



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens



3rd Meeting of

MEDITARCH – ANCIENT WORLD Conference

Co-organized by the MA Programs “Greek and Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology” and “Archaeology and History of the Ancient World: from Early Prehistory to Late Antiquity”

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Session 1: Minoan and Aegean Archaeology

Chair: Prof. Yiannis Papadatos



Minoan Scripts in Funerary Contexts

Konstantina Pandi, MA Student

The relationship between Cretan Hieroglyphic and Linear A has preoccupied researchers for over a century. Most studies emphasize that the two scripts chronologically coexisted for roughly two centuries, often appearing in identical contexts - specifically within the palatial deposits of Knossos, Malia, and, more recently, Petras. Existing scholarship also highlights that both scripts served non-administrative functions.

This paper presents a comprehensive catalogue of inscribed objects from funerary contexts to demonstrate that these two writing systems did not actually coexist in all spheres of daily life, particularly in death. The methodology integrates distribution maps of cemeteries where distinct intra-island writing traditions occurred, comparative analyses of tomb types, and examinations of the form, material, function, and agency of inscribed grave goods.

The results reveal that Cretan Hieroglyphic occurs exclusively in the cemeteries of eastern Crete, whereas Linear A is restricted to central and western Crete. No coexistence of different intra-island writing traditions was identified within the same tomb or cemetery, with the sole exception of Linear A and the Archanes script in Tholos B at Phourni. Furthermore, a systematic association emerges between Cretan Hieroglyphic and house tombs, while Linear A appears in tholos tombs and specialized elite contexts, such as the Temple Tomb at Knossos and the rock-cut chamber tomb at Mavro-spilio. These patterns strongly suggest divergent social practices.

In conclusion, the deliberate choice of a specific script in funerary practices served as an identity marker, reflecting both horizontal and vertical social stratifications among Minoan communities. This study ultimately highlights the role of writing beyond mere administration, demonstrating its active participation in constructing social memory and identity.



Klasmatograms in Cretan Hieroglyphic: Interpreting their concentration at Knossos and Malia

Sophia Christou, PhD Candidate

The metrological system of the Cretan Hieroglyphic script is primarily characterized by the recording of commodities through the use of whole numbers. However, in the assemblages from the Hieroglyphic Deposits of Knossos and Malia (MM IIIB), quantities are, in certain cases, expressed in a different manner. These two palatial centers appear to have developed particularly sophisticated administrative systems. The need for precise accounting of commodities most likely led to the development of a system of fractional quantities, represented by the so-called klasmatograms. These signs enable administrative precision and denote parts of a whole and are employed to record non-integer quantities, allowing for the detailed management of stored commodities.

The exclusive concentration of klasmatograms at Knossos and Malia does not appear to be coincidental. The similarities between the two Deposits are so significant that they are considered to reflect shared administrative practices, of which the use of klasmatograms formed an integral part. The reasons behind this geographical concentration remain an open research question. The available evidence permits the formulation of hypotheses concerning the administrative and bureaucratic system, as well as chronological and geographical factors. The presence of these signs at Knossos and Malia does not necessarily indicate that the system was geographically restricted to Northern and Central Crete. Rather, it most likely reflects the development of more sophisticated administrative practices at these two palatial centers, the use of specific types of accounting documents, and the management of commodities that required highly precise quantitative recording.



Minoanisation and cooking practices from the peak sanctuary at Stelida, Naxos

Foteini Kalogridi, MA Student

At the beginning of the Late Bronze Age, the dynamics between Crete and the islands of the Aegean are characterized by a great shift, as evidenced in many aspects of material culture, which are starkly minoanising compared to the previous periods. It has been argued for almost a century now that this is the outcome of Cretan imperialization over the Aegean islands, an interpretation that throughout the years has been reconsidered and taken multiple redirections. It is widely known however that this phenomenon does not include only finished objects, such as pottery, architecture and wall paintings, but also everyday practices such as weaving, writing and cooking or, on the contrary, highly symbolical ones, such as religious practices.

Aim of this presentation is to reconstruct the cooking practices that took place on the peak sanctuary of Stelida at Naxos, by analyzing the cooking pottery wares coming from a single deposit of the site. The methodology applied includes the identification of both types and fabrics. Through the identification of consumption choices, we will try to discuss culinary habits and assess the degree and extent of Cretan influence on the ritual practices that took place on the peak, during Late Bronze I period. Is the material minoanising or simply adapting to the new environment? By engaging to this approach, this paper comments on the character of religious and cultural identity of the people that visited the peak sanctuary during the Neopalatial period.



