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NON-ADULT BURIALS IN THE SOUTH (TAVŞANDERE) NECROPOLIS OF PARION: DIACHRONY, FUNERARY PRACTICE, AND AGE-RELATED REPRESENTATION

This article examines 43 non-adult burials identified among 289 graves excavated in the South (Tavşandere) Necropolis of Parion, spanning from the late seventh/early sixth century BCE to the third century CE. Rather than treating non-adults as a single biologically defined category, the study analyses funerary treatment through grave type, containment and closure systems, associated assemblages, micro-location data, and spatial patterning within the cemetery. Its aim is to evaluate how age-related funerary representation was materially constructed and how this repertoire changed over time.

The Archaic sample is dominated by enchytrismos and other container-based burials, while the limited Classical evidence suggests continuity rather than a clear break in this tradition. Hellenistic examples form a small but internally consistent group defined by tile-covered graves, whereas burials from the Roman period show the greatest variability in grave technology, assemblage composition, and depositional complexity. Across the dataset, objects such as figurines, astragaloi, shells, and coins cannot be assigned fixed meanings as «toys,» protective items, or Charon's obols without reference to grave architecture, depositional status, and object placement. Spatial evidence further suggests that non-adult burials were neither fully segregated nor evenly distributed, but instead clustered in particular parts of the funerary landscape.

The evidence suggests that non-adult burials at Parion are best understood as part of a funerary repertoire shaped by both continuity and change. By combining diachronic analysis with contextual readings of grave assemblages, the study contributes to current debates on childhood archaeology, mortuary variability, and age-related funerary representation in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean.

Keywords: Parion; childhood archaeology; child burials; funerary archaeology; enchytrismos; mortuary variability; Troas

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ПОГРЕБЕНИЯ ИНДИВИДОВ НЕВЗРОСЛОГО ВОЗРАСТА В ЮЖНОМ (ТАВШАНДЕРЕ) НЕКРОПОЛЕ ПАРИОНА: ДИАХРОНИЯ, ПОГРЕБАЛЬНАЯ ПРАКТИКА И ВОЗРАСТНАЯ РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯ

В статье рассматриваются 43 погребения индивидов незрелого возраста, выявленные среди 289 могил, раскопанных в Южном (Тавшандере) некрополе Париона и датируемых периодом от конца VII — начала VI в. до н. э. до III в. н. э. Вместо того чтобы трактовать незрелых как единую биологически определяемую категорию, исследование анализирует погребальную практику через тип могилы, системы контейнеризации и перекрытия, состав сопроводительного инвентаря, микролокационные данные и пространственное распределение внутри некрополя. Цель работы — проследить, каким образом материально конструировалась возрастная погребальная репрезентация и как этот набор практик изменялся во времени.

Архаическая выборка характеризуется преобладанием энхитризма и других форм погребений в сосудах, тогда как ограниченный материал классического времени скорее указывает на преемственность этой традиции, чем на ее разрыв. Погребения эллинистического периода образуют небольшую, но внутренне согласованную группу, связанную прежде всего с черепичными могилами, тогда как комплексы римского времени демонстрируют наибольшую вариативность в погребальной технологии, составе инвентаря и депозиционной сложности. В рамках всего корпуса такие предметы, как терракотовые фигурки, астрагалы, раковины и монеты, не могут автоматически интерпретироваться как «игрушки», апотропеи или «обол Харона» вне связи с конструкцией могилы, депозиционным статусом и точным положением находок. Пространственные данные, в свою очередь, показывают, что погребения незрелых не были ни полностью изолированы, ни равномерно распределены, а, напротив, тяготели к определенным зонам погребального ландшафта.

Полученные данные позволяют рассматривать погребения индивидов незрелого возраста в Парионе как часть погребального репертуара, формировавшегося одновременно под воздействием преемственности и изменений. Сочетая диахронический анализ с контекстуальным чтением погребальных комплексов, статья вносит вклад

в современные дискуссии об археологии детства, варибельности погребального обряда и возрастной репрезентации в погребальной практике Эгейского мира и восточного Средиземноморья.

Ключевые слова: Парион, археология детства, детские погребения, погребальная археология, энхитризм, варибельность погребального обряда, Троада

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Introduction

Non-adult burials occupy a paradoxical position in funerary archaeology. They are essential for reconstructing how past communities understood infancy, childhood, adolescence, dependency, personhood, and age-related social roles, yet they remain difficult to interpret because low archaeological visibility, fragile skeletal preservation, uneven excavation histories, and context-specific disposal practices distort their representation in the cemetery record. The apparent absence, rarity, or simplicity of child burials cannot therefore be translated directly into low social value, weak emotional investment, or ritual marginality. Childhood in funerary contexts must instead be approached not as a self-evident biological category, but as a historically contingent and materially mediated social condition [Halcrow, Tayles, 2008: 191, 202–203; Carroll, 2011: 99–100, 113, 115; Beaumont, 2013: 198, 204–205; Lillehammer, 1989: 89, 102–103; Murphy, Le Roy, 2017: 2–9].

A related problem concerns associated objects. Figurines, astragaloi, shells, coins, miniature vessels, and other small finds have often been assigned fixed labels such as toys, apotropaic devices, or Charon's obols. Yet such identifications are rarely secure when based on object type alone. Their interpretive value depends on depositional status, grave architecture, object placement, and assemblage composition. Non-adult funerary treatment is therefore best reconstructed through context rather than isolated artefact categories [Serra, 2020: 194; Van Andringa, 2025: 11–12].

The South (Tavşandere) Necropolis of Parion provides a useful context for examining these issues. Located in north-western Anatolia at the Troas-Propontis interface (Fig. 1), the cemetery lies approximately 1 km south of the city centre (Fig. 2), within the wider topographical and archaeological setting of Parion as established through survey and excavation [Keleş, 2013: 29–36; Başaran, Yılmaz, 2021: 107–133], and preserves a stratified funerary sequence extending from the late seventh/early sixth century BCE to the third century CE. Previous work has established the necropolis» broad chronological development and burial customs across

its Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman phases [Başaran, Kasapoğlu, 2018: 433–487; Kasapoğlu, 2019; Kasapoğlu, 2022: 261–262]. For the Hellenistic and Roman periods, recent work has further clarified patterns of continuity and change in grave typology, assemblage structure, and funerary practice [Tuğrul, 2024: 15–56]. What remains to be examined systematically is how non-adult burials participated in these changing funerary regimes across the full diachronic sequence.



Fig. 1. Location of Parion in the Troas-Propontis region
Рис. 1. Расположение Парiona в регионе Троады и Пропонтиды

This article examines 43 non-adult burials documented among 289 graves excavated in the South Necropolis between 2005 and 2025. The term non-adult is used here as an operational analytical category encompassing perinatal, infant, child, and adolescent individuals; it does not imply a socially homogeneous group [Halcrow, Tayles, 2008: 202–203; Beaumont, 2013: 196, 198]. The analysis combines grave type, containment and closure systems, associated assemblages, micro-location data, and spatial patterning in order to examine how age-related funerary distinction was materially constructed and reformulated over time. It further considers four related questions: how non-adult burials were distributed diachronically within the necropolis; whether the Archaic predominance of enchytrismos continued or was reformulated in later periods; how far age categories can be related to grave assemblages; and how the micro-location of selected finds can clarify depositional gestures without reducing repeated patterning to fixed meaning.

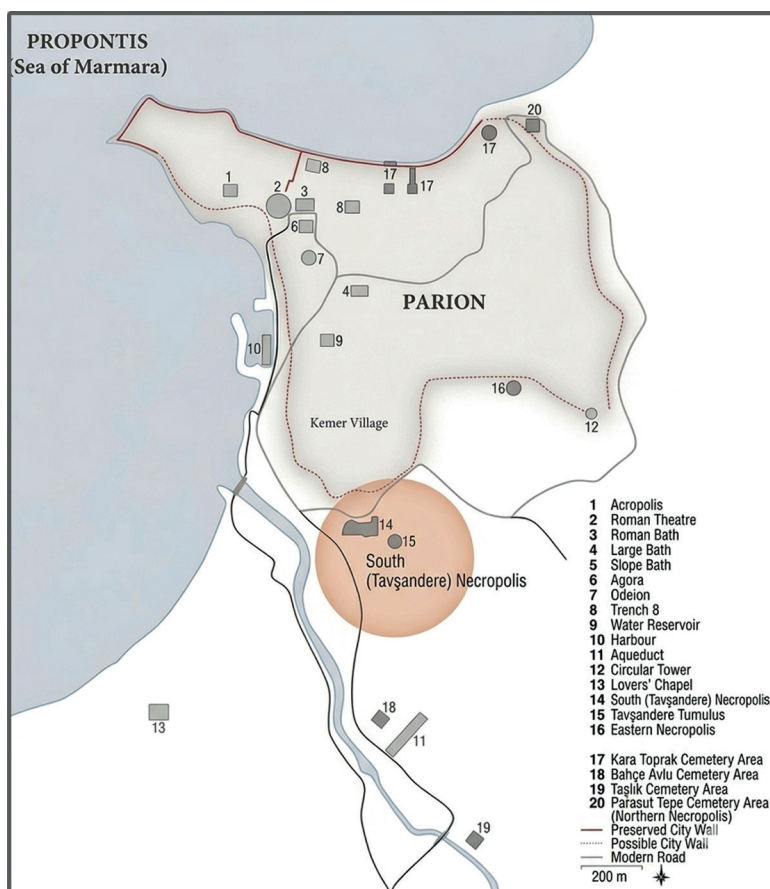


Fig. 2. Location of the South (Tavşandere) Necropolis in relation to the city centre of Parion

Рис. 2. Расположение Южного (Тавшандере) некрополя по отношению к центру города Парiona

Taken together, the evidence suggests that age-related funerary distinction at Parion did not disappear as burial regimes changed, but was reformulated through shifting combinations of grave technology, containment, assemblage selection, and spatial positioning. The study thus contributes to current debates on childhood archaeology, mortuary variability, and the contextual interpretation of age-related funerary practice in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean [Dimakis, Dijkstra, 2020: 1–3].

Theoretical framework

Childhood is no longer understood in archaeology as a purely biological stage of growth. Rather, it is approached as a socially defined and historically variable condition in which age categories, expectations of dependency, and forms of belonging were culturally structured. Non-adult individuals should therefore not be reduced to passive bearers of chronological age. In funerary contexts, they are better understood as individuals whose age-related identities were materially negotiated through burial treatment, object selection, and spatial

positioning. This requires a distinction between biological age and social age, since the two may overlap without necessarily coinciding. In ancient Mediterranean contexts, moreover, biological existence and full social personhood did not necessarily begin at birth, as social recognition could be completed only through postnatal acts such as paternal acknowledgement and naming [Dasen, 2013]. At the same time, comparative analysis still requires explicit age categories, provided that these are treated as operational analytical tools rather than direct equivalents of past social stages [Halcrow, Tayles, 2008: 202–203; Beaumont, 2013: 196–198; Gowland, 2018: 104–121].

