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# Πληροφοριακό Δελτίο της Ελληνικής Αρχαιομετρικής Εταιρείας

**- Δεκέμβριος 2012 -**

Love is all we have, the only way that each can help the  
other.

*(Euripides)*

## Newsletter of the Hellenic Society of Archaeometry

**- December 2012 -**

**Nr. 141**

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## ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΑ - CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS

### NEW DEADLINE FOR MONOGRAPHIC SESSIONS, <sup>14</sup>C AND ARCHAEOLOGY SYMPOSIUM

Dear all,

We would like to inform you that the deadline to submit a monographic session for the <sup>14</sup>C & Archaeology symposium in Ghent (8-12 April 2013) is postponed to **1 December 2012**.

The <sup>14</sup>C & Archeology organising committee



- 12 April 2013, Ghent, Belgium <http://www.radiocarbon2013.ugent.be>

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## **SUMMER INTENSIVE COURSE ON ANCIENT METALS AND METALLOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON, JULY 22- 26TH, 2013**

Course: Ancient and Historic Metals: Technology, Microstructure, and Corrosion.  
To be held at: University College London, Department of Mechanical Engineering,  
Torrington Place, London WC1E 7JE, UK. This is close to Malet Street and Gower  
Street. A great central London location.

Date: July 22-26th, 2013.

Instructor: Dr. David A. Scott, Professor, Department of Art History, Founding Director,  
UCLA/Getty Programme in Archaeological and Ethnographic Conservation.

Course Aims: This five-day course will act both as an introduction and a focus of more  
intensive study dealing with the examination, analysis, metallographic examination and  
corrosion of ancient and historic metals.

The course is designed to benefit conservators, scientists and archaeologists who wish to  
learn how to prepare metallic samples for metallographic study, learn something of the  
technological aspects of the working and structure of metals, and how corrosion and  
patination can be discussed and examined with the aid of polished cross-sections.

Artefacts for examination: Over the past 30 years an unrivalled collection of mounted  
metallographic samples has been assembled, which are studied as part of the course  
practical work, involving both polarized light microscopy and metallographic  
microscopy of freshly polished and etched samples. These samples range from cast iron  
from China to wootz steel from India, bronze coinage alloys from the Roman Empire to  
high-tin bronze from ancient Thailand, silver alloys from the Parthian period to ancient  
Ecuador, gilded copper and tumbaga from Peru and Colombia, to mention only a few of  
the geographical areas covered by available samples. Course participants will be  
instructed in the use of polishing and etching in the examination of samples and are  
encouraged to keep digital images which can be downloaded directly to their own  
computer, of the samples they have prepared during the week.

Students may also bring their own samples for examination if mounted and ground, or if  
not mounted, then one or two samples may be brought which can be mounted and  
prepared during the course.

Course Instructor: Dr. David A. Scott, Professor, Department of Art History, UCLA.  
His book, *Copper and Bronze in Art: Corrosion, Colorants, Conservation* won the prize  
from the Association of American Publishers as the best Scholarly/Art book published  
in the USA in 2002. His book on *Iron and Steel: Corrosion, Colorants, Conservation*,  
written with Professor Gerhard Eggert, was published from London in July 2009.  
Professor Scott's most recent books are very relevant for this course, and were published  
in 2011 and 2012. "Ancient Metals: Microstructure and Metallurgy, Volume 1", ISBN  
978-0982933800, the volume from 2011, is included in the cost of the course: each  
participant will receive one copy of this volume. Other background reading which relates  
directly to the samples we shall study during the week have been published in the second  
volume of this series, *Gold and Platinum Metallurgy of Ancient Ecuador and Colombia*,

ISBN 978-0982933848, together with volume three, some additional plates for this topic, ISBN 978-0982933831, and additional bronzes available for study whose microstructures were published in Copper and Bronze in Art, ISBN 978-0892366389, mentioned above. For further details regarding ordering of these additional books please contact the author.

Please send an e-mail to: [dascott@ucla.edu](mailto:dascott@ucla.edu) to register for this course.

Include brief details of your background, education and current interest in ancient metals. If you have an interest in a particular area of ancient metals which can be examined using polished samples, please do let me know when registering, as selected samples have to be transported from the USA to the UK for this course.

Professor Scott has published over 110 papers in the peer-reviewed literature and eight books. He has been an editor for the journal 'Studies in Conservation' for the past 30 years.

Course Schedule: The course will be held over the five days, Monday-Friday, July 22nd - July 26th , 2013. The course will take place at UCL Department of Mechanical Engineering, Torrington Place, London WC1E 7JE. Many nearby hotels and hostels can be found in this area. The course will run from 9:15am-5pm each day.

The course is open to a maximum of 10 participants only.

Course Costs: The cost of the instruction for the five days will be \$900.00 or sterling equivalent of this amount (550 Pounds Sterling).

For details of payment and to register for this course, please contact the course organizer and director:

Professor David A. Scott, Room A410,  
The Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles CA  
90095-1510, USA [dascott@ucla.edu](mailto:dascott@ucla.edu)

### **Course Details:**

Monday: Introduction, use of the metallurgical microscope and the taking of digital images. The use of JScale to create scale bars for the images, the mounting and polishing of samples, their preparation, use of resins, grinding and polishing. Introduction to phase diagrams, using the copper-silver equilibrium diagram and examination of silver-copper alloys from the ancient world. Examples of Sasanian silver plates, ancient Greek silver, Byzantine silver platters, Renaissance silver plaques and dishes and Ecuadorian silver-copper alloys.

Introduction to copper and bronze. Examination of the different versions of the copper-tin phase diagram and their application to ancient bronzes and copper alloys. Mounting and polishing of ancient samples and how different kinds of etching can be used.

Tuesday: Continuation of the examination of copper-tin and copper-tin-lead alloys. Wide variety of laboratory-made alloys and ancient samples encompassing the copper-tin series and copper-tin-lead. Ancient Chinese bronze mirrors. South American copper-arsenic alloys, and ancient Greek bronzes will be highlighted.

Casting and working of metals and aspects of bronze casting in the ancient world. Colour etching of selected mounted samples. Recording of samples with digital camera and case studies in the examination of a group of Greek copper alloy plaques and Renaissance bronze figurines will be discussed.

Wednesday: Continuation of practical session. Examination of mounted samples of copper alloys. Introduction to the metallurgy of iron and the iron-carbon phase diagram. Preparation of metallographic samples of iron from Anglo-Saxon and Mediaeval sites in Great Britain, Ancient Turkey and Nigeria, Mafa ironwork from the Cameroons, Japanese swordblade, Chinese cast iron and meteoritic iron from Australia and the USA.

Thursday: Mounting and discussion of samples brought by students.

Gold alloys and gilding. Examination of gold-copper alloys from ancient Colombia, gilded samples from Peru and Ecuador, and amalgam gilded artefacts from China and Europe. Examination of some ternary phase issues in relation to gold-silver-copper alloys. The corrosion of tumbaga alloys and aspects of the Pourbaix diagram.

Friday: Continuation of practical examination of mounted samples, including lead, zinc, tin, and nickel. Some examples of stainless steels and other special or more modern metals, such as weathering steel and examination of mounted specimens prepared earlier in the week.

**David A. Scott**  
[dascott@ucla.edu](mailto:dascott@ucla.edu)

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**HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN**  
**TERRACOTTAS: MEDITERRANEAN**  
**NETWORKS AND CYPRUS CONFERENCE,**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS, NICOSIA, 3-5**  
**JUNE 2013**

Dear colleagues,

The Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus invites the submission of papers for the conference Hellenistic and Roman Terracottas: Mediterranean Networks and Cyprus dedicated to the study of Hellenistic and Roman terracottas from the Mediterranean region. The workshop will be held at the University of Cyprus, in Nicosia, during 3-5 June 2013. The conference is under the auspices of the Coroplastic Studies Interest Group.

Terracotta figurines embody ancient tangible and intangible cultural evidence and meanings. In addition to the artistic, technological and economic aspects involved in their study, they also objectify socio-cultural (i.e. religious and ideological) expressions; they become invaluable testimonies to everyday life, encoding important cognitive elements, expressing human self-awareness and reflecting meanings and ideas of the societies that produced and used them. The multifaceted significance of Cypriot terracottas has been acknowledged by a large corpus of published data that addresses a series of interlinked issues, related to their typological, stylistic and chronological classification, the technology and techniques employed in their manufacture, their provenance, the mode of their production, the scale of their distribution, and their role as cultural artefacts in differing social contexts. Despite the substantial studies on earlier Cypriot terracottas, the Hellenistic and Roman production remains with very few exceptions highly neglected and outside recent theoretical and scientific developments.

This conference is organised within the framework of a research project currently funded by the Anastasios G. Leventis Foundation via the University of Cyprus. The project aims at establishing a more concrete scholarly discussion on the study of Hellenistic and Roman terracottas. In particular, by integrating different approaches of analysis, it aims to study the terracotta figurines from the “House of Orpheus” at Nea Paphos, tackling simultaneously the aforementioned issues for these later periods of Cypriot Antiquity. Additionally, through comparative studies with other Cypriot and Mediterranean sites, this project proposes to examine continuing and changing patterns of production, distribution and function of Cypriot terracottas, as a result of the interplay between local structures and incoming Ptolemaic and Roman socio-political and socio-cultural impositions.

In the context of this on-going project we organize this conference on the one hand in order to present some of the material and preliminary results, and on the other in an attempt to introduce the “House of Orpheus”<sup>TM</sup> figurines within their broader socio-cultural and socio-political Cypriot and Mediterranean contexts. Thus we welcome contributions related to material (both large and small scale terracottas) not only from



Cyprus, but also from the wider Mediterranean region. Building on the International Symposium “Figurines in Context: Iconography and Function(s)”™, held on December 7-8, 2011, in Lille, the purpose of a meeting with such a wide perspective is to gather reliable evidence from well-known archaeological contexts (e.g. sanctuaries, burials, houses) that will shed light on the function of Hellenistic and Roman terracotta figurines and their associated technology and iconography.