Session 2: Mycenaean Archaeology of Mainland Greece

Chair: Assist. Prof. Vassilis Petrakis



Chariot Warriors at Mycenae: Grave Circle A Stelae and the Eastern Mediterranean Language of Royal Power

Maria Stamati, MA Student

The status of the individuals buried in Grave Circle A at Mycenae remains a central problem in the study of early Mycenaean society. The wealth of the graves has often been taken as evidence for the emergence of a ruling elite. This paper approaches the problem through a neglected but significant category of evidence: the iconography of the funerary stelae. Three stelae from Grave Circle A depict a chariot warrior charging against and killing his enemies. Such scenes are exceptional in the Mycenaean visual repertoire, where chariot combat is otherwise rare. Do these images simply represent local martial values, or do they reflect the selective adoption of an eastern Mediterranean visual language associated with royal power?

The paper examines these stelae through a comparative iconographic analysis. It considers parallels in Hittite, Levantine, and Mesopotamian combat imagery, with emphasis on Egyptian New Kingdom royal iconography, where the king is frequently shown as a chariot warrior defeating his enemies. The comparison focuses on shared features, such as the isolated heroic figure and the visual subordination of the enemy, while also considering significant differences in weapons and ideological context.

It is argued that the Grave Circle A stelae do not simply copy Near Eastern models. Rather, they adapt selected elements of a wider eastern Mediterranean repertoire of power imagery to a specifically Mycenaean funerary context. In this sense, the stelae may provide an additional line of evidence for the elevated political status of the individuals commemorated in Grave Circle A. Their imagery suggests that these dead were presented as figures whose authority could be expressed through visual forms associated elsewhere with rulership and exceptional social power.



"Hold the Line": Scribal training and communities of practice in the Mycenaean Palatial Period

Ariadne - Panagiota Fatsi, MA Student

The decipherment of Linear B in 1952 and the subsequent efforts of many archaeologists, classical philologists and linguists to this day have provided us with abundant information about the Mycenaean palatial period. The extant documents may be bureaucratic, logistical in nature and preserved in a fragmentary manner, but they have still offered us invaluable nuance in understanding the world that created them. However, the people who used writing remain largely an open question. In a striking juxtaposition to the very detailed accounts of how scribes were trained in Egypt, Mesopotamia or the Hittite Empire, aspects like the selection, the training and the social role of the tablet writers are almost invisible in the palace records of Mycenaean Greece. Only a few documents, with the most notable among them being the **V(1) 114** tablet from Knossos, directly provide us with information regarding scribal training. Additional evidence can be inferred by the results of this training; namely, the construction of the clay tablets themselves, the text structure, the proper spelling and the corrections made by the scribal hands. The high degree of homogeneity in such writing and administrative practices across the Mycenaean palatial states seems at first glance to contradict our lack of knowledge about - or even the possible absence of - large-scale centralized systems of scribal training. This paper seeks to present and re-examine the relevant data, assessing whether the evidence could support the idea of a community of practice facilitated by an already established social hierarchy, in which literate administrators pass on knowledge, identity and tradition to new members through an apprenticeship model.



Expressing Regional Identity through pottery production and consumption in the Late Early and Early Middle Bronze Age. A case study from Thebes

Christos Dalamagkas, Graduate MA Student

The Early Helladic (EH) III and Middle Helladic (MH) I periods (c. 2300/2200-1900BCE) have not been as intensely studied as the preceding and following phases (such as EH II or MH II-MH III). This lack of attention, is especially true for Central Greece, where this period is, practically, unknown territory. The existence of strong regional elements in EH III and MH I has been stated before, this is not inaccurate but consistently is always underexplained. Regionalism is not marked by only a different ceramic shape or decoration; it is (or should be) mostly defined from elements of human agency, values, identity and social organization specific to a defined geographical area. These specific characteristics are expressed through the material culture.

By analyzing pottery production and consumption in Central Greece during EH III and MH I, we can reconstruct substantial features of the material culture this chronological period. By placing the results of these analyses in the greater context of EH III and MH I not only in Central Greece but in Mainland Greece in general, we may be able to observe how identities and other elements of human behavior are expressed within the same cultural “sphere” of the Middle Helladic period.



