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NECROPOLEIS RESEARCH NETWORK (NRN)**

The Study of Cremations

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ABSTRACTS

(Papers and Posters)

Marlis ARNHOLD

How to Commemorate/Bury/Atone for a King: contextualising the pyre remains from Tumulus 77 in Salamis, Cyprus

Tumulus 77 in Salamis on Cyprus covered a unique find complex that still raises questions about several aspects of its interpretation today. It comprised the remains of a massive pyre, known among other things for the fragments of sculptures made of unbaked clay that it contained. The pyre remains attest to an elaborate ceremony performed at considerable effort, reminiscent both of elaborate funeral pyres of early Hellenistic Macedonian kings and of rituals of non-funerary contexts that included the burning of ephemeral images. Spatially embedded in the cemetery of Salamis, Tumulus 77 was undoubtedly related to other tumuli and their tombs, but did not contain a burial itself or human remains that could be attributed to one. Its ambivalent character undoubtedly raises questions, but also allows the pyre remains and the burning of the dead to be considered from the perspective of their funerary as well as ritual connotations. The contribution is dedicated to the contextualisation of the finds in these two areas by elaborating both their funerary and their ritual aspects and comparing them with examples from both contexts. It does not seek a fundamental reassessment of what I believe is rightly known as the cenotaph - or at least the remains of a ritual performed in honour - of Nicocreon, but rather illuminates the complexity of the function and meaning of cremation rites in funerary contexts through this example. Both the connection to Nicoreon, the last king of Salamis, and the analogies of the findings to the funeral pyres of Macedonian rulers allow us to link the ritual specifically to royal funerals in general. In view of its likewise ritual, non-funerary connotation, the question is raised of the extent to which the special treatment of the deceased contributed to the social elevation of the person of the ruler and to what extent we can speak of deification of heroisation in this context.

Mordechai AVIAM

Fre-Standing Sarcophagi – A Galilean phenomenon

Free standing sarcophagi are burial installations which are built or cut above ground and not in cut caves or buried in soil. They are known in Lebanon, Syria, Asia Minor and Europe, but in the rural landscapes of Land of Israel they are rare, they appear only in the polis cemeteries. Nevertheless, many of them, in different sub-types were found in surveys in the Upper Galilee. In this paper I will present their distribution, suggested date, and types.

Foteini BALLA

Burnt Funerary Deposits (enagismoi) in the Classical and Hellenistic Cemetery at Ancient Sikyon

In Ancient Sikyon (Northeastern Peloponnese) a cemetery in use from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period was discovered in the 1970s. It was included individual tombs with inhumations, mainly in shaft graves, while a funerary monument with multiple burials was also detected. During the re-examination of the excavation data in the 2010s it was found that in the upper fillings of some burials of the 4th and 3rd centuries BC burnt funerary deposits (*enagismoi*) had been preserved. These are rituals that took place after the burial process was over. In particular, traces of fire (burnt soil and charcoal) were preserved in small pits dug into the upper fillings covering the tombs. A number of vessels were detected in these pits, mainly for drinking and solid food, but also other interesting small objects. These offerings refer to testimonies from ancient literary sources about fire rituals that took place over the graves after the burial. Their discovery in the cemetery of ancient Sikyon is an important testimony of the performance of these rituals and strengthens our knowledge of the burial rites of the region.

Dimitris BOSNAKIS and Elpida SKERLOU

New Evidence on Primary Cremations from the Early Iron Age Kos

The aim of this paper is to present four adjacent primary cremation burials discovered during a rescue excavation carried out along the western boundary of the low Seragia hill, at the northeastern end of the island of Kos. They all belong to the same type of cremation burials, known from the previously published material from the town of Kos and the village of Kardamena. They consist of a long rectangular pit connected at the bottom (in the form of air ducts) with four circular smaller pits at the corners. Two other cremations of possibly similar type, poorly preserved due to later disturbances, will also be briefly discussed, in order to review all the available evidence for Early Iron Age cremations at Kos.

Konstantoula CHAVELA

Limnaia and Pras: The cemeteries of two cities at the fringes of the Greek world

The area of northeastern Aetoloakarnania, which lies west of Acheloos, was until recently an unknown archaeological area. It includes an extensive plain, which develops on the eastern shores of Lake Amvrakia and reaches as far as the Amvrakikos Gulf. At the northern edge of the plain and in front of the Amvrakikos Gulf, the fortification with its long walls dominates the modern city of Amfilochia, which is identified with the ancient Limnaia. East is defined by the Mount Thyamon behind which extended the country of the Agraeans, an Aetolian tribe, while in the north it bordered the country of the Amphiloche. There we find the fortification of ancient Pras, which at first must have belonged to Acarnania and then to the Agraeans. Outside the two impressive fortifications of Limnaia and Pras, parts of their ancient cemeteries have recently been investigated. Their use seems to have begun around the middle of the 4th century BC and continued until at least the 2nd century BC. This presentation will address issues relating to the organization and use of burial space as well as the local mortuary rites. These are defined by a uniform approach to burial. However, a range of variables in the funerary process at both cemeteries can be detected, as the co-occurrence of inhumation and cremation, the presence of single and multiple inhumations and the variety of the grave goods. These variations could be considered indicative of the management and definition of the social relations of the inhabitants of the ancient settlements. Besides, as Chapman (1991)¹ has pointed out cemeteries are the new 'arenas' for renegotiations and changes in the social positions and relations.