The conference will focus on: (1) The typological and iconographic analysis of terracottas; (2) Technological studies focusing on fabrics, slips and pigments; (3) Issues of chronology, technology of manufacture, provenance and distribution; and (4) The contextualisation of terracottas within their individual depositional intra-site and extra-site contexts.

Proposals for presentations could focus on one or more of the following research questions:

• What are the similarities/differences between the deposition of Hellenistic and Roman terracottas in different contexts (i.e., sacred, funeral and domestic)?

• Do the meanings of the object change according to the context and/or the period?

• How can spatial analysis (both intra-site and across a wider range) of terracottas contribute to the identification of their distribution and function?

• What is the relationship between Hellenistic/Roman technological and iconographic traditions with the earlier (Archaic and Classical) local traditions?

• What is the impact of local traditions and what are the levels of cultural transmissions and transformations?

• Can we determine and distinguish between locally produced and imported terracotta figurines?

• Can we notice any differences in the function of locally produced and imported terracotta figurines?

• What is the impact of comparative studies when studying Hellenistic and Roman terracotta figurines?

• How do the disciplines of anthropology, natural and computer sciences (e.g. archaeometry, digital humanities etc.) help in the better understanding of both the function and the manufacture/distribution of Hellenistic and Roman terracotta figurines?

• What is the relationship between Hellenistic/Roman technological and iconographic traditions with the earlier (Archaic and Classical) local traditions?

• What is the impact of local traditions and what are the levels of cultural transmissions and transformations?

• Can we determine and distinguish between locally produced and imported terracotta figurines?

• Can we notice any differences in the function of locally produced and imported terracotta figurines?

• What is the impact of comparative studies when studying Hellenistic and Roman terracotta figurines?

• How do the disciplines of anthropology, natural and computer sciences (e.g. archaeometry, digital humanities etc.) help in the better understanding of both the function and the manufacture/distribution of Hellenistic and Roman terracotta figurines?

### **Abstract Submission**

Abstracts of a maximum of 300 words should be submitted by 31 January 2013 to [papantoniou.giorgos@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:papantoniou.giorgos@ucy.ac.cy) in Word format including:

Surname  
First Name  
Position  
Affiliation  
Phone number  
Email address  
Title of the paper

You should be informed of the outcome of your abstract submission by 17 February 2013.

### **Presentations**

The official language of the workshop is English. Presentations should not exceed 20 minutes. A draft version of the paper should be submitted by 30 April 2013. The papers will be read in advance of the meeting by a specialist who has undertaken the role of discussant. It is hoped that, in this way, there will be a meaningful discussion and contextualisation of the terracottas presented.

### **Conference Expenses**

Participants are responsible for their travel and accommodation expenses. There will be no registration fee and, during the conference, lunch and coffee will be offered by the Archaeological Research Unit of the University of Cyprus.

### **Publication**

For the consistency of the volume we would advise you to address in the best possible way at least some of the research questions posed above. The peer-reviewed papers will be published in the form of an edited collection of studies and not as the proceedings of a conference. Acceptance for presentation of a paper, therefore, does not guarantee acceptance for publication.

### **Convenors**

Prof. Demetrios Michaelides  
Dr Giorgos Papantoniou  
Dr Maria Dikomitou-Eliadou

### **Contact**

Dr Giorgos Papantoniou: [papantoniou.giorgos@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:papantoniou.giorgos@ucy.ac.cy)

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**"NINMACH 2013 - NEUTRON IMAGING AND  
NEUTRON METHODS IN MUSEUMS AND  
CULTURAL HERITAGE RESEARCH", FRM  
II, TU MUENCHEN, GARCHING, GERMANY,  
SEPT 9-12, 2013**

NINMACH 2013

Neutron Imaging and Neutron Methods in Museums and Cultural  
Heritage Research Conference

A message to be posted on behalf of our colleague Burkhard Schillinger.

We are pleased to announce "NINMACH 2013 - Neutron Imaging and Neutron Methods in Museums and Cultural Heritage Research" to be held at FRM II, TU Muenchen, Garching, Germany, on Sept 9-12, 2013, under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

**Details can be found at:**

**[URL:http://www.frm2.tum.de/aktuelles/veranstaltungen/ninmach-2013/index.html](http://www.frm2.tum.de/aktuelles/veranstaltungen/ninmach-2013/index.html)**

This new conference is explicitly designed to connect conservators, archaeologists, historians, museum professionals and scientists. The aim is to further the use of neutron investigative methods in cultural heritage research.

Neutrons easily penetrate thick layers of metals, even lead, while revealing organic material like wood, leather or bones in sealed metal or stone containers. Two- and three-dimensional imaging provides visual information, while neutron activation analysis delivers elemental composition information, and neutron scattering reveals alloys and textures.

The conference addresses both neutron researchers with experience in neutron methods as well as complete newcomers from the museum and archaeology side who wish to get an overview about neutron methods available for their work, but also scientists from small reactors where neutron imaging can be put to a new use in cultural heritage research.

Please pass this mail on to anyone who might be interested, and \*please\* pre-register your interest on the web site as early as possible!

Since this conference is a world's first, we do not know how many participants to expect, and we urgently need your help to get a first estimate.

The conference will be organised as non-profit, the fees only covering local costs such as meals.

**Investigative methods:**

Neutron Imaging: Radiography and Tomography  
Autoradiography  
Activation Analysis  
Prompt Gamma Activation Analysis  
Neutron Resonance Capture Analysis  
Large Object Imaging with Fast Neutrons  
Advanced Imaging Methods: Bragg Edge Scanning, Phase Gratings,  
Texture  
Scattering Methods

**Investigative subjects:**

Numismatics (Greco-Roman coins and others)  
Textile Conservation/Archaeology  
Organic residues on archaeological metal objects  
Non-destructive characterization of metal structures  
Autoradiography of paintings  
Statuettes and Figurines  
Ceramics  
Wood conservation, impregnation with liquid consolidants  
Fossils

Looking forward to welcoming you in Garching,

\*\*\*\*\*

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**USC'S TRAINING PROGRAM FOR  
SCHOLARS, CONSERVATORS, LIBRARY  
AND MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS,  
ARCHIVISTS AND RESEARCHERS IN THE  
USE OF REFLECTANCE TRANSFORMATION  
IMAGING (RTI) FOR DOCUMENTING  
ANCIENT TEXTS AND ARTIFACTS,  
INCLUDING THE LOAN OF IMAGING  
EQUIPMENT, CALL FOR PROPOSALS  
(ROUND TWO)**

The University of Southern California's West Semitic Research Project ([www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp](http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp)) has just approved the first applicants for training in Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI). The projects that have been accepted include RTI documentation of:

- \* Egyptian graffiti incised on stone blocks
- \* Wax and lead tablets and clay seals ranging from the first century BCE to the eighth century CE
- \* Egyptian quartzite statues
- \* Korean artifacts

The Training Program is funded by grants from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The IMLS and the Mellon Foundation have also funded the purchase of imaging equipment to support the Training Program.

The objective of this project is to develop an infrastructure for training scholars in the use of RTI technology and subsequently to lend the necessary imaging equipment to participants in the training program so they can do an initial RTI documentation project either in field environments (archaeological sites, etc.) or in libraries, museums and/or other similar venues, worldwide. This initial undertaking should be understood to be a pilot project that can develop into an ongoing, broader documentary effort and preferably may also serve as the catalyst for establishing a scholarly network consortium for image documentation of a given corpus (or corpora) of ancient texts and/or artifacts. All equipment to be lent out is both rugged and compact and is thus ideal for doing sophisticated imaging in remote locations. Twenty-four awards over three years (approximately eight per year) for traineeships will be provided based on the merit and intrinsic importance of a proposed pilot imaging project as well as the appropriateness of the subject matter for RTI imaging.

The next deadline for applying to the training program is January 15, 2013, followed by another deadline of April 15, 2013.

For more information, see

[http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/Training\\_Program.pdf](http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/Training_Program.pdf),

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/wsrp/projects/imls.shtml>, or contact Marilyn Lundberg ([mlundber@usc.edu](mailto:mlundber@usc.edu)) or Bruce Zuckerman ([bzuckerm@usc.edu](mailto:bzuckerm@usc.edu)).

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**HISTORICAL METALLURGY SOCIETY 50TH**  
**ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE 14TH-16TH**  
**JUNE 2013 FRIENDS HOUSE, 173-177 EUSTON**  
**ROAD, LONDON, NW1 2BJ**

This international academic conference is the culmination of a series of events marking the 50th Anniversary of the Historical Metallurgy Society and will provide a high-level 'state of the art' profile of current and future developments in the various disciplines which HMS represents.

The four themes of this meeting are:

- Origins of metallurgy. Chairs Paul Craddock & Thilo Rehren.
- Innovation and change. Chairs David Bourgarit & Justine Bayley.
- Society and metalworkers. Chairs Marcos Martín-Torres & Vincent Serneels.
- The future of historical and archaeological metallurgy. Chairs David Killick & David Dungworth.

Offers of papers or posters are welcome on any of these themes, from academics and students, archaeologists, historians, and independent researchers including local study groups and community archaeology programmes.

There will be facilities available for posters and time will be allocated for a poster session. The maximum size for posters is A0 (841 x 1189mm – upright/portrait format).

Due to popular demand the call for papers deadline has been extended.

