

Abhandlung

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Not another paper on Lefkandi and Eretria! A communo-centric approach to the creation of collective identities in Lefkandi and Eretria

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Zusammenfassung: Ziel der vorliegenden Arbeit ist es, die Rolle von Denkmälern und Monumentalität bei der Schaffung kollektiver Identitäten im frühen Griechenland anhand von zwei Fallstudien, Lefkandi und Eretria, zu untersuchen. Dabei werden sowohl die Bestattungen als auch die Gebäude untersucht, die zu Ehren der Verstorbenen errichtet wurden und die beiden Orte von individuellen zu kollektiven Monumenten machten. Die Wahrnehmung der Denkmäler durch die Menschen änderte sich im Laufe der Zeit, was sich auf ihre Monumentalität auswirkte und die Entstehung kollektiver Identitäten rund um den Toumba-Friedhof und den Westtor-Friedhof in Lefkandi bzw. Eretria beeinflusste.

Schlüsselworte: Lefkandi, Eretria, kollektive Identitäten, Monumentalität, soziales Gedächtnis

Abstract: The aim of the present paper is to explore the role monuments and monumentality play in the creation of collective identities in early Greece by focusing on two case studies, Lefkandi and Eretria. Equal emphasis will be given to the study of both the burials and the buildings that were subsequently created in honour of the deceased, transforming both sites from individual monuments to collective ones. People's perceptions of the monuments changed over time affecting their monumentality hence influencing the emergence of collective identities centred around the Toumba cemetery and the West Gate cemetery at Lefkandi and Eretria respectively.

Keywords: Lefkandi, Eretria, collective identities, monumentality, social memory

Περίληψη: Στόχος του παρόντος άρθρου είναι η μελέτη του ρόλου των μνημείων και της μνημειακότητας στην

δημιουργία συλλογικών ταυτοτήτων στον πρώιμο ελλαδικό χώρο μέσα από την εξέταση δύο τοποθεσιών, του Λευκαντίου και της Ερέτριας. Ιδιαίτερη έμφαση δίνεται στην μελέτη τόσο των ταφών, όσο και των κτισμάτων τα οποία ανεγέρθηκαν προς τιμήν των νεκρών, μετατρέποντας έτσι και τις δύο τοποθεσίες από χώρους προσωπικής μνήμης σε συλλογικές. Η διαχρονική πρόσληψη των μνημείων από τις τοπικές κοινότητες μεταβαλλόταν διαρκώς, επηρεάζοντας την μνημειακότητά τους και κατ' επέκταση την δημιουργία συλλογικών ταυτοτήτων τόσο στο νεκροταφείο της Τούμπας στο Λευκαντί, όσο και στο νεκροταφείο της Δυτικής Πύλης της Ερέτριας.

Λέξεις Κλειδιά: Λευκαντί, Ερέτρια, συλλογική ταυτότητα, μνημειακότητα, κοινωνική μνήμη

Introduction¹

The island of Euboea has long been in the spotlight regarding the socio-political discussions on early Greece (1200–700 BC). Late Bronze Age (1400–1200 BC) palatial societies were dominated by kings bearing the title of *wanax* who ruled over each polity through a system in which all of the military, political, religious and administrative powers were placed in their hands. Following the collapse of the palaces (1200–900 BC), the well-established hierarchies vanished with them to a significant extent, while their position was soon occupied by noble-kin groups competing with each

¹ The present paper had a very long life before reaching the press as it is based on research carried under the supervision of Ioannis Xydopoulos at the University of the Thessaloniki back in 2018 to whom I owe an immense debt for his ever-helping criticism and constructive feedback. Discussions with Jane Rempel, Kelsey Madden and Faidon Moudopoulos-Athanasios greatly helped me in elaborating on various ideas presented here. I would also like to express my gratitude to the anonymous reviewers for their comments which significantly improved the quality of the present article. Any errors or misunderstandings are of course exclusively mine.

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Fig. 1: Map of the sites mentioned in the present article (source: Google maps, adapted by the author).

other for power². The period beginning with the fluidity that emerged following the collapse of the palatial world till the consolidation of the new modes of political and socio-economic organisation in the early Iron Age (900–700 BC) is often thought as one dominated by local elites engaged in regional and interregional competition and trade³. The differences between the palatial, post-palatial and early Iron Age societies are often reflected in the use of burials and social memory in the creation of different types of identities⁴. Excavations at numerous sites particularly in central and southern Euboea such as Lefkandi, Eretria, Amarnythos and Plakari (Fig. 1) frequently focus on the emergence of these new social dynamics as evidenced through the archaeological remains with a particular emphasis placed on the role of burials and communal feasting in them⁵. Yet,

the mechanisms through which these elites were able to consolidate their social status within their communities require further research. Monuments and monumentality played a key role in these processes as enablers of the creation of a new social reality in which novel forms of collective identities emerged between groups of people extending their influence at both regional and interregional level⁶.

Nowhere else are these themes more prevalent as in the study of what is arguably the two major sites in Euboea, Lefkandi and Eretria. Over the years impressive finds have come to light at both of these well excavated sites with the Toumba cemetery and the cemetery near the West Gate being among the most important ones in Lefkandi and Eretria respectively. Different types of buildings associated with these two cemeteries have been – quite rightly so – identified as monuments. However, these buildings are not the only ones regarded as monuments, as certain burials

² Maran/Wright 2020; Knodell 2021, 63–150.

³ Kramer-Hajos 2016; Eder/Lemos 2020.

⁴ Georgiadis/Gallou 2009; Borgna *et al.* 2019.

⁵ The bibliography on these sites especially Lefkandi and Eretria is vast. The following works cited are only indicative and mostly relevant to the present paper serving as a good starting point for further reading. Lefkandi: Popham *et al.* 1979; Catling/Lemos 1991; Popham *et al.*

1993; Popham/Lemos 1996; Eretria: Bérard 1970; Blandin 2007; Amarnythos: Fachard *et al.* 2017; Plakari: Crielaard 2015. For a more extensive list see Knodell 2021, 37 n.1.

⁶ Maran 2015; 2016.

treated with an increased degree of monumentality could also be considered as such. This is particularly true at both sites in which the central burials of important individuals acted as the core around which a cemetery and a subsequent collective identity were formed. Unfortunately, the monumentality of the cemeteries, which encompasses both buildings and burials, is rarely explored. More often than not, debates around this focus on implementing different socio-political models on the study of burials, in an attempt to identify the exact role that the deceased played while alive within their local communities⁷.

