

Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea
Congressus internationales Smyrnenses XV

Proceedings
of the online conference on the archaeology of
BONE OBJECTS
during the Roman and Early Byzantine periods
in honour of Hector Williams



May 14, 2025, in Izmir, Turkey

edited by

Ergün Lafli

Last update: 25 April 2025.
Number of words: 13,342.

Proceedings of the online conference on the archaeology of bone objects during the Roman and Early Byzantine periods in honour of Hector Williams, May 14, 2025, in Izmir, Turkey, Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea, Congressus internationales Smyrnenses XV.

Copyright © 2025 Ergün Laflı (editor)

Main organizer of the e-conference: Ergün Laflı.

All rights reserved.

This non-commercial book has been uploaded to Academia, and can be **freely** downloaded and **freely** reproduced.



This license enables reusers to copy and distribute the material in any medium or format in unadapted form only, **for noncommercial purposes only**, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator.

ISBN: 978-605-61525-3-5.

Printed in Izmir, Turkey on 31 December 2025.

Scientific referees (in alphabetical order): Erwin Pochmarski (Graz) and Hugo Thoen (Ghent / Deinze).

Page setting: Ergün Laflı (Izmir).

Text corrections and revisions (in alphabetical order): Erwin Pochmarski (Graz) and Hugo Thoen (Ghent / Deinze).

Papers, presented at the international video conference, entitled “Archaeology of bone objects during the Roman and Early Byzantine periods” on 14 May 2025 in Izmir, Turkey.

26 papers with 52 pages and numerous colourful figures. All papers and key words are in English.
21 x 29,7 cm; paperback; 40 gr. quality paper.

Frontispiece. *A bone plaque depicting Medusa from the Archaeological Museum of Afyonkarahisar, western Turkey, acc. no. 3935 (photo. by E. Laflı, 2005).*

Websites: <<https://www.academia.edu/128741647/>>.

Video of the lectures: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDq2E-Bd7Z8>>.

Table of contents

<i>An introduction to Roman bone studies: editorial remarks about the proceedings of the conference</i> , by Ergün Laflı.....	6–9.
<i>Program of the international e-conference on Roman bones on 14 May 2025</i> , by Ergün Laflı.....	10–11.
<i>Records of the e-conference in YouTube</i> , by Ergün Laflı.....	12.
<i>Short biography of Professor Edward Hector Williams</i> , by Ergün Laflı.....	12.
<i>Studia de Romanis et Byzantinis ossibus tractatis</i> ,.....	13–90.
<i>Comme de cire ! Perspectives to Roman organic locking and sealing devices</i> , by Isabelle Bertrand and Mégane Vialle.....	1–1.
<i>“Alexandrian bone counters”: finds and interpretations</i> , by Chiara Bianchi.....	1–1.
<i>Beauty is hidden in tiniest things: bone artefacts from ancient necropolises in Montenegro/South Illyricum</i> , by Jelena Cvijetić and Marija Ljuština.....	1–1.
<i>Miniature architecture and vegetal decoration on the bone furniture carvings in Roman and Byzantine Egypt</i> , by Marie Delassus.....	1–1.
<i>Roman bone objects from the frontier zone of Pannonia (Lussonium), Hungary</i> , by Ferenc Fazekas.....	1–1.
<i>Marine adornment: About a purple dye murex shell pendant discovered in Dacia</i> , by Iosif Vasile Ferencz and Ana-Maria Păpureanu.....	1–1.
<i>Some new and old finds from the type of bone amulet in the form of a hand from the Romanian collections</i> , by Ștefan Georgescu and Ana Hamat.....	1–1.
<i>Bone and antler jewellery and accessory for women discovered in Dacia Superior, Romania</i> , by Ana Hamat.....	1–1.
<i>Bone artefacts from Mirobriga, Santiago do Cacém, Portugal</i> , by Raquel Guimarães, José Carlos da Costa Quaresma, Daniel Andrade, Paulo Calaveiras, Cristiana Sofia Figueiredo Ameixinha and Martim Lopes.....	1–1.
<i>Roman bone distaffs figuring Aphrodite of Menophantos - Venus Pudica from Turkey</i> , by Ergün Laflı, Maurizio Buora and Fatih Hakan Kaya.....	1–1.
<i>Roman bone figural panels from Turkey</i> , by Ergün Laflı, Maurizio Buora and Fatih Hakan Kaya.....	1–1.
<i>Roman bone distaffs and spindles from Turkey</i> , by Ergün Laflı, Maurizio Buora and Fatih Hakan Kaya.....	1–1.

<i>Graeco-Roman funerary steles depicting distaffs and spindles from Turkey</i> , by Ergün Laflı, Maurizio Buora and Fatih Hakan Kaya.....	1–1.
<i>Roman bone combs, boxes and miscellanea from Turkey</i> , by Ergün Laflı, Maurizio Buora and Fatih Hakan Kaya.....	1–1.
<i>Roman and Early Byzantine bone gambling dice from Turkey</i> , by Ergün Laflı, Maurizio Buora and Fatih Hakan Kaya.....	1–1.
<i>Post-Byzantine mother-of-pearl liturgical objects from Turkey</i> , by Ergün Laflı, Maurizio Buora and Fatih Hakan Kaya.....	1–1.
<i>Ivory in the Aegean Bronze Age: Minoan and Mycenaean objects and workshops</i> , by Angeliki Liveri.....	1–1.
<i>Parva munera: representations of public spectacles on Roman and Early Byzantine bone objects</i> , by Angeliki Liveri.....	1–1.
<i>Bone artefacts in stratigraphy from the Roman sites of Almoínhas and Frielas, Portugal</i> , by Martim Lopes, Inês Domingos da Silva and José Carlos da Costa Quaresma.....	1–1.
<i>Early Byzantine antler objects from the hill-top fortifications in northern Illyricum, Serbia</i> , by Gordana Jeremić and Selena Vitezović.....	1–1.
<i>Conservation of organic artefacts in the collections of the National Museum of Alba Iulia, Romania</i> , by Ioan Oprea.....	1–1.
<i>An ivory statuette figuring Thanatos from the suburbs of Tomis, Romania</i> , by Ingrid Petcu-Levei and Radu Petcu.....	1–1.
<i>Sasanian and early medieval bone objects: archaeological case studies from Iraq, the Persian Gulf and Central Asia</i> , by St. John Simpson.....	1–1.
<i>Roman bone pins, needles, spinning and weaving accessories from the Archaeological Museum of Istria, Croatia</i> , by Alka Starac.....	1–1.
<i>Bone objects from the University of British Columbia’s excavations at Anemurium (Rough Cilicia) and Mytilene (Lesbos)</i> , by E. Hector Williams.....	1–1.
<i>Worked bones depicting Isis and Horus from the excavations of the necropolis of Belinskoye site on the western border of the Bosporan Kingdom</i> , by Viktor G. Zubarev, Elena V. Shushunova and Sergey V. Yartsev.....	1–1.
<i>List of observers</i>	1–1.
<i>Members of the conference committees</i>	91.
<i>List of the previous Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea</i>	92.

*List of the previous Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea, Acta congressus communis omnium gentium Smyrnae.....*93.

*Announcement of the next “Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea” in May 2026, in Izmir.....*46.

An introduction to Roman bone studies: editorial remarks about the proceedings of the conference

Ergün Laflı

Professor Ergün Laflı (Izmir)

Çınarlı Mah., Ankara Asfaltı Cad., No. 7, Ege Perla A Kule, 21. Kat, Daire 82, Konak, TR-35110 Izmir, Turkey.

Phone: +90.539.577 07 33; **e-mail:** <elaflı@yahoo.ca>.

Website: <<https://deu.academia.edu/ErgunLAFLI/>>.

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-4722-5018.

Ancient bone objects have been found in relatively large quantities in the entire Mediterranean, from Spain to Syria and Egypt to France, where they were manufactured between the Neolithic and Medieval periods. The art of carving animal bones involves especially antler and horn. However, the spectrum of the worked bone objects recovered from Anatolia, rest of the eastern Mediterranean, Near East, the Black Sea area and Balkans is very varied, and reflects different characteristics of Graeco-Roman and Early Byzantine daily life. In these areas they were also utilised as grave goods secondarily. They were exported or imported over the entire ancient Graeco-Roman and Early Byzantine worlds.

In this conference papers dealing with ancient artefacts or objects manufactured by bone, antler, ivory, animal teeth, mother of pearl and cockleshell are included. Main material groups made by bones are as follows: items connected to personal grooming, weaponry, artefacts used for spinning or in pottery decoration, artefacts related to cosmetics, jewellery, combs, pins for clothing and women's hair, items related to dressmaking and textile (particularly sewing needles, weaving implements or buttons), parts of soldiers' equipment, items used for leather working, amulets and other magical items, knife handles, musical instruments, playing stones (e.g., lopsided dices), frames of various kinds (e.g., of mirrors), furniture (including fittings, wood sidings and inlaid decoration), boxes, plaques, writing items (for example, *κάλαμοι*, *calami* in Lat.), liturgical and religious items (e.g., crosses and reliquaries), half-finished products and *miscellanea*. Just in the rest of the Roman world, hairpins are the most numerous artefacts made of bone or antler in the Eastern part of the Empire. Gaming pieces represent the other widespread and customary *instrumentum* category of the worked bones. Several other material groups are also used during the processing of bone artefacts, for example, some objects may have been filled with coloured wax to make them to stand out.

So far the study of this material group has been overlooked, whereas there is still a huge amount of unpublished material from excavations, field surveys and museums in the entire Mediterranean and rest of the ancient world. There is a regular conference series of the *Worked Bone Research Group* (WBRG; cf. <<https://www.wbrg.net/>>) which includes almost all periods and areas. In our e-meeting in 2025 we only focus on bone objects between the first century B.C. and the sixth century A.D., and attempt to set out a comprehensive model for the study of bone objects, including their definition, typology, chronology, contexts, function, regional characteristics, production and distribution patterns in the whole eastern Mediterranean geographies, including the Near East, Black Sea area and Balkans. The increasing number of recent finds in the concerned areas over the last thirty years, thanks to the development of preventive archaeology, has tended to challenge our previous observations and assumptions on Graeco-Roman and Byzantine bone artefacts.

It is also our intention to create a complete bibliography of previous publications on bone objects for several areas and chronologies.

