

2nd MEETING OF

MEDITARCH – ANCIENT WORLD

Co-organised 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: “Bronze Age Archaeology I”

Chair: Prof. Yiannis Papadatos

A glimpse into silver-lead and copper production on Early Bronze Age Sifnos

Magda Giannakopoulou, PhD Candidate

Metallurgy is thought to have played a vital role in the development of the Early Bronze Age Aegean societies, being connected to economic development and social complexity. This paper focuses on three sites from EBA Sifnos, the smelting sites of Skali and Kasela and the settlement of Akrotiraki, during the excavation of which lead and copper slag, litharge impregnated hearth lining and furnace wall fragments have been located. The remains have been studied using Optical Microscopy and Scanning Electron Microscopy with Energy Dispersive X-ray Spectroscopy (SEM-EDS), whilst Lead Isotope Analysis was also conducted. At Skali local and probably imported copper ore was smelted in non-perforated furnaces. At Kasela, the only currently known lead smelting site in the Early Bronze Age Aegean, local argentiferous lead ore was smelted within perforated furnaces. The remains from Akrotiraki are related to lead-silver production, including a refining or smelting process related to the slag, and cupellation. The litharge impregnated hearth lining fragments are the by-product of this later process, which is the separation of silver from argentiferous lead metal. Therefore, on southern Sifnos the two main stages of lead-silver production, smelting and cupellation, as well as the primary production of copper are present, rendering it the only area within the Early Bronze Age Aegean that all the above stages co-exist, offering a new insight into the organisation of the early metallurgical production throughout the Aegean world.

Session 1: “Bronze Age Archaeology I”

Chair: Prof. Yiannis Papadatos

The social significance of the ceramic changes in the Early Minoan II period at Malia: Results from the case study of the Prepalatial pottery from Sector P.

Dimitris Karatzanis, MA Student

This paper explores the socio-political transformations that took place during the Prepalatial period (ca. 3100–1900 BC), with a particular focus on the Early Minoan II phase in the Minoan settlement of Malia, Crete. Through an analysis of the pottery from the recently excavated Sector Pi and a critical reinterpretation of previously published excavation data from the site, I examine the developments that led to the emergence of so-called “chief houses” or “elaborate buildings” in EM IIB.

This period marks the initial appearance of hierarchical structures in Crete, especially in the eastern part of the island, as reflected in the construction of “proto-monumental” buildings at sites such as Vasiliki, Palaikastro, and Malia. This architectural phenomenon appears to have been short-lived, ending with fire destruction events—at least in Malia and Vasiliki—at the close of EM IIB, followed by leveling operations at Malia during EM IIIA.

Through a detailed ceramic analysis—focusing on clay composition, surface treatment, firing technology, and vessel typology—this study seeks to reconstruct the organization of ceramic production and the patterns of consumption for both locally produced and imported wares. These findings will contribute to a new understanding of the socio-political and economic dynamics of the Prepalatial period, with special emphasis on the foundation phase of the Malia settlement (EM IIA) and its development into a dominant regional center by EM IIB.

Session 1: “Bronze Age Archaeology I”

Chair: Prof. Yiannis Papadatos

Investigating the coarse pottery from the Sanctuary of Kalapodi. An archaeometric approach

Kelly Christodoulou, PhD Candidate & Anno Hein, Senior Researcher, NCSR Demokritos

This doctoral research focuses on the coarse ceramics from the South Temple Sequence at Kalapodi, a major cult site in Central Greece, continuously used from the Late Mycenaean period (LHIIIB-IIIC) through Roman times. The substantial coarse ware assemblages from LHIIIB – LHIIIC to the Early Iron Age (EIA) offer a valuable opportunity to explore long - term ceramic production and consumption practices within a ritual context.

The primary objective of the study is to examine the typology and chronological distribution of coarse wares and to compare the archaeological results with the ritual context and the outcomes of archaeometric techniques. The research was carried out in two stages: an initial macroscopic study that established a detailed typological framework, followed by compositional and petrographic analyses. Both stages employed the chaîne opératoire approach to reconstruct the processes of ceramic production, use and discard.

Through this methodology, thirty macroscopic coarse categories were identified, including standard cooking vessels from the LHIIIB and LHIIIC periods, Handmade Burnished Ware (HBW), EIA burnished wares and pithoi featuring impressed decoration.

