***INSIGHT 2022-2024***

**A unique monument at the crossroads of political transformation**

**Investigation and documentation of the Palaepaphos-Laona tumulus**

**Ένα μοναδικό μνημείο στο μεταίχμιο πολιτειακού μετασχηματισμού**

**Ψηφιακή τεκμηρίωση και αποτύπωση του τύμβου της Λαόνας στην Παλαίπαφο.**

*Summary*

Following the excavation of the tumulus of Salamis in the 1960s, which covered a cenotaph, two views were put forward to answer the key question of ‘by whom was it built and to whose memory’. Both, however, associate the construction of this most unusual – for Cyprus – burial monument with the period of the conflict of the Diadochi. Written sources paint a vivid picture of the confrontation between Ptolemy and Antigonus, during which, one after the other, the royal dynasties that ruled the Cypriot polities were exterminated. By 294 BC, when Ptolemy finally won the island, the institution of Cypriot *basileia* (kingship) had died out. Although historiographers describe these dramatic events in considerable detail, their material imprint has not been identified in the archaeological record of the late 4th and early 3rd c. BC. A second much larger tumulus has now been identified at Palaepaphos-Laona. Ceramic analysis places its construction during the same transitional period. Although Cyprus did not possess the technical know-how required for the realisation of this type of mega-monument, a recently published geoarchaeological study confirms that Laona was an expertly designed and executed monumental earthwork.

INSIGHT will conduct a state-of-the-art full digital recording and documentation of Laona as a burial tumulus ahead of site preservation and final publication. The material buried in the mound should provide information on the political entity responsible for its construction and reveal the purpose which this unique and culturally un-Cypriot monument was designed to fulfil. Combined with data from the diachronic landscape analysis and excavations conducted since 2006 by the Palaepaphos Urban Landscape Project, the results will throw critical new light on a poorly known period of major political and cultural realignment during which Cyprus lost her indigenous city-states and became an island colony of the Ptolemaic kingdom.