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‘ PRINCESSES ’

of the Mediterranean in the Dawn of History



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Organisers



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The Lady of Aigai

The 'Queens' Burial Cluster' is located at a most privileged and prominent spot above and beyond the cemetery, directly next to the city's west gate and close to the sanctuaries with the royal offerings.¹ Nine graves were excavated here: four Archaic pit graves (AI [540/30 BC], AII [approx. 500 BC], AIII [approx. 480 BC], and AIV [470/60 BC]), three Classical monumental cist graves (K1 [approx. 430 BC], K2 [approx. 440 BC], and K3 [350-30 BC]), and two Macedonian tombs. One of the latter, with an impressive Ionian façade on its inner chamber and a magnificent gilt marble throne among its furnishings, is the earliest (344/43 BC) monument of this type, but also one of the most significant, since it probably belonged to Queen Euridice, wife of King Amyntas III, mother of three kings, and grandmother of a world ruler. The other Macedonian tomb, also with Ionian façade and marble throne, probably belonged to Euridice's granddaughter, queen of Thessaloniki and last of the Temenid dynasty, who died in 298 BC. Scattered finds suggest the presence of earlier graves (first half of sixth century BC), probably pit graves, which were destroyed during the construction of the two Macedonian tombs.

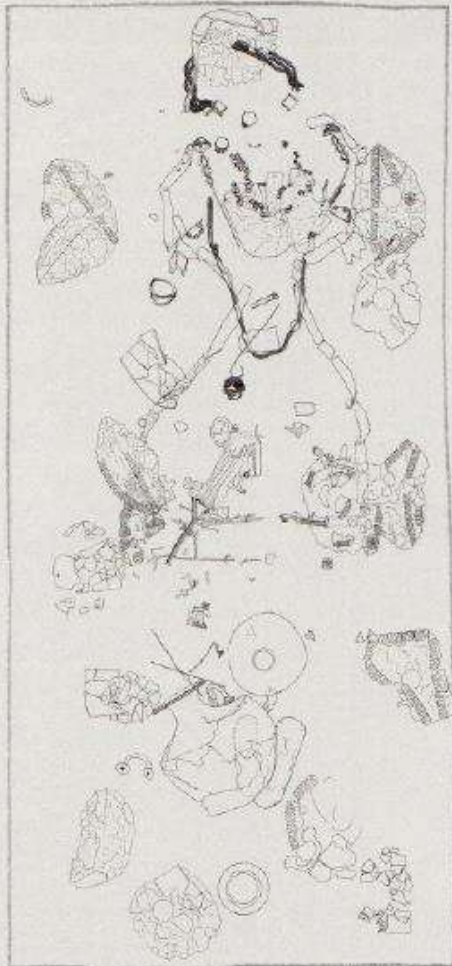


Fig. 1. Drawing of the burial of the 'Lady of Aigai' (1988/A11).

Despite the looting of eight of the nine preserved graves, the extremely opulent grave gifts found throughout the cluster, as well as the form and location of the funerary monuments, demonstrate that all of the graves belonged to important female members of the royal family. For reasons of eugenics and politics, the Temenid kings frequently resorted to polygamy. The sons of all of the royal wives had equal chances of become king according to their age and abilities. However, at least with regard to the performance of the queen's religious duties, there was probably a hierarchy among the royal consorts, since only one could hold the office of high priestess.² The limited number of burials (compared to the number of women in the royal family) in this cluster might suggest that only those wives who held the highest sacerdotal office at the time of their death, had the privilege of being buried here. The others were probably buried in the same cluster or even the same grave as their husband, as was the case for the two wives of Philip II.

1. On the 'Queens' Burial Cluster' (Cluster B) see Ανδρόνικος 1987, 1-7. Ανδρόνικος 1988. Κоттариδης 1989, 1-11. Κоттариδης 1990, 35-44. Κоттариδης 2004b, 527-542. Also Κоттариδης 2004, 139-147. Κоттариδης 2009, 143-153. Κоттариδης 2006, 155-168. Κоттариδης 2007. Κоттариδης 2011b, 153-166.