A second issue concerns visibility. Numerical weakness, uneven age representation, or simplified burial form cannot be read straightforwardly as evidence for social indifference or low emotional investment. Such patterns may instead reflect preservation, excavation history, recording resolution, and burial location. The problem is especially acute for perinatal and infant individuals, whose skeletal remains are more fragile and whose funerary treatment may not conform to the more archaeologically visible patterns of older children and adults [Carroll, 2011: 113–115; Cannon, Cook, 2015: 399–402; Dubois, 2012: 332–334]. Normative textual statements about infants and very young children must therefore be handled cautiously and should not be converted directly into explanations of local archaeological practice, since they often reflect selective elite discourse rather than the full range of funerary behaviour [Carroll, 2011: 99–100; Carroll, 2018a: 148–149].

A third issue concerns the analytical status of the grave context itself. In this study, the grave is treated not as a static container of artefacts, but as an analytical record of funerary action. Burial architecture, body treatment, object distribution, and depositional relations are therefore considered together in order to reconstruct how funerary gestures were materially organised. This approach follows recent funerary archaeology in stressing that ritual interpretation must be grounded in the contextual relationship between human remains, containment systems, grave closure, and the spatial arrangement of associated finds [Van Andringa, 2025: 11–12, 15–16; Serra, 2020: 194]. Micro-location is therefore used here not as proof of intention, but as a contextual tool for narrowing interpretation [Van Andringa, 2025: 15].

This principle is especially important for object categories frequently associated with child burials. Figurines, astragaloi, shells, coins, miniature vessels, and other small finds may in some contexts relate to play, protection, age status, affiliation, projected identity, or funerary performance. Yet none of these meanings can be assigned securely on the basis of object type alone, and astragaloi in particular cannot be treated automatically as toys or child markers [Sabetai, 2022: 10–12; Carè, 2012: 403–406]. Their significance depends on quantity, association, placement, and the wider grave assemblage in which they occur. For this reason, the Parion material is not approached through automatic labels such as toy, child marker, or Charon's obol. Instead, these finds are evaluated through their depositional status, their association with other objects, and their position within the burial context. This contextual strategy reduces over-interpretation while allowing a more controlled discussion of age-related funerary representation [Huysecom-Haxhi, Papaikonomou, Papadopoulos, 2012: 343–344].

On this basis, the next section outlines the principal analytical variables used in the study: age category, grave type, burial containment and closure, assemblage composition, micro-location, and spatial relations.

Material and methods

This study is based on 43 burial contexts identified as non-adult in the South (Tavşandere) Necropolis of Parion during the 2005–2025 excavation seasons. They are evaluated within the broader cemetery dataset of 289 graves documented to date. The analysed burials span from the late seventh/early sixth century BCE to the third century CE. The dataset derives from excavation records, post-excavation assessment, and contextual analysis undertaken for the necropolis, while Table A1 provides the full grave codes and contextual descriptions for the sample. Methodologically, the study combines osteobiological assessment, contextual evaluation, and funerary-archaeological analysis in order to examine age-related funerary treatment diachronically within the cemetery.

Dataset, chronology, age attribution, and limitations

Burials were included in the analytical sample only when two conditions were met: the individual could be identified as non-adult on osteological, contextual, or combined grounds; and the grave retained sufficient analytical resolution for comparison. At minimum, this required that some of the following variables could be assessed with confidence: grave type, burial mode, containment and closure system, associated assemblage, stratigraphic relation, spatial relations, or micro-location. Contexts with severely disturbed integrity, inadequate documentation, or no secure basis for age attribution were excluded.

Chronology was established through a context-based procedure combining stratigraphic relationships, datable grave finds, and typological and regional parallels. Superposition, cutting relationships, fill composition, and grave closure were used where available. Artefact-based dating relied primarily on ceramics, selected small finds, and coins. Where direct stratigraphic evidence was weak or absent, typological parallels from Troas and the wider northern Aegean and north-west Anatolian region were used cautiously. The procedure therefore followed a hierarchy in which stratigraphy provided the strongest basis, contextual dating through finds the second, and typological analogy the least secure.

Age estimation was based, whenever possible, on osteobiological indicators recorded during excavation and post-excavation assessment, including dental development, epiphyseal fusion, long bone measurements, and other preserved immature skeletal markers. Comparable osteoarchaeological work on immature assemblages from the Greek world likewise relies on preserved long bones and other immature skeletal elements for age estimation, while stressing that sex determination is not possible in immature remains [Bourbou, Themelis, 2010: 112–113]. Where osteological evidence was incomplete or absent, age attribution relied on contextual and morphological observations in the excavation record, but only where these were judged analytically usable rather than merely possible. The general framework follows standard procedures for the recording and assessment of human skeletal remains [Buikstra, Ubelaker, 1994]. For analytical consistency, the following age categories are used throughout: perinatal, here treated as an operational category for late foetal/neonatal individuals documented within approximately the first month of life; infant, >1 month to <3 years; child, 3–12 years; adolescent, 13–18 years. These remain analytical tools and do not imply direct equivalence between biological age and socially recognised stages of life [Halcrow, Tayles, 2008: 202–203; Beaumont, 2013: 198].

Biological sex was not used as an independent analytical variable. This reflects both the methodological unreliability of osteological sex estimation in prepubescent individuals [Bourbou, Themelis, 2010: 112–113] and the structure of the published anthropological dataset from Parion, which includes immature individuals for whom age and sex could not be securely assigned [Çırak, Şarbak, Mucur, Acar, Tarhan, Koç, Keleş, 2023: 13, 15–16, 19]. While this procedure increases comparability across the sample, it also introduces a selective bias in favour of better preserved and better documented contexts. Quantitative patterns should therefore be treated not as direct reflections of the original biodemographic structure of the cemetery population, but as patterns emerging from a sample shaped by preservation, excavation history, and recording resolution. For the same reason, graves with few or no associated finds were not interpreted automatically as evidence for low social value or limited ritual investment, since low archaeological visibility may also result from preservation and recovery biases rather than indifference toward the deceased [Carroll, 2011: 113–115].

Analytical variables and coding

The analysis integrates chronology, age category, grave type, burial mode, containment and closure system, assemblage composition, object position, and contextual relationships. The analytical axes used in the study are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Analytical axes and variables

Таблица 1

АНАЛИТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСИ И ПЕРЕМЕННЫЕ

Analytical axis	Variables
Chronology	Period or sub-phase: Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman
Age category	Perinatal, infant, child, adolescent
Grave type	Enchytrismos (amphora, hydria, pithos, coarse ceramic container), tile grave, simple earth grave, rock-cut grave, sarcophagus, possible wooden coffin or bier
Burial mode	Inhumation, cremation
Containment and closure system	Vessel containment, tile cover and closure, stone closure, possible wooden containment
Assemblage composition	Ceramic vessels; terracotta figurines; metal objects; glass objects; personal ornaments; coins; faunal remains; other small finds
Micro-location	C, T, AP, UE, LE, EXT; plus intra-cover or extra-cover, and in-vessel or out-of-vessel deposit status
Contextual relationships	Stratigraphic relationship, superposition, adjacency, micro-area clustering
Spatial analysis	Intra-necropolis distribution, proximity, clustering, horizontal and vertical relationships

For each grave, the following core fields were recorded: period or sub-phase, age category, grave type, burial mode, containment and closure system, find categories, intra-grave object position, and stratigraphic or spatial relationships. A strict distinction was maintained between recorded observations and interpretive inferences. Variables such as grave context, age category, grave type, find category, and object position belong to the observational level. By contrast, status, ritual purpose, identity representation, apotropaic significance, and models of continuity or change belong to the interpretive level and were not treated as primary data.

Contextual and spatial procedure

Micro-location data were assessed through in situ photographs, excavation drawings, and measured field documentation. Object position was coded by combining anatomical reference zones with deposit status. The zone system and the main depositional distinctions used in the coding procedure are shown in Fig. 3. The anatomical reference zones used in this study are as follows: C, cranial; T, thoracic; AP, abdominopelvic; UE, upper extremity; LE, lower extremity; and EXT, body exterior, used for finds located within the grave context but outside the body-related anatomical zones.

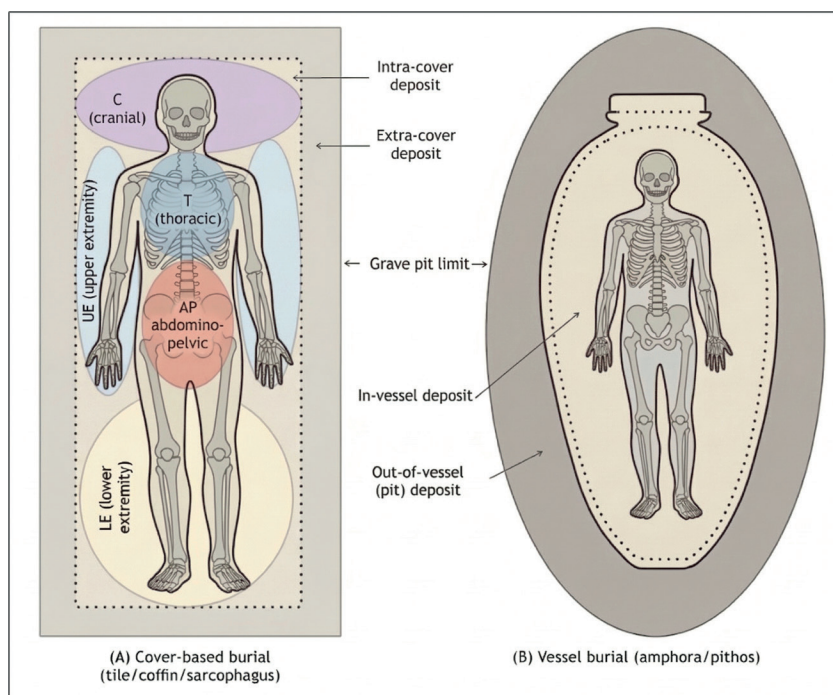


Fig. 3. Micro-location coding scheme¹. Panel A shows anatomical reference zones and intra-cover/extra-cover depositional distinctions in cover-based burials; Panel B shows in-vessel and out-of-vessel depositional distinctions in vessel burials

Рис. 3. Схема кодирования микролокации. Панель А показывает анатомические референтные зоны и различия в депозиционном статусе внутри перекрытия и вне перекрытия в погребениях с перекрытием; панель В показывает различия в депозиционном статусе внутри сосуда и вне сосуда в погребениях в сосудах

In graves with a clear containment system, finds were also distinguished according to whether they were located inside or outside the boundary of the primary burial containment.

¹ Cover limit is defined by the boundary of the primary burial covering/enclosure (tile cover, wooden burial containment, or sarcophagus). Finds located within this boundary are recorded as intra-cover deposits; finds outside the cover limit but within the grave pit are recorded as extra-cover deposits.