Analyses using pEDXRF, NAA and petrography revealed diverse compositional and geological profiles. Elemental analysis revealed five compositional clusters that aligned with macroscopic categories. Petrography confirmed regional production using volcanic rock fabrics for most cooking and pithos wares, and a few cooking ware imports from Aegina. A sedimentary rock fabric tradition was used for many EIA burnished wares, while LHIIIC-EIA HBW exhibited variable fabrics, suggesting multiple origins and decentralized centers.

Session 2: “Bronze Age Archaeology II”

Chair: Prof. Giorgos Vavouranakis

In research of the deathscape: An investigation of the Neopalatial lack of burials

Eleni Vasilopoulou, MA Student

During the MM III -LM IA period in Crete, the period of the establishment of the New Palaces, an important noticed phenomenon is the lack of the expected burial data, non-corresponding to the estimated population numbers. This absence is witnessed throughout the island and has been approached by some scholars in the past, that focused mainly on individual regions. This lack of burials has been related to the sociopolitical context of the period. Research has stressed the important role of feasting practices within the palaces, which are seen to have led to indifference for burial ritual. This approach, despite its merits, does not explain the absence of an action triggered by death, a phenomenon that exceeds human choice and constitutes an inevitable need of all human societies. The paper adopts a macroscopic approach to argue that changes in the mortuary sphere had already started in the MM IIB period. If belief systems are vital for the consistency of burial practices, it seems that already in MM IIB a process of “deritualisation” of burial had initiated with the ritual termination of several graves. The MM IIIA-LMIA socio-political changes did not then trigger but, instead, accentuated the process and resulted in a variety of burial practices in the Neopalatial landscape. Therefore, changes in burial practices may be examined as the results of internal developments within the mortuary field if they are to be better understood.

Session 2: “Bronze Age Archaeology II”

Chair: Prof. Giorgos Vavouranakis

Investigating transhumance in the uplands of Neopalatial Crete: The archaeological and ethnographic significance of the Dikte region

George Ntzoufras, MA Student

For over a century, Minoan archaeology focused primarily on coastal and lowland sites. However, in recent decades, attention has shifted toward mountainous regions, revealing their significance in Minoan economic and sociopolitical organization. Numerous Neopalatial sites have been identified in the southeastern Dikti region, allowing a more comprehensive understanding of habitation and resource management in remote highland areas of Lasithi. Recent excavations at the Neopalatial administrative center of Gaidourophas Anatoli and the highland settlement of Lavrakia Kalamafka, along with surveys in the mountainous hinterlands of Ierapetra and Agios Nikolaos, have produced valuable archaeological data. The nature of these settlements, combined with the presence of an administrative center for the organization and management of production, suggests not only the intensive exploitation of natural mountain resources, but also a form of connection with the palatial administration.

As the excavation and study of finds are still in the early stages, this presentation aims to explore the parameters of economic exploitation, through the use of ethnoarchaeological methods. The region is currently used by seasonal transhumant flocks of sheep and goats, within the framework of small-scale transhumance husbandry. Interviews with local herders provide insight into the area's suitability for habitation and pastoral activity, both today and in the recent past. Correlating the results of this research with the available archaeological data and epigraphic evidence of Linear A and slightly later Linear B tablets, provides new insights into the exploitation of the mountainous landscape during the Minoan Palatial Period, and especially the now forgotten practice of “Inverse Transhumance”, which was likely practiced in the Dikti region during the Neopalatial Period.

Session 2: “Bronze Age Archaeology II”

Chair: Prof. Giorgos Vavouranakis

Quid pro Quo: Relations between the palace and the damos in the palatial state of Pylos

Ariadne Fatsi, MA Student

The functioning of the Mycenaean palatial states, especially concerning political authority and economic organization, has often been misunderstood in earlier scholarship. Historians focusing on the first millennium BCE tended to view the Mycenaean palace as a wholly centralized institution, exercising full control over production and redistribution. However, both archaeological and epigraphic evidence suggest a more nuanced picture, with the palace exerting direct control over specific industries and only certain segments of the population. Moreover, assuming that the palaces represented fully centralized systems risks overlooking the presence of other, non-palatial actors who held authority and high social prestige. In the Linear B tablets, the most important such institution is the *damos* (*da-mo*), a term generally understood to represent local communities with strong ties to agricultural production. Linguistically, the word derives from an Indo-European root associated with distribution and sharing, and is widely accepted as the precursor to the Classical Greek *dēmos*. The purpose of this paper is to present the epigraphical evidence regarding the functions of the *damos* in land tenure, cultic activity and social organization, and reassess its relationship to the palace in the Mycenaean palatial state of Pylos. Through this analysis, I propose that the palace and the *damos* functioned as institutions on parallel levels, whose relations were likely grounded in mutual recognition and even collaboration.

