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in Aegean Archaeology

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IN AEGEAN ARCHAEOLOGY

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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**Mediating Power in Sixteenth-Century BCE Mainland Greece:
the Example of 'Mirror Culture'**

Funerary rituals in sixteenth and early fifteenth-centuries BCE Mainland Greece display prestige objects and objects of power adapted from Minoan material culture that are related to major shifts in economic and social power. Mirrors are a particularly interesting case, because while they first appeared in eastern and central Crete in domestic contexts (palaces, villae), the so-called Mycenaean cultural groups seem to have been the first to include the mirror in the funerary rites in a process of social promotion, specifically at Pylos, Mycenae and Laconia. This trend is then visible from the mid-fifteenth century onwards in the tombs of Chania and of the Knossian area, where the mirror is placed with the paraphernalia of members of the upper social classes. By examining the adoption of the copper-alloy mirror as a form of power and as an expression of new identities, we review the relationships, contexts and practices that served to shape authority and individuality during the Late Helladic I–II period.

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Miniature Bodies in Practice:
the Embodied Performance of Everyday and Ceremonial Acts in
Bronze Age Aegean Seal Imagery

The human body is considered an active agent through which humans perceive the world, collect experiences and memories that differ depending on space and time. The embodied involvement with the world and the repetition of everyday or special acts constitutes the way in which social identity is formed and expressed. The body entangles with the social and cultural environment through a multisensory process and thus comprises a means for the (re)construction of identities. In the proposed presentation, the focus will be on human figures and their practices, as they are depicted on Bronze Age Aegean seals and sealings. Human figures appear in miniature representations of the Middle and Late Minoan Periods performing a variety of everyday as well as special and/or ceremonial practices. During the Prepalatial and Protopalatial Periods, the representational form is simple and the activities performed by the subjects are limited, involving mainly everyday practices such as constructing and carrying vessels, bows, arrows or fish, standing or hugging each other. On the contrary, during the Neopalatial and Final Palatial Periods, ritual and symbolic content involving both male and female figures has considerably increased, including bull-leaping and battle scenes, hunting episodes and animal capture, processions and ceremonial events, deities and epiphanies. Through the presentation of the different bodily practices, either everyday or ceremonial acts, depicted on Minoan seals and sealings, the aim is to reconstruct the expression and performance of the multiple and complex individual or communal identities in Minoan societies.

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**Neither Frescoes nor Rock Reliefs:
Zoomorphic Plastic Decorations on Pottery from
Western Anatolia in the Second Millennium BCE**

Late Bronze Age Western Anatolia is commonly defined as a world between worlds. During the second millennium BCE, this region, still understudied but characterised by its own development and customs, was embedded in the spheres of influence of two important cultural circles: the Mycenaeans and the Hittites. Both these cultures are well-known for their artistic expressions in a number of media, while Western Anatolia has been commonly considered almost aniconic. One exception to this narrative are zoomorphic appliqués, handles and spouts appearing in this region during the second millennium BCE. This group of finds, while known ever since Schliemann, has not been studied on its own so far. It is even stranger when we look at the appearance of this phenomenon at many important sites of Western Anatolia, where we can trace many similarities but also differences. After Troy, with the largest corpus so far, the site of Kaymakci offers the second largest number, followed by sites such as Liman Tepe, Beycesultan or Seyitömer Höyük. Animal representations were also found in other regions which were in contact with Western Anatolia, but have also been rarely compared. The aim of this presentation is to present the current stage of a complete and comparative examination of this material. It will be shown that among several traditions of zoomorphic decorations on pottery we can find possible connections with Central Anatolia, and I will raise the possible link with ritual texts as known from Hittite sources.

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**200,000 Years of History at Stelida, Naxos (Greece):
the Challenges and Approaches to Writing Deep-Time Narratives**

Stelida, Naxos presents a unique opportunity to investigate how we approach the writing of deep-time histories. The site, primarily known for its Palaeolithic chert quarry and Bronze Age Minoan-type peak sanctuary, has a history of intermittent use from approximately the Middle Palaeolithic through to present day. This presentation examines the potential of a multi-scalar archaeological approach at Stelida, focusing on a thematic rather than the traditional chronological approach. To explain, multi-scalar archaeology seeks to understand the complex relationships between human societies and environments across different temporal scales. This approach recognises that human activities and their impacts are not limited to a single level of analysis but rather across a range of scales. At the core of multi-scalar archaeology is a commitment to integrating diverse sources of evidence and methods not limited to archaeological data but also encompassing ethnographic and historical records and palaeoenvironmental data.