We warmly invite contributions by scholars and graduate students from a variety of disciplines related to this material group. Intended to bring together scholars of Greek, Roman and Early Byzantine

instrumenta / artefacts' archaeology to discuss a range of issues concerning this material group characteristics, this video conference should be an excellent opportunity to increase our knowledge about ancient artefacts. The following theme groups are the main questions of the conference which are prescriptive:

- Bone objects from archaeological field projects, museums and private collections,
- Graeco-Roman bone objects in comparison with the bone objects of the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic periods, Bronze and Iron Ages,
- Graeco-Roman bone objects in comparison with the Minoan and Mycenaean bone objects,
- Etymology of bone objects in ancient Near Eastern, eastern Mediterranean and Aegean languages,
- Ancient Greek, Latin and Byzantine textual sources on bone objects,
- Typological evolution and design of bone objects,
- Selection criteria for some certain animal genres for bone-working,
- Decoration of bone objects, as detailed chronologies should be established for both the produced forms and their decoration,
- Chronologies of these objects that can highlight the social spread of these products,
- Manufacturing technics, manufacturing tools, major production centres and workshops of bone objects in the Roman and Early Byzantine periods, their organisation and interactions.
- Distribution of bone objects, economic and social aspects: in what type of socio-economic context are they found?
- Typological and functional features of bone objects during the Roman and Early Byzantine periods: what might the utilitarian, social and/or symbolic functions or practices of these objects have been?
- Identification of the economic factors that contributed to the standardization in the bone-working,
- What ancient Greeks, Romans and Byzantines thought about afterlife? Bone objects in the eastern Mediterranean funerary contexts,
- The role of monastic or religious economy in Early Byzantine bone-working,
- Commodities and their trade through bone objects,
- Relations of bone objects to metal, terracotta, glass, wooden or stone objects: how did this material group fit in with objects made from different materials, particularly metal, glass, or wood? Can any stylistic links be found between them?
- Roman bone objects in the eastern and western Mediterranean and Europe, and their differences,
- Roman gravestones and other iconographic media depicting bone objects,
- Conservation of bone objects, especially excavated finds: current strategies and future approaches,
- Archaeometric analyses of these objects,
- *Miscellanea.*

On these themes and questions, all approaches and methods susceptible to bring some progress to our current knowledge are of course welcome: archaeology, physical anthropology, archaeozoology, osteoarchaeology, bioarchaeology, palaeohistology, ancient history, history of art, cultural anthropology etc.

A special focus of the workshop is the identification of workshops from different regions, cities and areas, in particular capital cities (such as Byzantium, Ephesus, Pergamum, Antioch-on-the-Orontes, Alexandria, Athens, Rome etc.) with main workshops. A regional approach will enable us to understand the influences and contacts between workshops. Were these exclusively urban activities, or also rural? What motivated their establishment? Political powers, raw materials, the development of urban centres and the urban elite (merchants, craftsmen, religious orders, etc.) or economic outlets? And, are there any imitations or copies in certain localities suggesting competition between workshops?

Another important topic is the manufacturing techniques which were varied and depended on the composition and morphology of each raw material type as much as on the artefact to be produced. Regardless of the raw material, the manufacturing process of an ancient bone object was usually multi-stage:

1. Selection and acquisition of the raw material;
2. Preparation of the raw material, including cleaning, drying and cutting into pieces;
3. The appropriate working processes using instruments like knives, chisels, files, lathes and bow-drills;
4. Finishing the worked objects by grinding, polishing and colouring.

The previous finds reflect that mostly manufacturing techniques were related to an organized production where the different manufacturing stages were standardized and predefined, which can be identified as a *chaîne opératoire*. Particular attention should be paid to these technical aspects, which are the integral parts of the uniqueness of most of the ancient worked bone objects.

We also need to look at the distribution of these objects on a local, regional, and even supra-regional scale, and trade networks. Some have crossed the overseas, such as Anatolian products unearthed in England. How can these exchanges be explained?

This video conference took place on 14 May 2025 virtually on Zoom and physically in Buca, Izmir, Turkey. All the lectures and discussions in our e-conference were in English, and were recorded for later viewing on YouTube for participants who were unable to attend the live performance. The YouTube links of the e-conference can be found on p. 12 below. The symposium was first announced in May 2024 (**fig. 1**). Between October 2024 and January 2025 there were more than 28 paper applications from 14 countries, including – in alphabetical order – Canada, Croatia, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and UK, 27 of which were accepted as a lecture to be presented at our symposium (**fig. 2**). Thematically papers were divided into seven sessions, dealing with different aspects of Roman and Early Byzantine worked bones (*cf.* the program below). This book was arranged mainly in April 2025 when papers were placed in alphabetical order by the author names. It was constantly being updated in its online version on our *Academia* account. Revised papers will be published in a peer-reviewed proceedings volume in 2026 or 2027.

Several international archaeological meetings under the series of *Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea, Congressus internationales Smyrnenses* were organized in Izmir, and after the current meeting these annual meetings will be organized in electronic form regularly every second Wednesday of May (for a list of past meetings and their publications in the series of *Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea, Acta congressus communis omnium gentium Smyrnae*, please *cf.* at the end of this book). Announcement for our 2026 e-conference is to be found at the end of this book as well.

This e-conference is dedicated to the contributions of Hector Williams to Anatolian and Aegean archaeology who is Professor Emeritus of Classics and Classical Archaeology at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

I would like to thank following colleagues for preparation of this book (in alphabetic order): Dr Isabelle Bertrand (Chauvigny), Dr Maurizio Buora (Udine), Professor Gian Luca Gregori (Rome), Dr Fatih Hakan Kaya (Izmir), Dr Marija Ljuština (Belgrade), Professor Erwin Pochmarski (Graz) and Professor Hugo Thoen (Ghent / Deinze), Professor E. Hector Williams (Vancouver, BC).

Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea
Congressus internationales Smyrnenses XV

Call for papers

Online conference on the archaeology of
Bone Objects
during the Roman and Early Byzantine periods

in honour of Hector Williams



14 May 2025 / Izmir, Turkey

Meeting venue

Join us on Zoom.us

E-mail

paphlagonia@deu.edu.tr

Deadline for the abstracts' submission

1 April 2025

Website

<https://deu.academia.edu/ErgunLAFLI/Congressus-internationales-Smyrnenses>

All are welcome.

Fig. 1: Poster of the Roman bones video conference (by E. Laflı, 2024).



Fig. 2: Map of the Anatolian sites presented at the video conference on Roman bones (drawn by F. H. Kaya, 2025).

Fig. 3: Map of the sites presented at the video conference on Roman bones (drawn by F. H. Kaya, 2025).

Program of the international e-conference on Roman and Early Byzantine bone and ivory artefacts in the Mediterranean on 14 May 2025 / *Programme de la e-conférence internationale sur les objets en os et en ivoire romains et proto-byzantins en Méditerranée, le 14 mai 2025*

Last update / dernière mise à jour : 22/04/2025.

Please note that appointed times given on the timetable of the conference program are arranged according to the Istanbul-Athens-Izmir time zone which is one hour ahead of Central European Time (CET).

Veuillez noter que les heures indiquées correspondent au fuseau horaire Istanbul-Athènes-Izmir, + 1 heure par rapport au fuseau (CET).

Web link to join to the live meeting on Zoom
/ *Liens Web pour rejoindre la réunion en direct sur Zoom :*

https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZYscO2tqDwrGNRIF19z_wCGf1LI5IJAJZxj

Meeting ID / ID de conférence : 821 7456 7120.

Password / Mot de passe : 118192.

10 h 00 – 10 h 35: Session 1: Opening session / Séance 1 : Séance d'ouverture – Chairman / Présidence : Maurizio Buora (La Società friulana di archeologia, Udine, Italy).

Welcoming lecture / Conférence de bienvenue :

10 h 00 Ergün Laflı (Izmir, Turkey)
Introduction.

10 h 10 **Opening lecture / Conférence d'ouverture – Keynote speakers / Conférenciers principaux :** Isabelle Bertrand (Musées de Chauvigny, France) and Mégane Vialle (Université Paris Nanterre, France)
Comme de cire ! Perspectives to Roman organic locking and sealing devices.

10 h 30 Discussion.

10 h 35 – 10 h 45: Break / Pause.

10 h 45 – 12 h 00: Session 2: Earlier, Roman and Early Byzantine bone finds from the eastern Mediterranean / Séance 2 : Découvertes en matière osseuse anciennes, romaines et proto-byzantines de la Méditerranée orientale – Chairwoman / Présidente : Ana Hamat (Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie, Constanța, Romania).

10 h 45 Angeliki Liveri (Athens, Greece)
Ivory in the Aegean Bronze Age: Minoan and Mycenaean objects and workshops.

11 h 00 Chiara Bianchi (Milan, Italy)
“Alexandrian bone counters”: finds and interpretations.

11 h 15 Angeliki Liveri (Athens, Greece)
Parva munera: representations of public spectacles on Roman and Early Byzantine bone objects.

11 h 30 E. Hector Williams (The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada)
Bone objects from the University of British Columbia's excavations at Anemurium (Rough Cilicia) and Mytilene (Lesbos).

11 h 45 Discussion.

12 h 00 – 13 h 15: Lunch break / Pause déjeuner.

13 h 15 – 14 h 15: Session 3: Roman and Early Byzantine bone finds from the Black Sea area, Illyricum and its environs / Séance 3 : Objets en matière osseuse d'époques romaine et proto-byzantine de la région de la mer Noire, de l'Illyrie et de ses environs – Chairman / Présidence : E. Hector Williams (The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada).

13 h 15 Jelena Cvijetić and Marija Ljuština (both from the Univerzitet u Beogradu, Serbia)
Beauty is hidden in tiniest things: bone artefacts from ancient necropolises in Montenegro/South Illyricum.

13 h 30 Gordana Jeremić and Selena Vitezović (both from the Arheološki institut, Belgrade, Serbia)

