

Cypro-centric Approaches to Teaching Ancient Cyprus: Practical, Creative, and Experiential Pedagogies for Engaging with Landscapes and Material Culture

(A hybrid workshop organised in the context of the *Teaching Ancient Cyprus* Network;
funded by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Events Fund and the
Fostering Cypriot and Greek Studies in Ireland Project)

Department of Classics, Arts Building, 6th Floor, Room B 6002

Zoom link for registration:

https://tcd-ie.zoom.us/meeting/register/4RXQ-Fi_T5OdI34mTr1ZlIg

Convenors: Ersin Hussein (Swansea University) and Giorgos Papantoniou (Trinity College Dublin)

Thursday 29th May

10.30: Registration

10.45: Welcome Addresses

Session 1 – Chair: Ersin Hussein

10.50-11.30: Introduction and a Personal ‘Cypro-centric’ Perspective: Is it Research-led Teaching or Teaching-led Research? (Giorgos Papantoniou)

11.30-13.00: Shared Activity

Create an open noticeboard: everyone, including lecturers, researchers and students can take time over **coffee/tea** to add anonymous comments and ideas to a shared board (digital or physical). Questions to Consider:

- What challenges/constraints do you currently face in the classroom re teaching Cyprus?
- What opportunities do you think exist and need to be developed?
- Resources at your institution to support the teaching or learning of ancient Cyprus?
- What collaborations would you like to see develop?
- Do you get students out into the field or a museum-based projects? And if not, what are the barriers?
- Have you as students participated in field or museum-based projects? And if not, what are the barriers?
- etc. (i.e. any thoughts you wish to share)

We will read these at the end of the session; and reflect on these at the end of the workshop.

13.00-14.00: Lunch

Session 2 – Chair: Giorgos Papantoniou

14.00-14.30: A Journey of Teaching Cypriot Archaeology in Dublin (Christine Morris, Trinity College Dublin)

14.30-15.00: From Field to Class and Back Again. Teaching the Archaeology of Cyprus in Italy (Luca Bombardieri, Università di Siena and Giampaolo Graziadio, Università di Pisa)

15.00-15.30: Sneaking Cyprus into the Syllabus: Neoliberalism, Consumerism, and ‘Market Demand’ in US Higher Education (Derek B. Counts and Elisabetta Cova, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee)

15.30-16.00: From Cyprus to Cyberspace: Digital and Experiential Approaches to the Teaching of Ancient Cyprus in STEM Education (Jody Michael Gordon, Wentworth Institute of Technology, Boston)

16.00-16.30: Coffee Break

16.30-18.00: Keynote by Maria Iacovou (University of Cyprus), to be followed by discussion

Title:

Student in Crete, Teacher in Cyprus

Building Cypriot Archaeology Courses based on the Islands’ Parallel Lives

A Personal Journey and a Tribute to my Mentors

Wine and Finger Food for the Speakers (in collaboration with the Cypriot Embassy in Dublin)

19.00-20.30: Public Event (only in person) in collaboration with the Cypriot Embassy in Dublin, Arts Building, Room 2041A: Jonathan Swift Theatre

Presentation of the Documentary *Skammata*, produced by the Cypriot Department of Antiquities and directed by Danae Stylianou (Duration: 87 mins)

Synopsis:

Fifty years after the coup d’etat and the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, foreign and Cypriot archaeologists along with retired staff members of the Department of Antiquities, evoke their personal memories, as they reflect on the collective trauma of war and its consequences on Cypriot archaeology. Interweaving archival material from excavations with captivating personal testimonies, *Skammata* presents momentous events that marked Cypriot archaeology, before and after the tragic summer of 1974.