The presentation will begin with an overview of the conceptual framework and methods of multi-scalar archaeology—focusing on the tripartite method developed by Fernand Braudel (1949) and time perspectivism as developed by Geoff Bailey (1981; 2007). A case study from Stelida will follow, examining three overarching themes present at the site over its 200,000 years of history: resource extraction, visibility and communication, and marginality. Using archaeological evidence, and ethnographic and historical records, these three themes will be investigated. Overall, it will be argued that a multi-scalar and thematic approach allows for greater accessibility to the deep time history of the site—particularly for non-academic audiences.

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When, Where, and Why?

**The Distribution of Chamber Tomb Groups
in the Argolid in Chronological and Local Context**

In this paper, I re-examine the evidence for chamber tomb use in the Argolid based on an updated dataset compiled as part of research for my doctoral dissertation. I have documented a total of 698 tombs in 86 geographically distinct tomb groups at 26 sites in the Argolid. This represents the most complete catalogue of tomb groups in the region, and more than doubles the number from previous studies, allowing for a more holistic understanding of the mortuary landscapes of the Late Bronze Age Argolid.

I will present the evidence for the spatial distribution of tomb groups by starting period. I show that a majority were established before the end of the 15th century (Late Helladic (LH) II) in all regions of the Argolid, including outside the Argive Plain. Very few tomb groups were established at new sites during the peak Palatial period, that is after LH IIIA1. Therefore, I argue that previous studies have overstated the role of the palace in the spread of chamber tombs. Through examining the distribution of cemeteries by starting period, I suggest that we can understand the spread of the chamber tomb from the perspective of individual burying groups rather than as a type imposed by the emerging centres of the Argive Plain. The increase in the number of individual tombs in LH III can then be interpreted in terms of local developments including the articulation of new social groups in the funerary landscape as well as in relation to broader regional developments which included a standardisation of material culture under the new palatial administration.

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**The Construction of the Menelaion Mansions:
an Energetics Approach**

The early Mycenaean Period (*ca.* 1800–1400 BCE) is witness to the emergence of architectural complexes that exceed previously known domestic structures in terms of size, quality of construction and labour investment, and thereby forms a substantial change of the built environment on the Mainland. I argue that the mobilisation, manipulation and centralisation of labour in construction projects played an important role in the transformation of kin-based and relatively undifferentiated Middle Helladic societies to asymmetrical and centralised social formations of the early Mycenaean Period. To do so, I make use of architectural energetics to make estimations of labour investment and organisational structures by breaking down the construction process into its individual components (acquisition, transport, shaping and assembly).

My discussion will be based on two early elite residences, Mansion I and II of the Menelaion in Laconia. Mansion I is a key site for our understanding of architectural and social developments in the ProtoPalatial Period during the Early Mycenaean Period. This rubble-built Korridor Haus has been considered a major step in the monumentalisation of the built environment after the small-scale architecture of the preceding Middle Helladic Period. I will reconstruct the chaîne opératoire and estimate the size of the specialised and non-specialised workforce required for the construction of both Mansions. This will allow for a better estimation of the kinds of organisational structures required—could they have been constructed by simple social groups without formalised inequalities, or by communal entities of local scale?

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An Eye Single-Blade Bronze Axe from Achaia and the Possible Trading Circuits from Italy, Central Europe and Greece between the Last Phases of the Mycenaean Palaces and the First Iron Age