Abstracts for papers and posters should be submitted by December 3rd 2012 at the latest. Please indicate which session you think would be most appropriate. For more information or to submit an abstract please contact [Eleanor.Blakelock@archaeomaterials.co.uk](mailto:Eleanor.Blakelock@archaeomaterials.co.uk) or post to Eleanor Blakelock, Studio Flat, 616 Green Lanes, London, N8 0SD, United Kingdom.

Abstracts should be no longer than 250 words. Please include the name and affiliation of all authors and indicate the presenting author in bold letters.

For more information and for the booking form visit <http://hist-met.org/agm2013.html>

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**WARFARE IN BRONZE AGE SOCIETY - THE  
IMPACT OF COMBAT AND WARFARE ON  
SOCIETIES IN BRONZE AGE EUROPE AND  
BEYOND, UNIVERSITETETS  
HUVUDBYGGNAD (MAIN BUILDING),  
VASAPARKEN, SAL 10, DECEMBER 6TH AND  
7TH**

**Preliminary Program**

Thursday, December 6th

Warfare, economy, and Society

9:15-9:45

Keynote: Helle Vandkilde

Warfare and pre-state societies: modern imaginaries and scientific/academic enquiries

9:45-10:15

Angelos Papadopoulos

Parallel Lives? The Relationship between Warriors, Pirates and Merchants in Late Bronze Age Eastern Mediterranean

10:15-10:45

Barry Molloy

A portrait of Dorian Grey (areas): Warfare and mobility in the central and southern Balkan peninsula in the 13th to 11th centuries BC.

10:45-11:15

Coffee Break

11:15-11:45

Kate Anderson

Becoming the Warrior: Constructed Identity or Functional Activity in Late Bronze Age Northern Britain

11:45-12:15

Florian Klimscha

The Emergence of specialized Combat Weapons in the Levantine Bronze Age

12:15-12:45

Marc Gener

A sword is a sword is a sword. Carp's tongue swords and their use. Functional, technological and morphological aspects.

12:45-13:45

Lunch

13:45-14:15

Peter Fischer

to be announced

14:15-14:45



Sophie Bergerbrant  
Bronze Age Warfare and Textile  
14:45-15:15

Stephen O'Brien  
Violence and Gender in the Late Bronze Age Aegean  
15:15-15:45  
Coffee Break

15:45-16:15  
Derek Pitman  
Beyond the grave: Crafting identities in the Middle Bronze Age Southern Trans Urals  
16:15-16:45  
Jan-Heinrich Bunnefeld  
The Chief and his Sword? – Some Thoughts on the Swordfighter's Rank in the Early Nordic Bronze Age  
16:45-17:15 Keynote  
Kristian Kristiansen  
to be announced

Friday, December 7th  
Warfare or ...?, Warfare and ...?  
9:15-9:45  
Keynote: Anthony Harding  
Bronze Age encounters: violent or peaceful  
9:45-10:15  
Knut Rassmann  
Early Bronze Age fortified settlements - Indications of destabilization or stabilization in intragroup relations?  
10:15-10:45  
Thomas Terberger et al.  
Warfare or sacrifice? - New archaeological investigations on the Bronze Age site in the Tollense Valley, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, northeast Germany  
10:45-11:15  
Coffee Break

11:15-11:45  
Joakim Goldhahn  
On war and memory and the memory of war – the Middle Bronze Age burial from Hvidegården on Zealand in Denmark revisited  
11:45-12:15  
Johan Ling  
Maritime warfare on the rocks  
12:15-12:45  
Ioannis Georganas  
“Warrior Graves” vs Warrior Graves in Late Bronze Age Aegean  
12:45-13:45  
Lunch

13:45-14:15  
David Fontijn

Transformation through destruction - warrior paraphernalia in ritual, 1600-500 BC

14:15-14:45

Lene Melheim

Tales of hoards and swordfighters: the brand new and the broken

14:45-15:15

Christian Horn

Warfare vs. Exchange? Towards an integrated approach to past societies

15:15-15:45

Ole Christian Aslaksen

Eastern Mediterranean Bronze Age Warfare as a Mixed Martial Art

15:45-16:15

Coffee Break

16:15

Final Discussion

**Please visit the site:**

[http://www.historiskastudier.gu.se/english/current/news/Nyhet\\_detalj//warfare-in-bronze-age-society.cid1106465](http://www.historiskastudier.gu.se/english/current/news/Nyhet_detalj//warfare-in-bronze-age-society.cid1106465)

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**INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC**  
**CONFERENCE: AN ISLAND BETWEEN TWO**  
**WORLDS: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF**  
**EUBOEA FROM PREHISTORIC TO**  
**BYZANTINE TIMES, ERETRIA, JULY 12-14,**  
**2013, CALL FOR PAPERS**

The Norwegian Institute at Athens in collaboration with the 11th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities and the 23rd Ephorate for Byzantine Antiquities of the Hellenic Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, Culture, and Sports invites all interested colleagues working on Euboea or whose research is in some way connected to this island to participate in the scientific conference on the archaeology of Euboea, entitled: “An Island between Two Worlds: The Archaeology of Euboea from Prehistoric to Byzantine Times.” The conference will take place over the period of three consecutive days in Eretria in July of 2013.

Euboea, the second largest Aegean island and the island closest to the Greek mainland, has always had a dual identity, being considered both an island and a part of the mainland, in geographical and cultural terms. From one end to the other, Euboea also connects southern and northern Greece, the Cyclades and Thessaly. This dual identity, based as much in history as in geography, persisted through millennia of Euboea’s past and, in combination with Euboea’s position along the many Aegean sea-routes, produced an archaeological record that merges features from both the Greek mainland and the insular world of the Aegean.

Euboea has been the focus of generations of Greek and international scholars resulting in more than two thousand different publications since the 1960s. The island’s past has benefitted from the work of regional (i.e. the 11th Prehistoric and Classical and the 23rd Byzantine Ephorates) and of specialized (i.e., The Ephorate for Palaeoanthropology-Speleology of Southern Greece and the Ephorate for Underwater Antiquities) archaeology directorates of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture. The Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece and the British School at Athens have been present on Euboea the longest, working principally in the central part of the island, most notably at Eretria, Lefkandi, and Amarnythos. The work of the Canadian, Dutch, and Norwegian Institutes has focused on the southern part of Euboea. The undisputable wealth of scholarship that testifies to Euboea’s importance and uniqueness makes it imperative that the archaeology of the entire island be put once again into scientific spotlight in its own right. This conference has the objective of providing a forum where past and present work of archaeologists studying Euboea can be showcased and discussed. We also hope to attract colleagues currently working on the island to present their most recent research. In this way, we aim to reaffirm the rightfully important place of the island of Euboea in the scientific efforts to understand the past of this part of the Mediterranean.

**ABSTRACT SUBMISSION**

All paper abstracts must be submitted electronically in either Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or Adobe PDF (.pdf) format and accompanied by a cover letter/email stating the name, institutional affiliation, and the preferred contact information (email) of the applicant. The languages acceptable for abstract submissions and paper presentations are English and Greek. The length of the abstract should not exceed 400 words. The abstract submission deadline is January 15, 2013. The abstracts and all inquiries should be sent to the conference email address at: [contact.euboeaconference@norwinst.gr](mailto:contact.euboeaconference@norwinst.gr).

## CONFERENCE FORMAT

The format of the conference is paper-and-PowerPoint podium presentations. The conference will take place in Eretria. The organizers are working on securing funding options for accepted conference presenters. The presentations will be divided into sessions at the discretion of the Organizing Committee. We intend to publish the proceedings of the conference. We particularly invite colleagues to submit papers on the following general conference themes or the combination thereof, but we also welcome any papers connected to the archaeology of Euboea:

- History of archaeological research on Euboea
- Euboea between the mainland and the islands
- The first Euboeans: evidence for Palaeolithic and Neolithic habitation in Euboea
- In the middle of the wine-dark sea: Euboea and maritime interactions during the Aegean Bronze Age
- From core to periphery: Euboea from Geometric to Hellenistic times
- Times of trouble or prosperity? Euboea during Roman and early Byzantine times
- Between east and west: the archaeology of Byzantine, crusader, and Venetian Euboea
- Problems and solutions: future directions of archaeological research on Euboea
- The past as the driving force of the future: Euboean cultural heritage and tourism
- Difficult issues and simple solutions: supporting and funding archaeological research and cultural heritage protection on Euboea

Sincerely,

Conference Organizing Committee

\*\*\*\*\*  
NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE AT ATHENS  
TSAMI KARATASOU 5, GR-117 42, ATHENS, GREECE  
TEL: 210 92 31 351, 210 92 41 420. FAX: 210 92 15 993  
E-MAIL: [contact@norwinst.gr](mailto:contact@norwinst.gr)  
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## **BRITISH SCHOOL AT ATHENS UPPER HOUSE SEMINAR**

THE DIRECTOR OF THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT ATHENS INVITES YOU TO AN  
UPPER HOUSE SEMINAR

MONDAY, 3RD DECEMBER, 2012 AT 7.00 P.M.

Dr Ann Brysbaert

(University of Leicester)

will introduce the topic:

“Talking shop: multicraft workshop materials and materialities in prehistoric Tiryns,  
Greece”

The UH seminar will take place in the saloni of the Director’s residence, British School  
at Athens.

Entrance from 52 Souedias str. Tel: 211 1022 800

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**ΘΕΣΕΙΣ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΣ/ΥΠΟΤΡΟΦΙΕΣ –**  
**JOB VACANCIES/FELLOWSHIPS**

**MELLON POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP**  
**AT NORTHWESTERN**

Northwestern University's Middle East and North African Studies Program invites applications for a two-year Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship beginning September 1, 2013. All strong applicants from any discipline are encouraged to apply, while there is particular interest in applicants whose work and/or teaching is in the following areas: Iran, North Africa, the Gulf States, religion, migration, gender and sexuality, race/ethnicity, legal studies, science and technology studies.

