavated. This proved to have a familiar but very complicated sequence of architectural development, with use, abandonment, demolition, rebuilding and renovation over several centuries. This area is especially important as it provides assemblages of material dating to the earlier part of the Bronze Age, filling in a period poorly represented in our previous excavations. Over the next two seasons (1999-2000 and 2000-2001) the remainder of the area begun this year will be fully excavated. The large area excavated should allow a substantial basis for investigating household architecture as well as other aspects of economy, technology and culture history at the site.
Marki is now by far the most extensively excavated site of the prehistoric Bronze Age in Cyprus. In addition surveys and related research on other sites in the vicinity provide a further dimension to the project. All this provides the basis for addressing a wide range of issues in both local Cypriot culture history and of broadermethodological and theoretical interest, as is clear from the attached list of the main publications arising from the project.

The excavations at Marki have been funded by a series of Large Grants from the Australian Research Council.

Selected publications on the Marki excavations

Final Reports

Preliminary Reports

Special discussions and analyses

Theses based on or associated with the Marki project

Postgraduate theses in preparation
Brewster, D., Prehistoric Cypriot Bronze Age Black Polished Ware. Sneddon, A., The Bronze Age Cemeteries at Marki, Cyprus.