… from the moment when people are no longer sure that they have a soul or that the body will
regain life, it is perhaps necessary to give much more attention to the dead body, which is ulti-
mately the only trace of our existence in the world and in language.¹

Cemeteries, tombs and grave monuments are conspicuous survivals of the Helle-
nistic and Roman eras in Anatolia. Yet, despite the wealth of material remains, our
knowledge of antique funerary practices and of the use and significance of cemeter-
ies is rudimentary and generally slanted in favour of more durable, impressive and
higher-status monuments.² Many studies have been concerned with documenting
individual grave and tomb features, often with a focus on architecture and inscrip-
tions, rather than considering cemeteries as affective elements within the physical
and human landscape. Such isolating of structures and privileging of artistic or
philological qualities may detract from appreciating the contexts in which people
commemorated and venerated the dead. The deficit in knowledge is therefore not so
much due to a lack of data (for plentiful graves and cemeteries have been recorded),
but a lesser focus on comparative and theoretical approaches that would integrate
disparate types and qualities of information.

The above assessment is applicable to the site of Pessinus in central Anatolia, where
an abundance of archaeological information from cemeteries is coupled with a rel-

² Marcello Spanu, ‘Burial in Asia Minor during the Imperial period, with a particular reference to
Cilicia and Cappadocia’ in Burial, Society and Context in the Roman World, ed. John Pearce et al. (Oxford:
Oxbow, 2000), 169–77; Sarah Cormack, ‘Funerary Monuments and Mortuary Practice in Roman Asia
Minor’ in The Early Roman Empire in the East, ed. Susan E. Alcock (Oxford: Oxbow, 1997), 137–56;
ative lack of synthesis and interpretation. The work undertaken has been primarily a data-collecting exercise: questions relating to the establishment of cemeteries and their use-life; construction and re-construction of grave monuments; and the relationship between the interred and the living remain to be addressed in detail. The potential for such questions to shed light on past practice and social dynamics within Pessinus—and in central Anatolia more generally—demonstrates the importance of evaluating available information rather than accumulating more data as an end in itself. By utilising ideas drawn from social anthropology and landscape studies, we aim to provide additional lenses through which to examine the cemeteries of Pessinus and their status as affective loci in relation to the city and wider landscape. Therefore, our aim in this article is not to give an exhaustive recitation of the available evidence, but to present it selectively in order to evaluate funerary practice and social identity through time.

Funerary archaeology in Roman Anatolia

Knowledge about Roman-period burial practices in Anatolia is inconsistent compared with other parts of the Roman Empire, particularly the western provinces. Many investigations that have taken place in central Anatolia have focused on high-status and ‘spectacular’ tomb remains and on the artistic, sculptural and architectural qualities of monuments and grave goods. Other funerary remains have been excavated in the course of ‘rescue’ work triggered by building works and looting, but little else is done with the resulting information. This reflects a paucity of systematic approaches to the study of Roman-period funerary remains in Turkey,

3 Spanu, ‘Burial in Asia Minor’ 169.
whether regarding the collection of data or interpretation thereof. 6 Nevertheless, some excavations have resulted in more comprehensive studies of cemeteries, such as the work at Hierapolis-Pamukkale and Sagalassos. 7

On the whole, sufficient attention has not been given to synthesis of information from different sites and time periods, nor to the evaluation of practices among groups and individuals of differing wealth and rank within the same settlement. The potential for such approaches is demonstrated by the excavation of Roman cemeteries at Gordion, a multi-period settlement some sixty kilometres north-east of Pessinus known primarily for its Iron Age (circa 1200/1180–330 BCE) settlement and burial tumuli dotting the immediate landscape. 8 In the 1990s and 2000s, a growing interest in phases other than the Iron Age has resulted in targeted excavation and re-evaluation of other periods, including the Roman. Another noteworthy site is Amorium, forty kilometres south-west of Pessinus, investigated primarily for its Early- and Middle-Byzantine (circa 650–1100 CE) remains but also boasting those from the Hellenistic and Roman periods. 9 Excavation of funerary contexts has concentrated on graves in and around the lower city church and some extramural cemeteries. 10 The results of fieldwork and research at these sites suggest the potential for interpretive and comparative approaches that would integrate data from neighbouring Pessinus.

Besides the variance in excavation and publication, there has been limited application of theory to the data obtained from Roman cemeteries in central Turkey. Investigating changes in practices through time and patterns within and between settlements can inform fundamental questions relating to social practice: as M. Parker Pearson writes, ‘one of the main ways in which we interpret past societies is through recovering the material traces of those practices associated with the remains of the dead’. With a specific focus on Pessinus, this article suggests some theoretical pathways that may be taken when thinking about Roman funerary remains. We will show that funerary evidence may be used to explore a range of concepts relating to personhood and landscape, thereby moving away from antiquarian approaches and generalization, and focusing attention on material culture as being ‘meaningfully constituted’ and embedded in both the outcome and process of human action.

