

Kathleen J. Birney, Ph.D.

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Ancient Mediterranean environment and plant ecophysiology; ancient medicine, perfumes and organic commodities; ceramic analysis; archaeological chemistry; Mediterranean cultural interactions: archaeology of the Sea Peoples, Phoenicians, Persian & Hellenistic periods.

EDUCATION

M.S., Yale School of the Environment	Environmental Science	2024
M.I.T., Center for Materials Research in Archaeology & Ethnology (Adv. Studies Program)		2018–9
Ph. D., Harvard University	Near Eastern & Mediterranean Archaeology	2007
<i>Fields: Mediterranean Archaeology, Near Eastern History, Syro-Palestinian Archaeology Hebrew Bible</i>		
M.A., Harvard Divinity School	Theological Studies	1998
B.A., Yale University	Classics (Ancient Greek), pre-med	1996

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Wesleyan University

Associate Professor, Department of Classical Studies and the Archaeology Program	2018–present
Assistant Professor, Department of Classical Studies and the Archaeology Program	2011–2018
<i>Affiliate:</i> Department of Art History, Jewish and Israel Studies, Middle Eastern Studies Certificate	
Harvard Semitic Museum, Research Associate	2010–present
Harvard University, Post-Doctoral Fellow	2007–2008

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS

PI, Ancient Ecophysiology Initiative	2020–present
Head of Persian and Hellenistic Research, Tel Shimron Excavations	2015–present
Co-Director, OpenARCHEM Project	2016–2021
Co-PI, Kastrouli-Desfina Archaeological Project, Greece	2018–2020
Assistant Director, Ashkelon Excavations (Israel)	2015–2016
Grid Supervisor, Ashkelon Excavations	2007–2015
Square Supervisor, Ashkelon Excavations	1998–2002, 2004
Research Appointment, Ashkelon Publications, Cambridge MA	2003, 2005

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Books

Birney, K. (2022) *Ashkelon 9: The Hellenistic Period*. Final Reports of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon. University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns. <https://www.eisenbrauns.org/books/titles/978-1-64602-216-8.html>

Articles and Book Chapters (Peer-Reviewed)

Birney, K. (2024). Rethinking Pliny's "Sicilian Crocus": Ecophysiology, Environment, and Classical Texts. *Economic Botany*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12231-024-09600-6>

Marston, J., **Birney, K.** (2021). Hellenistic Agricultural Economies at Ashkelon, Southern Levant. *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00334-021-00850-1>

Koh, A., **Birney, K.**, Roy, I., Liritzis, I. (2020). The Mycenaean Citadel and Environs of Desfina-Kastrouli: A Trans-Disiplinary Approach to Southern Phokis. *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry* 20.3: 47-73.

Koh., A., **Birney, K.** (2019). Ancient Organic Residues as Cultural and Environmental Proxies: The Value of Legacy Artifacts. *Sustainability* 11 (3)656. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11030656>

Birney, K. (2018) An Astynomos at Ascalon. *Eretz Israel* 33: 25-32

Birney, K. (2017) Phoenician Bathing in the Hellenistic East: Ashkelon and Beyond *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 378: 203-222

Koh, A., **Birney, K.** (2017) Organic Compounds and Cultural Continuity: The Penn Museum Late Minoan III C Jar from Tourloti. *Mediterranean Archaeology & Archaeometry* 17.2: 19-33

Birney, K. (2015) To the Dregs: Drawing Meaning from the Rhodian Handles of Hellenistic Ashkelon. *Center for Hellenic Studies Research Bulletin* 3.2 http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hnc:jissue:CHS_Research_Bulletin.Vol_03.Issue_02.2015

Birney, K., Doak, B. (2011) Infant Burial and the Iconography of Death on a Burial from Philistine Ashkelon. *Israel Exploration Journal* 61/1 (2011): 32-53. [Reprinted with minor edits in *Ashkelon 7: The Iron Age I*, ed. L. Stager, D. Master, and A. Aja (2020)]

Birney, K., Levine, E. Iron II Weights and Measures, and 'Phoenician' Inscribed Bronze Cuboid Weights (2011). In Stager, Schloen and Master (eds.), *Final Reports of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, vol. III.: The 604 B.C.E. Destruction*, 473-92. (Eisenbrauns)

Birney, K. (2008) Tracking the Cooking pot *à la steatite*. Signs of Cyprus in Iron Age Syria. *American Journal of Archaeology* 112 (2008): 565-580.

