GRAVES, TOMBS, NECROPOLEIS
in their Settlement Environment in the Eastern Mediterranean – Classical to Hellenistic Period

ABSTRACTS

9th – 14th October 2016
The elite necropoleis of the Kazanlak valley in the settlement pattern context

In the paper are completed and elaborated the observations of both authors delivered in their report at the June 2015 Conference in Paris, in which rich tumular tombs and graves from the northern part of the Kazanlak valley, concentrated in the triangle Shipka–Sheynovo–Kran are interpreted as necropoleis of noble and/or dynastic families, which existed before, at the time of Seuthopolis, and after its destruction (CRAI 2015, 2, 913-943). As a probable residential seat, prior (and synchronous?) to the last Odrysian capital Seuthopolis, to which the earlier burial complexes have been related, a settlement structure studied at the “Gradovete” locality, on the Haemus slopes just to the north of the town of Kran, has been identified. Among the tumular groups to the west of this place stands out a group of mounds by the tumulus Golyama Kosmatka related presumably to the Seuthes III dynasty.

The necropoleis of the closest vicinity to Seuthopolis as well as of a broader area to the east and south of the capital with tombs and graves have been analyzed. On the basis of its peculiar plans, material, constructions and inventory (if preserved) several characteristics are to be defined: 1) The tombs, which are to be dated no earlier than Hellenistic period, outline a zone in the southern half of the Kazanlak valley and to the east at the lands of a settlement center in the area of the modern town of Maglizh; 2) the predominance of tombs built of bricks 3) and amongst them those with domed burial chamber; 4) brick is used for secondary graves as well (in the mounds or separately); 5) Part of the necropoleis with such tombs and graves trace out basic routes going east and south-east outside the valley.

For some of the tumular groups with tombs to the east and west of Seuthopolis as well along of the northern slopes of the Sredna gora mountain the interpretation of their formation in the context of new settlement structures or of older ones more developed in the new political and economic conditions of the Early Hellenistic period is supposed.

Monumental architecture in the area of the southern slopes of Sashtinska Sredna Gora Mountain (late 5th – early 3rd c. BC)

In the last 15 years, several extremely important discoveries in the field of the Thracian archaeology were made in the area between the town of Strelcha and the village of Starosel in Sashtinska Sredna Gora Mountain. To the already known tombs at the village of Levski, in Zhaba Mogila tumulus near Strelcha, and in Roshava Mogila tumulus, several more were added: the spectacular discoveries in Chetinyova Mogila tumulus, the tombs in Tumuli Nos. 1 and 4 in Manyov Dol locality, in Kutilishka Mogila tumulus, and in Horizont Tumulus, all near Starosel, and in Nedkova Mogila tumulus near the village of Panicheri. In addition to the tombs, several cist graves were investigated near Strelcha and the villages of Smiletis, Krastevich, and Starosel. The evidence of the graves and the tombs is complemented with the information about various settlements and sanctuaries, investigated in the same area. Among the first are the monumental residential fort in Smilovene locality above the town of Strelcha, the commercial settlement near Krastevich, and the residence under Kozi Gramadi peak above Starosel. The two sanctuaries in the area, at Sekiz Harman locality near Krastevich and on the top of Kozi Gramadi peak, also yielded evidence about monumental architecture.

The paper aims to summarize the available evidence of monumental architecture in the area, with an analysis of the construction materials, building techniques, ground plans, constructions and order decoration – along with the most probable directions of the influences that could be detected.

The chronology of the sites indicates, in the present state of research, that the monumental architecture began in the second half of the 5th c. BC with the construction of the sanctuary in Sekiz Harman locality near the village of Krastevich. On top of the remains of the tetrapyrgium, initially built at the site, soon a new monumental wall of the temenos was constructed, with two propylons in Ionic order and a temple. The use of the sanctuary was related to the existence of the commercial settlement in Pamuk Tepe locality in its immediate vicinity. Possibly, there were other settlements in the area, having in mind the central place of the sanctuary, as well as the artifacts from the Hellenistic Period that were discovered there, mostly pottery. The real heyday of the monumental architecture came around the middle of the 4th c. BC, when the residence under Kozi Gramadi peak was built, and a massive stone wall was constructed in the sanctuary on the peak. Probably, the monumental fort in Smilovene locality above the town of Strelcha was built at the same time or slightly later. The construction of the monumental tombs in Chetinyova Mogila at Starosel and in Zhaba Mogila near Strelcha could be dated after the middle of the 4th c. BC. The building materials and techniques, the ground plans and constructions, and the elements of order decoration allow for the conclusion that monumental architecture with specific features developed in the area within the limits of two or three decades. Some of these specifics indicate the direct participation of Athenian stonemasons and architects. The impossibility to specify the dates of some of the structures, mostly of the cist graves, impedes elucidating their exact place among the monumental buildings – whether they preceded the monumental tombs or were built in the same period. The presence of similar, almost identical elements in some of the monuments reveals a possibility that complexes such as Zhaba Mogila and Chetinyova Mogila could have predetermined, at least to some extent, the architecture of the rest. The one in Zhaba Mogila is the only one that allows for identifying a sequence in the construction of the monuments.