The cemeteries of Pessinus: problems and potential

The site of Pessinus is located in and around Ballıhisar village, approximately 130 kilometres south-west of Ankara in central Turkey (Fig. 1). The physical environment of the area is typical of the central Anatolian plateau: dry and steppe terrain of flat uplands, punctuated by hills and mountain ranges. Pessinus itself is nestled in a deeply incised valley, surrounded by steep slopes leading to the flat plateau, which is heavily eroded at several points to form numerous spurs and ridges (Fig. 2). On the uplands surrounding the city are extensive ancient cemeteries, which today are visible in the form of fragmentary grave markers and tomb remains, uneven ground and recently dug looters’ pits.

Figure 1: Map of Turkey, showing the location of Pessinus (W. Anderson).

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Pessinus was identified and frequented by antiquaries in the nineteenth century and formal investigations began in 1967 by teams from Ghent University. The cemeteries around the city were among the first areas to be investigated, and interest in them continued until the end of Ghent University’s tenure of the project in 2008. The investigations found funerary remains that are essentially confined to the Roman period, coinciding more or less with Pessinus’ status as a principal city of Roman Galatia. While the earliest datable occupation in the Pessinus valley can be traced back to the early fourth century BCE, graves dating prior to the first century BCE are almost entirely absent. Whether this is due to hitherto undiscovered cemeteries, complete usurpation of older cemeteries by newer ones, or change in locale function (for example, a shift to habitation) that obliterated earlier graves, remains unknown.

Indeed, determining the nature of funerary practice during the Iron Age and Hellenistic periods is crucial for assessing the impact of ‘Roman’ ideas in Anatolia, including the adoption and/or rejection of western Roman practices. Only a limited number of Iron Age cemeteries in central Anatolia have been investigated (excluding tumuli and rock-cut tombs), the key site being the Common Cemetery at Gordium, which limits insight into continuity of practice into the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Likewise, the impact of the Galatians at Pessinus is uncertain, as no material culture or funerary evidence associated with them has been found at the


site. However, epigraphic studies at Pessinus have shown that people from several different origins and ethnic backgrounds dwelt in the city, implying that a variety of cultural entanglements took place through time. It has been observed by S. Cormack and M. Spanu that western Roman influence on funerary practice in central Anatolia was limited, and it is therefore of interest to ask how such practices were enacted at Pessinus.

Figure 2: View of Ballhisar from EC 1, looking north-west (photo: M. Negus-Cleary).

Past investigations of cemeteries at Pessinus primarily focused on East Cemetery 1 (EC 1, excavated 1967, Fig. 3) and North Cemetery 1 (NC 1, excavated 1987–91, Fig. 4), out of the dozen or so cemeteries that surround the city (Fig. 5). Recent surveys have located eleven definable cemeteries and a number of other places where tombs are present (William Anderson, Damjan Krsmmanovic and Michelle Negus-Cleary, ‘Ground survey in Pessinus and its periphery: first observations’ in Pessinus and its Regional Setting, BAR International Series, ed. Gocha Tsetskhladze [Oxford: Archaeopress, in press], Fig. 4). While other cemeteries associated with satellite sites have been noted within a wider radius of the city, they garner only passing mention in the reports, and are of therefore limited value to the present discussion (John Devreker, ‘Pessinus [Pessinonte] 1986’, Araştırmalar Sonuçları Toplantısı 5.1 [1988]: 130; Devreker and Vermeulen, Paths of the Dead—Interpreting Funerary Practice at Roman-Period Pessinus, Central Anatolia
NC 1 are located on prominent elevations overlooking Pessinus, thus visible from various points within the city itself and the surrounding uplands. They were probably among the chief cemeteries of the city, judging from their size, long-term usage and the presence of varied grave types. Accordingly, the nature of excavated graves and the context of funerary monuments has proven to be quite complex.

Figure 3: Excavation of EC 1 (1967), looking west (Devreker & Vermeulen 1994).

Figure 4: NC 1 (2010), looking north (photo: D. Krsmanovic).

Figure 5: Plan of Pessinus, showing cemetery locations, excavation trenches, and hypothetical extent of the Roman period city (M. Negus-Cleary 2011).
The foremost problem archaeologists have had to contend with in dealing with the cemeteries of Pessinus is disturbance, in the form of frequent dismantling of graves during antiquity and robbing that has occurred during antiquity and into the present day. This has hindered accurate dating of graves, the use of absolute dating techniques and reconstruction of the cemeteries’ development over time. This issue is particularly acute at NC 1 because of the building of a walled compound on top of the former cemetery (perhaps in the sixth century CE), which caused significant disruption to underlying levels. While the disturbance on EC 1 has been less extensive, owing to lack of later overlying construction, looting has caused more targeted destruction. Furthermore, though quite a large number of graves have been investigated, those excavated on EC 1 are confined to the edge of the plateau, an area that seems to have been sporadically used until later times and is thus not necessarily indicative of spatial distribution of graves through time. Despite these limitations, some broad statements may be made regarding the chronology of burial practices at Pessinus.

