

RESEARCH PAPER: EUROPE/MIDDLE EAST

The Archaeological Activities of the Scott-Stevensons in Cyprus, 1878–1883

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The early years of the British administration in Cyprus, which began in 1878, were characterised by an approach of casual acquisition towards the island's ancient material culture. Civilian administrators and military personnel stationed in Cyprus, prompted by the island's reputation as a rich source of antiquities, took the opportunity to explore ancient tombs and acquire objects to keep as personal souvenirs or to sell, despite official restrictions on excavation. The nascent Cyprus Museum, responsible for the island's cultural heritage, lacked resources to restrict or closely monitor this activity. Many objects were removed from their context of excavation without proper recording, resulting in the formation of numerous disparate collections across the UK which lack provenance and documentation. This paper seeks to restore contextual information to some objects dispersed in this way through a re-examination of archives and published sources. While this cannot reconstruct a full archaeological provenance, it can add to the knowledge of individual objects and their collection history, and more broadly the ways in which private and public collections of ancient Cypriot objects were formed through social and intellectual networks. It focuses on the archaeological activities of two British residents, Andrew and Esmé Scott-Stevenson, in Cyprus between 1878 and 1883, demonstrating how such research can contribute both to the archaeological record, and to the social history of archaeology in Cyprus, in particular the recovery of seldom-heard women's voices.

Introduction

The British administration of Cyprus from July 1878 marked the beginning of the end of the 'mythical age' of Cypriot archaeology, as it was characterised by the British archaeologist John Linton Myres (1869–1954) (Myres and Ohnefalsch-Richter 1899). Prior to this, Ottoman laws governing the excavation and export of antiquities were in operation, but not always consistently enforced. Some collectors managed to remove huge numbers of objects, most notoriously the Italian-American consul Luigi Palma di Cesnola (1832–1904) whose Cypriot antiquities formed the founding collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and his brother Alessandro (1839–1914) (Goring 1988; Kiely and Ulbrich 2012; Masson 1992).

After the advent of the British administration, the official position was initially to ban private excavation (Myres and Ohnefalsch-Richter 1899: vi), though this ban appears to have been lifted around May 1879 (Stanley-Price 2001: 269). Small-scale exploration was undertaken by the German archaeologist Max Ohnefalsch-Richter, on behalf of museums and private individuals (Stanley-Price 2001, 2018). The first British-led larger scale excavations under the new regime, in 1882, were proposed by Lieutenant Herbert Kitchener (1850–1916), Director of Survey, and supervised by the colonial administrator George Gordon

Hake (1847–1903). Funded by the South Kensington Museum rather than the British Museum, they focused on obtaining aesthetically pleasing objects rather than archaeological recording (Bailey 1965; Kiely 2011). The Cyprus Museum, the first national institution for discovering, storing, displaying and studying the island's antiquities, was founded in 1882, and under the Ottoman Law of Antiquities of 1874 had first claim on one-third of finds excavated through private initiatives, and ownership of all the products of any excavations it sponsored (Stanley-Price 2001: 270). However, it was stymied by lack of funds, affecting its ability to undertake excavations, provide proper facilities for storage and display, and ensure that its dues from private excavations were collected (Myres and Ohnefalsch-Richter 1899: vi).

The early years of the British administration were characterised by an unfocused and casual approach to excavating antiquities. For the new administration, grappling with a range of complex issues and hampered by limited funding, proper governance of antiquities was not a high priority. Meanwhile, military and civilian officials posted to Cyprus purchased antiquities from local excavators and collectors and explored its archaeology, considered to be one of the leisure activities afforded by the island, in a spirit of idle enquiry. Spending a limited amount of time on the island – sometimes just a few months – these temporary residents lacked the opportunities of earlier consular collectors and local antiquarians to build up expertise and an appreciation of the island's history.

Permission was not always sought from the administration for very small-scale investigations, and even when it was granted, little effort was made to excavate systematically and record the findings. The objects obtained usually vanished into private collections or the antiquities market, losing touch with their context of excavation (Kiely and Ulbrich 2012). Although not on the scale of the Cesnola brothers' wide-ranging ransacking of the landscape, many tombs were explored and their contents appropriated during this period, and an understanding of the context of this activity is essential to interpreting the small, unprovenanced collections which resulted (Kiely and Merrillees 2012).

The objects obtained through collecting and amateur excavations were generally treated as personal souvenirs, often part of a broader collection of 'curios' gathered over the course of a career. Such collections tended to be disbanded within a few generations, since the binding force which held them together – each object's connection to a personal history – was specific to the individual who had assembled it, and it generally had limited interest or value for its inheritors (Pearce 2012: 69–73). However, some present-day museum collections retain sufficient information to enable the networks along which the objects moved to be traced. While this is far from ideal in terms of their archaeological context, all such information adds to our understanding of the practices of exploration and

exploitation of Cypriot antiquities in this period, and, to some extent, increases knowledge of the sites from which they were removed.

To this end, this paper examines the archaeological activities in Cyprus of Andrew Scott-Stevenson (1847–92), an early Commissioner of the district of Kyrenia on the north coast of Cyprus, and of Esmé Scott-Stevenson (?1853–1925), one the first women to accompany the new administration in Cyprus (**Figure 1**). The Scott-Stevensons have been of interest to historians (Demetriou 1997; Hook 2014; Varnava 2012) but little is known about their role in exploring and collecting Cypriot antiquities. Esmé Scott-Stevenson's observations allow the recovery of a woman's perspective on ancient Cyprus in the 19th century, an under-explored point of view. The following discussion reconstructs the Scott-Stevensons' archaeological activities and traces some of the objects they acquired to UK collections, restoring some contextual information to these previously unprovenanced objects.