Daniela Stoyanova. Monumental architecture in the area of the southern slopes of Sashtinska Sredna Gora Mountain (late 5th – early 3rd c. BC)
The latest published analyses revealed that the two tombs that were built here share numerous specifics and a chronology in the 330s-320s BC. The presence, in and around the tombs, of reused details of a third, earlier tomb, the so-called Panthers Tomb, indicates that the latter should be dated to the period of the construction of the earliest tombs in the area. The last stage of the monumental architecture here could be dated to the late 4th or the early 3rd c. BC.

**Stephan Steingräber.** The So-Called Temple Tombs in Etruria and in the Eastern Mediterranean – Diffusion, Chronology, Architecture, Decoration, Ideology

The so-called temple tombs represent without any doubt the most noble and elaborated monumental tomb type especially concerning the rock tombs. The temple, porticus and – in a smaller size – aedicula tombs are documented from the late archaic period until the Roman imperial era in many different geographic and cultural areas around the central and eastern Mediterranean: in Southern Etruria (Norchia, Sovana, Grotta Scalina, Sutri), North Apulian Daunia (Arpi, Canosa, Salapia), Campania (Napoli), Macedonia (Verginia, Lefkadia, Aghios Athanasios etc.), Thracia, Illyria/Albania (Basse-Selce), Arcadia (Alipheira), on the islands of Rhodes, Thera and Kastellorizo, in Asia Minor (Lycia, Caria, Paphlagonia, Phrygia, Cappadocia), Palestina/Jerusalem, Nabatean area/Petra, Persia, Alexandria and the Kyrenaika (Kyrene, Barca). The phenomenon can be considered primarily as typical for some “peripheral” cultures (from the Greek viewpoint) where tomb architecture had a particular tendency to monumentalization, heroization and autorepresentation of the deceased. The temple form characterized the tomb as a sacred place or “funeral temple” of persons and families belonging to the local upper social classes.

Highpoints in Etruria are the Tombe doriche and Tomba Lattanzi in Norchia, the Tomba Ildebranda in Sovana and the recently excavated monumental rock tomb in Grotta Scalina near Musarna. The most spectacular examples at all are without doubt the 18 temple tombs with their rich decorations (among the more than 600 rock tombs) of the rock necropolises in the Nabatean capital Petra dating between the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D. The oldest examples still from the late archaic period we find in the Kyrenaika, the strongest concentration of temple tombs – mostly dating from the 4th century B.C. – in the Southwest of Asia Minor (Lycia and Caria). In case of the rock tombs the often monumental and richly decorated facades were always visible whereas in other cases such as in Macedonia and Apulia the façades became covered and hidden after each funeral. Those tombs were particular characteristic for monarchical and oligarchic societies and had to emphasize and glorify the deceased in his political and social position. The outward appearance of the façade and monument was normally much more important than the tomb chamber and burial place. The temple form implies an assimilation to the gods and heroes and fits well particularly with the political and ideological situation in the Hellenistic period. In some cases inscriptions name the owners of the tombs and special decorations such as weapon friezes express symbolic values. Often such tombs were situated along the main access roads to the town and in visible contact with the urban area. Tendencies to the heroization of special personalities and gentil groups are well reflected particularly during the 4th c. and the Hellenistic period also in a series of examples still from the late archaic period in Southern Etruria (Norchia, Sovana, Grotta Scalina, Sutri), North Apulian Daunia (Arpi, Canosa, Salapia), Campania (Napoli), Macedonia (Verginia, Lefkadia, Aghios Athanasios etc.), Thracia, Illyria/Albania (Basse-Selce), Arcadia (Alipheira), on the islands of Rhodes, Thera and Kastellorizo, in Asia Minor (Lycia, Caria, Paphlagonia, Phrygia, Cappadocia), Palestina/Jerusalem, Nabatean area/Petra, Persia, Alexandria and the Kyrenaika (Kyrene, Barca). The phenomenon can be considered primarily as typical for some “peripheral” cultures (from the Greek viewpoint) where tomb architecture had a particular tendency to monumentalization, heroization and autorepresentation of the deceased. The temple form characterized the tomb as a sacred place or “funeral temple” of persons and families belonging to the local upper social classes.

In my paper I will try to elaborate the origins, the development, common elements and differences of this unique tomb type in different cultural areas around the Mediterranean.