Chronology and types of burial practice

The earliest datable graves at Pessinus consist of both cremation and inhumation types. On EC 1, cremation burials include brick or tile constructions in a shallow trench and simple pits, sometimes with a bedding of stones upon which the body was laid prior to burning; two urn burials were also found. Though most of the cremation burials on EC 1 could not be dated, the few examples that were date from the first century BCE/first century CE. No inhumation graves have been given a pre-Roman date except a multiple inhumation cist, constructed from limestone blocks and dated to between the third and first centuries BCE. On NC 1, the ear-

22 ibid., 63–64.
23 ibid., 72.
liest graves are simple pit (Fig. 6) or brick lined cremations. Interestingly, the only urn burial is rather late (fourth/fifth century CE). A few simple pit inhumations were also discovered, including two containing mid-first century BCE coins of the Galatian ruler Deiotarus, deposited as obols in the mouths of the deceased.

**Figure 6:** Simple pit cremation graves, NC 1 (Vermeulen 2003).

Therefore, while the first-century-BCE to first-century-CE trend on both cemeteries appears to be cremation, this point should not be overstated due to the inconclusive nature of the data and the presence of inhumations. On NC 1, the latter practice begins to take precedence throughout the first century CE, in the form of simple or brick/tile lined pits. The presence of cremations at Pessinus is noteworthy since Anatolia has a long tradition of inhumation; the introduction of cremation in the later first century BCE may relate to the arrival of people who migrated from the west, bringing their own native practices with them. This coincides with the rise of Romanising material culture, manifested in the commencement of large-scale importation of *sigillata* pottery (especially from the Pergamum region, and also some from Italy) and monumental building programmes such as the temple in Sector B

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and the so-called ‘canal system’ in Sector D (and no doubt other major changes in urban planning across the city).\textsuperscript{29} However, as noted above, the influence of ‘Roman’ funerary practices in Anatolia was limited, and there was continuity of practices and forms of commemoration that are traditionally associated with the Hellenistic and pre-Hellenised Anatolian cultural spheres.\textsuperscript{30} At Pessinus, however, these practices are difficult to define.

Nevertheless, the resumption of inhumation as the dominant practice in the later first century perhaps reflects assimilation or re-affirmation of past practices that took place after the short-lived trend for cremation, which may have accompanied western migrants. However, the problems surrounding the dating of graves weaken this interpretation, for if they date over a protracted period of two or more centuries after the imposition of Roman hegemony, the argument for trends lasting only one or two generations does not hold. Moreover, some cremation graves on both cemeteries do have a later date,\textsuperscript{31} and these may be anachronistic strategies tapping into past cultural values.\textsuperscript{32}

These issues touch on the lack of definition of the demographics and socio-cultural/ethnic composition of Pessinus at any given period, and the extent to which this is discernible in the consumption of particular kinds of material culture and, indeed, funerary customs. It is, however, suggestive of Pessinus’ state at the beginning of the first millennium CE as a primarily administrative hub in which many inhabitants may not have necessarily been locals but originated from a wider region, or, indeed, beyond Anatolia. Thus, through observation of changes in material culture and practices including funerary rites, we may be in a position to perceive the active imposition of alternative practices that outlived their initial deployment.

Due to the paucity of graves dating to this period, F. Vermeulen, who wrote much


\textsuperscript{31} Lambrechts, ‘Fouilles de Pessinonte’, 134; Vermeulen, ‘The Cemetery’, 43, 44.

\textsuperscript{32} cf. Lambrechts, ‘Fouilles de Pessinonte’, 135, who views late cremation graves as indicative of different ethnicity.
of the final report on excavations at NC 1, argues that this cemetery experienced a hiatus in use between circa 100–250 CE. The situation on EC 1 is, again, unclear. Much of the evidence from the second and third centuries from both cemeteries comes from secondary contexts, as graves were systematically dismantled and their structural components reused in later graves and urban architecture. The monuments are dated by means of epigraphy and stylistic motifs, including reliefs on sarcophagi and various stelae, the most intriguing of which are the so-called doorstones. This type of monument—common across contemporary central and western Anatolia—is comprised of a substantial rectilinear marble block, carved with reliefs bearing four panels representing a double door with a knocker and keyhole, or other motifs, such as baskets and lozenges (Fig. 7). As no door-stones appear to have been found in primary contexts at Pessinus, it is difficult to determine the architecture of the tombs which they adorned. However, it is clear that they were visible and probably constituted elaborated architecture of above ground tombs.

![Figure 7: Exceptionally elaborate double door-stone (3rd century), found at Sivrihisar (photo: V. Clark).](image)

The final phase of the use-lives of EC 1 and NC 1 occurs between the fourth and sixth centuries CE. While simpler forms of interment practiced in earlier periods

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34 ibid., 123.
were maintained, the dominant type of burial on both cemeteries becomes large cist graves. These graves were frequently constructed from *spolia* of older graves (Fig. 8a & b), urban architecture, or—as exemplified by remains from NC 1—newly cut stone blocks (Fig. 9). A further characteristic defining them is multiple inhumation, including up to thirty-nine individuals. The cessation of interment on EC 1 remains undetermined, while on NC 1 it may have occurred around the mid-fifth century, the last dateable coin from a secure burial context being an issue of Marcius (450–57 CE). In the sixth century, as noted above, a walled compound was built on top of the cemetery on the western side of the plateau spur. Its precise relation with the ‘lower town’ of Pessinus remains uncertain, though it was certainly a place of residential and economic, and perhaps administrative, military and ecclesiastical functions. This period is marked by significant disturbance of the cemetery, including robbing of building material, pit-digging and installation of storage *pithoi* in floors that frequently disturbed underlying graves. Thus, most graves, particularly the late cist examples, have been disturbed in one manner or another and looting since ancient times has further contributed to this.