Northwestern's MENA Program is a new initiative whose core faculty specialize in a range of topics in a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, art history, history, literature, media studies, and political science. The successful candidate will teach two courses per year in the appropriate department or program within the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences.

AA/EOE. Applications from minority and women scholars are especially welcome. Applicants should hold a PhD granted during or after 2009; all requirements for the PhD must be completed before the start date.

Please read ALL instructions and make all preparations before proceeding to the application link at the bottom of this page.

TO PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SUBMIT A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION for an applicant:

please use the link sent in the e-mail that requested your letter (that is, do not use the link given at the bottom of this page).

1. Applications will only be accepted through the online form (link at the bottom of page). Please make sure all documents are prepared in advance, because partial applications will not be accepted and cannot be saved. Also, please be sure all information is entered completely and accurately (especially names and email addresses), as there will be no opportunity for online revision after your application has been accepted.

2. All uploaded files should be in Adobe PDF format. Files in another electronic format (e.g., MS Word) should be saved or "printed to" PDF format before uploading. If you only have a paper version of a particular document, you may scan it and save it as a PDF. The first method is preferred, however, because it retains text recognition capabilities.

3. Three names and email addresses for external referees are required.

Soon after you submit your complete online application, your references will automatically be emailed instructions for uploading a letter of recommendation. NOTE: If you are using a professional placement or dossier service (e.g., interfolio) to submit

any or all recommendations, please use the service's address instead of your referee's address in the appropriate space. Once again, please be sure all addresses are entered correctly with no spelling errors; otherwise your referee or dossier service will not receive the instructions.

4. A completed application must include the following:

Cover letter (that addresses proposed research for the fellowship period and teaching experience)

Curriculum Vitae

Writing Sample (15-page limit)

3 Letters of Reference

5. Some things to remember before uploading your documents:

Please note that no document may exceed 4 MB in size, so be sure to minimize the size of any large PDF files before uploading.

File names should not contain parentheses, quotation marks, or other such characters; the system will likely not accept such documents.

6. When your PDF files and list of references are complete, you may proceed to the Online Application. All required fields must be filled in before you click on the "Submit Application" button. The system will not accept incomplete applications. Applications that are complete by January 2, 2013, will be ensured full consideration. You will receive an email confirmation shortly after your application has been received.

If you have any questions about submitting your application, please contact: [b-ramirez@northwestern.edu](mailto:b-ramirez@northwestern.edu)

The following link takes you to the application page:

MENA Postdoctoral Fellowship Application

<http://facultysearch.weinberg.northwestern.edu/apply/index/NjI>.

Please visit the site: <http://www.mena.northwestern.edu/application.html>

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## **POSTDOC ON CROWDSOURCED FRESCO** **REASSEMBLY, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE** **LONDON**

A postdoc position is available in the computer graphics group at University College London. Funding is available for nine months, in the first instance, for carrying out research in Computer Graphics, Human-Computer Interaction and Machine Learning generally, and in mobile crowdsourcing applications and the data mining of respective user output specifically. More information at <http://tinyurl.com/cmclqlyv>.

We seek an excellent candidate with a track record of expertise in some combination of computer graphics, machine learning, computer vision and human-computer interaction. The post is for someone who is interested in computer graphics and crowdsourcing applications, with primary focus on and responsibility for the funded project "Laymen To The Help Of Experts: Crowdsourcing To Aid The Reassembly Of Ancient Frescoes" (EPSRC EP/J014338/1). The project aims at developing a game-like, mobile-phone-based crowdsourcing application that will enable unskilled volunteers to contribute to the reassembly of the shattered Late-Bronze-Age wallpaintings of Akrotiri, Greece. The post involves the design and implementation of an (iOS-based) client-server infrastructure to collect and analyse data from users' mobile devices, as they playfully engage with the "Akrotiri Jigsaw". The research associate will also conduct a field study, closely interacting with the site on Santorini, Greece. Everyone from all nations that matches the Person Specification criteria is encouraged to apply, to start before March 2013.

Tim Weyrich's group, based at UCL in the centre of vibrant London, performs research in computer graphics and vision. Amongst other fields, his group specialises in cultural heritage applications and digital humanities. This project combines aspects from systems engineering, user interaction design and machine learning with a unique archaeological problem domain. The project is integrated in a larger international collaboration that aims at developing computer-aided methods to help reassembling shattered frescoes. If you have questions regarding the application procedure, please read the Job Description PDF first and direct remaining questions to Lynette Hothi [lynette.hothi@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:lynette.hothi@ucl.ac.uk); for all other enquiries please contact Tim Weyrich [t.weyrich@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:t.weyrich@ucl.ac.uk).

\*\*\*\*\*

Tim Weyrich  
Senior Lecturer (Assoc. Prof.), Department of Computer Science  
Associate Director, UCL Centre for Digital Humanities  
Malet Place, London WC1E 6BT, UK  
<http://tim.weyri.ch/>

\*\*\*\*\*



**ΑΝΑΚΟΙΝΩΣΕΙΣ - ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ABSTRACTS 'THE DISTRIBUTION OF  
TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE  
PRODUCTION OF ANCIENT  
MEDITERRANEAN POTTERY'**

Dear colleagues,

For those of you, who are interested: the abstracts of the International Conference 'The Distribution of Technological Knowledge in the Production of Ancient Mediterranean Pottery' at the Austrian Archaeological Institute in Athens (November 23rd-25th 2012) is now online [http://www.oelai.at/tl\\_files/img/OELAI\\_Athens\\_Conference\\_Abstracts.pdf](http://www.oelai.at/tl_files/img/OELAI_Athens_Conference_Abstracts.pdf)

Best wishes,

Walter Gauß, Gudrun Klebinder-Gauß, Constance von Rügen

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## AIA SITE PRESERVATION GRANT

The Archaeological Institute of America's Site Preservation Grant is intended to fund projects that uphold the AIA's mission to preserve and promote the world's archaeological heritage for future generations. The goal of the grant, which carries a maximum value of \$25,000 to be awarded over the course of one to three years, is to maximize global preservation efforts and awareness through AIA support. The AIA is targeting projects that not only seek to directly preserve archaeological sites, but those that also emphasize outreach, education, and best practices intended to create a positive impact on the local community, students, and the discipline of archaeology as a whole.

\*\*\*Please note, applicants must first submit an inquiry form. If approved, applicants will have until February 15 to complete a full application.\*\*\*

The next deadline for this grant is Friday, February 15, 2013. All application materials must be received, not postmarked, by that date.

For more information or to submit an inquiry, please visit our website at <http://archaeological.org/grants/706>.

To learn about past winners, visit our projects page at <http://archaeological.org/sitepreservation/projects>.

\*\*\*\*\*

Kelly Lindberg  
Site Preservation Program Administrator  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE *of* AMERICA  
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Boston, MA 02215  
Phone: 617-358-6098  
Fax: 617-353-6550  
[klindberg@aia.bu.edu](mailto:klindberg@aia.bu.edu)  
[www.archaeological.org](http://www.archaeological.org)

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## **NARNIA TRAINING COURSE -** **INTRODUCTION TO PXRF IN** **ARCHAEOLOGY**

I would like to draw your attention to the next NARNIA training course in line, entitled "Introduction to pXRF in Archaeology". This training course is organised by the Department of Archaeology, The University of Sheffield, between the 14th and 19th of January 2013.

For more information about this NARNIA training event, please visit the following link:

<http://narnia-itn.eu/trainingcourses/routine-materials-analysis-using-pxrf/>

All enquiries related to this course should be addressed to Dr Ellery Frahm, Department of Archaeology, The University of Sheffield (email: [e.frahm@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:e.frahm@sheffield.ac.uk)).

From Maria Dikomitou-Eliadou  
[m.dikom@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:m.dikom@ucy.ac.cy)

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## *INTERNET SITES*

# **ASSOCIATIONS IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD: A SOURCEBOOK**

Welcome to the companion site to Associations in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook (= AGRW).

Using tools in the right sidebar, you can browse or search a growing online database of inscriptions and papyri about associations, immigrant groups, and guilds in the ancient Mediterranean, including many documents that do not appear in the book (marked with an asterisk\*).

The plan is to have more translations and photos contributed to this website by scholarly experts around the world with coordination by Richard S. Ascough, Philip A. Harland, and John S. Kloppenborg

Please visit the site: <http://philipharland.com/greco-roman-associations/> [Go there for links]

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## **WEALDEN IRON DATABASE - PEOPLE IN THE IRON INDUSTRY**

The Wealden Iron Research Group's on-line database of iron-working sites has been in existence for five years, and continues to be updated when new sites are discovered or when additional information becomes available.

A new facility allows users to search for people associated with the iron industry. More than 2000 individuals have already been included, ranging from the owners and tenants of iron sites to those employed in various roles in smelting and forging, and other occupations. People are linked, where possible, to the sites with which they were associated.

This project will remain a 'work in progress', and users are invited to contribute by contacting the Editor via the site - [www.wirgdata.org](http://www.wirgdata.org). Access is also available via the Group's main site - [www.wealdeniron.org.uk](http://www.wealdeniron.org.uk). Constructive comments and suggestions will be welcome.

We see this facility as being useful to historians and genealogists, so please feel free to forward this email to other discussion groups, individuals and societies that might be interested.