**Maria Stamatopoulou, Stella Katakouta.** The chamber tombs with pyramidal corbelled roof from Thessaly: a reassessment

This paper aims to discuss a monumental tomb type that was peculiar to Thessaly during the Classical period: the chamber tomb with square plan and pyramidal corbelled roof. Examples of the type have been found in Kranon, Pharsalos and northeastern Thessaly. All were looted; the rediscovery of the finds of some tombs and work on the monuments themselves have revealed important new evidence that allow a better understanding of the appearance of this tomb type in the region and of the significance of monumental tomb architecture in Thessaly.

**Stella G. Miller.** Spatial Organization among Thraco-Macedonian Tombs

The collective funerary landscape of Thrace and Macedonia displays a variety of common features. Yet, as is well known, built chamber tombs in these zones display baffling variety in size, configuration, and decoration even when isolated by region. Attempts at establishing meaning behind the chamber tomb and its embellishments result in no generally valid conclusions. In this paper I make no claims to have solved the problem. Rather, I will focus on a cluster of tombs whose configuration suggests some special activity associated with burial practices. The point of departure is courtyards that sometimes appear internally in both Macedonia and Thrace but also externally as forecourts, particularly among Macedonian tombs. Such forecourts, rectilinear and often trapezoidal in shape, occupy a space between the dromos and a facade constructed with greater or lesser embellishment. This group of fewer than a dozen widely scattered Macedonian tombs with definable forecourts has not so far been examined as such. Such forecourts are clearly a deliberate and well-defined external space that surely had a purpose. Considering their possible function
leads down several paths of inquiry that include activities both practical and ceremonial/ritualistic. A possible overlap with Thracian tombs should be investigated.

**Atanasia Kiriakou.** Funerary landscape, commemoration and identity negotiation strategies in the 4th c. BC at Aegae (Vergina)

Necropoleis and the embedded mortuary practices constitute crucial fields of archaeological investigation, since they are considered to be arenas of personal and communal identity formation in past societies. Well established beliefs, concepts drawing on collective memory and place value and ideologies intertwined with social structure combined with elements of the landscape contribute to the configuration of the funerary landscape.

This paper aims at underpinning some crucial features of the extensive necropolis of Aegae (modern Vergina), the first capital of the Macedonian kingdom, in the early third quarter of the 4th c. BC. A burial mound that covered three elite burials lies at the core of this examination. The effort to elucidate facets of its creation and history brings to the fore a dynamic society that has left its impact on the landscape. This is the period when funerary and urban architecture reaches its peak as manifested in lavish and elaborate buildings such as the palace and other public structures and the "Macedonian" type of graves. However, despite the new trends, the assemblage under study demonstrates the intentional establishment of a linkage to ancestors other than the ruling class and the intention to take advantage of a place with accumulated symbolic value.

The importance of the mortuary area was augmented with the construction of a funerary monument in front of the burial mound under study. Despite its destruction the remains (a 10 m long rectangular krepis) speak for its size, monumentality and the careful selection of the grave markers crowning it (a one meter high marble volute krater has survived). Embarking on the typology of the monument and the affinities it presents with other contemporary structures it will be attempted to outline an overview of commemoration monuments in 4th c. Macedonia.

To conclude, the burial mound with the funerary monument constituted a landmark for the family and the society and also formed part of the scenery for rites and practices connected not only to the dead but to daily habits as well.

**Chavdar Tzochev.** The Introduction of the Tholos Tomb in Thrace: Placing Changes in Burial Architecture in a Historical and Political Context

Archaeologists have long tried to trace the origins of the tholos tomb in Thrace, allowing either for local development from simpler structures or for import of architectural models from neighbouring regions. All such attempts focused on finding – with little success – earlier precursors of the tholoi. This paper takes a different path, seeking to answer when and where tholos tombs first appeared in Thrace, what they changed in the funerary practice, and how this change fits a wider historical context. I argue that the Tholos tombs did not develop locally during the 5th and the first half of the 4th century BC, but were introduced by Greek, probably Athenian, architects in the period 350–340 BC. This marked a shift in the way Thracian elites expressed their power through the burial rite and funerary monuments. The change was undertaken by the last Odrysian kings, heirs of Kotys I, and was politically motivated.

**Diana Dimitrova.** The royal tomb at Golyama Kosmatka tumulus

The tomb under the Golyama Kosmatka tumulus was built on plan of complex nature. It has two securely established building phases of construction and use; a third one is also supposed.

During the archaeological excavations in 2004 under the leadership of Dr. Georgi Kitov a symbolic burial of the Odrysian ruler Seuthes III was found in the third sarcophagus-like chamber. Among the artifacts found in situ, most of which personal belongings, are two silver vessels – a jug and a phiale of calyx type, as well as a bronze helmet, on which the name of Seuthes was inscribed. In front of the tomb façade a unique bronze head of a statue was found belonging to a man with individualistic features, which in profile bear a striking resemblance to the image of the Thracian king as depicted on coins. All of this, together with the closely situated and founded by the ruler Seuthopolis, strongly suggests that the last rites performed in the Golyama Kosmatka tumulus were connected with the symbolic burial of Seuthes III.

