**Hidden Pasts: Developing narratives for community archaeology and local history at Arediou, Cyprus**

This project is exploring how the past is variously understood and negotiated within a small rural community in central Cyprus. The community of Arediou was chosen for study since the community until recently has not been overly influenced by the myriad external influences to which Cyprus is subjected , and is only now renegotiating its values in the light of changing social and economic forces. Moreover, ongoing archaeological fieldwork within the village over the past decade has served to build up a strong network of links between the research team the local community.

**Aims and Objectives:**

Our primary fieldwork aim was to examine ways in which Arediou, and by extension other similar such communities, might be persuaded to engage with constructing their own local narrative through integrating their rich archaeological heritage within more recent historical experiences. Primarily we hoped to ensure the preservation of the community’s fragile archaeological heritage (which is under threat from development, intensive farming activities and above all looting) by actively including individuals in the creation of historical narratives. Through a number of initiatives within the village (described below) we have sought to develop and encourage an understanding locally of their archaeology as an important source of knowledge and information and above all to promote local ownership of the narrative.

Our other aim was to situate the archaeology within a wider local historical context. In particular we focused on the hidden histories within the contested landscape of Arediou, namely the final years of Ottoman occupation, the EOKA resistance, and the 1974 invasion, all of which have served to create a very specific local identity, largely rooted in the community’s sense of Greekness.

To explore these issues we have identified four key approaches which explore different conceptions of, and engagement with, the past.

1. Initial consultation for establishing an exhibition space at Arediou, in the newly-built Civic Centre. We aim to do this by sharing our academic expertise with the local community and also liaising and facilitating communication at an appropriate level between the Community Council and the Cyprus Department of Antiquities.
2. Educational: this involves hands-on interaction with the archaeology through handling and teaching sessions at the Village School, together with the preparation of teaching materials and an “*Archaeology of Arediou*” booklet in Greek.
3. Exploratory research aimed at situating the archaeology within a wider narrative of local history through the creation of a photographic record of the old village.
4. Testing the feasibility of an oral history project, recording the memories and recollections of the older surviving villagers. This is aimed at revealing and preserving what are effectively hidden histories – aspects of the past that otherwise are unspoken and may eventually become lost or forgotten.

**Results:**

One of the stated objectives in our initial application was to transform ‘poachers into gamekeepers’: we are very aware in the past that many finds from our excavation site, and other ancient sites in the area, have been looted and have been made privy to some of these finds. The ethical issues of cultural ownership were very clearly addressed by the dissemination of knowledge about the archaeology with the wider community as part of our daily interaction, alongside the more considered methodologies outlined above. Our success can be measured in part by the response to the oral histories and school handling sessions outlined below, but perhaps more so by the successful negotiation to “return” a key artefact from Arediou *Vouppes* to the Department of Antiquities, along with details of its provenance.

1. Museum /exhibition space. In consultation with the Department of Antiquities, and working closely with the local community, we have identified a suitable space within the recently built municipal building to house the proposed display of archaeological artefacts. We have drawn up a list of objects from the excavation that are suitable for display within this exhibition, including a group of recently restored vessels from the work-rooms of Building 1 (<http://www.trinitysaintdavid.ac.uk/en/archaeologyhistoryandanthropology/research/excavationsatarediou-vouppescyprus/studyseason2007/>). The Department of Antiquities was very positive about the implementation of this display and we were able to create a line of communication between the Community Council and the curator of the Cyprus Museum. The successful completion of this phase of the project now lies in the hands of the *koinotarchis* (local mayor) and the local community.
2. Educational Resource. We have continued to work closely with the village school in Arediou, using this as a forum for informing the wider community about their archaeology. We have provided the school with photographs from the excavation, which are used as teaching materials, and also an artist’s impression of the ancient site of Arediou. (<http://www.trinitysaintdavid.ac.uk/en/archaeologyhistoryandanthropology/research/excavationsatarediou-vouppescyprus/studyseason2012/>). Another key part of the project was hands-on sessions in the village school (ages 5-10), following on from the pilot session in 2012. The village children were able to handle various objects from the excavation – including grinding grain on one of the several querns excavated at the site – and also under careful close supervision could handle the restored pottery assemblage from the workrooms. In close consultation with the teachers, we have completed a booklet and quiz, aimed mainly at the older children at the school (8-10 years), and a series of worksheets aimed at the younger school children. The booklet and worksheets are currently being translated and the illustrations finalised.
3. Photographic Record. We have built up an archive of the old village houses in Arediou (<http://www.trinitysaintdavid.ac.uk/en/arediou-hiddenpasts/theoldvillage/>), which we have supplemented with oral histories concerning the use of space within the houses. As our knowledge base of the traditional lifeways of the community of Arediou has increased we have extended the photographic record to create a wider picture of the village within its social and economic landscape – one which we have also identified as a contested landscape. The photographic record includes a detailed video record of the wider landscape of Arediou which is currently being further developed and will be added onto the web page, under the theme “a sense of place”. Some of the photographic record is available on the web page (see link above). Other elements are being used as illustrative material for seminar papers and a journal publication presenting results of this research. The webpage is currently being translated into Greek and Turkish.
4. Oral histories. The pilot study collecting oral histories has been very successful, but equally very challenging. Given our very close relationship with the wider community at Arediou (built up over approximately10 years ) we found that people were very happy to share memories with us. Perhaps more importantly our research has generated a very real interest in local histories, which has been taken up by the family of the village priest. This resulted in their organising a tour around the old village for older members of the community in June. Our aim was specifically to generate an interest in the local histories and to promote local ownership and narratives of this past – in this respect the project has been a resounding success. In particular older members of the community were eager to share memories about how the village has changed and the old way of life; frequently commenting to us that the younger members of the community have no interest in their past, instead being more interested in the allure of western (non-Cypriot) culture. Some of the details recovered have been invaluable for creating an understanding of the ancient community of Arediou.

Given the sensitive and personal nature of the many stories of Arediou’s contested past, we have been faced with very real concerns about how this material is used and disseminated, both to an academic audience and to the wider local community. We are also very aware the stories we have heard represent only a partial account of the recent past – the Turkish villages forced to leave in 1974, for example, effectively have no voice. We have been able to collect oral traditions concerning the Ottoman occupation of Arediou. Likewise we found that the very strong sense of Greek identity of many of our informants meant they were happy to talk about the events of 1974. There was a very different attitude to stories of EOKA (*Ethniki Organosis Kipriakou Agonos*: National Organisation of Cypriot Struggle [against British imperial ruler]) from the few villagers old enough to have been involved in the struggle. Although there was clearly pride in their EOKA past (illustrated by EOKA memorabilia in many of the houses of older residents), there was an unwillingness to discuss this on record. Once the recorder was turned off, however, the stories flooded in.

Certainly, there is real interest in the Hidden Pasts project amongst the wider community of Arediou and this could be successfully carried forward; however, for the project to continue it would require a strong anthropological presence on the project team, to allow full consideration of the ethical issues in particular with the accumulation and dissemination of oral histories.