The Scott-Stevensons in Cyprus

Andrew Scott-Stevenson came to Cyprus at the beginning of the British occupation in June 1878 with the 42nd (Highland) Regiment of Foot, the Black Watch (Harfield 1978; Varnava 2012). When the Regiment sailed for Gibraltar five months later, he remained behind and was appointed Assistant Commissioner and Local Commandant

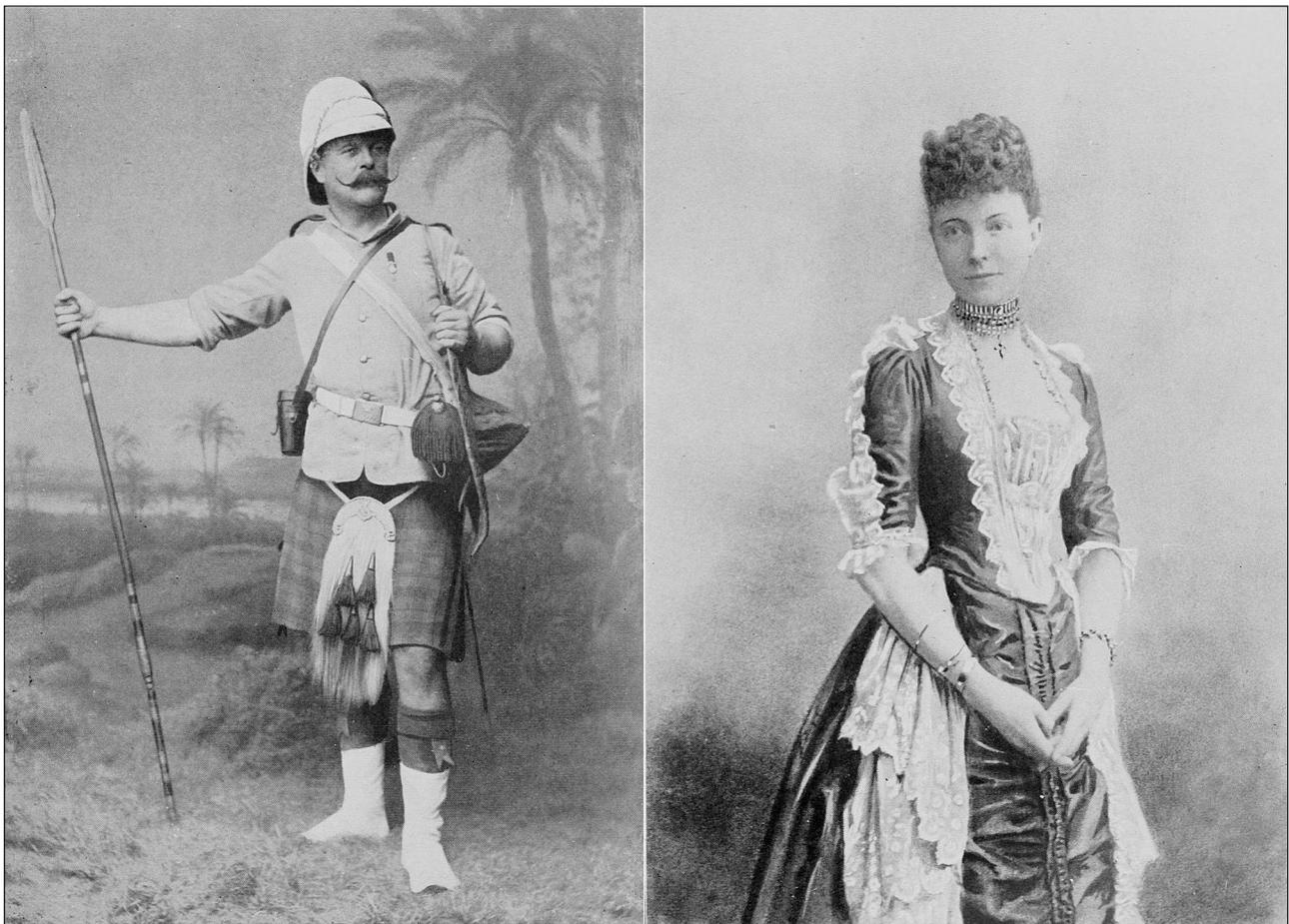


Figure 1: Andrew and Esmé Scott-Stevenson. Vizetelly, E. *From Cyprus to Zanzibar by the Egyptian Delta*.

of Police in the northern district of Kyrenia, before being promoted to Commissioner of Kyrenia in February 1880.

The qualities of physical strength, courage and an unbending commitment to duty which had served him well on previous active service made him ill-suited to the new administration's task of implementing reforms while balancing the competing interests and priorities of different groups. His friend the journalist Edward Vizetelly (1847–1903), who reported on the British occupation for the *Glasgow Herald*, considered him 'one of the best' (Vizetelly 1901: 285), but his nephew thought him 'tactless and stupid... pugilistic in temper and enjoys nothing more than knocking somebody down' (Stevenson 2009: 73). Scott-Stevenson was one of the harsher administrators. Catselli describes him as

'a man of many accomplishments and inexhaustible energy, but he was detested by Greek and Turk alike on account of his inflexibility and excessive zeal. He always carried a whip which he never hesitated to use, even on one occasion applying it to the backside of the Mayor of Kyrenia... [who] could not understand why this steely Briton wanted to change things so quickly and insisted on immediate application of laws which had been promulgated only the day before.

Nevertheless under his iron hand Kyrenia began to flourish.' (Catselli 1979: 94)

Scott-Stevenson's commitment to improvements was undermined by the high-handed and intolerant manner in which he went about his work. His arrogance attracted considerable criticism in the local press (Ioannides 2018, 48). The priority of the British officials was to take a firm grip on executive functions such as tax collecting and the administration of justice, and to carry these out impartially. At times this approach of equality before the law was carried to punitive lengths, as when two Greek priests on trial for breaching forestry regulations were forcibly shaved, causing widespread anger (Katsiaounis 1996: 75). It is revealing that Vizetelly misattributed this scandalous mistreatment (of which he rather approved than not) to Scott-Stevenson (Vizetelly 1901: 30–31). Scott-Stevenson's inflexibility and high-handedness were also evident in his approach to archaeological investigation and acquiring antiquities.