Over the years, past approaches to detecting hierarchies have adopted different terms for important individuals. Terms such as big men, chiefs, heroes, and ancestors all entered the archaeological vocabulary to describe the social role of the important individuals lavishly buried at both sites. Greek archaeologists have been traditionally fascinated by the strict categorisation of different types of cults dividing those into hero cults, ancestor cults and tomb cults.⁸ Arguably, among the most prevalent approaches were those promulgated by Carla Antonaccio, James Whitley and David Boehringer. In her seminal book *An Archaeology of Ancestors: Tomb Cult and Hero Cult in Early Greece*, Antonaccio⁹ proposed a strict categorisation between hero cults, ancestor cults and tomb cults by claiming that different types of cults appeared for different reasons. Whitley¹⁰ downplayed the role of the ancestors by asserting that they were limited to a minor role in the social imagination of the Greeks, while he attempted to situate both hero cult and tomb cult in the wider political context of the early Greek world. Boehringer¹¹ was the first one to demonstrate a close connection between the various cults and the creation of collective identity, by adopting a wider use of the term hero and studying the phenomenon against the backdrop of the emerging *polis* in Attica, Argolis and Messenia.

Notwithstanding the merits of each proposed theoretical framework, the approach adopted here is a more widely encompassing one. Moving beyond past, mainly androcentric, models this paper will place equal importance on both genders' graves examining them as part of the same elite world. Particular emphasis will be given to the burials and the construction of the subsequent monuments honouring them, as perceived by their communities and the implica-

tions for the creation of collective identities. Therefore, the main aim of the article is to examine the intricate ways in which communities were affected by the death and burial of these powerful individuals and the role monumentality plays in this. In attempting to do so, the present research focuses not only on individuals per se, but also on the monuments honouring them. More importantly, the monuments' particular role in the development of a collective identity is studied, by examining both the material and the symbolic aspects of them which in turn form a certain 'deathscape'¹².

Monumentality and Collective Identity

Apart from the approaches to the "social afterlife" of these important individuals, a separate body of literature has examined the notions of monuments and monumentality both relevant here, as in both case studies, Lefkandi and Eretria, specific monuments were connected to the deceased buried at each of these cemeteries. The scholarly debate surrounding both the notions of monuments and monumentality is still ongoing; even the definitions for these terms are far from being homonymously accepted by scholars¹³. The present article adopts a broad definition of both terms. Consequently, a monument is typically a large object that was created to commemorate either something personally meaningful or socially significant for the local community, which acts both as a constant reminder and an active factor in the preservation and shaping of the memory of a significant event¹⁴. This of course does not mean that every monument has to be physically imposing or impressive, but rather that the people's perception of it and interaction with it, along with the monument's daily impression on them has to be something extraordinary¹⁵. Monuments are often a palimpsest of interventions made on numerous occasions across different historical periods. It is therefore very hard for the original intention of the structure, if ever was one, to be communicated to subsequent generations, especially in oral communities. Different groups of people interact with and interpret each monument differently, encountering it as 'amnesiacs' re-discovering and re-embedding it in their contemporary world view¹⁶. It is this cycle of forgetting and re-discovering which is constitutive in the formation of new

⁷ Knodell 2021, 28 with references.

⁸ e. g. Coldstream 1976; Snodgrass 1982; Whitley 1988; 1995; 2002; Morris 1988; Calligas 1988; Antonaccio 1993; 1994; 1995; 2006; Mazarakis-Ainian 1999; Boehringer 2001.

⁹ Antonaccio 1995.

¹⁰ Whitley 1995; 2002.

¹¹ Boehringer 2001.

¹² Dimakis 2015.

¹³ Osborne 2014; Brunke *et al.* 2016; Buccellati *et al.* 2019.

¹⁴ Choay 2007, 14–15; Osborne 2014, 3.

¹⁵ Brysbaert 2019, 25.

¹⁶ Wheatley 2015.

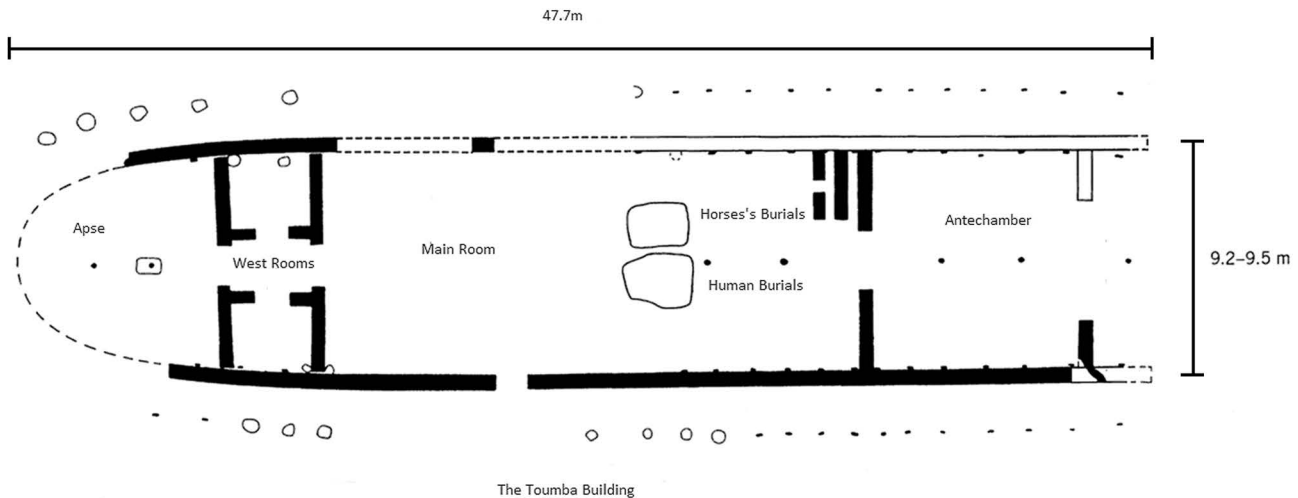


Fig. 2: The Toumba building at Lefkandi (adapted from Pakkanen/Pakkanen 2000, fig. 1).

identities, particularly in monuments which are gradually transformed from individual to collective ones, by therefore acquiring new meanings¹⁷.

Monumentality constitutes a fluid concept that could be defined as the ongoing process of a number of interactions and relationships between people and any given monument¹⁸. As Felix Levenson argues ‘affection makes a monument ... society makes monumentality’¹⁹. This is not to say that the physical traits of any given monument are not important but rather that they are so in so far as they influence its perception, since what really lies at the core of monumentality is the social perception of the monument. Everything can be potentially considered as a monument, but the very notion of monumentality is socially constituted and dependable upon the acceptance of a monument as a communal monument²⁰. Yet the various co-occurrences of different parameters such as size, position, permanence, investment and complexity have to be identified in order for something to classify as monumental²¹. These contributing factors inevitably affect the different types of monumentalities. Levenson has identified at least three of them, two of which, intended and perceived monumentality, are relevant in our discussion. Intended monumentality only lasts for one generation as it is shared between the intent-group, the people who act as authors of the monument. Before a monument comes into existence, it is conceived in the minds of its authors who are typically diversely motivated. Despite its

precise nature, the fact is that this shared motive is present only with this group with restricted participation²². In contrast to that, perceived monumentality is more wide participating form of monumentality, subject to temporal change and different among social groups. As one would expect, it is naturally affected by the intended monumentality but it needs not be the same²³.