Female Representations of the Bronze Age Aegean Managed through Semantic AI Technology: Using Onto(termino)logies to Better Assess Depictions of Dress

Melissa Bergoffen, MA Student

In my previous paper submitted for the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens' 2025 MEDITARCH Ancient World Conference, I provided an overview on how semantic artificial intelligence technology could be used to maintain archaeological information for Bronze Age Aegean artifacts with female representations on wall paintings in a more beneficial manner than relational databases, especially when it comes to iconography. This paper continues this research by providing a more in-depth look on how ontologies and ontoterminologies can specifically help iconographers and other scholars analyze depictions of dress.

Dress can be subdivided into four general categories: garments, accessories, hairstyles, and cosmetics. These topics have already been studied to varying degrees by numerous scholars, but they tend to focus on a specific site and use inconsistent terminology when referring to the same dress depiction or, even worse, use the same term for different depictions.

My Iconographic Metadata Onto(termino)logy aims rectify these issues by creating a consistent manner in which to address depictions of Bronze Age Aegean dress by creating hierarchical concepts based on important characteristics of garments, accessories, hairstyles, and cosmetics found within my research of the relevant scholarship and by observing the iconography itself. I will focus here primarily on hairstyles and jewelry depicted in wall paintings because they are less frequently studied (especially in relation to garments), tend to focus on specific geographical examples (i.e. Thera), and have fewer characteristics (again in relation to garments).



Session 3: Cypriot Archaeology

Chair: Prof. Giorgos Vavouranakis



The Palaepaphos Baetyl and Phoenician Aniconic Traditions: Evidence or Speculation?

Victoria Tryfonos, MA Student

This paper explores the aniconic cult tradition of Aphrodite at Palaepaphos and the baetyl discovered at the sanctuary. Expanding upon this foundation, the present study also investigates broader Phoenician aniconic cultic traditions. The sanctuary of Palaepaphos boasts a long period of continuous operation, with its foundation dating back to the Late Bronze Age and extending through to the 4th century CE. The sanctuary is closely associated with the goddess Aphrodite, and Palaepaphos is widely recognized as one of the most important cult centers in Cyprus and the broader Eastern Mediterranean. While it holds the status of a "pan-Cypriot" cult center, this perception is primarily tied to the Graeco-Roman period. Nevertheless, its function as a major religious hub allowed its reputation to transcend the temporal and geographical boundaries of Cyprus. Information regarding the worship of the goddess derives from both written sources and iconographic representations on coins and jewelry; however, the actual cultic practices that took place at the sanctuary remain obscure and is poorly understood, this highlights the importance of re-evaluating our knowledge of the sanctuary's cult. This study attempts to examine the aniconic tradition linking the goddess to the sanctuary, as well as the similarities and differences identified with corresponding Phoenician deities.

The methodological framework involves a primary synthesis of iconographic parallels and written sources. This is followed by a comparative overview of selected cultic traditions from the Eastern Mediterranean. Ultimately, by comparing the cult of Aphrodite at Palaepaphos with these other Eastern examples, we ask: was a general type of cult adopted in the 12th century BCE, or is this a later assumption that influenced the perceptions of the early excavators? Preliminary findings suggest that although Palaepaphos participates in a shared Eastern Mediterranean cultic vocabulary, reflecting the broader interconnected climate of the era, it ultimately preserves a highly unique, localized character.



The imported and domestically manufactured scarabs in the Bronze Age Aegean and Cyprus

Ersi Lavari, PhD Candidate

The sealing scarab is one of the most distinctive artefacts of ancient Egyptian material culture, carrying both practical and symbolic significance. Despite the long-standing contacts between Egypt with the Aegean and Cyprus throughout the Bronze Age, scarabs from the latter two regions have received relatively little scholarly attention. This paper aims to examine the role of imported and locally manufactured sealing scarabs through the compilation of a comprehensive catalogue of items from Bronze Age Mainland and Insular Greece, Cyprus, and the shipwrecks of Ulu Burun and Cape Gelidonya. The analysis focuses on the chronology, archaeological contexts, iconography, materials, and distribution of both imported and locally manufactured items. The evidence indicates that they were deposited predominantly in funerary contexts, especially during the Late Bronze Age, often together with imported prestige goods from the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. Although often interpreted simply as evidence of contact with Egypt, these objects likely assumed different roles and meanings in different cultural contexts. Their local production, selective iconographic choices, and archaeological associations suggest that they possibly acquired new meanings within Aegean and Cypriot societies, functioning simultaneously as symbols of status, personal identity, and protection. Taken together, these observations offer a new perspective on the circulation, reception, and significance of Egyptian sealing scarabs in the Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean.