**Georgi Nehrizov.** The Tomb at the Village of Dolno Lukovo: Architecture and Decoration

The tomb was found during rescue excavations in 1992, and it is remarkable for its architecture and, especially, its decoration. It consists of a burial chamber almost quadrangular in plan, with the entrance facing the south, an ante-chamber opened to the south and a dromos whose length is not defined. The chamber and the antechamber are built on a crepidoma made from nicely cut marble slabs of various sizes. The northern wall of the chamber is made completely from marble blocks and slabs, arranged in irregular courses. Only the two lowest courses fit those at the other walls. They are made from thin marble slabs, arranged vertically and horizontally respectively. The third and the fourth rows at the eastern and the western walls are made from considerably longer and thicker blocks of soft lime with oblique faces. There is a pitched roof, consisting of four pairs of solid lime blocks. The building is consolidated by lead seals binding the roof blocks to each other at their upper part.
The antechamber is narrower and lower than the chamber. Each of the walls is made from two limestone blocks with a rusticated frontal face. The roof is similar to the one of the chamber but it consists of two pairs of blocks.

The dromos is made from local crushed stones bound by clay. Its walls are leaning outwards probably to support the soil cover of the mound.

The orthostatic first course of the burial chamber consisting of thin marble slabs bears the tomb decoration. Relief geometric shapes, such as disk, quadrants, rectangles, five pointed star as well as two realistically shaped images of a horse head and a fish, are found on 8 of the 14 slabs. Relief quadrants are shaped on two of the roof blocks as well. A crest is cut outside, at the upper end of the western edge. It is extremely important to emphasize that the images on the marble slab are covered with mortar plaster and were not visible at least during the second stage of the tomb functioning. It can be also suggested that although it does not seem very probable, the marble slabs with relief images have been re-used.

All elements of the tomb in the village of Dolno Lukovo are covered by mortar stucco. Small pieces of it have survived and have been found in situ. Based on the preserved fragments, it is established that the slabs of the crepidoma have been covered by pink plaster. The same plaster smeared directly on the trampled clay covers the floor of the dromos. The main color of the burial chamber walls is light blue, and the roof blocks are plastered with white mortar. There are bands of deep red, purple and dark blue paint on the walls, but the decorative pattern cannot be reconstructed.

In contrast to the chamber, the antechamber has been filled in with soil and pieces of wall plaster preserved in situ. This allows reconstructing the sequence of the color bands. There is a light purple plinth above the floor covered with oblique light bands. The space above the plinth imitates ivory colored block masonry. It is followed by slightly protruding dark blue band and an ochre colored band. The roof is plastered with white mortar similar to the chamber.

The tomb has been robbed in the past. The archaeological excavations has brought to light, in the antechamber especially, elements of the grave goods of the burial (or burials): a silver coin of Alexander III type, pieces of a funerary wreath, fragmented bronze bilateral fibula, a lamp covered with black coating, pottery sherd including sherd from two amphorae as well as human bones.

A part of a saddle horse corpse – the left part of the chest and the left front leg with an iron ring of a saddle was laid in the dromos, in front of the antechamber.

Based on the artefacts discovered in the tomb, the burial is dated after the mid-3rd century BC. It seems possible that the tomb has functioned during two periods, and its construction can be dated back to a slightly earlier period, but not prior to the early 3rd century BC.

Mete Aksan. Burial and Settlement Relations in terms of Architecture, Spatial Design and Grave Inventory: Three Examples from Southeastern Thrace

In the light of my study on the reinvestigation of the previously excavated tumuli in southeastern Thrace, the burial mounds under discussion tend to form groups at certain locations. The reinvestigated tumuli in southeastern Thrace are generally located in the vicinity of three main sites: Vize (Bizye), Lüleburgaz (Bergule / Arcadiopolis) and Kirklaireli. Tombs with corbelled dome and barrel-vaults found under the five tumuli (Eriklice, Karakoç, Kirklaireli A, B and C) in the vicinity of Kirklaireli are all dated generally to the 4th-3rd century BC. This demonstrates that between these dates, rulers with considerably high status were positioned in this region of southeastern Thrace. Likewise, approximately 40 tumuli lie mainly south and also east of Vize (Bizye). Nine were excavated by Mansel in the 1930s and the finds point generally to the Roman period (1st-3rd century AD.). Of these nine tumuli, Vize A tumulus stands out with its architecture and grave goods which all point to a kingly burial. The finds from these tumuli are in accordance with the fact that Bizye was a main center in Thrace during the Roman period. The four tumuli east of Lüleburgaz (Bergule / Arcadiopolis) are also located very close to one another and evoke a small necropolis with rich burial finds from the 2nd century AD, pointing to high elites. The aim of this paper is to try to correlate tumuli and the nearby settlements and understand the status, spheres of influence of these sites.