It follows that in order for both of these categories to manifested the involvement of various groups of people, frequently interacting with both one another and with monuments, are indeed required. The cohesion of these groups is not automatic but has to be consciously achieved²⁴. At the core of this process lies collective memory which is memory shared and distributed among the members of any given group²⁵. Paul Connerton²⁶ distinguished between two types of memory, an inscribed one encompassing monument and an embodied one constituted of rituals. However, there is no reason to suggest that these two cannot overlap or co-exist, as it is through the combination of both that a group identity becomes potent. More specifically, it is the preservation and dissemination of collective memory that ultimately leads to the emergence of group identities. However, in order for these to become visible to themselves and firmly established within any socio-political context, group identities have to manifest materially, performed and expressed through symbolic practices and artifacts²⁷.

¹⁷ Connerton 2006.

¹⁸ Osborne 2014, 3; Levenson 2019, 35.

¹⁹ Levenson 2019, 22.

²⁰ Ibid. 26.

²¹ Brunke *et al.* 2016.

²² Levenson 2019, 23–26; Hageneuer/van der Heyden 2019, 68–70.

²³ Levenson 2019, 23–26; Hageneuer/van der Heyden 2019.

²⁴ Mac Sweeney 2011, 37.

²⁵ Watkins 2012, 34. On social memory see Van Dyke 2019.

²⁶ Connerton 1989.

²⁷ Delitz/Levenson 2019, 111.

As it has been repeatedly argued, mortuary rituals and burial rites provide great opportunities for both the materialisation and the re-negotiation of identities²⁸. By being repetitive and standardised, these burial rites, and their subsequent adoption by each of the communities examined here, contributed to the creation and promotion of a collective identity between the people who buried their dead in a similar fashion to the central burials both in Lefkandi and Eretria. A sense of belonging was therefore gradually developed around a centre of power materialised in the form of a handful of elite burials around which a sense of symbolic community was gradually created²⁹. Consequently, it is tempting to suppose that both these powerful individuals and their burials acted as focal points around which a symbolic collective identity was progressively constructed. In order to test this hypothesis, we now turn to two case studies, those of Lefkandi and Eretria by focusing on burials goods, mortuary rites and funerary monuments.

Lefkandi

The well-known building at the Toumba in Lefkandi (Fig. 2) constitutes one of the most lavish edifices ever to be built during the Iron Age³⁰. The long apsidal building is formed of three rooms totalling a length of 50m and a width of 10m. Excavations around the building have uncovered traces of an enclosure, encompassed by wooden palisades. Underneath the main room two pits were discovered. The first one contained a double burial of a male cremation and a female inhumation. The second pit contained the skeletal remains of four horses, two of which had iron bits in their mouths³¹.

Archaeologists have long debated the function and the purpose of this building as well as its chronological association with regards to the burials. The main disagreement pivots around whether the burials predate the construction of the building, or if the building already existed before the burials³². According to the first hypothesis originally suggested by the excavators and subsequently maintained by Irene Lemos, the building had a clear funerary function, as

it is dated slightly after the burials³³. On the other hand, it has been proposed that the initial purpose of the building was to serve as a dwelling for the couple buried underneath the main room and was then converted to a funerary monument covered by a large tumulus following the couple's death³⁴. A third theory was proposed by Antonaccio, who rejected both of the abovementioned suggestions and argued that the sole purpose of the building was to act as a place where commemorative feasts in honour of the deceased couple took place³⁵. Interestingly enough, Yannis Hamilakis has suggested, although not in regards to the Toumba burial at Lefkandi, that, in some cultures, incorporation is successful only after the deliberate destruction of a monument³⁶. Thus, it is tempting to hypothesise that the Toumba building had to be destroyed, so that the whole area could be converted into one with strictly funerary function. Regardless of the exact purpose of the building the fact remains that this constituted an unparallel structure signifying the importance of the deceased for the local community.

Some time after the destruction of the building and the construction of the tumulus, a cemetery (Fig. 3) dated between the mid 10th and late 9th century gradually formed around it³⁷. Taking into consideration the fact that this was the most elaborate cemetery found in Lefkandi as well as its clear association with the building, it is possible that this belonged to the local elite³⁸. The burial rites adopted by the people buried there, mirrored the ones attested in the two central burials underneath the building. These central burials have been thoroughly studied by Mervyn Popham³⁹. The remains of the cremated male were carefully wrapped in a cloth and placed inside an amphoroid Cypriot krater next to which sword, a blade, a spearhead, and a grindstone were discovered. It seems that the male dead at the Toumba in Lefkandi was buried in such a way as to project a warrior's identity, the ability to host and participate in *symposia* – or at least in some form of communal feasting –, and a strong association with trade⁴⁰. The sacrifice of the four horses along with the weapons found inside his tomb confirm his warrior identity while the apparent lack of sympotic parafernelia can be compensated by the presence the

²⁸ Van Dyke 2008, 282.

²⁹ Anderson 1983; Smith 1986; Xydopoulos 2017, 72.

³⁰ For an extensive overview of the bibliography regarding Lefkandi, see Mazarakis-Ainian 1997, 46 n. 43; for a detailed analysis of the buildings structure, see Pakkanen/Pakkanen 2000, 242–249; Pakkanen 2004.

³¹ Popham *et al.* 1993, 19–21; Antonaccio 1995, 236–242; Morris 2000, 228–239; Lemos 2002, 141–146; 161–168; 218–220.

³² For an overview of the two opposing theories, see Antonaccio 1995, 236–242.

³³ Popham 1982, 169–174; Lemos 2002, 162–168.

³⁴ Mazarakis-Ainian 1985, 8–9; Crielaard/Driessen 1994.

³⁵ Antonaccio 1995, 40–42.

³⁶ Hamilakis 1998, 117.

³⁷ Popham *et al.* 1993; Lemos 2002, 166–168; 2007, 276; 2020, 793–794.

³⁸ For these see Popham *et al.* 1980.

³⁹ Popham *et al.* 1993, 12–22.

⁴⁰ Antonaccio 2006, 391–392; Mazarakis-Ainian 2006, 206. For the 'Homeric' connotations of the burial see Kourkoulakos 2023.

