



Geoarchaeological investigations in the ancient cemetery of Kamara, Agios Nikolaos, S.E. Crete, Greece

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A large part of the Late Hellenistic-Roman cemetery of Kamara is found beneath the alluvial depositions of the Xeropotamos torrent, which passes through the modern town of Agios Nikolaos in S.E. Crete. Main purposes of the geoarchaeological research were the determination of the location of the river channel during the establishment of the cemetery as well as the age of sediment infill of the cemetery. Several geoarchaeological methods such as lithostratigraphic analysis and mapping of the excavated tombs, geophysical survey based on georadar and electrical resistivity methods and dating of the infilled sediments using the Optical Stimulated Luminescence (O.S.L) technique, were applied in order to reconstruct the paleogeographic evolution of the study area. The geophysical prospection identified the earlier river's channel to the southwest of the present river's flow, as concluded by the presence of coarse, high resistance sediments. The sediment filling of the floodplain- probably connected with climatic events (Medieval warm period)- resulted to the natural diversion of the riverbed and thus the sediment infill of the cemetery.