Elissavet GANIATSOU, Aggeliki GEORGIADOU, Tania PROTOPSALTI and Christina PAPAGEORGOPOULOU

An Incremental Isotope Study of Infant Feeding in Thessaloniki during the Hellenistic and Roman Period

Over the last decade, nitrogen and carbon stable isotope ratios of dentine collagen have been applied to characterize infant diet and estimate the duration of breastfeeding. Evidence suggests that infants were weaned in different ages even during the same period or site and the existence of a recurrent pattern of breastfeeding in humans remains unknown. In this study, we present the diachronic pattern of breastfeeding and the weaning diet of 65 individuals from the site of Thessaloniki. We measured the $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ and $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ values in collagen from dentine increments to reconstruct the diet from birth up to the age of 6 yoa from individuals, who lived in the city of Thessaloniki from its foundation at 315 BC through the later Roman period (324 AD). Our results show that breastfeeding duration

¹ J. Chapman, The creation of social arenas in the Neolithic and Copper Age of S.E. Europe. The case of Varna, in: P. Garwood – D. Jennings – R. Skeates – J. Toms (eds.), *Sacred and Profane. Proceedings of a Conference on Archaeology, Ritual and Religion*, Oxford University, Committee for Archaeology Monograph 32 (Oxford 1991) 15–171.

ranges between the first and fourth year of life, while nine individuals consumed limited amounts of breastmilk or not at all. The weaning diet consisted mainly of terrestrial sources (C3 and C4 plants, animals/animal-products) or small fish. Furthermore, the evidence of stress in the analyzed dataset indicates maladaptive nutritional choices of early life. Our aim is twofold: firstly, to account on the duration of breastfeeding and weaning in the course of time and secondly, associate possible differences to burial context and biological sex. This research is co-financed by Greece and the European Union (European Social Fund ESF) through the Operational Programme «Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014 - 2020» in the context of the project “Breastfeeding and weaning in antiquity the case of Thessaloniki” (MIS 5049509).

Olga KAKLAMANI

Into the Fire or Not: Some considerations on infant and child burials in necropoleis of the Aegean islands

This research focuses on the age of the deceased as a possible factor for choosing the rite of cremation over other burial practices in the Aegean islands during the Early Iron and Archaic periods. Cremation of the dead is frequent custom in the Aegean islands from the Early Iron Age onwards. In most islands, cremations coexist with other burial practices: inhumations and pot inhumations (enchytrismoι) within the same cemetery, outnumbered or not. Due to lack of anthropological studies, age and sex of the deceased can be safely identified in only a few cases. However, available information on burial practices in the islands indicates that cremation was not dictated by sex or social status. Age, though, seems to have been a criterion for choosing cremation over other burial practices, something that is attested in some cases by osteological analysis. Moreover, the presence of enchytrismoι in most islands under study is a strong indication that cremation may not have been related to a specific age group, infants and small children. Apart from archaeological evidence, the present research considers ancient literary sources and ethnographic studies to explore why the destructive rite of cremation was usually not preferred as burial practice for deceased infants and small children, individuals that were regarded as non-members of the society, in-between the living and the dead.

Eleni KALLIGA, Maria KORELIDOU and Christina PAPAGEORGOPOULOU

The Evolution of Beta Thalassemia in the Aegean Region Throughout Time. A bioarchaeological approach

Beta thalassemia is a genetic type of anemia and is inherited to the offspring by one or both parents. The disease is found in three types (major, intermedia and minor). Beta thalassemia affects today many people of Mediterranean origin. As patients with beta thalassemia major do not survive today without blood transfusions, it is expected that they would not live past infancy during antiquity. The main aim of our research is to explore at which time during antiquity beta thalassemia is set under natural selection, as it is a disease that is considered to protect the individuals from malaria. Through the study of human skeletal samples from ecologically differentiated sites, we aim to clarify the environmental factor in the evolution of the disease. The diachrony of the skeletal archaeological sample offers us the possibility to observe the evolution of the disease throughout time, in accordance to the cultural differences that emerge in northern Greece during the different chronological periods (rural versus urban settlements). The macroscopic paleopathological study is carried out in order to find cases of thalassemia and other diseases with similar skeletal manifestations (other anemias, scurvy). We follow a novel protocol of macroscopic study for beta thalassemia, which is applied for the first time to a large skeletal sample of archaeological origin (Mavropigi, Thessaloniki, Acanthus and Abdera). In parallel, paleogenetic analyses are carried on selected skeletons which manifest anemia, as well as on random skeletons. With this we aim to positively identify pathological cases and be able to offer a differential diagnosis among a large variety of skeletal lesions but also to identify cases of thalassemia that do not manifest on the skeleton.

Anna KARLIGKIOTI

A Bioarchaeological Study of Cremation Practices in Cemeteries from Eastern Attica and Thebes Spanning the Classical and Hellenistic periods

Funerary analysis can provide diverse information regarding attributes of past societies coming from different lines of evidence, such as material culture, architecture and burial customs (Pearson 1999). In addition, the contextualised study of skeletal remains can offer significant insights into demography, health, activity, dietary patterns and other aspects of life in the past (Buikstra 1977). In this direction, the relatively young field of historical bioarchaeology, integrates biological data with their cultural and historical context to generate a more comprehensive understanding of past life (Novak and Warner-Smith 2020). Such a multidisciplinary approach allows a greater synthesis of biological and cultural parameters and the effective study of past humans as biosocial beings (Buikstra and Beck 2006, Gowland and Knüsel 2006). Even though Classical Antiquity in Greece has been thoroughly studied both in relation to its history and archaeology, bioarchaeological studies of historical era assemblages are extremely few and in their great majority comprise case studies of unburnt human skeletal remains (reviews in Buikstra and Lagia 2009; Lagia 2015; Nikita and Triantaphyllou 2017). Furthermore, research has focused principally on Athens, leaving the rest of the Classical world largely unexplored (Humphreys 1980, Morris 1992, Closterman 2007). The current study aims to reconstruct past social attitudes and cultural beliefs about death through the analysis of cremated human remains in their biocultural framework. The skeletal material under study includes primary and secondary cremations, dating to the Classical period and found in cemeteries in Mesogeia plain and Thebes, in the context of rescue excavations by the Ephorates of Antiquities of Eastern Attica and Boeotia respectively. The combination of osteoarchaeological data, mortuary evidence and historical information will attempt to offer insights to the life of the unseen inhabitants of Classical antiquity in Greece.