Trailer link: <https://youtu.be/BJGNA5194zQ>

Friday, 30th May

Session 3 – Chair: Athanasios K. Vionis

9.30-10.00: Teaching Archaeology (Cypriot or Otherwise): Back to Basics (Jennifer Webb, La Trobe University/University of Cyprus)

10.30-11.00: Teaching Cypriot Prehistory at Athens: A Heavy Legacy, Current Practices, and Prospects (Giorgos Vavouranakis and Ioannis Voskos, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

11.00-11.30: Between Kyrenia and Mazotos Shipwrecks: Challenges and Perspectives in Teaching Maritime Archaeology in Cyprus (Stella Demesticha, University of Cyprus)

11.30-12.00: Coffee Break

12.00-12.30: Cyprus Insula: (Re)Learning About Cyprus Inside and Outside of the Museum (Demetra Ignatiou, Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation and Aliosha Bielenberg, UC Berkley)

12.30-13.00: Ancient Cyprus Down Under: Object Based Learning Experiences with Cypriot Antiquities in the University of Sydney's Chau Chak Wing Museum (Craig Barker, The University of Sydney)

13.00-14.00: Lunch

Session 4 – Chair: Christine Morris

14.00-14.30: Cyprus in the Classroom: Engaging MA Students with Case Studies in Heritage Interpretation (Francesco Ripanti, University of Birmingham)

14.30-15.00: Research-based Teaching – Teaching-based Research in a Cypriot Perspective (Kristina Winther-Jacobsen, University of Copenhagen)

15.00-15.30: Teaching Historical Cyprus: Abandonment, Contested Areas and Ethical Challenges in Archaeological Education (Athanasios K. Vionis, University of Cyprus)

15.30-16.00: Integrating Cyprus in UK University Strategic Plans (Georgia Andreou, University of Southampton)

16.00-16.30: Coffee break

16.30-17.10: Initial Conclusions and a Personal Perspective: Teaching Ancient Cyprus (the Swansea Context) (Ersin Hussein)

17.10-18.10: Shared Activity

Roundtable ‘Cyprus in the Curriculum’: everyone, including lecturers, researchers and students, can respond to this question and issues raised during the workshop, including the points raised during the first shared activity.

18.10-18.30: Final Thoughts and Future Steps

Abstracts

(in order of presentation)

Thursday, 29th May

Introduction and a Personal ‘Cypro-centric’ Perspective: Is it Research-led Teaching or Teaching-led Research? (Giorgos Papantoniou, Trinity College Dublin)

This paper first, introduces the main themes of the workshop highlighting how integrating Cypriot studies within higher education curricula fosters both pedagogical innovation and scholarly advancement. We believe that this workshop provides an opportunity to reflect on best practices, challenges, and the transformative potential of a Cypro-centric approach to learning and research.

Then, I attempt to explore the reciprocal relationship between research and teaching on ‘ancient Cyprus’ (broadly defined) bringing to the forefront my own positive experience at Trinity College Dublin; building on the earlier tradition of the Institution, I was able to successfully incorporate Cypriot studies into both undergraduate and postgraduate curricula. The design and delivery of standalone modules, as well as interdisciplinary integration within a Classics Department, have provided students with a nuanced understanding of Cyprus’s socio-political and cultural position within the broader Mediterranean landscapes. My position, titled Visual and Material Culture of the Ancient World, has also allowed me to undertake, similarly to my research, a rather diachronic approach to teaching Cyprus. Employing material culture studies, digital tools, and experiential learning methods has not only enhanced student engagement but also influenced my research directions. Additionally, the presence of PhD researchers specialising in Cypriot studies, supported by competitive funding, reflects the dynamic intersection of research and teaching in this field.

Beyond curriculum development, this paper examines broader initiatives that contribute to the strengthening of Cypriot studies in Ireland, including my roles as coordinator of both the Steering Committee of the Postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology (PoCA) conference and the ‘Fostering Cypriot Studies in Ireland’ project. These initiatives illustrate how teaching can lead research just as much as research informs teaching. By sharing experiences and methodologies, this workshop seeks to foster a broader conversation on the interplay between teaching and research; and to advocate for inclusive and innovative pedagogical strategies for teaching ‘ancient Cyprus’, offering to students new pathways to experience the value of studying Greek and Roman archaeology in additional geographic regions beyond the ‘mainstream’ classical centres.