2. Κоттариδης 2011a, 93-126.



Fig. 2. The 'Lady of Aigai' upon discovery.

The only tomb (1988/AII) to have escaped the grave robbers' notice was located near the centre of the 'Queens' Burial Cluster'.³ The tomb (fig. 1) was intact, filled with treasures that recall the wealth of Mycenae's shaft graves – in fact, it contained the richest burial excavated in Macedonia so far. The grave, which consisted of a vast pit (approx. 5m long, 4m wide, and 5m deep) with a large wooden case/sarcophagus at the bottom, is dated to the early fifth century BC.

After the end of the funeral, the wooden case and the grave-gifts that had been placed around it were covered with soil and the pit was backfilled with earth and large stones. When the wooden lid rotted and collapsed under the enormous pressure of the overlying volume, the soil covered the deceased's decaying body. As a result, the jewellery and gold garment ornaments were hardly moved, leaving the imprint of the dead queen's body in the soil (fig. 2). Thus, through very careful excavation and meticulous drawing and photographic documentation archaeologists were able to retrieve extremely important information on the objects, the funerary customs, and the grave's occupant.

3. Tomb of the 'Lady of Aigai'.



Fig. 3. The gold strip that probably decorated the deceased queen's diadem-wreath.

Contrary to the custom prevailing at Aigai until the reign of King Philip II (359-336 BC), according to which pit graves were oriented north-south with the deceased's head pointing south, this grave was oriented east-west with the deceased's head pointing east. Her arms extended along her torso and her body was placed slightly off-centre to make room for her sceptre on her right (as in the graves of warriors, in which the spear is placed to the deceased's right).

Its wooden shaft had rotted away, however its curved bone finial and the tiny amber petals of the palmettes that decorated its entire length attest to its existence. A symbolic object, the sceptre denotes the rich lady's particular religious office continuing the tradition evidenced by the triple bronze double axes from the equally opulent female burials of the Early Iron Age (eleventh-seventh centuries BC) at Aigai (see pages 73-81 in the present volume).

The position of both the deceased's crushed skull and teeth and her jewellery indicates that her head was turned sideways and tilted slightly towards her right shoulder. She wore no death mask, mouthpiece, or eye covers.

Hardly displaced from its original position at the top of the head, a gold strip with embossed mythological scenes probably adorned her diadem-wreath (fig. 3, n. 1). The three gold coils with the precious gold finials found next to the diadem among the cranial bones were probably hair ornaments (n. 2). Made of thin flat wire and resembling tight curls of golden hair, they were probably secured in the hair and left hanging on the sides, framing the face with their warm glow. These most rare,⁴ impressive, and somewhat extravagant ornaments might be considered direct descendants of the heavy bronze hair-coils that hung from large bronze buttons on women's headscarves and dangled on either side of the head during the Early Iron Age (eleventh – seventh centuries BC).

4. Similar ornaments are extremely rare. Examples were found at Archontiko and in the two richest women's tombs of Sindos, where they were identified as 'necklaces' hanging from the temples over the chest (see pages 391-392 in the present volume). The two Sindos tombs were cist graves, and it is possible that some objects were removed from their original position by water or rodents. Alternatively, it is possible that these ornaments were worn in different ways.

Bronze hair-coils are very popular ornaments in the tumulus cemetery at Aigai, the largest and most impressive examples coming from the priestess tombs with the triple bronze double axes.

Less extravagant but equally precious and elaborate are the dead queen's remaining jewels: the characteristic hoop earrings (n. 6), the elegant pyramidal pendant (n. 5), the opulent necklace with its two strands of gold beads (n. 3), the heavy bow fibulae (n. 7), the huge pins (n. 8), the long braided silver chain with the double snakes at the ends (n. 4), the gold armlets that twisted like snakes around her upper arms as suggested by their snakehead endings (n. 10), and the simple finger ring that she wore on her right middle finger (n. 11).

