



# NECROPOLEIS RESEARCH NETWORK

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### Book of Abstracts

**Nicholas AHERNE**

#### **Theoretical Approaches to Garland Sarcophagi in Roman Phoenicia: From Glocalisation to Funerary Ritual**

An inherent tension at play in the Roman funerary sphere is that between materiality and ephemerality, two states of becoming, common to both the body of the deceased and garlands offered to the dead. Sarcophagi of stone, lead, terracotta, and wood, decorated with garlands, compose the most common sarcophagus type in the necropoleis of Roman Phoenicia. Their material properties and iconographic designs made this tension more intricate, permitting additional layers through which the living commemorated the dead and experienced the process of dying. This paper investigates the functionality of garland sarcophagi of Phoenicia, analysing both regional variations and reconstructing the potential ways the designs were 'read' and experienced by viewers. Furthermore, the paper encompasses the so-called half-fabricated garland type; initially conceived as an intermediary product in the stages of the carving process, this type in of itself found great demand amongst the inhabitants of Phoenicia. The imported (global) and local variations of the garland and half-fabricated types raise particularly interesting questions concerning what may be termed as a localisation or glocalisation of their motifs and symbolism which in turn shaped local ritual experiences. Thus, this paper combines globalisation theory and funerary ritual as the two are intertwined. Identity is considered, though too often from an etic perspective do scholars infer assertions, expressions, or markers of identity. As will be demonstrated the development of these garland sarcophagi represents a complex cultural entanglement which can only be fully understood if we turn to the wider funerary landscape. Thus, this paper employs an interdisciplinary approach, drawing upon materiality, iconography, inscriptions, grave goods, tomb structures, and cult apparatus.

**Nurettin ARSLAN  
and Nilden ERGÜN**

#### **Hellenistic family graves of Assos Necropolis**

Assos is located at the northern end of the Gulf of Edremit, south of the Troad. The necropolis extends to the other parts of the city, with the exception of the southern areas. However, a greater concentration of graves is observed along the roadways leading to the main gates in the western and eastern periphery of the city. Excavations in the western part of the city revealed burials on both sides of the Archaic street, extending from the 7th BC to the 3rd century AD. The necropolis

of Assos provides an impressive picture of an ancient burial ground. Despite the fact that a significant number of graves were unearthed in this area between 1881 and 1883, only a small percentage of them were documented. Subsequent studies of the western necropolis yielded reliable information about the funerary customs in graves dating to the Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic and Roman Periods. However, the most remarkable graves in the necropolis are the Hellenistic family graves. A considerable proportion of the family members were interred in the family graves, which were surrounded by a wall. The inscriptions on the cubical shaped gravestones placed on the subterranean graves in the family cemeteries provide information about the identities of the grave owners. A thorough investigation was conducted, leading to the conclusion that cremation had been applied to all but a small number of individuals in the family cemeteries. The bones were placed in square-shaped urns and covered with a cloth. It was observed that grave gifts were limited and that a metal object was usually left. An offering area was discovered in front of the outer wall of one of the family cemeteries. The vessels that departed from this location contain a highly diverse array of Hellenistic pottery and offer a comprehensive chronological framework. The Hellenistic graves of Assos serve as a prime exemplar for comprehending both a local tradition and the prevailing practices of the period.

**Photeini BALLA**

#### **Child (and infant?) burials of the early classical period from Sikyon**

In a section of a cemetery in ancient Sikyon (Corinthia, Greece), graves dating to the Early Classical period (480/475-450 BC) were discovered, some of which contained child burials. In a nearby area circular pits were discovered, which probably belong to infant burials. It is noteworthy that only in a few cases of immature burials were skeletal remains identified, probably due to the composition of the soil that did not allow the preservation of their bones. However, the dimensions of the burial pits and the offerings that had been deposited, such as clay figurines, eggs and astragals (knuckle-bones), refer to non-adults. It is particularly interesting that in some of the child burials the offerings covered the entire body of the deceased, an element that is not found in the remaining adult burials of the same or later period.

**Louisiane  
BETRANCOURT**

#### **Death and the Dead in Hellenistic Crete: preliminary results from the analysis of cemeteries in Central and Eastern Crete**

Traditionally, Hellenistic Crete and its mortuary behavior have long been underrepresented in favor of Minoan and Bronze Age studies in the literature. Only recently have scholars started to include the Hellenistic data of Crete to the archaeological discussion. It is in this context that my PhD project came to be. The research thesis, entitled “Death and the Dead in Hellenistic Crete: the evolution of Cretan burial grounds and mortuary behavior”, aims at surveying the mortuary data of the Hellenistic period throughout the island, to create a synthetic body of work on the use of cemeteries and the funerary customs in place from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. up to the Roman conquest of Crete. This paper aims at presenting the research I am currently conducting for the project. The expected goals of research and the methodology used will first be introduced. Some preliminary results coming from four selected ‘key’ sites will then be discussed through brief case studies covering the burial sites at Itanos and Lato pros Kamara for the Lassithi region, as well as at Chersonissos and Apollonia for the Herakleion region. Observations regarding the distribution of tomb types, their orientation, as well as the burial offerings will be reviewed and comparisons of these characteristics will be made between the sites.