In vessel burials, the same principle was applied through the distinction between in-vessel and out-of-vessel deposit status. The relevant point of reference was therefore not the grave pit as a whole, but that primary containment boundary. This procedure allows object placement to be treated not simply as a list of grave contents, but as a potential trace of depositional action within the burial sequence [Van Andringa, 2025: 11–12]. At the same time, micro-location resolution is not uniform across the dataset. It is more limited in some Archaic vessel burials and in certain early excavation records. Micro-location evidence was therefore used interpretively only where documentation quality was sufficient. In this study, micro-location is not treated as proof of intention, but as a contextual tool for narrowing interpretation.

The non-adult sample includes vessel burials, especially enchytrismos in amphorae, hydriae, pithoi, and coarse ceramic containers, as well as tile graves, simple earth graves, rock-cut graves, and sarcophagi. Possible wooden containment was identified only where nail distribution, linear clustering, and possible edge or corner relationships together suggested a coherent structural pattern. Isolated nail finds were not treated as sufficient evidence for a coffin or bier. This threshold was adopted in order to avoid converting a single artefact class into an automatic indicator of wooden funerary furniture [Tuğrul, 2024: 107–108, 138].

Graves whose type and position could be securely identified were mapped in a GIS environment. Spatial analysis focused on the distribution of non-adult burials within the necropolis and on their horizontal and vertical relationships with neighbouring graves. Coordinate data were recorded by CORS and processed in the ITRF system. Here, spatial proximity is treated as an analytical observation rather than as direct proof of contemporaneity, household organisation, or social affiliation. Superposition, adjacency, and micro-area clustering were interpreted only where stratigraphic evidence or well-documented contextual relations supported such readings. The study therefore combines descriptive and contextual analysis while keeping data, pattern recognition, and interpretation methodologically distinct.

Results

This section presents the 43 non-adult burials from the South (Tavşandere) Necropolis at the level of recorded archaeological evidence. The material is organised diachronically in order to show changes in grave type, burial containment, associated assemblages, spatial relationships, and available micro-location data from the Archaic to the Roman period. Detailed grave descriptions are provided in Table A1. Interpretive claims concerning ritual meaning, status, or symbolic value are reserved for the Discussion section.

Non-adult burials in the Archaic period

The non-adult sample from the Archaic period comprises 14 grave contexts (Table 2; Table A1). It is dominated by container burials, especially amphora burials, followed by pithos burials and a single hydria burial. Two further contexts, M 171, a rock-cut grave delimited by a single row of rubble stones, and L 4, a sarcophagus, show that the sample was not restricted to one burial technology. All Archaic non-adult burials in the present dataset are inhumations, and no cremation burial attributable to this age group was identified.

Table 2

**Distribution of non-adult burials in the Archaic period
by grave type and age category**

Таблица 2

**Распределение погребений индивидов незрелого возраста архаического
периода по типам могил и возрастным категориям**

Grave type (Archaic)	Infant	Child	Total
Enchytrismos, pithos	1	1	2
Enchytrismos, amphora	9	0	9
Enchytrismos, hydria	1	0	1
Rock-cut grave	0	1	1
Sarcophagus	0	1	1
Total	11	3	14

Excavation records indicate recurring technical procedures in the preparation and closure of Archaic vessel burials. In amphora and hydria graves, the vessel was generally laid horizontally in the pit, a section of the vessel body was broken to facilitate deposition, the opening was reclosed with stone or ceramic fragments, and the mouth was then covered with a flat stone supported by rubble around the vessel [Kasapoğlu, 2019: 19; Kasapoğlu, Ayaz, 2024: 139]. Within the current dataset, this suggests a broadly comparable technical treatment across Archaic vessel burials, although documentation quality is uneven. Within the currently documented vessel-burial sample, AMP 9 provides a clear example of pebble bedding beneath the body (Fig. 4C). Comparable bedding practices are also reported in some Archaic pithos burials at Parion [Kasapoğlu, 2019: 19].

Pithos burials are few but contextually important, especially PM 2, which forms part of the Archaic micro-area discussed in the section «Spatial distribution and micro-area relations». Amphora burials are the most frequent grave type. Published identifications tentatively associate some of these vessels with Lesbian, Milesian, and Attic amphora types, including Attic SOS examples, although not all examples are sufficiently preserved for secure attribution [Kasapoğlu, 2019: 19–20]. Within the published Archaic amphora corpus, AMP 2 and AMP 3 are the clearest cases for which associated grave finds are explicitly reported [Kasapoğlu, Ayaz, 2024: 139]. The single hydria burial, AMP 7/HYD 1, shows that amphorae were not the only ceramic containers used for non-adult deposition in this phase; its association with the same local burial area as AMP 6 places it within the same Archaic funerary horizon, and it may be dated to the second half of the sixth century BCE [Kasapoğlu, 2019: 20].

Taken descriptively, the Archaic evidence is characterized by the strong predominance of container burials, only limited variation beyond that form, and a small number of rock-cut and stone-built grave types.

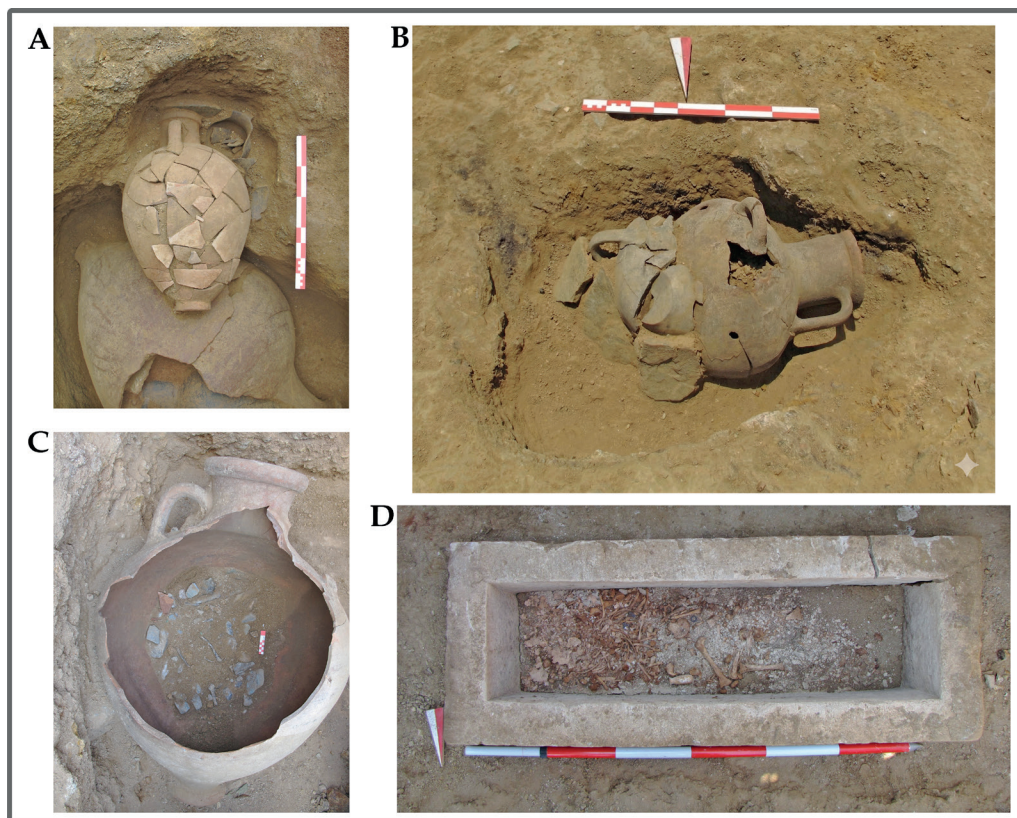


Fig. 4. Non-adult burial practices at Parion in the Archaic period: (A) AMP 4, amphora burial; (B) AMP 7/HYD 1, hydria burial; (C) AMP 9, pebble bedding beneath the body inside the vessel; (D) L 4, sarcophagus burial. Photo: Parion Excavation Archive

Рис. 4. Погребальная практика в отношении индивидов не взрослого возраста в Париионе в архаический период: (А) AMP 4, амфорное погребение; (В) AMP 7/HYD 1, погребение в гидрии; (С) AMP 9, галечная подсыпка под телом внутри сосуда; (D) L 4, погребение в саркофаге. Фото: Архив раскопок Парииона

Non-adult burials in the Classical period

Evidence from the Classical period is extremely limited. At present, only one non-adult burial context, AMP 1, can be assigned to the fifth to fourth centuries BCE with sufficient contextual security. The available evidence therefore consists of a single infant amphora burial and does not permit broader internal comparison. This limited representation should not be read directly as evidence for reduced ritual attention or diminished funerary investment, since *in situ* graves from the Classical period at Parion are few in number, were deposited in a layer not yet fully exposed, and were often damaged by later Hellenistic burials [Kasapoğlu, 2022: 261–262].

AMP 1 is the only currently documented non-adult grave from the Classical period in the South (Tavşandere) Necropolis (Table A1). The small tibiae and other skeletal remains

recovered from the vessel indicate an infant approximately 1 to 1.5 years of age [Kasapoğlu, 2022: 275]. On typological grounds, the amphora has been dated to the last quarter of the fifth century BCE or the first half of the fourth century BCE. The burial was an inhumation in a horizontally placed amphora; the vessel was broken below the rim and handle zone to allow the deposition of the body, the individual was placed with the head toward the base and the feet toward the neck, and the broken section was then replaced. The amphora was then protected by surrounding it with rubble stones before the grave was covered with soil. No associated grave finds are reported in the currently available published documentation (Table A1). AMP 1 therefore provides the only clear example from the Classical period of continued container-based inhumation for a non-adult individual at Parion.

Non-adult burials in the Hellenistic period

The Hellenistic sample consists of only two non-adult burial contexts, DSM 2 and DSM 18. These are presented in Table A1 [Tuğrul, 2024: 231, 247]. In both cases, the burial mode is inhumation and the body position is recorded as dorsal. Both are straight-gabled tile graves covered with Corinthian-type stroter tiles, and together they represent one child and one adolescent burial. Within the present dataset, Hellenistic non-adult burials therefore form a very small but typologically consistent group defined by tile-grave technology.



Fig. 5. Non-adult burials at Parion in the Classical and Hellenistic periods: (A) AMP 1, amphora burial from the Classical period; (B) DSM 2, Hellenistic tile grave; (C) DSM 18, Hellenistic tile grave.

Photo: Parion Excavation Archive

Рис. 5. Погребения индивидов незрелого возраста в Париионе в классический и эллинистический периоды: (A) AMP 1, амфорное погребение классического периода; (B) DSM 2, эллинистическое черепичное погребение; (C) DSM 18, эллинистическое черепичное погребение. Фото: Архив раскопок Парииона

DSM 2 belongs to an adolescent individual of approximately 15 years of age and contained one unguentarium and one iron pin. DSM 18 is classified here as a child and contained a single iron pin. Both contexts are placed broadly between the second century BCE and the early first century BCE, though the precision of dating is not identical in the two graves (Table A1).