- Early Byzantine antler objects from the hill-top fortifications in northern Illyricum, Serbia.
- 13 h 45** Alka Starac (Arheološki muzej Istre, Pula, Croatia)
Roman bone pins, needles, spinning and weaving accessories from the Archaeological Museum of Istria, Croatia.
- 14 h 00** Discussion.
- 14 h 15 – 14 h 30: Break / Pause.**
- 14 h 30 – 16 h 30: Session 4: Roman and Early Byzantine bone finds from the Black Sea area, Dacia and its environs / Séance 4 : Artéfacts en matière osseuse d'époques romaine et protobyzantine de la région de la mer Noire, de la Dacie et de ses environs – Chairwoman / Présidente :** Marija Ljuština (Univerzitet u Beogradu, Serbia).
- 14 h 30** Viktor G. Zubarev, Elena V. Shushunova and Sergey V. Yartsev (all from the Tul'skiy Gosudarstvennyy Pedagogicheskiy Universitet Im. L. N. Tolstogo, Russia)
Worked bones depicting Isis and Horus from the excavations of the necropolis of Belinskoye site on the western border of the Bosporan Kingdom.
- 14 h 45** Ingrid Petcu-Levei and Radu Petcu (both from the Muzeul de Istorie Nationala si Arheologie Constanța, Romania)
An ivory statuette figuring Thanatos from the suburbs of Tomis, Romania.
- 15 h 00** Iosif Vasile Ferencz (Muzeul Civilizatiei Dacice si Romane Deva, Romania) and Ana-Maria Păpureanu (Muzeul Național Brukenthal, Sibiu, Romania)
Marine adornment: About a purple dye murex shell pendant discovered in Dacia.
- 15 h 15** Ștefan Georgescu and Ana Hamat (both from the Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie, Constanța, Romania)
Some new and old finds from the type of bone amulet in the form of a hand from the Romanian collections.
- 15 h 30** Ana Hamat (Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie, Constanța, Romania)
Bone and antler jewellery and accessory for women discovered in Dacia Superior, Romania.
- 15 h 45** Ioan Oprea (the Muzeul Național al Unirii, Alba Iulia, Romania)
Conservation of organic artefacts in the collections of the National Museum of Alba Iulia, Romania.
- 16 h 00** Ferenc Fazekas (Városi Múzeum, Paks & Régészeti Tanszék, Hungary)
Roman bone objects from the frontier zone of Pannonia (Lussonium), Hungary.
- 16 h 15** Discussion.
- 16 h 30 – 16 h 45: Break / Pause.**
- 16 h 45 – 17 h 30: Session 5: Roman bone finds from Portugal / Séance 5 : Artéfacts en matière osseuse d'époque romaine – Chairwoman / Présidente :** Zoe Tsiame (University of Thessaly, Volos / Orthodox Academy of Crete, Chania, Greece).
- 16 h 45** Raquel Guimarães (Universitat de Barcelona, Spain), José Carlos da Costa Quaresma, Daniel Andrade, Paulo Calaveiras, Cristiana Sofia Figueiredo Ameixinha and Martim Lopes (all from Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal)
Bone artefacts from Mirobriga, Santiago do Cacém, Portugal.
- 17 h 00** Martim Lopes (Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Torres Vedras, Portugal), Inês Domingos da Silva (Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal) and José Carlos da Costa Quaresma (Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal)
Bone artefacts in stratigraphy from the Roman sites of Almoínhas and Frielas, Portugal.
- 17 h 15** Discussion.
- 17 h 30 – 17 h 45: Break / Pause.**
- 17 h 45 – 18 h 30: Session 6: Italian-Turkish contribution to Roman and Early Byzantine bone studies / Séance 6 : Contribution italo-turque aux études sur les objets en matière osseuse d'époques romaine et protobyzantine – Chairwoman / Présidente :** Isabelle Bertrand (Musées de Chauvigny, France).
- 17 h 45** Ergün Laflı (Izmir, Turkey), Maurizio Buora (La Società friulana di archeologia, Udine, Italy) and Fatih Hakan Kaya (Dokuz Eylül University, Izmir, Turkey)
Roman bone distaffs figuring Aphrodite of Menophantos - Venus Pudica from Turkey.
- 17 h 50** Ergün Laflı (Izmir, Turkey), Maurizio Buora (La Società friulana di archeologia, Udine, Italy) and Fatih Hakan Kaya (Dokuz Eylül University, Izmir, Turkey)
Roman bone figural panels from Turkey.
- 17 h 55** Ergün Laflı (Izmir, Turkey), Maurizio Buora (La Società friulana di archeologia, Udine, Italy) and Fatih Hakan Kaya (Dokuz Eylül University, Izmir, Turkey)
Roman bone distaffs and spindle from Turkey.
- 18 h 00** Ergün Laflı (Izmir, Turkey), Maurizio Buora (La Società friulana di archeologia, Udine, Italy) and Fatih Hakan Kaya (Dokuz Eylül University, Izmir, Turkey)

- Graeco-Roman funerary steles depicting distaffs and spindles from Turkey.
- 18 h 05** Ergün Laflı (Izmir, Turkey), Maurizio Buora (La Società friulana di archeologia, Udine, Italy) and Fatih Hakan Kaya (Dokuz Eylül University, Izmir, Turkey)
Roman bone combs, boxes and miscellanea from Turkey.
- 18 h 10** Ergün Laflı (Izmir, Turkey), Maurizio Buora (La Società friulana di archeologia, Udine, Italy) and Fatih Hakan Kaya (Dokuz Eylül University, Izmir, Turkey)
Roman and Early Byzantine bone gambling dice from Turkey.
- 18 h 15** Ergün Laflı (Izmir, Turkey), Maurizio Buora (La Società friulana di archeologia, Udine, Italy) and Fatih Hakan Kaya (Dokuz Eylül University, Izmir, Turkey)
Post-Byzantine mother-of-pearl liturgical objects from Turkey.
- 18 h 20** Discussion.
- 18 h 30 – 18 h 45: Break / Pause.**

18 h 45 – 19 h 30: Session 7: Closing session / Séance 7: Séance de clôture – Chairwoman / Présidente: Chiara Bianchi (Milan, Italy).

- 18 h 45** **Closing lecture 1 / Conférence de clôture 1 – Keynote speaker / Conférencier principal:** Marie Delassus (Musée du Louvre, Paris, France)
Miniature architecture and vegetal decoration on the bone furniture carvings in Roman and Byzantine Egypt.
- 19 h 00** **Closing lecture 2 / Conférence de clôture 2 – Keynote speaker / Conférencier principal:** St. John Simpson (The British Museum, London, UK)
Sasanian and early medieval bone objects: archaeological case studies from Iraq, the Persian Gulf and Central Asia.
- 19 h 15** Ergün Laflı (Izmir, Turkey)
Closing technical remarks and next e-conference in May 2026.
- 19 h 25** Discussion.

Records of the e-conference in YouTube
/ Enregistrements de la conférence électronique sur YouTube :

All lectures: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDq2E-Bd7Z8>>.

Short biography of Professor Edward Hector Williams

Ergün Laflı

Professor Ergün Laflı (Izmir)
Çınarlı Mah., Ankara Asfaltı Cad., No. 7, Ege Perla A Kule, 21. Kat, Daire 82, Konak,
TR-35110 Izmir, Turkey.

Phone: +90.539.577 07 33; **e-mail:** <elaflı@yahoo.ca>.

Website: <<https://deu.academia.edu/ErgunLAFLI/>>.

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-4722-5018.

This conference is dedicated to Edward Hector Williams who is Professor Emeritus of Classics and Classical Archaeology at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada) where he taught from 1970–2015. He was raised in the small subarctic town of Churchill, Manitoba, and did his BA Honours in Classics at the University of Manitoba before doing his MA and PhD at the University of Chicago. He studied for two years at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and dug at its projects at Kenchreai (eastern port of Corinth), Corinth, and Samothrace. He was assistant director of the UBC excavations at Anemurium from 1971–1985. He became director of the new Canadian Archaeological Institute at Athens (now the Canadian Institute in Greece) in 1981 and opened its facilities as well as starting its two projects at Stymphalos and Mytilene. He served on the Publications Committee of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and chaired it for three years. He was also an Academic Trustee of the Archaeological Institute of America from 1993–2003 and also served a term as President of its Canadian subsidiary. He has been involved with many other cultural institutions and spent 30 years on the Board of Directors of the Vancouver Maritime Museum, three of them as President and 20 on its Collections Committee. He is also a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. His particular interests are Greek and Roman cities and sanctuaries, ancient lamps, exploration of the Canadian Arctic, and maritime archaeology.



Photo credits: H. Williams, 2025.

Studia de Romanis et Byzantinis ossibus tractatis

(in alphabetical order)



Image: A bone distaff from Ephesus, Museum of Ephesus in Izmir
(photo. by E. Lafı, 2024).

Comme de cire !

Perspectives to Roman organic locking and sealing devices

Isabelle Bertrand and Mégane Vialle

Dr Isabelle Bertrand (Musées de Chauvigny)

Ville de Chauvigny, Pôle Culture-Patrimoine, Service des musées et du patrimoine,
3 rue Saint-Pierre, BP 90064, F-86300 Chauvigny, France;

Websites: <<https://chauvigny-patrimoine.academia.edu/IsabelleBertrand>>,
<<https://u-paris10.academia.edu/M%C3%A9ganeVialle>>.

E-mail: <isabelle.bertrand@chauvigny-patrimoine.fr>.

Ms Mégane Vialle (Université Paris Nanterre)

UMR 7041 ArScAn – GAMMA, MSH Mondes, 21 Allée de l'Université, F-92023 Nanterre Cedex, France.

E-mail: <megane.vialle@parisnanterre.fr>.

The use of ingenious locking and sealing systems first in perishable and then in durable materials became indissociable from fragile or precious containers since the Neolithic period, quickly imposed in the practices of the Ancients, who were preoccupied by protecting their commodities or their possessions, including funerary offers and perhaps the rests of the cremated deceased. In recent years, many scholars have focused their researches on metallic variants of these artefacts which are much better represented archaeologically, leaving barely any space to organic matters. They revealed historiographical mistakes with archaeometrical analysis and experimental archaeology. Hence, the aim of this paper is to propose a presentation of the different device types (mainly bolts and seal-boxes) in animal and vegetal materials discovered between West and East, in order to evaluate for each of them their spatial and temporal distribution. The study based on across all the Roman imperial territories, will allow to discuss potential evolutions and the reasons for their existence, to determine contextual parallels or to highlight regional particularities. In order to understand these objects, it will also be necessary to examine their terminology, their mechanism and to reconstitute the relationship between people and precious things.

Keywords: Bolt, seal boxes, organic materials, trade, distribution, Roman period, entire Mediterranean.

Selective references

ANDREWS C. J., *Roman Seal-Boxes in Britain*, British Archaeological Reports, Oxford, British Series 567, 2012.

ANDREWS C. J., Are Roman seal-boxes evidence for literacy?, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 26, 2013, p. 423-438.

BÉAL J.-C., *Catalogue des objets de tabletterie du musée de la civilisation gallo-romaine de Lyon*, Lyon, Centre d'études romaines et gallo-romaines de l'Université Jean-Moulin Lyon III, 1983, p. 355- 356.

BERTRAND I., BOUCHER T., Boîtes à sceller d'époque romaine dans le Centre-Ouest de la Gaule, in LEGER C., RAUX S. (ed.), *Des objets et des hommes. Études offertes à Michel Feugère*, Drémil-Lafage, Éditions Mergoïl, 2021, p. 109-142.

BOUCHER T., FEUGÈRE M., Les boîtes à sceau romaines du Musée de Montagnac, *Bulletin Instrumentum*, 29, juin 2009, p. 9-12.

BOŽIČ D., Neues über die Kontakte längs der Bernsteinstraße während der Spätlatènezeit, *Arh.vestnik*, 49, 1998, p. 141-156.

BOŽIČ D., FEUGÈRE M., Les instruments de l'écriture, *Gallia*, 61, 2004, p. 21-41.

ČIŽMÁŘ M., Funde von Siegelkapseln aus den keltischen Oppida Stradonice (Böhmen) und Staré Hradisko (Mähren), *Germania*, 68, 2, 1990, p. 597-600.

FEUGÈRE M., Cistes en osier à verrou d'os, *Bulletin Instrumentum*, 14, décembre 2001, p. 24-26.

FURGER A.R., WARTMANN M., RIHA E., *Die römischen Siegelkapseln aus Augusta Raurica*, Augst, Augusta Raurica, 2009.

MILLE P., BAYEN É., CONCHE F., MONTEIL M., Des objets en bois remarquables issus d'un puits de la place d'Assas à Nîmes (Gard), *Gallia*, 75, 2018, p. 233-262.

“Alexandrian bone counters”: finds and interpretations

Chiara Bianchi

Dr Chiara Bianchi (Milan)
Milan, Italy.

Phone: +39.338.745 39 68; **e-mail:** <chiarabianchi.archeo2@gmail.com>.

Website: <<https://independent.academia.edu/ChiaraBianchi>>.

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-3035-1763.