Encyclopedia Entries (Peer-Reviewed)

Birney, K., Shapiro, A. (2022) Friable Brown Cooking Ware. *The Levantine Ceramics Project*. <https://www.levantineceramics.org/wares/1029-friable-brown-cooking-ware>

Encyclopedia Entries (cont'd)

Birney, K., Shapiro, A. (2022) Southern Levantine Mortaria Ware. *The Levantine Ceramics Project*.
<https://www.levantineceramics.org/wares/1029-southern-levantine-mortaria-ware>

WORKS IN PREPARATION/REVIEW

Modeling salinity responses in *Iris pallida*: medicinal microclimates for an ancient *pharmakon*. (with C. Brodersen). In preparation.

GRANTS, AWARDS, & FELLOWSHIPS

Yale Planetary Solutions (Co-PI) “Drought Resilience Mechanisms in Ancient Egyptian Wheats and Implications for Modern Crop Strategies” (Award: \$22,013)	2023
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation New Directions Fellowship (Award N-1710-04961, \$279,000) *second year delayed due to COVID	2018–2019;* 2022–2023
National Science Foundation: Major Research Instrumentation (PI) (Award # 2018821, \$151,255.00)	2020–2022
Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies Publication Working Group Grant (Co-PI)	2017
Loeb Classical Library Fellowship (declined)	2015
Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies Research Fellowship, Washington D.C.	2015
National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship (W.F. Albright Institute for Archaeological Research, Jerusalem, Israel)	2014
Robert Pfeiffer Traveling Fellowship for archaeological research in Israel	2000, 2004, 2007
Derek Bok Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard University	2001, 2006
Dorot Foundation Travel Fellowship	1998, 1999, 2002

INTERNAL RESEARCH GRANTS

Wesleyan Scientific Instrumentation Grant, pXRF (Collaborative with EES, Chemistry) (Award: \$55,712)	2022
Wesleyan Project Grant (PI) “Organic Biomarker Degradation: Models and Applications” (PI) (Award: \$4,984)	2022
Wesleyan Project Grant “Organic Residue Biomarker Research” (PI) (Award: \$3,000)	2022
Wesleyan Project Grant “Archaeological Residue Analysis: Biomarker Degradation” (PI) (Award: \$500)	2021
Wesleyan Project Grant “Reconstructing Funerary Landscapes of East Crete” (PI) (Award: \$2,600)	2019

CONFERENCE PAPERS & PRESENTATIONS

- Werner, K., Roberts, A., and **Birney, K.** Computational Biochemistry and Classical texts: modeling the pharmacodynamics of *Iris Pallida* in ancient Lung and Respiratory Therapies. Research poster, Annual Meeting of the Society for Classical Studies, Chicago IL. 2024
- Dorr, Alexander, **Birney, K.**, and Marston, J.M. A View from the Jezreel: Initial Findings from the Hellenistic Archaeobotanical Assemblage at Tel Shimron. Conference paper, Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Overseas Research, Chicago, IL. 2023
- Bowman, N., and **Birney, K.** Reconstructing environments of medicinal *Crocus sativus* in the Mediterranean. Research poster, Annual Meeting of the American Institute of Archaeology, San Francisco, CA. 2022
- Rogers, A., Roberts, A. and **Birney, K.** A Phytochemical Basis of Ancient Uses of Iris (*I. germanica*) Research poster, Annual Meeting of the American Institute of Archaeology 2021
- Birney, K.**, and Gilstrap, W. Hellenistic Unguentaria from Ashkelon: Insight from combined Organic and Materials Analysis. Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Overseas Research, San Diego, CA. 2019
- Birney, K.**, and Koh, A. The Value of Legacy ORA Data and Objects: Case Studies. Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Overseas Research, Boston, MA 2017
- Koh, A., Clinton, M., and **Birney, K.** The Mouliana Project: Results of the 2016 Season Paper delivered at the Archaeological Institute of America Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada 2017
- Birney, K.** The Phoenician Perimeter: Considering Persian Control of the Southern Levant. Paper delivered at the Society for Biblical Literature Annual Conference, Boston MA 2017
- Marston, J., and **Birney, K.** Hellenistic Agricultural Economy in the Southern Levant: New Evidence from Ashkelon. Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Overseas Research, Boston, MA 2017
- Birney, K.** To the Dregs: Drawing Meaning from the Rhodian Handles of Hellenistic Ashkelon. Paper delivered at the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies Research Symposium, Washington D.C. 2015
- Birney, K.** To Rinse or to Receive? An Analysis of 2nd Century Stuccoed Rooms at Ashkelon. Paper delivered at Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Overseas Research, Atlanta, GA 2015
- Birney, K.** From Ashkelon to *Ascalon*: Towards a Reconstruction of the Hellenistic City. Paper delivered at the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Jerusalem, Israel. 2014
- Birney, K.** Recent Excavations at Ashkelon: The Persian and Hellenistic Periods in Grid 51 Paper delivered at Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Overseas Research, Baltimore, MD 2013
- Birney, K.** Mycenaean Influence in Iron Age Syria – Reconstructing the Big Picture Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Overseas Research, Boston, MA 2008