Micro-location data are more legible here than in most of the Archaic container burials, despite the very small sample. In DSM 2, the iron pin was recorded in the cranial zone and the unguentarium along the upper-extremity line, most probably in relation to the right arm. In DSM 18, the iron pin was recorded in the abdominopelvic zone. In descriptive terms, the Hellenistic sample differs from the Archaic one in combining a narrower assemblage range with more consistent reliance on tile-grave technology. Even so, the sample remains too small for this pattern to be treated as a secure period norm.

Non-adult burials in the Roman period

Non-adult burials from the Roman period constitute the largest sample in the dataset and display the greatest variability in grave technology, associated assemblages, and micro-location resolution. The Roman sample includes 26 burials and comprises possible wooden coffin or bier graves, tile graves, coarse ceramic container burials, one amphora burial, and one simple earth grave. The sample is overwhelmingly dominated by inhumation, but it also includes the rare case of child cremation, BTM 19 (Table A1).

Table 3

Distribution of non-adult burials in the Roman period by grave type and age category

Таблица 3

Распределение погребений индивидов незрелого возраста римского периода по типам могил и возрастным категориям

Grave type (Roman)	Perinatal	Infant	Child	Total
Possible wooden coffin or bier	0	3	14	17
Tile grave	0	1	4	5
Coarse ceramic container burial	2	0	0	2
Amphora burial	0	1	0	1
Simple earth grave	0	0	1	1
Total	2	5	19	26

The largest subgroup consists of burials classified as possible wooden coffin or bier burials. As defined in the section «Contextual and spatial procedure», these contexts were not identified on the basis of nail presence alone, but through nail distribution patterns, linear clustering, and possible edge or corner relations within the grave. This group is dominated by children, with a smaller number of infant burials, making probable wooden containment the most frequent funerary form for non-adults in the Roman period. ATM 2 provides one of the clearest examples, since the *in situ* nail line and preserved wood remains adhering to the nail shanks make probable coffin joints materially visible, as shown in Fig. 6a-b [Tuğrul, 2024: 32].

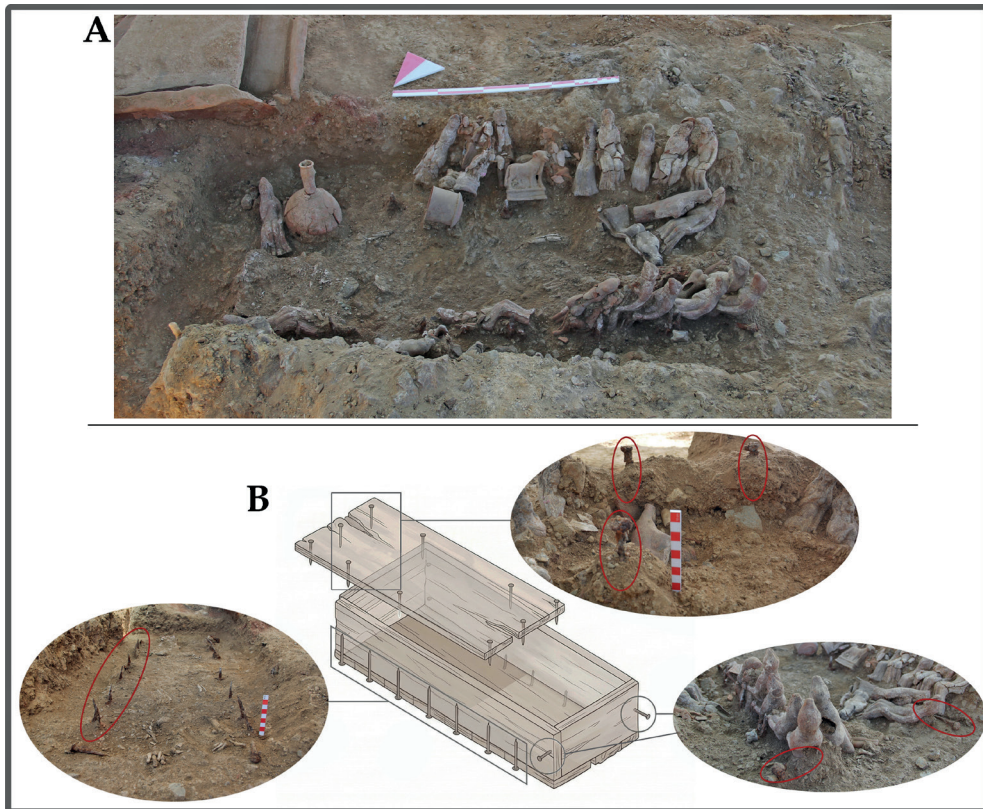


Fig. 6. ATM 2, probable wooden coffin burial from the Roman period: (A) general view of the burial context; (B) recorded in situ nail positions shown alongside a schematic reconstruction of the probable coffin arrangement². Photo: Parion Excavation Archive; drawing by the author
 Рис. 6. АТМ 2, вероятное погребение в деревянном гробу римского периода: (А) общий вид погребального контекста; (В) зафиксированные *in situ* положения гвоздей, представленные вместе со схематической реконструкцией предполагаемой конструкции гроба.

Фото: Архив раскопок Париона; рисунок автора

Tile graves form the second largest grave-type subgroup within the Roman non-adult sample. Within the analytical sample, these are represented by burials such as İSM 27, İSM 28, İSM 30, İSM 35, and İSM 63. Their assemblages range from a single coin to more complex deposits including vessels, figurines, beads, animal remains, and out-of-cover placements (Table A1). Container burials remain present in the Roman sample, but they are no longer the dominant grave form. Two perinatal burials are represented by coarse ceramic containers, and one infant burial, AMP 15, was placed in an amphora; in that context the recorded associated

² The wooden planks shown in panel B are schematic and do not represent preserved boards. The reconstruction is based on the recorded position, alignment, and level of the nails. Wood remains were documented on the shanks of all recovered nails.

finds consisted of one chytra and two shells placed inside the vessel (Table A1). In container burials, orientation is defined primarily by the mouth-to-base axis of the vessel, whereas in tile graves and the simple earth grave it is recorded from the head-to-foot direction of the body.

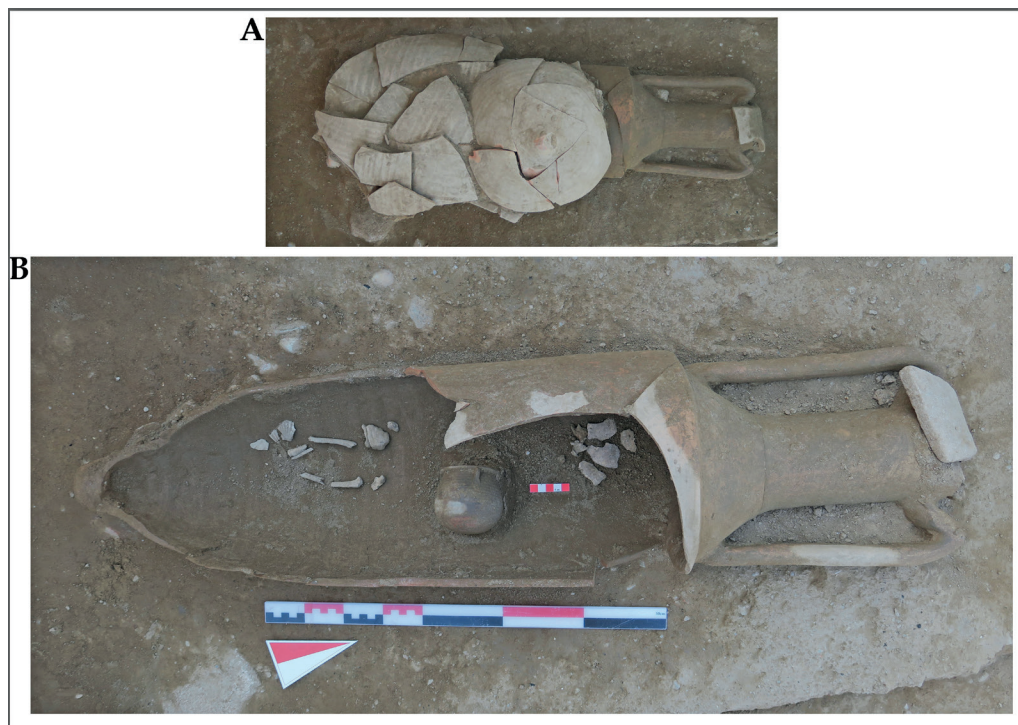


Fig. 7. AMP 15, amphora burial from the Roman period: (A) grave before opening, showing closure with ceramic sherds and a tile fragment at the mouth; (B) grave after opening, showing skeletal remains and associated finds within the vessel. Photo: Parion Excavation Archive

Рис. 7. АМР 15, амфорное погребение римского периода: (А) могила до вскрытия, с закрытием устья керамическими фрагментами и фрагментом черепицы; (В) могила после вскрытия, с костными останками и сопутствующими находками внутри сосуда.

Фото: Архив раскопок Парииона.

Associated assemblages from the Roman period are more varied than those recorded for the earlier phases. Across the sample, recorded finds include terracotta figurines, astragaloi, shells, glass or ceramic unguentaria, metal pins, beads, earrings, mirrors, lamps, jugs, coins, and iron nails. Sample graves such as ATM 1, ATM 2, ATM 3, ATM 4, İSM 27, İSM 35, and İSM 63 illustrate this variability clearly. At the same time, several Roman-period contexts were recorded without associated grave finds; the presence or absence of associated grave finds is therefore treated only descriptively and not as a direct index of ritual investment or social rank. What can be stated with confidence is that the Roman sample displays the widest recorded range of assemblages within the non-adult dataset. Micro-location data are likewise

more legible here than in the earlier phases, especially in tile graves and selected inhumation contexts with clearer internal depositional relationships.

Spatial distribution and micro-area relations

Non-adult burials are considered here both at the scale of necropolis-wide distribution and, where the excavation record permits, through local positional relationships within restricted micro-areas. The orthophoto/GIS plan codes graves by period, grave type, and age category (Fig. 8). Spatial proximity is treated only as a positional relationship and, unless supported by stratigraphic evidence, is not used as proof of contemporaneity, household organisation, or kin-based clustering.