The shift from expansive cemeteries outside settlements to intramural burial is a prominent characteristic of late-antique cities in Anatolia, though the prohibition against intramural burial was never as strictly observed in the eastern provinces as it was in the west. At Pessinus this phenomenon is difficult to gauge as our knowledge of the configuration of the Late Roman/Early Byzantine city is still rudimentary. However, tantalizing evidence comes from Sectors D and E (see Fig. 5), where

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37 ibid., 57.
38 One cremation grave was dated by a coin of Leo I (457–74 CE) (Lambrechts, ‘Fouilles de Pessinonte’, 129), though it is not stated whether the artefact is intrusive. Nevertheless, it may be speculated that, given the lack of change in function as on NC 1, some interment continued on EC 1 into the sixth century.
42 Cormick, ‘Funerary Monuments’.
tombs were excavated on the west bank of the river and in the vicinity of the monumental retaining wall (called le quai byzantin in the final publication), whereupon a sarcophagus remains perched. In addition, we may surmise that individuals were interred in the presumed church that lies under modern housing on the east side of Sector L behind the village mosque, and further burials in its vicinity, as well as other churches at Pessinus, presently only known from historical texts.

Figure 8a & b: Late Roman cist tombs constructed from spolia, EC 1 (Waelkens 1984).
Figure 9: Cist grave from new-cut marble blocks, NC 1 (photo: D. Krsmanovic)

Funerary activity at Pessinus during medieval times is difficult to decipher, as indeed is the overall occupation of the site. Excavations on the so-called ‘Ottoman Hill’ (Sector J) at the northern outskirts of Pessinus (Fig. 10) revealed various periods

43 Pieter Lambrechts, ‘De derde opgravingskampanje van de Gentse Universiteit te Pessinus (Turkije)’, De Brug 13 (1969): 273–4; Waelkens, ‘Le système d’endiguement’, Fig. 145.  
of cultural activity which are not easy to interpret due to extensive disturbance of
the deposits.\textsuperscript{46} The earliest phase of activity in the area is represented by eight late-
first-century-BCE/early-first-century-CE graves (North Cemetery 2).\textsuperscript{47} Echoing EC
1 and NC 1, grave types are mixed: three inhumation and five cremation burials,
al simple pit type. One inhumation burial was of an obol type, reminiscent of the
examples from NC 1.

\textbf{Figure 10:} The so-called ‘Ottoman Hill’, looking south. Note the spolia used as tombstones,
and the telegraph pole on the hilltop, behind which lies the Sector J trench (photo: D. Kris-
manovic).

The first cemetery was followed by hiatus in the area’s use after which a building was
constructed on the site, possibly used for domestic or artisanal functions. This phase,
loosely dated as late (possibly sixth century), is followed by another indeterminate
hiatus before the establishment of the so-called ‘old Turkish cemetery’, visible today
in the form of \textit{spolia} grave markers such as column shafts. As the graves themselves
have not been opened, it is difficult to gauge whether this cemetery is genuinely from
the Turkish (Seljuk or Ottoman, as has been continually suggested in all publications
to date) period or earlier medieval (Byzantine), in which case it supposes interesting
ideas regarding the later occupation of Pessinus, a topic still subject to dispute.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} John Devreker, Hugo Thoen and Frank Vermeulen, ‘Pessinus (Pessinonte) 1990: Rapport provi-
\textsuperscript{47} ibid., 351.
\textsuperscript{48} Evidence of post-seventh century occupation at Pessinus is largely negative evidence—in the form
of coins, a seal, and small amounts of pottery from NC 1 and Sector B (Marc Waelskens, ‘The Impe-
The findings from excavations at EC 1 and NC 1 demonstrate that a variety of strategies were employed in funerary practice through time. This variety raises questions regarding the demographics, social and cultural affiliations, and wealth and status of the people of Pessinus during the Roman period. In the introduction to this paper, we contended that the data recovered from cemeteries in central Turkey, and Pessinus in particular, has not been the subject of sufficient synthesis and interpretation. In the second part of this paper, we will suggest some interpretive paths that may be taken to pursue questions relating to the relationship between the dead and the living. In particular, we focus on concepts relating to personhood and the landscape—lines of interpretation that have the potential to broaden our understanding of both particular and general issues relating to negotiation of identity, and how this is manifested in the archaeological record.

Dead agents and personhood

We should first state that we do not see funerary remains as simply evidence that exists in the present, waiting to be documented and interpreted according to archaeological, art historical, epigraphic, or other disciplinary precepts. Cemeteries were meaningful places that were actively used in the past, and the deceased interred in them were capable of altering the experiences of the living through time and space. Cemeteries may function as places where identities and relationships are contested by virtue of the fact that the dead possess agency—the ability to elicit specific and thus definable types of action from the living.49 Though agency has come to encompass a variety of definitions since its adoption in archaeological discourse,50 we em-
ploy a relatively basic variant in this paper: in treating death as a socially determinative event, it becomes a focal point for kinds of activities that are not part of regular daily life. The corpse itself and the eventual place of interment both constitute ‘sites’ that are thus implicated within this series of particularised activities.