Saito KIYOHIDE

Excavation of Burial Mounds in the Tylos period in Bahrain

The aim of our research is to understand and discover Palmyrene influences through excavations of the Maqaba Burial Mounds of the Tylos Period in Bahrain. Bahrain is one of the key way points for Indian trade routes for Palmyrene caravans during the Tylos period. Many Palmyrene lived in Bahrain, and some of them worked as administrators during this period. Therefore, they may have been buried in Bahrain after they died. The Maqaba Burial Mounds are located near the north coast line of the main island of Bahrain. The Maqaba Burial Mounds consist of at least seven large mounds and we have engaged in excavations of the biggest mound (MBM-1) starting in 2017. MBM-1 is surrounded by bank-like mounds to the west and south. The mounds are about 60 meters in diameter and 2.5 meters in height. More than one hundred funeral facilities (graves) of smaller mounds were concentrated into one place to form a large mound. Burials facilities are similar to plaster coffins which were fixed by piles of stones with blackish plaster, and then two or three large stones were covered over coffins as capstones. Finally, the earth was covered over the capstones to build a small mound. From 2017 to 2019, sixteen graves were excavated. Although almost all were looted by grave hunters, artifacts and burial facilities from them showed very characteristic aspects to help understand and compare between Tylos burial practices and Palmyrene burial practices. Preliminary analysis of skeletal remains revealed interesting information on their eating habits during their childhood. It was possible to form a clear image of people buried in Maqaba and to find any evidence of Palmyrene existence in the Tylos period, therefore skeletal remains are very essential elements to analyze by physiochemical methods.

Elena KORKA, Paraskevi EVAGGELOGLOU, Christina PAPAGEORGOPOULOU, Panagiotis PANAILIDIS, Aggeliki GEORGIADOU, Eleni KALLIGA, Asterios AIDONIS, Elissavet GANIATSOU, Kyriakos XANTHOPOULOS and Marianna KOUKLI

First Bioarcheological Results from the Systematic Archaeological Research Project of Ancient Tenea

Since 2013, the systematic archaeological research program of Ancient Tenea, in Chiliomodi, Corinthia, is being carried out under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Sports. Main purpose of the project is the excavation and promotion of the ancient city, which, according to Pausanias, was founded by Trojan prisoners brought over from Tenedos by Agamemnon. The results of the program highlight the uninterrupted habitation of the city from prehistoric until late Roman times. Among the various excavated monuments, a well-organized cemetery of the archaic times, as well as a cemetery of the Hellenistic and the Roman times surrounding a Roman above ground funerary monument and an earlier semi-underground cistern stand out. In this paper, the first results of the macroscopic study of the osteological material (paleodemography, paleopathology, anthropometric characteristics), the study of the stable isotope ratio and the analysis of the ancient DNA sequence will be presented. During the excavation, a total amount of 3 adults dating to the archaic times and 34 adults and 28 minors dating to the Hellenistic and Roman periods have been discovered. We took samples from 15 human skeletons (3 males, 10 females, 2 subadults, 4 from the Archaic and 11 from the Hellenistic and Roman periods) and measured stable isotope ratios of carbon and nitrogen ($\delta^{15}\text{N}$, $\delta^{13}\text{C}$) from bone collagen. Preliminary results show that terrestrial animal protein played a vital role in the dietary habits of the population with less intake of C3 plants (archaic era) and no discernable input from marine resources.

Marianna KOUKLI, Frank SIEGMUND and Christina PAPAGEORGOPOULOU

Estimating Stature for Ancient Greeks: how tall were they? Populations-specific equations and diachronic body height trends

Human stature is the result of the complex interaction between genetics, environment and living standards. In bioarchaeology, stature estimation is a demanding process which, however, plays a significant role in the understanding of human growth patterns, their link to social conditions and in the evolution of past societies. Stature can be estimated from skeletal material by two different methods: the anatomical technique that provides the most accurate results and the mathematical technique that includes regression models. The usual lack of well-preserved skeletons constrains the use of regression equations. However, in order to produce accurate estimations, there needs to be a high degree of similarity in the anthropometric characteristics of the reference and the under-study population. With the present study, we present new and more accurate methods for stature estimation of skeletal material from ancient Greece and we explore body height trends throughout antiquity. We used 121 intact skeletons dated in Roman times to generate novel population specific equations. We applied them to a total sample of 775 individuals, 402 males and 373 females, originating from important archaeological sites and necropoles, dated from the Mesolithic (10th-7th millennium BC) to the early Byzantine period (9th c. AD). Mean stature trends throughout the Hellenic antiquity ranged from 159.7 cm to 170.6 cm for males and from 153.4 cm to 160.4 cm for females. Furthermore, we observe four significant critical signs of stature fluctuations: a) the increase of male stature from the Neolithic to Bronze Age; b) the slight but gradual increase of male and female stature in the early Iron Age and Archaic/Classical periods; c) the significant loss of stature in both sexes during the Hellenistic centuries; d) its radical increase from the Roman times onwards.

Aglaiia KOUTROBI

The Secondary Cremations of Corinth's Roman Cemeteries

This presentation focuses on the secondary cremations during the Roman period at Corinth. It is mainly based on the preliminary results of the recent excavations that took place during the construction of the new Corinth – Patras National Highway in comparison with the known examples from Corinth's North and Northern Cemeteries. Initially, it describes the variety of the cinerary urns' typology and material as well as the presence of grave offerings. It also categorizes their modes of burial, either separately or in the interior of simple graves and grave monuments that contained inhumations. Finally, it examines the elements that may represent ritual activities conducted by the family members of the deceased. In conclusion, secondary burials appear at Corinth from the 1st century B.C. to the 1st century A.C. and are strongly interwoven with the advent of the new colonists. The variety of their characteristics reveals the lack of homogenous sepulchral perspectives which may be associated with personal preference or the heterogeneous community found within the city. The handling of domestic materials must have equally played a significant role.