So called “Alexandrian counters” are discoid in shape, and made of bone or rarely of ivory; on the obverse side various scenes are found whereas on the reverse numerals in Latin and Greek (from 1 to 15) are present; sometimes in the middle an inscription, in Greek, identifies the scene.

They were considered to be of Alexandrian origin because the scenes engraved often featured monuments, buildings, obelisks, places of cult and landscapes with crocodiles, connected to the city of Alexandria and to the Nile delta. But apart from the afore mentioned scenes, other images were found: gods from the Greek-Roman pantheon and from the Egyptian pantheon, for example Serapis, Isis, Horus, Anubis, Thot; but also heroes, poets, the Muses, athletes, and portraits of Roman politicians and emperors from the Julio-Claudian dynasty, for instance Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Nero, the women Julia and Livia, and also a member of the late Ptolemaic dynasty Cleopatra's brother, probably Ptolemy XIV. In some cases, on the obverse, hands with fingers in various positions indicate a specific number (so called “finger numbers”). There are also caricatures for example of prostitutes, theatrical masks, victory wreaths of athletic competitions along with a considerable variety of animals, plants and inanimate objects.

These pieces have been discovered throughout the Roman world: in Egypt, along the coasts of the eastern Mediterranean, along the northern shores of the Black Sea, in Italy and as far away off as central Europe.

They can be dated between around the Caesarian period to the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty with Nero (conventionally between 45 BC and AD 68), even though some pieces continued to be used for quite a while, at least until the first half of the second century AD.

Initially they were thought to be theatre tickets but the discovery of an infant burial from Kerch (Panticapaeum) containing a complete series of counters, numbered from 1 to 15, changed the latter theory and they are now considered gaming pieces. To tell the truth, we do not really know how the game was played; it is not mentioned in ancient sources and all interpretations are up to questioning. This paper will consider the findings of “Alexandrian counters” in archaeological contexts and different interpretations, in order to offer a new contribution to the discussion.

Keywords: Bone counters, game pieces, contextual material, Alexandria, eastern Mediterranean, Roman period.

Selective references

ALFÖLDI-ROSENBAUM E. 1971, *The Finger Calculus in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages. Studies on Roman Game Counters I*, “FrühMitAltSt”, 5, 1–9.

ALFÖLDI-ROSENBAUM E. 1975, *The Muses on Roman Game Counters*, “Muse”, 9, 13–20.

ALFÖLDI-ROSENBAUM E. 1976, *Alexandriaca. Studies on Roman Game Counters III*, “Chiron”, 6, 205–239.

ALFÖLDI-ROSENBAUM E. 1980, *Ruler Portraits on Roman Game Counters from Alexandria*, in R.A. Stucky, I. Jucker (Ed.), *Eikones. Studien zum griechischen und römischen Bildnis. Festschrift Hans Jucker zum sechzigsten Geburtstag gewidmet*, Bern, 29–39.

ALFÖLDI-ROSENBAUM E. 1984, *Characters and Caricatures on Game Counters from Alexandria (Studies on Roman Game Counters 5)*, in N. Bonacasa, A. Di Vita (Ed.), *Alessandria e il mondo ellenistico-romano. Studi in onore di Achille Adriani*, II, Rome, 378–390.

BIANCHI C. 2015, *‘Pedine alessandrine’: testimoni illustri di un gioco ignoto*, in F. Slavazzi, C. Lambrugo (ed.), *Tra Alea e Agon: giochi di abilità e di azzardo. I materiali della Collezione Archeologica Giulio Sambon di Milano*, Florence, 53–65.

BIANCHI C. 2021, *Les jetons historiés dits « alexandrins »: bilan et propositions*, in V. Dasen, M. Vespa (ed.), *Play and Games in Classical Antiquity: Definition, Transmission, Reception*, Liège, 179–203.

ROSTOVTSEV M. 1905, *Interprétation des tessères en os avec figures, chiffres et légendes*, “RA”, IV, 5, 110–124.

Contribution of Chiara Bianchi to bone archaeology

Her field has been for many years the study of objects of hard material of animal origin (ivory, bone, antler) found in Roman Age contexts in collaboration with Archaeological Heritage Administrations and Museums. She worked for the project “Greek and Roman articulated dolls (10th cent. BC-7th cent. AD): archaeological and anthropological approaches”, University of Fribourg (CH), directed by Professor Véronique Dasen, with funding from the Swiss National Research Foundation (the Corpus of Roman articulated bone and ivory dolls is currently in press).



Figs 1a–b: An “Alexandrian counter”, Collection Sambon, Milan (photo credits: Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per la Città Metropolitana di Milano, after Bianchi 2015).

Beauty is hidden in tiniest things: bone artefacts from ancient necropolises in Montenegro/South Illyricum

Jelena Cvijetić and Marija Ljuština

Dr Jelena Cvijetić and Dr Marija Ljuština (both from the Univerzitet u Beogradu)
Univerzitet u Beogradu, Filozofski fakultet, Ćika-Ljubina 18-20, SR-11000 Belgrade, Serbia.

E-mail addresses: <jcvijeti@f.bg.ac.rs>; <mljustin@f.bg.ac.rs>.

Phone numbers: +381.60.387 70 52; +381.64.230 04 56.

Website: <<https://f-bg.academia.edu/MarijaLjustina>>

Orcid IDs: 0000-0001-5065-563; 0000-0002-6740-8022.

The paper attempts to systematize available data on bone artefacts from ancient necropolises in Montenegro, with special reference to the material from two systematically investigated necropolises: one from northern Montenegro - Municipium S. (Komini by the city of Pljevlja) and the other from the central part of present-day Montenegro - Doclea (Duklja by the city of Podgorica). Bone artefacts predominantly appear in funerary contexts. They were confirmed in modest numbers at the Komini necropolises, and are dominated by items for personal use, such as decorative pins. All specimens from the older graves were fragmented and damaged due to the effects of high temperatures of pyre. In most cases, they were found in graves where the remains of cremated deceased were placed in a ceramic receptacle protected by a circular stone construction or a cist, sometimes on a “pedestal” in the form of a stone slab. In the group of the later graves, a bone pin with a conical head and a slightly conical body was found in a pit without an ash receptacle, together with a coin of Hadrian. Such pins were either interpreted as hair pins used to fasten coiffure, or as toilet pins utilized to apply cosmetics, namely pigment on eyebrows and eyelashes. These finds mainly belong to the period from the first to the third century AD. In a grave of a 10-12-year-old female, aside from a necklace made of multi-coloured glass and bronze beads, and a bracelet of dark blue glass beads decorated with ribs, a bone spindle whorl was found. Objects for wool spinning, as part of the mundus muliebris, are often seen as indicators of the identity of married women.

The necropolis of Doclea complemented the list providing artefacts used for writing, which could have belonged to school-aged children.

It is worth mentioning that a part of a bone plate from the handle of a long curved knife was found in a grave in the necropolis of Municipium S. An iron pilum and a bronze fibula were in the inventory of the same grave. In this necropolis, several graves with long curved knives or, in one case, a spear with the tip stuck into the ground, were found. These knives (about 30 cm long, with a handle that once had a bronze or bone, and probably also a wooden plating), are most often found in burial pits with a receptacle for ashes in the form of a ceramic urn. In most of the cases, the urns were covered with a stone slab or a larger ceramic fragment and surrounded by a circular stone construction or a cist. Burial pits of this type are grouped in the central part of the necropolis. Rare findings from the graves indicate that these are most likely men’s graves. There are indications that this custom was practiced in the south-eastern necropolis of Doclea as well as in the necropolises around Lake Skadar (the necropolis of Velje Ledine near Gostilj in graves from the third and second centuries BC), as well as in other partially explored contemporary necropolises from the territory of Montenegro. It is reckoned that this custom did not derive from the Roman tradition. Based on the current knowledge, one can rather speak of a custom spread over a wider area, which was common to several protohistoric communities in the central and western parts of the Balkans. Representations on silver and bronze plaques from graves excavated in the necropolises by Lake Skadar may indicate deeper symbolic meaning of placing knives next to the deceased.

Keywords: Necropolis sites, funerary finds, knife, use, Montenegro, South Illyricum, pre-Roman period.

Miniature architecture and vegetal decoration on the bone furniture carvings in Roman and Byzantine Egypt

Marie Delassus

Dr Marie Delassus (Musée du Louvre, Paris)
Département des arts de Byzance et des chrétientés en Orient, Musée du Louvre,
Pavillon Mollien, F-75058 Paris cedex 01, France.

Phone: +33.1.40 20 84 51; **e-mail:** <marie.delassus@louvre.fr>.

Websites: <<https://xn--muse-du-louvre-dkb.academia.edu/MarieDelassus>>,
<<https://musée-du-louvre.academia.edu/MarieDelassus>>.

Among the many bone carvings discovered in Egypt and other regions of the Mediterranean Basin, a specific category stands out: architectural elements, to which some bones carved with vegetal and floral motifs can also be associated. These decorations offer a repertoire of varied forms: columns and pilasters with decorated shafts, capitals in two or three dimensions, friezes of acanthus or rosettes, vegetal candelabra motifs. They formed the architectural framework for large compositions in which figurative representations were inserted to decorate caskets, chests, or armaria. We will examine the osteological and technical characteristics of these reliefs, based on examples held in French museums. We will begin by identifying the parts of the animal skeleton selected. Then, by analysing the tool traces, we will attempt to reconstruct the gestures used by the craftsmen. Finally, we will look at the choice of decorative patterns, their style, and their fidelity to the monumental architecture works of the Roman and Byzantine periods.

Keywords: Miniature architecture decoration, vegetal decoration, bone furniture carvings, Egypt, Roman period, Byzantine period, museum studies.



Fig. 1: A miniature architecture on a bone furniture carving from Egypt, Musée du Louvre (photo. by M. Delassus, 2024).

Roman bone objects from the frontier zone of Pannonia (Lussonium), Hungary

Ferenc Fazekas

Dr Ferenc Fazekas (Városi Múzeum, Paks & Régészet Tanszék)
Városi Múzeum, Paks Deák Ferenc utca 2, H-7030 Paks, Hungary;
& Régészet Tanszék, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Archaeology, Rókus utca 2, H-7624 Pécs, Hungary.
E-mail: <fazekas_ferenc@yahoo.de>; **phone:** +36.20.475 34 24.
Website: <<https://pte.academia.edu/FerencFazekas>>.

The Roman fort Lussonium (Paks-Dunakömlőd, western Hungary) is located in Pannonia Inferior, in the middle section of the Ripa Pannonica. The site was in use between mid-first century to the beginning of the fifth century AD. Systematic excavations were carried out between 1987 and 2011; beside the remains of the fort, large number of finds were brought to light, among them the most interesting finds are bone artefacts. The composition of the bone items display a wider scale of materials, techniques and presence of different types of Roman bone objects, the great amount of raw materials, the semi-finished artefacts indicate the existence of bone tool manufacture in the Roman fort. The material covered in the lecture will make also another significant contribution to the question and distribution of the different groups of bone artefacts along the Ripa Pannonica.

Keywords: Fort, contextual material, manufacture, use, raw material, Lussonium, Pannonia, Hungary, Roman period.