**Chryssa BOURBOU**

**Osteobiographies: Re-visiting the lives of past people through the study of human skeletal remains**

The living (and the dead) human body is a continuously evolving biocultural product. Bioarchaeology refers to the contextualized analysis of human remains derived from archaeological contexts. Serving as a nexus between biology and culture, which takes account different datasets (e.g., biological, funerary, documentary, cultural, etc), bioarchaeology offers a critical approach and re-examination of attitudes about corporeal and social experiences in the past. In this presentation, we reconstruct the life stories (osteobiographies) of two young adult individuals recovered from an extended burial ground in Chania (Crete, Greece), dating to the Classical– early Hellenistic period (second half of the fourth to the beginning of the third century BCE). The study of their skeletal remains demonstrated that both individuals exhibited evidence of trepanation, a sophisticated cranial surgery. Through these cases, we showcase the contribution of bioarchaeology to better understand how a given society shapes specific socio-cultural attitudes about the sense of ‘otherness’ in the past, different forms of marginality, and the various notions of the ‘shelf’.

**Yannis**

**CHATZIKONSTANTINOU**

**From Flesh to Ash: Investigating the Use of Fire in Minoan and Early Iron Age Funerary Contexts of Central Crete**

The transition from the Minoan to the Iron Age in Crete is characterised by significant changes and discontinuities in the treatment of the deceased. The cemeteries of the Subminoan, Protogeometric and Geometric periods (1050-700 BCE) are quite extensive and contain different types of burials (e.g. Prinias, Afrati, Eltyna). Inhumation and cremation coexist, and in many cases the deceased are accompanied by precious objects. Cremation is a fairly common burial practice and was originally claimed to be an exogenous influence on the island. However, recent data from Prepalatial Tholos tomb cemeteries (e.g. Koumasa Tholos Tomb B) reveal an advanced use of fire in the manipulation of the deceased since the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE. This paper aims to identify similarities and differences in the use of fire in the treatment of the deceased in central Crete during different periods through the study of human remains. Diachronically, the exposure of human remains to fire is a highly sensory experience that symbolically represents the transformation and destruction of the transitory nature of the human body. The multiple uses of fire on human remains as part of multi-layered funerary rituals during the Minoan and Early Iron Age on Crete underlines the presence of several incorporeal experiences and beliefs.

**Maria-Ioanna  
CHRISTOPOULOU**

**In and Out of Context: Funerary portrait statues extra and intra muros in Late Hellenistic-Early Imperial Province of Achaia**

Province of Achaia, a cultural melting pot for Italians and Greeks during the transitional period of Late Hellenistic and Early Imperial era, has yielded a considerable number of portrait statues and inscribed statue bases, although few of them can be safely linked with funerary contexts. Patras, for example, a roman colony founded by Augustus, is one of the few places, in the province in question, with enough sculptural evidence and available excavational data. In other cases, such as Kerameikos in Athens or Calydon in Aetolia, funerary statues of that period with known context are considerably fewer. Furthermore, monumental post-mortem commemoration in key places with thousands of passers-by and pilgrims, such as Agoras and Sanctuaries, was of great importance for the propagation of the memory of the illustrious dead and the reinforcement of the collective memory in the province. The Agora of Messene and the Sanctuary of Epidauros have provided us with notable cases of the above practice. Last but not least, of equal importance with presenting the funerary sculptures of the Achaia is debunking some common beliefs about

famous, -allegedly funerary-, statues such as the Hermes and the Small Herculaneum Woman from Aegion, now the National Archaeological Museum of Athens.

**Tamara M. DIJKSTRA**     **‘τὴν σωματοθήκην κατασκεύασεν ἑαυτῷ’ - reconstructing ritual acts and commemorative practices from inscribed funerary monuments**

The *necropoleis* of Roman Pisidia and the Kibyratis have yielded a veritable treasure trove of stone funerary monuments. Stemming both from large cities and smaller settlements, they range from grandiose built tomb complexes that house multiple sarcophagi to simple rock-cut niches, and from portrait busts and relief stelai to plain ostothekes. Although the majority of these monuments have long-since been emptied and de-contextualised, this paper shows that a close reading of their materiality, decorative schemes and epitaphs allows the reconstruction of ritual acts and commemorative practices. These, in turn, offer insights not only into identities and social structures, but also reveal valuable glimpses into the eschatological beliefs of the people who lived and died here.

**Evangelia GEORGEDAKI**     **Women in Ancient Crete: Funerary Monuments and Inscriptions as Mirrors of Social Identity**

This lecture investigates the role of women in ancient Cretan societies from the classical to the roman period, through an integrated study of funerary stelae and their inscriptions. These monuments offer valuable insight into how women were represented, remembered, and situated within broader social structures. The research focuses on how female identity, kinship relations, and public recognition are articulated through commemorative practices, as well as how these may reflect broader institutional frameworks, such as those preserved in the Gortyn Code. By examining funerary evidence from several Cretan cities, the study highlights regional traditions and traces changes in gender roles over time. Methodologically, it combines archaeological and epigraphic approaches, bringing together typological, iconographic, and content-based analysis of the inscriptions to reconstruct the ways in which women's presence was materialized and expressed after death. As part of my doctoral research, this lecture seeks not only to illuminate aspects of female social identity and memory, but also to reevaluate conventional narratives by foregrounding the role of women beyond the confines of traditional historiography.

**Mercourios GEORGIADIS**     **The warrior ethos in the Aegean Bronze Age burials and the broader trends in the Mediterranean**

The appearance of attempts to demarcate warriors in the burial context can be traced across the Aegean from the 3rd millennium BC onwards. Similar trends have been identified in other parts of the Mediterranean and Europe as well. The image of the warrior is depicted in different ways and in different contexts, whilst the first weapons were deposited as offerings in graves. Some of these characteristics had been parts of wider social, political and cultural processes than local phenomena. This is more evident during the 2nd millennium BC burial traditions. Moreover, the emphasis of the warrior ethos within multiple burial tombs was an Aegean characteristic in the second half of the 2nd millennium BC. At the same time the form and the symbolisms it had found analogies to other areas in the Mediterranean. A certain image and aesthetic was attributed to them, which was shared among various cultures and regions. The fall of the palaces in the Aegean

changed some of the aesthetic values for the image of the warriors. However, their depiction in art continued to be common, whilst their social significance remained as important as before.

