

#5th Scapecon

No (e)scape from
bits and pieces

Towards an archaeology
of fragmentation in the
Aegean Bronze Age

- People -

- Material
culture -

- Data -

CALL
FOR
ABSTRACTS

5th international
post-graduate and early career
scholars' conference
in Aegean archaeology

24th - 27th November 2022
Louvain-la-Neuve,
Belgium

SUBMISSION
DEADLINE:

31ST MARCH 2022

Program and submission:
<https://scapecon.minoan-aegis.net/>

Contact : scapecon2022@gmail.com

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In the **fifth international installment of ScapeCon**, we invite early career scholars to explore the concept of **fragmentation** in Aegean Bronze Age archaeology. From a hermeneutical perspective, a fragment can be various things: (1) any kind of (deliberately or unintentionally) broken or incomplete object, element, or feature that once formed part of a greater whole, such as an artifact, material assemblage, or socio-cultural context; but also (2) gaps in the archaeological data resulting in an insufficient knowledge of the context of any given object, element, or feature, even when this tangible entity appears fully preserved. Fragmentation can thus be **tangible** or **intangible** but is always relationally connected to a greater whole. At this conference, we invite papers that discuss both aspects of material and immaterial fragmentation within the three main sessions of **people**, **material culture**, and **archaeological data**. We encourage **interdisciplinary approaches** to contribute to the discussion on these topics.

People

This session will focus first on the human body: as a (re-)presentation in the visual arts, and as a biological material, approached through iconography, osteoarchaeology, and archaeoethanatology, respectively. Secondly, this session aims at connecting the individual to its wider community.

On the first aspect, we invite papers discussing the concepts of zonation and fragmentation of the human / hybrid body in the areas of two- and three-dimensional iconographic media (frescoes, seals, pottery, figurines, etc.). Through osteoarchaeology and archaeoethanatology, we will investigate processes of disarticulation, dispersal, manipulation, and ordering of human remains related to intentional or unintentional fragmentation of the human body. We also invite papers discussing ways of identifying intentionality behind fragmented bodies in an archaeological assemblage, in fieldwork and post-excavation study as well as in revisited osteoarchaeological collections.

Regarding the second, more conceptual, approach we welcome presentations discussing both the horizontal (spatial) and the vertical (socio-political) fragmentation of society. The horizontal approach includes the partition of territory at various spatial scales (from local to supra-regional), either synchronically or diachronically. The degree of human occupation in various areas and its possible translation into geopolitical concepts (borders, states, etc.) is another point of interest. The vertical aspect approaches the fragmentation of the social organization (low-ranking social units, artisans, members of the elite) and the ways in which the archaeological record reflects how people structure their relations and practices through inclusion and exclusion. We welcome papers based on both material culture studies and networks, as well as on theoretical models.

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Material culture

This session aims to explore the fragmentation of both artifacts and architecture. This includes discussions on their production, transformation, function, and use, and shared or distinct traditions at various scales. We welcome papers emphasizing the socio-cultural relevance of these phenomena.

First, through craft production, two axes will be investigated more specifically: the *chaîne opératoire* and the workshops. The fragmentation of the *chaîne opératoire* enables a discussion of the production sequence and the division of its various steps including specific procurement strategies, gestures, and techniques employed. The fragmentation of workshops – grouped or isolated, independent or under degrees of control, specialized or multi-craft production – are possible routes of inquiry. We are welcoming papers that address the socio-cultural implications of the fragmented steps within the production sequence and their relevance and impact both on the finished product and the relation between people involved in different stages of the process.

Secondly, we would like to discuss the identification of fragmentation practices such as intentional or unintentional breaking, deposition, but also instances of repair and remodeling of objects, artifacts, and architectural features that form part of their biography. The social cognition connected to processes of fragmentation will play a crucial role in this session. We invite papers discussing how to identify and define deliberate/intentional fragmentation against unintentional fragmentation within archaeological deposits. The division between intentional fragmentation and destruction of objects and architectural features is another possible trajectory in this session.

Moreover, we invite contributions discussing the existence of fragmentation in the consumption of artifacts, as could be understood through their function and context of use. Different conceptual (e.g., representative, ritual, or mnemonic) and practical functions can be identified for items used individually when compared to forming part of an assemblage. We are interested in papers analyzing the social implications related to fragmented functions and concepts.

Finally, the fragmented nature of local and wider-scale traditions and their selection from a common set of characteristics will be discussed. This involves thoughts on design (i.e., morphology, technique, style) as shared or singular characteristics. How can differences and similarities in material culture be understood as a proxy for social fragmentation?

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Data

The archaeological record is by essence discontinuous, partial, and scattered in space and time. Whether this results from pre-or post-depositional preservation issues or selection constraints during archaeological investigations, it has severe theoretical and ethical implications on the way we interpret these “bits of” data and communicate this fragmentary knowledge.

Reasoning about similarity and the surge for classification has been at the heart of the archaeological discipline and is the underpinning of much archaeological dating. First, we would like to discuss how we can evaluate the consistency of our classification and rationalization systems. We are looking to bring together papers that showcase self-reflective and transparent methodological approaches in the development of their proposed classification.

One of archaeology's greatest challenges, yet most basic tenets, is to fill up the numerous voids of past times. The presence or absence in the archaeological record might be interpreted as the reflection of a genuine cultural or historical “hiatus” or as the consequence of several biases inherent in the discipline. The lack of systematization in the data collecting and / or processing method is one of the commonly cited sources of bias in archaeology. So secondly, we encourage papers that propose retrospective views on the creation and significance of gaps, but also innovative methods, based on case studies, for legitimizing the extrapolation of absent data in the archaeological evidence.

Finally, the fate of uncovered archaeological artifacts is highly dependent on their condition. Only the finest examples are deemed worthy of being displayed in museums whilst the broken and worn remain stored, archived, and frequently forgotten. Furthermore, contrary to the better-preserved historical ruins, Bronze Age remains are more vulnerable and deprived of monumentality, which poses new challenges in engaging the visitors with the Bronze Age past and in enhancing its legibility. Besides these challenges in terms of knowledge communication to the public, data fragmentation also impacts knowledge production by the scholarly community. In archaeological deposits, fragmented material, especially in the case of high-quantity remnants, is too often understudied in favor of completely preserved specimens. This runs the risk of generating bias in our interpretation of the material, for instance in terms of representativity. In this session, we aim to gather papers that showcase critical thinking on questions pertaining to the production, interpretation, presentation, and communication of the fragmented archaeological record within or without museums and site contexts. This also includes, but is not restricted to, ethical discussions on the construction and display of authenticity and integrity in the archaeological data.

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Submission details

Applications for both oral and poster presentations are open. They can be submitted via the website <https://scapecon.minoan-aegis.net/> no later than **31st March 2022**.

The conference will be held in English. Speakers will be given 20 minutes to present their papers or 5 minutes for poster presentations. Depending on the evolution of the sanitary situation, ScapeCon 2022 might take place in a hybrid format. Selected contributions will be published in the Conference Proceedings.

Attending the conference in person will be free of charge. Accommodation in shared rooms will be provided for speakers. A list of possible financial resources to cover travel expenses will be made available soon on our website.

Suggested bibliography

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- Mathioudaki I. 2015. "Minoan Archaeology: The Pretence of Being Through Perception, Retention and Recollection." In: S. Cappel, U. Günkel-Maschek, and D. Panagiotopoulos (eds.), *Minoan Archaeology. Perspectives for the 21st century* (Aegis 8). Presses universitaires de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, 367–374.
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