This proposal, starting from a new interpretation of an eye single-blade axe coming from the northern Peloponnese, fits into the broader theme of the so-called metallurgical *koinè*, *i.e.* the spread of common ideas and types through the contacts between the Aegean and the Western Mediterranean in the Post-Palatial Period. From the well-known casting mould in soft stone from the 'Oil Merchant's House' at Mycenae we know that the presence, or in any case the production, of allochthonous Italic and Central European objects already existed during the phase of the Mycenaean palaces and increased after the fall of the palatial system as documented by a second axe mould from 'Casa a ovest del Piazzale I' at Phaistos. In the debate on the *koinè* which is currently being addressed, this paper proceeds not only from the point of view of trade and exchange of ideas, but also from an ethnic-cultural point of view. In this framework, the axe, with its ancient and multifunctional meaning—weapon, religious symbol, sign of power and probably also a pre-monetary element—turns out to be a very interesting archaeological marker that may provide insights into the dynamics of power linked to metallurgy, a central element in the socio-political and territorial reorganisation process of the new 'chiefs' of the Post-Palatial Period, and into the exchange circuits between the Late Helladic IIIC and the Early Iron Age, especially for those routes that connected western and north-western Greece with the rest of the Mediterranean.

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Marking Identity and Status:
the Role of Anatolian and Near Eastern Sealstones
from the Cemeteries of Eleona and Langada on Kos

In this contribution, we discuss a relatively small but important group of sealstones of Anatolian and Near Eastern manufacture discovered at the Mycenaean cemeteries of Eleona and Langada on Kos. These fascinating objects, which include two unpublished specimens, were made of steatite, carnelian and lapis lazuli, and were decorated either with simple geometric motifs or with more complex figural scenes. In our presentation, we first provide a thorough contextual analysis of these sealstones and then assess their social and cultural significance within the Koan Late Bronze Age burial arena.

The sealstones examined in this paper reveal a wider array of contacts compared to those shown by other materials from Eleona and Langada, for example pottery vessels. While the latter were mostly imported from or inspired by Greek mainland workshops, these sealstones demonstrate the importance of Anatolian and Near Eastern fashions for the individual definition of identity and display of status within the Koan local community. As such, these objects represent yet another important component of the complex and multifaceted Mycenaean material culture that developed on Kos and in the wider south-east Aegean during the second half of the Late Bronze Age.

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How many Weapons for the Palace?

An Interpretation Proposal for the Use of ka-ko in the Pylos Linear B Tablets

The paper aims to propose an interpretation of the intended use of the metal recorded as ka-ko (χαλκός, *i.e.* copper or bronze) in Mycenaean written sources. This metal, also denoted by the logogram *140/AES, is the subject of the twenty Linear B tablets collected in the Pylos Jn-series. Two of these documents record important palatial officers delivering ka-ko to the palace in order to produce spear and javelin heads; the other eighteen tablets, on the other hand, deal with the palace distributing weighed amounts of ka-ko to ka-ke-we, the smiths. The series presents several problems, including the type of metal recorded, how it would have been mobilised, the reasons for its registration and the work performance of the craftsmen in charge of its processing.

Since these issues are still the subject of debate, this study is based on the hypothesis that the recorded metal was bronze and was used to produce weapons. Since metals and metal objects are also archaeologically visible, philological evidence will be combined with archaeological evidence discovered in Aegean contexts contemporaneous with or immediately before the time period to which most of the Pylos tablets are dated (Late Helladic IIIB2). Indeed, based on published archaeological data on the weight of the weapons, this paper will propose a total count of the weapons that the Mycenaean bronzesmiths of Pylos could have forged with the bronze amount recorded in the Jn-series tablets, and thus how many men could have been armed.

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**Interdisciplinary Research on Gold Mining
at the Amalara Archaeological Site in Northern Greece—Final Result**

The paper is a summary of the project “Extraction of gold in prehistoric and ancient Macedonia. Interdisciplinary research on gold mining at the Amalara site in northern Greece and its European context”, realised in the years 2015–2022, financed by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Amalara is a site located on the northern slopes of the Anthemous Valley, about 40 km east of Thessaloniki. The first confirmed settlement on this site dates back to the Bronze Age and continued in various forms until the Ottoman Period. The most characteristic element of the site is extensive rock debris that may be the remains of gold mining.

The aim of the project was to determine the technology of potential gold mining and related settlement processes. For this purpose, a number of non-invasive research methods have been applied including geological mapping, SEM analysis of fluvial sediments, spatial analyses, surface surveys and hydrographic network analysis. The data was interpreted in the context of the region (Macedonia and Thrace) and more broadly in a European context.

An additional result of the project was the documentation of damage to the site by natural river erosion and illegal excavations inspired by folk legends, which sometimes have a surprising connection with reality.