Esmé Scott-Stevenson, described by Vizetelly (1901: 43) as 'a brilliant, charming lady', is best known as the author of *Our Home in Cyprus* (Scott-Stevenson 1880), a highly popular account of her first year on the island. It opens with a letter to her mother, beginning 'I daresay you will be very much surprised when you hear that I have tried to write an account of our life and riding expeditions in Cyprus.' (Scott-Stevenson 1880: vii). This framing device sets the tone for the chatty, personal narrative that follows, in which Esmé pre-emptively disavows any particular expertise, while also claiming authority as an eye-witness:

'It would be no use my trying to write a very clever or learned work; but I can relate my own honest

experience, and tell what any one else can see, if they choose to follow my footsteps.' (Scott-Stevenson 1880: xi)

Despite the apparent naïveté of this opening, the account is cleverly shaped to feed the British public's appetite for information about its new responsibility. Part of a spate of travellers' tales of Cyprus which emerged around this time, it conveys Esmé's trenchant opinions on every aspect of her experiences in Cyprus, a blend of optimism and mordant criticism, often expressed in superlatives. Its buoyant tone disguises several observations that seem designed to cause consternation among the administration and political observers. Vizetelly (1901: 43) numbered her among 'several contributors... [who] out of sheer devilry, kept me supplied with tit-bits of information' and it is possible to detect this mischief-making tendency in *Our Home in Cyprus*. Her disclaimer that 'I have avoided political subjects, or saying anything about this island as a *useful* acquisition' is contradicted by statements such as 'I do not wish to be understood to say that I set any value on the island as a garrison in the Mediterranean. I know that it is not so.' (Scott-Stevenson 1880: xi, 65). Her comments on the placement and management of the initial troop encampment, the prevalence of bribery, and the existence of slavery and forced labour, were seized upon by newspapers in Britain and fed the ongoing controversy about the advisability of Britain's presence in Cyprus. Despite the opinion of some reviewers that *Our Home in Cyprus* was 'simple and naïve' and 'pretty word pictures, such as perhaps only a lady could write' (*Glasgow Herald* 1879, *Naval and Military Gazette* 1879), a keen observational intelligence and wit can be detected.

Recent critical responses to *Our Home in Cyprus* have noted Esmé's unselfconsciously imperialist, ethnocentric attitude to Cypriot people and customs, reflecting an innate sense of superiority and lack of cultural awareness common among the colonial administrators and British visitors to Cyprus at the time (Çoban Döşkaya 2019; Demetriou 1997; Kamberidou 2016). Her distancing descriptions of the appearances and behaviour of the Cypriot people she meets, and unquestioned assumptions about their natures and capacities, are characterised by 'colonial desire and colonial fear' (Given 2002: 420; Kassis 2018). While her views display the ethnocentrism and prejudice of her class (Katsiaounis 1996: 75), Esmé Scott-Stevenson's work has value in conveying her experiences as an observer and explorer, providing first-hand descriptions of British army life in Cyprus, and of her engagement with ancient remains.

The Scott-Stevensons had left their previous posting in Malta under a cloud, allegedly the result of a scandal caused by the Duke of Edinburgh's equerry, the Honourable Debonnaire Monson, having paid 'far too marked attention' to Esmé ('Philabeg' 1878). This affair of honour ran its course from a formal demand for satisfaction issued by Andrew Scott-Stevenson to a public horse-whipping administered by him to the equerry on the quay at Valetta. A regimental Court of Inquiry acquitted Andrew of all blame, but considerable opprobrium attached

to Esmé, not least from Lieutenant General Sir Garnet Wolseley, the first High Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief of Cyprus. He described her in characteristically bad-tempered terms in his private journal:

'I, actually, had an English lady to dinner today, Mrs. Scott Stevenson, wife of an officer in the 42nd Highlanders about whom there was such a scandal last winter in Malta. I did not admire her, her voice was grating and unpleasant and she was evidently a very foolish creature.' (Cavendish 1991: 25)

Wolseley strongly disapproved of officers' wives accompanying them in the early days of the occupation, and had a generally low opinion of women travellers, which may have coloured his views of Esmé; he was similarly dismissive of Lady Annie Brassey, the traveller and collector, on her visit to Cyprus (Cavendish 1991: 82, 129). It is however clear that she was to some extent socially shunned:

'[Mrs Stevenson] is not called on by the Regt. which must be a heavy blow to her. ...Everyone likes the husband but he is enamoured of the woman and they begin to think him a fool in consequence. They all look upon her as a disgrace in the Regt. so they will have nothing to say to her.' (Cavendish 1991: 117)

It may be partly due to their ambiguous social status, intensifying the effect of the 'social vacuum' in early colonial Cyprus that allowed British women space to pursue

their own interests (Roussou-Sinclair 2002: 143), that the Scott-Stevensons spent so much of their time in each other's company, exploring the island and neighbouring regions. Esmé relished the 'perpetual freedom' of living outside Europe afforded by her husband's role in the military, which gave her opportunities to travel, explore, and seek new experiences (Scott-Stevenson 1883: 134; Sørensen 1998: 47).

Exploration in Cyprus

The Scott-Stevensons travelled extensively in their first year in Cyprus, carrying out expeditions on horseback to Famagusta, Larnaca, Limassol, Baffo (Nea Paphos), Arsinoe and the end of the Karpas Peninsula. A detailed map of their journeys was produced by Andrew for *Our Home in Cyprus* (Figure 2). Travels further afield during their time in Cyprus were published by Esmé as *Our Ride through Asia Minor* (Scott-Stevenson 1881) and *On Summer Seas* (Scott-Stevenson 1883), in an attempt to capitalise on the success of *Our Home*.

The Scott-Stevensons evidently had an interest in Cypriot antiquities, in common with many British residents; its ancient past was one of the best-known aspects of the island for many Britons at this point (Edbury 2001: 15). L.P di Cesnola's *Cyprus: Its Ancient Cities, Tombs, and Temples* (1877) formed a handy primer for new residents. Esmé stated that 'I have derived most of my knowledge of... ancient history from Consul Cesnola's book' (Scott-Stevenson 1880: 208), and her work demonstrates close familiarity with it. Their interest extended to visiting the antiquities excavated by Alessandro Palma di Cesnola