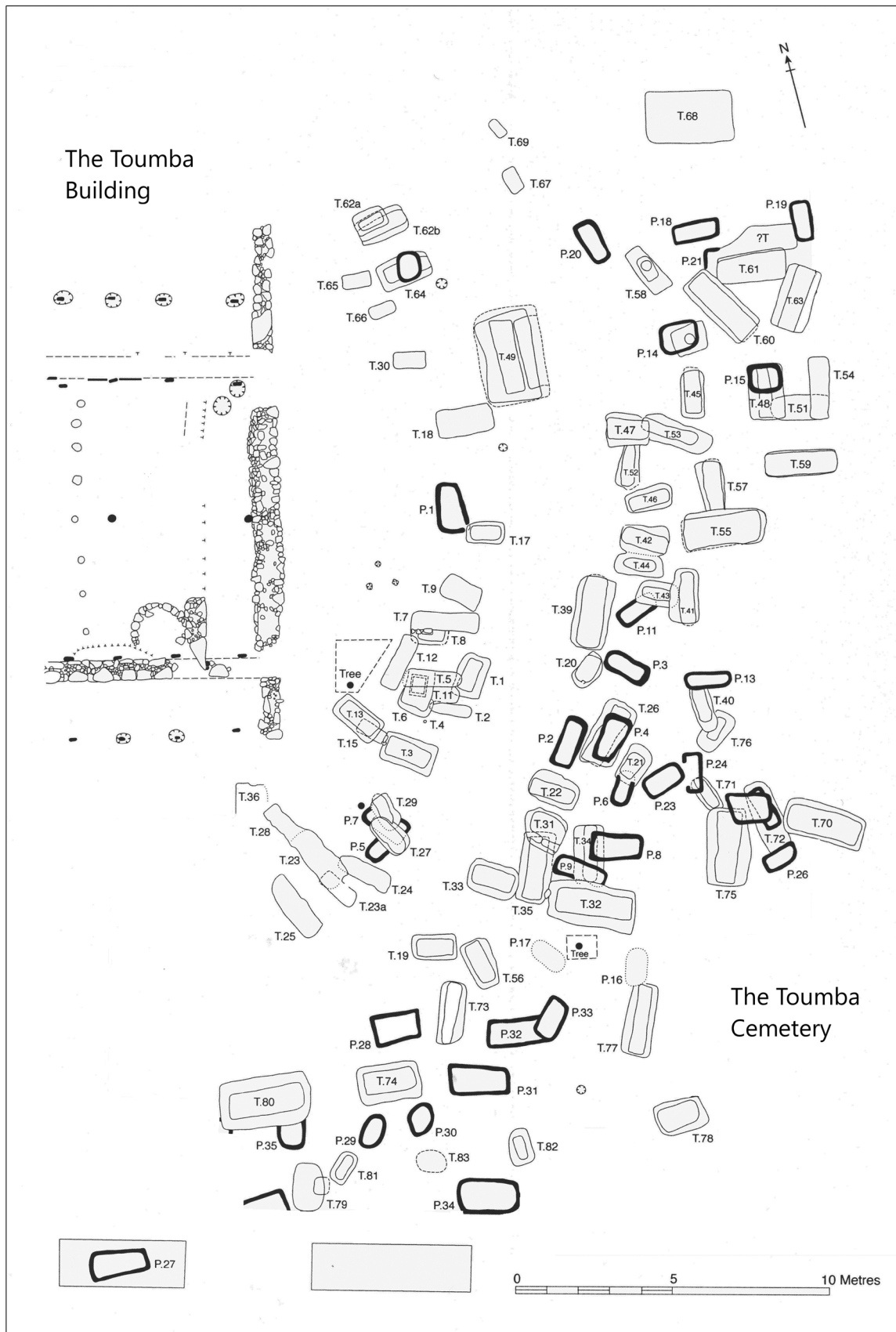


Fig. 3: The Toumba cemetery at Lefkandi (adapted from Lemos 2007, fig. 1).

amphoroid krater, a testimony to both a sense of commensality and connections to trade networks.

On the other hand, the female inhumation puzzled to archaeologists more than her male counterpart. The woman interred there was lavishly equipped with numerous pieces of jewellery, including a faience necklace and an old, gold, Babylonian pendant. The debate around the woman's social role is based on the existence of a knife with an ivory handle in her grave, as well as on the crossed position of her limbs⁴¹. The combination of these two elements has been interpreted as a human sacrifice or a funerary gift to the male buried next to her⁴². However, other suggestions have been made both by Antonaccio and Kate Harrell. Antonaccio argued that since this is not the only double burial the woman was probably not sacrificed⁴³. On the contrary, based on her grave's valuable burial goods, Antonaccio even argued that the woman was the central figure honoured by this abnormally wealthy burial instead of her accompanying male. A more modest proposal was made by Harrell, who suggested that if we accept that the dagger found in the female's tomb was used for the horses' sacrifice, in combination with the close proximity of the horses to her, then a potential connection between them might be possible with the horses acting as caisson horses⁴⁴. Furthermore, the important status ascribed to horse burials is well attested, as the breeding of horses constitutes an expensive process, therefore making their sacrifice even more salient⁴⁵.

The presence of the two vases, the faience necklace, the Babylonian pendant, and the dagger with the ivory handle all testify to the important trade links with Cyprus and with the eastern Mediterranean in general⁴⁶. But the most important piece of information reaffirming the social status of the deceased is the building itself, as for both its construction and destruction a significant number of people would have been required⁴⁷. It is therefore tempting to suggest that even after the death of these powerful individuals, their influence in the local community was conspicuously felt to such a degree that certain members were almost obliged to contribute to the creation of their funerary monument and use this connection to their own advantage by enhancing

their social standing through associating themselves with these important individuals. That of course does not mean that everyone involved in the construction of these buildings had gained the right to bury their dead there. Given the exclusionary nature of grave goods and burial rites attested at Lefkandi it should not come as a surprise that some people who were involved in the creation of the monument were then denied access to it. The transformation of the site's function from a burial ground directly connected with a limited number of people to an imposing monument marking the territory, in combination with the preservation of their former owners' status was further signalled by the demolition of the building and the subsequent construction of the "ritual tumulus"⁴⁸. The great effort invested in the procedures described above both secured the everlasting influence of the social status of the deceased buried there, while at the same time strengthening the internal cohesion of the group of people involved in these activities.

The important symbolic relation between the deceased underneath the Toumba building and the deceased at the extended cemetery is reflected upon both the choice of the specific location to be used as a cemetery and the similarities between the rites attested at the couple's burial and the ones found elsewhere in the cemetery⁴⁹. A notable burial rite is that of double burials, which echo the central double burials at the Toumba. There are at least another three double burials. The first one contained two inhumations, with the burial goods of one of them bearing a striking resemblance to ones attested in the female's grave at the Toumba building. In the second one, urns were found containing the ashes of the deceased. Here, the man was buried as a warrior with equipment similar to that of the man at the Toumba building. The third case of double burials is consisted of one cremation and one inhumation, once again a reminiscence of the double burial at the Toumba building⁵⁰.