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Jeremy S. Hodgkinson, MA, FSA  
Wealden Iron Research Group  
[www.wealdeniron.org.uk](http://www.wealdeniron.org.uk)

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## ***ΝΕΕΣ ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ – NEW PUBLICATIONS***

### **BAR S2439 2012: THE DEVELOPMENT AND TRADITIONS OF POTTERY IN THE NEOLITHIC OF THE ANATOLIAN PLATEAU. EVIDENCE FROM ÇATALHÖYÜK**

Süberde and Erbaba by Serap Özdöl. ISBN 978 1 4073 1038 1. £27.00. xi, 117 pages., illustrated throughout. Buy Now

The book sheds light on the cultural sequence of the Neolithic pottery in the Anatolian plateau with the help of original evidence from the settlements of Çatalhöyük in the Konya plain and Süberde and Erbaba in the Beyşehir-Suğla basin, all of which are located in the Çarşamba river basin within central Anatolia's broader Konya endoreic (closed) basin. Other zones from the basin and other parts of the Anatolian plateau have also been investigated and have provided data relevant to the issues addressed in this work; those discussed here are primarily the Lake District outside the basin to the west, the Karaman region and Niğde-Aksaray region within the Konya basin, western and northwestern Anatolia, and last of all, though only in general terms, the Cilicia and Amuq plains in southern Anatolia and the Rouj basin in northwestern Syria (northern Levant). The ceramic classification provided here is also used to define and compare contemporary pottery traditions from the Anatolian plateau and the Near East and to place them accurately within a single chronology. The study, at the same time, attempts to understand and define the regional pottery cultures of Anatolia and to assess the level of communication and interaction between them.

**Please visit the site:**

<http://www.archaeopress.com/ArchaeopressShop/Public/defaultAll.asp?QuickSearch=serap>

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## **EΙΔΗΣΕΙΣ - NEWS RELEASE**

# **GHF SUPPORTS PLANNING AT KARKEMISH, IMPORTANT ANCIENT CITY ON THE EUPHRATES RIVER**

For generations of archaeologists, Karkemish has seemed like a dream site — both in terms of its huge archaeological potential as well as its elusiveness. Although the ancient city, referenced in the Bible, has always been well known by scholars, its location was a mystery until George Smith identified it in 1876. From then until 1920, a number of teams excavated the site, including a British Museum-funded team that involved T.E. Lawrence (“Lawrence of Arabia”), before war and conflict again put it out of reach.

In 2011, however, for the first time in close to a century, a team of archaeologists returned to Karkemish with an integrated long-term research strategy. Today, the joint Italian-Turkish team, led by Nicolò Marchetti of Bologna University, is in its second season of excavation at the site, where it hopes not only to study the city’s ancient history and urban layout but also to conserve the archaeological site as a tourism destination and park.

Last month, Marchetti and his team hosted Dr. Dan Thompson, GHF’s Director of Global Projects and Global Heritage Network (GHN), for a week-long visit to witness first hand the research being carried out and to discuss Marchetti’s goal of creating a national park that covers the archaeological site and the natural beauty of the nearby Euphrates River. GHF has provided support for planning at Karkemish, whose rich ancient history and setting make it a strong candidate for eventual UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination.

Situated at a strategic crossing point along the river, Karkemish is perhaps most famous as the site of a battle in 605 B.C. that saw the Assyrians and their Egyptian allies fall to the Babylonians. Its lengthy history as a city, however, is what makes Karkemish one of the most important archaeological sites in the Near East. During the Late Bronze Age it occupied a key role in the Hittite Empire, and though its size before that is debated, many believe it was a major city dating all the way back to the Early Bronze Age. The city was also the seat of an important Neo-Hittite dynasty during the Iron Age three thousand years ago.

Today, Karkemish is located along the border of Turkey and Syria, with about 55 of the site’s 90 total hectares falling within Turkish territory. The site is separated into inner and outer regions by massive earthen ramparts and is closely neighbored by the cities of Karkamış (Turkey) and Jarabulus (Syria). Although Marchetti estimates that only 5 percent of the site has been excavated, findings have included remains of defensive structures, temples, palaces and numerous basalt statues and reliefs.

As with the majority of the developing world’s cultural heritage sites, conservators at Karkemish face a number of challenges.

Although the area was deemed officially cleared of mines in 2011, it remains sensitive to war and conflict, particularly given recent events in Syria. In addition, despite Marchetti's team's efforts to counter the toll taken by decades of neglect on the site's exposed features, degradation has occurred. Finally, planning for the site must take into account the development of the two nearby cities, whose expansion could threaten Karkemish.

As one of the primary sites taught to archaeology students in Turkey (along with GHF project sites Çatalhöyük and Göbekli Tepe), Karkemish is already well known regionally. With continued excavation and proper conservation, it has the potential to be developed into a global tourism destination, providing an economic boost to the area's poor, rural communities.

**Please visit the site: <http://globalheritagefund.org/onthewire/blog/karkemish> [Go there for pix]**

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## **EGYPTIAN PRINCESS'S TOMB FROM 2500 BC UNCOVERED**

EGYPT'S antiquities minister announced overnight the discovery of a princess's tomb dating from the fifth dynasty (around 2500 BC) in the Abu Sir region south of Cairo.

"We have discovered the antechamber to Princess Shert Nebti's tomb which contains four limestone pillars," Mohamed Ibrahim said.

The pillars "have hieroglyphic inscriptions giving the princess's name and her titles, which include 'the daughter of the king Men Salbo and his lover venerated before God the all-powerful,'" he added.

Mr Ibrahim said that the Czech Institute of Egyptology's mission, funded by the Charles University of Prague and directed by Miroslav Bartas, had made the discovery.

"The discovery of this tomb marks the beginning of a new era in the history of the sepulchres at Abu Sir and Saqqara," Mr Ibrahim said.

The Czech team also excavated a corridor in the southeast of the antechamber, which leads off to four other tombs, two of which have already been discovered separately.

The two tombs belonged to high-ranking officials including a "grand upholder of the law" and an "inspector of the servants of the palace," according to their inscriptions. They date from the fifth pharaonic dynasty.

The discoveries have all been made during the excavation season, which began in October, said Usama al-Shini, director of the Supreme Council of Antiquities for Giza.

The corridor contains four limestone sarcophagi that contain statuettes of a man, a man accompanied by his son, and two men with a woman.

Please visit the site: <http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/breaking-news/egyptian-princesss-tomb-from-2500-bc-uncovered/story-e6freoo6-1226509581174>

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## ΚΟΥΤΡΟΥΛΟΥ ΜΑΓΟΥΛΑ, ΦΘΙΩΤΙΔΑΣ

Ολοκληρώθηκε πριν από μερικές μέρες η τρίτη περίοδος έρευνας πεδίου του προγράμματος αρχαιολογίας και αρχαιολογικής εθνογραφίας στην Κουτρουλού Μαγούλα, αποκαλύπτοντας μια σημαντική και εντυπωσιακά διατηρημένη αρχαιολογική θέση. Η Κουτρουλού Μαγούλα, κοντά στα χωριά Βαρδαλή και Νέο Μοναστήρι της Φθιώτιδας, είναι ένας από τους μεγαλύτερους τεχνητούς λόφους που δημιουργήθηκαν στην Ελλάδα, καλύπτοντας μια έκταση περίπου 40 στρεμμάτων και με ύψος 6.6 μέτρα από την πεδιάδα. Κατοικήθηκε κατά τη Μέση Νεολιθική Περίοδο ( περίπου 5800-5300 π.Χ.) από μια κοινότητα μερικών εκατοντάδων ανθρώπων, οι οποίοι κατασκεύασαν ιδιαίτερα προσεγμένα σπίτια από πέτρα και πλιθιά, με πέτρινα υποστρώματα δαπέδων. Μερικοί πέτρινοι τοίχοι διατηρούνται πάνω από ένα μέτρο σε ύψος, κάτι ιδιαίτερα σπάνιο για την περίοδο αυτή, που ίσως υποδηλώνει την ύπαρξη εξ ολοκλήρου πέτρινων τοίχων και όχι απλώς πέτρινων θεμελίων, όπως ήταν η επικρατούσα άποψη μέχρι σήμερα.

Η ανασκαφή στη θέση άρχισε το 2001 από την Επίτιμη Διευθύντρια του ΥΠΑΙΘΠΑ κ. Νίνα Κυπαρίσση και από το 2010 διενεργείται στα πλαίσια του νέου προγράμματος συνεργασίας της Αρχαιολογικής Υπηρεσίας και του Πανεπιστημίου του Southampton, μέσω της Βρετανικής Σχολής Αθηνών, με τη συνδιεύθυνση της κ. Κυπαρίσση και του κ. Γιάννη Χαμηλάκη. Έχει αποδώσει πολλά και σημαντικά ευρήματα, μεταξύ των οποίων πολλά πήλινα ειδώλια, που υπερβαίνουν τα 300. Αναλογικά με την ανασκαμμένη έκταση, ο αριθμός αυτός είναι ιδιαίτερα εντυπωσιακός, ίσως από τους μεγαλύτερους στη Νεολιθική της Νοτιο-Ανατολικής Ευρώπης.

Η γεωφυσική διασκόπηση και η τοπογραφική έρευνα των τελευταίων τριών χρόνων έδειξαν πως οι κάτοικοι της Μαγούλας κατά τη Νεολιθική Περίοδο είχαν διαμορφώσει το χώρο σε άνδηρα και φαίνεται πως είχαν κατασκευάσει μια σειρά από κυκλικούς τάφρους που περιέβαλαν τον οικισμό, έργο που θα απαιτούσε την συντονισμένη, συλλογική προσπάθεια ενός σημαντικού αριθμού ατόμων. Αν και μέχρι σήμερα δεν υπάρχουν μαρτυρίες για την ύπαρξη κεντρικής εξουσίας στο χώρο κατά τη Μέση Νεολιθική, αρκετοί άνθρωποι μπορούσαν να συνεργαστούν και να δουλέψουν συλλογικά για την κατασκευή κοινοτικών και ίσως κοινωνικά ωφέλιμων έργων.