A Journey of Teaching Cypriot Archaeology in Dublin (Christine Morris, Trinity College Dublin)

Cypriot archaeology has been taught in Trinity College Dublin since 1996 and happily continues to flourish today. In this paper I trace and reflect on my own teaching ‘journey’, considering how a module on ‘Ancient Cyprus’ (spanning earliest times to the Early Iron Age, and taught over a full year as an advanced undergraduate class) has evolved in response to multiple factors. The beginning of this journey is, without doubt, ‘inheritance’; I had the good fortune to study Cyprus with Nicolas Coldstream in London and then to

bring, or transplant, that tradition to Dublin. Teaching and learning are contextual for both lecturer and our students, so each new place also offers different opportunities and affordances – Cyprus and Ireland, as an example, being islands at the opposite ends of Europe and with significant modern historical parallels which can be drawn upon in teaching archaeology and heritage. I also regularly teach the archaeology of another key Mediterranean island, Crete, though with a traditional chronological focus on the (Minoan) Bronze Age, making it interesting to look back now at the extent to which I have drawn on similar teaching approaches for both. Finally, I share some examples of teaching approaches which have emerged for me as particularly important: a focus on embodied and experiential materialities (handling and sometimes making objects; and co-creating object biographies as a class), and the incorporation of case studies from archaeology and heritage that encourage our students to think critically and ethically about the role of the past in the present.

From Field to Class and Back Again. Teaching the Archaeology of Cyprus in Italy (Luca Bombardieri, Università di Siena and Giampaolo Graziadio, Università di Pisa)

Beyond the early antiquarian interests of Italian travellers, diplomats and pseudo-archaeologists in the XVIII and XIX Centuries, the emergence of an Italian archaeological initiative in Cyprus dates back to the Archaeological Field Project at Ayia Irini, Morphou in the beginning of 1970s. Such a formative project stems from a collaboration between the Italian National Council of Research (CNR) and the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus and it definitively tips the balance from previous extractive archaeological initiatives to a newly based cooperative partnership.

During the following twenty years the Italian Archaeology of and in Cyprus was basically driven by the CNR as a matter of research on field and museum collections, with no direct relationship with education and teaching initiatives.

In 1991 the first University class explicitly dedicated to the Archaeology of Cyprus has been established in Pisa, in the major framework of the Aegean Prehistory. Since then, Cypriot Archaeology increasingly became subject of single classes, especially in Post-graduate Schools in Archaeology spread over a set of universities (e.g. Torino, Venice, Lecce, Catania).

Again, twenty years after the opening of the first Cypriot Archaeology class, a new fieldwork project was initiated. The Erimi Archaeological Project, focused upon the investigation of a Middle Bronze Age community, is the first University-based initiative with a steady educational program from class to field that involve students both from Italy and Cyprus thanks to Erasmus exchange programs and focus training activities. Additionally, the Erimi Archaeological Project promotes cooperative activities between Italian and Cypriote partner institutions (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italian Embassy, Department of Antiquities' local and district museums, Kourion Municipality) through the shared development of initiatives in community archaeology at Erimi.

Sneaking Cyprus into the Syllabus: Neoliberalism, Consumerism, and ‘Market Demand’ in US Higher Education (Derek B. Counts and Elisabetta Cova, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee)

The last two decades have witnessed a steady and deliberate transformation of higher education in the United States that has emphasized short-term, ‘market-driven’ strategies to program array at most colleges and universities. And at the same time, reduced funding and waning public support have resulted in a perfect storm of challenges to the humanities and social sciences: increasing costs set against decreasing financial support yields staggering budgetary shortfalls, which inevitably frame university course schedules as a marketplace where students are viewed as customers and enrollments are linked not only to sustainability, but also economic value. Cuts to faculty and graduate support in fields not identified as having a ‘market demand’ or deemed a ‘growth’ area are as common as threats to cancel low-enrolled courses or suspend majors. It is against this backdrop that I offer comments on the challenges (and opportunities) of incorporating Cyprus into the curriculum at a time when the humanities are under attack US and where there is often pressure to teach ‘mainstream’ Mediterranean archaeology (Egyptian, Greek, Roman, etc.). The role (or absence) of Cypriot archaeology in classrooms is a critical part of how the field moves forward and this workshop seems like an ideal place to explore such a theme.