A relation to trade is further confirmed by the finds in the so-called warrior-trader's tomb and in other mainly female tombs in the extended cemetery. Among other finds, the first one contained a bronze cauldron with the deceased's remains, a sword, in this case 'killed, a spearhead and 'Phoenician' bichrome jugs⁵¹. Regarding the female graves, an interesting observation was made by Lemos, arguing that despite the fact that rich female burials are to

41 Mazarakis 1997, 51; Popham 1982, 172–173; Popham *et al.* 1993, 19–20.

42 Hughes 1991, 46–47; Popham *et al.* 1993, 21; Steel 1995, 23; Catling 1995, 126; Langdon 2008, 287.

43 Antonaccio 1995, 240; 2002, 25, 31–32.

44 Harrell 2014, 101.

45 Antonaccio 2006, 391; for the link between elite and horse burials, see Carstens 2005; Chatzinikolaou 2007, 278–279; Rempel 2011, 31–33.

46 Coldstream 1998; Babbi 2021. For the role of imported objects in the mortuary practices as these attested at Lefkandi see Sherratt 2009; 2012, 161 and for a parallel Franković 2018.

47 Lemos 2006, 521; Pakkanen/Pakkanen 2000, 242.

48 Pakkanen/Pakkanen 2000, 250; for the concept of 'ritual tumulus' see Müller-Celka 2012.

49 Mazarakis-Ainian 2012, 79; Lemos/Mitchell 2011, 635.

50 Antonaccio 2002, 31–32; Lemos 2007, 277; Crielaard 2016, 56–62; for the double burials in the rest of the cemeteries in Lefkandi see Lemos 2002, 164–168.

51 Popham/Lemos 1995.

be found in every subsequent period after the destruction of the Toumba building, a gold pendant was offered only at a handful of them. Moreover, in two of them, bronze vessels and beads originated in the Near East were discovered, evidencing once again the relation with the trade⁵². Interpreting this phenomenon, Lemos suggested that the honour of receiving a gold pendant was reserved only with women with the highest status, who were mainly buried next to ‘warriors’⁵³.

It therefore becomes evident that people who had the privilege of burying their dead at the Toumba cemetery attempted to create a symbolic collective identity centred around the main dead underneath the building. The male dead were interred with burial goods promoting an idealised ‘warrior identity’ – long-standing tradition attested in different parts of the Aegean World⁵⁴ – imitating the one projected by the central male burial. It can be assumed that this was the most commonly shared male characteristic in the Toumba cemetery, with the features of commensality and trade having a less conspicuous role⁵⁵. Another interesting remark could be made regarding the female burials. Based on the impressive finds briefly discussed above and their resemblance to the ones discovered in the main female burial it can be argued that the tendency of earlier research to consider the females as an extension of the males’ status is both outdated and misguided. Despite being in some cases located next to a rich male burial, the most richly decorated female burials found in Lefkandi were of equal social importance, materially manifested mainly through the presence of precious jewellery.

The community members burying their dead in the extended cemetery that gradually developed around the Toumba building consciously created a symbolic collective identity through which they were self-defined⁵⁶. By emphasising their battle prowess and their access to gold personal ornaments, they highlighted their high social status and their close, actual or imaginary, association with the dead couple buried at the Toumba building. According to the well-known quote by Luis Althusser “ideology constitutes both a real and an imaginary link with the past”⁵⁷. By actively choosing the specific location as their cemetery

and mimicking the burial rites of the couple at the Toumba building burial, the community members exercising their privilege of burying their dead there demonstrated their desire to establish a link between them and the main dead at a both an imaginary and a physical level.

Eretria

The second case study is once again a well-known one from the island of Euboea. Near the West Gate of Eretria’s city walls, a small necropolis consisting of nine children inhumations and seven adult cremations were excavated and fully published by Claude Bérard⁵⁸. From the burials dated mainly during the 8th–7th BC, the earliest as well the most elaborate one is tomb six⁵⁹. The remaining five out six cremation burials are located around tomb six in a semi-circular way⁶⁰. Inside tomb six, two craters were found. The first one contained the cremated ashes of the deceased along with a few small items, all carefully wrapped in a piece of cloth, while the second crater was placed upside down functioning as lid⁶¹. Perhaps, one of the most important finds according to Bérard was a bronze Mycenaean spearhead, a puzzling find considering both that it was the only bronze weapon and also that iron weapons had at least in principle replaced bronze ones by the 11th century BC⁶².

The discovery of the aforementioned weapon in the specific tomb cannot be accidental. The dead interred in the particular grave is frequently characterised as ‘Chief’ or ‘Prince’ due to the plethora of burial goods found in his tomb⁶³. The interpretation suggested by Bérard that the spearhead was not actually used as a weapon, but more as kind of sceptre constituted, was until recently, the widely accepted hypothesis⁶⁴. Drawing evidence from literary sources and combining them with archaeological evidence, Bérard argued that the spearhead functioned as a sceptre similar to those of the Homeric kings. Therefore, the ‘antique sceptre’ was probably an indication of status and power⁶⁵. The specific use of the spearhead as a non-functioning weapon with ritual significance is also in accordance with Anthony Snodgrass’s argument that weapons similar to this were used in

52 Lemos 2007, 277, n.19, burials with both gold pendant and eastern imports T63, T 80; Lemos/Mitchell 2011, 637 burials with gold pendant T63; T38; T 80.

53 Lemos/Mitchell 2011, 637–638.

54 Franković/Matić 2020.

55 With tomb 79 being a visible exemption; for this see Popham/Lemos 1995.

56 Cohen 1985, 118.

57 Althusser 1971, 155.

58 Bérard 1970; see also Blandin 2007, 43–58. For a brief presentation of the historical context see Verdan 2015a.

59 Bérard 1970, 223; Mazarakis 1987, 14.

60 Crielaard 1998, 45.

61 Bérard 1970, 13; Crielaard 2007, 171.

62 Bérard 1970, 17 n. 29; Crielaard 1998, 45.

63 Mazarakis-Ainian 1987, 14.

64 Bérard 1970, 223–224.

65 For a similar case see Stampolidis 1996.

parades during the Archaic Age⁶⁶. By carrying the sceptre in front of the whole community, the local aspirant figure would have established himself in its collective memory as its undisputed leader. However, more recent studies have argued that the spearhead was actually an import from Northern Italy and not an heirloom⁶⁷. Regardless of its function or origin which might continue to puzzle future archaeologists, the spearhead was certainly considered a prestige item given both its unique attestation in the central burial and its symbolic value either as an heirloom or an exotic import.