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**Assessing the Evidence for the Emergence of
Social Inequality during the Neolithic:
Case Studies from the Region of Modern-Day Greece**

The emergence of social inequalities in the region of modern-day Greece during the Neolithic Period is a complex and highly-debated topic in archaeology. Due to the lack of clear direct evidence which could provide a better understanding of the matter, interpretations vary. However, several archaeological indicators may be used to consider aspects of this social change.

This presentation explores the factors that can contribute to research on the potential emergence of social inequality in Neolithic Greece, including the role of environmental conditions, technological innovations and cultural developments. I will mainly focus on presenting selected case studies, such as the regions of Thessaly and Macedonia, that offer the largest amount of evidence and therefore provide the best scope for interpretation and a better view on the topic. This will be followed by a presentation of my own interpretation of the data thus far. This analysis draws on archaeological and anthropological evidence, such as burial practices, settlement patterns and material culture, to shed light on the mechanisms that suggest increased social complexity in this period.

Archaeological excavations at these sites have revealed that some houses were much larger and more elaborate than others, suggesting a possible distinction between groups in these societies. Additionally, the varying presence of finely crafted pottery, jewellery and other luxury goods may indicate that some individuals had greater access to goods of higher-quality and in larger quantities. Another form of evidence could come from burial practices, as in some Neolithic cemeteries, individuals were buried with more (or less) elaborate practices than others. Again, this could indicate differences in social structure and the presence of inequalities.

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Feeding Bottles in Early Mycenaean Greece

New finds of locally produced matt-painted feeding bottles from Early Mycenaean strata uncovered in recent excavations carried out by the University of Salzburg in the so-called Outer Extension of the settlement of Kolonna on Aegina show that there existed more than two roughly contemporary variants of this shape. The main differences concern the size and shape of the handle, as well its alignment with the tubular spout. These variations indicate different ways of handling by the users.

The aim of this paper is to analyse distribution patterns for the variants of the feeding bottle. Since this vessel shape is commonly interpreted as a device for the feeding or weaning of infants, possible differences between feeding practices embedded in societies on the Greek mainland, the Peloponnese and the islands will be examined.

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**Late to the Agricultural Revolution:
the Slow Adoption of Farm Technology in Mycenaean Greece**

This talk proposes that changes to agricultural production in southern Greece during the Late Bronze Age, when Mycenaean palatial society was at its height (c. 1400-1200 BCE), significantly altered the organisation and composition of the labour force. The adoption of new technologies, including the animal-driven plough and agricultural terraces, would have ushered in a revolutionary change from hand farming that relied primarily on human labour to less labour-intensive practices that shifted work to traction animals. There is evidence for an awareness of architectural techniques needed for terracing, the use of ploughs and traction animals earlier in the Bronze Age, but the deployment of these technologies appears to have been restricted to elite segments of society. Widespread adoption was surprisingly slow, perhaps because of the verticality of the landscape and the resources needed to transition away from hand farming.

This paper argues that more extensive use of the plough, traction animals and agricultural terracing was tied to the emergence and development of the Mycenaean palace states, which supported regimes aimed at increasing agricultural production in their immediate and more remote hinterlands. The use of ploughs and terraces would have transformed farming techniques, the number of people engaged in farm labour and labour needs across the agricultural calendar. These subtle but profound changes would have resonated across Mycenaean society and seem to have reshaped agricultural production in ways that continued long after the fall of the palaces.

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Stoned in the Bronze Age?

The State of the Debate on Consumption of Narcotics in Minoan Crete

Studies on the use of narcotics in prehistory have become increasingly popular in recent years, since state-of-the-art archaeometric instruments are more and more capable of detecting the presence of psychoactive plant sources in archaeological material. In the context of Crete and the Minoan civilisation, there is also ample iconographic material related to the use of the opium poppy, which did not exist in nature and was created by human cultivation and selection of a wild species. The depictions of the “Poppy Goddess” added significantly to the public image of the Minoans as the hippies of the ancient world. At the same time, there have been attempts to connect the testified opium consumption with the nature of Minoan “psychedelic” art—a rather misleading concept as I will attempt to point out—with regard to the general characteristics of the substance in question.