Shaping Paphian Resourcescapes: Agricultural Potential and Copper Exploitation as factors of Territorial Organisation

Efstratios Mavros, PhD Candidate

Food production and copper exploitation formed the economic foundations of Iron Age Cypriot polities, yet the relationship between agricultural productivity, mineral resources and political organisation remains insufficiently understood. This paper investigates the resourcescapes of southwestern Cyprus during the Cypro-Archaic period, focusing on the polity of Paphos, as one of the island's most prominent political entities. The study examines how Paphos organised and managed its hinterland in order to sustain agricultural production and secure access to the metalliferous zones of the Troodos Mountains. Utilising a GIS-based spatial analysis, multiple environmental variables -including geology, soils, topography, hydrology and precipitation- are integrated to develop an Agriculture Suitability Model that identifies areas with the highest cultivation potential. The resulting spatial patterns are evaluated alongside archaeological evidence to explore the subsistence capacity of the Paphian territory.

The second part of the study investigate the procurement and transportation of copper from the Troodos ore deposits towards Paphos, utilising Least Cost Paths (LCP) analysis to approach the potential transport corridors and assess the territorial extent required for the resource acquisition. By integrating agricultural and metallurgical landscapes within a single analytical framework, this paper offers new insights into the economic organisation and territorial strategies of the Paphian polity during the Cypro-Archaic period.



Session 4: Near Eastern Archaeology

Chair: Prof. Konstantinos Kopanias



Mapping Tutankhamun's Tomb: Spatial Patterns of the Burial Assemblage

Polymnia Alatzaki, PhD Candidate

Tutankhamun's tomb is the best-preserved royal burial from ancient Egypt, providing an exceptional archaeological context for the study of royal funerary practices. Since its discovery by Howard Carter in 1922, the tomb and its burial goods have been the subject of extensive research. However, part of the material remains unpublished, while most recent studies present the burial goods as a single collection, usually classified by object type. As a result, the relationship between the artefacts, the spaces within the tomb in which they were found, and the overall organization of the tomb has received limited attention.

The present PhD research approaches Tutankhamun's tomb as a complete archaeological context by combining the study of its architecture, iconography, and burial goods, with particular emphasis on their spatial distribution. A database is currently being compiled to record information about each object, including its type, material, function, quantity, decoration, state of preservation, and its findspot. Once completed, the dataset will be integrated into ArcGIS Pro to reconstruct the spatial arrangement of the burial goods within the tomb.

This research aims to investigate how the spatial distribution of the burial goods relates to the architecture and iconography of the tomb and what this may reveal about the organization of the burial and ancient Egyptian royal funerary practices. The resulting ArcGIS database is expected to provide a practical tool for exploring the spatial organization of the burial assemblage and its archaeological context.



The Archaeology of Siege: Material Evidence of Siege Warfare from the Assyrian Invasion of Judah

Chryssostomos Lamprou, Graduate MA Student

The unprecedented military expansion of the Neo-Assyrian Empire brought it into conflict with numerous states of the ancient Near East. The formidable fortifications of Early Iron Age walled settlements necessitated significant developments in the field of siege warfare. Despite the destructive nature of these conflicts, rich material evidence has survived from a number of siege events. These assemblages not only confirm the Assyrians' reputation as effective conquerors of cities but also testify to the preparatory measures and strategies undertaken by the defenders, in anticipation of the Assyrian war machine.

The Assyrian invasion of the kingdom of Judah in 701 BCE represents arguably the most archaeologically documented example, combining an exceptional body of archaeological evidence with detailed textual accounts from both sides of the conflict. This paper will examine a variety of material remains from the Assyrian destruction layers of Judahite cities, focusing on the diverse archaeological evidence from Tel Lachish and the renowned siege ramp discovered there. These examples best illustrate the Assyrians' ingenuity in the field of poliorcetics, confirming the use of siege tactics depicted in Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs. Additionally, the defenders' preparatory actions, such as the digging of Jerusalem's Siloam Tunnel and the issuing of the so-called "private" stamp impression jars for food storage, will also be discussed to explore the kinds of countermeasures taken by cities to endure prolonged blockades and prevent famine.



