

38608 Pregnancy, labour and puerperium: a perilous trio. Reflections on relevant Greek inscriptional data.

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There has been almost impossible to estimate accurately what the general death rates for both male and female sex were in the Greco-Roman antiquity. Paleopathology has provided us with several estimations starting from about twenty years of life for both sexes to forty or slightly more, based on the limited evidence that a number of skeletons supply, but these estimations have been often revised under the pressure of new more accurate techniques and different ways of interpretation. On the other hand, the use of inscriptional data, however relatively scarce those might be, is not only useful, but also imperative, given the lack of official full statistics for the Antiquity; besides, a combined assessment of inscriptional data, both Latin and Greek, for the same region or era, as well as of skeletal evidence, however scarce, all of which might contradict or corroborate each other, will definitely help reach more definite conclusions.

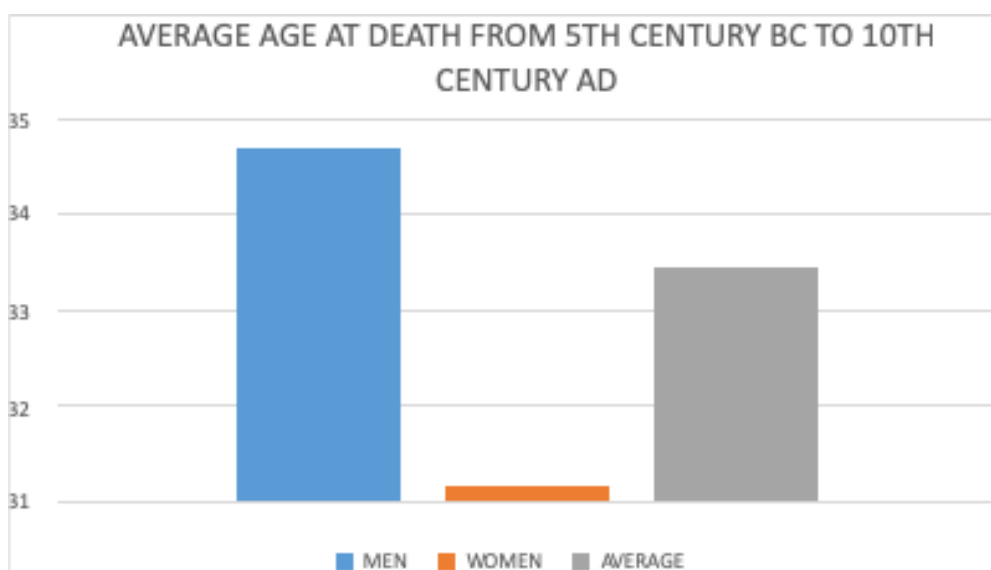
To analyze Greek inscriptional data of the Pre-roman and Roman era to estimate female mortality and its relation to maternity, thus adding to previous research that focused on Latin inscriptions of the same time period.

Inscriptions providing death records for 4691 people, 1463 of which definitely women

Age at death for men and women was assessed in relation to specific region or time period, evaluating other information such as age at marriage, number of pregnancies and living children and cause of death.

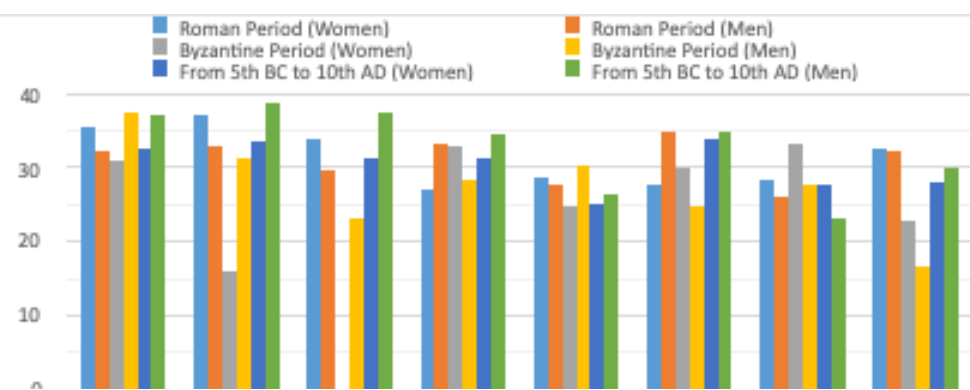
Age at death was assessed overall (5th BC to 10th AD, the whole of Greco-roman world), by subregion (1-8 subregions) and sub-periods (Roman and Byzantine). Age pyramids estimated percentages of preschool age, childhood, adolescence and adult life in decades.

