



# EMPIRE & EXCAVATION

## Critical perspectives on archaeology in British-period Cyprus, 1878–1960

A conference held in collaboration with the British Museum and the  
Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute (CAARI)

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### ABSTRACTS

***Surveillance, survey and local knowledge: Landscape relations in the development of Cypriot archaeology, 1878–1960***

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When state-approved excavations take place in a colonial situation, such as that of Cyprus between 1878 and 1960, who has the agency? The now numerous critiques of colonial archaeology have transformed our understanding of colonial archaeological practice, but they all too often reduce the archaeology to an artefact of the foreign expedition leaders and their social and political context. Have we all, in other words, been telling and retelling the sorts of hero stories that Cesnola so liked to tell about himself?

So who does have the agency? What about the Cypriot farmers, excavation workers, landowners and enthusiasts, for example? How has the actual archaeology driven the development of archaeological practice in Cyprus: the characteristic sequences, deposition processes, contexts, assemblages, structures and artefacts? And what role has the broader landscape played? How have archaeological practitioners of all backgrounds understood and interacted with that landscape, and been influenced in their practice, decision-making and interpretation by landforms, vegetation, riverbeds and views?

In this paper I will juxtapose the colonial urge to produce a totalising, optic knowledge of the past through mapping, surveillance and control, with the intensity of local knowledge held and practised by villagers. The first type of knowledge considers itself *over* the landscape, and is objectified in finished maps, plans and overviews, and in antiquities whose biographies were captured and cut short. The second is based on being *in* the landscape, in a complex and constantly emerging relationship with community, field and hillside and with antiquities which had an ongoing biography.

Where this dichotomy becomes particularly interesting is where it begins to break up, as the boundaries between Cypriot and non-Cypriot decay and the landscape and the archaeology exert their own agency.

***Law and archaeology in British-period Cyprus: the case of Lapithos***

Stella Diakou (Istituto Nazionale di Studi Etruschi ed Italici)

This paper aims to explore the Antiquities Law that was in place during the time when Cyprus was part of the British Empire and how this affected the dispersal of antiquities outside of the island. The paper will focus on the excavations that took place in Lapithos in the 20th century and how the material from the excavations was divided between the authorities on the island and the excavation teams. Particular emphasis will be placed on the American excavations at Lapithos (1931–1932), which until recently were for the most part unknown to the archaeological community.

Lapithos attracted the interest of early travellers and researchers before the end of the 19th century. The three main archaeological projects that produced a wealth of information and material on the archaeology of the region all took place in the first half of the 20th century when Cyprus was part of the British Empire: J.L. Myres and M. Markides on behalf of the Cyprus Museum Committee (1913–1918); E. Gjerstad and the Swedish Cyprus Expedition (1927–1928) and B.H. Hill and the Pennsylvania Cyprus Expedition (1931–1932). In 1955 Lapithos was investigated by H. Catling and his team as part of the Cyprus Survey Project, while additional rescue excavations were carried out by the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus. Currently, the excavated material from Lapithos is divided in its majority between Cyprus, Sweden and the United States.

When the British acquired Cyprus in 1878, they maintained the 1874 Ottoman Law on Antiquities until 1905 when the first modern law on antiquities was passed. This law was amended in 1927 and then reinforced in 1935. Focusing on the American Expedition at Lapithos and reading the 1905 Law together with archival documents (e.g. correspondence, export permits) highlights how the division and subsequent dispersal of the excavated material between the excavators and the host country was also influenced by personal preferences, shipment and storage issues and the desire to create or enrich collections of antiquities abroad.

### ***The Ancient Cyprus Collection at the British Museum: retracing stories of travelling antiquities, knowledge and empire***

Polina Nikolaou (Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation)

This paper considers the mechanisms of collecting Cypriot antiquities during the late nineteenth century by examining the archival documents held at the Cyprus State Archives and the Department of the Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum. It adopts a spatial perspective for exploring the roots and routes of the diaspora of Cypriot antiquities as they were excavated on the island, formed archaeological collections and then moved to the British Museum for display. The focus of this paper will be on the three large-scale excavations organized on the island by the Department of the Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum, when Emma T. Turner (1811–1892) bequeathed, in her will, £2000 to the British Museum for the ‘purpose of excavation or survey of sites in Europe, Asia or Africa in furtherance of the study of the antiquities of Greece, Rome or Egypt or of Biblical Antiquities’.