The identity of the owner of the object, buried in tomb six, has been a point of controversy as at least three different interpretations have been suggested over the course of the last 50 years. Bérard argued that the dead was a famous warrior distinguished during the war with Chalcis. While studying the location of this small necropolis, he also observed that the road connecting Eretria with Chalcis passed through the West Gate, where the small cemetery was located. Therefore, the construction of the graves at this specific site could not be accidental, as their tombs will symbolically guard the entrance of their city⁶⁸. According to the second suggestion, the person interred in tomb six was the founder or one of the founders of Eretria if we accept that Eretria superseded Lefkandi⁶⁹. Francois De Polignac, the main promulgator of this hypothesis, has proposed that the main dead is on the verge of two different, albeit interrelated worlds, between the pre-polis society and the eventual emergence of the polis institution⁷⁰. A third, more anthropologically based approach was followed by Jan Paul Crielaard, who based strictly on the archaeological evidence at hand, claimed that the aim of this small necropolis was to emphasise the continuity over the course of time between the main burial and the others gradually buried around him⁷¹. Regardless of the deceased's identity, it could be argued that he belonged to the upper social stratum and he was a prominent leading figure of his local community, who maintained his power and status even after his death. His lavishly decorated burial, the exact location of his tomb both in relation to the rest of the nearby burials and to the West Gate of Eretria, his possible sceptre, and the intrigu-

ing observation by Alexandros Mazarakis-Ainian about the almost sacred preservation of his potential dwelling are considered as important factors in support of this thesis⁷².

It has also been argued that the dead buried at the small necropolis constituted a *kinship group*, a fascinating yet unproven theory⁷³. As already stated, adults were cremated, while children buried. Cremations were always secondary, and their remains were placed into bronze cauldrons⁷⁴. The initial observations regarding the deceased's gender were solely based on the burial goods. However, more recently conducted osteological analysis has proven that the excavators were indeed right in suggesting the gender based on the material evidence⁷⁵. The male burials are distinguished by the presence of arms such as irons spearheads and swords, the female ones by the absence of weapons and the presence of jewellery such as rings, diadems, and pins, while the ones that belong to children are indicated by the presence of miniature ceramic objects⁷⁶.

However, what is interesting in the case of Eretria is the manipulation of the deceased's status over the course of time by certain members of the community and the gradual but steady installation of a cult honouring them (Fig. 4). At some point after the last individual was buried at the small cemetery, i. e., around 680 BC, the ground above the graves was covered with a curving stone *perivolos* and a triangular structure. Some years later, probably between 675–625 BC, a *bothros* that contained pottery associated with feasting such as oinochoe and kraters, terracotta figurines of horse riders, ashes, animal bones and shells, was constructed but later destroyed due to a flood. At a later stage, an *oikos* functioning as an *estiatorion*, a two-room building where ceremonial feasts honouring the dead were organised, was *constructed* replacing the *bothros*. Furthermore, south of the burials, a structure identified as a *bomos* was found as well as another *estiatorion*, which was destroyed due to a fire during the 7th BC, and consisted of five rooms⁷⁷. Despite the fact that different interpretations have been suggested by various scholars⁷⁸, it is noteworthy to point out some interesting observations stemming from the study of the graves in relation to the buildings in the same area.

It is generally agreed that a slow but gradual change in the meaning of the monument over the course of time did

⁶⁶ Snodgrass 1964, 134; Bérard 1970, 17.

⁶⁷ Betelli 2001.

⁶⁸ Bérard 1970, 69–70; Babbi 2021, 451 has recently argued that the deceased need not necessarily be a military leader but a leader who was able to gather and coordinate people. However, it is difficult to see how that would be possible with the necessary military might behind him to back his claims.

⁶⁹ Walker 2004, 72–88 *contra* Verdan *et al.* 2020, 96.

⁷⁰ Polignac 1995, 132–33.

⁷¹ Crielaard 1998, 47.

⁷² Mazarakis-Ainian 1987, 16; 1999, 28.

⁷³ Bérard 1970; Antonaccio 1995, 230; Mazarakis 1987, 14.

⁷⁴ Crielaard 2016, 62–64.

⁷⁵ Blandin 2007, 127–29.

⁷⁶ Bérard 1970, 13–55; Antonaccio 1995, 230; Blandin 2007, 43–58.

⁷⁷ Bérard 1970, 56–64; Crielaard 1998, 45–46 n.18 with the full bibliography; Antonaccio 1995, 230–31.

⁷⁸ See the discussion in Antonaccio 1995, 232–233.

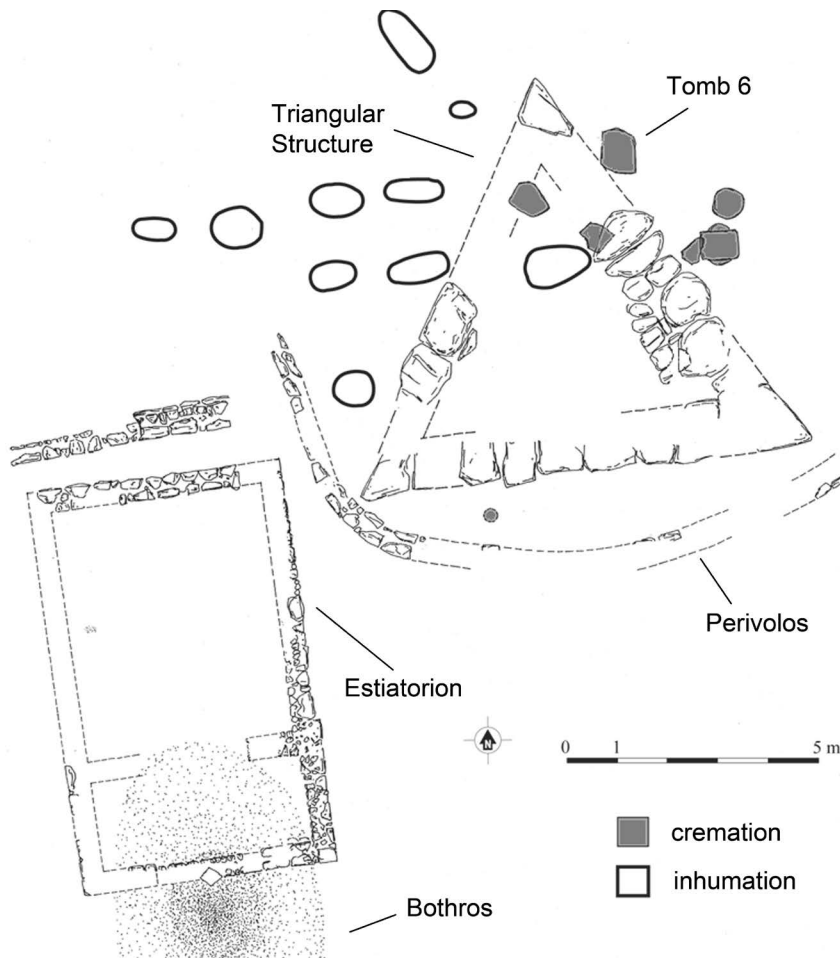


Fig. 4: The burial plot near the West Gate. The burials and the subsequent buildings (adapted from Bérard 1970, pl. III).

occur. However, it is very hard to establish the exact type of this transformation and the groups of people that it might have been involved in it. Since, at least initially, there were no indications of a possible ancestors' veneration at the cemetery, it might be useful to suppose that the group of people involved in the gradual creation of the buildings were not the direct descendants of the deceased buried there⁷⁹. That is not to say that no close relatives were implicated in this development, but rather that this concerned a more diverse group of people, possibly belonging to the same social stratum but not necessarily to the same *kinship group*. Hence, it is probable that here, as in the case of Lefkandi, the privilege of participating in the commemorative feasts in honour of the dead belonged to specific *kinship groups*, comprising the local elite. Consequently, it was the participation of the local elite in this cult that contributed to the strengthening of a common collective identity among them.