Athanasia KYRIAKOU, Despoina ZAFEIRI, Anastasia KATSAVELI, Chrysa PALIADELI and Sevasti TRIANTAPHYLLOU

Common Ground: looking for shared features in late 4th c. BC cremations from Vergina/Aigai

The choice of cremation has been recognized as central to the mortuary rites of "elite burials" in the kingdom of Macedonia from the late archaic to the Hellenistic period. Especially the 4th c. BC was a period of a variety of combinations concerning the treatment of the dead, the burial structures, the grave goods and the commemoration monuments. Despite the large percentage of looted graves, synthetic approaches can offer valuable insights. In this direction it is attempted to evaluate a small number of burials from Vergina / Aigai dated to the late 4th c. BC by focusing in particular on two crucial aspects: the treatment of the body as deduced by the examination of the human remains and the funerary receptacle in conjunction with the grave goods or pyre remains in it. Both of them belong to the rites of passage around death and reflect the funerary ideology and the perceptions of the social persona of the deceased. At the core of the study lie three assemblages that can be understood as deviant burials, since they were discovered in the surrounding area of a cult place, the sanctuary of Eukleia, in the urban grid, deprived of any sort of burial or commemoration structure. However, precisely this particularity diminishes the burials to the quintessential constituents; therefore the outcome of the interdisciplinary investigation can prove to be very productive for the research on mortuary rites and more specifically on issues related to cremation. Although published intact burials are very few, a further survey of assemblages from the same area and period can enrich the results. The osteological material from Tomb III of the Great Tumulus has been recently reexamined and the assemblage, in general, is undoubtedly closely related to the finds from the sanctuary of Eukleia. The unlooted grave 'Heuzey b' from the same necropolis, despite the poor state of preservation of the skeletal remains, constitutes a close parallel in time and space. From a methodological point of view pertaining to contextualization, it is attempted to apply the same criteria to assemblages of an earlier or later date. The conclusions on shared or divergent features will contribute to deepening our knowledge on cremation rituals in this period.

Anna MOLES, Tamara DIJKSTRA, Chryssa VERGIDOU and Paraskevi (Voula) TRITSAROLI

Integrating Evidence: Understanding the impact of mobility on past lifeways in Roman Greece

Our research focuses on the mortuary sphere and aims to integrate a wide variety of available evidence for understanding how changing mobility and increased connectivity in the Roman Empire impacted lifeways and society. We will present the main principles of an integrated interdisciplinary approach, bringing together osteological, isotopic, archaeological and historical data, to demonstrate how it can be achieved and its importance for the interpretation of life in the past. Coupling

bioarchaeological data with a thorough contextual analysis enables us to explore variation among social groups and change through time at sites across Macedonia, the Peloponnese and Crete in the Early Roman period. We consider how sites with different characteristics and locations were differentially impacted by the socio-economic changes that occurred across these provinces at this time of increased connectivity. Our integrated interdisciplinary approach enables us to achieve better understanding of life and society in Roman Greece.

Evangelia PAPPI

Untimely loss: child burials in Geometric Argos

Childhood is a socially constructed and culturally specific notion, subject to socio-economic and ideological parameters and systems of belief. Visibility of childhood in Geometric Argos rests primarily on the mortuary record, in view of the scarcity of other forms of evidence such as iconographic representations. This paper focuses on the funerary treatment of children in Argos through the analysis of the surviving human remains and associated mortuary practices of ca. 80 burials ranging in date from the Early Geometric to the Subgeometric period. These burials, most of which are unpublished so far, have been uncovered by the excavations of the Greek Archaeological Service and the French School at Athens in the present-day city of Argos between 1953 and 2020. Aspects of funerary treatment such as types of burial, spatial arrangement of tombs and accompanying burial offerings will be addressed. Despite poor sub-adult bone preservation and uneven archaeological recovery, the actual skeletal remains from the burials, which have survived and were collected and curated in the Archaeological Museum of Argos will also be discussed in terms of treatment of the deceased and palaeodemographic issues, such as assignment in broad age groups. Although the overview of the evidence is largely preliminary, it will allow some inferences about children's social standing through their representation in the mortuary record. Exploring changing attitudes to immature individuals at death, issues of social integration or social exclusion as well as negotiation of identity will be discussed, during the period that led to the formation of the Argive city-state.

Gabriella POULAKAKI and Zoe SPYRANTI

The Newly Discovered Burial Monument at Sikyon. A Symbolic Funerary Banquet (?)

The Late Classical/Early Hellenistic burial monument under study has been recently uncovered in ancient Sikyon within the framework of the *Old Sikyon Project*. The burial ground forms part of an extensive roadside cemetery where three more elaborate burial structures have been investigated in the past decades, placed among hundreds of common graves. The newly discovered burial monument brings to the foreground matters such as the spatial organization of a private burial property, while at the same time the associated finds showcase one of the basic functions of a monumental funerary structure as the place where the survivors visited their dead and performed commemorative rituals for them. Of great importance for the latter are the remnants of a ritual deposit associated with the burials of the monument and comprising of numerous vessels and a great number of figurines. A considerable number of clay vessels from the deposit form a sympotic group that resembles sets of metal vessels mostly found in burial contexts of Macedonia. Even though the imitation of metal vases in clay is a common practice during the Late Classical/Early Hellenistic period, a whole set of clay imitations of a sympotic group concentrated in one burial context is so far unparalleled in the ancient funerary record. In all likelihood, these vessels refer to a symbolic funerary banquet and display amongst others the high social status of the deceased buried in the area of the monument. Finally, several observations on the finds of the deposit highlight the cultic character of the ritual represented, leading to possible associations with specific mystery cults and offering valuable information about the religious identity of the deceased.