Η Μαγούλα αποτέλεσε σημαντικό ιστορικό τόπο και τους επόμενους αιώνες. Κατά το τέλος της Εποχής του Χαλκού ένας θολωτός τάφος κατασκευάστηκε στον κορυφή του λόφου, ενώ κατά τα Μεσαιωνικά χρόνια (12-13ος αιώνας μ.Χ.) τουλάχιστον ένα άτομο (μια νεαρή γυναίκα) θάφτηκε ανάμεσα στα Νεολιθικά σπίτια.

Εκτός από την ανασκαφή, το πρόγραμμα πραγματοποιεί εθνογραφική έρευνα στην περιοχή, καθώς και δράσεις δημόσιας αρχαιολογίας, συμπεριλαμβανομένων θεατρικών δρώμενων που γράφτηκαν ειδικά για την ανασκαφή και ανέβηκαν δίπλα στις ανοικτές τομές, όπως οι παραστάσεις «Το Γεύμα» (2011) και «Το Σπίτι» (2012), οι οποίες εξελίχθηκαν σε λαϊκό γλέντι, με την συμμετοχή πολλών κατοίκων από την περιοχή. Κατά το 2013 και το 2014, η ερευνητική ομάδα θα πραγματοποιήσει μελέτη του υλικού, καθώς και σειρά δημοσιεύσεων σε επιστημονικά περιοδικά και άλλα έντυπα.

Please visit the site: [http://www.yppo.gr/2/g22.jsp?obj\\_id=52334](http://www.yppo.gr/2/g22.jsp?obj_id=52334)

## **ARCHAEOLOGISTS DISCOVER THRACIAN GOLDEN JEWELRY**

Archaeologists say they have unearthed an almost 2,400-year-old golden hoard in an ancient Thracian tomb in northern Bulgaria.

The treasure was found on Thursday near the village of Sveshtari, 400 kilometers (250 miles) northeast of Sofia, team leader Diana Gergova said.

She said that among the artifacts, dating back to the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third century B.C., were gold jewelry and applications for horse trappings, a tiara with reliefs of lions and fantasy animals, as well as four bracelets and a ring.

The Thracians lived in what is now Bulgaria, and parts of modern Greece, Romania, Macedonia, and Turkey between 4,000 B.C. and the 7th century A.D., when they were assimilated by the invading Slavs.

Read more: <http://newsok.com/archaeologists-discover-thracian-golden-jewelry/article/feed/459916#ixzz2BrfcwPkg>

Please visit the site: <http://tinyurl.com/bj2tupp> [Go there for pix]

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## **ANCIENT ROMAN GIANT FOUND—OLDEST COMPLETE SKELETON WITH GIGANTISM, BY CHRISTINE DELL'AMORE**

At six feet, eight inches, he would have towered over his contemporaries

**It's no tall tale—the first complete ancient skeleton of a person with [gigantism](#) has been discovered near [Rome](#), a new study says.**

At 6 feet, 8 inches (202 centimeters) tall, the man would have been a giant in third-century A.D. Rome, where men averaged about 5 and a half feet (167 centimeters) tall. By contrast, today's [tallest man](#) measures 8 feet, 3 inches (251 centimeters).

Finding such skeletons is rare, because gigantism itself is extremely rare, today affecting about three people in a million worldwide. The condition begins in childhood, when a malfunctioning pituitary gland causes abnormally growth.

Two partial skeletons, one from Poland and another from Egypt, have previously been identified as "probable" cases of gigantism, but the Roman specimen is the first clear case from the ancient past, study leader [Simona Minozzi](#), a paleopathologist at Italy's University of Pisa, said by email.

### **Piecing Together a Giant**

The unusual skeleton was found in 1991 during an excavation at a necropolis in Fidenae, a territory indirectly managed by Rome.

At the time, the Archaeological Superintendence of Rome, which led the project, noted that the man's tomb was abnormally long. It was only during a later anthropological examination, though, that the bones too were found to be unusual. Shortly thereafter, they were sent to Minozzi's group for further analysis.

To find out if the skeleton had gigantism, the team examined the bones and found evidence of skull damage consistent with a pituitary tumor, which disrupts the pituitary gland, causing it to overproduce human growth hormone.

Other findings—such as disproportionately long limbs and evidence that the bones were still growing even in early adulthood—support the gigantism diagnosis, according to the study, published October 2 in the [Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism](#).

His early demise—likely between 16 and 20—might also point to gigantism, which is associated with cardiovascular disease and respiratory problems, said Minozzi, who emphasized that the cause of death remains unknown.

### **A Giant of the Stage?**

[Charlotte Roberts](#), a bioarchaeologist at the U.K.'s Durham University, said she's "certainly convinced with the diagnosis" of gigantism. But she'd like to know more.

"You can't just study the disease, you have to look at the wider impact of how people functioned in society, and whether they were treated any differently," Roberts said.

Goods buried with a body, for example, can offer hints to the person's role in life and how they were treated in their community.

The Roman giant, though, was found with no funerary artifacts, study leader Minozzi said. And, she added, his burial was typical of the time, suggesting he was included as part of society.

"We know nothing about the role or presence of giants in the Roman world," she said—other than the fact that the second century A.D. emperor Maximinus Thrax was described in literature as a "human mountain."

Minozzi noted, though, that imperial Roman high society "developed a pronounced taste for entertainers with evident physical malformations, such as hunchbacks and dwarfs—so we can assume that even a giant generated enough interest and curiosity."

### **Long Illnesses**

Whatever the Roman giant's lot in life, the information to be gleaned after his death might someday further science.

"Normally a doctor will be looking at a patient with a disease over short term span," Durham University's Roberts said. "We've been able to look at skeletons from archaeological sites that are thousands of years old. You can start to look at trends of how diseases have changed in frequency over time."

If by studying ancient remains "we can teach the living and help them plan for the future," she said, "that's a good thing."

**Please visit the site: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2012/11/121102-gigantism-ancient-skeleton-archaeology-history-science-rome/>**

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## **STONE TOOLS POINT TO CREATIVE WORK BY EARLY HUMANS IN AFRICA, BY JOHN NOBLE WILFORD**

At a rock shelter on a coastal cliff in South Africa, scientists have found an abundance of advanced stone hunting tools with a tale to tell of the evolving mind of early modern humans at least 71,000 years ago. The discovery, reported in the current issue of the journal *Nature*, lends weight to the hypothesis that not only did anatomically modern *Homo sapiens* emerge in Africa but also, to a previously unsuspected extent, their cognitive capacity for abstract and creative thought and the conception of increasingly complex technologies associated with modern human behavior.

The report describes the stone tools as microliths, thin blades about only an inch long that could be affixed to wood or bone. These tipped projectiles were either arrows propelled by bows or, more likely, spears launched by atlatls, wooden extensions of the throwing arm that act as a lever, imparting greater speeds and distances to the weapon.

This technology, the researchers said, may have been pivotal to the success of *Homo sapiens* as humans left Africa and entered Eurasia some 50,000 years ago, encountering Neanderthals who were limited to hand-thrown spears.

The new evidence appeared to answer some critics who have contended that previous findings of early modern human behavior in Africa have been spotty and short-lived - a "flickering" pattern of experimentation with little or no continuity over time and across regions. The rock shelter excavations at Pinnacle Point, near Mossel Bay, east of Cape Town, show that this micro-blade technology continued over 11,000 years, until 60,000 years ago. The report says the technology was also "typically coupled to heat treatment" processes in shaping sharp and durable blades that persisted for nearly 100,000 years.

In their article in *Nature*, the researchers conclude, "Early modern humans in South Africa had the cognition to design and transmit at high fidelity these coupled recipe technologies."

One of the authors, Curtis W. Marean, director of the research and a paleoanthropologist at the Institute of Human Origins at Arizona State University, said, "Every time we excavate a new site in coastal South Africa with advanced field techniques, we discover new and surprising results that push back in time the evidence for uniquely human behaviors."

The lead author of the report was Kyle S. Brown, a specialist in ancient stone tools who is associated with the University of Cape Town. Prior investigations showed that this microlithic technology appeared briefly between 65,000 and 60,000 years ago and then seemed to vanish. Such thin blades had not been found in abundance until about 20,000 years ago.

Dr. Marean said in a telephone interview that while some archaeologists were still skeptical of a strong African role in modern human behavior, there was diminishing support for the more Eurocentric "creative explosion" concept, born of bedazzlement

over the cave art and fine tools of Upper Paleolithic Europe, which became widespread after the arrival of modern humans.

"Ninety percent of scientists are comfortable that fully modern humans and human cognition developed in Africa," Dr. Marean said. "Now they have moved on. The questions are, how much earlier than 71,000 years did these behaviors emerge? Was it an accretionary process, or was it an abrupt event? Did these people have language by this time?"

Like many other archaeologists, Dr. Marean and his team have concentrated their investigations in the caves and rock shelters overlooking the Indian Ocean. In a global ice age beginning 72,000 years ago, many Africans fled the continent's arid interior, heading for the more benign southern shore. Access to seafood and more plentiful plant and animal resources may have increased populations and encouraged technological advances, Dr. Marean said.

The well-preserved artifacts at Pinnacle Point, collected over a recent 18-month period, led the researchers to conclude that the advanced technologies in Africa "were early and enduring." Other archaeologists who reached different conclusions may have been misled by the "small sample of excavated sites," they said.

Richard G. Klein, a paleoanthropologist at Stanford University who has favored a more sudden and recent origin of modern behavior, about 50,000 years ago, questioned the reliability of the dating method for the tools, noting that "there is another team that has already argued for a much longer" time period for the toolmaking culture.

