



AEGEAN LECTURES & ANNUAL MEETING OF AEGEUS

Friday 27 OCTOBER 2023, 19:00

Swedish Institute at Athens (Mitseon 9, Acropolis Metro station)

Fragments of ideology in the society of Prehistoric Thera

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The ideology of an obsolete society without written texts can be approached only through archaeological evidence. Mortuary practices, for example, since the Palaeolithic, can reveal perceptions about the afterlife, and are relevant to memory. Certain indications for such perceptions have also emerged in Akrotiri on Thera. However, the remarkable preservation of the monuments, the abundance of portable finds and the narrative scenes both in vase painting as well as in wall-paintings also reveal ideological constructs related to life and to the future.

The title of the lecture “fragments of ideology” refers to the fact that our information is not derived from written sources, but is secondary and fragmentary, and the conclusions we draw, interpretative approaches that they are, are obviously not objective and not immune to misinterpretation. The excavation of the so-called *House of the Benches* in recent years (2016-2021), revealed a unique monument of a public character which functioned as a depository of various objects. The finds in Areas 1 and 2 chronologically cover a period from the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC (Early Cycladic period) until the volcanic eruption (end of the Middle Cycladic period). Without specific knowledge of the purpose of these deposits and their symbolic value for the prehistoric society of Thera, the identification of specific ideological content becomes difficult.