Marine adornment: About a purple dye murex shell pendant discovered in Dacia

Iosif Vasile Ferencz and Ana-Maria Păpureanu

Dr Iosif Vasile Ferencz (Muzeul Civilizației Dacice și Romane Deva)
Muzeul Civilizației Dacice și Romane Deva, Department of Archaeology, 1 Decembrie 1918 Street, no 39,
Deva, RO-330005 Hunedoara, Romania & Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara, Romania.

Phone: +40.74.539 32 54; **e-mail addresses:** <vasile.ferencz@e-uvv.ro>, <iosifvasile@yahoo.com>.

Website: <www.researchgate.net/profile/Iosif-Ferencz?ev=hdr_xprf>.

Orcid ID: 0000-0001-9510-0052.

Dr Ana-Maria Păpureanu (Muzeul Național Brukenthal, Sibiu)
Muzeul Național Brukenthal, Piața Mare nr. 4-5, Cetății Street no 1, RO-550160 Sibiu, Romania.

Phone: +40.74.016 33 11; **e-mail:** <papureanu.ana@gmail.com>.

Orcid ID: 0009-0007-6383-1628.

The Dacian fortress of Ardeu, a village located in southwestern Transylvania, has been known in archaeological literature since the late 19th century. However, over the last two decades it has been researched more intensively. The complex was built in the middle or in the second half of the first century BC and functioned until the beginning of the second century of the Christian era. The end of the Dacian habitation at Ardeu is linked to the Dacian campaigns of Emperor Trajan.

The Dacian complex at Ardeu includes a settlement, an area with sacred deposits and a fortified enclosure located on the top of a hill that dominates both. The most important construction researched so far is located in a dominant position, within the fortified enclosure. It is the residence of the nobleman who ruled the fortress, built on a stone base with a Hellenistic wall.

The objects discovered during the two decades of research are both numerous and diverse: weaponry, tools, utensils, household items, clothing and adornment, etc. The purpose of this presentation is to present a pendant made of a *Bolinus Brandaris* (Linnaeus, 1758) shell. The specimen is a purple dye murex, a Mediterranean species from the Muricidae family, “exotic” in the Dacian environment, emphasizing its significance.

Keywords: Marine adornment, murex shell, pendant, contextual material, Dacia, Romania, pre-Roman period.



Fig. 1: A purple dye murex shell pendant discovered in Dacia (photo. I. V. Ferencz, 2024).

Some new and old finds from the type of bone amulet in the form of a hand from the Romanian collections

Ștefan Georgescu and Ana Hamat

Dr Ștefan Georgescu and Dr Ana Hamat (both from the Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie, Constanța)
Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie, 12 Piața Ovidiu, Constanța, Romania.

Phone: +4.0726.272 940; **e-mail addresses:** <viorel.stefan.g@gmail.com>; <anahamat@yahoo.com>.

Websites: <<https://uvt-ro.academia.edu/ViorelStefanGeorgescu>>;
<<https://muzeulbanatuluimontan.academia.edu/HamatAnaCristina>>.

This presentation will bring into discussion a specific type of amulet, a bone made amulet in form of a hand, from the Romanian collections. This type of amulet is quite very rare in museum collections from the territory of Romania and recently we have new discoveries of this kind of artefacts.

Until now, we have recorded just four amulets of this form, discovered in Tibiscum and Tomis, and one of them does not preserve information about a known place of discovery. The more recent are two amulets of this type, which were discovered in a funerary context from Tomis (modern day Constanța). The artefact discovered in Tibiscum, comes from an older discovery in the Roman settlement.

The study of these amulets will offer us an insight in the private and public lives of the people from Antiquity.

Keywords: Bone amulets, hand form, museum studies, Romania, Roman period.

Authors

Ștefan Georgescu is Ph.D. in Roman lamps and pottery, archaeologist at the Museum of National History and Archaeology in Constanța, Romania. He is specialized in the field Roman lamps and pottery, being one of the experts in rescue excavations in Tomis.

Ana Hamat is PhD in Roman jewellery from Dacia, archaeologist at the Museum of National History and Archaeology from Constanța, Romania. She is specialized in the fields of Roman small finds and Roman jewellery and works in the rescue excavations from Constanța.

Bone and antler jewellery and accessory for women discovered in Dacia Superior, Romania

Ana Hamat

Dr Ana Hamat (Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie, Constanța)
Muzeul de Istorie Națională și Arheologie, 12 Piața Ovidiu, Constanța, Romania.
Phone: +4.0726.272 940; **e-mail address:** <anahamat@yahoo.com>.
Website: <<https://muzeulbanatuluiimontan.academia.edu/HamatAnaCristina>>.

The object of this presentation is represented by the discussion of specific types of jewellery like bracelets and amulets along with hairpins and pins for fastening the garments. They were discovered in places like Drobeta, Tibiscum or Apulum, mostly in rich settlements or even important municipia of Dacia Superior. One of the cities with the most important discoveries remains Drobeta, from where we have mostly local products, crafted in specialized workshops, and also products coming from near or faraway places, as a result of the interprovincial commerce. We will try to empathize the role of these objects in the mundus muliebris as parts of a larger image associated mainly with women. Also, we will bring into discussion this specific type of production for the provincial economy, as a model for other categories of materials.

Keywords: Bone jewellery, antler jewellery, female accessory, contextual material, Dacia Superior, Romania, Roman period.

Bone artefacts from Mirobriga, Santiago do Cacém, Portugal

Raquel Guimarães, José Carlos da Costa Quaresma, Daniel Andrade, Paulo Calaveiras, Cristiana Sofia Figueiredo Ameixinha and Martim Lopes

Ms Raquel Guimarães (Universitat de Barcelona)

Equip de Recerca Arqueològica i Arqueomètrica de la Universitat de Barcelona (ERAAUB), c/o Institut d'Arqueologia de la Universitat de Barcelona (IAUB), Centro de Humanidades (CHAM), Barcelona, Spain.

E-mail: <ras.guimaraes95@gmail.com>; **Orcid ID:** 0000-0002-7910-3373.

Dr José Carlos da Costa Quaresma, Mr Daniel Andrade, Mr Paulo Calaveiras,

Ms Cristiana Sofia Figueiredo Ameixinha and Mr Martim Lopes (all from the Universidade Nova de Lisboa)

IEM-Instituto de Estudos Medievais, CHAM-Centro de Humanidades, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Av. de Berna, 26-C, Gabinete 608, PT-1069-061 Lisbon, Portugal.

Phone: +351.217.908 300.13 21; **e-mail addresses:** <jcquaresma@fcsh.unl.pt>, <josecarlosquaresma@gmail.com>; <andrade.dcp@gmail.com>; <paulocalaveiras@gmail.com>;

<a2020126588@campus.fcsh.unl.pt>; <martimafonsorl@sapo.pt>.

Website: <<https://fcsh-unl.academia.edu/Jos%C3%A9CarlosQuaresma>>.

Archaeological excavations carried out in Mirobriga, a small Roman city near the coast in present-day Portugal, have led to the recovery of a significant assemblage of bone artefacts, dated between the first and fourth centuries AD, totaling approximately 100 fragments. These objects are distributed across different functional categories, primarily associated with personal adornment, textile activities, leisure, and domestic life. The study of this assemblage allows for a typo-chronological classification of the materials, providing insight into their role in the daily lives of the inhabitants of Mirobriga. Furthermore, the presence of these artefacts suggests a population whose customs and practices aligned with the aesthetic and social patterns of the Romanized Mediterranean. By contextualizing these objects within broader imperial trends, this study contributes to the understanding of cultural interactions and the integration of Mirobriga into the socio-cultural dynamics of the Roman world.

Keywords: Personal adornments, social practices, Lusitania, Mirobriga, Santiago do Cacém, Portugal, Roman period.

Roman bone distaffs figuring Aphrodite of Menophantos - Venus Pudica from Turkey

Ergün Laflı, Maurizio Buora and Fatih Hakan Kaya

Professor Ergün Laflı (Izmir)

Çınarlı Mah., Ankara Asfaltı Cad., No. 7, Ege Perla A Kule, 21. Kat, Daire 82, Konak,
TR-35110 Izmir, Turkey.

Phone: +90.539.577 07 33; **e-mail:** <elaflı@yahoo.ca>.

Website: <<https://deu.academia.edu/ErgunLAFLI/>>.

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-4722-5018.

Dr Maurizio Buora (La Società Friulana di Archeologia, Udine)

La Società Friulana di Archeologia, c/o Via Gorizia 16, I-33100 Udine, Italy.

E-mail: <mbuora@libero.it>; **website:** <<https://independent.academia.edu/mauriziobuora>>.

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-5746-8312.

Dr Fatih Hakan Kaya (Dokuz Eylül University, Izmir)

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Arkeoloji Bölümü,
Tınaztepe/Kaynaklar Yerleşkesi, Buca, TR-35160 Izmir, Turkey.

E-mail: <fatih.kaya@deu.edu.tr>.

It is very well known that the ring distaffs made by bone are more often discovered throughout the eastern part of the Roman Empire. In this paper we present ten formerly unpublished examples of bone distaffs figuring Aphrodite of Menophantos - Venus Pudica from Turkey. All of these distaffs from Turkish local museums consist of a flat shaft decorated on the upper end with a naked feminine figure, supposedly the goddess Venus, and a circular ring on the other end. The depiction of Venus in the type of Pudica is an indication of virtuousness and faithfulness of Roman women, and thus, representing the loyalty given to women as wedding gifts. Among our five examples head of Venus is broken. Most of these distaffs should be grave goods, most probably of female individuals. Their number in Phrygia is remarkably high, perhaps parallel to its production at there during the Romans.



Figs 1–6: Six Roman bone distaffs figuring Aphrodite of Menophantos - Venus Pudica in the Archaeological Museum of Afyonkarahisar in western Turkey (photo. by E. Laflı, 2018).



Figs 7–10: Four Roman bone distaffs figuring Aphrodite of Menophantos - Venus Pudica from Anamur, Mersin, Ankara and Ephesus Museums in Turkey (photo. by E. Lafli, 2004, 2017 and H. Williams, 1972).



Fig. 11: A Roman bone distaffs figuring Aphrodite of Menophantos - Venus Pudica from Alexander Ancient Art Auction House, London, UK.

Keywords: Bone distaffs figuring Aphrodite of Menophantos - Venus Pudica, use, iconography, dating, Phrygia, Turkey, Roman period, museum studies.

References

A. Rațiu, Venus pudica on a bone distaff from Capidava, *Cercetări Arheologice* 23, 2016, pp. 137–150.

Roman and Early Byzantine bone gambling dice from Turkey

Ergün Laflı, Maurizio Buora and Fatih Hakan Kaya

Professor Ergün Laflı (Izmir)

Çınarlı Mah., Ankara Asfaltı Cad., No. 7, Ege Perla A Kule, 21. Kat, Daire 82, Konak,
TR-35110 Izmir, Turkey.

Phone: +90.539.577 07 33; **e-mail:** <elaflı@yahoo.ca>.

Website: <<https://deu.academia.edu/ErgunLAFLI/>>.

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-4722-5018.