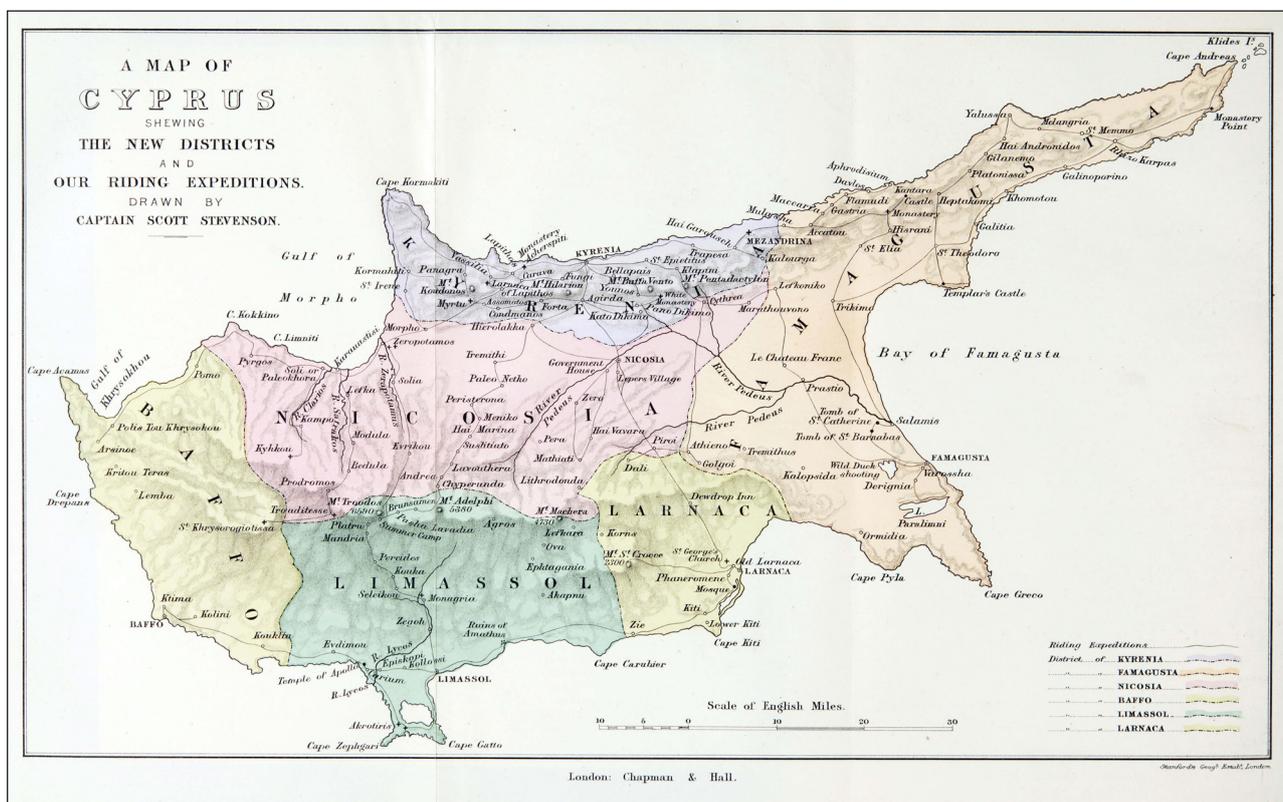


Figure 2: 'A Map of Cyprus shewing the New Districts and Our Riding Expeditions' *Our Home in Cyprus*. Courtesy of Sotheby's London.

and confiscated as a result of the official ban on private excavation (Scott-Stevenson 1880: 208). Their journeys across the island took in major archaeological sites, including Lapithos, Soli, Amathus, Curium and Salamis. Esmé's reflections on these tended towards moralising generalisations about the transience of worldly things; at Amathus, the Scott-Stevensons 'compared the present desolation with the ancient magnificence' (Scott-Stevenson 1880: 218). However, *Our Home in Cyprus* provides valuable evidence for their own explorations of ancient sites. While Esmé's account is rather impressionistic and lacks details of sites and finds, in line with the breezy tone adopted to suit her broad intended market, it gives an insight into the approach to ancient remains taken by many British residents in this period. She introduces the Scott-Stevensons' explorations as follows:

'On the other side of the mountains is "Larnaca" of Lapithos, a small village of stone-built houses, and probably the necropolis of ancient Lapithos, which was one of the most important towns on the north coast. ...

On one occasion I went with my husband to visit the tombs, the Commissioner of Kyrenia having obtained permission to open a few. ... You enter, crawling on hands and knees, by a narrow passage the size of a man's body, and most frequently find yourself in a large compartment, with a shelf or ledge of stone at one end. Occasionally there are three of these shelves round the three sides of the tomb. Frequently niches for lamps or statuettes are cut in the wall, and the ground is covered with fine soil.

There are many hundreds of these rock-cut tombs; but Cesnola and a French consul opened most of them.' (Scott-Stevenson 1880: 59–61)

Esmé clearly describes single-chamber tombs with platforms and niches, but it is difficult to pin down the sites discussed, in the area of Larnaka tis Lapithou (see Masson 1977: 323ff.; Parks 1999: 93). Esmé's supposition that it was 'the necropolis of ancient Lapithos' derives from Cesnola (1877: 232–33), and indicates that the extensive cemeteries at Lapithos detailed by Myres (1899: 7–8) were not known to her. Cesnola describes his visit to 'Larnaca of Lapethus' and claims that he 'dug here for five days in 1872' (1877: 233), though in Masson's view his statements 'semblent tout à fait fantaisistes' (1977: 325 n.69).

Esmé's quest for first-hand experiences, 'what I have actually seen and learned about for myself' (Scott-Stevenson 1880: 208), led her to enter the tombs herself rather than relying on reports from her husband. She provides a further account of exploration at Agios Ermolaos:

'I have only once been in a tomb that had not already been opened and rifled. This was at a place called Saint Ermola, four miles west of the Agirda Pass. My husband and Mr Holbeck, Sixtieth Rifles,

opened it by removing a large flat rock covering the entrance, and lightly fixed in by shrubs and weeds. At a depth of about six feet they came to a cavity filled with lighter and more easily removed earth, in which were found some human bones and two earthenware bottles. It was a most exciting moment when the spade touched the first hard substance. I remember lying stretched out on the ground, and peering eagerly into the hole where the two gentlemen were digging, though none of us could see in the least, for the clouds of dust that filled our eyes and nostrils. The villagers, the interpreter excepted, were made to stand at a respectful distance. Great care was used to handle the tools gently. Guess our disappointment, when the article was brought to light, to find only a bottle of the commonest clay and rudest workmanship, showing the grave to be that of a slave or a very poor person!' (Scott-Stevenson 1880: 61–62)

The tone of this narrative, characterised by excitement and suspense, situates the Scott-Stevensons' digging as treasure hunt and spectacle. The British explorers laid claim to the active role in the discovery, keeping back the 'villagers' whose experience and expertise might have been helpful. Esmé's disappointment at the discovery of a plain bottle, while no doubt exaggerated to round off the anecdote, suggests that their goal was aesthetically pleasing objects, 'treasures' rather than broader evidence of the past. This was a common attitude among colonial residents in Cyprus, described vividly by G. Gordon Hake, who excavated for the South Kensington Museum, in his article 'On Treasure Bent' (1890): 'Of all forms of gambling commend me to the search after antiquities.' The exploration of tombs is presented as a pastime and amusement, with an element of speculation, rather than any form of serious enquiry; for example, there is no attempt to date the sites or the objects uncovered. This attitude is reflected in the lack of detailed recording of sites and finds.