CONFERENCE PAPERS & PRESENTATIONS (cont'd)

Birney K., and Doak, B. Intramural Infant and the Iconography of Death at Ashkelon 2008
Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Overseas Research, Boston MA.

Birney, K. Tracking the Cooking Pot à la Stéatite: The Road Inland 2007
Paper delivered at the American Schools of Oriental Research, Philadelphia, PA

INVITED TALKS

Thinking with Ecophysiology: Exploring New Approaches to Classical Landscapes and Ancient Plants. USC Dornsife Center for the Premodern World. Feb 21, 2024. 2024

Rethinking Iris in Dioscorides: A Multidisciplinary Approach. Research Institute of Classical Studies, University of Rethymno, Crete. April 1, 2021. 2021

Archaeology meets Chemistry: Challenges in Organic Residue Analysis. Wesleyan University Natural Sciences and Mathematics Luncheon Series 2020

Material, Culture, and Identity in Hellenistic Ashkelon. Conference, *Mapping the Cultural and Diversity of the Southern Levant in the Hellenistic Period*. Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, Jerusalem. June 18, 2020 (*postponed due to COVID*) 2020

The OpenARCHEM Database as a Resource for Scientists and Humanists
Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Tübingen 2018

Making Digital Humanities work in the Classroom: Getting Students to Engage
AALAC/CLAC Workshop on Digital Humanities, Wellesley College 2018

Who wants Take-Out? Exploring Archaeological Models for Urban Economies.
Boston University, Archaeology Seminar Series 2017

Building Technology Training into Humanities Courses: Reflections and Analysis
NESAC Digital Humanities Conference, March 2017 2017

Homeric Heroes in Mediterranean Context 2017
Department of Classics, Connecticut College

From Theory to Practice: Digital Methods in Research & Teaching 2017
Digital Humanities Workshop, Wesleyan University

Of Markets and Migrants: Thinking 'with' Mycenaean material culture in the 12th century
Keynote Speaker, Brandeis University Graduate Conference, Department of Classics 2017

Philistines, Dead and/or Alive: Recent Archaeological work at Ashkelon, Israel 2016
Classical Association of Connecticut, Hartford, CT

Wrestling with *-ization* yet again: Material, Culture and Identity in Persian-Hellenistic Ashkelon
University of Connecticut Archaeology Lecture Series, Storrs, CT 2016

The Impact of Hellenism on the Coast of Palestine: Ashkelon as a Test Case. 2014
Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel

INVITED TALKS (cont'd)

- Pushing Boundaries: Pioneers of Attic Red Figure 520-490 B.C. 2014
Wesleyan Pottery, Middletown, CT
- From Philistines to Phoenicians and Beyond: Ongoing excavations at the City of Ashkelon 2013
Wasch Center, Wesleyan University
- An Introduction to Philistine Culture 2011
American Institute of Archaeology Lecture Series, Trinity University, Hartford, CT
- Rethinking our Approach to the Sea Peoples 2010
Core Archaeology Graduate Group, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
- Economy and Trade in Ancient Egypt 2009
Harvard Semitic Museum, Cambridge, MA
- Late Bronze Age Trade in the Mediterranean: Modern Market Principles in the Ancient World 2008
Harvard Semitic Museum, Cambridge, MA