Session 3: “Near Eastern Studies and Female Representations”

Chair: Prof. Konstantinos Kopanias

‘wꜣd wr’ or “the Great Green”: A critical reassessment

Ersi Lavari, PhD Candidate

The term *‘wꜣd wr’*, traditionally translated as “the Great Green”, has been the subject of extensive scholarly debate due to the elusiveness of its meaning in textual and iconographic sources from Middle to New Kingdom Egypt. Interpretations vary, ranging from an identification with the Mediterranean or the Red Sea, to associations with the Nile or its Delta. The present paper aims to offer a critical reassessment of all available evidence—administrative and literary texts, monumental inscriptions, and tomb iconography—presented chronologically and discussed in their historical and archaeological context. Particular emphasis is placed on the appearance of the term *‘iww ḥryw-ib wꜣd wr’* (“Islands in the midst of the Great Green”) in Theban tomb scenes, which serves as a focal point for discussions concerning foreignness, geographic perception, and maritime networks. Rather than promoting a single interpretation, this paper aims to explore the range of meanings that *‘wꜣd wr’* may have held, depending on period, context, and textual genre. The evidence suggests that the term was consistently linked to aquatic spaces, though its exact referent, if any, likely shifted across time. Therefore, through an examination of philological, archaeological, and iconographic material, this paper argues that the meaning of *‘wꜣd wr’* may have varied over time and context, reflecting Egypt’s evolving connections with neighboring areas.

Session 3: “Near Eastern Studies and Female Representations”

Chair: Prof. Konstantinos Kopanias

The female form in Late Bronze Age adornment: Symbolism and syncretism in Canaanite goddess pendants

Elizabeth Clare Symes, MA Graduate

This paper examines the human-figure or nude goddess pendants from the Late Bronze Age Southern Levant, focusing on their iconography, artisanry, and cultural significance. Drawing on sixteen extant pendants from sites such as Megiddo, Lachish, and Beth Shean, which can be categorised into three distinct types: representational, pictorial, and representational cut-out, this paper aims to explore their syncretic nature shaped by Syro-Mesopotamian and Egyptian artistic traditions. Typically crafted from precious metals using rudimentary techniques, these pendants prominently feature detailed depictions of the female pelvic region, including imagery of the vulva, pubic hair, and accompanying adornments. The study investigates the symbolism embedded in these motifs, interpreting them as potential expressions of fertility, sexuality, and divine femininity. Emphasising the role of female genitalia in these objects, it considers their possible apotropaic function, proposing that they served as protective symbols in societies confronting high maternal mortality and infertility. Further, the paper explores the cultural and religious implications of female nudity in the region, highlighting its contrast with male depictions and its potential role in distinguishing between divinity and mortals. By analysing the nuanced iconography of these pendants, this paper contributes to the broader discourse on female bodily representation in the ancient world, challenging gendered interpretations of such artefacts and considering their roles in both ritualistic and social contexts.

Session 3: “Near Eastern Studies and Female Representations”

Chair: Prof. Konstantinos Kopanias

Female representations of the Bronze Age Aegean managed through AI technology: Methods and application to wall paintings

Melissa Bergoffen, PhD Candidate

Within the field of archaeology, accessibility of material data and metadata has been unsatisfactory. This is particularly true for artifacts, evidence, and interpretations pertaining to ancient women. For example, there is currently no single resource or repository for the representations of female figures from the Bronze Age Aegean, which makes it difficult to comprehend the extent of the female presence within iconography, how those representations compare, and what they could mean for the lives of the prehistoric women they may (or may not accurately) represent. My PhD dissertation at the University of Crete in conjunction with the TALOS Project hopes to address this issue by applying Artificial Intelligence technology, namely that of ontologies and ontoterminologies represented within various knowledge graphs, to the wall paintings, figures and figurines, glyptics, ceramics, and other artifacts in which female figures are represented in order to create a searchable repository. In this paper, however, the focus will purely be on female representations in the 50+ wall paintings that have been found across Crete, the Cyclades, and Mainland Greece. To achieve this, I will provide an overview on my methodology (in-depth descriptions for creating ontologies that use CIDOC CRM and its extensions) and dataset (the wall paintings themselves and how they will be recorded using TEDI and Protégé), as well as explore potential use cases that can be performed through SPARQL queries. This project not only hopes to minimize the shortcomings in studies of ancient women, but also to promote FAIR Principles within archaeological data management.