**Bilge HÜRMÜZLÜ**

### **How the Ionians Remember?**

As symbolic keys unlocking status and prestige, burial customs reflect a range of social concerns, from mourning to celebrate the memory of a specific audience and thus provide an important picture of the 'memory' of society. Memory has an important role and power of transformation of culture or to carry out the features of the culture over generations. Those who have participated in any social order are considered to have collective memories. On the other hand, alterations in 'remembering' and 'practice' between generations are also a reality. Long-term necropolis research in Ionia and its colonies provide some important hints to understand the role of the social memory on burial customs. The link between Abdera cemeteries to Klazomenai and Teos, clearly shows the social need of self-presentation by using the burial as an instrument. The change of community in Abdera after the second colonization period in mid sixth century the burial types and practice start to follow the Teian examples, or at least they differ from the earlier Klazomenain types. This paper will focus on burial customs of Ionians in homeland and diaspora, the death and memory of these Ionian communities.

**Myrina KALAITZI  
and Anastasios  
KAKAMANOUDIS**

### **Second Lives, Lasting Images: The Painted Funerary Stelai Reused in the "Great Tumulus" and Traces of Commemoration at Aigai, Macedonia**

The tombstones found in second use in the "Great Tumulus" that covered the royal tombs excavated by Manolis Andronikos and his associates in Aigai (Vergina) in the late 1970s constitute a closed corpus of material, which, thanks to the specific conditions in which these were deposited during their "second lives" as building material, preserves one of the rare surviving series of Greek tombstones with painted figured scenes. Owing to multispectral imaging (MSI) undertaken in the 2010s, we can now more accurately assess these painted representations, with regard to their content, style, and technique, and identify scenes that had previously gone unrecognized. The paper will focus on the findings from the group of figured stelai examined in the second phase of the MSI project, and will also bring forward new evidence regarding the different modes of grave marking and commemoration in the necropolis of late Classical and Hellenistic Aigai. The discussion situates the tombstones within their wider artistic milieu, in particular the wall paintings of the late Classical and early Hellenistic monumental tombs of Macedonia, as well as other series of painted tombstones, such as those of Demetrias in Thessaly, and of Alexandria in Egypt.

**Elif KOPARAL**

### **Tumuli as landmarks of social memory and autochthony: A perspective from Ionia**

Tumuli have been used as a burial custom in an extensive geography and a long period of time. Although there are significant differences in building techniques, uses and placement in various geographies and periods, almost in all cases they have been utilized as indicators of power and for claiming the land. In this paper, I will focus on the use of tumuli in the Ionian region to explain how they have been used for expressing state power, as well for constructing social memory for the polis communities to claim the polis land. Spatial organization of tumuli around the asty and the khorai are closely affiliated with the emergence of polis and the process of urbanization. Placement of the tumuli at the peripheries of the polis territories around 7<sup>th</sup> c. BCE and their re-use as well as building new ones guide us to understand how the rural territories were organized,

and remained crucial to the polis identities. I will discuss the evidence from the *khora*i of Klazomenai, Teos, Erythrai and Lebedos ([www.klasp.net](http://www.klasp.net)) by KLASP surveys as well as the published data from elsewhere in Ionia.

**Hava Bracha  
KORZAKOVA**

**Different types of inscriptions in the "Sidonian" burial cave in Maresha and their significance for studying the local discourse**

In the "Apollophanes' Cave" in Maresha, Israel, which has been in use during the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods, there are many inscriptions of different types. Some of the inscriptions designate the buried - only with a name and burial date, or describing social status. Others describe images represented on the "animal" frieze, which in itself raises the question – what for? A third type of inscription is not funerary at all and does not relate to burials - these are graffiti left by those who visited the cave for personal reasons, completely unrelated to burials. Among such graffiti we find the famous "Mariseian Song," which, in our opinion, is a quote from a lost mimiamb, and shorter inscriptions that nevertheless present historical and literary interest. It appears that we can better understand the details of the local discourse by studying these inscriptions in their totality.

**Andreas LEVENTIS**

**Contexts of Commemoration: Reused Ceramics and Mortuary Practice in Hellenistic Acharnai**

This paper examines the recontextualised use of a West Slope-type hydria (figure 1) in a secondary cremation burial (Tomb 8) at Acharnai (Attica), where the vessel—characterised by ribbing, vegetal wreath, and Lesbian kymation—was placed within a beehive-shaped container and sealed with an inverted deep basin. This gesture, widely attested across the Hellenistic world, reflects a codified funerary practice with both practical and symbolic dimensions. The study explores the vessel's role within its context of use, highlighting how such refined ceramic forms were appropriated for commemorative purposes and embedded in local funerary traditions. Particular emphasis is placed on patterns of ceramic consumption, the symbolic reuse of symposium-related shapes in mortuary settings, and their capacity to communicate status, identity, and memory. By situating the find within the regional ceramic landscape of Hellenistic Attica, the paper also addresses regional identities and interactions, examining how imported stylistic forms were locally interpreted and ritually redeployed. This case offers insight into the cultural logic of funerary assemblages and the dynamic interplay between form, function, and meaning within the necropolis.