An abundance of gold, exquisitely crafted three-dimensional flower and buds, filigree lace and rich granulation are used to create an enchanting microcosm of details that reflects the fashion of the time and the goldsmith's remarkable abilities. The shapes and manufacturing techniques demonstrate that all of the deceased's jewellery was produced by the same craftsman, whose workshop was probably located in the region not far from the auriferous Echodoros River. This workshop apparently produced some of the jewellery worn by the ladies of Sindos and Archontiko. However, the Macedonian queen's jewellery is not only more numerous and precious, the pieces also match one another forming an elegant ensemble, a veritable set unusual for that time, which demonstrates not only her wealth, but also their owner's refined taste and sophistication.

The deceased's garment is also unusually opulent, with gold bands and discs sewn onto the fabric and a fine gold sheet covering almost her entire chest down to her waist. The presence of pins and fibulae, the rare organic remains, and the few traces of metal oxidation suggest that the lady wore a fine, thickly woven *peplos* over an even finer *chiton*. At least one of these garments, possibly the *peplos*, was dyed a light, bright purple.⁵

5. Traces of a purple textile were identified during excavation near the deceased's right hand.

The two fairly large bow fibulae found below the shoulder secured the peplos slightly above the chest, joining the front and back panels together as illustrated in representations. The two huge pins found above the fibulae probably held the peplos and chiton together and adorned the lady's shoulders with their impressive heads. Attached next to the pins were the snakehead suspension bits of the silver chain that hung down to the lady's abdomen. Gold discs (fig. 4, n. 20) with embossed rosettes and two tiny sewing holes in their centre were sewn, like buttons, in rows on the peplos' skirt, whereas two double and four single triangular sheets formed a shiny border on the hem (n. 17-18).

Traces of a third textile that was slightly thicker and stiffer than the peplos and chiton and, above all, the gold bands that were found over the silver chain show that the deceased wore a third garment, possibly a kind of overcoat that partially covered the other two. This third garment was decorated with five large metal strips (n. 13-15) embossed with a braid motif and mythological scenes using the same mould as on the diadem. It also featured fifteen smaller strips (n. 16) decorated with rows of rosettes and originally sewn onto the hem. All of these preserve their original shape thanks to the metal's relative stiffness and allow a clear and unexpected reconstruction of this unusual garment.

Fig. 4. Twenty three gold discs with embossed rosettes, approximately 500 BC.



The manner in which this *epiblema*, or overcoat, widens at the shoulders and the total length of the metal bands that fold at this point suggest that the garment probably covered the head, held in place by the diadem. It then covered the shoulders and back reaching down to slightly above the ankles. On the front, it fastened at the waist with a gold double pin, but left the chest and legs uncovered, falling diagonally on the sides to reveal almost entirely the decorated skirt of the peplos. The overcoat hugged the body, sketched the silhouette with its gold hem in a most characteristic and remarkable way.

The overcoat's design was specific and deliberate as indicated by its fastening at the waist with the gold double pin and by the slightly curving metal bands and use of smaller ones to follow the curved shape of the garments hem. On the other hand, the sparse sewing holes make it impossible for the bands to stay attached to the hem, unless the person wearing the garment stayed still. Although this decoration was possibly added for the funeral, the *epiblema* usually featured a distinct border, whose shape the gold bands reproduced.

A little below the double pin was a double gold strip with embossed triangles and drop-shaped motifs (n. 12). This strip was located over the silver chain and was thus part of the deceased's outer layer of garments, possibly decorating a textile band or belt used for joining together the *epiblema*'s right and left sides.



Fig. 5. The bronze hydria and omphalos bowl upon discovery.



Fig. 6. Silver omphalos bowl bearing the earliest inscription found so far at Aigai, approximately 500 BC.



Fig. 7. Iron exaleiptron, approximately 500 BC.



Fig. 8. Iron model of a four-wheeled cart, approximately 500 BC.

Two trapezoidal zigzag-shaped gold sheets with embossed geometric decoration were sewn next to the gold border along the garment's upper edge, near the upper arms, and two more near its lower corners. Similar sheets decorated the upper part of the deceased's shoes, the soles of which were covered with strong gilt silver plaques (n. 21).