Session 3: “Near Eastern Studies and Female Representations”

Chair: Prof. Konstantinos Kopanias

Engines of empire: The representation and function of siege engines in Neo-Assyrian military practice

Chrysostomos Lamprou, MA Student

The present study aims to investigate the role, representation, and development of siege engines in Assyrian warfare during the early first millennium BCE. While the significance of siegecraft to the Neo-Assyrian military is well established, the specific machines employed —such as battering rams and siege towers— remain only partially understood. Their analysis is complicated by the fragmentary and stylized nature of the available evidence. The primary sources for these devices are Neo-Assyrian palace reliefs, supported to a limited extent by textual references, while direct archaeological evidence is virtually absent.

This paper focuses on siege engines as depicted in royal iconography, seeking to explore typological distinctions, and consider their intended function and tactical application. Rather than offering definitive reconstructions, the study emphasizes the interpretive challenges posed by the sources themselves, including questions of artistic convention, ideological messaging, and the tension between symbolic and practical representation.

By approaching Assyrian siege engines through a combination of visual analysis, comparative study, and critical methodology, this research contributes to the broader discussion on ancient military technology and aims to clarify how these machines may have operated both as tools of war and as instruments of royal display.

Session 4: “Agents of Meaning: Bodies and Objects in Ancient Contexts”

Chair: Dr. Ioannis Voskos

Hero in his own time: Amenhotep II and his athletic identity

Aspasia Nithavrianaki, MA Student

This presentation focuses on the athletic self-image of Pharaoh Amenhotep II, as described in remarkable detail on the Sphinx Stela. What makes this monument stand out is not only its vivid language but also the use of precise, almost measurable, information. For instance, we read that the young prince rowed a barque with 200 oars alone, pierced copper targets with arrows, and outran all military officers. These accounts may bear traces of authentic court practice related to military and physical education. My interest lies in understanding what these physical feats meant for royal ideology at the time. Rather than relying on divine birth or prophecy, Amenhotep II seems to have built his authority around his trained, disciplined body. His athleticism becomes central to how he presents himself as king. I will focus on a close reading of the Sphinx Stela, supported by comparative analysis of archaeological and bioarchaeological data, and also modern interpretations of royal embodiment. From this perspective, I will examine how Amenhotep II transforms athletic performance into political language. Contrary to his father Thutmose III, who was remembered for his military genius and Thutmose IV who was associated with divine revelation, Amenhotep II defines himself through personal action. What is more, unlike mythic heroes celebrated after death, he constructs his heroic image while alive, using inscriptions, public performance, and physical feats to institutionalize his power. My aim is to show how this athletic identity was not just personal pride; it was a new way of claiming authority in ancient Egypt, with the body at the center of kingship.

Session 4: “Agents of Meaning: Bodies and Objects in Ancient Contexts”

Chair: Dr. Ioannis Voskos

Mobility, identity, and political narrative: Rethinking the Amorites

Panagiotis Davvetas, PhD Candidate

By the end of the 3rd millennium BCE, the Amorites are portrayed as mobile pastoralists active on the fringes of Mesopotamian urban societies. In the past, many researchers claimed that the Amorites were primarily at odds with the settled populations of the alluvial plain. This view was shaped both by certain royal Mesopotamian inscriptions and by the biased assumption that the relationship between “the desert and the sown” was inherently hostile. However, a closer examination of the textual data suggests a more nuanced reality. For instance, the Amorites appear to have participated in various echelons of society, including the military. The aim of this paper is to highlight the fluid boundaries between the Amorites and the settled populations of Mesopotamia, as revealed through a reexamination of textual and epigraphic sources. Furthermore, the paper supports the view that farmers and pastoralists enjoyed a largely symbiotic relationship during this period, with the former incorporating the latter into their cosmology, as demonstrated in a range of literary compositions. In this context, the negative portrayals of the Amorites in some royal inscriptions were likely connected to the political climate of the time and may have served the economic policies of specific rulers.