To that end, death may be viewed as a form of social rupture, resulting in the division of the social and biological individual, whereupon the various activities initiated by the living are directed towards the figurative or literal redressing of the event’s impact and dealing with the deceased’s new status. Such activities may include transfer of property, setting up of memorials, reconfiguration of roles in the household, performative activities such as feasting and rituals associated with funerals and observed periodically subsequent of interment. Indeed, burial itself represents a culmination of numerous processes leading up to (and, indeed, taking place subsequent to) the act of interment.

The various activities initiated by the living upon biological death are arguably directed towards the coordination of the deceased’s personhood. This concept pertains to the individual’s abstracted status and identity, which is built up through life by means of social and material relationships, thus making up their overall biography.


cf. Yannis Hamilakis and Eleni Konsolaki, ‘Pigs for the Gods: burnt animal sacrifices as embodied rituals at a Mycenaean sanctuary’, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 23.2 (2004): 145–47; some of these practices are implied by evidence from the Lydian culture of Iron Age western Anatolia. The excavated grave goods from the few unlooted tombs in Lydia are comprised of banqueting accoutrements—furniture and fine ware pottery. The evidence has led to the view that banquets were practiced in association with funerary activity (Christopher H. Roosevelt, *The Archaeology of Lydia, From Gyges to Alexander* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009], 180–2). Parker Pearson, ‘The Archaeology of Death and Burial’.

The biography thus becomes the vehicle for redressing the event of death and promoting activities which continue maintaining the individual’s presence in society after biological death. The corpse itself is a keen affirmer of personhood.\textsuperscript{55} It may seem that the body is representative of the individual’s reduction to an object,\textsuperscript{56} however, the continued treatment and perception of it as a subjective individual in funerary contexts shows that the body continues to be capable of exerting subjectivity. The body, in effect, acts as a proxy for the abstracted, socially constructed individual, thus defying objectification through activating the imaginations and memories of the living,\textsuperscript{57} directing them into streams of action which strive to reconcile the deceased’s newly acquired status.

**Landscape and heterotopia**

The second theoretical pathway we highlight relates to the spatial aspect of cemeteries and people’s relationships with these places. Cemeteries are, in essence, repositories of biographical narratives and social memory, giving them highly affective potential in the overall landscape. As a result, the burial of the city’s deceased inhabitants in proximity to urban areas demonstrates how landscape is embedded in the general ways of existence, not merely as a backdrop for human action.\textsuperscript{58} The plateaus and hilltops where the cemeteries are situated may therefore be seen as constituting a *heterotopia* (Fig. 5): space that is set apart from everyday social space.\textsuperscript{59} A heterotopia is something fundamentally imaginary, pieced together through people’s repeated engagement with it and formed from the totality of experiences arising from such engagement.

The cemetery is therefore a powerful repository of social memory, where ideas about


\textsuperscript{59} Foucault, ‘Of Other Spaces’, 25.
ethnicity, gender, class, rank and life narratives exist in multiplicity, shaped from acts of remembering and forgetting. The totality of individual instances of personhood thus contributes to the cemetery’s overall heterotopia. The simple action of marking a grave, for example, is not merely a marker of identity or finality, but represents an index of processes leading up to interment and objectifying the seemingly permanent physicality of the deceased in the landscape, which has continued impact on the activities of the living who engage with the graves, as will be outlined below.

Interpreting funerary practice at Pessinus

Concepts relating to personhood and landscape may be especially applicable to burial practices, where, as I. Hodder notes, generalised laws governing a direct relationship between material culture and human society are less convincing. Hodder comments that ‘it is ideas, beliefs and meanings which interpose themselves between people and things’.

These perspectives can be explored with reference to the wide variety of funerary remains at Pessinus.

![Figure 11: Libation cupule stone, EC 1 (old excavations) (photo: D. Krsmanovic).](image1)

![Figure 12: Libation cupule stone reused in a late antique building, Sector K (photo: D. Krsmanovic).](image2)

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61 Hodder, Reading the Past, 3.
One example of activity surrounding the maintenance of personhood at Pessinus may be deduced from stones bearing incised libation cupules, of which twenty examples were found during the excavations of EC 1 (Fig. 11), while others were incorporated into the fabric of later urban structures (Fig. 12). The cupules are indicative of the performance of commemoration: the act of visiting a grave and pouring a libation was arguably an emotional and memory-laden experience for the living, wherein the whole act (preparation of liquids, ascent to the cemetery, pouring of libations) becomes an index for recalling the deceased, thereby maintaining their personhood in living consciousness. The practice constitutes a series of intentional actions that are repeated over a period of time with a view towards memorialising and embellishing the personhood of one or a group of individuals.