Anatomy of a Wrestling hold: Kinesiology and solar rebirth in Middle Kingdom Egypt

Aspasia Nithavrianaki, MA Student

The wrestling scenes in the Beni Hasan necropolis constitute the largest surviving corpus of athletic representations from Middle Kingdom Egypt. Previous studies have documented these scenes and interpreted them mainly as military training or have read the pairs as a continuous sequence. These readings do not examine the movements in mechanical terms, and to my knowledge no kinesiological analysis of them has been published. This paper examines the extent to which the artists understood the mechanics of wrestling. Selected pairs from the tomb of Amenemhat were subjected to kinesiological analysis with Kinovea software (v.0.9.5). The athletes' centers of mass were estimated using the Segmental Analysis Method. The results indicate that the movements are represented with considerable biomechanical accuracy. The holds are efficient and several correspond closely to techniques still used in wrestling today. This suggests that the artists did not rely exclusively on conventional visual formulas but possessed at least a practical understanding of how wrestling techniques operated. The location of the scenes within the tomb is also significant. They are placed on the eastern wall, a direction associated in Egyptian religious thought with the rising sun, renewal and rebirth. Light entering through the tomb doorway would also have illuminated this wall. The placement may therefore have been deliberate, allowing the wrestling scenes to carry a symbolic meaning beyond the representation of athletic activity. The physical struggle, balance, and recovery of the wrestlers may have served as metaphors for the regeneration and rebirth of the deceased.



**Session 5: Materiality, Representation and the
Reception of the Past**
Chair: Prof. Dimitris Plantzos



Bronze Age Aegean Pottery Fabrication Techniques: culture, cognition, manufacture and memory

John Ward Regan, MA Student

While pottery is generally approached as an economic product or object category, this paper argues ceramic production was an active participant in the stabilization and transmission of memory, identity, meaning and cultural continuity throughout the eastern Mediterranean.

I will approach Bronze Age Aegean pottery as a socially distributed material-cognitive system embedded within interconnected *chaînes opératoires* of production, ritual, administration and social organization. Pottery and its manufacture were part of layered systems of interaction where clay, tools, kilns, gestures, apprenticeship and social practice interacted within constrained material and ideological environments.

The historical development and spread of pottery technologies transformed production and conceptual frameworks through which fabrication and use was understood. The wheel was not adopted simply because it was technologically “superior.” Its adoption involved a socially mediated process situated within social, political, ritual and economic systems. Technological change is viewed as a socio-technological event shaped by administration, craft specialization, cultural identity and hegemonic power structures. Examining pottery production and distribution furthers the understanding of the organization of Aegean Bronze Age societies. Variations in standardization, manufacture and vessel morphology reveal differing levels of centralized control, labor coordination and ideological integration. Pottery operated as a technological process, symbolic medium and cognitive infrastructure. The vessels stabilized material practices, embodied knowledge, learned gestures and socially transmitted systems of meaning. Pottery was a signifying artifact and evidence of cognitive processes.

Through repeated engagement with constrained material processes, ceramic manufacture reproduced memory, value, ritual and social continuity across generations. Pottery was an active component in the dynamic material-mental feedback systems that structured Bronze Age Aegean life.



Reconstructing Athena Areia: A Reconsideration of the Prototype through the Athena Medici Type

Chrysanthé Maggidis. PhD Candidate

The Athena Medici type occupies a problematic position in Classical archaeology. Although widely regarded as a Roman copy of a lost Greek original, its prototype, attribution, function, and historical context have remained unresolved despite more than a century of scholarly debate. This paper re-examines the monument through an interdisciplinary investigation integrating formal and iconographic analysis, facial proportional analysis, technical assessment of sculptural construction, archaeological evidence, and historical contextualization. Rather than evaluating copies in isolation, the research reconstructs the sculptural type as a coherent corpus, identifying formal, proportional, and technical characteristics that point to a single fifth-century BC prototype. These results are considered alongside literary testimony, the archaeological record of Plataea, architectural evidence for the Temple of Athena Areia, and landscape investigations, placing the sculpture within its original religious and commemorative setting.

The combined evidence supports identifying the Athena Medici type with the lost cult statue of Athena Areia, erected in the aftermath of the Persian Wars as a monument celebrating collective Greek victory and civic memory. The continued replication throughout the Roman Imperial period demonstrates that its meaning extended beyond aesthetic appreciation, reflecting the enduring authority of Classical Greek religious imagery and its adaptation within changing political and cultural contexts. Beyond identifying Athena Areia, by Pheidias, the study establishes a transferable methodology for reconstructing lost Classical monuments through the convergence of archaeological, art historical, scientific, and spatial evidence. Therefore, it demonstrates how interdisciplinary research can more effectively reshape the study of fragmentary monuments and the transmission of Classical artistic traditions.