A tale of two monuments?

What becomes evident after a brief albeit close examination of both Lefkandi and Eretria is that monumentality played a key role in the mechanisms attested at both sites. The monuments themselves seems to have followed distinct, yet parallel lives. Collective identities are not primordial passive reflections on the material of a pre-existing world order nor simply evoked by populations to achieve their socio-political goals. Instead, they emerge within specific historical contingencies and are sustained through their conscious performance. Even if the living at both Lefkandi and Eretria formed two respective communities, this does not necessarily mean that a shared identity was present among each of those. One should always be mindful of the fact that not everyone had the same rights to burial⁸⁰. A certain sense of belongingness did not simply preceded

⁷⁹ Polignac 1995, 136.

⁸⁰ Morris 1987.

the construction of the tombs but it was instead instigated by the conscious creation of the cemetery space⁸¹. None of the cemeteries directly represents pre-existing social differences and structure of their respective communities or indeed collective identities⁸². It is rather a co-examination of both the similarities and the differences attested at the material record and observed visually and tactually, and the multiplicity of ways that the monumentalisation of the burials underneath the Toumba building and the ones near the West Gate affected the way people interacted with them that led to the emergence of certain collective identities at the expense of others⁸³.

Despite the intended monumentality with which the two central burial at the Toumba building at Lefkandi were embellished, the monument's meaning for the local community changed over time unequivocally affecting its perceived monumentality. The interment of the couple along with all the funerary paraphernalia, the construction and destruction of the building, the creation of the tumulus were all shared experiences which in turn led to the development of shared memories and emergence of new identities between the group of people involved in these processes. Regardless of the amount of time, energy and effort invested in monumentalising these two burials, the subsequent sense of belongingness would only be attested within this intent group with limited participation. However, over the course of time, the initial meaning of the building was forgotten and the tumulus covering it would serve its purpose as a focal point around which the cemetery developed. The perceived monumentality of the burials and the Toumba building would be altered and expanded to include other members of the community not necessarily involved in the initial phase of the construction of the monument. This of course does not mean that this privilege was extended to everyone as the group of people burying their dead there consciously created a connection to the main deceased to their own advantage in order to increase their social status. In this regard the suggestion made by Lemos, that the people buried there might have been the elite group who succeeded the main dead in the leadership of the local community seems probable⁸⁴.

Whereas the memory of the original function of the building might not have been seen as that important, the way the two main dead were buried was seen as such. This becomes evident through the study of the depositional patterns attested at the cemetery which are clearly influenced

by the ones found in the two main burials. Through the preservative nature of oral tradition, a combination of 'forgetting' and 'remembering' was indeed attested at Lefkandi as more members of the community were gradually trying to link their dead to the central burials by mimicking the grave goods and burial rites attested in them. It was through this conscious development of the cemetery at this particular location and the deposition of specific grave goods that the living created a symbolic collective identity within the cemetery space which in turn encouraged the sense of belongingness between them. It is this reflexive relationship as influenced by both types of monumentality that informs the emergence of a shared collective identity between certain members of the local community consciously created by themselves and materialised in the funerary record.

Similar observations can be drawn regarding the burials near the West Gate at Eretria. The monumentalisation of the graves consisted of both the lavish grave goods deposited in them and the spatial organisation of the burials centred around tomb six. By arranging these burials around the central one the whole site acquired a new identity, as it was now more than just the burial site of an important individual. It had been transformed into a monument created by a certain group of people to serve as the core around which a collective identity was formed through the adoption of both similar grave goods and burial rites and the spatial expression of this process through the conscious arrangement of the burials around the central one. This intended monumentality which was bestowed upon the small necropolis involved a small number of people who had the right to bury their dead at the specific location and therefore this initial shared identity was limited among them. However, this was not the final phase in the life of this monument. If monuments are indeed a palimpsest of 'mementos', then more mementos were added by the community to this monument at a later stage. These mementos were in the form of a series of buildings created at the site of the monument, notably the *perivolos*, *bothros*, *oikos*, *estiatorion* and *bomos* influencing its perceived monumentality by affecting more members of the local community. Arguably, the construction of these buildings might have involved a larger number of people than the one initially associated with the monument but this does not guarantee that all of them subsequently participated in the activities performed in these buildings, especially given their exclusionary nature.

Perhaps more important than the construction itself was the function of these buildings as all of them were associated with funerary rites honouring the dead. The number, size and specific location of these buildings indicate the wider participation of a larger number of people who

⁸¹ Barrett 1994.

⁸² Whitley 2002.

⁸³ Levenson 2019, 21.

⁸⁴ Lemos 2002, 218–219.

would share memories, strengthen their group's internal bonds and sense of belongingness. These funerary rites typically include sacrifices and communal feasting all of which are activities which constituted a great opportunity for the members of the elite to strengthen their collective identity. Communal feasting in particular⁸⁵, which would have taken place at the *estiatorion* constituted a key factor in establishing certain prominent figures as the leaders of the local society in its collective memory. It cultivated a sense of collectivity between the participants, while providing the hosts with an excellent opportunity to further develop their own personal network⁸⁶.

However, in order for this new role of the site as the core around which a newly formed collective identity would emerge a necessary act of 'forgetting' would have taken place. This meant that the central dead's exact identity or indeed that of the rest of the people buried there as ancestors of certain individuals would be forgotten in order for the monument with its enhanced monumentality to acquire a new role. This would of course mean that the living consciously altered the perceived monumentality of the site rendering it as something not associated with a specific family or families but with a certain class, that is the local elite⁸⁷. Therefore, similar to Lefkandi, the living symbolically created a collective identity initially through the disposal of the dead in a certain way while later on through specific rites and customs which subsequently strengthened the internal cohesion of the group of people involved in all of these phases. Even though the groups of people involved in these process varied through time, the mechanisms instigating this remained the same.