Apart from the sceptre, the wooden case contained several other precious grave gifts. An elegant glass perfume bottle (n. 24) was placed near the deceased's pubis. A rare silver omphalos bowl, gilt and richly decorated with characteristic vegetal motifs in relief, preserving the earliest known inscription from Aigai (fig. 5-6), was placed at her feet. So was a silver rod with applied gold decoration, a chain hanging from one end, and a gold bead attached to the other like a spindle whorl, probably part of a particularly luxurious and sophisticated spindle. The rod was broken into three pieces as if ritually 'killed' so as to follow its mistress to Hades realm, like warriors' swords. For the Macedonian queens, as for Homeric Queen Helen of Sparta, spinning wool was the daily occupation that characterized their presence in life and death. The Macedonian ladies took their spindle to their graves like the ladies of Archaic Crete on the funerary stelai of Prinias. Alexander the Great did not fail to praise the textiles woven by the women of his generation.

The bronze hydria (fig. 5) that was found lying across the deceased's feet was originally placed standing up near the case's west wall, as indicated by its base. Twelve large bronze omphalos bowls with characteristic incised lance-shaped motifs framed the deceased's body; originally they stood against or hung from the case's sides. Hanging between the six pairs of bowls were six large terracotta busts of the Goddess, which had fallen among the vases (fig. 9, n. 26).

Outside the wooden case, on a step in the west part of the burial pit, was a bronze lebes on an iron tripod, a bronze ladle with ornate handle (n. 23), and a tinned bronze bowl, all of which were probably used for the funerary libations and ritual bathing of the body of the 'Lady of Aigai'.

An elaborate iron exaleiptron on a bronze tripod base (fig. 7, n. 25), a small iron four-wheeled cart (fig. 8, n. 22) with wooden gold-decorated pack animals attached to it (only the fine gold decorative bands of the animal figurines are preserved), and several iron spits, probably originally contained in a wooden or leather case decorated with gold, had fallen onto the deceased's thighs probably from their original location on the wooden case lid.

The examination of the deceased's teeth and bones showed that the 'Lady of Aigai' was in her forties – that is, middle-aged for her time – when she died, in the early fifth century BC. Obviously a wife of King Amyntas I (approximately 530-495 BC), she might have been the mother of Alexander I (495-454 BC), a young man and Olympic athlete at that time (Herodotus, *Histories*, 5, 22).

The spindle and sceptre define the deceased's identity and area of activity according to her time's standards: sedulous and productive, the pride of her house, she was both a priestess and queen, the incarnation of and mediator for the community's divine blessings.

The iron spits suggest that the queen shared with her family's men the privilege of participating in the sacred banquets that followed the sacrifices to the gods. The cart model recalls the story of the venerable priestess of Argive Hera, whose sons, Kleobis and Biton, in an act of extreme piety, pulled her cart so that the holy procession would not be delayed and received the gods' bittersweet reward. A symbolic object, the cart model suggests that, as a high priestess, the Macedonian queen had the right to appear in public and take part in the sacred processions and litanies held in honour of the gods, the rituals of which she performed. This hypothesis is further enhanced by the queen's gilt silver omphalos bowl and the twelve bronze omphalos bowls, libation vases par excellence, contained in this grave and in all of the other graves in the 'Queens' Burial Cluster'.

In the Archaic kingdoms that come alive in the epics, the king, descendant of god supreme, is the living link that connects his people with divinity and secures its blessing. As supreme bearer of divine rule, the king performs the required rituals accompanied by his wife and high priestess, whose presence in some rituals is even more important than her husband's.

Similar finds from the Sindos,⁶ Archontiko,⁷ and Aiani⁸ cemeteries demonstrate that in neighbouring tribes and peoples the wives of kings and rulers also held religious offices. This custom persisted in democratic Athens, where the *basilinna*, wife of the ruling *basileus*, played a leading part in the extremely important ceremonies of the *Hieros Gamos*, or Sacred Marriage.

6. Δεσποίνη – Βοκοτοπούλου – Μισαηλίδου – Τιβέριος 1985.

7. Χρυσοστόμου – Χρυσοστόμου 2005a, 505-516.

8. Καραμήτρου-Μεντεσίδη 1996, 219-231.