Session 4: “Agents of Meaning: Bodies and Objects in Ancient Contexts”

Chair: Dr. Ioannis Voskos

“The image stirred and shuddered from its seat”: An anthropological approach to Ancient Greek art through Euripides' ‘Iphigenia in Tauris’

Konstantinos Loukopoulos, PhD Candidate

The development of methodological tools through which classical archaeology attempts to analyze, study, and interpret the material remains of classical antiquity has evolved through a long process, beginning in the 18th century with the method of stylistic analysis. However, in recent decades, there has been a shift in archaeological research. Interest has moved away from this idealistic, anthropocentric, and largely restrictive approach towards a more anthropological consideration of artifacts. These artifacts are now studied symmetrically, regarded as equal to the human factor, capable of influencing human cognition and affecting him on multiple levels as independent agents through their very own materiality. Although attributing agency to inanimate material entities might initially seem impossible, examining the artifacts of classical antiquity themselves, along with specific excerpts from ancient literature, suggests that this might not have been far from how the ancient Greeks themselves viewed material culture. Utilizing Alfred Gell's anthropological theory of art, along with the concepts of agency, materiality, and animism, this lecture will attempt to identify similar perceptions in Euripides' "Iphigenia in Tauris," where the xoanon of Artemis plays a crucial role in the plot's development, in order to draw useful conclusions regarding the depiction of the metaphysical and perceptions of representation in early ancient Greek art.

Session 4: “Agents of Meaning: Bodies and Objects in Ancient Contexts”

Chair: Dr. Ioannis Voskos

Shaping the dead: A west slope hydria and the material construction of identity

Andreas Leventis, MA Graduate

This paper investigates the funerary transformation of a West Slope-type hydria, discovered in a secondary cremation burial in Hellenistic Acharnai (Attica). Originally part of an aesthetic and social ceramic tradition associated with symposium and elite display, this hydria, decorated with vertical ribbing, a myrtle wreath, and a Lesbian kymation, was recontextualised within a cist tomb — Tomb 8th of the plot in Souliou 38 street — placed inside a beehive-shaped container (kypseli) and sealed with an inverted deep basin (lekanis). Notably, the vessel contained a significant quantity of the deceased’s cremated bones, preserved in remarkably good condition, underscoring its central role in the ritual and corporeal care of the dead.

The case offers a unique entry point into the study of ceramic form mobility and its semantic shifts across contexts and regions. West Slope pottery, widely circulated in the eastern Mediterranean (e.g. Rhodes and Alexandria), is here integrated into a peripheral necropolis of Attica, mediating between cosmopolitan aesthetics and local mortuary traditions. The assemblage exemplifies how shape, surface, and symbolic gesture are mobilised to articulate memory, protect the remains, and negotiate identity within the broader cultural economy of death.

By placing this vessel within its precise archaeological and performative setting, the paper contributes to wider discussions on the entanglement of local practices and transregional ceramic languages in the ancient Mediterranean. It highlights the agency of ceramic materiality in shaping funerary space and meaning, and underscores the interpretive potential of such objects in reconstructing the cultural logics of Hellenistic ritual behaviour.

Session 5: “Hellenistic Archaeology”

Chair: Prof. Dimitris Plantzos

Depictions of sculptural relief in Macedonian painting: pigment, materiality and meaning in the fourth century BCE

Gabriel Coleman, PhD Candidate

This paper will present and analyze how the materiality of polychrome sculpture was communicated in fourth century BCE Macedonian tomb paintings. It will synthesize pre-existing literature on the subject as well as the author’s own observations (made in situ), new photographic and photogrammetric images in the case of the Ipogeo dei Cristallini, and pigment analysis from recent technical investigations. Four case studies will be presented:

1. The griffin frieze from Tomb I at Vergina
2. The griffin frieze from the kline of Tomb II at Potidea
3. The griffin frieze from antechamber C of the Ipogeo Dei Cristallini
4. The doric metopes from the tomb of the Judgement

In all cases certain pigments and techniques were used to evoke the aura of three-dimensional sculpture: suggesting faded polychromy, gilding, highlights, or the build up of light and shadow. These details were executed in a considered and materially embedded fashion which suggests an awareness of a common aesthetic language. The example from the Tomb of the Judgement is the most advanced elaboration of this mimetic language. As a central piece to my PhD thesis it will receive more in-depth analysis.