Archaeology in Greece during the Dictatorship: Snapshots from Mastrokostas's archive

Maria-Parthena Kevork, PhD Candidate

The present paper examines the operation of the Archaeological Service during the period of the Junta, or military Dictatorship (1967–1974). The main source of information is the archive of Euthymios Mastrokostas, a Greek archaeologist who was actively serving during this period. Previous research on the history of the Archaeological Service has been, with few exceptions, largely limited to the meticulous work and publications of Petrakos. Equally limited is our knowledge of Mastrokostas's life and archaeological activity, despite the fact that he served in various regions of Greece. Although he left behind a rich archive of personal, academic, and administrative documents, this material has remained virtually unknown, and no extensive effort has been made to study it in its entirety.

This study therefore constitutes the first attempt to present selected snapshots from this archive, as part of an ongoing, comprehensive investigation. These archival insights will serve as a methodological tool for highlighting key aspects of the history of the Archaeological Service, with particular emphasis on the Junta years, which stand out because the regime specifically targeted citizens with left wing political beliefs. This is reflected in the frequent transfers of archaeologists who were considered politically suspect. According to his correspondence, Mastrokostas was among those affected: he was subjected to repeated short-term relocations between Athens and Thessaloniki. On 19 April 1973, exhausted by these constant transfers, he resigned from the Service. The present paper addresses the following questions: What do Mastrokostas's repeated transfers—and the archaeological work documented in his archive—reveal about the operation of the Archaeological Service during the Dictatorship? To what extent were his transfers the result of his political beliefs? Could other factors, such as conflicts with colleagues or broader scholarly, administrative, or political issues, have contributed to these decisions? Were the transfers the sole reason for his resignation, or were additional internal issues involved?

More broadly, what does Mastrokostas's archive reveal about the structure and functioning of the Archaeological Service in the mid to late 1960s and early 1970s? In short, how was the Archaeological Service affected by the authoritarian regime of the Greek military Dictatorship, as reflected in the evidence preserved in Mastrokostas's archive.



Session 6: Hellenistic and Roman Archaeology

Chair: Assoc. Prof. Nikolas Dimakis



Death, Identity and Collective Memory: Elite Burials in Ptolemaic Judea

Erasmia Mastora, MA Student

Burial practices in Ptolemaic Judea offer valuable insight into the ways local elites negotiated identity within the political and cultural landscape of the Hellenistic eastern Mediterranean. Rather than perceiving funerary monuments as passive reflections of Hellenization, this analysis examines them as deliberate expressions of memory, authority, and social continuity. Drawing upon theories of funerary archaeology and cultural memory, particularly the work of Mike Parker Pearson, Jan Assmann, and James E. Young, it explores how architecture, iconography, inscriptions and burial practices were utilized in order to preserve family histories and legitimize elite status.

The discussion focuses on three archaeological case studies which will be arranged chronologically, the Za'aquqa Tomb, the Tomb of the Sidonians at Maresha, and Qasr alAbd at Iraq al-Amir. Together, these sites illustrate different strategies through which memory was materialized, from the continued use of family tombs and the construction of monumental landscapes to the integration of bilingual inscriptions and Hellenistic iconography within the broader contexts of funerary practice. These features demonstrate the selective adoption of Greek artistic and architectural forms in conjunction with longstanding regional practices, rather than indicating the replacement of local traditions.

By shifting the discussion from Hellenization to collective memory, this study emphasizes the active role of local communities within the empire in shaping their own identities. It argues that elite burials in Judea during the Ptolemaic period were not simply places of interment but rather carefully constructed commemorative spaces through which ancestry, legitimacy, and social memory were negotiated, as well as transmitted across generations.



***Champlevé* Decoration from the Building with Arches at Stobi**

Goce Pavlovski, PhD Candidate

Excavation of the destruction layer within the Building with Arches at Stobi has brought to light numerous fragments of marble slabs belonging to the decorative revetment of the first level. The main scheme consisted of polychrome *opus sectile* panels set within the niches and framed by white marble pilasters.

Among the most intriguing elements of this decorative assemblage are white marble architectural friezes carved in a distinctive shallow, two-plane relief technique. The decoration was created by lowering the background around motifs retained on the original surface of the stone. The visual effect depended primarily on the contrast between the flat motifs, their incised internal details, and the more roughly worked recessed background, rather than on deep sculptural modelling. Although the technique is commonly associated with *champlevé* or colour-inlaid relief, no traces of pigment or coloured filling has so far been identified on the fragments from Stobi.