PODCASTS & PUBLIC MEDIA

- Birney, K. Science in Archaeology. (2022 Jan 24) [Educational video]. *Mummies of the World Educational Module*. Connecticut Science Center. 2022
- Birney, K. (Host). (in prod.)“Hekate: Goddess of the in-Between” [Audio podcast episode]. 2022
In *Mythlets: Live from Mount Olympus*. Onassis Center Media.
- Birney, K. (Host). (in prod.)“Eleusis and the Mystery Cults” [Audio podcast episode]. 2022
In *Mythlets: Live from Mount Olympus*. Onassis Center Media.
- Birney, K. (Host). (2022 Apr 12) “Hermes: God of Middle Children”. [Audio podcast episode]. 2022
In *Mythlets: Live from Mount Olympus*. Onassis Center Media.
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/3ZzFapcZXSdktVgNXpAqRV>
- Birney, K. (Host). (2021 Dec 14). “I Belong to No Man”. [Audio podcast episode]. 2021
In *Mythlets: Live from Mount Olympus*. Onassis Center Media.
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/5TGltAht7a0t56q7MvJVH6>
- Birney, K. (Host). (2021 Nov 16). “A Mouth Like Flame and Breathing Death” 2021
[Audio podcast episode]. In *Mythlets: Live from Mount Olympus*. Onassis Center Media.
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/1WbXIHBMw6EQqL0ijCLjs8>
- Birney, K. (Host). (2021, Oct 12). “Don’t Drop Your Shield”. [Audio podcast episode]. 2021
In *Mythlets: Live from Mount Olympus*. Onassis Center Media.
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/4KHPxFQvpsjfsxQBONKf6z>
- Birney, K. (Host). (2021 Sep 9). “I bestow upon thee my adamant sword”. [Audio podcast 2021
episode]. In *Mythlets: Live from Mount Olympus*. Onassis Center Media.
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2BEbFrg8Qp4oCioB3qzNJV>
- Birney, K. and A. Koh. [Adventures in Storax](#). Full Spectrum Communications. 2018

TEACHING EXPERIENCE (cont'd)

Wesleyan University, Dept. of Classical Studies & Archaeology Program 2011–present
 Visualizing the Classical (Design Theory & Archaeological Reconstruction, Advanced CLST)
 Patterns in Ancient Organic Residue Degradation (Advanced Tutorial, Integrated Lab, ARCP)
 Ancient Weapons: Technology, Design, Archaeological Analysis (Adv. Seminar, ARCP)
 The Greek Vase as Art and Artifact (Advanced, ARCP/CLST)
 Archaeological Field Methods (Intermediate; onsite: Ashkelon, Shimron, Kastrouli)
 Pyramids & Pyres: Death and Afterlife in Egypt & Greece (Intermediate)
 Bronze Age Art & Archaeology (Introductory ARCP)
 Greek Art & Archaeology (Introductory ARCP)
 From Linear B to the Little Iliad: Homer and Homeric Traditions of the Bronze Age (Adv. Greek)
 Hesiod: The Greek Creation Myth in Mediterranean Context (Adv. Greek)
 Introduction to Ancient Greek (two semester course, Introductory CLST)
 Body, Soul, and Afterlife Journeys in Ancient Greece (Int/Adv. Greek, CLST)
 Single Combat in the Ancient World (First-year Writing Seminar, ARCP/CLST)

Tel Shimron Archaeological Field School 2017–present

Ashkelon Archaeological Field School (undergraduate and graduate instruction) 2008–2016

Harvard University, Classics Department and Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations 2000–2006
Head Teaching Fellow. Images of Alexander the Great; Bible and Its Interpreters; Archaeological History of Egypt

THESIS ADVISING

Maritime connectivity and mobility in the SE Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean during the Neopalatial Period: a GIS-based Approach. (N. Bowman) 2023
 Going back to the Roots: A Phytochemical Investigation of Iris in the Ancient Mediterranean (A. Rogers) 2021
 Hedrai and Hemorrhages: War Wounds and their Treatment in the Hippocratic Corpus (T. Zitter) 2021
 Il far dela cola: Examining 16th century Techniques of Steelmaking through Translation and Experimental Archaeology (A. Lam) 2020
 Shedding Light on Dark Ages: LMIIIC Burials in East Crete (K. Barnes) 2018
 Our Warp Bloodred, Our Weft Coarseblue: Experimental Exploration of the Use and Mythology of the Warp-Weighted Loom in Norse Greenland and Ancient Greece (C. Diemer, with COL) 2018
 Colonial Collecting. (Thesis with accompanying exhibit mounted in Olin Library) (S. Hoynes) 2016
 Grave Concerns: The Sacred Corpse and Burial Re-entry in Antiquity (M. Rothberg, with Anthropology) 2016
 Egyptianizing Amulets from Persian Ashkelon (S. McCully) 2016
 Thin-Section Optical Mineralogy Study of Cooking Vessel Fabric during the Hellenistic Period at Ashkelon, Israel (E. Shames, with Earth/Env Sci) 2015
 Hellenistic or Roman? A Case Study of a Mosaic in Tel Dor, Israel in Regional Context (A. Ruiz-Lopez) 2013
 The Archaeology of Pan-Hellenic Politics: Monumental Dedications at Delphi and Cycladic Political Identity (A. Peck) 2012