The new report, Dr. Klein said in an e-mail, "does illustrate, as have many others, that the archaeological evidence for modern human origins is controversial."

The hypothesis of earlier African origins of modern human behavior and cognition has been gaining strength over the last decade or two. Two archaeologists, Alison S. Brooks of George Washington University and Sally McBrearty of the University of Connecticut, led the charge with publications of their analysis of increasing evidence of African art and ornamentations expressing a modern cognitive capacity and symbolic thinking.

In a commentary accompanying the Nature report, Dr. McBrearty, who was not involved in the research, wrote that she believed that "modern cognitive capacity emerged at the same time as modern anatomy, and that various aspects of human culture arose gradually" over the course of subsequent millennia.

Dr. McBrearty gave a cautious endorsement of the new research from Pinnacle Point relating complex technologies to the evolution of modern behavior in Africa. She said the findings "go some way to supporting this hypothesis."

**Please visit the site: <http://mobile.nytimes.com/2012/11/13/science/evidence-of-persistent-modern-human-behavior-in-africa.xml>**

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## **ARCHAEOLOGISTS EXCAVATE MASSIVE ANCIENT GATEWAY IN JORDAN**

The site is revealing remains of a major fortified Bronze Age city in the southern Jordan River Valley.

A team of archaeologists and excavators are uncovering a site that could be among the largest ancient Bronze Age cities of the Near East.

Current efforts are focusing on a massive, newly discovered Middle Bronze II Period (1800 - 1540 BCE) city gate complex and associated structures, part of a nearly impenetrable defensive system that ringed and protected a city that the excavators suggest may have commanded and controlled a group of other nearby ancient settlements.

The city gate was revealed during excavations conducted during January of 2012 under the direction of Dr. Steven Collins of Trinity Southwest University and Yazeed Eylayyan of the Department of Antiquities, Jordan. It was one of a number of major architectural features associated with a massive defensive fortification system built to protect the city.

The fortifications boast a 4m-thick city wall which was built on a foundation of large stones up to 5m high and topped by a mudbrick superstructure. The entire construction was reinforced by an earthen/mudbrick rampart/glacis system that sloped outward and downward about 35 to 38 degrees from the city perimeter wall. Based on current excavated evidence and analysis, the newly discovered gateway constitutes the main, monumental gateway leading into the city through these fortifications.

Reports Collins, et. al.: "The sheer size and extent of the MB2 (Middle Bronze Age II) defensive system would have been most impressive, and virtually impregnable. Indeed, thus far there are no evidences of conquest-destruction for the duration of the Bronze Age defenses. There's also evidence of a substantial ring-road between the inner face of the MB2 city wall and the first row of houses." [1]

The remains of the ancient city encompass an area so large that it dwarfs surrounding ancient settlements that feature finds and structures roughly contemporaneous with the city, and analyses of the city's context, finds, and other data have led associated scholars to suggest that it may have been the hub of a collection of settlements that had relations economically, politically, or in other ways, as a Bronze Age city-state.

The recent discoveries are part of an ongoing excavation project conducted jointly by Trinity Southwest University in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the Department of Antiquities of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The site, called Tall el-Hammam, is a large tel located in the southern Jordan River Valley, about 14 kilometers northeast of the Dead Sea. Now entering the 8th season, investigations there have revealed a long occupational history, beginning with the Chalcolithic Period through to Islamic times, with a distinctive occupational gap of at least five centuries following the Middle Bronze period. The reasons for the gap have not been confirmed, and scholars involved with the project are continuing to search for clues.



Archaeologists and a team of students and volunteers will be returning to the site to excavate and explore more of the city gate and other related structures in January, 2013.

Please visit the site: <http://popular-archaeology.com/issue/september-2012/article/archaeologists-excavate-massive-ancient-gateway-in-jordan>

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## **A NEW TECHNOLOGY HELPS TO DECODE THE OLDEST AND UNDECIPHERED WRITING SYSTEM, BY LILIANA GIANNI**

Researchers at the University of Oxford and Southampton have developed a system for reflectance transformation imaging (reflectance transformation of images) to collect high-quality images of ancient and important historical documents (research funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation). The system has recently been applied to the study of some relics preserved in the basement of the Louvre. These and other images to documents under investigation are now available free online at Cuneiform Digital Library initiative.

Among the documents there are manuscripts written in proto-Elamite, the oldest and undeciphered writing system known, used in ancient Iran from 3200 to 3000 BC. Analyzing the images with high quality of these documents and share them with the scientific community, the team at Oxford University hopes to crack the code.

Dr Jacob Dahl, one of the leaders of the Cuneiform Digital Library at Oxford University as well as Professor in the Faculty of Oriental Studies, has spent ten years trying to decipher the writing proto-Elamite and believes that the new system could lead to major advances in research. Dr Dahl points out the importance of working on images of high quality when it comes to coding manuscripts, that are highlighted even small differences in the symbolic can be decisive in the interpretation of the code.

The staff of the Archaeological Computing Research Group and the Electronics and Computer Science at the University of Southampton has developed a methodology called reflectance transformation imaging : the manuscript located at the center of a dome is photographed 76 times as it is illuminated by 76 lights placed in different angles. The images produced are then combined so as to be able to move the light along the surface of the digital image and use the differences of light and shadow to highlight details.

Through the research conducted so far has shown that the pre-Elamite writing not only uses symbols to represent things but also a syllabary. For example, the word "cat" would not be represented by a symbol of the animal, but as symbols for the syllables of the word.

As many as half of the signs seem to be so used were invented from scratch to represent the sound. If this is confirmed, thanks to the analysis of the images obtained in this way, would radically change our interpretation and understanding of the early writings, where the phoneticism is considered to have developed through the so-called "principle of the puzzle."

Although certain features of the writing system is already known, the scribes shared some signs with the writing of Mesopotamia (numbers and signs representing animals or objects as a sheep, goat, cereals, etc.), 80% -90% the system remains undeciphered.

Writing pro-Elamite was used in official documents and agriculture, but not in schools. The lack of an academic tradition has meant that many errors were inserted in the text and that the system is not particularly useful for administrative functions.

Jokingly, Dr. Dalh said that "maybe this is the first known case of system failure due to the lack of knowledge of the financing of education."

The Louvre has access to 1100 pro-Elamite tablets, half of which can now be found on the website of the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative.

Dr. Dahl has argued that the collection of the Louvre, and in particular the tablets from Mesopotamia and Iran, are historically important because they contain the first substantial code of law, the first documentation of struggles between rulers, the first example of propaganda and the first form of literature.

To publish and disseminate the fundamental documents of ancient history is becoming increasingly important both to increase the contribution to research and to preserve and protect the cultural heritage in the areas affected by conflict. Suffice it to say that in Iraq over the past 20 years, the historical and artistic heritage has been subject to looting and neighboring Syria seems to have unfortunately a similar fate.

[http://www.archeomatica.it/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=721:una-nuova-tecnologia-aiuta-a-decodificare-il-piu-antico-e-indecifrato-sistema-di-scrittura&catid=8:ultime&Itemid=38](http://www.archeomatica.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=721:una-nuova-tecnologia-aiuta-a-decodificare-il-piu-antico-e-indecifrato-sistema-di-scrittura&catid=8:ultime&Itemid=38)

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Please visit the site: <http://tinyurl.com/a6hzlg5> [Go there for Italian original]

## **ARCHAEOLOGISTS DISCOVER SHIPWRECKS, ANCIENT HARBOR ON COAST OF ISRAEL**

A team of archaeologists from the University of Rhode Island, the Israel Antiquities Authority, and the University of Louisville have discovered the remains of a fleet of early-19th century ships and ancient harbor structures from the Hellenistic period (third to first century B.C.) at the city of Akko, one of the major ancient ports of the eastern Mediterranean. The findings shed light on a period of history that is little known and point to how and where additional remains may be found.

The discoveries were presented on November 15 and 17 in Chicago at the annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research by URI assistant professors Bridget Buxton and William Krieger on behalf of the Israel Coast Exploration project.

According to Buxton, three of the four well-preserved shipwrecks found off the coast south of Akko were first detected using a sub-bottom profiler in 2011. Later, storms stripped off several meters of inshore sediments and temporarily revealed the wrecks, as well as an additional large vessel. The wrecks are now reburied.

During the brief time the shipwrecks were exposed, the Israel Antiquities Authority investigated one of them: a 32 meter vessel which still preserved its brass gudgeon (rudder socket) and many small artifacts, such as plates, a candlestick, and even a cooking pot with bones in it. Laboratory analyses completed this summer by the IAA revealed that the ship's wood came from Turkey. The team believes these ships may have belonged to the Egyptian navy under Admiral Osman Nurredin Bey, whose ships were severely damaged in his attempt to capture Akko in the Egyptian-Ottoman War of 1831. The town eventually fell to Egyptian land forces under Ibrahim Pasha in 1832.

"These ships have occasionally been exposed and buried again by storms since we found them," Buxton said. "We're in a race against time to find other ships in the area and learn from them before storms totally dislodge or destroy them."

Although shipwrecks from the 1800s are not the highest priorities in a region where civilization goes back thousands of years, Buxton is excited by the discovery for what it tells her about where much older ships may be found.

"Like many underwater archaeologists I'm very interested in finding a well-preserved example of an ancient multi-decked warship from the Hellenistic age," said Buxton. "These ships were incredible pieces of technology, but we don't know much about their design because no hulls have been found. However, a combination of unusual environmental and historical factors leads us to believe we have a chance of finding the remains of one of these ships off the northern coast of Israel."