Fig. 9. Terracotta female bust, approximately 500 BC.

However, even the finds from the richest female burial of Sindos, in the fertile valley of the Axios River, cannot rival the opulence and wealth of the 'Lady of Aigai', who entered her grave clad in purple and gold from head to toe like the queens of the legends.

Interestingly, this most opulent funerary assemblage does not include a gold death mask such as those found in the burials of important men and women at Sindos, Archontiko, and Trebeniste, where great care was taken to conceal with gold all of the exposed parts of the deceased's body. This obviously deliberate omission and the majestic pyre – the two are interrelated since the pyre rendered redundant the use of a gold mask to cover the deceased's face and provides them with the image of divine imperishability – mark an interesting difference between Macedonian burial customs and those of the neighbouring tribal kingdoms.

Of the remaining grave gifts, the religious busts (n. 9) ensured the protection of the great Goddess during the priestess's journey to the Underworld. The hydria offered its contents to quench the lady's eternal thirst, the bathing and libation vases, such as the perfume bottle and the exaleiptron, were necessary for the funerary ritual. The nature and function of these objects reflect the general funerary practices and ideology for that region and time and do not provide additional information for this particular burial.

With their precious materials and careful manufacture, the bronze and iron vessels are an obvious sign of great wealth and high social status. Their simple decoration of austere geometric motifs, however, suggests that they were locally made. On the other hand, the terracotta busts show definite East Ionian characteristics, and the silver omphalos bowl is either imported or strongly influenced by eastern models.⁹ This eastern influence, also apparent in the gold diadem's iconography,¹⁰ was a general trend in this region, which was annexed by the Persian Empire in the late sixth century BC, and should not be regarded as indicative of the deceased's origin or relations. The same applies for the deceased's jewellery, which, although opulent and refined, follows the styles prevalent in this region and time period, as well as her garments, which are diachronic types.

9. Phrygian, Lydian, and generally 'Achaemenid' parallels are well-known and well-studied, see Melikian-Chirvani 1993, 111-130. Toker 1992. Özgen – Öztürk 1996. Zournatzi 2000, 683-706.

10. The iconographical types and techniques recall East Ionian models.

The key for approaching the 'Lady of Aigai' is probably her unusual and particularly characteristic epiblema. The overcoat prevalent in mainland Greece, the Greek islands, Ionia, and Southern Italy during this period was the himation, a kind of short, fairly light mantle, draped around the body and forming rich pleats on one side, secured onto the shoulder with a fibula.

In the Archaic and Classical period, women, particularly priestesses, occasionally wore an epiblema, a kind of short cloak that covered the shoulders and back (sometimes also the head) but not the torso, its sides hanging loose or draped around the forearms.¹¹ Rare representations depict the epiblema draped around the waist so as to cover the abdomen like an apron. However, not a single representation survives that shows an epiblema or himation fastened at the waist like this one.¹²

Surprisingly, the Aigai epiblema is identical to the one depicted on an ivory figurine from the grave of a wealthy lady and possible priestess at Bayindir near Elmali (southwest Turkey) (fig. 14).¹³ The figurine, which is dated to the late seventh or early sixth century BC and depicts a woman holding a baby in one hand and a bird in the other, was probably part of a ritual vessel, like the other figurines from the same burial.

The woman's facial features and charming smile are carefully rendered, as is the curious epiblema, which covers the head and hugs the body like a 'shell' leaving the chest and thighs uncovered, but fastened at the waist by two projections that 'button' above the belt.¹⁴ The garment's distinctive border is rendered in relief and curved exactly like that of the Aigai epiblema, whereas the garment's decoration is different on the upper and lower parts.

11. See Connelly 2007, 85-117, and repeated references with extensive bibliography.

12. According to the published excavation reports, garments similar to that of the 'Lady of Aigai' do not occur in any of the cemeteries of the wider region (Sindos, Archontiko, Aiane).

13. Burial inside a tumulus in a cemetery of approximately 100 tumuli, see Dörflük 1988, 171-174. Özgen 1988, 187ff. Özgen – Öztürk 1996, 160ff. Roller 1999, 104ff. Işık 2000, 80ff. Boardman 2000, 90ff. Börker-Klähn 2003, 69-105. Sare 2011, 104-135.