Olga Palagia. A new interpretation of the main scene in the painted Philosophers’ Tomb in Pella, Macedonia

The so-called Philosophers’ Tomb was excavated in Pella, the capital of the Macedonian kingdom, in 2001 and promptly published in 2007. It dates from ca. 300 BC. and its four walls are decorated with four men sitting down and reading from scrolls, while a fifth man is standing, pointing at a globe. A secondary painted frieze represents a horse race among tomb monuments. The men have been interpreted as philosophers, while the man with the globe was identified as an astronomer. This paper will explore the iconography of gatherings of men reading and pointing at a globe which is known from funerary monuments in the fourth century and later. It will attempt to highlight the special meaning of the scrolls and globe which were used in initiation ceremonies in mystery cults related to the afterlife.
**Consuelo Manetta.** The decor of death: the funerary art of Bulgaria between the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic period.

Human activity that occurred in present-day Bulgaria during the Odrysian kingdom has left traces that can provide valuable insight into the important features of Thracian culture in the late 4th and early 3rd centuries BC — a period that is increasingly acknowledged as a crucial moment in the history of Thracian civilization. Numismatic studies have already shown that significant wealth accumulated in Thrace in this period, and this wealth can be connected to an outburst of urban development in Thrace as well as the dramatic increase in the number of rich tombs built below earthen burial mounds. They consist of chamber tombs which are different in plan and in size, whose interiors are occasionally painted. The color is sometimes limited to elements of the architectural decoration or merely to the swinging doors. In other cases, however, there are also examples of coherent figural decorative programs (e.g. the tombs of Kazanluk and Ostrusha). This paper will present the outcomes of an in-depth analysis of the painted tombs of Bulgaria between the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic periods, with a special focus on the iconography of funerary wall paintings and their interconnections with ritual and cultural issues. The study clearly shows that the Thracian funeral painting (alongside funeral architecture, furnishing and furniture) reflects specific Thracian patterns but unde- niably also mirrors Greek and Anatolian influences. Through the lens of funeral painting (iconographic and iconological choices, technical skill, craftsmanship and patrons), I will explore some of the much debated questions in current Bulgarian and international scholarship related to the following issues: spatial distribution of the necropoleis and their relation with their surrounding settlement network, population dynamics, ethnic labels, social, religious and artistic languages of the communities which inhabited Thrace in the period under consideration. Notwithstanding the compelling inputs of recent studies, many issues still require explanation: How did the Thracian culture in the Early Hellenistic period interact with the other local cultural tradition? How much did the Thracian depend on Greek/Macedonian models and artistic culture? Does the monumentality of the tombs (including the possibility of patronising a painted tomb) suggest an aspiration of Thracian elites to assimilate and emulate decorative trends that were popular among the Hellenized royal elites all over the Mediterranean (especially Macedonian fashions)? Or might it have hidden political meanings as, for example, an expression of power and wealth against or pro the Macedonian hegemony?

**Maria Chichikova.** The polychromy in the architectural and plastic decoration of the Early Hellenistic Thracian tombs

The paper deals with the polychromy attested in the decoration of the royal and elite tombs of the necropolises of Seuthopolis and Helis. The palette of the colors used there finds close parallels in the Macedonian tombs. The polychrome decoration of the Thracian tombs indicates that the involved artist knows very well the examples of Hellenistic painting from the area of the Eastern Mediterranean. He follows pretty closely the main trends of the Hellenistic decorative system, as well as the artistic and technological manners of the age.

**Kitan Kitanov and Julia Valeva.** Painting technique in Thracian tombs.

The aim of this contribution is to synthesize our information about the techniques and pigments applied in painted decoration of the Thracian tombs. The studies in this field can be considered insufficient, even less are the related publications. Nevertheless, a look on the state of research is needed to show the results achieved as well as the areas to be developed. The authors hope to find all available information in publications and in the archives of the National Institute of Immovable Cultural Heritage, which would present the results of the physico-chemical analyses carried out for the paintings of the monumental tombs of Sveshtari, Alexandrovo and Kazanlak.

**Emil Nankov.** Berenike bids farewell to Seuthes III, Part II: The South Italian alabastra from the Golyama Kosmatka tumulus