The processes involved in the cremation burials at Pessinus may also have been a fertile ground for the negotiation of personhood. P. Lambrechts, the first director of excavations at Pessinus, has argued that cremation in some instances happened in an alternative location, while remains were carried and deposited into the cemeteries. Though this claim cannot be substantiated, there is little doubt that cremation would not have been a single task but a complex arrangement of different processes involving different people acting in different locations. Spanu notes, in reference to Roman funerary activity in Anatolia, ‘evidence of cremation of the deceased in one place with the subsequent burial in another of ashes and bones in appropriate containers’, suggesting that activities surrounding cremation were a more drawn out process than a single action. Burial practice is enacted across various scales of space, but also of time, and was, according to Parker Pearson, ‘a carefully thought out procedure which may have taken days, months or even years to plan and execute’. Thus we may suppose that, at Pessinus, procedures were enacted which involved extensive planning. This is certainly applicable to the various grave stelae, which were no doubt commissioned well in advance of the subject’s death.

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64 Lambrechts, ‘Les Fouilles de Pessinonte’, 129.
67 Thus, it is likely that there was an industry devoted to this, particularly door-stones.
Cremation is also strongly sense-affective, focusing on the transformation of the body involving smell, sound and sight. The act of burning brings about the body’s metamorphosis on the pyre from a recognisable individual to an undefined substance. As the human body is thus decomposed, its identity and by extension personhood are seemingly erased. Yet the ensuing actions, such as the collection and deposition of ashes and bones, were arguably a site for the reception of sensory information, affecting memory and emotion, and the activation of personhood itself.

Figure 13: Door-stone of Asklepios, high-priest of Kybele (2nd century), found on EC 1 (photo: V. Clark).

The erection of permanent monuments on a gravesite articulates further points regarding the shaping of personhood in pre/post-mortem situations. A good example illustrating these points is the door-stone of Asklepios, the archigallos (high priest) of Kybele, his mother and brother (Fig. 13). When the bomos was commissioned, it was inscribed with the title gallos, the archi- prefix having been added in an ad hoc

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manner presumably after the monument’s completion to reflect Asklepios’ change in status. This shows how the process of memorialisation pre-figured biological death, and how projected representation of the self through the grave monument was controlled in order to stress and maintain aspects of the individual’s status in society after biological death. It highlights professional and personal connections, concretising them in the minds of those interacting with the gravesite by associating the deceased individual with abstract social constructs, thus affirming his or her continued presence in the social consciousness.

The introduction of door-stones at Pessinus denotes new (undoubtedly imported) ideas of memorialisation in the second and third centuries CE. Such monuments first appeared in the fifth to fourth centuries BCE in western Anatolia, experienced a seeming hiatus in popularity during the Hellenistic period and were revived in Roman times. In terms of signification, door-stones have been interpreted as the tomb representing an eternal house, and the door motif a passage from the sphere of the living to that of the dead. Whether the Pessinuntian examples drew on the same sphere of signification remains to be determined, for while it is likely that locally specific meanings developed, there are consistencies between settlements and regions in terms of iconography, which suggests some retention of shared notions in disparate geographies.

The presence of inscriptions supports the notion of material claims to the space of the cemetery, where the writing is as much about its physicality as its content. The

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72 Roosevelt, ‘Symbolic Door Stone Stelae’, 78–79.
73 Waelkens, *Kleinasiatische Türsteine*.
formula *mnemes kharin* (Fig. 14), common throughout the Greek speaking world for several centuries, may be viewed as an invoking incantation after the list of names, evocative of individualised historical narratives,\(^{75}\) and inviting the visitor to the grave to engage with the deceased’s personhood. In this way, the landscape of the cemetery is a meaningfully constructed entity that is a reciprocal medium for, and outcome of, human activity particular to such places.\(^{76}\)

![Figure 14: Funerary inscription (… *gunaiki mnemes kharin*) reused in Grave 3.81, NC 1 (photo: D. Krmanovic).](image)

Further strategies for maintaining personhood included the deposition of personal items into graves. On NC 1, a relatively high number of these were found in inhumation graves dating from all phases of the cemetery’s use, in the form of jewellery, clothing and other accessories.\(^{77}\) One Late Roman grave is of interest on account of the presence of a Hellenistic coin with a hole drilled through it, denoting that it was worn as a pendant.\(^{78}\) These grave goods point to the idea of the deceased as having a continued connection with their retrospective biographical self.\(^{79}\) The example of the Hellenistic coin is indicative of more directed attempts at harnessing

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\(^{78}\) ibid., 98.

\(^{79}\) Williams, ‘Death Warmed Up’, 267. Motifs on door-stones perhaps also hint at this.
past cultural capital through personal adornment; indeed, the coin itself may have been viewed as an index of particular social circumstances. Certainly, the process of deposition and adorning of the corpse with these items would have been a way of affirming their personhood by associating them in a seemingly permanent manner with utilitarian and non-utilitarian objects that may have belonged to them in life. Alternatively, the addition of such material culture may be indicative of novel identities (not necessarily existent in life) being constructed through permanent material association.