Dr Maurizio Buora (La Società Friulana di Archeologia, Udine)

La Società Friulana di Archeologia, c/o Via Gorizia 16, I-33100 Udine, Italy.

E-mail: <mbuora@libero.it>; **website:** <<https://independent.academia.edu/mauriziobuora>>.

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-5746-8312.

Dr Fatih Hakan Kaya (Dokuz Eylül University, Izmir)

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Edebiyat Fakültesi, Arkeoloji Bölümü,
Tınaztepe/Kaynaklar Yerleşkesi, Buca, TR-35160 Izmir, Turkey.

E-mail: <fatih.kaya@deu.edu.tr>.

In Turkish sites and museums there are numerous examples of small bone objects formed into “cushion” polyhedrons marked with eyelets which were used as gambling dice during the Roman and Early Byzantine periods. Most of these gaming dices are six-sided modelled in bone, and known in Latin as tesseræ. Usually each of their sides is incised with the appropriate number. There are also few asymmetrical, lopsided dice. Most of these examples belong to the second and third centuries AD.

Keywords: Bone gambling dice, use, manufacturing, dating, Turkey, Roman period, Early Byzantine period, museum studies.



Figs 1–7: Seven Roman and Early Byzantine bone gambling dice from Turkish museums (photo. by E. Laflı, 2004).

Ivory in the Aegean Bronze Age: Minoan and Mycenaean objects and workshops

Angeliki Liveri

Dr Angeliki Liveri (Athens)

Στρατηγού Μαυρουζιάνη 102, Nea Ionia, GR-14235 Athens, Greece.

Phone: +30.210.279 04 14.

E-mail: <angeliki.liveri@gmail.com>.

This paper presents a selection of ivory objects, which were found in various Minoan and Mycenaean sites in Greece. They are dated in the Bronze Age, mainly in the second millennium BC. These finds were mostly unearthed in graves, including idols of human figures or animals, seals, cosmetic-boxes or decorating inlays for furniture, weapons, vases, doors and other luxury objects, like hair combs, sceptres and mirrors. Ivory objects were produced in workshops, which are located in Crete, Peloponnese, Central Greece and Cyprus. Often, these workshops were inside the palaces; therefore, they disappeared after the palatial destruction. The artists decorated the ivories with Minoan or Mycenaean art motifs. Occasionally, they used new themes, which show Egyptian or Syrian-Palestinian influences, a result of the commercial exchange between these regions. This indicates also the raw material's provenience. This paper aims to highlight the similarities and differences between the various local workshops concerning their iconography, style and technical processing of the material.

Keywords: Ivory, ivory workshops, chrysolephantine objects, Minoan art, Mycenaean art, Aegean Bronze Age, trade, Minoan and Mycenaean seals.

***Parva munera: representations of public spectacles
on Roman and Early Byzantine bone objects***

Angeliki Liveri

Dr Angeliki Liveri (Athens)

Στρατηγού Μακρυγιάννη 102, Nea Ionia, GR-14235 Athens, Greece.

Phone: +30.210.279 04 14.

E-mail: <angeliki.liveri@gmail.com>.

This paper presents selected representations of public spectacles on various bone objects, focusing on chariot races, gladiatorial fights and wild beasts hunts (venationes) in the Roman and Early Byzantine period. Popular games (ludi circenses) are visible on ivory artefacts, e.g. on plates (mostly parts of imperial and consular diptychs), pyxides, figurines, knives-heads etc. Scenes of such spectacles (in hippodrome, amphitheatre or in circus) or a single participant (a charioteer, a gladiator) are preserved. These luxury objects were mostly offered as gifts (munera) or they are souvenirs of a performance. This paper aims to classify the selected objects chronologically according to the game that they represent, comparing with similar representations in other works of art, e.g., wall-paintings, mosaics, reliefs, where it is possible.

Keywords: Public games, chariot races, gladiators, ludi circenses, venationes, ivory, diptychs, figurines.

Bone artefacts in stratigraphy from the Roman sites of Almoínhas and Frielas, Portugal

Martim Lopes, Inês Domingos da Silva and José Carlos da Costa Quaresma

Mr Martim Lopes (Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Torres Vedras)
Universitat Rovira i Virgili, c/o Rua Almirante Gago Coutinho 9, PT-2560-302 Torres Vedras, Portugal.

Phone: +351.915.819 275; **e-mail:** <martimafonsorl@sapo.pt>.

Website: <<https://urv.academia.edu/MartimLopes>>.

Orcid ID: 0000-0001-9261-7240.

Ms Inês Domingos da Silva (Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal)

E-mail: <inesdomingos1@campus.ul.pt>.

Dr José Carlos da Costa Quaresma (Universidade Nova de Lisboa)

IEM-Instituto de Estudos Medievais, CHAM-Centro de Humanidades, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas,
Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Av. de Berna, 26-C, Gabinete 608, PT-1069-061 Lisbon, Portugal.

Phone: +351.217.908 300.13 21; **e-mail addresses:** <jcquaresma@fcsh.unl.pt>, <josecarlosquaresma@gmail.com>.

Website: <<https://fcsh-unl.academia.edu/Jos%C3%A9CarlosQuaresma>>.

This paper aims to present the complete bone artefacts from two Roman sites in the valley of Loures, near Lisbon (Portugal), whose occupation is dated between the early second century (or even late first) and the sixth century AD.

The site of Almoínhas was investigated primarily by the municipal archaeologists between 1995 and 2001 and excavated in area in 2006-2007 by ERA-Arqueologia enterprise.

These interventions recovered an interesting assemblage, mostly from a waste dump, yet, due to the large excavated area, other questions arose from the absences of certain bone artefacts, a research question that this work also aims to tackle.

The site of Frielas has less excavated area than Almoínhas, yet a more diversified assemblage was recovered in the peristyle of what is considered a Roman villa of considerable dimension.

This assemblage appears to be a good reflex of the daily life in both Roman sites, the first site with a considerable amount of loom weights and other productive apparatus, such as a potter's wheelbase, ceramic kilns and agricultural tools, that appear to reinforce a productive focus on this site, where tools for bone artefacts would be expectable to be found in association.

On the other hand, the site of Frielas presents well a domestic apparatus within the expectable findings on a residential building of this type.

Finally, this work studies the last unpublished bone finds in the Roman sites within Loures region, that complement a funerary assemblage from the site of Unhos that was recently presented and allows to some degree comparison and analysis within the social-economic status of the population of the Roman valley of Loures.

Keywords: Stratigraphical analysis, contextual material, Lusitania, Almoínhas, Frielas, Portugal, Roman period.

Early Byzantine antler objects from the hill-top fortifications in northern Illyricum, Serbia

Gordana Jeremić and Selena Vitezović

Dr Gordana Jeremić and Dr Selena Vitezović (both from the Arheološki institut, Belgrade)
Arheološki institut, Кнеза Михаила 35/IV, SB-11000 Belgrade, Serbia.

Phone numbers: +381.60.024 98 28, +381.11.263 71 91.

E-mail addresses: <jeremic.g@gmail.com>, <gjeremic@ai.ac.rs>.

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-0065-4093

Phone: +381.64.282 66 94; **e-mail:** <selenavitezovic@gmail.com>.

Website: <ai-rs.academia.edu/SelenaVitezovi%C4%87>.

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-1631-7016.

Early Byzantine fortified hilltop settlements represent a specific form of urbanization during the transition from the Roman to the European Early Medieval era. Archaeological research of the remains of hill-top fortified settlements in the Central Balkans, which represented parts of Northern Illyricum on the territory of the present-day Republic of Serbia, has yielded a wealth of data on the daily life of its inhabitants. These are settlements that are classified as smaller towns (such as Caričin Grad - Justiniana Prima?, Gradina on the Jelica Mt.) and rural areas (Brangović, Vojska etc.), which contain several common characteristics: they were built in environments rich in forests and waterways, near the main provincial roads; within the ramparts, there are public and private buildings, dominated by at least one or more church buildings, as centres of local communities, merchants, artisans, and mercenaries.

Intensive archaeozoological exploration of these settlements has yielded a complex picture of animal husbandry and the population's diet. Research has shown that game hunting from the late fourth to the early seventh century played a secondary role despite the rich forest terrain. However, among the portable finds, objects or semi-finished products with traces of processing made of deer antlers are quite common, indicating systematic collecting of antlers in the surrounding areas, as well as the presence of local workshops and a developed market for this type of items. The objects include combs, knife holders, heddle holders, spindle-whorls, etc. The proposed paper will deal with the techniques of making and decoration, the functional and topographical analysis of the objects, as well as the consumers and customers for which the objects were intended.

Keywords: Northern Illyricum, Central Balkans, hill-top settlements, antler, everyday objects, Early Byzantine period, late fourth–early seventh century AD.



Fig. 1: A heddle holder from Vojska near Jagodina, late fifth–sixth century AD (photo. by G. Jeremić, 2024).



Fig. 2: A heddle holder, Mt. Jelica, sixth century AD (photo. by G. Jeremić, 2024).

Conservation of organic artefacts in the collections of the National Museum of Alba Iulia, Romania

Ioan Oprea

Dr Ioan Oprea (the Muzeul Național al Unirii, Alba Iulia)
Muzeul Național al Unirii, Str. Mihai Viteazul 12-14, RO-510010, Alba Iulia, Romania.
Phone: +40.75.118 71 08; **e-mail:** <dasandrius@hotmail.com>.
Website: <<https://independent.academia.edu/EdeonDasius>>.

In general, we talk about the conservation system as representing at least half of all the actions taken into a museum. The future of our museums depends of how well this conservation processes are undertaken and how we will save the objects for the next centuries. Displayed, but most of them stored, artefacts of all kind are carefully supervised by a museum professional because they need constant protection, supervision, periodic control and checks and vitally, they need a stable environment with specific temperatures and humidity. If they are organic, such as those made of raw animal materials, their sensitivity is obviously higher and so is the needed care. Our museum hosts the biggest artefact collection of bone, horn and ivory from the Roman province of Dacia, far bigger than any other Roman settlement from the region and dated between the second and third centuries AD. Why do we have so many of these finds, what were their practical and symbolic purposes in their time, were they produced locally or imported, what are the main categories we found here - these are some of the topics we will try to cover during our intervention at the conference. In order to secure the best conservation methods for these types of artefacts, we also conducted several experiments of working bone and horn for a better understanding of the animal raw material and how they work over time, what affects them mostly and how we can avoid their potential damages.

Keywords: Conservation, organic artefacts, National Museum of Alba Iulia, Romania, Roman period, museum studies.



Fig. 1 (photo. by I. Oprea, 2024).

An ivory statuette figuring Thanatos from the suburbs of Tomis, Romania

Ingrid Petcu-Levei and Radu Petcu

Mrs Ingrid Petcu-Levei and Dr Radu Petcu (both from the Muzeul de Istorie Nationala si Arheologie Constanța)
Muzeul de Istorie Nationala si Arheologie Constanța, Piața Ovidiu, Nr. 12, RO-900745 Constanța, Romania.

Phone: +40.74.523 52 79.

E-mail addresses: <ingridpetculevei@gmail.com>, <ingridleveiyahoo.com>; <radupetcuarheo@gmail.com>.