This article provides a closer look at the two ointment vessels discovered in the Golyama Kosmatka tumulus, now commonly identified as the tomb of Seuthes III. Such a study remains a necessity for several reasons. Being a mundane item related to female hygiene, the alabastra, now in the possession of the Museum of History “Iskra” in Kazanlak (Inv ## II 1768-II 1769), have understandably remained in the background of subsequent studies devoted to the numerous objects found inside the tomb, thereby not receiving a detailed scrutiny with regard to identification, typology and chronology. Even the most definitive publication on the tomb has recently offered a superficial treatment. To go beyond the culture history paradigm and to acquire a contextual understanding of their significance in terms of the rites surrounding the king’s burial, we need to look at them not in isolation, but in conjunction with the silver gilt scallop shell-shaped jewelry box found in immediate association. In short, the vessels from the Golyama Kosmatka tumulus emerge as a solitary example (on the territory of modern-day Bulgaria) of a very fine specimen known as footed alabastron (more often made of gypsum rather than alabaster), belonging to the so-called South-Italian type dated to the first quarter of the 3rd c. BC. Several studies have abundantly shown its popularity in South Italy, and less so in Macedonia; its exceptional presence in Thrace implies extraordinary circumstances deserving further consideration.
North America. They continue from Asia Minor through Kazakhstan and Siberia to China and Japan. Tumuli occur even in South and insula, England, West and Central Europe, Apennine and Balkan peninsulas and reaching South Russia. Eastward the idea of heroization of the deceased.ary contexts developed in the Thracian territories simultaneously with the other neighboring areas and is connected to ration in the Mediterranean region, were known and used in Thrace as well. The tendency to install furniture in funer -tomb near Tekirdag which is currently on view in the lapidarium of the Archaeological museum in Tekirdag also be-tomb near Kazanluk and the kline-sarcophagus from the tomb in Malko Belovo. Another funerary bed coming from a near Sveshtari, the kline from the tomb at Naip, the kline from the tomb at Varbitsa, the funerary bed in the Ostrusha incisions. The examples of type B furniture from Thrace are the two funerary beds from the tomb in Ginina mogila small circular discs resembling volute eyes in the middle of the cutout sections and palmettes above and below the examples mentioned above show that furniture with type B decoration is spread throughout whole Thrace during the Classical and Hellenistic period furnishing evidence for the contacts between Thrace and the neighboring areas during these periods. They also suggest that the trends, typical for the architecture and the architectural decoration in the Mediterranean region, were known and used in Thrace as well. The tendency to install furniture in funerary contexts developed in the Thracian territories simultaneously with the other neighboring areas and is connected to the idea of heroization of the deceased. Meglena Parvin. New observations on the inventory from the southwest chamber of the mound complex Ostrusha

The subject of this study are three items found in the unplundered chamber of the mound complex Ostrusha – a silver jug of the Type “White lotus”, silver calyx-cup and a parade pectoral the “Mezek” type made of iron and a silver-gilt foil with relief decoration. The typological analysis of the objects allows for the relative date to be established. The jug belongs to a group of 22 similar objects found in Thrace and Eastern Macedonia. Manufacturing technique, the exquisite nature of the decoration and the overall proportions make it possible to date them during the last quarter of the 4th c. BC.

The calyx-cup is also quite popular in Thrace and Macedonia during the second half of the 4th c. BC, and even later. The specific features of the shape, the proportions and the undecorated surface provide grounds to assign it to the earlier variant of the shape and for its manufacture to be put in the third quarter of the 4th c. BC. The pectoral, together with eight other examples (whole or fragmentary) belongs to the group of the so-called “Mezek” type. Their territorial distribution falls again within Thrace and Macedonia. Identical manufacture, similar decorative motives, and composition suggest a compact group created and used during 325-275 BC.

Danaila Grudeva. Furniture with Type B decoration from Thrace.

The monumental tombs in Thrace from the Late Classical and Hellenistic period are very important for the study on the relations between the Thracian territories and Greece, Asia Minor and Macedonia as their plans, building mate-rials, construction and architectural decoration reflect the main trends in the architecture of the Mediterranean world during these periods. An important aspect of the study on the Thracian tomb architecture is the examination of the furniture used in their interior. The material collected so far is sufficient enough to allow us to draw a relatively clear picture of the furniture types used in the Thracian tombs and show the influence which Asia Minor, Greece and Macedonia had over the tomb furnishing in Thrace. The importance of the problem is further emphasized by the recently published comprehensive studies on the furniture (mainly funerary couches) from the neighboring areas.

The typology of H. Kyrieleis which is used in all major publications on the topic, divides the furniture into three main types - A, B and C, based on the decoration of their front side. Examples of all three types are also found in Thrace. The current paper will focus on the furniture with type B decoration from burial complexes in Thrace and will present their main features, stylistic characteristics, possible influences and chronological framework. The type B furniture is characterized by rectangular legs with semicircular incisions on each side; volutes at the four ends of the cutouts; small circular discs resembling volute eyes in the middle of the cutout sections and palmettes above and below the incisions. The examples of type B furniture from Thrace are the two funerary beds from the tomb in Ginina mogila near Sveshtari, the kline from the tomb at Naip, the kline from the tomb at Varbitsa, the funerary bed in the Ostrusha tomb near Kazanluk and the kline-sarcophagus from the tomb in Malko Belovo. Another funerary bed coming from a tomb near Tekirdag which is currently on view in the lapidarium of the Archaeological museum in Tekirdag also belongs to this type. Klina were found in two more tombs in Southeastern Thrace - the tomb in the "C" tumulus at Kirkareli and the tomb at Kirklareli-Eriklice and the researchers suggest that they belong to the same type based on their similarity to the Naip tomb. Unfortunately these are neither published nor preserved so their further analysis is not possible.

