

The sarcophagus of Alexandros, son of Philippos: An important discovery in the Lycian city of Tlos

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Abstract

This paper focuses on an illegally excavated and looted Lycian-type sarcophagus of the Classical period that was recently investigated by a team of archaeologists, physical anthropologists, and epigraphers. Data produced from the archaeological excavation inside and around the sarcophagus demonstrated that it had been in use from the Classical to the early Byzantine period. The first phase of use dates to the Classical period. The second phase, characterized by an inscription recording 'Alexandros, son of Philippos' added to the north long face of the sarcophagus, dates to the Hellenistic period and it seems that the sarcophagus with its Hellenistic inscription was used until the 4th century AD. The third phase of use covered the 4th to the 7th centuries AD, during the late Roman and early Byzantine periods. The last period of use is defined by a nearly 1 m deep fill, in four layers, containing 34 burials. This newly discovered sarcophagus of 'Alexandros, son of Philippos' casts a fresh light on Lycian burial customs and the social status of the deceased.

Keywords: burial customs, Lycia, necropolis, sarcophagus, Tlos.