Session 5: “Hellenistic Archaeology”

Chair: Prof. Dimitris Plantzos

Painted funerary stelae of soldiers from Alexandria, Egypt

Vasileios Lamprinos, MA Student

This paper examines several painted funerary stelae of soldiers from Alexandria, Egypt, mostly dating during the 3rd century BCE. Not much is known about the archaeological context of these stelae, as they were uncovered during poorly documented excavations in eastern and western necropoleis of Alexandria. Some of them were confused between contexts and in recent years, scholars have attempted to associate them with specific tombs, while for others the place of recovery is only approximately known. In some cases, archaeometric analyses have been conducted on these stelae. These analyses have provided useful information not only about the characterization and use of pigments in Alexandria and Eastern Mediterranean during the 3rd century BCE, but also about the symbolism of these pigments in the society of this period. In order to further support this argument, parallels will be presented, mostly from Macedonia. Lastly, it is essential to place these stelae within a socio-historical framework. During the 3rd century BCE, the first Ptolemies encouraged many people from across the Eastern Mediterranean to move to Alexandria, primarily to serve as mercenaries in the Ptolemaic army. The result was a multicultural city inhabited by various ethnic groups, who lived, formed their identities and died there. This paper will examine these stelae not only as works of art, but also as funerary monuments that reflect not just the deaths but, more importantly, the lives of Alexandrian soldiers and the identities they developed within the multicultural society of Alexandria.

Session 5: “Hellenistic Archaeology”

Chair: Prof. Dimitris Plantzos

Death and the dead in Hellenistic Crete: Preliminary results from the analysis of cemeteries in the Lassithi and Heraklion regions

Louisiane Betrancourt, PhD Candidate

This paper is a follow up to the presentation I gave in the first edition of the conference, which introduced the goals and methodology for the PhD research I am presently conducting at both the NKUA and ULB universities. This year, an update on the current state of my research will be offered. It will first include an initial assessment of the distribution of tombs and tomb types throughout the island in the Hellenistic times. The selection process of eleven representative sites, spread all over Crete, will then be laid out. Namely, the sites of Itanos, Olous and Lato Pros Kamara for the Lassithi region; Chersonissos, Knossos and Apollonia for the Heraklion region; Eleftherna and Stavromenos for the Rethymno region; Aptera, Kydonia and Phalassarna for the Chania region will all be considered central for the analysis. Four case studies out of the eleven selected sites will be reviewed during the presentation, showcasing some of the preliminary results: the cemeteries at Itanos and Kamara in the Lassithi, as well as those of Apollonia and Chersonissos in the Heraklion region. Similarities and differences in the mortuary parameters observed in each of these four sites will be highlighted, including: the location of the cemetery, the main tomb types and their orientation, as well as the recurring offerings. The significance of such choices in the funerary practices displayed in these cemeteries will then be discussed.

Session 6: “Roman Archaeology”

Chair: Assoc. Prof. Stylianos Katakis

Late Hellenistic and early Imperial portrait statue bases from Boeotia: A reappraisal

Maria-Ioanna Christopoulou, PhD Candidate

During the Late Hellenistic and early imperial era, the Greek poleis were setting up honorific statues of the local and foreign elite in public spaces, such as the Agoras and Sanctuaries, with the intention of perpetuating the memory of contemporary individuals and reinforcing the local history and identity. The archaeological interest for Boeotia begins as early as the second half of the 19th century, given that the territory constituted a very prominent place of the ancient Greek world throughout the ages. In this paper I focus on the Boeotian portrait statue bases dating from the Late Hellenistic to the early Imperial era (146 BCE-68 CE), as part of my PhD thesis: “The social and political function of the sculptural depictions of private individuals during the transitional period of the Late Roman and early imperial periods in the Roman province of Achaia”. More specifically, subjects such as the technical characteristics of the bases, the material of the attached portrait statue, the social position of the honorand and the dedicator will be discussed along with the available archaeological evidence. Due to the fact that a large number of the aforementioned statue bases originate from Thespiiai and the Valley of the Muses in Helicon, I will, also, look at the destructive methods of extraction of the inscribed stones from Late Roman and Medieval buildings by the first excavator P. Jamot and the loss of the valuable archaeological context.