Buxton believes that the ships they are looking for are likely buried in the coastal sediment, which has built up over the centuries through natural processes. However, time is not on their side. "That protective silt is now being stripped away," she said. "And it's

being stripped away a lot faster than it was originally dumped, by a combination of development, environmental changes, and the effects of the Aswan Dam." The Nile River has historically deposited large quantities of silt in the area, but the dam has significantly reduced the flow of silt.

The archaeologists found the ships and another early modern vessel within Akko's modern harbor while testing their equipment in preparation for an ongoing survey out in deeper water. The sub-bottom profiler detects anomalies below the sea floor. "It's the gift that keeps on giving," Buxton said. "We found so many targets to explore that we didn't have time to check all of them, but even just having information about where things are helps Koby (Jacob Sharvit, director of the IAA Maritime Antiquities Unit) know where to look after any big storms."

One line of buried targets detected off the southern seawall of old Akko is particularly suggestive. Continuing excavations in this area over the summer revealed an alignment between these targets and a newly-discovered slipway and shipshed structure, which continued out under the sea floor 25 meters from the Ottoman city wall. The feature resembles other naval shipsheds found in places such as Athens where they were used to haul up ancient warships. The excavation project was initially undertaken to strengthen the eroding sea wall, but it also revealed Hellenistic masonry, pottery vessels, an ancient mooring stone, and a stone quay 1.3 meters below the modern sea level. The possibility that much more of the Hellenistic port lies well-preserved under the sea floor is exciting for the archaeologists, because it means that shipwrecks from earlier centuries that have so far not been found at Akko may simply be buried deeper down in the sediment.

"We've got fragmentary historic records for this area in the Hellenistic period, and now we've found a very important feature from the ancient harbor. Ancient shipwrecks are another piece of the puzzle that will help us to rewrite the story of this region at a critical time in Mediterranean history," she said.

Located on the northern coast of Israel, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Akko is one of the few cities in the Mediterranean with more than 5,000 years of maritime history. Also known as Acre, Ake and Ptolemais, its port was an important waypoint for the Phoenicians, Romans, Crusaders, Ottomans and other ancient maritime empires. In the Hellenistic period, it was bitterly fought over by the rival empires of Egypt and Syria.

"Understanding the history and archaeology of Akko's port is crucial to understanding the broader issues of maritime connectivity and the great power struggles that defined the history of the Eastern Mediterranean during the Hellenistic Age," Buxton said.

Please visit the site: [http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2012-11/uoria112812.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2012-11/uoria112812.php)

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## TALL EL HAMMAM EXCAVATIONS

A team of archaeologists and excavators are uncovering a site that could be among the largest ancient Bronze Age cities of the Near East. Current efforts are focusing on a massive, newly discovered Middle Bronze II Period (1800 - 1540 BCE) city gate complex and associated structures, part of a nearly impenetrable defensive system that ringed and protected a city that the excavators suggest may have commanded and controlled a group of other nearby ancient settlements.

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Website: [http://www.tallelhammam.com/Tall el Hammam.html](http://www.tallelhammam.com/Tall_el_Hammam.html)

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## **ΝΕΟΛΙΘΙΚΟ ΣΠΗΛΑΙΟ ΤΟΥ ΔΙΡΟΥ «ΙΣΩΣ ΕΝΕΠΝΕΥΣΕ ΤΟ ΜΥΘΟ ΤΟΥ ΆΔΗ»**

Η Αλεπότρυπα, ένα από τα δαιδαλώδη σπήλαια του Διρού, φιλοξένησε έναν από τους μεγαλύτερους Νεολιθικούς οικισμούς στην Ευρώπη και αποτέλεσε σημαντικό τόπο λατρείας -μέχρι που η οροφή κατέρρευσε πριν από 5.000 χρόνια και σκότωσε όλους τους κατοίκους του.

Οι ερευνητές που ολοκλήρωσαν τον τελευταίο γύρο ανασκαφών εικάζουν μάλιστα ότι η Αλεπότρυπα ίσως ενέπνευσε το μύθο του Άδη -μια «ενδιαφέρουσα ιδέα», η οποία όμως είναι δύσκολο να αποδειχθεί.

Ο Γιώργος Παπαθανασόπουλος, σήμερα πρόεδρος του Κέντρου Νεολιθικών Μελετών, είναι ο επικεφαλής των ανασκαφών από το 1970, δώδεκα χρόνια μετά την ανακάλυψη του σπηλαίου το 1958. Ο ίδιος και οι συνεργάτες του πρόκειται να παρουσιάσουν τα τελευταία ευρήματα στις 6 Ιανουαρίου, στο πλαίσιο του ετήσιου συνεδρίου του Αρχαιολογικού Ινστιτούτου Αμερικής.

«Ο Γιώργος Παπαθανασόπουλος υποστήριξε ανέκαθεν ότι τα κεραμικά [που βρέθηκαν στην Αλεπότρυπα] δεν προέρχονταν από την περιοχή της σπηλιάς αλλά ήρθαν από αλλού -ότι η σπηλιά ήταν χώρος προσκυνήματος όπου θάβονταν σημαντικοί άνθρωποι, κάτι που οδηγεί στην ενδιαφέρουσα ιδέα ότι αυτή ήταν η αρχική είσοδος του Άδη, ότι ήταν η πηγή της γοητείας που ασκούσε στους Έλληνες ο κάτω κόσμος» δήλωσε στο LiveScience.com ο Μάικλ Γκάλατι, συνεργάτης του Παπαθανασόπουλου από το Κολέγιο Millsaps στο Μισισίπι.

Δεδομένου βέβαια ότι η ελληνική μυθολογία συνδέει τον Άδη με τον ποταμό Αχέροντα στην Ήπειρο, η ιδέα ότι η Αλεπότρυπα ενέπνευσε το μύθο, χιλιάδες χρόνια πριν από τον Όμηρο, πιθανότατα θα παραμείνει αναπόδεικτη.

Το σπήλαιο της Αλεπότρυπας, κοντά στο γνωστό σπήλαιο Γλυφάδα που είναι ανοιχτό για το κοινό, είναι πραγματικά τεράστιο: η κύρια αίθουσά του έχει ύψος γύρω στα 60 μέτρα και πλάτος 100, και στο βάθος της κρύβει μια λίμνη με καθαρό νερό.

Χιλιάδες εργαλεία, κεραμικά, ασημένια και χάλκινα τεχνουργήματα, ακόμα και ανθρώπινα οστά που βρέθηκαν στη σπηλιά, μαρτυρούν ότι ο χώρος είχε χρησιμοποιηθεί ως κατοικία, αποθήκη και λατρευτικός χώρος στη Νεολιθική Εποχή, από την έκτη μέχρι την τρίτη χιλιετία π.Χ.

Όλα τέλειωσαν απότομα πριν από περίπου 5.200 χρόνια, όταν η οροφή της σπηλιάς κατέρρευσε, καταπλάκωσε όσους βρίσκονταν μέσα και σφράγισε για πάντα την κύρια είσοδο. «Είναι ό,τι πλησιέστερο έχουμε σε μια Νεολιθική Πομπηία» σχολιάζει ο Γκάλατι.

Τα ευρήματα δείχνουν ότι η Αλεπότρυπα αποτέλεσε χώρο ταφής στον οποίο πραγματοποιούνταν τελετές που συμπεριλάμβαναν την καύση μεγάλων ποσοτήτων κοπριάς. «Οι ταφές και οι τελετουργίες έδιναν στο σπήλαιο μια αίσθηση του κάτω κόσμου. Είναι σαν τον Άδη, μαζί με το ποτάμι της Στυγός» λέει ο Γκάλατι.



Οι ερευνητές πρόκειται τώρα να παρουσιάσουν στο συνέδριο τα αποτελέσματα από τις ανασκαφές της τελευταίας τριετίας. Μεταξύ άλλων, οι έρευνες έξω από το ίδιο το σπήλαιο αποκάλυψαν τα ίχνη ενός οικισμού, ο οποίος δείχνει ότι εκατοντάδες άνθρωποι έμεναν μέσα και έξω από το σπήλαιο στην περίοδο ακμής του.

Επιπλέον, έρευνες του Παναγιώτη Καρκάνα από την Εφορεία Παλαιοανθρωπολογίας και Σπηλαιολογίας Νότιας Ελλάδας Ελλάδα επιβεβαιώνουν ότι το σπήλαιο χρησιμοποιούνταν τακτικά για τελετές.

Το σημαντικό όμως είναι ότι οι ανασκαφές δεν έχουν εξαντλήσει το βάθος των αποθέσεων του σπηλαίου. «Θα μπορούσαμε κάλλιστα να έχουμε ανθρώπους του Νεάντερταλ εκεί κάτω» λέει ο Γκάλατι. Δεδομένου ότι οι Νεάντερταλ κατοικούσαν στην Ευρώπη από τα 200 μέχρι τα 30 χιλιάδες χρόνια πριν, μια τέτοια ανακάλυψη θα σήμαινε ότι η ιστορία της Αλεπότρυπας πηγαίνει πολύ πίσω.

«Τεχνουργήματα Νεάντερταλ υπάρχουν σε σπηλιές στον διπλανό κόλπο, οπότε είναι δύσκολο να πιστέψει κανείς ότι δεν θα υπάρχουν τέτοιες ενδείξεις και στην Αλεπότρυπα» επισημαίνει ο ερευνητής.

«Απλά δεν έχουμε σκάψει αρκετά βαθιά για να το ξέρουμε» λέει.

Λεπτομέρειες για το σπήλαιο δίνει το βιβλίο «Το Νεολιθικό Διρό Σπήλαιο Αλεπότρυπα» του Γιώργου Παπαθανασόπουλου, το οποίο κυκλοφορεί από τις εκδόσεις Μέλισσα.

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