

Tomb ownership in Lycia; site selection and burial rights with selected rock tombs and epigraphic material from Tlos

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Abstract

This paper draws together archaeological, epigraphic, and historical evidence concerning burial customs in Lycia. The work concentrates in particular upon Tlos, one of the most important cities in Lycia. The rock-cut tombs chosen for study from the acropolis cover a period from the beginning of the 5th century BC to the 3rd century AD. These selected tombs at Tlos conform well with the formerly established archaeological facts regarding burial customs in Lycia. Tomb examples from Tlos are examined separately in terms of their periods and their architectural features.

The task involved gathering the published material. This material concerns foremost well-preserved tombs with inscriptions. They are classified according to their typological order and listed in chronological sequence separating tombs from the Classical period from those of the Late Hellenistic and Roman periods. Consequently, it is understood that even the uninterrupted usage of the family tombs throughout the years, does not imply the existence of an unchanging burial tradition. Burial practice was usually transformed according to the necessities of the current conditions.

Keywords: Burial customs, burial rights, Lycia, rock-cut tomb, Tlos.