From Cyprus to Cyberspace: Digital and Experiential Approaches to the Teaching of Ancient Cyprus in STEM Education (Jody Michael Gordon, Wentworth Institute of Technology, Boston)

For the last 150 years, a major focus for higher education in the developed world has been STEM education, that is, teaching and learning in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. The advancement of these fields began in the Industrial Revolution with the establishment of the first technical schools and institutes of technology (e.g., the Royal Institution, MIT etc.), but government support dramatically increased during World War II and especially during the Cold War when technological progress became linked to political success, industrial development, and military dominance. More recently, the development of the internet, the dot.com economy, and now artificial intelligence (AI) has further promoted these schools’ contributions to solving some of the world’s great problems, from climate change to curing disease. Today’s STEM institutions attract intelligent and curious students who are good at calculating, programming, and problem-solving, and most of the classes they take are directly related to these technical subjects. However, to meaningfully contribute to society and to secure a gainful income, graduates must apply these technical skills to solving real-world problems. It is at this point where humanities education, in fields such as philosophy, religion and ethics, and history and archaeology, plays a key role in shaping a holistic curriculum in STEM schools.

This paper’s goal is to show how the teaching of ancient Cypriot topics at a STEM school, Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, USA, can provide students with reading and writing, critical thinking, cross-cultural analysis, and digital humanities skills that supplement their technical abilities. Ancient Cypriot history and archaeology resonates with STEM students because Cypriots were innovators and problem solvers. Throughout Cypriot history, the people of Cyprus have had to leverage natural resources, geopolitical

location, and local knowledge to survive on their island home, and so introducing students to this material provides them with fresh critical perspectives on how their own problem-solving abilities might be applied to modern social issues. The paper will specifically touch on how ancient Cypriot topics have been addressed in three different courses: Roman Culture and Technology, Computer Science and Society, and a Cyprus Study Abroad course for engineers, computer scientists, and architects. In sum, the paper illustrates how Cypro-centric topics can be leveraged in a wide range of assignments that prepare STEM students for real-world decision-making and innovation.

Friday, 30th May

Teaching Archaeology (Cypriot or Otherwise): Back to Basics (Jennifer Webb, La Trobe University/University of Cyprus)

With the rise and rise of the archaeological sciences, the increasing use of new technologies and big data and the overarching focus on theory, the fundamentals of our discipline are in danger of being overwhelmed. Yet they must guide all archaeological practice. If students do not have a deep and critical understanding of the complexity of the relationship between material culture and archaeological context, their research, no matter how scientific and sophisticated, runs the risk of being built on unstable foundations. While undoubtedly best done in the field, the classroom has a role to play in teaching these fundamentals and a case study approach may be most appropriate. I offer a number of examples, based on my own work in Cyprus, to illustrate the importance of understanding how artefacts come to be where we find them, assessing the relative systemic integrity of deposits and looking for meaningful links between consumption behaviour, disposal strategies and recovery contexts.

Teaching Cypriot Prehistory at Athens: A Heavy Legacy, Current Practices, and Prospects (Giorgos Vavouranakis and Ioannis Voskos, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

Cypriot Prehistory was introduced as a distinct undergraduate module at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) by Eleni Mantzourani in 1986. She taught at all higher education levels until her retirement in 2021. Nota Kourou and Sophia Kalopisi also taught on various aspects of Cyprus, within their Classical and Byzantine archaeology courses, respectively. The module on Cypriot Prehistory was re-introduced in 2022. It provides a comprehensive picture of the island from the earliest presence of human beings to the 11th century BC. An additional undergraduate module offered to the English-taught curriculum places Neolithic Cyprus in the wider context of the East Mediterranean. Both modules bring up the idiosyncratic character of Cypriot Prehistoric material culture. The seminar format of the Greek module affords an inclusive and student-centred character but entails challenges regarding the ways in which students connect Cypriot Prehistory to the rest of their curriculum. The Cypriot collections of the NKUA Museum of Archaeology and History of Art, the National Archaeological Museum at Athens and the Museum of Cycladic Art offer a hands-on approach to pottery. References to the current political situation of Cyprus and the impact on cultural heritage, illegal excavations, and

archaeological research on the island present a complex challenge, as Greece has always retained an active role in the related international politics and events. The paper addresses all the above issues related to the subject matter, the pedagogical methods, and the political dimension of teaching about Prehistoric Cyprus.