Session 6: “Roman Archaeology”

Chair: Assoc. Prof. Stylianos Katakis

Grave stelae and reliefs from Roman Crete and Cyrenaica. A bridge between two worlds?

Konstantinos Koumentakis, MA Student

The subject of my presentation is the grave stelae and reliefs that have been discovered in the area of Cyrenaica (present-day eastern Libya) and the island of Crete. This material forms part of my MA thesis, in which I investigate the funerary sculpture of the Roman province of Crete and Cyrenaica (c. 67 B.C.–297 A.D.), a rare example of a province composed of two geographically separate regions.

In this presentation, I will examine the most remarkable examples of grave stelae and reliefs, and I will attempt to identify possible similarities between the sculptures of Crete and Cyrenaica. I will begin by examining each region separately, having categorized the sculptures based on both iconography (stelae depicting one or more persons versus those without human figures) and typology (the anthropomorphic stelae of Cyrenaica and the reliefs of Crete).

Following this, I will provide a comparative analysis and attempt to evaluate whether there was any common ground in the funerary sculpture of the province as a whole. Before delving into the objects themselves, I will also offer a brief overview of the historical context of the province of Crete and Cyrenaica, with a particular focus on its social history.

Session 6: “Roman Archaeology”

Chair: Assoc. Prof. Stylianos Katakis

The child as a portrait statue within the relief composition during the Roman Imperial era

Aikaterini Gianna, MA Student

This paper focuses on the depiction of children within the family context on funerary reliefs from Attica during the Roman Imperial era. Specifically, it refers to the representation of children as portrait statues - placed on statue bases/pedestals—within the relief composition. In most family scenes on Attic funerary reliefs, three family members are depicted: the mother, the father and, in the center, the child. Motifs where the child is depicted with only one parent, either the mother or the father, also exist in Attica. While there are cases in which adult figures are shown standing on statue bases, this specific representational practice is often associated with children. To better understand this phenomenon, comparative examples are used from funerary reliefs with family depictions from the province of Macedonia—mainly Thessaloniki –, but also from other areas in the eastern part of the Empire. The existence of an actual portrait statue of the depicted children cannot be confirmed, although the figures of the children portrayed as statues in the funerary reliefs imitate real statues that were indeed erected to honor children. Accordingly, the study concentrates on the use of the statue base within the relief composition, as a symbolic way of honoring the prematurely deceased child. The research also addresses the distinction between living and deceased family members depicted in the relief composition, as expressed through this specific iconographic motif.

Session 7: “Politics, Economy and Society from the Classical to the Imperial Period”

Chair: Assoc. Prof. Nikos Giannakopoulos

Ἀρχέλαος Τύραννος: Archelaos of Macedonia as a typical tyrant in the works of philosophers

Nikitas Kourkoulos-Arditis, MA Student

The nature of the Macedonian monarchy under the Temenids remains a very controversial subject as many historians still argue whether the kings ruled institutionally with their power limited by the Macedonian assembly, or whether their power was largely personal and absolute, often breaching the customary law of the Macedonians. Regardless of opinion on the subject, modern historians refrain from using the term tyrant for the monarchs of Macedonia.

However, ancient Greeks had a much more rigid view of tyranny. Any individual who seemed to rule autocratically taking advantage of his power to commit heinous acts could easily be labeled a tyrant. The Macedonian king Archelaos (413-399 B.C.) is an example of a king who was considered a tyrant by many.

This hostile attitude is especially clear in the works of philosophers with a moralistic view. In Plato's *Gorgias* Archelaos is presented by Polus, an interlocutor of Socrates, as a typical tyrant, a bastard son of the king and a mere slave, who resorted to the murder of his relatives to seize the throne, thus proving that unjust people are the happiest.

Aristotle also thought negatively of Archelaos. In a discussion of the structural flaws of tyranny that often lead to its collapse, Aristotle gives some examples of monarchs (without distinguishing between kings and tyrants) who were assassinated because of their arbitrary behavior. Archelaos incurred the wrath of no less than three individuals, who formed a conspiracy to murder him in order to take revenge for his unjust deeds.

Archelaos fits perfectly the stereotype of a tyrant. Cruel, ruthless and indulging in pleasures without any regard for justice, thus bringing his downfall.