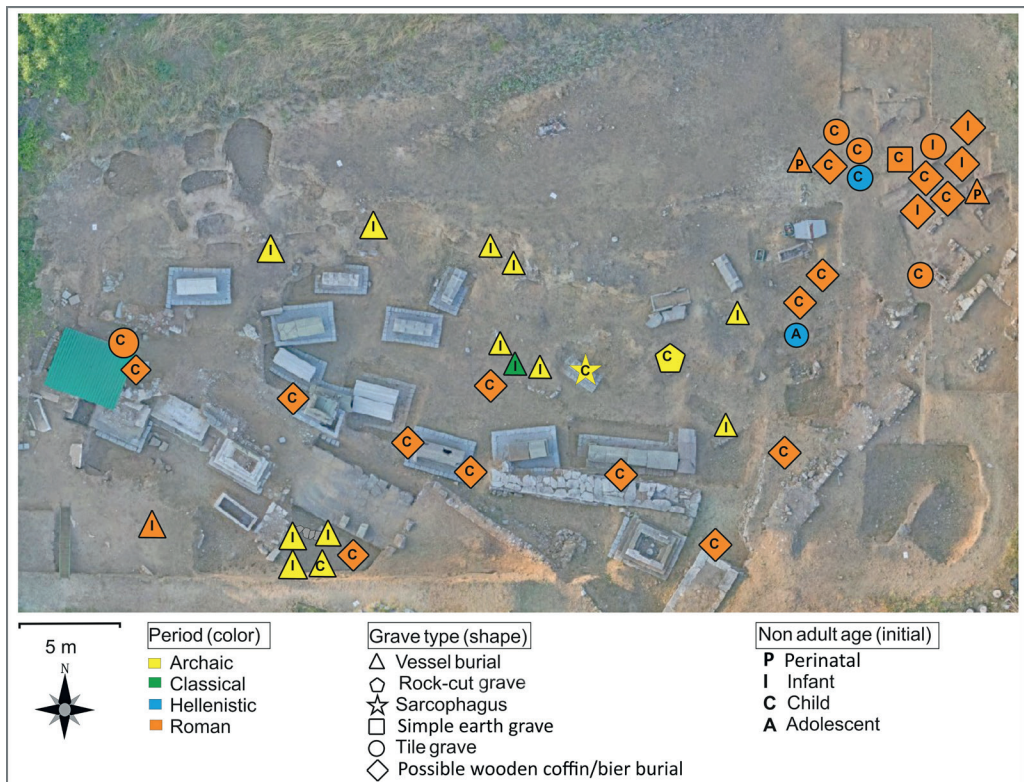


Fig. 8. Orthophoto/GIS plan showing the spatial distribution of non-adult burials in the South (Tavşandere) Necropolis. Photo: Parion Excavation Archive

Рис. 8. Ортофотоплан/GIS-план, показывающий пространственное распределение погребений индивидов незрелого возраста в Южном (Тавшандере) некрополе.

Фото: Архив раскопок Парииона

Across the excavated area, non-adult burials were not confined to a single segregated sector. They occur within the broader funerary landscape and in association with other grave groups, but their distribution is uneven rather than uniform. The clearest concentration is the Archaic cluster of container burials around PM 2. Within this micro-area, PM 2 lies below AMP 4

and AMP 5, while AMP 6 and AMP 7/HYD 1 belong to the same adjacent burial area. AMP 2 and AMP 3 are separated by a single row of stones, and PM 2, together with another infant burial, lies directly below AMP 3. Taken together, these relationships define the clearest local concentration of Archaic non-adult burials within the excavated area [Kasapoğlu, Ayaz, 2024: 139]. This arrangement is shown schematically in Fig. 9.

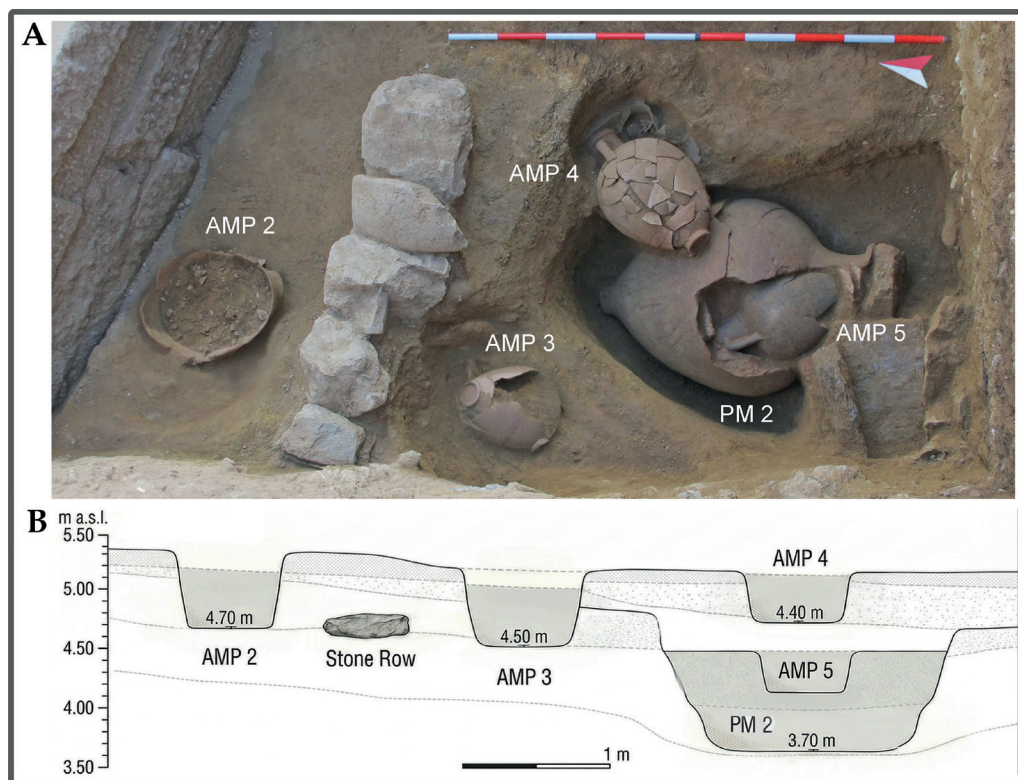


Fig. 9. Field photograph and schematic section of the Archaic micro-area showing adjacency and superposition among PM 2, AMP 2, AMP 3, AMP 4, and AMP 5: (A) field photograph; (B) schematic section showing the stone row between AMP 2 and AMP 3 and the lower position of PM 2 beneath AMP 4 and AMP 5. Photo: Parion Excavation Archive; drawing by the author

Рис. 9. Полевая фотография и схематический разрез архаического микроучастка, показывающие смежность и стратиграфическое перекрытие между PM 2, AMP 2, AMP 3, AMP 4 и AMP 5: (A) полевая фотография; (B) схематический разрез, показывающий каменный ряд между AMP 2 и AMP 3, а также более низкое положение PM 2 под AMP 4 и AMP 5. Фото: Архив раскопок Парiona; рисунок автора

This configuration shows that some non-adult burials should be evaluated not only as isolated grave contexts but also through local spatial relationships. Even so, the evidence is sufficient only to identify superposition, adjacency, and repeated use of a narrow burial zone; it does not demonstrate a formally bounded children's sector, a household plot, or a kinship

parcel. Outside this Archaic micro-area, the dataset does not show comparably clear local clusters for the Classical or Hellenistic phases, largely because securely attributable non-adult graves are very few in number. The Roman sample is more numerous and more dispersed, occurring across several grave technologies rather than within a single confined locus.

Micro-location patterns

Micro-location data are presented here only at the level of recorded positional patterning. As defined in the methodological section, object position was coded through anatomical zones and deposit status rather than interpretive categories. Usable micro-location information is uneven across periods and grave types: Archaic vessel burials are more often documented through in-vessel or out-of-vessel distinctions, or through uncertain positional descriptions, whereas graves from the Roman period, especially tile graves and possible wooden coffin or bier burials, provide the highest proportion of anatomically legible placements. The Hellenistic sample is fully usable at zonal level, but it remains too small to structure the overall pattern on its own (Table A1; see also Table 4).

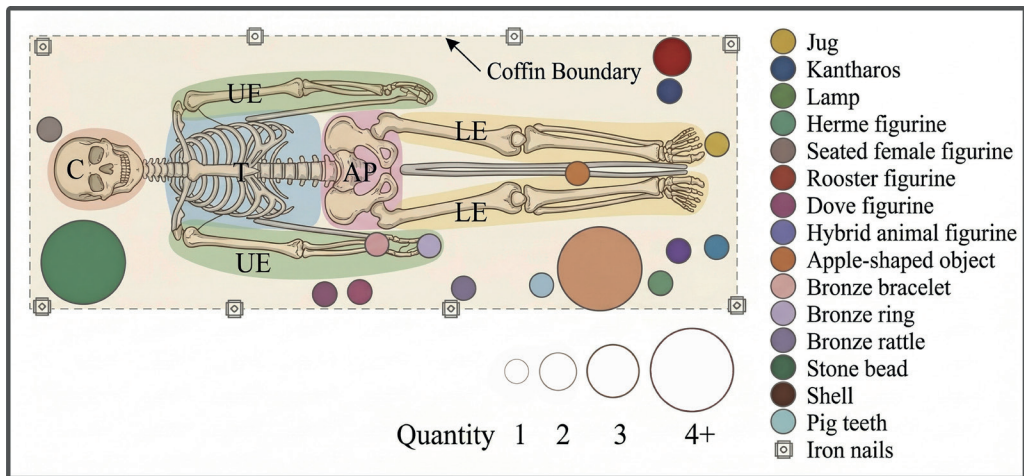


Fig. 10. Example of coded micro-location recording in the non-adult burial ATM 5 from the Roman period, showing body-related zones, the coffin boundary, and the distribution of associated finds³.

Рис. 10. Пример кодированной фиксации микролокации в погребении индивида не взрослого возраста ATM 5 римского периода, показывающий зоны, связанные с телом, границу гроба и распределение сопутствующих находок.

Table 4 summarises coded placements by major object category and body zone. Coins show the clearest repeated positional pattern, with a marked concentration in cranial placements and only minimal unclear cases. Figurines display the broadest and most dispersed distribution, with particularly frequent exterior and unclear placements, alongside a substantial lower-extremity component, rather than clustering in a single anatomical zone. Jewellery and beads

³ The figure illustrates a coded burial plan rather than an interpretive reconstruction. Object sizes are schematic and reflect distribution rather than exact dimensions.

are most strongly associated with the upper-extremity line, while lamps tend more often toward exterior or unclear placements. Vessels are distributed across several zones, but are concentrated above all in unclear placements, followed by lower-extremity positions. Less frequent object categories, including pins/needles, shells, astragaloi, rattles, faunal remains, and other small finds, are likewise dispersed, though lower-extremity and unclear positions are the most frequent.

Table 4

Summary of coded micro-location placements by major object category and body zone in the Parion non-adult sample⁴

Таблица 4

Сводка кодированных микролокационных размещений по основным категориям предметов и зонам тела в выборке погребений индивидов невзрослого возраста из Парiona

Object category	Cranial	Trunk	Upper extremity	Lower extremity	Exterior	Unclear	Total
Coins	13	0	0	0	0	2	15
Figurines	2	9	0	11	21	25	68
Jewellery / beads	2	1	6	1	0	1	11
Lamps	0	2	0	1	4	3	10
Vessels	2	4	6	9	3	21	45
Less frequent object categories	3	2	1	8	4	7	25
Total	22	18	13	30	32	59	174

Taken together, the coded evidence shows not a single non-adult depositional template, but a set of recurrent positional tendencies that vary by object category and by the quality of contextual documentation and preservation. These tendencies are discussed interpretively in the following section.