**Themistoklis LIANOS**

**Cooking Vessels and Food in the Funerary Contexts of Crete during the Early Iron Age: Balancing between Symbolic and Practical Value**

This paper focuses on the presence and role of the limited number of ceramic cooking vessels found in the funerary contexts of Crete during the Early Iron Age (10th–7th century BCE). This particular category of pottery has traditionally been assigned symbolic value, primarily due to its frequent representation by miniature or small-sized vessels that show little to no signs of use. At the same time, recent studies have brought to light new evidence regarding the quantities of food consumed during funerary or commemorative rituals. As a result, prevailing interpretations of certain funerary assemblages are now being re-evaluated. These new findings have reignited interest in the role of food—and, by extension, cooking vessels—within mortuary practices. Accordingly, this presentation aims to revisit the symbolic significance attributed to cooking

vessels and to reconsider their function in funerary rituals, where such a reassessment is possible.

**Maria Sofia MARINAKI**      **Constructing Gendered Identities and Social Memory in the Protoegeometric Burials at Lefkandi, Euboea**

This research focuses on the burial practices at the Protoegeometric Toumba of Lefkandi, approached through the perspective of gender archaeology. It investigates how gendered identities were constructed and commemorated within Early Iron Age mortuary landscapes, applying feminist archaeological theory to challenge earlier interpretations shaped by binary and heteronormative assumptions. The study reconsiders how gender was performed and symbolized through burial assemblages and spatial organization. This approach contributes to ongoing debates on the archaeology of remembrance and the performativity of funerary practices. It emphasizes the role of deathscapes as constructed commemorative landscapes, where gender and social status were materially and symbolically contested and remembered. By looking closely at the funerary rituals and material culture, the analysis explores how social roles and relationships were expressed and negotiated within the burial context—both in the past and through the lens of present-day interpretation. Lefkandi is situated within broader Aegean mortuary traditions, presenting cemeteries as active sites where local and supra-local identities were forged and social memory was embedded. At the same time, the research acknowledges that these landscapes remain interpretively charged, shaped by the disciplinary and sociocultural frameworks through which earlier readings were constructed. Additionally, the research highlights how mortuary sites like Lefkandi are not just places of interment but arenas of social negotiation, where cultural values and identities were communicated, maintained, or transformed. By integrating feminist theory with archaeological data, this study seeks to shed new light on the complex ways in which gender and memory intersect in Early Iron Age Greece, and on how death rituals worked to materialize ideologies of identity, difference, and belonging.

**Verena MEYER**      **Gender and Sex-Related Commemoration through grave markers in Geometric Attica: Evidence from Kraters and Amphorae**

The practice of placing a vessel above the grave of a deceased person is well known in the region of Athens and Attica during the Geometric period and evokes a familiar image: while male graves are typically marked with large kraters, those of women are crowned with amphorae. From the Protoegeometric to the Early Archaic period, in some cases, these grave markers were placed above some of the most luxurious and prestigious burials of their time. This paper aims to examine the reliability of these markers as indicators of the sex or gender of the deceased, as well as the underlying social values they reflect. Due to the absence of bioarchaeological evidence for most graves marked with kraters and amphorae, the sex or gender of the deceased often has to be determined —albeit to some extent of uncertainty—based on associated grave goods. Although this practice is especially common in Attica, particularly in its large necropoleis, these grave markers are also found in other parts of Greece. By comparing the use of kraters and amphorae in Attic and non-Attic contexts, it will be investigated whether their gendered connotations persisted even when transferred to different social settings.

**Michael MILIDAKIS  
and Michael ILIAKIS**

**Ἐκείνων δὲ διαπρεπῇ τὴν ἀρετὴν κρίναντες αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν  
τάφον ἐποίησαν: an (re)assessment of the research on the  
Marathon Tumulus**

The battle of Marathon needs no introduction. It is a landmark in ancient Greek political and military history that shaped the next phase of the evolution of the Greek world. Undoubtedly, this military confrontation is considered among the most famous battles of antiquity. The battle itself, and as well as its ramifications on the eastern Mediterranean region's history and culture, were, are and will continue to be a research topic for students of the ancient world. The present essay focuses on perhaps the most macabre aspects of the battle's outcome: the collection process of the Athenian casualties, the subsequent funerary practices and the type of the monument erected to commemorate the war dead. The *Soros* site, situated to the east of the road from Nea Makri towards the modern Marathon village, is generally accepted as the mound of the Athenians. The presentation will expose critically the available literary and epigraphical sources as well as the archaeological evidence on the burial practices associated with the Athenian fallen. Furthermore, it will examine the prevailing archaeological theories on the funeral monument and its identification with the *Soros* mound.

**Anna MOLES and  
Katerina TZANAKAKI**

**Revisiting the grave: investigating memory and identity in a  
collective Roman rock-cut chamber tomb at Aptera, Crete**

Aptera was an important centre in the Roman period, as demonstrated by its strategic position above Souda Bay, the impressive architecture still visible at the site today, and finds that have been produced by rescue excavations over the years. This paper presents the first small-scale but comprehensive bioarchaeological study to be conducted at Aptera, which has focused on the human skeletal remains from a Roman rock-cut chamber tomb on the Dousemertzzi-Kelaïdi plot within the ancient West Cemetery of Aptera. With the human remains of a minimum number of 18 individuals, of a wide range of ages, found on benches, in niches, and on the floor of the chamber, this tomb offers an interesting opportunity to investigate the role of memory in the funerary sphere through an investigation of the sequence and longevity of its use, likely for a family group across some generations. We consider the identity and lives of those buried in this tomb by taking an interdisciplinary approach in combining the osteological, palaeopathological, and isotopic ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ ,  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ ,  $^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$  and  $^{14}\text{C}$ ) analyses, with the archaeological evidence.