Dalit REGEV, Elisabetta BOARETTO and Ilan GRONAU

Discrepancies in Studying Phoenicians Tombs in Sicily

Sicily had been a major hub of Phoenician maritime routes, with clear Phoenician features found in several prominent sites along the island's coast. In 2018, we initiated an interdisciplinary study to examine tomb finds and ancient DNA from prominent Phoenician sites in Western Sicily. We gathered bone samples from 67 tombs from five different sites, received high quality aDNA data for 46 of them, and 36 of these were successfully dated using ¹⁴C analysis. While many of the radiocarbon dates were consistent with our expectations based on the archaeological context, for 11 of the 36 samples (roughly 30%) the ¹⁴C analysis dated the bones to be significantly more recent than the associated tomb finds. For example, one of these tombs contains finds that clearly associate with Phoenician culture in the 6th – 4th centuries BCE, but the buried bones are dated to the 1st century BCE/CE, a time period associated with Roman expansion into Sicily. This discrepancy challenges the accepted methods in archaeology for the study of excavated tombs; if the finds are disconnected from the buried individual and thus from organic material – how can we date the tombs? By archaeological finds or by biological finds? In the talk we will discuss various interpretations possible for these discrepancies, and will try to sketch a plan to resolve them.

Stefanos SPANOS

Fouresi-Glyka Nera (Paiania). An Archaic-Classical Cemetery: graves of the Anatólis street (no. 8-4)

During the excavations (drainage) of March 2021 graves were discovered from the late archaic and classical period on Anatólis street (no. 8-4) in Fouresi. More than fifteen graves have been discovered till now, but only twelve have been examined. The research is ongoing. Most graves belong to the archaic –classical period, one dates back to the late geometric period. They are mostly primary cremations. The graves are pits of rectangular shape with rounded corners, in which the deceased was cremated. The tombs have a South-North or East -West orientation and were dug in the soft rock or ground. Some graves have airway grooves. Similar grooves were revealed nearby in Fouresi on Kykladon/Sifnou street, but also in other areas of Attica, like Drafi, Velanideza, Vourva, Dipylon and the ancient agora of Athens. Near the graves from 2021, were found on Filoxenias street remnants of an ancient road. Remnants of a road were discovered also earlier near the cemetery of Kykladon/Sifnou street. In the archaic-classical graves were found burnt vases, like for e.g. lekythoi (with mythological presentations and others), remains of bronze objects and part of lead. A wall south of the area seems to border the area, like it happens at the cemetery of Kykladon/Sifnou street. Some vessels (amphoras) were probably used for jar burials.

**Sevasti TRIANTAPHYLLOU, Niki PAPAKONSTANTINOY, Yannis CHATZIKONSTANTINOY,
Sotiria KIORPE and Vasiliki PAPATHANASIOU**

TEFRA: The technology and the bio-anthropology of the use of fire on human remains in the Aegean

The proposed paper aims to present the framework of a new three-year project funded by the Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation with a special focus on the Iron Age. The research project is going to examine the effect of fire on human remains in the Aegean according to two dimensions: 1) the technology of the use of fire and 2) the bio-anthropology that is the demographic synthesis and the biological attributes of the people whose bodies were subject to burning. Methodological tools which will shed new light to the technological aspects of firing involve: 1) published excavation data, 2) macroscopic, microscopic as well as isotopic heat-induced alterations derived from selected sites with cremated remains from different regions of the Aegean, and 3) experimental research by simulating firing conditions of the past. The originality of the project will be accomplished through the systematic and methodological collaboration of scholars originating from archaeology, osteoarchaeology, biochemistry and forensic sciences. The combination of innovative analytical methods such as the microscopic and stable isotopic work will be applied for the first time

in archaeological human remains of the Aegean. The holistic approach and the interdisciplinary character of the research will bring together a great range of information and data and will shed new light on the use and the technology of cremation.

Paraskevi (Voula) TRITSAROLI and Evaggelia ALVANOU

Cremated Human Remains from the Necropolis of Ancient Dion: a bioarchaeological study

Dion was the Macedonians' religious centre and federal shrine from the 5th c. BC onward. The city became a Roman colony after the battle of Actium (31 BC), developed into a highly connected urban centre and enjoyed a period of remarkable prosperity until the end of the 3rd century AD. At the same time, there is evidence for a multi-ethnic community that gradually evolved in a process of interaction and exchange that led to the fusion of Roman and Greek cultures and the emergence of new social roles. Our research explores whether these processes of change also influenced the attitudes of the people of Dion toward life and death. In 2013-2015, a rescue excavation conducted under the auspices of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Pieria brought to light more than 250 burials from the North and West necropolis of the city spanning from the Hellenistic to the Early Christian periods. Expanding upon previous investigation on 102 inhumations, we focus here on the analysis of cremated remains from 30 deposits, most of them dating to the Roman period, with the aim to investigate whether individuals included in these deposits represent distinct social or cultural groupings. To reach this aim, we integrate evidence generated from the analysis of cremated bones with archaeological and historical interpretation. Results offer new insights into mortuary practices and the treatment of the dead body in Roman Greece.

Theophania TSEMPERA and Maria TSOULI

Tales of Spartan Exceptionalism: the bioarchaeological evidence

The brand name Sparta carries connotations of harshness, austerity, militarism, etc. Although Sparta is intensively studied and modern research has revised earlier interpretations, there are still heated debates among researchers and a great chasm between recent advances in scholarship and public perceptions of ancient Sparta. A compound of different parameters has resulted in these distorted and contradictory interpretations of the Spartan past, from scientific biases, omissions and limitations to the peculiarities of the Spartan state. Key questions related to the social structure and ideology of ancient Sparta, and the lifestyle of the Spartiates still need to be answered. Who were the Spartans in biological and social terms? To what extent did military ethos, excellence and austerity dictate Spartan lifeways? What was the significance of the Lycurgan tradition in the burial sphere? Was actually the role of Spartan women distinct? What was the position of children within the community? Were eugenic policies a common practice or a modern misconception? How can the study of the mortuary and bioarchaeological evidence help us to address these questions? The unexpected discovery of the Classical Cemetery of Sparta in 2009 and its unique features – i.e. a burial road, horse burials, post-burial rites, clusters of burials demarcated by enclosures, opened a window on the Spartan world. The study of the cemetery, which is now in progress, holds great potentials to enlighten all these much debated and contested features of the Spartan society. The project examines all the available strands of evidence - contextual data, human skeletal remains, biomolecular data, animal remains, historical evidence - by integrating traditional archaeological data with state-of-the-art scientific techniques, and by collaborating with specialists from leading institutions. By means of this integrated bioarchaeological approach we aim: i) to illuminate the biological and health profile of the Spartans and their daily realities (diet and nutrition, activities, interpersonal violence), ii) to explore social dimensions related to kinship relations, status, age and gender categories, and iii) to reconstruct Spartan funerary ideology for the first time on the basis of the archaeological evidence.