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A Dualism of the Lily in the Aegean Seals.

Ornament—Sign Concept

The lily flower is widely regarded as one of the main symbols of Minoan culture. The flower is not only noticeable on pottery, frescoes and weapons but is also quite prominent on seals. Despite the appearance of the lily on stone seals, not only individually but also in an array of different signs, it is seen as a purely ornamental element (Olivier and Godart 1996). The contexts in which the representations of the lily are found are very often linked to religious or palace scenes, demonstrating how important this plant was to the Minoans. It is therefore surprising that such an important plant does not seem to have an representation in writing.

This paper offers a new perspective on the representations of the lily on seals and a discussion of the possibility of seeing it not only as a form of decoration, but also as a pictographic and later Linear A/B sign. It discusses whether it is possible for the lily flower on seals to have two functions at the same time: purely decorative as well as written as a pictogram.

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**Coarse Ware from the Middle Helladic Settlement of the Trapeza:
Overview of Shapes, Functions and Historical Development**

The pottery assemblages from Middle Helladic (MH, 2100–1700 BC) settlements usually display a noticeable variety of wares differing in terms of technology and shapes. Usually, there is a very discernible difference between the high-quality tableware, mainly composed of fine matt-painted and unpainted burnished vessels, and the coarse, at times very crudely-made pottery for domestic use. MH coarse domestic pottery is notoriously associated with a very narrow set of shapes, mostly medium and large-sized jars provided with handles or knobs. Vessels produced in coarse fabrics were mainly used for cooking, although the evidence suggests that they served in other domestic activities, such as food processing, transport and storage. They were also occasionally used as burials receptacles. Indeed, an exclusive, specialised local class of cooking vessels seemingly did not exist at most MH settlements across the Greek mainland, with the only notable exception of Kolonna on Aegina.

This paper stems from direct experience of the materials recovered from the MH settlement of the Trapeza (Eastern Achaea) and focuses on the coarse ware found at the site, with the aim of offering a general description of the ceramics in terms of technology, shapes and possible functions, as well as an insight into the main diachronic trends based on the stratigraphic sequence of the excavations.

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Mycenae and the Corinthia:
Political Periphery or Active Agent?

The relationship between Mycenae and the Corinthia in the Late Bronze Age has often been considered one of dependence. It is clear that Mycenae's political influence extended as far as Tsoungiza and the Nemea Valley in southern Corinthia, and also to the port-town of Kalamianos on the Saronic coastline in the Late Helladic III Period. However, the role of the northern coastal plain of the Corinthia in this complex network of interaction has largely been considered politically dependent upon Mycenae; the extensive system of roads leading to and from Mycenae is one such argument. The lack of any palatial centre found in the Corinthia has also exacerbated this perception, though the Cheliotoumylos tholos tombs now give reason to believe a centre may have existed at Corinth in the Late Helladic Period.

This paper will examine the nature of interaction between Mycenae and the Corinthia in the Late Helladic Period. It will be shown that Mycenae's interests in the Nemea Valley and at Kalamianos were two-fold: 1) to gain a foothold in the land-based communication and trade routes between the Argolid and the Corinthia; 2) to build a stronger maritime presence in the Saronic Gulf and compete with Aeginetan control of maritime trade routes. In contrast, the northern coastal plain of the Corinthia remained an active, independent agent in this network, likely facilitating and benefiting from exchange networks between central and southern Greece. Thus, it occupied an important space within the palatial world while remaining socio-politically independent of palatial control.

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**Dating the Use of Early Mortuary Contexts on Crete:
Combined Relative Dating and Absolute AMS Radiocarbon Determinations**

Radiocarbon determinations from Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (EBA) sites on Crete, except for Knossos, are of rather small number and sporadic. Aiming to add to this record and refine our current absolute chronologies of the early human occupation of Crete, Nafplioti's programme 'Absolute scientific DATING of early Mortuary behaviour in Crete using ultrafiltration AMS radiocarbon (ADAM)' analysed human skeletal from this context and generated a significant number of high-quality AMS radiocarbon (¹⁴C) measurements from old and new funerary sites that are significant to the Neolithic Transition as well as to later developments during the EBA. For most of the sites, these are the first ever calendar dates.