The first season of the excavations (November 1893 to March 1894) was conducted at Amathus and was superintended by A.H. Smith, an assistant (i.e. curator) at the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, and by J.L. Myres, then a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford; the second season of the excavations was carried out at Kourion (Curium) and was superintended by H.B. Walters (another assistant at the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities); the third season of the excavations took place at Enkomi and was directed, consecutively, by A. S. Murray (Keeper of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities), Percy Christian (British Museum agent) and A.H. Smith. The duty of the Turner Bequest archaeologists was to oversee the excavation and transportation of the antiquities from their finding spot to the British Museum. The actual digging was conducted by local workers, the excavations were organized by the British Museum agents and the daily activities at the ancient sites were regulated by the colonial government of the island.

Recent literature on the history of collections has demonstrated that collecting was a practice of valuation and preservation embedded within a broader social, political and economic context. Drawing from this literature, the present paper will give valuable insights on how the formation of the ancient Cyprus Collection at the British Museum was entangled with archaeological narratives and colonial relationships, flows and networks, including administration, commerce and exploration. It will, also, shed light on the unlicensed excavations taking place at the time and the role of the, often, unnamed local people in the excavation and exportation of antiquities. In doing so, this paper will a) show that the diaspora of Cypriot antiquities was a product of the historical, conceptual and spatial aspects of the relationship between empire and archaeology and b) explore the emergence of Cypriot archaeology as a field-based discipline by situating it in the broader colonial, imperial and geopolitical context of the Eastern Mediterranean.

### ***Was there an official German interest in the archaeology of Cyprus between 1878 and 1914?***

Stephan G. Schmid (Institut für Archäologie, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

At first glance, there seems to have been a substantial German interest in the archaeology of Cyprus during the first 35 years of British administration of the island. At a closer look, however, most of these activities, though directly connected with the name of a German subject – Max Ohnefalsch-Richter – cannot be considered German enterprises since they were conducted on behalf of institutions and private persons mostly of British or Cypriot origin, including the British Museum and the newly founded Cyprus Museum. There are, however, a few occasions where excavations were carried out on behalf of the Royal Museums of Berlin and/or the Prussian government. The aim of this paper is to present a series of examples that may reveal the manifold ways in which German individuals and institutions tried to create a kind of official interest in the archaeology of Cyprus, roughly between 1850 and WW I.

After some earlier travellers to Cyprus with a clear interest in the antiquities of the island, e.g. Ludwig Roß or Carl Friederichs, we will consider Paul Schroeder’s trips to Cyprus in 1870 and 1873 more carefully. Schroeder (1844–1915) was a talented orientalist who worked as dragoman for the German consulate/embassy in Constantinople and later became German consul and consul general for Syria, residing in Beirut. His unpublished travel journals and notes as well as some letters he sent to Berlin not only show his own interest in potential excavation sites on the island, but also some attempts to interest official and governmental institutions in such activities. This clearly is a step beyond Roß’ and Friederichs’ approaches who – like others – were content in solely buying ancient Cypriot objects either for their own collections or for the Berlin Museums. Such was the case with Friederichs who bought many objects from Cesnola for Berlin. Hence, we will have to examine whether there was a kind of continuity between Schroeder’s attempts to interest official German institutions in working in Cyprus under the late Ottoman administration and those of Ohnefalsch-Richter during the early years of British administration. In order to do so, we will discuss some of Schroeder’s and Ohnefalsch’s documents but also consider the background of the official German excavations in Tamassos, Idalion and Rantidi in 1888, 1889, 1894/5 and 1910 respectively. It will be interesting to see whether German government and institutions actively contributed to these excavation activities or whether they simply profited from the personal engagement of individuals.