**Niknam NAJIB**

**The Role of Ancient Funerary Traditions on the Diversity of  
Mortuary Practices and Burial Rites in the Sasanian Period**

In April 224 A.D, five centuries of Parthian monarchy were put to an end by a ruler from the House of Sasan in Pars, Iran, leading to the official establishment of the Sasanian Kingdom, which encompassed present-day Iran and some parts of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. There is a general agreement among scholars that this political event brought about significant changes in the country, particularly in the domain of religious issues when Zoroastrianism was recognized as a state religion and the 'only' acceptable religion throughout Sasanian territories until the fall of this dynasty in 651 A.D. Sasanian kings and priests spent much effort to spread the Zoroastrian doctrine across the country and establish an orthodoxy in this religion which can be traced through various aspects, such as burial rites and mortuary practices. According to many late Sasanian primary sources, the body of the deceased had to be taken to high mountains or certain designated spaces, and be exposed to the sun for a year to be excarnated by animals. That is because, according to Zoroastrian beliefs, the corpse is considered one of the most unholy elements in the world, which can be possessed by demons and pollute the earth. After the decay

of the flesh, the bones were cleansed and must then be placed in a receptacle (ossuary), or left on the mountain and proceed to sun exposure. Despite such emphasis on body exposure, archaeological excavations have revealed seven different types of burials in the Sasanian period, which are sometimes in direct contradiction with the aforementioned funerary rite. Different reasons can be proposed for this significant variation in mortuary practices, one of the most important of which is the ancient funerary traditions existing before the Sasanian period in West Asia and ancient Near East. These ancient burial customs could account for certain types of burial, like Cairns or Jar Burials, which can be found in many Sasanian sites across Iran and Mesopotamia. This indicates that such ancient funerary rites, that were completely familiar to past societies in these regions and were engraved on their memories long before the succession of Sasanian to power, played a more important role on shaping the rites of burials in Late Antique Iran compared to the religious propaganda of the Sasanian court.

**Onur ÖZBALABAN**

**"All Roads Lead to Death". Tumulus and road connection:  
Tumuli and roads at Mount Nif (Olympos), İzmir, as a case study**

The research area known as "Mount Nif (Olympos) and its Vicinity," located in İzmir, Western Anatolia, encompasses an ancient road network extending between the present-day districts of Kemalpaşa (Nymphaion) and Torbalı (near Metropolis). This network historically connected the Kryos (Nif Çayı) and Kaystros (Küçük Menderes Nehri) river basins. Along this route, a series of tumuli—varying in chronology and typology—have long stood as silent markers, situated near necropolises and ancient settlements within the region. This study focuses on the distribution and significance of tumuli in relation to the ancient road system. Specifically, it examines the spatial associations between the tumuli and the remnants of ancient roads, employing spatial analysis to trace potential road alignments based on tumulus locations. The research further explores how these tumuli evolved over time in conjunction with transformations in the regional transportation network. Key tumulus sites include those in the Dağkızılca and Karamattepe necropolises, as well as isolated examples dispersed throughout the landscape.

**Banu ÖZDİLEK**

**The Necropolis of Neapolis, A Military-Rural Settlement from  
the Peripolion of Termessos: An Evaluation Based on Local  
Workshops; Tomb Types, Iconography, Funerary Cult,  
Inscriptions**

Neapolis Necropolis is important for containing different types of tombs for a medium-sized peripolion, as well as various data regarding the mortuary cult and displaying local artistic characteristics. The difficult accessibility of the Neapolis settlement, which was built on steep terraces, affected its economy and caused food production such as wine and olive oil to be concentrated in the city center. Although the temple architecture shows Hellenistic influences, the surviving structures largely date to the Roman and Byzantine periods. Historical and epigraphic evidence confirms the influence of Pisidian culture on Neapolis, particularly visible in its tombs. The necropolis, positioned extramurally in accordance with Roman tradition, contains 45 identified tombs, 38 of which are sarcophagi. These include chamosorion-type rock-cut sarcophagi, one built aedicula/arcosolium tomb, one chamber tomb, one freestanding ostothek, and four rock-carved ostotheks. The necropolis features rock-cut stelae, niches, offering bowls, garlands, and plaque sockets on sarcophagi, all associated with funerary cult practices. Architectural elements like exedrae provide insights into ritual behaviors. The coexistence of inhumation and cremation, along with diverse tomb types and locations, reflect social status and personal preferences. Iconographic representations primarily consist of shields, spears, and tabula ansata motifs characteristic of Pisidian sarcophagi. A rare bear relief suggests a

heroization scene and provides clues about local fauna. The same sarcophagus includes both a religious object (sistrum) and a military standard (vexillum), indicating details of funerary cults and professions. No other sarcophagus with identical iconography has yet been found. Depictions of religious items (phiale, oinochoe, altar), gendered figures (husband-wife busts), occupational representations (priest, soldier, hunter), and apotropaic or vegetal motifs (Medusa, rosette, palmette) reveal insights into provincial funerary art. Inscriptions on the tabula ansata provide names, kinship ties, cultic affiliations, and tomb-related fines, aiding the chronological classification of the graves. The limestone used for tomb construction was sourced from a local quarry within the necropolis, and stylistic analysis suggests that the carvings were executed by local artisans, as shown by comparisons with Termessos. The unique examples from Neapolis, absent in previous studies on Roman sarcophagi in Anatolia, significantly enhance our understanding of rural burial practices in the Imperial period.

