



CALL FOR PAPERS

30th EAA Annual Meeting in Rome, Italy 28 - 31 August 2024

Session #498: REFUSE IN CONTEXT: ARCHAEOLOGY OF WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN URBAN SETTINGS

During Antiquity, urban Mediterranean societies spread and developed diverse town models to address the challenges associated with communal living, adopting a variety of solutions. One significant challenge was the daily, massive generation of solid, liquid, and physiological urban waste. While there has been some attention in recent decades towards urban sanitation infrastructure, such as aqueducts, sewerage networks, middens, and latrines, our understanding of the nature and composition of organic and inorganic waste, the temporal evolution of waste disposal areas, and the impact of refuse management practices on urban evolution remains limited.

This session takes a bottom-up approach to explore rubbish in Mediterranean urban settings, fostering the multidisciplinary characterization of waste in specific archaeological contexts to uncover town biographies. We seek to address various research questions: What is the nature and composition of waste in urban settings? How are refuse areas distributed topographically? What is the temporality and specialization of refuse areas? What types of discarded materials are typically found in sewers, middens, streets, and buildings? What were the waste management practices in ancient towns, and what was the impact of these practices on urban development and population health?

To answer these questions, the session promotes multidisciplinary, integrated studies of urban organic and inorganic waste, combining various methods, such as microstratigraphy, zooarchaeology, archaeobotany, spectroscopy, isotopes, biomarkers, geochemistry, paleoparasitology, and more. The core themes of the session include: 1) the potential of archaeological sciences and microarchaeology in defining urban transformation processes; 2) the challenges of integrating data from different analytical methods, architecture, and material culture at diverse analytical scales, from waste management areas to town; 3) the importance of studying waste within their stratigraphic contexts by characterizing site formation processes. This session aims to cover a broad timespan in Mediterranean history, spanning from the Late Bronze Age to Late Antiquity.

Session format: Regular session with 15-minute oral presentations

Deadline: 8 February 2024

Abstract submission: <https://www.e-a-a.org/eea2024>

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