Discussion

The Parion dataset does not support the existence of a single, stable template for non-adult burial, nor does it suggest a simple chronological replacement in which one funerary rite disappeared and another took its place. Instead, the cemetery preserves a funerary repertoire in which continuity and transformation operated simultaneously. Some practices, above all the recurrent use of container burial for the youngest individuals, show marked durability. Others, especially grave architecture, assemblage variability, and the organisation of mortuary space, were reformulated more substantially across time. The result is not a fixed burial tradition for non-adults, but a historically shifting funerary grammar through which age-related difference was made materially visible [Dijkstra, 2019: 212–213; Dimakis, 2019: 297–298].

⁴ Counts refer to coded placements rather than to the total number of objects or graves. Only records with usable micro-location documentation were included. Trunk combines thoracic and abdominopelvic placements. «Vessels» includes unguentaria/toiletry vessels and other vessels. Less frequent object categories include pins/needles, shells, astragaloi, rattles, faunal remains, and other small finds.

Continuity and transformation in non-adult funerary treatment

The clearest long-term continuity in the Parion dataset is the durable association between the youngest individuals and container-based burial. In the Archaic phase, the non-adult sample is dominated by amphorae, pithoi, and a single hydria burial; in the Classical phase, the only securely attributable burial, AMP 1, remains an amphora inhumation; and in the Roman period container burial persists, though no longer as the dominant form. This fits wider Aegean evidence in which enchytrismos and related vessel burials were strongly associated with foetal, neonatal, infant, and young-child burial and often followed recurrent procedures of deposition and closure [Vlanti, 2022: 6–8]. At the same time, technical continuity cannot be equated automatically with stable funerary meaning, since recurrent forms may persist while their funerary significance shifts [Dijkstra, 2019: 213; Dimakis, 2019: 297–298].

Regional comparison points in the same direction. At Antandros, Archaic infant and child inhumations employed amphorae, hydriae, khytrai, pithoi, and simple earth graves, while Classical-period evidence shows amphorae and pithoi continuing alongside tile and simple earth graves [Yağız, 2025: 86; Yağız, 2020: 865]. Tenedos presents a similar picture, where pithos and amphora graves formed only part of a wider repertoire that also included stone-built graves, some of them used for children, other inhumations, and a rock-cut tomb [Özkan, 1993: 199–200]. In this regional context, Parion's Archaic and Classical container burials are best understood not as anomalous survivals, but as local expressions of a broader north-west Anatolian funerary repertoire in which repetition and variation coexisted.

At Parion itself, continuity also involved selective reuse of restricted burial space. The PM 2-AMP 2-AMP 3 micro-area indicates repeated deposition of infants and children within a tightly delimited Archaic burial zone, combining superposition, adjacency, and separation by stone alignment rather than fully isolated grave placement [Kasapoğlu, Ayaz, 2024: 139]. The AMP 2 dog burial adds a further layer of complexity to this micro-area. Greek comparative evidence suggests that associations between infants and dogs were not necessarily accidental, although they were not semantically uniform. In the Athenian Agora Bone Well, now fully published as a monograph, infant and foetal remains were deposited together with numerous dogs [Liston, Rotroff, Snyder, 2018], and this association has been discussed in relation to childbirth, untimely death, companionship, guardianship, and purification rather than through a single fixed symbolism [Liston, Rotroff, 2013: 64; Carroll, 2018b: 24; Day, 1984: 21, 27–28; Bourbou, Themelis, 2010: 116–117]. Comparable associations are also attested at Messene and Eretria, where infant or perinatal deposits were likewise found with substantial dog remains, and in Messene dogs were even buried among groups of child burials [Bourbou, Themelis, 2010: 111–112, 116–117; Fox, 2012: 415–416]. A later Roman comparison from northern Italy likewise associates dog burials with fetuses, stillborns, and perinatal individuals, and has been interpreted in terms of companionship, protection, guardianship, and liminal purification [Amoretti, Bassi, Fontana, 2018: 319–320]. At Parion, the safest conclusion is therefore not a fixed symbolic reading of the dog burial, but recognition that the AMP 2-AMP 3-PM 2 cluster records a local funerary zone in which burial repetition, age-sensitive placement, and unusual associated practice converged.

Compared with the Archaic predominance of container burials, later phases reveal a reconfiguration of non-adult funerary treatment. The Hellenistic sample forms a small

but internally coherent group centred on tile graves, whereas the Roman phase shows the greatest variability in grave technology, assemblage composition, and depositional resolution. In particular, the prominence of possible wooden coffin/bier burials in the Roman sample indicates a significant shift in funerary media. What persisted, however, was not a single burial form, but the repeated need to materialise age difference through changing combinations of containment, grave technology, and associated deposition. Age distinction remained visible, but the means through which it was expressed changed over time [Dijkstra, 2019: 212–213; Dimakis, 2019: 297–298]. This contrast must nevertheless be treated with caution. Because the Classical and Hellenistic samples are extremely limited, the transition between the Archaic and Roman endpoints remains only partially visible, and the intermediate stages of this long-term trajectory are still archaeologically fragmented.

Age, grave technology, and funerary representation

One of the clearest outcomes of the Parion dataset is that age and grave technology were related, but never in a rigid one-to-one manner. Biological or osteological age categories did not automatically correspond to socially recognised stages of life; age must therefore be investigated rather than assumed, and the relationship between biological, chronological, and social age could be asynchronous rather than fixed [Beaumont, 2013: 196; Gooch, 2025: 30–31]. In the same vein, Mariaud argues that child burials should be examined within the wider burial system rather than treated in advance as a wholly separate category of «special death» [Mariaud, 2012: 23].

At Parion, the clearest age-related pattern is the recurrent use of container burial for the youngest individuals in the sample (Table 3; Table A1). In the Archaic phase, the non-adult dataset is dominated by amphora, pithos, and hydria burials, and the single Classical burial, AMP 1, also remains an amphora inhumation. In this respect, the Parion evidence fits more broadly within the grave culture of the western Anatolian island — coastal zone [Mohr, 2015]. This pattern, however, does not justify any automatic equation between enchytrismos and infancy. Across the Greek world, enchytrismoι are often associated with foetuses, newborns, infants, and young children, but the relationship is not universal. Vlanti has shown that the rite was strongly linked to the biologically youngest in Attica and Euboea, whereas the wider regional picture remained more variable. At Antandros, pithoi were initially used for infant and child burials but later also for adults, while amphorae remained associated mainly with foetuses and infants [Vlanti, 2022: 6–7; Yağız, 2025: 86, 94]. A broadly comparable trajectory can also be observed elsewhere in the Troas, where early child burials at Assos include amphora and small stone-cist forms, whereas stone sarcophagi became dominant in the West Gate necropolis from the Classical period onward [Freydank, 2000]. The Parion evidence therefore supports a patterned association between biologically young individuals and container burial, not an inflexible code. More broadly, Greek and Roman evidence indicates that foetuses, neonates, and very young infants could receive distinct mortuary treatment, including burial in containers and, at times, spatial separation from the main communal cemetery, without implying neglect or indifference [Dasen, 2013].

The relationship between age and grave technology becomes clearer in the Hellenistic and Roman phases. The Hellenistic sample is very small, but both non-adult burials are tile graves, pointing to a narrower technical repertoire within this limited dataset. In the Roman period,

by contrast, non-adult burials occur in possible wooden coffin or bier burials, tile graves, coarse ceramic container burials, an amphora burial, a simple earth grave, and the rare child cremation BTM 19 (see Table 3; Table A1). The Roman amphora example at Parion is best read against wider Roman evidence showing that infant amphora burials have often been explained as practical reused containers for the poor, but could also reflect age- or stature-sensitive choices in vessel selection, modification, and funerary treatment [Stevens, 2013: 627–628, 635, 640; Carroll, 2018b: 184–185]. ATM 2 provides one of the clearest examples of probable coffin-based burial, since nail alignments and preserved wood remains make the structural logic of wooden containment materially visible, as shown in Fig. 6 and Table A1. [Tuğrul, 2024: 32]. BTM 19, by contrast, shows that variability in the Roman period extended not only across grave technology but also across burial mode (Fig. 11; Table A1). Comparison reinforces the point. At Antandros, simple earth graves could also contain young individuals with substantial assemblages [Yağız, 2025: 94]. Parion does not reproduce that pattern directly, but the broader point still holds: age was materially differentiated, yet the media through which that differentiation was expressed changed with chronology, local practice, and the funerary technologies available to the burying group.



Fig. 11. Child cremation burial dated to the Roman period. Photo: Parion Excavation Archive

Рис. 11. Детское кремационное погребение, датируемое римским периодом.

Фото: Архив раскопок Парииона

This has important consequences for interpretation. The Parion evidence does not suggest that children were represented in death merely through «small» or «simple» burials, but neither does it support the opposite assumption that richer graves necessarily imply higher status. Comparative evidence shows that simple graves may still contain substantial and carefully structured deposits. At Antandros, for example, a simple earth grave could contain

a young individual accompanied by a rich and varied assemblage [Yağız, 2025: 94]. More broadly, the quantity and quality of associated funerary objects need not communicate the same messages, since age differentiation operated within a wider burial system rather than through grave wealth alone [Mariaud, 2012: 23–25]. As recent childhood archaeology has emphasised, non-adult mortuary expenditure may reflect identities constructed by mourners, including projected identities, rather than the achieved identity of the deceased as an autonomous social actor [Gooch, 2025: 279–280]. At Parion, grave technology is therefore best understood as one of several media through which age difference was made materially legible, negotiated, and reformulated within the wider burial system, rather than as a simple age label in itself.

The key point, then, is not that particular grave forms can be assigned directly to specific age groups, but that grave technology formed one component within a wider funerary grammar through which age was materially expressed. In some periods, this grammar was relatively narrow, as in the Archaic predominance of container burial or the small Hellenistic tile-grave group; in others, especially the Roman phase, it became more diversified (see Table 3; Table A1). What can be observed archaeologically is therefore not social age as an abstract category, but the material strategies through which age difference was made visible, negotiated, and reconfigured within the cemetery [Halcrow, Tayles, 2008: 202–203].

Assemblages, micro-location, and depositional logic

The Parion assemblages show that associated finds cannot be read through a single interpretive lens. Grave goods are neither transparent reflections of the deceased's identity nor random additions to grave fill, but selected deposits whose significance depends on their relationship to the body, their position, burial technology, and the wider funerary context [Cooper, Garrow, Gibson, Giles, Wilkin, 2022: 38, 53]. This caution is especially important for non-adult graves. As Mariaud has shown for the East Aegean, objects in child graves do not fundamentally differ in quality or quantity from those in adult burials, and age differentiation was only one among several criteria expressed within the wider burial system [Mariaud, 2012: 23–25]. De Larminat similarly demonstrates that the analytical force of grave goods lies not simply in typology, but in placement, association, and depositional treatment within the grave [de Larminat, 2012: 308], while Huysecom-Haxhi and colleagues argue that figurines should be interpreted not one by one, but as components within wider assemblage-level constellations [Huysecom-Haxhi, Papaikonomou, Papadopoulos, 2012: 343]. The Parion material strongly supports this relational approach.