Katerina TZANAKAKI

Burial Customs from Rescue Excavations in Ancient Apta and its Territory: postmortem rites in the Western Cemetery and the Kyani Akti site at Kalyves

The presentation deals with archaeological remains from the Late Archaic and Hellenistic periods related to post-mortem ritual acts, unburned or cremated and often found in the rescue excavations carried out by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania in the western cemetery of ancient Apta and in burial sites of its territory, such as the site of Kyani Akti at modern village Kalyves. From the western cemetery will be presented, the remains of postmortem offerings as well as destructions that caused the dissolution of earlier burials, perhaps for the placement of newer ones. These activities date back to the 5th century BC, followed by rituals that contain fire. The Hellenistic rituals take various forms and in some cases (Kyani Akti) form a whole thick layer above the graves. In this layer coexist, ritual pits with broken vessels, burnt soil with ashes, charcoal and charred fruits and four-sided simple structures made of stones containing large vessels sunk vertically into the ground. These constructions may be developed around or in contact with other, more elaborate ones, covered with plaster, some of which possibly also functioned as altars. The sunken vessels are mostly amphorae, unpainted or black-painted and have a hole in their bottom. Among the black glazed ones stand out some amphorae that bear relief decoration of the so-called Plaketten ware. Ritual activity of such density is not observed in the cemeteries of other cities of the western end of Crete. The remains, once fully studied, is expected to illuminate social, religious or even political aspects of Apta in historical times but at present they are presented preliminary.

Anastasios ZISIS

Ancient Greek Colonization in Retrospect: population projections from the birth of colonies

Greek colonization (8th-5th century BC) was one of the most momentous demographic and socio-cultural events in ancient Europe, spreading people, goods, art, ideas, and lifestyles across the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. This paper evaluates the demographic developments that followed this historical process by applying classical methods of demographic projections (Preston *et al.* 2001). In this exploratory analysis, we use the Corinthian colony of Ambracia as a case study, estimating the most probable trajectories of population change throughout the three centuries. We developed numerous fixed demographic scenarios with the cohort component method and varying fertility, mortality, and migration levels. From these scenarios, we present the most likely ones following historical references and archaeological data.

Boaz ZISSU and Omri ABADI

The Tombs of the Kings in Jerusalem: new insights

The monumental burial structure known as the 'Tombs of the Kings', is commonly identified as the burial plot of Queen Helena of Adiabene and her family. Adiabene was a small kingdom, vassal of the Parthian Empire, located on the upper Tigris (on the south shores of the Caspian Sea). Helena converted to Judaism, lived in Jerusalem during the first century CE, and was buried north of the city. The identification of this burial complex is based on the discovery of a sarcophagus with the name Tsadan Malkata incised on it, as well as by topographic references by Josephus to the 'monuments of Helena' on the northern road to Jerusalem, three stadia from the city walls (Jewish War 5.2.54–56, 5.4.147). The tomb was surmounted by three pyramids (some fragments survive). A monumental rock-cut staircase led down to two huge ritual immersion baths and to a gate entering the spacious tomb courtyard. The entrance to the square courtyard is through an arched, monumental opening cut in the northern wall, at the bottom of the stairway. Hewn benches were left along the courtyard's northern, western and southern walls. The wide doorway to the vestibule of the tomb was cut in the center of the western wall of the courtyard and accessed by three steps. The doorway was surmounted by an ornate façade, cut in the bedrock, with a *distylos in antis* (now missing) which

supported the entablature. The architrave is a low relief richly ornamented with a thick band of leaves, pomegranates, olives and other fruits. The Doric frieze above has triglyphs and discs (on the metopes); in its center is a cluster of grapes with two wreaths and two acanthus leaves on either side of it. The cornice, located above the frieze, consists of projecting ledges. The façade opens into a rectangular vestibule containing the entrance to the rock-cut hypogeum, which consists of an entrance chamber and five burial chambers. A total of 50 primary burial places were created within the complex, in the form of *loculi*, *arcosolia*, and ossuary repositories intended to contain the members of an extended family. During the late Roman period, the hypogeum was reused by Roman residents of the city, re-founded as Aelia Capitolina. Some cremation burials are associated with the reuse of the complex. In the proposed paper we present this outstanding burial complex, focusing on some new insights regarding the architecture, sarcophagi and the original purpose of the ritual baths in their archaeological, architectural, topographical and cultural context.

Asterios AIDONIS, George LYRAS, Soultana PROTOPSALTI, Stavroula TZEVRENI, Stela VASILEIADOU, Krino KONSTANTINIDOU and Christina PAPAGEORGOPOULOU