A further revealing example of this treasure-hunting approach is given by Esmé's account of the Scott-Stevensons' visit to the church at Kantara monastery, where her attention was attracted by 'china plates' set into the plaster (see Karageorghis 2006: 550 for this custom). They were informed that three had already been taken away, by Cesnola, a member of Wolseley's staff, and someone else. On payment of a bribe, the Scott-Stevensons were allowed to remove some of the objects:

'my heart beat with excitement; but great was my disappointment, when the treasures were handed down, to find the majolica one very coarse and inferior in design, and the other a complete imposition.' (Scott-Stevenson 1880: 267)

Esmé's collecting activity was characterised by highs and lows of excitement and disappointment, and her interest in the objects recovered was primarily aesthetic, with little attention given to their date or context. This episode also indicates the sheer scale of acquisition by overseas resi-

dents; the Scott-Stevensons were lucky to find anything left to remove.

Esmé's narrative provides an eye-witness account of the archaeological remains at Kyrenia itself (see Parks 1999: 88):

'The little town is well worthy of a visit. To the west are many tombs, cut out of the solid rock: some are in the shape of an oven, others with seats round them, and niches for statues or lamps. The remains of rich carving, and even letters, can be traced on many of them. Several hundred have been opened... A few have flights of rock-cut steps leading down to the interior, but I am too afraid of the snakes to explore them thoroughly.' (Scott-Stevenson 1880: 115)

Her description bears some similarity to an account by Charles Newton, Keeper of Greek and Roman Antiquities of the British Museum, of his visit to Cyprus in April 1879:

'Here [i.e. Kyrenia] are many rock-cut tombs: the façade of one of these is a niche for a statue flanked by a pilaster on either side. All of these tombs appear to have been opened.' (Kiely 2010: 248-49)

Newton met the Scott-Stevensons on this visit, and they may have shared information on tombs in this area. Although his report was evidently intended as a broad-brush overview, it is notable that it is no more precise than Esmé's in identifying the locations of the tombs discussed. While such accounts are of limited help in constructing an overview of the area's archaeology, they provide some contextual information for the objects acquired from them. Esmé's narrative also contributed to the spread of information about ancient Cyprus for a broad popular audience, a role often overlooked in histories of archaeology (Sørensen 1998: 42). While Andrew Scott-Stevenson's position gave them access to these tombs, it was Esmé who brought their explorations to the attention of her readers, responding to and feeding public interest in Cyprus and its history.

The Scott-Stevensons' attempts to appropriate ancient remains led to conflict with the Cypriot people among whom they lived. In March 1882 the Greek-language newspaper *Aletheia* stated that a Turkish Cypriot landowner from Kyrenia had found an ancient tomb, and the Government had posted guards, but Esmé had commenced digging herself, found antiquities and removed them to her house. The report concluded with an indignant complaint about the double standards of the ruling classes (*Aletheia* 1882). This came to the administration's attention, and Andrew Scott-Stevenson was required to clarify the situation. His version of events was that the landowner had informed him of the discovery, and that he had

'placed a sentry on the tomb at the proprietor's request as he informed me that the Greeks who had crowded around would surely plunder the grave of any valuables that might be in it if not

watched. Next morning, I entered the tomb myself but found it had long ago been broken into and contained only a broken terra cotta sarcophagus and a few pieces of damaged pottery. ...

Mrs Scott Stevenson and a party of English ladies were present at the opening of the tomb, and the owner of the ground presented them with some of the pieces of pottery which are now in my house.' (Cyprus State Archives: SA1/8493 1882)

No further official action appears to have been taken. The exact nature of the incident is impossible to judge, in particular whether the pottery was gifted or appropriated, but it provides an interesting perspective on the Scott-Stevensons' attitudes to archaeological remains. They viewed their explorations as distinct from the 'plunder' threatened by 'the Greeks', but also as too minor to require official permission, demonstrating the limited ability of the British authorities to maintain control or even awareness of small-scale excavation done in this way. The report reveals resentment from the Cypriot population towards the governing classes for their annexation of antiquities, especially when guards were mounted to prevent local people from doing the same (see Given 2001: 259-60).

A further act of appropriation was linked to Andrew's initiative in June 1883 in arranging the re-interment of Sergeant Samuel McGaw, who had died of heatstroke on the first day of the British troop landings. The remains were transferred to the British cemetery at Kyrenia where the grave was 'surmounted by a Byzantine sarcophagus', described in 1918 by George Jeffery, Curator of Ancient Monuments, as 'an ancient Christian sarcophagus, with crosses on its sides, probably removed from some old tomb in the neighbourhood' (Harfield 1976: 182; Jeffery 1918: 317-18). It is not known where Scott-Stevenson acquired this sarcophagus, but this indicates a pattern of appropriation of antiquities for his own ends. In October 1883 he was 'summoned by one Constantino Hadji Andrea on account of the seizure, in 1882, of a sarcophagus etc. excavated by him', later amended to two sarcophagi, with a concurrent charge of assault (Cyprus State Archives: SA1/5924-28 1883). It is possible that one of these was the sarcophagus repurposed to honour Sergeant McGaw.