The varied character of the burials at Pessinus at any given point in time may derive from particular instructions of the deceased while living, which were acted upon (or even contravened) at death. For example, the aforementioned cremation urn from NC 1, dating to the fourth/fifth century, may be a deliberate anachronism and an attempt to harness cultural capital through adoption of overtly western Roman practices. On the other hand, the first-century-BCE obol burials from NC 1 and NC 2 show attitudes to death that follow Hellenic views of the afterlife. The co-existence of varied practices—anachronistic and innovative, simple and lavish—indicate the variety of strategies adopted; some, no doubt, necessitated by economic considerations and available resources but also by a level of competition and urge to differentiate, displaying an apparent wealth of cultural and conceptual resources.

The material culture of cemeteries was just that—a culture of materiality that links personhood and landscape. This would have been mediated by the surrounding topography and the relationship with other parts of the settlement, including other cemeteries. It seems that the main north-south road between Spaleia (Sivrihisar) and Amorium which passed through Pessinus would have influenced the location of certain tombs on NC 1, which were more visible to those travelling along the road. Social codes may have governed the use of particular cemeteries, and visibility and movement might also have been a consideration for their internal organisation, which appear to show concentrations of burials at the edge of the plateau, suggesting a hierarchy of space and the use of prominent positions for ostentatious burials. While there is little evidence for planning, movement within the cemeteries would have been circumscribed by the position of tombs, necessitating the formation of

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80 Vermeulen, ‘The Cemetery’, 35, Fig. 25.
walking routes or pathways that were repeatedly taken by generations of mourners.

The placement of graves and establishment of cemeteries may have significance regarding claims to control over the land, whereby ‘the act of burial itself ... serves to physically “plant” the dead in the land, making their remains an inalienable and fixed part of that land’. Burial placement may therefore be a form of ‘heritage claim’ that involved making a material statement of genealogical decent and entitlelment. These claims were not only in the form of the burial itself but were also supported by other physical elements that range from simple grave markers to elaborate tomb structures. Areas in the cemeteries where there is limited intercutting of graves and some degree of unified orientation and clustering suggest some degree of maintenance and observation of such claims. This is exemplified by the late cist tombs in the southernmost area of NC 1, overlooking Pessinus (Fig. 15). The extent of clustering and alignment is indicative of contemporaneity, and the location’s intervisibility with the city itself shows the deliberate emphasis of the connection between the living and the dead, and the respective entities of the city and the heterotopia of the cemetery.

Figure 15: Southernmost area of NC 1 and vicinity of trench boasting a prominent concentration of late cist graves, overlooking Ballihisar (photo: D. Krismanovic).

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81 Parker Pearson, *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*, 17.
Late antiquity – changes to personhood and landscape

Though the chronology of cemeteries at Pessinus is rather imprecise, and at many locations grave usage appears to span several generations, certain phases are marked by distinct change in funerary practice. Shifts in burial practice that occurred during late antiquity (approximately from the mid third century CE onwards) are one aspect of extensive changes in the physical makeup of the city, particularly in the use of urban and periurban space. Yet there is also some continuity, for example, in cemetery locations that are used throughout the Roman period and long into the Christian era. By observing change and continuity in the material aspects of funerary practice, ideas of personhood and landscape, both at the time of change and the preceding period, are thrown into sharp relief.

By the fourth to sixth century, there are clear differences from the preceding period. As already outlined, many older grave monuments were dismantled and appropriated into substantial cist tombs, in keeping with the general activity of spoliation that began to intensify from the late third century until the end of large-scale occupation at Pessinus. The use of Roman building stone in late antiquity and medieval times is a common phenomenon across the former domains of the Roman Empire, hinting at attempts to harness the cultural capital of the past for new ends. The patrons of works sought to build their prestige using the physical fabric of the Roman city, thereby associating themselves with the past through material appropriation of it. The dismantling of old graves at Pessinus is suggestive of revised social norms that were reflected in the proclamation of official sanctions for re-use of abandoned monuments, as expressed in the Theodosian Code. By the late fourth/early fifth century, the use of spolia was widespread at Pessinus—the re-use of tomb materials in construction of new tombs, especially door-stones, appears to have been more than

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an economic measure of deploying available resources. This is supported by the use of *spolia* in non-funerary contexts, especially in the walled compound built on NC 1, where the positioning of decorated marble blocks indicates aesthetic choices as well as practical considerations.\(^{86}\)

The phenomenon of spoliation is also symptomatic of new understandings of cemeteries as socially meaningful places. It also puts to question where the materials for the late graves precisely came from, as it is possible that other cemeteries (or parts thereof) went out of use and were allowed to be dismantled, which has implications for hierarchies of memory and strength of meaning of particular locales. The most visible tombs, which occupied prominent places at the edge of the plateau facing Pessinus, were presumably in prestigious locations, and their use as burial places might have been usurped by new priorities. Certain cemeteries, or parts of cemeteries, may have been open to plunder, and perhaps had lesser social/emotional significance which facilitated their closure and requisition of their resources. Closure of cemeteries need not have been a sudden event but perhaps involved gradual abandonment. However, in the case of NC 1, it seems likely that the cemetery’s use was halted more suddenly and that the site was appropriated for its eventual use as a hilltop compound.