Cyprus Insula: (Re)Learning About Cyprus Inside and Outside of the Museum (Demetra Ignatiou, Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation and Aliosha Bielenberg, UC Berkley)

The proposed paper focuses on the pedagogical aspect of the temporary exhibition Cyprus Insula: History – Memory – Reality presented at the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation (BOCCF) in Nicosia from July 4, 2024 to July 30, 2025. Reflecting on the notions of Time, Place and People, the exhibition captures life in Cyprus from antiquity to the present day, conveying an inclusive approach on the island's multifaceted and culturally rich insular identity, in a contemporary and interactive manner. The first part of the paper provides an overview of the cypro-centric curatorial perspective of the Cyprus Insula exhibition, examining its role within the pedagogical potential of museum exhibitions. The second part discusses the collaboration between Cyprus Insula and *bahçes histories** of Cyprus for the exhibition's public program. It elaborated on the case study of the educational participatory walk at Skouriotissa, titled Mining the Past: From Slag to Capitalism, which took place in January 2025. This walk engaged the historical site and available sources in a dialogue to narrate the (hi)story of mining in and around Katydata.

The exhibition Cyprus Insula: History Memory Reality is curated by Dr Yiannis Toumazis and Demetra Ignatiou

The walk Mining the Past: From Slag to Capitalism was designed and led by Aliosha Bielenberg within the framework of the collaboration of bahçes histories of Cyprus and Cyprus Insula, for the exhibition's public program.*

Ancient Cyprus Down Under: Object Based Learning Experiences with Cypriot Antiquities in the University of Sydney's Chau Chak Wing Museum (Craig Barker, The University of Sydney)

The Nicholson Collection of antiquities makes up a significant part of the Chau Chak Wing Museum, the new purpose-built museum at the University of Sydney in Australia. Within that collection, the archaeology of Cyprus is well represented with more than 2500 objects from the island representing the Early Bronze Age to the Medieval periods, some displayed in the current exhibition titled "Crossroads: Ancient Cyprus". Despite the collection and a long tradition of University of Sydney archaeologists working in Cyprus, including the current active Paphos Theatre Archaeological Project, no specific undergraduate courses on Cypriot archaeology have been taught in Sydney since the 1980s; nor is Cypriot archaeology represented in Australian school syllabuses.

The Chau Chak Wing Museum offers a range of Object-Based Learning (OBL) sessions for both undergraduate and postgraduate students and an active school outreach education program with tactile experiences. Through these educational programs we have adapted

and developed innovative and creative ways of bringing the Cypriot material into broader pedagogies and teaching strategies.

This paper will explore ways in which we have taught tactile and digital experiences for school students, university students and adult education students in Sydney using the Cypriot materials both for archaeology and ancient history students, as well as students of a diverse range of academic subjects including business and medicine. The presentation will provide case studies on the challenges and successes of developing education programs with Cypriot archaeological materials without a formal Cypriot syllabus.

Cyprus in the Classroom: Engaging MA Students with Case Studies in Heritage Interpretation (Francesco Ripanti, University of Birmingham)

With its numerous archaeological sites, diverse populations, colonial past, and troubled recent history, Cyprus offers a wealth of opportunities for inclusion in teaching curricula. The potential for using Cyprus in the classroom extends beyond modules on the island's history and archaeology. Cypriot case studies can enhance different modules into the heritage studies, providing unique insights into topics such as decolonization, contested heritage, tourism, and digital heritage.

