

## Quantifying Ceramic Grave Good Value and Elite Status in the Early Iron Age

The exploration of Athenian cemeteries and funerary practices and their evolution over time have had wide-reaching implications for our understanding of the development of the Athenian polis and many aspects of Greek culture (Morris 1989). The funerary objects, and particularly the ceramics, found in the cemeteries reflect aspects of the Athenian economy, societal values, gender roles, and even socio-political hierarchy. The recent comprehensive republication of the Early Iron Age cemeteries in Athens provides never-before-published data on the burials, allowing for new inquiry (Papadopoulos 2017).

In this paper I attempt to apply a new anthropological method of funerary archaeology to the EIA cemeteries. I adopt a statistical framework that was recently developed to equally weigh and combine multiple aspects of grave good value, which can produce a balanced view of overall grave wealth, and aid comparisons between prehistoric graves (Nørtoft 2021). The six wealth measures used in this framework, which Nørtoft calls Quantwealth, provides a more holistic view than methods like Grave Good Depth and Total Object Value. This is relevant again to questions of elite ritual control and status in early Greek society.

With slight modifications, I apply this method to the ceramic objects of the Areopagus cemetery. A truly systematic examination of the grave good values of the EIA Athenian funerary ceramics is now possible for the first time in the history of the excavations, as each funerary vessel is now represented by photographs and drawings of their patterns. This study confirms that this new framework is more useful in understanding the value of funerary objects than the TOT method, and also yield unexpected and nuanced insights into the prestige of certain objects. I hope this preliminary attempt at applying the most recent methods of grave good wealth

analysis to the Athenian cemeteries will improve the funerary archaeology of the prehistoric Mediterranean.

### Bibliography

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