The examples mentioned above show that furniture with type B decoration is spread throughout whole Thrace during the Classical and Hellenistic period furnishing evidence for the contacts between Thrace and the neighboring areas during these periods. They also suggest that the trends, typical for the architecture and the architectural decoration in the Mediterranean region, were known and used in Thrace as well. The tendency to install furniture in funerary contexts developed in the Thracian territories simultaneously with the other neighboring areas and is connected to the idea of heroization of the deceased.


Burial mounds are spread over vast territories. They occur in almost all of Europe starting from Scandinavian Pen-insula, England, West and Central Europe, Apennine and Balkan peninsulas and reaching South Russia. Eastward they continue from Asia Minor through Kazakhstan and Siberia to China and Japan. Tumuli occur even in South and North America.
In the general studies on the archaeological geophysics burial mounds do not attend as a potential target of exploration. Nevertheless they are so widespread, published examples of the application of geophysical techniques in tumulus prospection coming from abroad are quite scanty. Moreover, there is not a universal method offered for investigation of similar archaeological sites. Resistivity, geomagnetic, seismic, low frequency electromagnetic and GPR survey have been carried out with varying success. The surveyors have applied the devices at their disposal or techniques they have decided to be more appropriate for the proper conditions for solving the specific tasks set. Often, reported surveys have not been followed by archaeological excavations and thus it cannot be assessed to what extent they have been really successful.

The situation in Bulgaria has been established quite differently. It can be stated that this kind of investigation has formed here a separate branch in archaeological geophysics situated on the boundary between archaeology and engineering geology. Geophysical prospection of Thracian burial mounds has been usually or very regularly systematic and in predominant part of the cases they have been followed by archaeological excavations. This has allowed a test of the efficiency of the applied techniques but also corrections to be performed in order of the results optimization.

Initially, the efforts have been focused mainly on the discovery of large structures – monumental tombs. Development of geophysical equipment as well as of computer programming in recent years have allowed the technique of geophysical prospection to be improved and thus maximum useful information to be derived. This enhanced technique includes the joint application of routine electro-resistivity and geomagnetic mapping supplemented now by the new opportunities provided by the continuous vertical electrical sounding (CVES) and, respectively, by the two and three dimensional inverse modelling known also as two and three dimensional resistivity tomography (2D and 3D ERT). The latter allows a greater depth of investigation as well as more detailed qualitative and quantitative interpretation of the field measurement data. As a result of the application of this enhanced technique, a great variety of archaeological structures have been registered beneath the tumulus embankments – built stone graves (the tumuli Svetitsa and Malkata at Shipka), domed tombs (Golyama Arsenalka at Shipka and Momina tumulus at Bratya Daskalovi), stone piles (Zareva at Shipka, tumulus 1 at the village of Granit), krepises enclosures (krepises) (Atyova tumulus at Shipka and Chitashkata at Bratya Daskalovi), grave pits with cremation (Kabyle), grave pyre (Krakochova tumulus at Bratya Daskalovi), primary mounds (tumuli at the village of Krushare and the town of Opaka).

Olivier Henry. Seeking immortality, the Body of Tombs

Starting form case studies located in Southern Asia Minor, this papers aims at analyzing the social and political context of the architectural development of tombs in the early Hellenistic period.

Maya Vassileva. Phrygian Cult: the Evidence from the Tombs

Phrygian cult has widely been discussed in recent scholarship. The focus however has always been on the rock-cut monuments and open-air sanctuaries of the Mother Goddess known to the Greeks as Kybele. Phrygian tombs have entered the discussion, especially recently, but much less so than the rock-cut façades, altars, etc. This is due in part to the difficulties in reading properly the symbolism of the burial assemblages in the absence of written texts, and in part to the large unpublished material.

The present paper attempts at a possible interpretation of the grave goods in the rich Phrygian tombs in relation to Phrygian cult. This will be done in comparison of other data available. The conclusions presented here understandably refer to the Phrygian elite that was engaged with religious matters. For example, wooden furniture, textile remains and bronzework found in the tombs display similar cult symbolism. All of them show remarkably close patterns to the rock-cut sanctuaries of the Phrygian Mater.