The real estate developments in Constanța have attracted in recent years a series of preventive archaeological investigations, which have led to the discovery of a rich archaeological material. This includes a bone statuette found in the Palazu Mare district of Constanța. Here a nucleus of habitation has been identified, previously reported through various archaeological finds from the Roman period. The archaeological site of Palazu Mare has been more clearly delimited in recent years thanks to numerous surveys and preventive archaeological investigations. The chronology of the settlement (vicus?) has been placed in the second–third centuries and the first decades of the fourth century AD. The statuette we want to present is 6 cm high and 1.7 cm wide and is made of ivory. It is the representation of the god Thanatos, who is the personification of the Death in Greek and Roman mythology. Unfortunately, it is not complete, the left hand and part of the legs are missing, and moreover the back wings. The closest analogy for our representation comes from Northern France and is a small bronze statue that was discovered in a villa rustica in Salouël, a commune in the outskirts of Amiens. Without being sure of the functionality of the object to which the statue pertains, we will place it in the category of instrumentum domesticum, which covers a variety of objects that were part of the everyday life of the Romans. The rarity of the discoveries consists in the material from which the statuette is made as well as the context in which it was found. As can be seen, Thanatos is characteristic of funerary art, being rarely found in domestic contexts. Ivory statues are quite rare in the Dobrudja part of Moesia Inferior.

Keywords: Ivory statuettes, Thanatos, contextual material, Tomis, Romania, Roman period.

**Sasanian and early medieval bone objects:
archaeological case studies from Iraq, the Persian Gulf and Central Asia**

St. John Simpson

Dr St. John Simpson (The British Museum, London)
The British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG, United Kingdom.
E-mail addresses: <ssimpson@britishmuseum.org>, <syndjer11@gmail.com>.
Website: <<https://britishmuseum.academia.edu/StJohnSimpson>>.

Forthcoming.

Keywords:

Roman bone pins, needles, spinning and weaving accessories from the Archaeological Museum of Istria, Croatia

Alka Starac

Dr Alka Starac (Arheološki muzej Istre, Pula)

Arheološki muzej Istre, Carrarina ul. 3, HR-52100 Pula, Croatia.

Phone: +385.91.153 96 66; **e-mail addresses:** <alka.starac@ami-pula.hr>, <alkastarac46@gmail.com>.

Website: <<https://independent.academia.edu/AStarac>>.

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-8254-0849.

The subject of the paper is a group of about seventy Roman bone objects from the Roman Collection of the Archaeological Museum of Istria, which includes needles for various purposes, and spinning and weaving tools. Half of the selected objects are unpublished and originate from an old museum collection without preserved data on the location and circumstances of the find, which makes it difficult to identify their purpose. Of the objects whose circumstances of discovery are known, approximately two-thirds originate from a settlement context, and the rest from necropolises. The custom of placing sewing, spinning and weaving utensils in women's graves persisted in Istria continuously from the first to the fourth century. Hairpins, clothespins and sewing needles, spinning utensils and objects that could have been used in weaving are divided according to type and shape. Among hairpins, those with an ovoid or spherical head dominate numerically, followed by those with a conical head. Hairpins with apotropaic figural motifs of a magical hand, a woman's head and a Dionysian cone stand out. Large needles with bulbous or flat heads could be used as pins for fastening clothing, for securing hairstyles, and in textile production as spindle whorls or distaffs. Needles with one hole were used for sewing, while needles with three holes could have been used for sewing, nailbinding or fastening clothing. One entire distaff, and the weights and spindle whorls from various spindles have been preserved. The different possibilities of using the bone artefacts that are the subject of the paper are listed, and their symbolic and apotropaic meaning is analyzed. The study of selected bone objects is a contribution to the knowledge of the aspects of the use of processed bone in Roman Istria in everyday household activities mainly related to women, in styling hairstyles, dressing, making fabric and making clothes.

Keywords: Bone distaffs, bone pins, bone needles, bone spinning and weaving accessories, museum studies, Istria, Croatia, Roman period.



Fig. 1: A Roman bone pin in the Archaeological Museum of Istria, Croatia, acc. no. A-5303 (photo. by A. Starac, 2024).

Bone objects from the University of British Columbia's excavations at Anemurium (Rough Cilicia) and Mytilene (Lesbos)

E. Hector Williams

Professor E. Hector Williams (The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC)
The University of British Columbia, Department of Classical, Near-Eastern and Religious Studies,
Vancouver Campus, Buchanan C227, 1866 Main Mall, Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z1.
E-mail: <hector.williams@ubc.ca>.

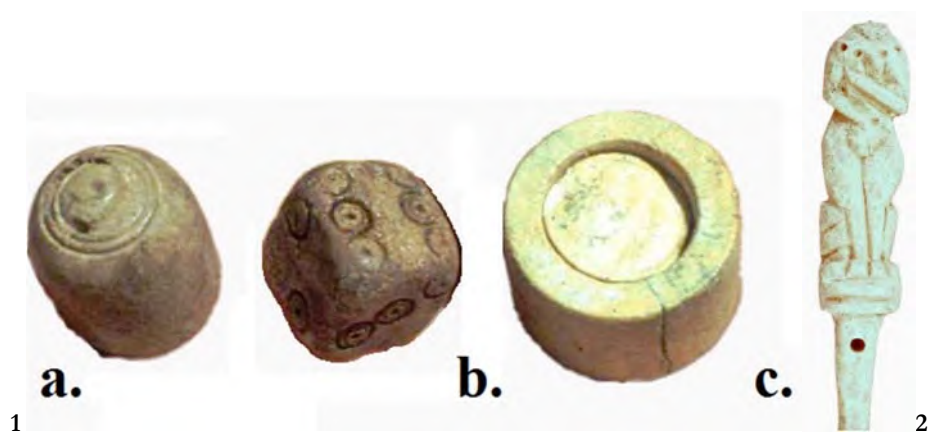
Archaeological excavations at the large urban site of Anemurium (modern Mersin province, Turkey) between 1970–1985 and the Aeolic Greek city of Mytilene (Lesbos, Greece) recovered a large number of bone objects from the Early Byzantine (late sixth–mid seventh centuries AD) levels of the site. They include the usual hair pins, needles, containers, furniture parts, dice, writing implements, etc. as well as some unusual pieces like a broken distaff with a crude carving of an Aphrodite Pudica as its handle. At Mytilene near the North Harbour in the remains of a probable tavern/brothel destroyed in the second quarter of the fourth century AD the dig recovered over a hundred bone hair pines as well as astragals, dice, gaming tokens, and pieces of bone and horn prepared for turning into a variety of objects. In the sanctuary of Demeter buried in the medieval castle we found few bone objects but one was of especial interest: the front part of a mouse with holes for axle and wheels, likely a child's toy. The paper will summarize and illustrate these finds and try to put them in their context.

Keywords: Excavated contextual material, Anemurium, Cilicia, southern Turkey, Mytilene, Lesbos, Greece, Late Roman period, Early Byzantine period.

References

E. Ayalon, *The assemblage of bone and ivory artefacts from Caesarea Maritima, Israel, 1st–13th centuries CE*, BAR International Series 1457 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005). DOI: 10.30861/9781841718958.

C. Williams and H. Williams, A Roman 'house' in Mytilene, in: N. Crummy (ed.), *Image, craft and the Classical World. Essays in honour of Donald Bailey and Catherine Johns*, Monographies Instrumentum 29 (Montagnac: Éditions Monique Mergoil, 2005), 243–247.



Figs 1–2: A group of bone artefacts from Anemurium, Turkey (photo. by H. Williams, 1975).



Fig. 3: A worked bone depicting a mouse from Mytilene, Lesbos, Greece (photo. by H. Williams, 2014).

Worked bones depicting Isis and Horus from the excavations of the necropolis of Belinskoye site on the western border of the Bosporan Kingdom

Viktor G. Zubarev, Elena V. Shushunova and Sergey V. Yartsev

Professor Viktor G. Zubarev, Dr Elena V. Shushunova and Professor Sergey V. Yartsev
(all from the Tul'skiy Gosudarstvennyy Pedagogicheskiy Universitet Im. L. N. Tolstogo)
Department of History and Archaeology, Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education
"Tula State Lev Tolstoy Pedagogical University", Prospekt Lenina 125, RU-300026 Tula, Russia;
Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education "Belgorod State National Research University",
85 Pobedy str., RU-308015 Belgorod, Russia.

E-mail addresses: <parosta@mail.ru>; <schuschunova.elena@yandex.ru>; <s-yartsev@yandex.ru>.

Phone numbers: +7.910.700 54 55; +7.915.783 43 26;

Orcid IDs: 0000-0001-8831-9101; 0000-0003-0237-4383; 0000-0001-5532-211X.

Between the second and sixth centuries AD the site of Belinskoye was located on the western borders of the Bosporan Kingdom in the area of the northern section of the Uzunlar defensive line in the Crimean Azov region. It has been studied for almost three decades by the archaeological expedition of the Tula State Lev Tolstoy Pedagogical University under the supervision of Doctor of Philosophy in History, Professor Viktor G. Zubarev. A rare bone work, depicting a nude female figure with a baby in her arms, has been found in crypt No. 5 of the nearby necropolis. Despite the fact that the front side of the figure is poorly preserved and the woman's head has been erased, it is very well visible that she has a curly-haired infant in her arms, holding and sucking her naked right breast. The fold of the woman's clothing is only clearly seen below the abdomen. A coiled thread is depicted on the left hand. The reverse side is preserved below the general centre of gravity of the figure. The spine is worked out with a 'cut-in' line. The slopes of the exposed shoulder blades are shown. The piece is incomplete, the lower part, which was lost in antiquity, has not been preserved, as there are three holes at the bottom of the find, but not for repair, but for fixing, as an overlay on a casket, fragments of which have been found in the crypt.

When considering the rarity of the artefact, the dating of the investigated crypt No. 5, where the find was made, becomes of particular interest. Crypt No. 5 was constructed during a period when the inhabitants of the settlement, for reasons unknown, began to abandon funerary structures with artificial vaults, which in the Bosphorus are usually dated to the first–third century AD. Consequently, the crypts of this new type, which appear at first glance to be ordinary cut-out vaults in the rocky ground with beds, contain traces of attempts to erect funerary structures of previous designs. Determining the precise dates of interments in crypt No. 5 presents a significant challenge. This is due to the fact that, in addition to its primary function as a family vault, the burial chamber has been repeatedly plundered over the course of its history. Consequently, the artefacts accompanying the burials have not been preserved in their entirety. Initial examination of the surviving funerary inventory, which includes fragments of amphorae, red-lacquer ware, and a set of beads, suggests a date in the middle to second half of the 3rd century AD. Nevertheless, one of the preserved bronze round buckles probably bears traces of a small cut near the edge, which can be evaluated as a sign peculiar to the 4th century. Moreover, a coin of the Bosporan king Rhescuporis VI (AD 303–341/342) has been found in the nearby vault No. 8 of the same type.