Most poignantly, the dismantling of graves is indicative of the dismantling of meaningful information associated with them, a subversion of antecedent identities and significant alteration of the heterotopia of the cemetery. But, the construction of the late cist graves also arguably represents reinterpretation, where new meanings were constructed from the remnants of the old—the activity initiating processes of memory and contemplation of the past, or establishing links with past inhabitants, whether or not they were direct family or kin. The use of past grave monuments and architectural elements in the cist graves is arguably purposeful, simultaneously one of suppression and endorsement.\(^{87}\)

The incorporation of door-stones into the cist graves may be indicative of this cataloguing of past identity into new contexts, and perhaps a transfer from individual


\(^{87}\) Papalexandrou, ‘Memory Tattered and Torn’, 56.
commemoration to collective usage. This was therefore a politically charged act in that the emphasis on personality is transferred to one of anonymity and collective memory, a tendency also observed at late antique cemeteries at Corinth. While it may be said that the stones used were available at hand, or that the decision may have even been an aesthetic one, such acts were considerably involved and meditated, perhaps indicative of attempts to tap into a pre-existing meanings, indexed by the materiality of funerary inscriptions and the door motif itself. Thus it is more profitable to see the functional and symbolic elements as symbiotic rather than one determining the other.

Several examples from late-antique Pessinus can be used to show how the use of old tombs to re-construct other tombs or buildings was both a deliberate but also a deeply engrained social act. The finest example is arguably grave 3.81 on NC 1 (Figs. 16, 17), which shows careful composition of the different spolia, with the door-stone motifs and inscriptions—which, significantly, have not been chiseled away—facing inwards. Similar examples abound elsewhere in the region. One tomb investigated

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89 Papalexandrou, ‘Memory Tattered and Torn’, 61.
at Amorium is an Early-Byzantine cruciform structure made up of four compartments and built almost entirely of reused door-stones.\textsuperscript{90} The structure’s fabric echoes the widespread reuse of stones taken from earlier tombs at Pessinus, as well as being an example of the communality of burial practices during late antiquity.

The nature of communal burial, and the laws and customs relating to this practice, appear to have changed significantly during late antiquity. Prohibitions on the opening of tombs that are expressed in inscriptions of the Early- and Middle-Imperial period in Anatolia indicate a concern to reserve tombs for co-habitation by family members.\textsuperscript{91} However, the very existence of these inscribed prohibitions that threaten fines and curses for transgressors suggest that unauthorized use of tombs was widespread.\textsuperscript{92} It is difficult to gauge the nature of this at Pessinus, though one late inscription suggests some adherence to protocol and admonition of transgression.\textsuperscript{93} Multiple interment was relatively commonplace in the late period, with numerous graves on EC 1 and NC 1 representing the phenomenon; grave 1.100 on NC 1 is particularly noteworthy for its thirty-nine occupants.\textsuperscript{94} It is possible that communal tombs are representative of familial connection, though this is difficult to confirm without well-dated contexts and DNA analysis, and that collective burials might have signified other kinds of social groupings.

In some instances, however, structures that were used over several centuries clearly involved the interment of individuals not related to the tomb’s initial occupants. At Amorium in 1994, an underground rock-cut tomb (a type not present at Pessinus) was investigated. The tomb’s construction consists of an \textit{arcosolium} structure with short \textit{dromos} and an entrance shaft and contains three burial couches within the chamber.\textsuperscript{95} The tomb’s initial construction probably dates from second or third century, though its use continued for several centuries: skeletal remains of more than a dozen individuals were found inside and artefacts were recovered dating from as

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[90] Lightfoot et al., ‘Amorium Kazısı 2005’, 272–74.
\item[92] For example, Christian Marek, \textit{Stadt, Ära und Territorium in Pontus-Bithynia und Nord-Galatia} (Tübingen: Ernst Wasmuth, 2003), 132–33.
\item[94] Vermeulen, ‘The Cemetery’, 57.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
late as the eighth century. Therefore, as at Pessinus, the revisiting and re-use of the tomb may have been continuous over the long term. Each new interment may be viewed as a key event responsible for renewed shaping of personhood, memory and emotion (by evoking directly or indirectly past interment events), and therein the further elaboration of the cemetery’s heterotopic qualities. The collective nature of the graves is suggestive of the construction of collective rather than personal identities.96

Conclusion

It is possible to see from this overview that there is considerable potential for interpretation of the funerary remains at Pessinus. Investigating ideas of landscape and personhood in conjunction with the materiality of tombs, grave markers, inscriptions, and the presence of the deceased themselves enables the construction of meaningful interpretations of the lives of Pessinuntians that go beyond artefact taxonomy, art history, epigraphy and materials analysis as an end in itself. The hills and plateaus surrounding Pessinus playing host to the cemeteries should be seen as places which elicit actions that articulate specific notions about society. They are experiential, interactive and contested locations, which manipulate and are manipulated by the living. As a result, they did not—and do not—exist simply as museums of the dead waiting to be catalogued and categorised. We therefore conclude that further research which integrates already existing information on Roman cemeteries—at Pessinus and elsewhere—could be used to develop dynamic interpretations of the way that funerary practice was reflective and constructive of social practice within settlements, and a key part of identity formation among urban dwellers.

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