In relation to Crete's EBA funerary contexts, ADAM investigated the duration of their use. Tholos tombs are thought to have been used for hundreds, up to one thousand, years. Yet, despite extensive scholarship and discourse on the tholos tomb use, knowledge of the absolute dating of that use remains sporadic. In response to this, this work suggests a very long period of use for certain sites: in some cases, the calendar dates are more than 500 years apart.

In this paper we focus on the EBA Cave Tomb at Kyparissi. We examine intra-site ¹⁴C dates variation against the associated material culture and the relative dating of the site aiming to shed new light on the duration of its use with a view to reconstructing aspects of the mortuary behaviour and social organisation of the people who used this tomb.

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Sun, Spirals and Seafaring.
Early Cycladic ‘Frying Pans’ in Context

The range of enigmatic Early Cycladic (3300–2300 BCE) vessels known as ‘frying pans’ has been the subject of much academic debate (Coleman 1985; Doumas 1991; Tsikritsis, Moussas & Tsikritsis 2015; Siotis & Aloupi-Siotis 2019) since they were first recognised by Christos Tsountas during excavations on Syros island in the late 19th century (Tsoutnas 1899). Scholars have been drawn to the function of these vessels, with interpretations varying from mirrors (Tsountas 1899; Papathanassoglou & Georgouli 2009), astrolabes (Faucounau 1978), drums (Varoucha 1925–6) and even salt pans (Doumas 1991). Interpretation of the range of iconographic motifs have been as equally varied, ranging from fertility charms (Higgins 1967; Goodison 1989), connections to a goddess (Thimme 1964) and representations of male desire and raiding (Broodbank 2000; Sherratt 2000).

Recent developments in neuroarchaeology (Malafouris 2013) and art theoretical perspectives on prehistoric Aegean iconography (Shapland 2010; Binnberg 2019; Chapin 2020) allow for a fresh take on this material, particularly in how these objects/representations have “intentions in action” (Malafouris 2008) and how the acculturation of the consumer (Muskett 2007) can be informed by their embedment within a landscape or, in this case, islandscape.

This paper takes a contextual and materiality-based approach to Early Cycladic frying pans from several Early Bronze Age sites. The aims are to determine the proportional significance of these motifs in site-wide assemblages, to explore what these representations indicate about Early Cycladic society and to evaluate what significance the bringing of sea onto land held for human-sea interaction in Early Cycladic society.

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“Bones on Fire”.

**A Re-Consideration of the Use of Fire on Human Remains
in the Prehistoric Aegean**

The occurrence of heat-induced effects on human remains in the Aegean, particularly the burial practice of cremation and its origins, has drawn the attention of several scholars for a long time. The practice of cremation signposts the Early Iron Age (11th century BCE onwards), when it either dominates or co-exists in high proportions with inhumations at a wide regional scale. However, increasing evidence for the use of fire on human remains throughout the Neolithic and Bronze Age Aegean has been revealed in the last decades (e.g. Late Neolithic Toumba Kremasti Koilada, Avgi, Kleitos in Western Macedonia, Early Cycladic Keros, Early Bronze Age Kriaritsi Chalcidice, Late Bronze Age Faia Petra Macedonia, Argos, Kazanaki Thessaly), indicating its variable performance either as partial burning of fleshed, defleshed or skeletonised remains or as intentional combustion of the human corpse.

This paper presents an updated evaluation of this Neolithic and Bronze Age Aegean phenomenon by combining all published archaeological data referring to the use of fire on human remains, collected within the framework of the ongoing research programme TEFRA, funded by the Hellenic Foundation of Research and Innovation (H.F.R.I). Different data categories, including context type, structural features, urn types, associated objects and skeletal material, have been systematically recorded in a relational database specially created for the project. Through the synthetic analysis of this evidence we explore spatial and temporal variations regarding the layout and characteristics of the practice, and discuss how its management changes through time and between different regions, pinpointing major similarities and differences.

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Traces of Milk in Two Mycenaean Cups from Glyka Nera, Attica

The chamber tomb excavated in 2008 at Glyka Nera brought to light several interesting aspects of Mycenaean burial customs. Among them was the question of the offering of food or drink to the dead. Two FS 220 cups found inside the chamber of the tomb retained traces of a white substance. The study of the residues proved that it was milk. This find opens yet another chapter in the story of the Mycenaean cemetery of Glyka Nera.