Finally, the official German position towards the archaeology of Cyprus shall be compared with official German activities elsewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean, such as Greece and Asia Minor.

## ***Archaeological entanglements: Palestinian refugee archaeologists in Cyprus, Libya and Jordan***

Dr Sarah Irving (Edge Hill University)

In 1950, the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* published an article by the then director of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus, A.H.S. 'Peter' Megaw, entitled "A Muslim Tombstone from Paphos."<sup>1</sup> Although the article is formally credited to Megaw, it opens as follows:

Mr. St. H. Stephan began to study this monument but died before he had finished the work. He made the following acknowledgments:—

"I have to thank the Director of Antiquities, Cyprus, Mr. A. H. S. Megaw, and Mr. Loizos Philippou, Hon. Curator of the Paphos District Museum for information and kind permission to publish this article. My thanks are also due to Mr. P. Dikaïos, Curator of the Cyprus Museum, to Miss A. Paschalidou, Keeper of the photographic records in the Department, and to the Librarian, Mr. D. Daniel."

St. H. Stephan was Stephan Hanna Stephan, a former assistant librarian and archaeological officer at the Palestine Archaeological Museum in Jerusalem. He and Megaw probably met in Jerusalem, when Megaw was commissioned to survey earthquake damage to the Dome of the Rock. Stephan, a Christian Palestinian, was a prolific ethnographer, translator and historian, associated with proto-nationalist scholars whose works appeared regularly in the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*.<sup>2</sup>

In 1948 Stephan, with at least 700,000 other Palestinians, became a refugee. He and his family fled to Lebanon, but the passport of one of his sons from this period is filled with stamps indicating journeys to and from Cyprus. Stephan died of a heart attack in 1949, but Megaw's article is a tantalising suggestion as to how his career might have proceeded, taking a course plotted by his links through the various British-run archaeological institutions of the Eastern Mediterranean.

If this had occurred, Stephan would not have been alone. At least two Palestinian refugee archaeologists from the Mandate government's Department of Antiquities took up jobs in the British-run DoA in Cyrenaica. Several others made the shorter transfer to the Jordanian DoA, headed by Lankester Harding. As such, a scholarly Palestinian refugee diaspora was mapped onto British colonial and postcolonial involvement in archaeology across the Eastern Mediterranean.

This paper locates Cyprus as part of that network via Stephan's work, highlighting the ways in which middle-ranking archaeological professionals from British colonies participated in webs of knowledge production, and how their linguistic and cultural skills were utilised by British colonial institutions in contingent and shifting ways and circumstances. I argue that while British colonialism often exploited and sidelined indigenous archaeology and archaeologists across the region, the latter found ways to create opportunities within it. Archaeology under the British in Cyprus is thus entangled with other sites of British control and influence from Jordan to Libya, creating unexpected routes for survival in colonial and postcolonial settings.

<sup>1</sup> A.H.S. Megaw, "A Muslim Tombstone from Paphos." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3/4 (October 1950), 108-109.

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Irving, "A Young Man of Promise": Finding a Place for Stephan Hanna Stephan in the History of Mandate Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 73 (2018), 42-62.

## ***Diving into the Past: Archival Research Results of the Cyprus Coastal Assessment Project and the History of the First Underwater Archaeological Explorations in Cyprus***

Panagiotis Theofanous, Maria Volikou, Despina Pilides (Department of Antiquities, Cyprus)

In view of increasing development pressures in the coastal zone and territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus, threatening underwater and coastal heritage, it was absolutely essential that a complete survey was undertaken as soon as possible, so as to safeguard its marine cultural environment. In this context, the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus implemented in September 2019 the Cyprus Coastal Assessment Project (CCAP), an innovative research programme funded by the Honor Frost Foundation and the Government of Cyprus. The aim of the project is the mapping and documentation of the underwater and coastal archaeological sites of Cyprus and the maritime spatial planning of its coastal zone for the protection and management of the maritime cultural heritage.