The reconstructed compositions consist of elaborate acanthus scrolls arranged above a continuous Ionic cymatium with an egg-and-dart motif. The friezes were carved on rectangular slabs attached to the rear walls of the niches at the level of the pilaster capitals.

Champlevé reliefs are best known from Late Antique synagogues and early Christian basilicas. Their earlier use in Roman architecture, however, remains poorly understood and is attested by only a limited number of finds, mainly from the eastern Mediterranean. By placing the Stobi material within this broader corpus, the paper argues that the assemblage provides evidence for an earlier Roman tradition of graphic, two-dimensional marble relief that later found wider application in Late Antique architectural decoration.



Monumental Funerary Architecture in Roman Grevena (2nd–4th c. AD)

Vasileios Angelos Vlachos, MA Student

The present study examines the monumental funerary architecture of the Roman period (2nd–4th c. AD) in the region of Grevena. The material comes from ongoing excavations and field surveys conducted by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Grevena (S. Dimaki) and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (N. Dimakis). This work has produced a comprehensive corpus of monuments from sites such as Megalo Seirini, Leipsokouki, and Kivotos. The core of this material consists of underground vaulted tombs, which share strong typological similarities within the local area of Tymphaia and the broader region of Upper Macedonia.

Additionally, the study examines scattered architectural members connected to these burial contexts. These surface finds act as important topographical markers. They suggest a wider spread of funerary activity and offer a practical method for locating new, undocumented tombs. Through this evidence, the study establishes a clear typological and chronological framework. The monuments are analyzed not just as technical constructions, but as active means of social display, showing how the deceased projected their identity and status. Ultimately, these structures demonstrate how Roman imperial types blended with local Macedonian building traditions to create a distinct regional style in a transitional geographic zone.



Ritual and Material Culture in Roman Thrace: The Grave Assemblages from Tumuli A and B at Spilaio, Evros

Andreas Leventis, PhD Candidate

Funerary contexts constitute a sensitive barometer for tracking cultural interactions and identity shifts within the Roman Empire. In the provincial landscapes of the Balkans, grave goods offer a tangible record of how rural populations integrated global imperial trends into their traditional ritual repertoire. This paper explores these dynamics through a holistic assessment of the multifaceted material culture excavated from Tumuli A and B at Spilaio, situated in the Evros region of northeastern Greece.

The two burial mounds present a compelling record of ritual continuity, characterized by a long diachrony. While Tumulus A represents a targeted deposition from the late 1st to early 2nd century AD, Tumulus B displays an extended use-life that transitions from the early Roman period into the 9th century AD.

To map the socio-economic profile of this inland community, this study contextualizes the diverse grave assemblages across their chronological phases. The evidence comprises indicative ceramic groups, including utilitarian cooking pots, coarse kitchen wares, storage jars, and lamps, studied alongside notable adornments (rings and earrings), numismatic finds, and delicate glass vessels. Special emphasis is placed on the macroscopically visible burning traces and soot marks present on the majority of the vessels. By cross-examining the functional traits of the pottery with the distribution of the non-ceramic small finds, this presentation aims to reconstruct the cultural preferences of this community, shedding light on its connectivity with the wider Mediterranean world.



**Session 7: Landscapes, Communities and Material
Culture from the Classical to the Imperial Period**
Chair: Prof. Sofia Aneziri



Defining Union: Sympoliteia, Synoikismos, and the Language of Political Integration

Jacob Howard, PhD Candidate

How do we recognize and interpret political union between Greek communities? Modern scholarship has commonly approached this question through terminology, classifying political unions through specific vocabulary or by assigning them to institutional categories such as federal *sympoliteia*, synoikistic *sympoliteia*, and *sympoliteia* by incorporation. Yet the ancient evidence is significantly less straightforward. Treaties identified as *sympoliteiai* frequently employ different terminology, and terms associated with political union do not consistently correspond to the institutional categories applied by modern scholarship. This problem is especially apparent in the relationship between *sympoliteia* and *synoikismos*, where modern distinctions between civic integration and territorial unification are not consistently reflected in ancient practice.