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**How to Approach Population Size Estimation
for Sites along the East Aegean–West Anatolian Interface?**

Several demographic studies have already attempted to reconstruct the size of the prehistoric population for the Aegean region, based on available archaeological resources. However, the region of the eastern Aegean islands and western Anatolia has not been considered sufficiently thus far. While seemingly not far away from the better-documented prehistoric centres of Crete and mainland Greece, dealing with the Interface region makes clear that not all areas can be approached in the same way.

The paper will thus present a new approach to demographic issues for this region and will propose a universal formula for calculating the population size of individual sites, as long as one can determine some of the proposed variables for a given site, on which this formula depends.

First, a synthesis of available demographic studies will be presented, carried out mainly in the Aegean region, but also from the ancient Near East, whose method is also suitable for the Interface area. The proposed variables are based on preserved architecture, especially the type and size of the individual houses, general size of the settlements and percentage of built-up residential area. Finally, population size calculations for the most significant Bronze Age sites along the Interface area will be briefly presented in contrast with values which are already available for sites in the surrounding regions from other previous studies.

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Adorned Bodies in Clay:

Decoration and Painting in Pottery and Clay Figurines in the Neolithic Aegean

The Neolithic Aegean figurines have been traditionally treated as a separate special category of material culture by scholars, which differs from other categories of artefacts, such as pottery. As such, the relationship of decoration and colour between pottery and figurines has been largely neglected, particularly as regards the Neolithic Aegean. Talalay (1993: 33) pointed out the similarity between pottery and figurines at Franchthi Cave. This led her to suggest a degree of organisation and control over the production process, from obtaining the raw material and the firing methods and style. Knowledge of pottery making was probably needed to model clay figurines since both require the use of similar techniques and decorations.

In this paper, I will analyse the relationship between figurines and pottery, particularly regarding their decoration, colour, style and motifs, focusing on two case studies: figurines from Neolithic Crete and Thessaly. The aim is to understand whether shared decorative motifs between figurines and ceramic vessels derive from contemporary vase painting, from clothing or have entirely different meanings. Hybrid examples that mix pottery vessels with parts of anthropomorphic figurines depicting human faces or bodies will also be analysed. The sharing of motifs between pottery, figurines and anthropomorphic vessels may indicate a close symbolic meaning that links pottery with the human form. The widely shared repetition of specific patterns between figurines and pottery across different sites in Neolithic Greece will be used as evidence to interpret the meanings of motifs as possibly representing woven prototypes.

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Metal Production as Evidence of Social Changes and Interaction between the Aegean World and Sicily in the Second Millennium BC

The Aegean influence in Sicily pertains to every field of production, especially from the second millennium BC. The *facies* of Thapsos (Thapsos, Cannatello, Caldare, 1470–1250 BC) marked the peak of Mycenaean influence in Middle Bronze Age Sicily, showing hybridisation phenomena. The paper will present networks, exchanges and influences through the perspective of metallurgical finds within the Aegean area (with a special mention for Crete and Cyprus) and Sicily, considered one of the most important points of exchange and contact in the Mediterranean. The study of metal objects proves the ability of Sicilian people to interact with their external environment and independently produce these artefacts. Remains from archaeological sites in Sicily have been analysed in terms of their different metal objects and their functional use. A distributive analysis of these materials shows three different areas of concentration, all strictly connected with the Aegean.

The study of metallurgy supplies irreplaceable data, not just limited to the technical-scientific sphere, but also information on production, development and exchange mechanisms of pre- and protohistoric societies. A metallurgical analysis of finds provides key evidence on the cultural organisation of communities which processed raw materials. The main aim of this presentation will be to point out the traces of social changes and interactions that occurred during the Bronze Age in two different areas that were, nevertheless, part of the same network system.

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Importance of Aegean Pottery from Tell el-Retaba, Egypt

The paper's main goal is to present a set of Aegean ceramic fragments from a domestic context in Tell el-Retaba, Egypt. What is the importance of Aegean imported pottery found at this site and how does the material correspond to other similar finds in Egypt?