14. Not held by the belt as on the other figurine from the same tomb (Antalya C), or the Cybele figurines, or even Cheramyes' Hera.

The Bayindir cemetery, where the lady was buried, was located on the edge of the Lydian territory at the time of its great acme. The grave's inscribed silver and bronze grave gifts mention the name Atis seven times, whereas the figurine's stylistic features associate it with similar finds from Ephesus.¹⁵ Possibly the work of an Ionian artist, this tiny masterpiece may reflect the reality of the public that it addresses.

The rare garment of the Bayindir 'kourotrophos' finds an unexpected parallel almost a century later in the unique epiblema of the Lady of Aigai. The rarity and obvious specificity of these two cases, as well as their chronological and geographical distance, suggest that the similarity does not result from some generic trend or influence. The uniqueness of the Aigai garment in both space and time makes it a characteristic feature, an element of identity for the lady wearing it. Could the richly adorned queen of Aigai have come from Lydia as a bride for the king of Macedon?

After the defeat of King Croesus in 546 BC, Lydia was one of the most important satrapies of the Persian Empire, and Sardis a favourite residence of the great ruler. In 513 BC, following Darius I's Scythian expedition, Megabazus campaigned against Thrace striving to reach as far west as possible. King Amyntas I of Macedon acted calmly and wisely, and took advantage of his Thracian neighbours' weakness in order to extend his territory to Anthemous and possibly Amphaxitis. Despite Herodotus's heroic narration (Herodotus, *Histories*, 5.17-22), it appears that the Macedonian king's relations with the Persians were anything but bad. The support of someone located in the army's rear is always useful, and Amyntas proved a useful ally for Megabazus. In this context, royal matchmaking is not improbable, given that intermarriage was a popular Temenid tactic in their foreign relations. If this was the case, the 'Lady of Aigai', who was born shortly before 530 BC, came to Macedonia after 513 BC and was probably not the mother of Alexander I, who was already a young adult in the early fifth century BC.

15. Işık 2000, 80-83. Also, Bammer 1985, 39-57.

There was another member of the royal family, princess Gygaia, whom Herodotus mentions as being given in marriage by her brother Alexander to the a Persian noble Bubares, son of Megabazus (Herodotus, *Histories*, 5.21). The clear reference to Gygaia's brother rather than father suggests that Gygaia's marriage took place after King Amyntas I died, probably in 496/5 BC, or 492 BC, when Mardonius's campaign that resulted in Macedonia's annexation by the Persian Empire began. Since Macedonian women were considered adults at the age of fourteen, Gygaia could have been a daughter of Amyntas and the 'Lady of Aigai'.

Largely unknown in Macedonia and throughout Greece,¹⁶ the name 'Gygaia' is obviously associated to the name of Gyges, the legendary king of Lydia.¹⁷ Gygaia was the name of a lake near Sardis, the most venerated shrine of Artemis near the tumuli of the kings. It was also the name of the mythical matriarch of the Lydian warrior kings, who was none else than the Great Goddess herself (*Iliad*, Book 2, 865; Herodotus, *Histories*, 1.93.5). The choice of such a name for the daughter of a Macedonian king cannot be incidental and makes sense if her mother was indeed connected to Lydia.

Gygaia's husband Bubares was no random individual. Possibly commander of the region's satrapy, he was one of the two officers in charge of constructing Xerxes's canal on the Athos peninsula (Herodotus, *Histories*, 7.22). Through Gygaia's alliance to Bubares, her brother Alexander enjoyed the Persian king's trust. The good relations between the Persians and the Temenids continued after the inglorious end of Xerxes's campaign.¹⁸ As a result, the Persian King ceded the city of Alabanda in Caria to Gygaia and Bubares's son, who was named Amyntas after his grandfather in honour of his mother's line. All of this takes on a new meaning if the 'Lady of Aigai' is indeed the link that connected the Macedonians with the legendary kingdoms of the East long before Alexander the Great.