The first phase of the programme involves data gathering and indexing of underwater archaeological surveys or excavations that took place during the past years. This has involved extensive research in the archives of the Department of Antiquities and a review of all of the relevant literature including various sources such as field reports, publications of archaeological research, grey literature and photographic archives. CCAP also utilises satellite imagery, topographical and bathymetric data for a) indication of promising coastal and underwater areas of high archaeological potential, b) analysis of spatial patterns of archaeological sites and c) evaluation of areas at risk. The last part of this phase will include interviews with the coastal communities and events to enhance public awareness on the protection of underwater cultural heritage. The project's database is developed on the basis of the data gathered and will be connected to a geographical information system (GIS) platform.

This extensive archival research, led to an in-depth historical analysis of past underwater archaeological surveys with the aim of locating possible harbour sites or shipwrecks. About ten years after the development of the SCUBA diving regulator, by Jacques-Eves Cousteau and Émile Gagnan, in 1943, underwater endeavours were also undertaken in Cyprus. During these early days of scuba diving, a team, equipped with cutting-edge diving technology of the era, set up a diving club and implemented the first underwater archaeological explorations in Salamis and Famagusta. The latter sparked the interest of many other teams and diving clubs from all over the island. Such operations, even though conducted

by non-archaeologists, alarmed the authorities and generated their early response to the first discoveries of underwater archaeological finds.

The scope of this paper is to discuss some outcomes of the research being conducted in the significant archival resources which remain so far largely unknown and under-exploited. Moreover, it will present the history of the very first underwater explorations and discoveries in Cyprus, the reaction of the authorities to them as well as the information provided on the pioneers conducting this research and their contribution to the dawn of maritime archaeological fieldwork in Cyprus. Finally, this paper aims to present the challenges of the historical research on one hand and its importance, on the other, in understanding the current status of this long neglected aspect of cultural heritage.

### ***Prehistoric Archaeology in the Republic of Cyprus: The First Sixty Years***

A. Bernard Knapp (Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute)

The aim of this paper is to assess one aspect of the ever-expanding historiography of Cypriot archaeology by presenting my own view of developments in *prehistoric* Cypriot archaeology over the past 60 years. In so doing, I have cast my net widely, since neither every relevant site nor every worthy archaeologist can be included. On Cyprus (and in the Mediterranean generally), where so much emphasis has always fallen on Greek and Roman cultures, archaeology is all too often regarded as a branch of 'classical' art and archaeology. By contrast, prehistoric archaeology and archaeological theory stand apart, particularly as they are practiced by younger scholars and those trained at least to some extent in the social and physical sciences. In order to discuss more recent trends, however, it is essential to present briefly the long history of archaeological fieldwork and research on the island (1860–1960). Thus, I first establish the antiquarian background and discuss the emergence and resilience of culture history in the archaeology of Cyprus as well as the rise of 'processual' approaches. I examine general trends as well as individual endeavours — by both native Cypriotes and foreign teams — in prehistoric archaeology. This involves consideration of the culture-historical approach, science-based archaeology and social archaeology. The paper concludes with a general discussion of the use of (and reactions to) 'theory' in prehistoric Cypriot archaeology, and a consideration of some possible future directions.

### ***Archaeology in Cyprus under British Rule 1883-1935: Imperialism, Hellenism, and the Eteocyprits***

Raphael Marshall (Independent scholar)

Michael Given's influential 1998 article 'Inventing the Eteocyprits' argued that 'the British Colonial Rulers of Cyprus ... exploited ancient history and archaeology to combat Greek nationalism'. In particular Given argued that Einar Gjerstad colluded with Governor Ronald Storrs' colonial administration to fabricate a non-Greek ethnic group at Amathus, the Eteocyprits, in order to deny 'the hellenic character of ancient and modern Cyprus'. Although Given's suggestion that the Eteocyprits were fabricated has received sustained criticism, his argument that the Eteocyprits were employed in colonial propaganda and early twentieth-century Cypriot archaeology was an instrument of colonial control has been widely accepted. The reality of Cyprus' archaeological politics in this period was considerably more complicated. Between the foundation of the Cyprus Museum in 1882 and the inauguration of the Department of Antiquities in 1935, archaeological policy was directed by the Cyprus Museum's committee. This was composed largely of Greek Cypriot notables elected by the Museum's subscribers. Cyprus' elected Legislative Council also played a substantial and previously unexamined role. Overall political control of archaeology was shared uneasily between classically educated British officials and Greek-Cypriot antiquarians.