**Eleni PAPADOPOULOU**      ***The Language of Burial: Funerary Practices and Social Identities at Maroulas, Crete***

This study investigates the funerary practices of the Late Minoan III cemetery at Maroulas in western Crete, emphasizing burial as a medium for negotiating social identities and roles. Established in the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC in a ravine overlooking the sea, the cemetery comprises mainly chamber tombs and a few pithos burials. Despite their architectural simplicity, the tombs display a structured funerary program, with primary inhumations in clay larnakes underscoring individuality and bodily preservation. The grave assemblages, dominated by drinking vessels, suggest both ritual consumption and symbolic references to communal roles, while jewelry, cosmetic implements, seal stones, and occasional weapons point to gender distinctions, genealogical memory, and social prestige. Ritual practices such as vessel breakage, libations, and offerings highlight the performative nature of death. Overall, the evidence demonstrates that funerary practices at Maroulas operated as a symbolic language through which age, gender, and social differentiation were expressed, masking complex identity dynamics beneath a modest tomb architecture.

**Hasan PEKER**      ***Commemorating the Dead at Karkemish: Late Hittite funerary inscriptions from the necropolis of Yunus in context***

Systematic excavations at Karkemish, which were restarted by a Turco-Italian team in 2011 a century after the British Museum ones, are also investigating the Iron Age (as well as Classical and Modern) cemetery area of Yunus. In this presentation, the Anatolian Hieroglyphic funerary stelae found at Karkemish and Yunus, as well as within the borders of the Late Hittite Kingdom of Karkemish, will be evaluated against contemporary written sources from other Late Hittite polities. The individuals to whom the funerary steles were dedicated, their family relations and their connections with Late Hittite state administration will be discussed with special reference to the 8th century BCE.

**Müjde PEKER**      ***Between Lydia and Ionia: Grave types and their contexts of the necropoleis at Mount Nif (Olympos), Izmir***

Mount Nif (Olympos) is located in the east of the Gulf of Izmir (Smyrna) and Istanbul University has been conducting excavations in this under-researched region since 2006. Different types of tombs, including single or two-chambered tombs under a tumulus, have been identified in the necropolis unearthed in Dağkızılca. Although their contexts have been damaged, their

architectural features and surviving finds allow for identification and dating, and indicate that this necropolis was in use since the second quarter of the 5th century BC. In addition, terracotta sarcophagi and cist graves have been found here with their contexts. The different types of graves and their contexts show the characteristics of Lydian and Ionian elements. This transitional region provides clues that will complete the missing link between these cultures.

**Anastasia PERYSINAKI**     ***Et inter mori avaritia vivit; coins for the dead of Argos Orestikon in Northwestern Greece***

This paper studies the deposition of coins in a funerary context, a practice well-established within the ancient world, often referred to as “the Charon’s obol”, aiming to offer some interpretations. As a case study, we will focus on Late Antiquity, examining the coin finds related to the burials at the site of Paravela, situated west from the ancient Diocletianoupolis and the modern settlement of Argos Orestikon, in Western Macedonia. The archaeological excavations, conducted from 2009 to 2018, revealed a site of public use from 2nd cent. C.E. to at least 5th – 6th cent. C.E., with an early extra muros Christian Basilica, built on a previously dating roman building, as well as an important number of burials – pit graves, tiled graves, cist graves and a burial chamber – dating within the 4th cent. C.E. The excavation finds include 17 bronze roman imperial coins associated with funerary context. We will try to shed light on the ideology that shaped the ritual of the coin deposition, the system of beliefs regarding death and the afterlife, and the transformation of the burial ground to a *lieu de mémoire* during the transition of the local community from the ancient graeco-roman world to the middle ages.

**Laetitia PHIALON**     **Late Bronze Age larnakes as potential objects with a past? A challenging question**

In very specific contexts, Late Bronze Age burial larnakes may be regarded as objects with a past, as in the case of Late Minoan clay larnakes reused in Early Iron Age tombs at Knossos. The idea that certain exceptional funerary containers had an impact after burial should also be considered, in the light of the Ayia Triada stone sarcophagus, for which the hypothesis of a “damnatio memoriae” at a time quite close to burial, in the Late Bronze Age, has however been suggested. The question then arises as to whether other Late Bronze Age clay larnakes, in addition to the Knossos examples, were reused at a much later period, and could thus be seen as objects with a distant past. The aim of this paper is first to explore this possibility, and then to examine whether Late Bronze Age tombs that contained larnakes were revisited for purposes other than burial in the Early Iron Age or later periods. As a rather negative provisional answer cannot be ruled out, it will be interesting to clarify whether this necessarily means that Late Bronze Age larnakes were generally not potential memory-bearing objects. However, a preliminary examination of the material from certain LBA tombs at Tanagra in Boeotia might hold some surprises.

**Manos RAPANAKIS**     **Slopes of Remembrance: Landform-Driven Mortuary Patterns in Hellenistic and Roman Crete**

The question of where to place the dead has long been a central concern in funerary practice, both in antiquity and in contemporary society. This study examines how specific topographical elements—such as slopes, ridges, and plains— played a key role in the organization and construction of burial sites in Hellenistic and Roman Crete. Through the integration of

archaeological data and geomorphological analysis, and by applying the Topographical Position Index (TPI), the landscape was classified into distinct landform types to better understand their relationship with mortuary activity. Findings reveal that cemeteries were not randomly distributed but strategically positioned in ways that responded to both practical concerns and symbolic meanings. Elevated ridges may have served as visual landmarks or status indicators, while slopes and plains offered varying degrees of accessibility, visibility, and seclusion. This research argues that the landscape functioned not merely as a passive backdrop but as an active element in shaping burial practices. The interaction between terrain and funerary customs reflects broader social identities, collective memory, and beliefs about death and the afterlife. By focusing on the Cretan context, the study provides new insights into how natural landforms contributed to the cultural and material construction of mortuary landscapes in the ancient Mediterranean.