This paper reconsiders literary and epigraphic evidence to examine how Greek communities expressed and conceptualized political union, focusing on the relationship between terminology, formulae, and institutional practice. Rather than treating terms such as *sympoliteia*, *synoikismos*, and *isopoliteia* as rigid categories, this paper investigates the flexible ways in which ancient communities employed terminology to articulate different dimensions of union, including shared citizenship, territorial integration, and participation in civic institutions. By comparing literary descriptions with the language of inscriptions, this paper argues that ancient terminology and formulae cannot be reduced to modern classifications used to define political union and integration. Instead, they reveal a spectrum of practices through which communities negotiated union, integration, and civic participation, demonstrating the limits of imposing rigid institutional boundaries on ancient forms of political union and integration.



The sacred landscape of Amaseia, the first capital of the Pontic Kingdom

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The city of Amaseia, located on the southern coast of the Black Sea, on the banks of river Iris and naturally fortified, served as the first capital of the Pontic Kingdom. Following the death of Alexander the Great, Mithridates I Ktistes, who claimed descent from one of the “Seven Families” of Persia, founded the Pontic Kingdom, whose population consisted predominantly of Greeks. The capital embodied the dual character of the kingdom, reflecting both the Greek cultural heritage of its subjects and the Persian background of the royal dynasty and aristocracy. Zeus Stratios, the official cult of Pontus, combined attributes of both Olympian Zeus and Ahura-Mazda and was worshipped in a monumental sanctuary located near the city. Alongside this official cult, the traditional Greek worship of the Nymphs was practiced in a nearby cave, as was common throughout the Greek world. At the same time, numismatic, literary, and epigraphic evidence attests to the worship of several other deities, including Zeus, Ares, Perseus, Hermes, Apollo, Cybele, and Sarapis. Such evidence derives not only from the Hellenistic sources but also from Roman ones, demonstrating the enduring presence of these cults in the collective memory of the local population. The presentation will discuss the existing bibliography and research on each topic, which are incomplete, and will highlight new elements that can contribute to the relevant scholarly discussion.



Crafting Continuities: A Comparative Analysis of Light-Coloured Asia Minor Pottery

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The paper will focus on the study of Light-Coloured Ware, drawing upon a unique and previously unpublished assemblage from an Early Byzantine villa. This category of pottery falls within the broader context of red-slipped tableware produced in Asia Minor during the Late Roman Period.

The aim of this research is to investigate the development and distribution of Light Coloured Ware, within the context of the mass production of red-slipped tablewares during the Late Roman Period, and its relationships with other contemporary ceramic traditions in Asia Minor and the wider Eastern Mediterranean. Through this research and comparative analysis, the study seeks to determine whether there are typological affinities or other connections to these ceramic traditions, and to highlight similarities and differences regarding shapes, decoration, manufacturing technology, and clay characteristics. Emphasis will be placed on a comparison with the ceramic production from Phocaea, which represents one of the most significant and popular types of redslipped tableware of the period. At the same time, the study examines broader trends in the mass production and distribution of tableware during the Late Roman Period, exploring potential influences and continuities from earlier ceramic traditions. Finally, reference is made to communication and exchange networks, as well as to the socioeconomic conditions that created a favorable climate for the emergence and flourishing of this specific ceramic production and the other types belonging to the same category of ceramic vessels.



Pots and Coins for the Dead: A Study of a Late Roman Cemetery in Kormista, Serres

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The current paper studies a Late Roman cemetery (4th-5th c. AD) of seventeen tombs unearthed from the site of 'Alantigkos', Kormista (modern prefecture of Serres, Northern Greece) in 2004. Drawing on approaches from funerary archaeology, this study focuses on the grave goods, with particular emphasis on the pottery and coins.

29 vessels were recovered from the cemetery representing different forms, like jugs and pitchers, mugs and small cooking pots, which appear to be of local and/or regional manufacture. Of particular significance is the presence of several examples with green glaze, which contribute to the understanding of the production of glazed ceramics in Late Roman Balkans.

A remarkable assemblage of Late Roman coins was found accompanying the burials, in a variety of depositional contexts. More specifically, 96 coins, mostly small bronze denominations but also *antoniniani*, were discovered, placed in different locations and with different groups of objects within the tombs. In keeping with funerary practices commonly attested in Macedonia, the majority of the coins were recovered in hoards.

The primary aim of this paper is first of all to combine the study of the pottery and numismatic evidence in order to interpret the funerary landscape in Kormista, through the understanding of the burial customs and, hopefully, the ideological and social framework of the local community. More importantly though, the paper seeks to demonstrate a way of combining analysis of ceramic and numismatic evidence as a reliable and effective methodological approach for field archeology in general, and for the study of burial assemblages in particular.