Urban Bioarchaeology of Thessaloniki: a geometric morphometrics view

Thessaloniki is a city with continuous and well-documented occupation since antiquity. The city was founded with the merger of smaller settlements in 315 BC. Its strategic position played a decisive role in its future development. After the Roman conquest of Greece (2nd c BC), it became the capital of the district of Macedonia, and later on, when the capital of the Byzantine Empire moved to Constantinople (330 AD), Thessaloniki emerged as the second largest city of the empire. During these historical transitions, the city flourished and retained its urbanity uninterrupted. However, despite the good archaeological record, it remains unclear if there was a biological continuity among the city's inhabitants or if there were major population changes such as influxes or replacements. To address this question, we investigate the evolution of the craniofacial anatomy of the city's inhabitants from antiquity till the late Middle Ages. We analyze 208 individuals excavated during the construction of Thessaloniki's metropolitan subway. We applied a geometric morphometric analysis of the temporal bone, in order to reconstruct the secular patterns of population variation. We tested whether the historical and sociocultural transformations between 3rd c BC and 14th c AD are interconnected with population changes. The bones were digitized and thirteen anatomical landmarks describing temporal bone morphology were collected. Landmark measurement error was tested and a Generalized Procrustes Analysis (GPA) was conducted to extract the geometric shape from overall size. Principal components analysis (PCA) and Canonical variate analysis (CVA) were performed to examine craniofacial shape differences. Considering also the archeological data, our study examines the continuity hypothesis, according to which a homogenous population pattern is expected, and the influx hypothesis, according to which morphological differentiation between chrono cultural groups would appear.

Panagiota BANTAVANOU, Efstratios VALAKOS and Christina PAPAGEORGOPOULOU

Histomorphological Age-estimation of Cremated and Unburned Skeletal Remains

Age estimation on cremated and poorly preserved skeletons is a challenging task. Standard age estimation methods do not perform efficiently on skeletal material that has been taphonomically modified due to high temperatures (<3000 C) or strong fragmentation. In such cases, histomorphological methods can estimate age-at-death with an estimation error of ± 5 -15 years. However, existing methods are not applicable on cremated bones and exhibit the highest estimation error (>10 years). In this study, we present a new histomorphological age estimation method for cremated bones. For this, we used femur cross-sections of cremated (n=30) and unburned individuals (n=45) of the same archaeological and taphonomic context (Thessaloniki, Metro osteological material, Roman Period 1st-4th c. AD). As a blind-test sample we used modern left femurs (n=8) of known sex and age-at-death from the Human Skeletal Reference Collection of the University of Athens. For histological sample preparation we developed two protocols one for cremated and modern bones and one for unburned bones. We generated four regression equations based on the densities of osteons and osteon fragments: a) osteon population density (OPD), b) osteon fragment population density (FPD), c) total population density (osteon and fragments) (TPD), d) multiple regression of osteon and osteon fragment population density (MPD). The regressions were tested for accuracy and reliability and compared with previous published methods. The regressions based on FPD and TPD were the most accurate with a mean estimation error of three years, whereas the multiple regression MPD, followed by the OPD regression were the less accurate. Our method performs better than previously published methods which showed a mean estimation error of 6.71 and 7 years respectively. The results of this method provided information about human archaeological material that until now could not be studied efficiently.

Tamara M. DIJKSTRA and Caroline van TOOR

Professional Identity in Funerary Epigrams

Epigrams (short poems) constitute a small percentage of the funerary inscriptions from the Graeco-Roman world. Choosing this literary form for one's epitaph must have been a conscious choice in a relatively illiterate world. In this article, we poster we show who chose to be commemorated with an epigram and why they chose to be commemorated in this way. Our material comes from the Graeco-Roman East and we focus on representations of professional identity, as this is indicative of a person's role in society. We show that (1) the habit of erecting funerary epigrams is widespread in space, time and across the social spectrum and that (2) epigrams were used as a medium to present oneself in transcending terms, e.g. as famous or 'the best' in one's profession, or in connection with the gods or mythical and epic heroes.

Aggeliki GEORGIADOU, Elissavet GANIATSOU, Kyriakos XANTHOPOULOS, Varvara PAPADOPOULOU and Christina PAPAGEORGOPOULOU

Diet Reconstruction in the Ancient Colony of Ambracia: stable isotope analysis ($\delta^{15}N$, $\delta^{13}C$) from bone collagen of human skeletons, during the archaic and classical period

The Greek colonial expansion of the early 1st millennium BC spread people, goods, art, ideas and lifestyles across the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The relationships between the mother-cities and colonies were multidirectional, profitable for both entities, and in some cases the colonies preceded the motherland in terms of cultural and political developments. Within this context the reconstruction of dietary habits can shed significant light on these interactions, as food in ancient Greek societies was regarded as a marker of ethnic and cultural differentiation. To address pending questions about subsistence in ancient colonies, we apply the established method of stable isotope analysis in human bone collagen to present the diet in the colony of Ambracia, from its occupation phase (archaic era) up to its destruction (Hellenistic era). Ambracia was founded by the city of Corinth in 625 B.C. on the banks of the river Arachthos in western Greece. The geostrategic location, at the crossroad of southern and northern Greece, made the colony a melting pot of cultural and commercial exchange particularly during the classical period (480-323 BC). Our dataset consists values of stable isotope ratios of carbon and nitrogen ($\delta^{15}N$, $\delta^{13}C$) from bone collagen of 158 human skeletons from the western cemetery of ancient Ambracia. Preliminary results show that terrestrial animal protein played a pivotal role in the dietary habits of the population with a lesser contribution of C3 plants and marine resources. Our findings will be correlated with literary evidence and other dietary studies in total period datasets from ancient Greek colonies. Our observations aim to delineate the dietary shifts during the colonization process and shed light on the intensely debated subject of daily life during the second Greek colonization in mainland ancient Greece.