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

University of Southern California, Dissertation Committee, Department of Classics, History and Middle Eastern Studies	2023–5
Hebrew University, Classical Archaeology Search Outside Reviewer	2023
Archaeological Institute of America, Graduate Student Paper Award Committee	2016–present
Reviewer: <i>Journals:</i> American Journal of Archaeology, Archaeometry, Cambridge Archaeological Journal, Tel Aviv <i>National Agencies:</i> National Endowment for the Humanities, Israel Science Foundation	2011–present
Voting Institutional Representative & Managing Committee Member, American School of Classical Studies at Athens	2011–present
National Endowment for the Humanities, Fellowship Programs at Independent Research Institutions, Granting Committee	2018
Session Mediator “Getting Students to Engage” AALAC/CLAC Workshop on Digital Humanities, Wellesley College Jan 12 2018	2018
Brandeis University, Master’s Thesis Co-Advisor, Dept. of Classical Studies <i>Hellenistic Moldmade Bowls: Tracking Connections between Fabrics and Motifs</i> (R. Jones) <i>Spatial Studies of Rhodian Amphora Distribution in Hellenistic Israel</i> (S. Chase)	2016-2018
National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship Committee, AIAR	2017
Session Co-Chair “Integrating Organic Residue Analysis into Archaeology” Workshop American Schools of Oriental Research Annual Meeting (with A. Koh) Boston, MA	2017
SHARE Field Program Coordinator	2012-2015
Board Member, Society for Humanitarian Archaeological Research & Exploration (SHARE)	2010–15
Session Chair, “Archaeology of the Near East: Bronze and Iron Ages,” Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research, Baltimore, MD	2013
Mentor, AIA/APA Women’s Classical Caucus	2012-2013

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Chair, Archaeology Program, Wesleyan University	2023-2026
CODES Steering Committee	2023–present
Faculty Advisory Committee	2021–2022
Community Mentorship Program	2021–2023
Chair, Archaeology Program, Wesleyan University	2019–2022

UNIVERSITY SERVICE (cont'd)

Wesleyan Admissions Office Faculty Panel Speaker	2011–present
Program Organizer, CTW Research Symposium in Arts & Humanities (COVID-delayed)	2021–2022
Wesleyan University, Review and Appeals Board	2021
Fries Center for Global Studies Grant, Tel Shimron Israeli-Palestinian Educational Program	2019
Wesleyan University Archaeology Program, Tenure-Track Faculty Search Committee	2018-2019
Wesleyan University Faculty Committee on Rights and Responsibilities	2017-2018
Wesleyan University, Language Resource and Technology Committee	2016-2017
Project-Based Learning Grant, Wesleyan University Center for Pedagogical Initiatives	2016
University Lecture Grant, Allbritton Center for Public Life (with E. Visvardi) (for sponsored lecture by Prof. Josiah Ober, Stanford University)	2016
Design & Engineering Initiative Course Development Grant (with C. Parslow)	2016
Wesleyan University Language Resource Center Committee	2015-2016
Wesleyan University First Year Program Committee	2013-2014
Wesleyan University Archaeology and Anthropology Collections Committee	2013-2014
Collaborative Proposal Grant, Allbritton Center for Public Life (with S. Croucher)	2013
University Lecture Grant, Allbritton Center for Public Life, (for sponsored lecture by Dr. Adriaan Lanni, Harvard Law School)	2012
Instructor and Coach, Harvard Karate Club and Harvard Karate Team	1998-2011
Non-resident Tutor, Lowell House, Harvard University	2004

LANGUAGE TRAINING

Ancient: Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Phoenician, Ugaritic, Aramaic, Hittite, Luwian

Modern: Russian, reading fluency in French and German.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Archaeological Institute of America	American Schools of Overseas Research
American School of Classical Studies at Athens	Society for Classical Studies
Society for Ancient Medicine	Society for Ethnobotany