This paper explores the use of selected Cypriot case studies in teaching heritage interpretation, based on recent experiences from the MA in International Heritage Management at the University of Birmingham. During the module, Cypriot case studies were the focus of two lectures and corresponding seminars, addressing challenging interpretations in contested areas and evaluating digital heritage outputs. By outlining the approaches and pedagogies used, and presenting qualitative feedback from students, this presentation reflects on the opportunities and challenges of using Cyprus to teach heritage interpretation.

Research-based Teaching – Teaching-based Research in a Cypriot Perspective (Kristina Winther-Jacobsen, University of Copenhagen)

The basic philosophy of the University of Copenhagen is that its permanent academic staff should be engaged in both research and teaching, and that it is primarily through the interaction between lecturers and students that the connection between research and education is forged. In principle, all degree programmes are research-based, but the goal is to achieve a higher degree of research integration where students are involved in and contribute to the teacher's research while developing their own research skills and experience.

Taking students on fieldwork is a widely practiced method of teaching students practical research skills. It plays an important role in the development of new talent, but it is typically a Master-Class-type method of transferring skills, which draws heavily on the research time of the teacher. This talk will present an experiment from 2022 to build a course around a research project, The analysis and publication of the pottery from the Roman bath at Kition, and invite the Master student participants to practice the role of pottery specialist under supervision.

Teaching Historical Cyprus: Abandonment, Contested Areas and Ethical Challenges in Archaeological Education (Athanasios K. Vionis, University of Cyprus)

This contribution examines approaches to teaching historical archaeology and cultural heritage in Cyprus by addressing the complex intersections of educational practices, politics and ethics in a local perspective. Drawing on case studies from different landscapes on the island, including contested regions loaded with negative memory due to past inter-community conflicts (e.g. the Xeros River valley, Larnaca District), this presentation demonstrates how the employment of field practices independently by the students and the use of digital learning tools that enable students to engage meaningfully with Cypriot landscapes and material culture may challenge traditional paradigms. The ethical implications of teaching Cypriot archaeology in the post-1974 context, addressing sensitive issues such as looting, the destruction of cultural heritage and the challenges of conducting archaeological research in politically divided territories are also critically examined. As will be demonstrated, teaching archaeology in contested areas necessitates a sensitive and inclusive approach, emphasising the role of local communities and their narratives. Engaging students in the exploration of myths and oral histories fosters a deeper appreciation of how abandoned spaces and landscapes shape collective identity and resilience. Overall, the intersection of abandonment studies, digital humanities and archaeology-in-practice equips the future generation of archaeologists with the tools to engage critically with the past, address contemporary issues, and contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage in contested landscapes. This holistic educational framework not only enriches students' understanding of historical processes but also empowers them to advocate for the recognition and preservation of marginalised histories.

Integrating Cyprus in UK University Strategic Plans (Georgia Andreou, University of Southampton)

Archaeology curricula are shaped by the strategic plans of universities, reflecting established trends in research and pedagogy. In this evolving landscape, archaeology is increasingly taught through thematic lenses, expanding its scope beyond traditional geographic or chronological frameworks. In this context, an island situated at the intersection of diverse research traditions—such as Classical Archaeology, Near Eastern Archaeology, and Egyptology—holds a unique position to offer insights into contemporary issues, including climate change, sustainability, and heritage politics. This paper examines how Cypriot archaeology is incorporated into thematic modules at the University of Southampton, using it as a case study to explore the colonial legacies and political dimensions of archaeology, the intersection of archaeology and conflict, and the role of archaeology in addressing climate change.

Initial Conclusions and a Personal Perspective: Teaching Ancient Cyprus (the Swansea Context) (Ersin Hussein, University of Swansea)

This paper will open the concluding session of the workshop by drawing together key themes raised by speakers and members of the audience. Reflection on the workshop proceedings will act as a springboard for further, joint discussion that will follow in the final shared activity. This presentation will also begin discussion on shared lines of enquiry by offering an overview of the role of Cyprus in the curriculum at Swansea University. It will pay particular attention to the following opportunities and challenges: the role of Cyprus in decolonising the curriculum, object-centred learning and experiential learning opportunities, fostering an inclusive learning environment, developing accessible study resources for study, and engaging students with the Cypriot landscape remotely.