Session 7: “Politics, Economy and Society from the Classical to the Imperial Period”

Chair: Assoc. Prof. Nikos Giannakopoulos

Going up from the Piraeus: “Reading” the excavation coins from the eastern main road

Anastasia Perysinaki, MA Graduate

The current paper examines the contribution of excavation coins to archaeological research. It is based on my MA thesis and uses as a case study the numismatic material unearthed in two central squares of the modern Piraeus, during rescue excavations carried out by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Piraeus between 2013 and 2015 in the context of subway construction. The excavations, conducted in the beating heart of both the modern and the ancient city, which was, to this point, archaeologically unexplored, revealed sections of what was identified as the eastern main road (*plateia odos*) of Piraeus, a vital artery not only linking the harbor with the city of Athens, but also facilitating the intra-Piraeus communication, passing through the eastern city gate and running through the whole peninsula, over the many centuries of Piraeus’ life. The road offered valuable findings, among which 89 bronze coins dating from the 4th cent. BCE to the 4th cent. CE. The numismatic evidence sheds light on the economic and monetary life of the city. It also provides for the first time an archaeological glimpse into one of the city’s major thoroughfares, and more broadly, it offers insights into Piraeus’ particular evolution through the centuries, mostly undiscovered especially if compared to the well – studied city of Athens. More importantly though, this study demonstrates how excavation coins can serve not only as chronological markers but also as spatial indicators that effectively map human activity and movement across a site, offering a dynamic layer of interpretation in urban archaeology.

Session 7: “Politics, Economy and Society from the Classical to the Imperial Period”

Chair: Assoc. Prof. Nikos Giannakopoulos

Roman matrons in the political arena: Fulvia’s paradigm

Theodoros Papadopoulos, MA Student

«The *nobiles* were dynasts, their daughters princesses». This remark by Sir Ronald Syme, in the introduction of his seminal work *The Roman Revolution*, reflects the elevated status of the female members of the roman *nobilitas* in the late Republic. Nevertheless, unlike the *de jure* princesses of the hellenistic monarchy, the roman «princess» was formally excluded from the roman political arena. Despite this undeniable reality, we can discern during the late republican period the gradual emergence of a female model that transcends these restrictions, with certain roman matrons exerting significant political influence in their own right and leaving their footprint in the historical record. This model, however, essentially operates behind the scenes and beyond the public gaze. Fulvia-Clodius’s widow, Marcus Antonius’ wife, Octavianus’ adversary and Cicero’s nemesis- is the first roman matron that appears to break this pattern, positioning herself in the spotlight and she does so, in no less a momentous and tumultuous period in the history of Rome than the end of the Republic. In that sense, Fulvia’s paradigm can be construed as a historical milestone. The purpose of this paper is to briefly clarify that statement, through the summarization of our knowledge of her life- her background, her marriages, her public presence, her actions, her enemies- in order to illuminate the manner in which Fulvia stands out from her contemporary republican counterparts and to outline the way through which she may be perceived as a harbinger and a blueprint for the powerful *dominae* of the imperial era.

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**Early Roman pottery from the Acropolis of Amphipolis (1st c. BC-1st c. AD):
Trade and production of a *civitas libera* in *provincia Macedonia***

Vaggelis Papaioannou, PhD Candidate

The aim of the paper is the preliminary analysis of selected pottery assemblages unearthed from the ongoing excavations (from 2019) conducted on the Acropolis of Amphipolis by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Serres (D. Malamidou) and the University of Patras (D. Damaskos). The imported ceramics demonstrate the tight commercial connections of the city, predominantly with the production centers of Asia Minor, like Ephesus (Ephesian Grey Ware) and Pergamon (early Eastern Sigillata C-ESC-), while a wider network (e.g. Crete, Italy) can also be attested. ESC in particular is the most ubiquitous fine ware, represented by types sparsely attested in contemporaneous contexts from Greece and rarely exported beyond the micro-region of Pergamon. Solid indications for a local or regional production of table wares are offered by imitations of *Italian sigillata* and other forms.

In a wider context, several socio-economic and political phenomena are discussed through the lens of commerce and pottery manufacture: a) the shaping of *regionality*, as observed in the common circulation and production patterns shared with other sites of the province and beyond, b) the Italian presence in the city, already known through epigraphic evidence, and c) the matter of the 1st c. BC destruction that befell the city, whose date and extent remain unanswered and have so far been approached with literary and epigraphic argumentation alone.