Considerable light has been shed on this period by Merrillees' 2005 'Towards a fuller history of the Cyprus Museum' and Pilides' 2009 publication and analysis of George Jeffery's diaries. Nevertheless Cyprus' archaeological politics in this period are far less fully understood than during final years of Ottoman rule or the early years of British rule. This paper builds on Merrillees' and Pilides' analysis by examining four sets of little-known documents, drawn primarily from the UK's National Archives.

The first set of documents are the minutes of five debates of Cyprus' Legislative Council on antiquities policy between 1903 and 1906, accompanied by a 1901 dispatch to London from the Governor. These reveal a longstanding and successful but previously unknown campaign by the Greek-Cypriot politician Christodoulos Sozos to prohibit the export of antiquities. Sadly they also document a nascent divide between Greek and Turkish Cypriot members of the Council on the management of Cyprus' archaeological heritage, with the Turkish-Cypriot council members characterising the Cyprus Museum as specifically Greek.

The second document is a 1928–9 minute paper discussing the illegal export of antiquities. Leading Greek-Cypriot politician and antiquarian Luke Pierides is remembered for initiating the Swedish Cyprus Expedition. However this minute paper suggests that Pierides also exploited his position on the Museum Committee to smuggle illegally excavated antiquities out of Cyprus. The authorities deemed investigation politically inexpedient.

The third group of files preserve correspondence between Governor Ronald Storrs and the Ancient Historian Arnold Toynbee in 1932–1933. Professor Toynbee had cited Cyprus' archaeology as the basis for Enosis. Attempting to respond, Storrs and several other officials tried rather ineffectually to persuade Toynbee that first millennium BC Cyprus was not archaeologically Greek. In this they drew extensively on a brief official analysis of Cypriot archaeology by the Ancient Historian James Headlam-Morley. Involving Gjerstad was considered but ultimately not attempted. Although British officials were sensitive to the political importance of Cypriot archaeology, they were not adept at manipulating it. Toynbee alluded to the Eteocyprits but Storrs appeared not to have heard of them, demonstrating that they were not used in British propaganda.

These previously neglected documents illustrate the complexity of early twentieth century archaeological politics in Cyprus. Cypriot archaeology was embedded in PanHellenic politics, inspiring a campaign against the export of antiquities by Greek deputies. Shortly afterwards, one of the most prominent PanHellenic politician-antiquarians exploited his position to illegally export antiquities. British Colonial officials were very sensitive to archaeology's political importance, but incapable of mounting a sophisticated campaign of manipulation.

### ***Excavation and Archaeologists at Marion in the British Colonial Period***

Joanna S. Smith (University of Pennsylvania)

Below the modern town of Polis Chrysochous, Cyprus, lie two ancient cities. The earlier city, Marion, was the target of several excavations by archaeologists of many nationalities during the British colonial period. These excavations only tangentially touched on the later city, Arsinoe, which was founded in the Hellenistic Period. These archaeologists created a narrative about Marion as a Greek city. This story comes down to us through well-known publications, especially Max Ohnefalsch-Richter's *Kypros, the Bible, and Homer*, articles in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* by the Cyprus Exploration Fund, and volume 2 of the *Swedish Cyprus Expedition*. Yet this narrative was based almost entirely on tombs. The settlement has only been the subject of stratigraphic excavation since 1983 when a team from Princeton University began its fieldwork. This paper explores the background to these early excavations based on research in the State Archives of Cyprus, the Cyprus Museum archives, the Department of Greece and Rome at the British Museum, and archives at the Medelhavet. An alternative narrative emerges from the lively correspondence, permits, and original notebooks that reveal other people, especially Menelaos Markides, who were important players in the larger endeavor to unearth, obtain, and protect the antiquities of Polis. It also corrects several errors in the published record based on original field notes about the hundreds of tombs recorded at Polis.