Ancient Cypriot Objects in Derby Museum and Art Gallery

The itineraries of the ancient objects which the Scott-Stevensons set in motion from Cyprus to the UK demonstrates how such objects circulated between private collectors and public institutions, moving along social networks driven by personal connections or exchanged for financial gain, and in the process losing touch with their place and circumstances of excavation. A group of ancient objects from Cyprus, which can be traced back to the Scott-Stevensons, were offered for sale in April 1882 at a Grand Bazaar at the Derby Drill Hall, and are now in the collection of Derby Museum and Art Gallery. This Bazaar was styled as an 'Eastern Fair' and offered for sale 'articles

of rare beauty, of antiquity, and of great worth' (*Derby Daily Telegraph* 1882b). They included

'a small collection of old pottery from Cyprus, which local connoisseurs will hear of with deep interest. The pieces, which are in good condition, are of immense antiquity (the dates of their manufacture are believed to be anterior to the Christian era), having been dug out of some rock tombs.' (*Derby Daily Telegraph* 1882a)

These had been 'dug up in Cyprus in the presence of Mr. Scott Stephenson [sic], one of the commissioners of the island' (*Derby Mercury* 1882). They made their way to England through a family connection of Esmé's with the organisers of the Bazaar. Such exhibition and sale of antiquities in charitable bazaars was not unusual, and reflected the objects' status in their collectors' eyes as 'curios', decorative and interesting rather than sources of knowledge about the ancient past. The collection consists of eight pottery vessels of plain ware and a lamp, most of which are characteristic of late Classical to early Hellenistic pottery found in tombs; it seems probable that the Scott-Stevensons obtained them from tombs in the area of Kyrenia (Parks 1999: 310ff.). It includes two pieces of modern pottery, probably also from Cyprus, reflecting another of Esmé's collecting interests.

They were purchased from the Bazaar and donated to the Museum by Mr William Boden (1837–1905), a member of a wealthy Derbyshire family, who was also related to one of the Bazaar's organisers. Boden's name, and not the Scott-Stevensons, is recorded with thanks in a Museum committee report from 1882. This reflects the priority placed by museums in this period on rewarding their donors through public recognition, which had the effect of obscuring objects' provenance and severing their connections with their place of excavation and excavators. The movement of the objects along these social networks eclipsed their earlier history.

Private and Sponsored Excavations

As well as the relatively informal explorations described by Esmé, the Scott-Stevensons also participated in the beginnings of a more organised approach to archaeological exploration in Cyprus. Myres and Ohnefalsch-Richter (1899: 5) briefly mention excavations by Andrew Scott-Stevenson at Kerynia [sic] in 1883, though there is no evidence that he left any record of his methods or findings. He also joined others in commissioning Max Ohnefalsch-Richter to excavate on his behalf, formally requesting permission in September 1883 for excavations at 'Episkopi and Soli or, if he is not successful at these places, at Salamis', alongside Surgeon Major F. Falwasser, the Senior Medical Officer and Samuel Brown, Government Engineer (Kiely and Merrillees 2012: 250–51; Reinach 1891: 184). Permission was granted, somewhat to the dismay of E.R. Kenyon, Acting Secretary to the Cyprus Museum:

'I do not wish to raise any objection to any of these three permits, but beg to ask that in future

all such applications may be referred to the Secretary Cyprus Museum before being granted, for his advice on the subject. ... All three petitions are vague and describe no limits for their operations, and all three refer in the first place to Soli, where the Cyprus Museum has already received permission to excavate. ... I have the honour to request that Dr Falwasser, Mr S. Brown and Capt. Scott Stevenson be informed that it is understood that the Museum will be supplied with an accurate catalogue of all antiquities found and a description of the positions in which they are found, together with accurate drawings'. (State Archives 1883: SA1/4006-8)

This memo is illustrative of the tension between the efforts of the newly formed Cyprus Museum's leadership to put excavation on a proper scientific footing, and the reality of a relative free-for-all in which requesting permission was largely a formality and the rules for officials were unclear (Reinach 1891: 199–200). The Cyprus Museum Catalogue gives an overview of the excavations conducted by Ohnefalsch-Richter at Katydata and Linu in the area of Soli, including a 'Bronze Age necropolis... used again in Hellenistic and Roman times' and an 'Extensive wholly Hellenistic necropolis' including 'tombs containing much glass, which go on into late Roman times', and 'another necropolis, entirely of glass-tombs... The glass from these sites is of quite unusual beauty and variety' (Myres and Ohnefalsch-Richter 1899: 4; Schmid 2018). Presumably some of these finds fell to Andrew Scott-Stevenson's share; in August–October 1883, the Honorary Secretary of the Cyprus Museum requested authority on his behalf to export '5 cases 1 barrel' of antiquities, suggesting the Scott-Stevensons had acquired a fair-sized collection (State Archives 1883: SA1/476).

Shortly afterwards the Scott-Stevensons' residence in Cyprus came to an end, due in part to Andrew Scott-Stevenson's repeated annexation of antiquities and resentment from their Cypriot owners. The charge of seizing sarcophagi and assault led to prosecution; Catselli (1979: 35, 100) records the objects of dispute as several Byzantine columns, uncovered by Hadji-Constandis Hadji-Andrea during building work, which Scott-Stevenson took for use as bollards in the quay. He was also prosecuted for whipping a Greek Cypriot during a riot at a fair at Myrtou in Kyrenia district, and was fined for this assault at the Assizes at Kyrenia in October. It is not clear whether this led directly to the end of his role as Commissioner, but after many efforts to combat the charge and have his fine overturned, the Scott-Stevensons left Cyprus in December 1883 (State Archives 1883: 5027–5050). His approach to antiquities formed a lasting part of his reputation in the area; a Greek historian of Kyrenia describes the town as 'unfortunate in having as the commissioner Lieutenant Andrew Scott Stevenson, an autocratic and curious man. ... together with other British officials, he acquired antiquities which he shipped and sold overseas' (Kokkinos 2012: 20), further illustrating local resentment at the Scott-Stevenson's appropriation of ancient objects.