In this context, the dating of the bone work found in crypt No. 5 should be approached with extreme caution. Some assistance in determining the age of the artefacts can be provided by the closest analogues of the finds, in which M. Kremer correctly identifies the image of Isis Lactans in the form of a nursing mother holding the infant Horus in her arms. This image was the tip of a complex object,

which scholars usually interpret as a 'spinning wheel with a ring'. This was believed to be used to strengthen yarns by twisting them together from a bundle of fibres, from which a new thread was then created.

The discovery of Isis breastfeeding Horus from the necropolis of the Belinskoye settlement represents the second such find in the Northern Black Sea region. A similar artefact was previously unearthed at Panticapaeum in a vault with an artificial arched ceiling, where funerary practices took place from the end of the second century to the first half of the fifth century. It is noteworthy that such dating aligns closely with foreign analogues of similar items. One such spinning wheel of the nursing Isis comes from Madytus in Egypt, the second from the western part of Asia Minor. In the latter, the woman is depicted completely nude and standing at a column. Despite this divergence from the spinning wheel from the necropolis of the Belinskoye settlement, all other details of the image are similar and, in their stylistics, strongly resemble our variant. Both items are dated to the 4th century.

In addressing the issue of the function of such spinning wheels in the spiritual life of the ancient population, it is crucial to recognise that our discovery was used exclusively in its upper part, thus indicating its exclusive use for religious purposes. In this regard, it is challenging to establish a connection with other discoveries of various types of whole spinning wheels in burials, although one might argue that these reflect the myth of the goddesses Moirai, or the Fates, with Clotho, as is known, being engaged in spinning the thread of fate. An alternative viewpoint suggests that the image of Isis with Horus in late antique times may have served as the prototype for the iconographic image of the Mother of God with Jesus. This provides a more comprehensive explanation for the presence of the cross carved into the lower part of the half-naked woman depicted in our artefact. It is noteworthy that in crypt No. 5, the provenance of our bone artefact, two additional crosses were carved into the rocky ground above the entrance to the chamber in the centre and on the right side. It is unfortunate that the funerary inventory from the latest burial in this crypt, which was probably the final one, has been lost to science. The only remaining artefacts are the remains of a casket with a previously attached image of a nursing mother.

In conclusion, it should also be stated that one of the Late Antique burials at the Belinskoye settlement, dating from the fourth–fifth centuries and located in proximity to residential dwellings, was of particular interest. This burial was notable for its depiction of a woman suckling a child, a motif with which the inhabitants of the settlement were likely familiar, and which may have been deliberately emulated in the iconography of the burial.

Keywords: Isis, Horus, Belinskoye, necropolis, contextual material, Belinskoye site, Bosporan Kingdom, Black Sea, Late Antique period.

List of observers

1. Dr Wojciech Pietruszka (Uniwersytet Wrocławski),
Zakład Historii Starożytnej, Instytut Historyczny, Wydział Nauk Historycznych i Pedagogicznych,
Uniwersytet Wrocławski, ul. Szewska 49, PL-50139 Wrocław, Poland.

Phone: +48.71.375 25 30.

E-mail: <wojciech.pietruszka@uwr.edu.pl>.

2. Dr Agnès Schérer (Paris)

Paris, France.

E-mail: <scherer-agnes@orange.fr>.

Members of the conference committees

Scientific committee (in alphabetical order)

Professor Gaetano Maria Arena (Università di Catania),
Ms Cláudia Barros (Universidade do Minho, Braga),
Dr Andrzej B. Biernacki (Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu),
Professor Dimitrios Bosnakis (University of Crete, Rethymno),
Mr Leonidas K. Bournias (Hellenic Ministry of Culture & Sports, Athens),
Professor Feliciano Costabile (Università degli Studi Mediterranea di Reggio Calabria),
Dr Iosif Vasile Ferencz (Muzeul Civilizatiei Dacice si Romane Deva),
Dr Vladimir A. Goroncharovsky (Rossiyskaya akademiya nauk, St. Petersburg),
Mr Łukasz Haba (Uniwersytet Wrocławski),
Dr Gordana Jeremić (Univerzitet u Beogradu),
Dr Jorge de Juan Ares (Universidad de la Laguna),
Dr Marija Ljuština (Univerzitet u Beogradu),
Dr Marin K. Marinov (Velikotŭrnovski universitet "Sv. sv. Kiril i Metodii"),
Dr Florica Mățău (Universitatea "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" din Iași),
Dr Wojciech Pietruszka (Uniwersytet Wrocławski),
Dr Mihailo St. Popović (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna),
Professor Natalia Poulou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki),
Dr José Carlos da Costa Quaresma (Universidade Nova de Lisboa),
Professor Amra Šaćić Beća (Univerzitet u Sarajevu),
Dr Elena Santagati (Università degli Studi di Messina),
Professor Claudia Santi (Università degli Studi della Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", Santa Maria Capua Vetere),
Professor Christos Stavrakos (University of Ioannina),
Dr Marcio Teixeira-Bastos (Universidade de São Paulo),
Dr Selena Vitezović (Univerzitet u Beogradu),
Dr Maria Xenaki (Hellenic Ministry of Culture & Sports, Athens),
Dr Sergey V. Yartsev (Tula State Pedagogical University).

Organizing and executive committee (in alphabetical order)

Dr Maurizio Buora (Società Friulana di Archeologia, Udine),
Dr Fatih Hakan Kaya (Dokuz Eylül University, Izmir),
Ms Zoe Tsiame (University of Thessaly, Volos / Orthodox Academy of Crete, Chania).

List of the previous
Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea, Congressus internationales Smyrnenses

I- E. Laflı and A. Müller (organ.), “International conference: Terracotta figurines in the Greek and Roman eastern Mediterranean: Production, diffusion, iconography and function”; June 2–6, 2007, Izmir. Website: <web.deu.edu.tr/terraccottas>.

II- E. Laflı and S. Fünfschilling (organ.), “International workshop: Late Roman glass in Anatolia (A.D. 4th to eighth centuries)”; October 26–28, 2009, Izmir.

III- E. Laflı (organ.), “International workshop on Hellenistic ceramics in Anatolia (4th to first cent. B.C.)”; October 12–14, 2010, Izmir.

IV- E. Laflı (organ.), “An international workshop on the pottery finds between fourth century B.C. and eighth century A.D. from northern and central Anatolia”; May 10, 2011, Izmir.

V- E. Laflı (organ.), “XVIIth international congress of ancient bronzes. The archaeology of bronzes in Anatolia and the eastern Mediterranean from Protogeometric to early Byzantine periods (tenth century B.C. to seventh century A.D.)”; May 21–25, 2011, Izmir.

VI- E. Laflı (organ.), “Second international conference on the archaeology of Ionia – Landscapes of Ionia: Towns in transition”; May 30–June 2, 2011, Izmir.

VII- E. Laflı and G. Labarre (organs.), “Archaeology and history of Lydia from the early Lydian period to late antiquity (eighth century B.C.-sixth century A.D.)”; May 17-18, 2017, Izmir.

VIII- E. Laflı (organ.), “*Unguentarium*. A terracotta vessel form and other related vessels in the Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine Mediterranean. An international symposium”; May 17-18, 2018, Izmir.

IX- E. Laflı and L. Chrzanovski (organs.), “Ancient terracotta lamps from Anatolia and the eastern Mediterranean to Dacia, the Black Sea and beyond. Comparative lychnological studies in the eastern parts of the Roman Empire and peripheral areas. An international symposium”; May 16-17, 2018, Izmir.

X- E. Laflı (organs.), “Cappadocia and Cappadocians in the Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine periods. An international symposium on the southeastern part of central Anatolia in classical antiquity”; May 14-15, 2020, on Zoom.us

XI- E. Laflı (organs.), “Ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine engraved gems in the eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea area. An international e-conference on archaeological and archaeogemological approaches”; May 11-12, 2021, on Zoom.us

XII- E. Laflı (organ.), “Ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine fibulae. An international e-conference in honour of Dr Maurizio Buora”; May 12-13, 2022, on Zoom.us

XIII- E. Laflı and Z. Tsiami (organs.), “Studia bithynica. An e-conference on the archaeology and history of Bithynia in northwestern Anatolia”; May 10, 2023, on Zoom.us

XIV- E. Lafli and Z. Tsiami (organs.), “Pithoi in the archaeology of the eastern Mediterranean. Studies on pithos as a storage and burial vessel in the ancient Classical and Byzantine world”; May 8, 2024, on Zoom.us

**List of the previous *Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea,*
*Acta congressus communis omnium gentium Smyrnae***

Ia- A. Muller and E. Laflı (eds.), *Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée grecque et romaine*, Vol. 1: *Production, diffusion, iconographie et fonction*, École française d’Athènes, Bulletin de correspondance hellénique, Supplément 54 (Athens/Paris, De Boccard, 2016).

Ib- A. Muller and E. Laflı (eds.), *Figurines de terre cuite en Méditerranée grecque et romaine*, Vol. 2: *Iconographie et contextes*, Archaiologia (Villeneuve d’Ascq, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2015).

II- E. Laflı (ed.), *Late Antique/Early Byzantine glass in the eastern Mediterranean*, *Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea – Acta congressus communis omnium gentium Smyrnae II/Dokuz Eylül University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Archaeology, Division for Medieval Archaeology, Publication series, No. 1* (Izmir, Hürriyet Matbaası, 2009) (ISBN 978-605-61525-0-4).

III- E. Laflı and S. Patacı (eds.), *Recent studies on the archaeology of Anatolia*, British Archaeological Reports, International Series 2750 (Oxford, Archaeopress, 2015).

IV- E. Laflı (ed.), *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine bronzes from Anatolia and neighbouring regions*, BAR International Series 3038 (Oxford, BAR Publishing, 2021).

V- E. Laflı and G. Labarre (eds.), *Archaeology and history of Lydia from the Early Lydian period to Late Antiquity*, Collection de l’Institut des sciences et techniques de l’antiquité 40 (Besançon, Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 2023).

VI- E. Laflı and G. Kan Şahin (eds.), *Unguentaria and related vessels in the Mediterranean from the Early Hellenistic to the Early Byzantine period*, BAR International Series 3165 (Oxford, BAR Publishing, 2024).

VII- E. M. Günther, S. Günther, E. Laflı and N. Serwint (eds), *Studia glyptica. Current studies on ancient Greek, Roman and Early Byzantine engraved gems*, *Alter Orient und Altes Testament - Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments (AOAT) 474* (Tecklenburg: Ugarit-Verlag, 2025). ISBN: 978-3-86835-371-6; ISSN: 0931-4296.

Colloquia Anatolica et Aegaea
Congressus internationales Smyrnenses XVI

Call for papers

Online conference on
Arrow Heads
in the Mediterranean archaeology.
Typology, use, chronology and contexts.

in honour of Martin Henig



13 May 2026 / Izmir, Turkey

Meeting venue

Join us on Zoom.us

E-mail

paphlagonia@deu.edu.tr

Deadline for the abstracts' submission

1 January 2026

Website

<https://deu.academia.edu/ErgunLAFLI/Congressus-internationales-Smyrnenses>

All are welcome.

Logo illustration.
A bronze arrow head, Archaeological Museum of Izmir (photo. by E. Lafli, 2018).