

The Complexity of Innovation: Who taught Porphyrios Dikaios how to dig?

Dr Phillip C. Edwards
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The Subject: Porphyrios Dikaios, a Cypriot archaeologist working in the 1920s and 1930s, emerged as one of the most proficient field archaeologists in the Eastern Mediterranean before WWII. Traditionally, the introduction of stratigraphic excavation methods in archaeology have foregrounded Mortimer Wheeler as the inventor of this new method in 1922, and Wheeler's student, Kathleen Kenyon, who introduced his methods into Eastern Mediterranean praxis in 1951, at Jericho. This paper demonstrates how the complex processes involved in discovery and invention enabled Dikaios to attain stratigraphic expertise beyond the reach of Wheeler and before Kenyon. Dikaios was not unique in Cyprus during this period, and his methods were shared by a closely-knit group of practitioners over a twenty-year period. It emerges that, far from being a quiet backwater, Cyprus was a centre of intellectual and political innovation in the early twentieth century, just as it had been a key hub for Bronze Age societies.



The Speaker: Dr Phillip Edwards is an Associate Professor in the Department of Archaeology & History at La Trobe University. His primary research involves the origins of sedentism and village life and his fieldwork is in the East Jordan Valley at the Natufian site of Wadi Hammeh 27 (12,000–12,500 BCE) and the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A site of Zahrat adh-Dhra' 2 (9,200–8,300 BCE). Recent research has included the *Earliest Village People* project, supported by an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant, and the publication *The Pre-Pottery Neolithic A Site of Zahrat adh-Dhra' 2 and the Dawn of Farming by the Dead Sea*, supported by a White Levy Grant.

This talk addresses another research interest, the history of archaeology.

6 pm Thursday 23 October, 2025

Venue: Australian Institute of Archaeology, Terrace Way, Macleod

La Trobe University, Building TER 11, Melways 873-4
(University parking restrictions do not apply after 5pm)

Following the lecture there will be light refreshments

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