All regions except Crete followed the pattern of men surviving women, although there is a difference range between 1 and 6 years. Average age at death was estimated at 34,68 and 31,16 years (men-women), with an overall estimation at 33,45 years. No significant change is observed during the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine era, 75% of the samples dating back to Roman Times. Age pyramids revealed a higher mortality rate for women at reproductive age until 36 compared to men of the same age by approximately 8% .



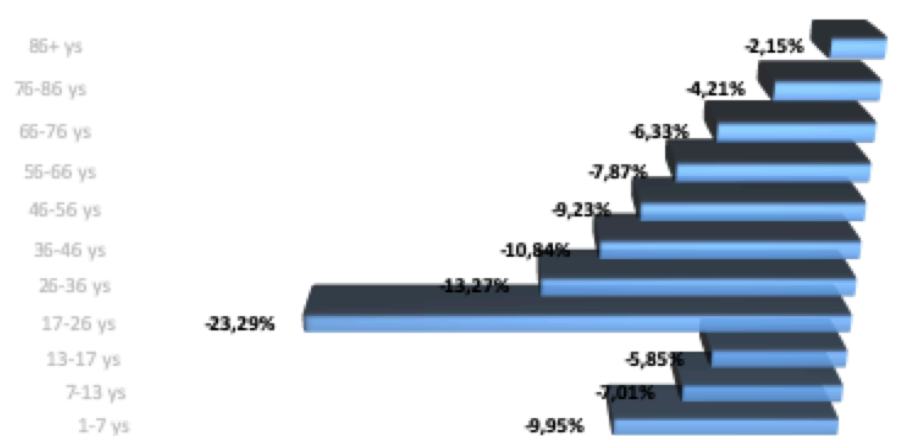
Average age at death on Greek inscriptions in the

Grecoroman world per region from 5th BC to 10th AD

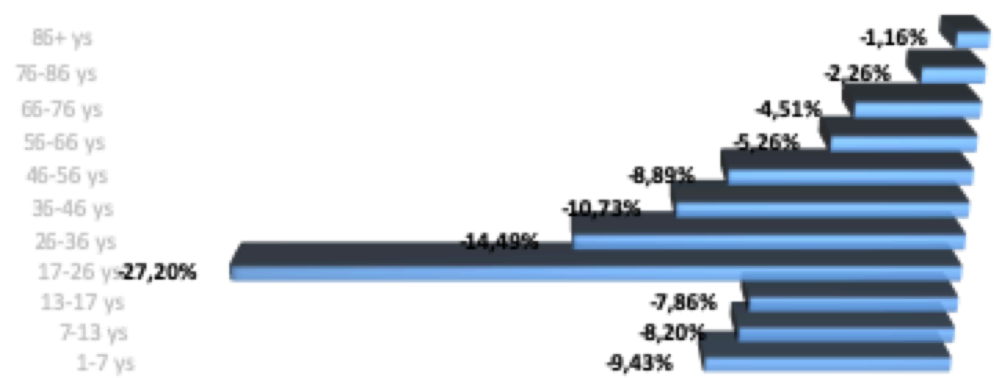


- 1.SYRIA, PALESTINE, ARABIA, EGYPT, CYPRUS 2.THRACE, EUXINE PONT, ARMENIA
- 3.AFRICA (EXC. EGYPT) 4.NORTH GREEK WORLD AND THE BALKANS
- 5.GAUL, WEST GREEK WORLD 6.CENTRAL AND SOUTH GREEK WORLD
- 7.CRETE 8.ASIA MINOR, ISLANDS OF THE AEGEAN

Death rate according to inscriptional data in the Grecoroman world from 5th BC to 10th AD - MEN



Death rate according to inscriptional data in the Grecoroman world from 5th BC to 10th AD - WOMEN



In this study we collected and analyzed Greek burial inscriptions which refer to age of death, while reference to sex is often but not obligatory. Analysis of the data showed that all regions except Crete followed the pattern of men surviving women, although there is a difference range between 1 and 6 years. Average age at death was estimated at 34,68 for men and 31,16 years for women, with an overall estimation at 33,45 years. No significant change seems to have happened through the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine era, noting that 75% of the samples date back to Roman Times. Age pyramids revealed a higher mortality rate for women at reproductive age until 36 compared to men of the same age by 8%. The death toll for the triplet of motherhood (pregnancy, labor, puerperium) appears to be significantly higher than for the one deriving from being a male citizen often destined to go to war. Future projects could concern themselves with more focused case studies, combining all possible sources, given the publishing of more paleopathological evidence.