**Jonathan RITTER**

### **The Roman Funerary Monuments of Apollonia and their imagery**

In Apollonia on the southeastern Adriatic coast numerous Roman funerary monuments are preserved, yet not systematically analysed. This paper analyses the Roman funerary monuments with a focus on the iconography. Furthermore the variety of funerary markers such as stelae, columellae, altars and funerary busts will be presented with their typology. In addition their size and scale will be reconstructed to showcase their different approaches to represent the deceased within the funerary landscape. The main focus of the paper is the imagery of the monuments. This will be used as an access for a better understanding of the habitus and self-representation of the inhabitants. The funerary iconography of Apollonia is further compared with that of the Roman colonies Dyrrhachium and Buthrontos, offering insight into Apollonia's characteristics. In this way, the funerary art is used as a lens through which to reconstruct ancient culture and values of the city.

**Hakon RÜCKEMANN**

### **Investigating the Frankonisi Necropolis: Preliminary Research into a Roman Burial Site near Olympia**

The Zeus sanctuary at Olympia has been studied for over 150 years, yet its surrounding area remains largely neglected. One notable exception is the Frankonisi Necropolis, a 2nd–4th century AD Roman burial site near Olympia, last excavated in the late 1960s and then largely forgotten. The site regained attention in 2018 with the discovery of the “Homer Brick” in a Roman-era chamber tomb—bearing 13 verses from Book 14 of the *Odyssey*, the oldest known written record of this text. Despite this remarkable find, the necropolis has only been briefly reported, with limited publication of artifacts and no comprehensive study. This presentation offers an overview of the Frankonisi Necropolis and its potential to advance understanding of Roman funerary practices in a panhellenic sanctuary context. As part of my ongoing PhD research, I explore this site at an early stage, where many interpretations remain provisional. Nonetheless, the variety of grave types and material culture suggests a complex social fabric including sanctuary staff, pilgrims, athletes, and locals. The necropolis may also offer insights into infrastructural and settlement dynamics around Olympia. Investigating these aspects promises to illuminate social identity, mortuary customs, and urban connectivity during a transformative period marked by the sanctuary's decline and the rise of Christianity.

**Gkampriella SELEMPA      Linou's Middle Bronze Age Burials: Insights to funerary practices from demographic data**

This presentation explores the mortuary practices of Middle Bronze Age Cyprus (c. 2000-1600 BC), focusing on the demographic analysis of human remains from 11 tombs, discovered during a rescue excavation in Linou, Nicosia. All tombs featured multiple burials. Linou is situated near Skouriotissa (one of the biggest copper mines in Cyprus), between the important centres of Lapithos and Dhenia. The pottery found in the tombs indicates usage throughout the Middle Bronze Age, with evidence suggesting most tombs were utilised from the Early Bronze Age (ECIII) to the early Late Bronze Age (LCI). The skeletal analysis identified a minimum of 223 individuals. Notably, the assemblage included 141 juveniles, among which 25 were foetuses, 89 were infants. Among the adults who could be sexed, approximately 55% were female and 45% were male. Most individuals were young adults, with only a few reaching over 50 years old. The tombs included both primary burials and secondary treatment, but public works disturbances made it challenging to draw clear conclusions about their frequency. Findings suggest inclusive burial practices, with individuals of all ages and sexes sharing the space. Demographic patterns from Linou are compared to other Bronze Age Cypriot sites to assess broader trends, while also addressing study limitations and future research opportunities.

**Manolis I. STEFANAKIS      The Necropolis of Kymissala, Rhodes, a heavily “explored” archaeological site**

The necropolis of the Deme of Kymissaleis on Rhodes was extensively explored and looted in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century by various explorers and looters, with much archaeological material dispersed in the international market. The aim of this paper is to explore the process, methods and experience of excavating an archaeological site that was heavily explored and looted in previous centuries, starting from the surface “readings” and the evident traces of the history of the area’s exploration, continuing to the methods of excavating layers disturbed by human activity. The results of the current research, besides the apparent remains and finds in situ, relay to the knowledge and understanding, of the motivation and the methods of the earlier explorers and the accumulation of artefacts in the late 19<sup>th</sup> c. and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Kaja STEMBERGER      How the "problematic dead" were treated in Roman period  
FLEGAR      Slovenia**

The fear of people who died "a bad death" is well documented for the Roman period. The so called *larvae* and *lemures* were believed to pose a danger for the living long after their human bodies had perished. In the archaeological setting, such cases are usually known as deviant burials. But such graves are hard to recognise from the early Imperial period due to the prevalence of cremation in the 1st and 2nd century CE. Only after the widespread shift in burial manner towards inhumation do they become more readily observable. While better documented in neighbouring Italy, in Slovenia they were never addressed beyond a few individual cases. In this paper I aim to systematically address known cases from Slovenia, and discuss the methods to recognise them in both modern and legacy data in order to create a rough picture of what can be expected at Slovenian sites. Moreover, for the first time the spatial and chronological patterns of their occurrence will be addressed. From my preliminary work, it is safe to conclude that certain types, such as bound burials and so called headless frog burials, have not yet been recognised or recorded in modern Slovenia.