This is particularly clear in the sample from the Roman period. Even securely documented graves show substantial internal variability: İSM 35 combines a figurine head, a bronze coin, a glass bead, and four external unguentaria; ATM 4 combines a mug, an unguentarium, multiple seated female figurines, and nails; ATM 22 yielded only a lamp, a bronze coin, and a single iron nail; and ATM 5 preserves one of the richest coffin-defined assemblages in the sample, including vessels, figurines, jewellery-related objects, a bronze rattle, a shell, pig teeth, and nails [Tuğrul, 2024: 326–327, 365–367, 383–384]. These deposits are too variable to sustain any single formula such as «toy set,» «amuletic set,» or «domestic set,» especially since even in child graves small and miniature objects may retain ambiguous and multiple functions rather than carrying one fixed meaning, and figurines in particular need not have

functioned as toys but could also evoke projected or unrealised social identities [Harlow, 2013: 335; Dasen, 2010: 26–27]. Even so, they are not arbitrary: their recurrence in patterned combinations indicates selective deposition within a funerary logic that likely combined practical, representational, and ritual dimensions.

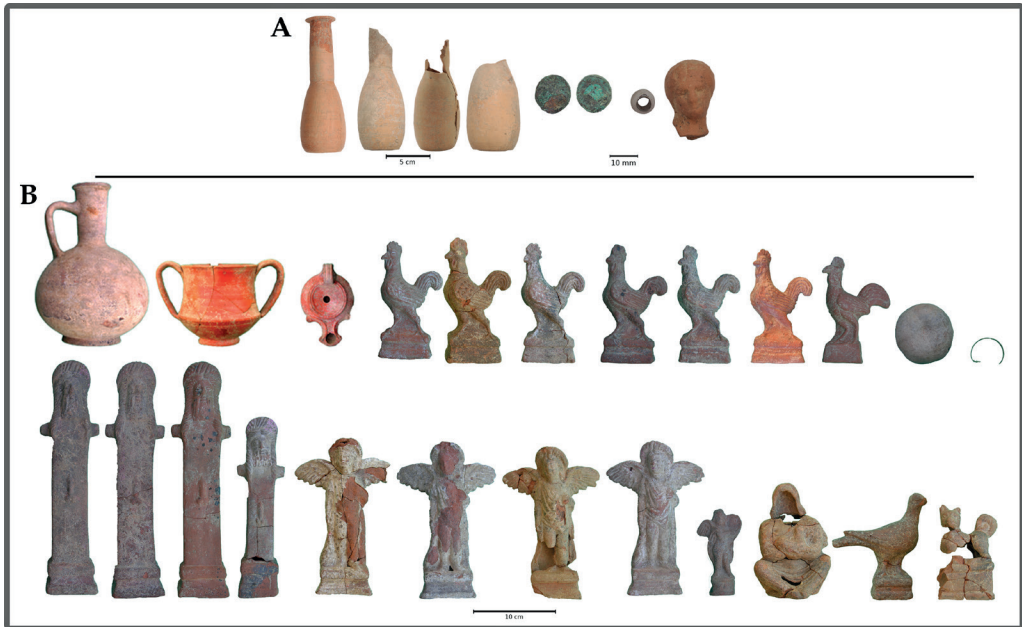


Fig. 12. Representative grave assemblages from Parion in the Roman period⁵: (A) ISM 35, showing a compact assemblage; (B) ATM 5, showing a more complex assemblage.

Photo: Parion Excavation Archive

Рис. 12. Репрезентативные погребальные комплексы из Парииона римского периода: (A) ISM 35, демонстрирующий компактный комплекс; (B) ATM 5, демонстрирующий более сложный комплекс. Фото: Архив раскопок Парииона.

Micro-location evidence sharpens this argument by showing that deposition followed recurrent but non-universal positional tendencies. Coins provide the clearest example. As Andújar Suárez and Blázquez Cerrato stress, coins in child burials should not be labelled automatically as Charon's obols, since their number, position, relation to grave type, and association with other finds must first be considered [Andújar Suárez, Blázquez Cerrato, 2019: 89, 91; Baldoni, 2008: 176–177]. In the Parion sample, coins show the most consistent recurrent tendency, with repeated cranial placement, often near the mouth or face. Figurines are distributed between body-related and more external or less body-centred placements; jewellery- and bead-related finds show a stronger association with the upper-extremity

⁵ The figure groups selected associated finds in order to illustrate assemblage composition and variability; it is not intended as a typological plate.

line; and lamps tend more often toward external placements. These contrasts suggest that depositional logic at Parion operated through differentiated placement rather than through a single rule governing all object classes, as shown in Table 4 and Table A1. [Andújar Suárez, Blázquez Cerrato, 2019: 96].

A useful way to structure this analytically without reducing the material to rigid categories is to distinguish intersecting analytical axes for assemblage interpretation at Parion (Table 5): functional or operational deposits linked to treatment of the body, libation, anointment, lighting, closure, and related practical acts; symbolic, apotropaic, or identity-related deposits involving protective, representational, divine, animal, gendered, or age-sensitive associations; and personal, biographical, or prospective deposits referring not only to lived experience but also to anticipated or unrealised life-course identities. This framework builds on contextual approaches that interpret grave goods through association, placement, and funerary sequence rather than through fixed typological meanings [Van Andringa, 2025; Mariaud, 2012: 23–25; Huysecom-Haxhi, Papaikonomou, Papadopoulos, 2012: 343]. The prospective dimension is especially relevant where objects may relate not only to lived experience but also to projected identities or unrealised life-course expectations [Gooch, 2025: 185, 281]. These analytical axes are not mutually exclusive, and the same object may operate in more than one register depending on context. Their value lies not in assigning fixed meanings, but in structuring contextual interpretation.

Table 5

Suggested analytical axes for the contextual interpretation of non-adult funerary assemblages at Parion

Таблица 5

Предлагаемые аналитические оси для контекстуальной интерпретации погребальных комплексов индивидов невзрослого возраста в Париионе

Analytical axis	Definition	Indicative Parion examples
Functional or operational	Objects linked to treatment of the body, libation, anointment, lighting, closure, or practices accompanying burial and grave closure	Unguentaria; jugs and pouring vessels; lamps; nails; textile-related pins; vessels placed inside or immediately outside primary containment
Symbolic, apotropaic, or identity-related	Objects carrying protective, representational, age-sensitive, gendered, divine, animal, or socially coded associations	Figurines; jewellery; beads; shells; rattles; astragaloi; coins, where interpretation depends on placement and association
Personal, biographical, or prospective	Objects that may relate to the deceased's lived world, socially expected life stage, or unrealised but anticipated identity	Small ornaments, selected figurines, and certain grouped small finds in child burials, especially where assemblages are internally coherent and body-related

This model explains why the Parion material resists shorthand labels. Figurines, for example, should be interpreted not one by one but as elements within wider assemblage constellations and may, in some contexts, relate simultaneously to representational and prospective dimensions of identity [Huysecom-Haxhi, Papaikonomou, Papadopoulos, 2012: 343; Gooch, 2025: 279–281]. Lamps may belong to practical funerary sequences, but their interpretive value also depends on final placement within or outside the primary burial containment [de Larminat, 2012: 306–308]. Coins, finally, may belong to recurrent cranial patterns often

discussed in Charon-related terms, but this meaning cannot be assumed automatically without considering their number, placement, grave type, and association with other finds [Andújar Suárez, Blázquez Cerrato, 2019: 89, 91, 96]. What matters methodologically is not the object type in isolation, but the combined consideration of object class, placement, depositional status, and burial architecture [Van Andringa, 2025: 11–12; de Larminat, 2012: 306–308; Huysecom-Haxhi, Papaikonomou, Papadopoulos, 2012: 343].

The broader point here is methodological. Parion supports neither the view that non-adult grave goods form a simple catalogue of childhood markers nor the view that they are merely generic funerary furnishings devoid of age-related relevance. Instead, it suggests that assemblages were formed through selective and context-sensitive combinations whose logic can only be understood relationally through grave type, containment, object association, and micro-location [Mariaud, 2012: 23–25; de Larminat, 2012: 306–308; Huysecom-Haxhi, Papaikonomou, Papadopoulos, 2012: 343–344].

Conclusion

This study has examined 43 non-adult burials from the South (Tavşandere) Necropolis of Parion within a broader cemetery dataset of 289 graves spanning from the late seventh/early sixth century BCE to the third century CE. Rather than treating non-adults as a single undifferentiated biological category, it has approached funerary treatment through grave type, containment and closure, associated assemblages, micro-location, and spatial relations, while recognising that age categories are analytical rather than direct equivalents of past social stages and that child burials must be examined within the wider burial system [Gooch, 2025: 30–31; Mariaud, 2012: 23–25]. The resulting picture is not one of uniformity or simple chronological replacement, but of continuity and transformation operating together in the material construction of age-related funerary distinction.

The clearest long-term pattern is the durable association between the youngest individuals in the sample and container-based burial (see Sections 4.1–4.4; Table 3; Table A1). In the Archaic phase, amphorae and pithoi dominate the non-adult sample, alongside a single hydria burial; the single securely attributable Classical burial was likewise an amphora inhumation; and even in the Roman period container burial does not disappear completely. Yet this continuity should not be mistaken for an unchanging child-burial tradition. The Hellenistic sample is instead represented by a small but coherent tile-grave group, whereas the Roman phase shows the greatest variability in grave technology, assemblage composition, and burial mode. What persisted, therefore, was not a single funerary form, but the repeated need to materialise age difference through changing combinations of grave technology, containment, and deposition, a pattern that also finds broader regional parallels in the north-west Anatolian and Aegean record [Vlanti, 2022: 6–7; Yağız, 2025: 86, 94].

A second key point concerns the interpretation of associated finds. The Parion material shows that figurines, astragaloi, shells, lamps, coins, vessels, and other small finds cannot be assigned fixed meanings on the basis of typology alone. Their significance depends instead on association, placement, containment, and recurrence within the burial context, while micro-location analysis shows that some object classes, especially coins, followed recurrent but non-universal depositional tendencies [Andújar Suárez, Blázquez Cerrato, 2019: 89, 91, 96]. The broader methodological implication is that non-adult grave goods should be read

neither as a simple catalogue of childhood markers nor as generic funerary furnishings devoid of age-related relevance. Instead, they are best understood as selective and context-sensitive assemblages whose logic can only be approached relationally through grave type, containment, object association, and micro-location [Mariaud, 2012: 23–25; de Larminat, 2012: 306–308; Huysecom-Haxhi, Papaikonomou, Papadopoulos, 2012: 343–344].

