

Ειδική Ενότητα

Special Section

FUNERARY ART IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN:
THE HELLENISTIC NECROPOLEIS OF ALEXANDRIA

Edited by Dimitris Plantzos and Nikolas Dimakis

Funerary art in the Eastern Mediterranean

The Hellenistic necropoleis of Alexandria

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Based on an International Workshop that took place in Alexandria (15–24 September 2024), the papers included in this Special Section investigate mortuary practices, strategies of personhood and selfhood, as well as memory narratives in Hellenistic Alexandria and its reception in later eras. Bringing together scholars working on various aspects of Alexandrian archaeology, this section discusses funerary art under the light of recent theoretical breakthroughs in the study of the ancient world.

The Section' overriding scheme is that the necropoleis of Alexandria functioned as a collective memoryscape. Memoryscapes are immersive, multi-sensorial landscapes inviting their visitors to remember their individual or collective history within a space physically occupied by memorials and monuments. Actively redeploying architectural and sculptural materialities, cemeteries inscribe their visitors with stories and memories authored and edited by the communities that produced them. This is most evident in societies in flux, such as Alexandria in the 4th–1st century BCE, when cemeteries –what the Greeks themselves called *necropoleis*, that is “cities of the dead”– were organized and designed as ideological powerhouses of and for the community, meant to commemorate the dead whilst educating the living. One particular aspect of our research is to investigate the influence cemeteries exercise on future generations as cohesive devices for the life of the community: from commemorating the dead to propagating social norms and values (as in the case of the Early and Mid-Hellenistic cemeteries of Alexandria, mostly populated by naturalized immigrants) or to forging discourses of localized and globalized identities – ethnic, social, religious or other.

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