**Anthi TILIAKOU,  
Andreas KAPETANIOS,  
Maria MEXI,  
Alexandra TSATSAKI**

**Shared Earth, Shared Bonds: Forging Memory and Identity in a  
Peripheral Aegean Context**

This project explores the mortuary landscape of St. George Island, a small yet enduring Aegean community, from the Classical to the Roman periods, as a locus of remembrance and ritual practice. Focusing on the treatment of the dead, we investigate how burial practices - particularly the repeated use of collective tombs, the structuring of grave spaces, and the inclusion of symbolic objects - materialized memory, belonging, and social identity. The funerary assemblage, which includes 51 bronze and silver coins associated with the Charon's obol rite, as well as evidence of wooden biers, personal ornaments, and complex stratigraphy, reflects a deep engagement with commemorative rituals that transcended the individual. Through an integrated approach combining osteology, taphonomic analysis, and spatial burial patterns, we consider how acts of interment operated as performative expressions of care, obligation, and ancestral connection. These deathways hint to not only familial bonds and possible biological ties, but also the ways in which local and broader cultural identities were actively negotiated through the body and its placement in death. Ultimately, this study positions the cemetery of St. George as a dynamic landscape, where memory was constructed, sustained, and transformed across generations.

**Aristodimos  
TSANAKTSIDIS**

**Memory and oblivion. Case studies from the eastern cemetery  
of Amphipolis**

This paper attempts to investigate the role of death and memory and how or if those two correlate with the landscape in which people are buried. In ancient necropoleis, the selection of the place in which the tombs were created, was based not only on practical reasons, such as the availability and the suitability of the soil, but also on collective and personal ones related to the remembrance of the dead. Three pairs of tombs found in the sector BΔE of the eastern cemetery of ancient Amphipolis, during the excavation period 1999-2001, have been selected as case studies. Each one of these cases demonstrates a different approach to commemorate, or not, the dead. Firstly, an analytical description of the tombs will be provided, as well as the chronology of the burials. Furthermore, the relation between the tombs will be examined. Were the tombs constructed taking into account earlier burials and thus there is a deliberate selection of the burial place, or, in case of a chronological gap between the burials, is it indicated that the existence of certain tombs had been forgotten ?

**Katerina TZANAKAKI**

**Archaeological evidence for the development of the cemeteries  
of ancient Kydonia in historical times**

This presentation aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the evolution of the cemeteries of ancient Kydonia, from the early historical centuries to the early Hellenistic period. This topic is actually part of my dissertation on the *physiognomy* of Kydonia, an important yet relatively hidden Cretan city situated beneath present-day Chania. Until now, its cemeteries have not been systematically researched. However, significant amounts of archaeological material emerged from rescue excavations carried out in response to applications for building permits. By examining this material, we gain valuable information about the city's socio-political history during the aforementioned period, as well as posthumous beliefs, as reflected in burial structures and practices. The cemeteries appear to have been established away from residential areas, making

use of open spaces near prehistoric tombs without disturbing them. Kastelli Hill, which dominates the famous Venetian harbour of Chania, is the central point of reference for the burial sites, which are arranged around it. These are classified as eastern, southern and south-western cemeteries. It is generally observed that the burial sites in Kydonia, which had existed since the Geometric period, were used continuously. Inhumation of the deceased is the common practice during this time. Cremations are not apparent.

**Claire ZIKIDI  
and Jane BUIKSTRA**

**Osteobiographies, Embodied Memory, and the Dead:  
Theoretical Reflections and Bioarchaeological  
Reconstructions from Phaleron Delta**

This presentation explores how memory—social, embodied, and material—is entangled with mortuary practice, using *osteobiographies* to examine human remains from the Phaleron Delta (8th–5th centuries BCE), a site shaped by sociopolitical shifts in early Athens. We approach the body not as a neutral source of demographic data, but as an active site where personal histories, cultural attitudes, and historical forces meet. We challenge the divide in bioarchaeology between biological evidence and social identity, advocating for a more integrated perspective that treats skeletal remains as complex, multi-layered entities. The *osteobiographic* approach brings biological data together with cultural and contextual factors to build nuanced, narrative-driven accounts of past lives. Focusing on individuals who experienced violence, illness, or long-term care, we explore how memory is embedded in the body and shaped by its treatment after death. Burial, neglect, or standardisation become means of remembering—or forgetting—certain lives. Ultimately, we argue that *osteobiographies* offer a valuable framework for understanding mortuary landscapes as spaces of memory-making, where individual stories intersect with broader ideological narratives. By viewing the dead as assemblages of lived experience *and* cultural meaning, we aim to contribute a more reflective and materially grounded approach to bioarchaeology.

**Boaz ZISSU  
and Eyal BARUCH**

**Between Worlds: Death and Burial in Hellenistic and Roman  
Jerusalem**

The paper examines the archaeological evidence of funerary practices in Jerusalem during the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods (100 BCE–70 CE). Analysis of the Jerusalem necropolis reveals a range of burial structures, from simple shaft graves to complex rock-cut family tombs with antechambers and multiple burial chambers. The archaeological record demonstrates chronological development in burial customs, most significantly the adoption of secondary burial in ossuaries during the later part of the period. The ossuary practice—collecting skeletal remains approximately twelve months post-burial—has been interpreted through multiple theoretical frameworks. The traditional interpretation links this practice to developing concepts of bodily resurrection, while alternative hypotheses suggest possible Roman cultural influence. The latter interpretation is problematic, however, as Jewish practices fundamentally diverged from Roman cremation customs. Rock-cut tombs associated with Jerusalem's elite social strata exhibit consistent architectural elements: façades with local versions of Hellenistic decorative motifs, sealing mechanisms (primarily square blocking stones), and interior spaces with benches, *loculi*, and *arcosolia*. Epigraphic evidence from ossuary inscriptions provides demographic data and insights into familial structures, onomastic patterns, and socioeconomic status. The material assemblage indicates complex processes of cultural negotiation as Jerusalem's population maintained distinctive Jewish practices while selectively incorporating elements from surrounding Hellenistic and Roman cultures. This archaeological dataset, when integrated with textual sources, enables reconstruction of both the physical funerary landscape and its

associated religious and social dimensions during a period of significant cultural transformation in ancient Jerusalem.