Return to Scotland and the Braidwood Collection

The Scott-Stevensons' return to the UK resulted in further dispersal of their antiquities to private and public collections. Andrew Scott-Stevenson served overseas in the Sudan and Khartoum, and in late 1885 returned to his home town of Braidwood in Lanarkshire to take up the role of Adjutant to the 9th Lanark Rifle Volunteers. The couple lived at Braidwood House, the mansion built in 1830 by Andrew's father. Their residence here is probably sufficient to explain the presence of a group of objects from Kyrenia in the 'Braidwood Collection' of Dr John R.S. Hunter-Selkirk (1835–98). Hunter-Selkirk was an antiquarian who put together a large and disparate collection combining geology, natural history and antiquities (MacNair and Mort 1908). Objects from this collection were shown at an Art Exhibition in Lanark in 1890, including

'a selection of the Phoenician pottery and glass ware, tear bottles, vases for holding oil and wine and other articles used in decorating tombs in Kyrenia Cyprus'. (*The Scotsman* 1890)

This rather imprecise description suggests a diverse collection of objects from a range of periods and sites in Cyprus. They may have been gathered by Hunter-Selkirk from a number of sources, but the proximity of the Scott-Stevensons and the mention of 'tombs in Kyrenia' make it likely that at least some of these objects came from them. These objects may have been sold, or given in friendship, and were incorporated into a typically heterogeneous 19th century collection. Unlike many such collectors, who left the ongoing management or dispersal of their collections for their descendants to deal with, Hunter-Selkirk made large donations to institutions during his lifetime. However, the highly diverse nature of his collection, and the lack of anything approaching a scientific description of the antiquities, resulted in an increasing loss of information as the objects changed hands and settings. One donation formed the founding collection of the Airdrie Burgh Museum, and around 1925 the objects from Cyprus were described as

'reminders of the long vanished Graeco-Phoenician culture, such as: An 8-burner lamp; a number of tear-bottles (literally for holding the tears of mourners); wine jars; jewel trays; a large, conical amphora for storing wine or oil; an urn for the ashes of the dead; lamps, food vessels and fruit trays from various tombs.' (Gardiner c.1925: 14)

The mention of 'jewel trays' and 'fruit trays' reflects curatorial uncertainty about the identities of these objects, now many steps removed from their context of discovery. Further donations to other local institutions followed, some of which were later damaged or sold. Due to this early dispersal of the collections, and successive municipal reorganisations, the current locations of the ancient Cypriot objects from the 'Braidwood Collection' are difficult to establish. However, 'Graeco-Phoenician Culture artefacts from Cyprus' from Airdrie Museum now form part of the collections of North Lanarkshire Council, some

of which can be linked to Hunter-Selkirk, and tentatively back to the Scott-Stevensons. Further research into this collection may strengthen these links and make it possible to restore more of these objects' context.

Sales to the South Kensington Museum

As well as private collections, some of the Scott-Stevensons' ancient Cypriot objects also found a place in the South Kensington Museum, now the Victoria and Albert Museum. Esmé's negotiations with the Museum, recorded in the V&A's archives, are illustrative of the Museum's approach to acquisition, and the difficulty of transferring personal narratives into a museum setting during this period. Their study demonstrates the contribution of archival research to recovering archaeological context.

In December 1894, Arthur Banks Skinner (1861–1911), Keeper of the Art Collections and latterly Assistant Director of the South Kensington Museum, reported on the Scott-Stevensons' collection:

'the vase of special importance amongst the Cyprian objects is a large amphora with pointed foot; on the shoulders of the handles are the names of the potter and his mark – The British Museum possesses a specimen with the same name, and we have the form very closely represented in the Museum. The rest of the objects are all more or less like our own – I do not think we need trouble about them. There are numberless other things, most bric-à-brac, picked up in travels abroad, of very little interest.' (V&A Archives, MA/1/S3368)

Skinner's dismissive remarks demonstrate the limited value of objects with personal histories for museums in this period, especially the South Kensington Museum in which the aesthetic quality of the objects was primary. He did however request on approval a 'Bowl from a church wall in Kyrenia district of Cyprus', one of two acquired by the Scott-Stevensons at Kantara (see above). The Museum does not appear to have purchased what was presumably a transport amphora, but did purchase the bowl (now V&A 695-1894) 'to place with others of the same kind in the Museum'. This acquisition illustrates the Museum's attempts to put together a representative collection; the bowl was valued for its ability to complement the existing collections, while other objects were rejected as too similar. The large quantities of ancient Cypriot material obtained from the Hake-Kitchener excavations may also have dampened the Museum's interest in further ancient Cypriot acquisitions. Esmé sent a letter to accompany the bowl, which recounts the treasure-hunting story of its acquisition in a close approximation of the narrative in *Our Home in Cyprus*, indicating that she felt this was an important part of the object's identity (V&A Archives MA/30/177).

The primary motivation for the sale was almost certainly financial. The Scott-Stevensons had moved to London in July 1889 when Andrew was promoted to Colonel (Stevenson 2009). He died in 1892 at the age of 45, apparently from syphilis, and the following year

their only surviving son died too, leaving Esmé with an eleven-year-old daughter and an illegitimate son born in 1885. Although always something of a loose cannon, in later life she was increasingly erratic; she was twice prosecuted, in 1894 and 1905, for stealing from her friends, and after the latter offence she was imprisoned for three months (*Exeter Flying Post* 1894; *Hull Daily Mail* 1905). Financial need may therefore have made these sales to the V&A important to her, while her correspondence with the Museum suggests that she also enjoyed the opportunity to reminisce about her time in Cyprus.

In 1896 Esmé made another sale of Cypriot material to the Museum, including a group of 19 mostly fragmentary terracotta figurines dating from the 3rd to the 1st century B.C. These mainly represent draped female figurines, including dancers, alongside a head of Athena wearing a Corinthian helmet, a lounging youth resting his head on his hand, a comic actor or satyr, a ‘temple boy’, and a group perhaps representing two Erotes playing or fighting. This group of figurines realised £5, and Esmé also sold a ‘fluted tumbler’ (V&A 399–1896) for £3, reflecting the relative value of complete glass and fragmentary terracottas according to the aesthetic priorities of the Museum. In 1980 and 1982 the terracottas were transferred to the British Museum, where they remain (BM 1980,1015.1-21). No information about their excavation or donor accompanied this transfer, except that they were from ‘a tomb cut out of the rocks near Kerynia [sic], Cyprus, in 1883’. In their *Catalogue of Greek Terracottas in the British Museum*, Burn and Higgins (2001: 257) comment that

‘The excavators or finders of the first, nineteen terracottas... are unknown... Nineteen figures is a considerable quantity to find in one tomb and it is possible that they really derive from a cluster of tombs, some of them perhaps disturbed, in the same area. They are, however, fairly homogenous in the appearance of their clay and in their encrusted and worn condition, and while none of them can be dated very precisely, they could quite easily be contemporary, and the fact that the group includes two sets of near replicas favours the probability of a single tomb for these at least.’

