



INTERTWINED
PASTS 3-6 SEPTEMBER
EAA 2025
BELGRADE

Session 152

Archaeology of Stone Sarcophagi around the Mediterranean during Antiquity: Current Research and Approaches

Daniel Morleghem, *La Sapienza, Rome, Italy*

Laura Nazim, *Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany*

Katharina Meinecke, *Universität des Saarlandes, Germany*

RUHR
UNIVERSITÄT
BOCHUM



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA



UNIVERSITÄT
DES
SAARLANDES

Submission before 6th February 2025 at <https://submissions.e-a-a.org/ea2025>

From Antiquity to the present day, the stone sarcophagus has been an ostentatious and costly funerary container. It is very often carved from a quality stone (marble in particular) and sculpted with geometric, plant, animal or anthropomorphic motifs, either as single isolated ornaments or depicting scenes from daily life or mythology. But a large proportion of sarcophagi, which are difficult to quantify at present because they have hardly been studied, are carved in local stone rather than in noble marble, often without any particular ornamentation and in different stages of manufacture.

Today, sarcophagi are no longer studied solely from the social, iconographic, artistic and commercial point of view that marked the 19th and 20th centuries. For more than two decades, researchers have been taking an increasing interest in the strictly artisanal aspects (tools and cutting techniques), the presentation and visibility of the object within the funerary space, social differences and various local production centres. Even the simplest examples are gradually becoming part of the regional corpus, so that we can better understand the economy (in the broadest sense) of this particular craft object, as well as its role as a social and identity marker.

The aim of this session is to provide an overview of recent and current research on stone sarcophagi in the Mediterranean during Antiquity. We invite contributors, particularly early career researchers, to present their case studies and discuss the following points in particular:

- their approach(es) to the sarcophagus as a craft, artistic, funerary and economic object;
- the criteria used to establish a corpus;
- the place of sarcophagi among other contemporary funerary containers (for example, terracotta and lead sarcophagi, as well as stone or terracotta urns);
- the contextualization of sarcophagi inside the burial space;
- the question of recognizable social differences among sarcophagus burials in a common context.