Kostadin Rabadjiev. The World Beyond. Hellenic and Thracian Interpretation Compared

The paper discusses the ideas about the world beyond in Hellenic and Thracian interpretation. These ideas are reconstructed in the study of necropoleis and the organization of space; the shape and decoration of burial constructions: tombstones and chamber-tombs; the burial customs and the burial goods. Thus the Greek and Thracian concepts are compared to reveal the difference between the two neighboring cultures. They seem even much opposite – the Greek idea about Beyond is rationalistic since the contact is unidirectional and the dead are defined essentially as memory in social context. The difference proved to be in the asynchronous development of Thrace compared to Greek culture and the death is a clear illustration for this. Being much closer to Homeric age it was concerned mainly with the elite and viewed as a transition to a higher rank. Thus the deceased were men with daemonic supremacy, ancestors with psycho-somatic immortality in the periphery of the inhabited world, who were honored in rituals at their anonymous tombs.

Kamen D. Dimitrov. The Cult of the Dead Ruler in Early Hellenistic Thrace. Tomb Evidence and Royal Ideology.

The paper examines the cult of the dead ruler in Early Hellenistic Thrace after the evidence of the royal tombs of Seuthes III (Golyama Kosmatka), of Roigos (the Kazaniuk tomb) and of Dromihaites (?) (the tomb by Sveshtari). These
kings ruled over societies which featured some typical Hellenistic characteristics: mixed population, organized as personal monarchy; dynastic marriages with the diadochoi; developed market based on regular contacts with Greek cities; use of the Greek language and metrology; veneration of Greek deities both as personal-family and public cults; integration of similar deities to older pre-Hellenistic cults.

The Greek texts related to the after-life ideology of the Thracians and the Getae in particular reveal elements both of the Homeric and the Hellenic traditions to venerate the deceased ruler as hero and antropodaimon. The three royal tombs under consideration, being contemporaneous of the royal cities of Seuropolis and Helis (?) and serving their Greek-orientated population should be regarded as Hellenistic tombs, and not as pre-Hellenistic "temple sub-mound structures of the Thracian orphic faith and compact solar religion" as claimed by some scholars. The evidence of the three tombs is classified by structure, decoration and inventory. Many parallels in the royal burial complex at Vergina and the elite burial under Bella tumulus in Macedonia can be referred to.

When formulating the final interpretation of our topic one should bear in mind that before all the cult of the dead ruler was built by his heirs in order to secure their rule on the community with the help of the inherited tradition and, in particular, the authority of their predecessor. If so, the strong politization of the cult should not be put in doubt and the religious category of semi-god (hero or antropodaimon) appears to be the most suitable form to venerate the predecessor. Many features of similar posthumous treatment of the three rulers under consideration can be noticed in their tombs. They stress on the divine origin (=protection), the glorious military and political life time carrier, the after death relations to chthonic deities such as the Dodonian Zeus, Persephone and Dionysos (the Zalmoxis cult of the Getae being totally absent!) in the relevant evidence from the Early Hellenistic age. However, a dionysiac belief in the “after-life return” to protect the community, the state and especially the heirs as prophet is also not to be excluded.

Totko Stoyanov and Kalin Madzharov. The Getic capital (Helis?) at Sboryanovo and its tumular necropoleis.

At the eve of the Hellenistic Age (ca. 325 BC) near the modern town of Isparerh (NE Bulgaria) new political and economic center of the Getae has been established. The excavations at Sboryanovo reservation have revealed the ruins of great settlement on a plateau surrounded three sides by a river, where powerful fortification system developed during several decades has been built. These investigations started 1986 after the discovery in 1982 of the Royal Tomb (with Caryatids) near the village of Sveshtari.

The most important part of the city is developed at the highest Southwestern sector, where probably is to be the residential quarter (Basileia) of the royal and the aristocratic families, which monumental tombs have been studied in the Eastern necropolis of the city. The curtain and the towers defending the isthmus from South-West are built in opus pseudoisodomum. The techniques used for the processing of the blocks and quadrae are very similar to that documented in the constructions of the monumental tombs of the Eastern necropolis of the city. The economic prosperity has led to the development of the settlement along the southern slopes as well to the valley to the north of the plateau. In its frames recorded by now (ca. 30 ha) the Getic center had about or more than 10 000 citizens and complex social structure. The general characteristics of the city and its aristocratic necropoleis have not analog in the Getic lands in the Early Hellenistic period. The only Getic city (polis) known in the ancient written sources at that time is Helis – the residence of the Getic ruler Dromichaites. There he brought the captured Lysimachus and his army (Diod. XXI. 12). If so, the Caryatids tomb could be built for Dromichaites himself and his wife, the daughter of Lysimachus.

In both necropoleis in Sboryanovo 52 mounds have been recorded (32 in the Eastern and 20 in the Western). 35 of them are studied partially or totally. There have been buried members of the elite of different levels. The common people have been buried in flat necropoleis which are not known so far. At the tumuli 9 type of grave constructions is to be defined: - barrel vaulted tombs (4), where the rite is inhumation; - tomb of quarry stones construction; - ashlar cist with inhumation; - one or two chambers tombs dug into the ground with cremations; several variants of cremation graves – with simple ground pit, with urn of different kind (pithos, pot, amphora); or disposition of the cremation resting on the terrain.