A letter from Esmé about these figurines, in the V&A archives, has allowed the circumstances in which these figurines were discovered to be identified.

‘Col. Scott Stevenson (42nd Highlanders) found the terra-cotta figures in a tomb cut out of the rocks near Kyrenia, Cyprus. It was in 1883 we came upon the tombs. The prisoners were making a road and the ground sounded hollow in places, on digging we came to a flight of steps and the opening of the tomb was at the bottom. There were many tombs cut out of the solid rock but this was the only one that had figures. A very fine marble sarcophagus was also in the tomb but had been smashed to pieces.’ (V&A Archives, MA/1/S3368)

Esmé’s account confirms that there was indeed a ‘cluster’ of tombs as Burns and Higgins surmise, but makes clear that the figurines were found in a single tomb, consisting of a wealthy Hellenistic burial including a marble sarcophagus which would have been costly (Parks 1999: 248). Presumably these were the 1883 excavations conducted by Andrew Scott-Stevenson recorded in the Catalogue of the Cyprus Museum (see above). Koiner and Reitingger (2019: 47) have noted stylistic similarities between this group and an ‘assemblage of 23 figurines... discovered when air-raid shelters were dug near the Government offices in Kyrenia in 1939’, which lends further support to the account provided by Esmé. While her letter is far from a complete archaeological provenance, it adds to the contextual information accompanying the figurines, and locates them within the history of Cypriot archaeology.

Esmé’s letter goes on to provide a detailed account of another tomb in this area:

‘We only found one tomb that had not been rifled, a little child’s. The tiny skeleton was quite perfect and the little knees bent. There was a coin in the hand, 2 gold earrings where the ears ought to have been & a little gold cylinder amulet on the throat. 2 small gold rings where [sic] on the little finger bones, one with an onyx in it. – The bones seemed to crumble away when explored.’ (V&A Archives, MA/1/S3368)

This description is striking in its closely observed detail of the skeletal remains and their position, often lacking from contemporary excavation reports, and the enumeration and location of the grave goods. Esmé’s description makes it clear that the jewellery was worn at the point of burial, and the coin was placed in the hand serving a symbolic role as ‘Charon’s fare’ (Parks 1999: 346). It is also remarkable for the emotion evident in the emphasis on the smallness of the ‘little child’, its ‘tiny skeleton’, ‘little knees’, and ‘little finger bones’ with ‘small gold rings’. It is evident that Esmé felt a personal response to this grave, hence her ability to provide a detailed description of the finds some thirteen years later; this account combines objective data and a subjective, emotional response. Her keen powers of observation and recollection would have made her a considerable asset to Cypriot archaeology, had the market not dictated a different focus and style of narration in her published work; as it is, the information she provided to accompany these objects adds to our understanding of their context of discovery. By doing so, she attempted to ensure that their connections with her personal history remained part of their identities when they were transferred to a museum setting, and these connections were indeed preserved in the archives, though they were not prioritised in their later move between institutions.

Pitt Rivers’ Second Collection

Perhaps as a result of financial pressures, a further group of objects from the Scott-Stevensons found a place among the many examples of ancient glass in the Pitt Rivers collection. Lieutenant-General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt

Rivers (1827–1900) was an anthropologist and archaeologist whose wealth allowed him to bring together immense collections of ancient and modern objects from around the world. His 'Second Collection', displayed in a private museum on his estate at Farnham, Dorset, was unfortunately dispersed in the mid 20th century, but is recorded in an illustrated catalogue (Cambridge University Library MS Add.9455). Volume Nine includes 23 glass objects labelled 'Cyrenia, Cyprus, found by Col. Scott Stevenson', expertly illustrated in watercolour by one of Pitt Rivers' assistants (see **Figure 3**). No information has survived on how the transaction was arranged, though Pitt Rivers was well known as a collector, and Esmé may have contacted him to arrange a private sale. The date of acquisition is unclear; the relevant volume of the catalogue is dated 1898–99 but appears to tackle a backlog of objects (Thompson and Renfrew 1999: 385).

Based on these illustrations, the glass acquired from the Scott-Stevensons formed a varied collection of mostly complete objects from the Roman period, ranging from the 1st to 4th century A.D. Many of them are of coloured glass and they include stirring rods, a needle, and a wide selection of small perfume bottles, as shown in **Figure 3**. The provenance of Kyrenia should not be discounted, as tombs from the late Hellenistic/early Roman period are known from this area (see Parks 1999: 402). However, the range and quality of these objects is perhaps more suggestive of the 'glass... of quite unusual beauty and variety' excavated by Max Ohnefalsch-Richter from the Hellenistic necropolis around Soli, and illustrated by him in watercolour in his *Kypros, The Bible and Homer* (Ohnefalsch-Richter 1893: Plate LXV). Some of these were probably allocated to Scott-Stevenson and may have formed part of the cargo of antiquities which he sought permission to export in 1883.



Figure 3: General Fox-Pitt-Rivers: Catalogue of his archaeological and anthropological collections Vol.9, p.2294 (detail) Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

Conclusion

Information gained by following individual collectors and their objects makes a contribution to the early history of archaeological exploration in Cyprus. As part of their experience of Cyprus, alongside their other duties and interests, the Scott-Stevensons took advantage of the opportunity to acquire antiquities. Like others, they were willing to appropriate or buy the ancient objects they came across, and focused on their appearance rather than their use as evidence of the ancient past. While *Our Home in Cyprus* promotes antiquity hunting as one of the amenities offered by the island, the Scott-Stevensons' approach was less casual than its narrative implies, including sponsoring excavations, exporting a collection, and, in Esmé's case, recording what she saw and carefully transmitting this information alongside the objects to the South Kensington Museum.

Through their actions and the movements of the objects, more people and institutions were entangled in the archaeological exploration of Cyprus. These ranged from the bazaar in Derby at which the status of the objects as 'curios' was paramount, to the broad-based antiquarian collection of Hunter-Selkirk, and the more focused collections of the South Kensington Museum and Pitt Rivers. By tracing objects from their museum locations back to the Scott-Stevensons, more information has been recovered both about their provenance and collection history, and about this early period in the history of Cypriot archaeology. Exploring the leads offered by museum and other archives can go some way towards restoring the context of such minimally provenanced collections, and expanding knowledge of the people and processes which contributed to the development of Cypriot archaeology.

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The author has no competing interests to declare.

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