Tell el-Retaba is a settlement located in Egypt in the middle of Wadi Tumilat in the eastern part of the Nile Delta. It has been excavated by the Polish-Slovak Archaeological Mission since 2007. The project discovered that the site was settled at the beginning of the 15th Dynasty and occupied until the Ptolemaic Period, including the New Kingdom.

We found three small fragments of Aegean ceramic vessels in the early 18th Dynasty (Late Minoan IA–IB) deposits, most probably Minoan imports. Twenty-three fragments from layers dated to the 19th (Late Helladic IIIB) and 20th (Late Helladic IIIC) Dynasties are Mycenaean pots, among which stirrup jars can be recognised.

Minoan and Mycenaean pots are well-known in Egypt. They were imported to the Nile Valley for their valuable contents although the pots themselves represented a value since many of them were imitated, for example in Egyptian faience.

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A New Late Bronze Age Installation in Ioannina Basin, in Epirus—NW Greece

During the construction works for a peripheral road of Ioannina city in NW Greece, the remains of a prehistoric installation dating to the Late Bronze Age came to light. Rescue excavation started in 2021 and continued in 2022, revealing part of two structures, most probably habitation areas, destroyed by fire. Burned daub fragments and carbonised architectural wood elements cover the habitation layer, which yielded a great number of hand-made, utilitarian vessels of various forms and sizes. A few wheel-made pots were also present, along with a limited number of stone tools. Earth samples were regularly collected for future analysis of carbonised faunal and floral remains.

This paper is a preliminary report of the excavation of the small installation, which offers new data regarding habitation in the lakeside areas of the Ioannina basin, and complements the fragmentary picture we have of the settlements in mainland Epirus during the Late Bronze Age.

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House of the Rising Class:
Contextual Re-Study of the Architectural Form and Socio-Economic Status
of the Panagia Houses at Mycenae

The Panagia Houses at Mycenae comprised a group of buildings that were traditionally described by the excavator as three independent units and ordinary Mycenaean households of three separate families (Mylonas-Shear 1987). Problems in confirming this view in the archaeological record have been previously noticed in the literature (see, for example, Darcque 2005; Burns 2007; Efkleidou 2021). This presentation proposes a complete re-analysis of the complex and reinterpretation of its form, status and function, based on detailed information on the stratigraphy, architecture and finds. The buildings are discussed as elements of a single internally integrated architectural unit—a large well-equipped yet non-elite household of an extended family. It had access to a number of valuable goods and most probably participated in the palatial system for the distribution of goods. A comparison of the Panagia Houses with other buildings reveals that the complex was probably inhabited by a middle-class family of specialised craftsmen or palatial service, and certainly not by the poor of the Mycenaean community. During the Late Helladic IIIB Period, the complex went through two main phases of occupation, characterised by a profound change of the architectural form, followed by a short-period of Post-Palatial reoccupation. The biography of the building reflects closely the history of Late Bronze Age Mycenae and the changing living conditions of the inhabitants of its lower town.

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**Mortality Salience and the Treatment of the Dead in South-West Messenia,
from the Middle Helladic to the Late Helladic Period**

Behavioural studies suggest that the awareness of one's mortality (mortality salience) increases the inclination to respond positively towards circulating values, encouraging the upholding of salient practices (Cohen 2000; Greenberg *et al.* 1986; Rosenblatt *et al.* 1989; Solomon *et al.* 1991). Nevertheless, when the acceptance of these values diminishes, the motivation to modify aspects of practices increases, resulting in small changes that eventually modify the entire set of practices that identify a community.

This paper explores the impact of mortality salience (Rosenblatt *et al.* 1989) on the emergence, maintenance and change of mortuary practices in south-west Messenia during the Middle Helladic and Late Helladic Periods (*ca.* 2050/2000 BCE to 1200/1190 BCE). Using the results of osteoarchaeological analyses undertaken on skeletal manipulation practices from eight Messenian cemeteries, this analysis examines how individuals addressed their mortality salience by reforming their proximal and distal defences (Greenberg *et al.* 1986, 2000; Arndt *et al.* 2003; Pyszczyński *et al.* 1999) through mortuary practice, and how the taming of mortality salience, as proposed by Ariès (1976), is reflected in the introduction of new mortuary practices following the disarticulation of the dead.

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