When comparing these cases studies, observations on social trends can be made at both sites. That is of course not to say that these two sites developed in the exact same manner but rather that the mechanisms affecting their monumentality and the subsequent emergence of collective identities centred around them were akin. Both the Toumba burials at Lefkandi and the small necropolis by the West Gate at Eretria were monuments created in a space seemingly reserved for funerary use. While the initial stages at both of them involved the use of this space by a limited number of people, this changed over the course of time as the intended monumentality gradually gave way to a new more wide encompassing one perceived monumentality involving more members of the local community. Both the Toumba burials

at Lefkandi and the necropolis at West Gate were gradually transformed from an individual *lieu de mémoire* to a communal one. Consequently, with the gradual internment of more people at both sites a process of transformation was set in motion affecting the way both sites were perceived by their respective communities. Whereas each of the individual's grave was perceived as an individual *lieu de mémoire*, the cemetery that slowly developed around the Toumba burials and the combination of burials and buildings at the West Gate were now perceived in their totality as a collective *lieu de mémoire*⁸⁸. However, this does not mean that all the members of the local communities had a right to imitate and eventually appropriate the way the central burial at Lefkandi were created or participate in the funerary rites hosted in the buildings near the West Gate at Eretria. Given the diachronic monumentality of these sites and the fact that in both of them were but one of the cemeteries discovered in their respective communities it might be tempting to hypothesise that only the elite had access to these⁸⁹. Burials and funerary rites are both highly ritualised events, spectacles that require an audience in the collective memory of which the materialised power dynamics will be engrained⁹⁰. In this regard, they serve a dual purpose as they provide excellent opportunities to the members of the local elites burying their dead there to strengthen the internal bonds of their group while at the same time distancing themselves from other members of the very same communities. Similar to the notion of diacritical feasting, that is feasting involving sumptuary display, lavishly decorated burials acted as status symbols instigating a desire from other members of the same groups to adopt the same burial customs⁹¹.

In the new emerging post-palatial societies were shifting social dynamics and changing power relations rendered past social relations obsolete while providing new oppor-

⁸⁵ Sherratt 2004.

⁸⁶ Antonaccio 1995, 256; Murray 1983, 196; Dietler 2001; Sherratt 2004; for the institution of symposium in general see Murray 1990; Wecowski 2014.

⁸⁷ See also Walker 2004, 109–114; Mazarakis 2012, 73–79.

⁸⁸ Levenson 2019, 27.

⁸⁹ These does not mean that people buried in the rest of the cemeteries at both Lefkandi and Eretria were only non-elite. Regarding especially Eretria both Blandin 2007, 59–72 and Crielaard 2007 have argued against this dichotomy between the cemetery at West Gate and the West cemetery (Kourouniotis plot) as an elite and non-elite burial ground respectively since lavishly decorated burials have been found in both of them (for the elaborate pottery in them see Verdan 2015b). However, while elites might have had access to the West cemetery (Kourouniotis plot), non-elites were excluded from the one near the West Gate.

⁹⁰ e. g. Routledge 2014.

⁹¹ Wright 2004, 146–148. For the importance of feasting in fostering the internal bonds of the elite and promoting a sense of belongingness see also van den Eijnde 2018. For the role of feasting in the post-palatial world in general see Knodell 2021, 133–135.

tunities to different agents, elites had to use any means in their disposal to consolidate their power in the fluid social reality of Archaic Greece. This was achieved by claiming spaces⁹² such as the cemeteries around the Toumba building and the West Gate, monumentalising them, hence enhancing their social capital and then excluding other community members from accessing them. This fluid and mutable social reality has been masterfully described by Alain Duplouy, who showed that wealth was not the only prerequisite for communicating power and status⁹³. The participation of the local elite in the development of the cemetery space around the Toumba building and the emergence of a cult at the cemetery near the West Gate only seemingly contradict Duplouy's suggestions about the lack of a strictly defined, dominant social category. It is precisely because of this particular lack of a rigid social elite in combination with the increased social mobility that members of the community ascending into the upper strata from diverse backgrounds have subsequently formed an elite group in need of a sense of collectivity. This had to be cultivated through various mechanisms, such as burials at exclusive sites and participation in rituals honouring the dead, aiming to firmly establish these people into the collective memory of the local community.

The similarities between the mechanisms through which monumentality affected the creation of collective identities as evidenced at both sites should not come as a surprise given the intricate relationship between Lefkandi and Eretria. Apart from the similarities in terms of burial rites and grave goods⁹⁴, recent research has shown that the decline of Lefkandi might be connected to the ever changing social dynamics and the gradual prominence of 'flat' sites⁹⁵. It is due to this instability of the post-palatial world that conflicts between individuals and groups rose. Within this context, elites tried to firmly establish themselves in the collective memory of their communities by developing a strong sense of belongingness between while at the same time depriving other members of their communities from this privilege. That is of course not to say that social systems including those based on status or rank did not exist but rather that a combination between inherited and acquired leadership was present within the communities at both sites⁹⁶. By monumentalising burials and funerary feasting the elites at both Lefkandi and Eretria fulfilled their twofold aim in establishing themselves as the leading group within

their respective communities and creating, performing and promoting a strong sense of collectivity between the members of these groups.

Conclusions

Both the Toumba building at Lefkandi and the buildings near the West Gate cemetery at Eretria arguably had monumental aspects. In the case of Lefkandi, the monumentality of the given building derived from its sheer size and the resources mobilised for its construction. On the other hand, regarding specifically the buildings near the West Gate, it could be argued that their monumentality stemmed from the specific place that they were constructed and their use as locales in which funerary rites and feasting honouring the dead took place. The burials in both of these sites were gradually transformed from an individual *lieu de mémoire* to a communal *lieu de mémoire* therefore contributing to a gradual emergence of a collective identity by employing two different, albeit interrelated, key mechanisms: mimesis and monumentalisation. In the case of Lefkandi, the construction of the burial monument predated the progressive surge in the number of burials mimicking the burial rites of the double burial at the Toumba building, while in the case of Eretria the emergence of a group of burials sharing the same burial customs preceded the construction of the monuments. Despite numerous unanswered questions, such as the initial use of the Toumba building or whether the people who constructed the buildings at Eretria were actually descendants of the deceased buried there, it is clear that is very hard to archaeologically distinguish between the conceived intent of a monument and its perceived outcome. Both the mechanisms and the sites themselves were of course embedded in larger processes evidenced in large parts of the Aegean⁹⁷. Despite the various regional differences, the persistence of certain groups to associated themselves with past monuments in order to solidify their present social status is a well-attested practice found in numerous places outside of Euboea⁹⁸. This hardly Euboea-specific phenomenon is deeply rooted in the fluid social reality that emerged as a result of the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces, in which social memory was manipulated by dominant groups in order to create new modes of socio-political organisation⁹⁹. Even if monuments are sometimes considered as static entities, people's perceptions

92 Ma 2016.

93 Duplouy 2006.

94 Blandin 2007, 35–58.

95 Lemos 2002, 519–527; 2020, 794.

96 Knodell 2021, 131–137.

97 Lemos 2002; Knodell 2021, 151–191.

98 Maran 2015; 2016.

99 Georgiadis/Gallou 2009; Borgna *et al.* 2019.

of them are not. It is this interplay between monuments, time, memory and human agency as entangled within the concept of monumentality that shaped people's experiences and ultimately led to the emergence of new forms of collective identities at both Lefkandi and Eretria.

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