A third point concerns the spatial and diachronic framing of non-adult burial. At Parion, non-adult burials were neither fully segregated within a discrete cemetery sector nor distributed evenly across the funerary landscape. The Archaic PM 2 micro-area instead suggests that repeated placement, selective clustering, and physical separation could operate together within a restricted burial zone, without demonstrating kinship, household grouping, or a formally bounded children's quarter (see the section «Spatial distribution and micro-area relations»; Fig. 9). These conclusions, however, must remain proportionate to the dataset: the Classical and Hellenistic samples are small, preservation and documentation are uneven, and micro-location evidence is not uniformly available (see Table 3; Table 4; Table A1). The main point is not that age can be read directly from burial form, but that age-related funerary representation at Parion was repeatedly constructed through changing material strategies. In this sense, the Parion dataset contributes not only to the archaeology of childhood, but also to wider debates on mortuary variability, contextual interpretation, and the necro-social organisation of funerary practice. By treating burial evidence not as an isolated catalogue of finds but as a record of age-related social representation, this study also contributes to the broader integration of archaeological evidence on child burial into socio-cultural histories of childhood in antiquity [Laes, 2015].

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Appendix A. Grave catalogue of the Parion non-adult sample**Table A1.** Full grave codes and contextual descriptions⁶

Приложение А. Каталог погребений невзрослой выборки Парииона

Таблица А1. Полные коды погребений и описания контекста⁷

Grave No.	Date	Age category	Assemblage
PM 2	590–550 BCE	Child	Inside the pithos: Bronze bracelet (1), Astragaloi (25).
PM 5	6th century BCE	Infant	No associated finds recorded.
AMP 3	late seventh/early sixth century BCE	Infant	Inside the amphora: Oinochoe (1). Outside the amphora: Cooking pot (1; incomplete).
AMP 4	590–550 BCE	Infant	Outside the amphora: Mug (1).
AMP 5	590–550 BCE	Infant	No associated finds recorded.
AMP 6	550–525 BCE	Infant	No associated finds recorded.
AMP 9	600 BCE	Infant	No associated finds recorded.
AMP 10	550–525 BCE	Infant	No associated finds recorded.
AMP 11	560–540 BCE	Infant	No associated finds recorded.
AMP 12	500–475 BCE	Infant	No associated finds recorded.
AMP 13	600–580 BCE	Infant	No associated finds recorded.
HYD 1	550–525 BCE	Infant	No associated finds recorded.
M 171	610–580 BCE	Child	Oinochoe (1), Aryballo (3), Ink pot (1).
L 4	525–500 BCE	Child	Inside the sarcophagus: Marble alabastron (1), Bronze earrings (2), Bronze ring (1), Astragaloi (6), Iron pin (1), Textile fragments. Outside the sarcophagus: Metal tools, including pliers, hammer, and a nail-cleaning implement.

⁶ Age categories follow the operational classification used in this study: perinatal (c. 0–1 month), infant (>1 month to <3 years), child (3–12 years), and adolescent (13–18 years). Original excavation and field labels were normalised to this system where necessary for analytical consistency. Deposit status is recorded with reference to the boundary of the primary burial containment; in vessel burials, this is specified as in-vessel or out-of-vessel. Only deposits explicitly recorded as outside the primary containment are noted separately. The expression «No associated finds recorded» indicates that no associated grave goods were documented in the excavation record for that context; it should not be taken to imply the original absence of perishable materials that may not have survived archaeologically. Burials coded as ATM were classified as possible wooden coffin or bier burials on contextual grounds, including nail distribution, linear clustering, and edge or corner relations, rather than on nail presence alone.

⁷ Возрастные категории соответствуют операционной классификации, принятой в данном исследовании: перинатальный (приблизительно 0–1 месяц), младенец (от 1 месяца до 3 лет), ребёнок (3–12 лет) и подросток (13–18 лет). Исходные полевые и лабораторные обозначения были нормализованы в соответствии с этой системой при необходимости для обеспечения аналитической согласованности. Статус депозита фиксируется относительно границы первичного погребального вместилища; в случае захоронений в сосудах это уточняется как «внутри сосуда» или «вне сосуда». Отдельно отмечаются только те депозиты, которые согласно документации находятся за пределами первичного вместилища. Выражение «Сопутствующих находок не зафиксировано» означает, что в полевой документации для данного контекста не было отмечено никаких погребальных даров; это не следует рассматривать как указание на изначальное отсутствие материалов, которые могли не сохраниться в археологической записи. Погребения с кодом ATM были классифицированы на контекстуальных основаниях как возможные захоронения в деревянных гробах или на носилках — с учетом распределения гвоздей, линейной кластеризации, соотношений по краям и углам, а не только на основе наличия самих гвоздей.

Продолжение таблицы А1

Grave No.	Date	Age category	Assemblage
AMP 1	500–440 BCE	Infant	No associated finds recorded.
DSM 2	2nd century BCE	Adolescent	Unguentarium (1), Iron pin (1).
DSM 18	2nd century — early 1st century BCE	Child	Iron pin (1).
AMP 15	late 1st century BCE — early 2nd century CE	Infant	Inside the amphora: Chytra (1), Shells (2).
BTM 19	Roman (stratigraphic)	Child	No associated finds recorded.
ÇM 1	Roman (stratigraphic)	Perinatal	No associated finds recorded.
ÇM 2	late 2nd — early 3rd century CE	Perinatal	Outside the pot: Lamp (1).
İSM 27	second half of the 1st century CE	Child	Inside the grave: Jug (1), Terracotta seated female figurine on a throne (1), Terracotta figurines (3; fragmentary), Glass unguentarium (1), Bronze coin (1). Outside the tile cover, adjacent to it: Lamp (1), Terracotta Eros figurines (2), Terracotta rooster figurine (1).
İSM 28	second half of the 1st century CE	Child	Bronze coin (1).
İSM 30	second half of the 1st century CE	Child	Jug (1), Bowl (1), Bronze coin (1).
İSM 35	second half of the 1st century CE	Child	Inside the grave: Bronze coin (1), Glass bead (1), Pig mandible. Outside the tile cover, adjacent to it: Terracotta figurine head (1), Unguentaria (4).
İSM 63	2nd century CE	Infant	String of glass beads (5), Glass jug (1), Bone pendant (1), Bronze coin (1).
ATM 1	second half of the 1st century BCE — early 1st century CE	Child	Thymiaterion (1), Terracotta Aphrodite Anadyomene figurine (1), Silver earrings with beads (2), Bronze coin (1).
ATM 2	early 1st century CE	Child	Inside the grave: Terracotta seated female figurines (14), Terracotta Kybele figurine (1), Jug (1), Pyxis (1), Bronze coin (1), Bronze ring (1). Outside the wooden coffin, adjacent to it: Terracotta seated female figurines (19), Terracotta Kybele figurine (1), Terracotta Aphrodite figurine (1), Terracotta bull figurine (1), Astragalos (1).
ATM 3	early 1st century CE	Child	Jug (1), Unguentarium (1), Cup (1), Terracotta seated female figurines on a throne (5), Terracotta seated armless female figurine (1), Terracotta draped nude Aphrodite figurines (3), Terracotta dove figurine (1), Bone object (1).
ATM 4	early 1st century CE	Child	Mug (1), Unguentarium (1), Terracotta seated armless female figurines (4), Terracotta seated female figurine on a throne (1).
ATM 5	early 1st century CE	Child	Jug (1), Kantharos (1), Lamp (1), Terracotta herm figurines (4), Terracotta Eros figurines (5), Terracotta seated female figurine (1), Terracotta rooster figurines (7), Terracotta dove figurine (1), Terracotta hybrid animal figurine combining dog, wolf, and lion features (1), Terracotta apple-shaped object (1), Bronze bracelet (1), Bronze ring (1), Bronze rattle (1), Stone bead (1), Shell (1), Pig teeth.

Окончание таблицы А1

Grave No.	Date	Age category	Assemblage
ATM 6	early 1st century CE	Child	Jug (1), Unguentarium (1), Terracotta seated armless female figurines (2), Terracotta seated female figurines with birds (5), Terracotta Aphrodite Anadyomene figurines (2), Terracotta child carrying a rooster figurine (1), Bronze coin (1).
ATM 7	early 1st century CE	Child	Inside the grave: Unguentarium (1), Bronze coin (1). Outside the wooden coffin, adjacent to it: Terracotta herm figurine of old Hermes (1), Terracotta herm figurine of Dionysos (1), Terracotta draped epebe figurines (3), Terracotta young Eros playing with a dog figurine (1), Terracotta Eros with goose figurine (1), Terracotta dove figurine (1), Terracotta pomegranate object (1).
ATM 9	second half of the 1st century CE	Child	Inside the grave: Jug (1), Mug (1), Kantharos (1), Unguentarium (1), Terracotta herm figurine of Dionysos (1), Terracotta child Eros playing with a dog figurine (2), Terracotta dove figurine (1), Terracotta pig figurine (1), Bronze coin (1), Mussel shell (1). Outside the wooden coffin, adjacent to it: Lamp (1).
ATM 11	1st century CE	Child	Inside the grave: Bronze coin (1). Outside the wooden coffin, adjacent to it: Terracotta Aphrodite figurines (3), Terracotta Eros and Psyche figurine (1), Terracotta herm figurine of old Hermes (1), Jug (1), Lamp (1), Glass unguentarium (1).
ATM 12	1st century CE	Child	Cup (1), Feeding bottle (1), Unguentaria (4), Glass unguentaria (2), Terracotta Aphrodite Anadyomene figurine (1), Terracotta Eros and Psyche figurine (1), Terracotta draped male figurine (1), Terracotta dove figurine (1), Bone pin (1), Bone objects (4).
ATM 13	1st century CE	Child	Jug (1), Terracotta seated female figurine with diptych (1), Terracotta seated female figurines on a throne (2), Terracotta draped nude Aphrodite figurine (1), Terracotta nude Aphrodite figurine with strophion (1), Terracotta dove figurine (1), Lamp (1).
ATM 16	1st century CE	Infant	Jug (1), Terracotta Aphrodite figurines (2), Terracotta seated female figurine with diptych (1), Terracotta kissing Erotes figurine (1), Shell (1), Bronze rattle (1), Bronze coin (1).
ATM 19	late 1st — early 2nd century CE	Infant	Inside the grave: Terracotta child Eros playing with a dog figurine (1), Terracotta dove figurines (2), Rattles (2), Unguentarium (1), Bronze rattle (1), Bronze coin (1). Outside the wooden coffin, adjacent to it: Lamp (1).
ATM 22	second half of the 1st — early 2nd century CE	Infant	Lamp (1), Bronze coin (1).
ATM 24	2nd century CE	Child	Inside the grave: Glass unguentarium (1), Glass bowls (2), Terracotta gladiator figurines (3), Terracotta seated female figurine on a throne (1), Terracotta attendant/slave figurine (1). Outside the wooden coffin, adjacent to it: Lamp (1).
ATM 25	2nd century CE	Child	Terracotta Apollo figurine (1), Terracotta gladiator figurines (3), Glass unguentaria (2).
ATM 27	second half of the 2nd century CE	Child	Bronze coin (1), Iron tacks.

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