Lidewijde de JONG, Tamara M. DIJKSTRA, Bilal ANNAN, Nicholas AHERNE, John TURCO, Niek van RULER and Paula KALKMAN

MARE - Mortuary Archaeology of the Roman East (Dutch Research Council – VICI)

In the Roman provinces of the Near East some people never passed away completely. Memories of the deceased were prolonged after death through portraits and epitaphs, monumental stone coffins, and roadside tombs. This project investigates how these forms of displaying the dead were embedded in mortuary rituals. The dataset largely consists of so-called legacy and orphaned materials. Discovered or excavated decades ago, tomb fragments such as sarcophagi and stelae often remain un(der)-published and hidden away in storerooms. Others end up as spolia, in parks or in gardens of one of the many regional museums. A further barrier for the study of mortuary rituals of the Roman Near East are the disciplinary divides in scholarship on epitaphs, human bones, ornamentation, and material remains. Recently, digitization efforts have made large datasets of ancient inscriptions and portraits available, and a pilot database was developed at the University of Groningen that brings

different data categories in conversation with each other. Capitalizing on these initiatives, MARE integrates legacy datasets compiled by archaeologists, historians, and art historians. Using an object-active approach, we interrogate the transformation of relationships between people, tombs, epitaphs, coffins, and visual imagery in the cemeteries of Roman Lebanon, Syria (Palmyra), and Turkey (Pisidia). Over a period of five years (2021-2026), our team investigates how local communities envisioned and reformulated their relationships with the dead. We will build a digital infrastructure to enhance legacy and orphaned datasets from coastal Lebanon, Palmyra, and Pisidia, as well as to unlock inaccessible collections for wider audiences.

Anastasia KATSAVELI, Vasiliki PAPATHANASIOU, Yannis CHATZIKONSTANTINOU, Niki PAPAKONSTANTINO and Sevasti TRIANTAPHYLLOU

TEFRA Project: the study of cremation in Iron Age Macedonia

The proposed poster aims to summarize the preliminary results of the macroscopic examination carried out in selected cremations from Iron Age Macedonia. The discrete regional variability expressed in the mortuary picture of the Late Bronze Age would acquire a more standardized form in Iron Age Macedonia which from the 11th c. onwards a range of social identities were developing in local communities. Cremations placed in urns and quite often inhumations and cremations either in tumuli or in flat cemeteries were attested. In the framework of the TEFRA project the effect of fire on selected cremains from Iron Age Macedonia will be investigated according to two dimensions: 1) the technology of the use of fire, and 2) the bio-anthropology that is the demographic synthesis and the biological attributes of the people whose bodies were subject to burning.

Anthi TILIAKOU

Communities in Transition? Human groups dynamics in the Greek Neolithic

The Greek Neolithic is a period of “transitional phases” currently described as ‘Neolithization,’ establishing a new way of life and cultural practices. However, it is still insufficiently understood, how these transformations affected Greece from a genetic point of view and to what extent cultural differences in Neolithic Greece correlate with genetic ones. Following an integrative approach, we successfully generated genome-wide data and 14C dates from 9 individuals from the Neolithic Cave of Pan and the Varambas settlement, in Attica, Central Greek mainland, which we integrated with the on-going osteoarchaeological analysis. Spanning a chronological range from ca. 7,699 to 5,480 BP both the Cave of Pan and the Varambas individuals cluster closely genetically with individuals from Neolithic Anatolia, Peloponnese, as well as Northern Greece. Though the Varambas group is still under study, the Cave of Pan osteoarchaeological data suggests this group falls within the expected average in general demographic and health observations compared to other Neolithic groups from the Greek mainland. However, on the genetic level, subtle deviations are observed, and huntergatherers groups (HG) from West Eurasia seem to be key in disentangling them. Crucial to our interpretations are the HG from the Caucasus, whose ancestry gradually reached the southern Greek Mainland like Franchthi and Alepotrypa in Peloponnese through Anatolia, and those from Eastern/Southeastern Europe. However, the possible genetic contribution of the latter could be indirect and related to the yet-unsampled local Mesolithic groups, whose cultural interaction with the Neolithic groups moving from Anatolia is supported by growing evidence.

Caroline van TOOR

Multiculturalism and Mortuary Practices: shifting identities in Hellenistic and Roman Thessaloniki

How does multiculturalism shape the way in which people identify themselves? In my PhD project, I analyse self-representation in order to understand how the identities of various social and cultural groups were constructed and redefined in a changing multicultural society. I do so by bringing

together all ca. 1,500 published funerary monuments and receptacles from Thessaloniki - a city that attracted Jews, Thracians, and Italian tradesmen in the Hellenistic period, and groups from the Greek east and Christians in the Roman period. On my poster, I will introduce the dataset and highlight the interesting relative invisibility of Jews and Christians in the data.

Ozan YILDIRIM

The Necropolis of Larisa (Buruncuk): topography, architecture and social-representational patterns

The necropolis of Larisa, located in ancient Aeolis in Western Turkey. The Larisa excavations were carried out between 1902 and 1932-34 as a joint undertaking of Germany and Sweden. The scope of 'Larisa (Buruncuk) Surveys' under the direction of Prof. Dr. Turgut Saner (ITU) between 2010-2021, mainly focused on architectural documentation and understanding the settlement pattern. Larisa necropolis, which is almost three times the size of the city area, covers an area of 32.6 ha. Circular planned burial units determine the building density in the necropolis. Most of the burial rings are 4-6 m in diameter; There are also a small number of rectangular planned burial units. While the image put together by the 'miniature tumuli' in Larisa brings to mind the emulation of "Bintepeler", the royal necropolis of Sardis; It can be interpreted as a form of self-representation of the elite in Larisa. During the campaigns in 1902 and 1934, a small group of burial units was excavated. In the excavation publication, only four pages are devoted to the necropolis. The necropolis contains finds dating to the 7th century BC, it is mostly dated to the 6th century BC. In the current research, the stone plans of about 130 burial units that preserve their architectural integrity have been drawn and added to the site plan. It has been determined that windmills built at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century are located on a series of monumental tumuli on the ridge to the north of the old Buruncuk village. One of the most important contributions of research in the context of necropolis; The 'Great Tumulus' with a diameter of 54.6 m located at the tip of the southeast slope of the area. Research on the Larisa necropolis continues within the scope of his Ph.D. study in the History of Architecture program of Istanbul Technical University. Unpublished archival documents of 20th century research and information from current research together present a strong urban and social landscape. The planning principles of the Larisa necropolis are closely related to the representation of the urban elite. The development and holistic-visual effect of the necropolis, apparently, were designed as meticulously and vividly as the design of the city, using all topographical and architectural possibilities.

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