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16. Ancient written sources mention another woman by the name of Gygaia, probably named after the Temenid Gygaia, who was wed to Amyntas III but was sidelined together with her children by Euridice.

17. Gyges, King of Lydia (Herodotus, *Histories*, 1.8-13).

18. Herodotus, *Histories*, 8.136.



1. *Filet diadem*

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 2153.

Gold. Complete.

Max. L. 48.9cm, max. W. 3.6cm.

The small holes arranged along the lower edge of this relatively wide and thick gold band suggest that it was sewn onto the textile that covered a wreath made of organic material. The slightly larger width and relief line marking the edges distinguish this band from the strips that decorated the hem of the deceased's epiblema.

Mythological scenes were embossed on the band's entire surface using a matrix.

Dotted lines divide the band into eight equal panels depicting: (a) two heraldic sphinxes and two standing heraldic lions on either side of palmettes; (b) a humorous version of Hephaistos' return to Olympus, with Hephaistos guided by Dionysus; (c) Herakles aiming his bow at two centaurs; (d) two Gorgons, Stheno and Euryale, in the characteristic position of the 'en gounasi dromos' chasing after Perseus for killing their sister Medusa; (e) Theseus fighting the Minotaur and Herakles fighting the Nemean lion with Athena looking on; (f) Odysseus and two of his comrades blinding Polyphemos; and, finally, two scenes of athletic games, possibly the 'athla epi Pelia', with a jumper, two athletes throwing, and a judge in one metope (g), and two pairs of boxers in the other (h). Dotted rosettes are scattered irregularly between the figures, an expression of the Archaic artist's *horror vacui*.

After the wreath's hard organic core disintegrated, the gold band was crushed by the soil and several figures are now barely visible. Careful observation, however, reveals a precise and detailed rendering following the forms and types of the lively and exuberant East Ionian iconography.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 86.



A.K.

2. Tubular coil ornaments

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 1974, BM 1975, BM 1993.

Gold.

Max. W. of spacer bars: 3cm.

These three gold tubular ornaments were found together with the diadem above and behind the crushed skull, surrounding the head like a halo. This suggests that they were placed on the head rather the neck, as assumed for examples from other contexts. Made of twisted gold strips, these tubular ornaments look very much like tightly curled hair. They were placed over the head and hung on either side of the face. Their ends were inserted inside conical finials made of thick gold sheet with rich filigree decoration on the obverse. Because the finials are quite heavy and would have pulled on the tubular coils, loosening and deforming them, we can assume that string was threaded through the coils to keep them steady. The small biconical gold beads found next to the coils' ends – four on each side (Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 2024, BM 2025, BM 2026, BM 2027, BM 2028, BM 2029, BM 2030, BM 2031: W. 0.9cm) – probably hung from these strings.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 114, n. 329.



A.K.

3. Necklace

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 2023.

Gold.

Two-strand necklace made of 61 ribbed gold beads, similar to the beads that decorate fibulae and pins. Made of relatively thick gold sheet, they probably featured a solid core of an organic material.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 115, n. 331.



A.K.



4. Silver chain with gold terminators

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 2165 and BM 2166.

Silver, gold.

L. 7cm, W. 1cm.

This long chain, up to 1cm wide, is made of eight tightly intertwined braids. Shortly before the ends, the braids pass through two gold cones with filigree decoration and separate into two strands, each strand (four in total) ending inside a gold tube shaped like a snake. The snakes, with scales and facial features rendered in filigree, bite into a suspension ring by which the chain was attached onto the peplos.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 115, n. 339.

A.K.



5. Pyramidal pendant

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum,

inv. n. BM 2022.

Gold. Complete.

H. 2.5cm.

Pendant with characteristic cylindrical suspension ring, entirely decorated with granulation, and featuring a tiny daffodil on its tip, similar to those on the earrings and pins.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 114, n. 332.

A.K.



6. Pair of hoop earrings

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 2018 and BM 2019.

Gold. Complete.

Max. D. 3.4cm, band W. 0.9cm.

Although of a type fairly common during the Archaic period, these earrings are distinguished by their exquisite craftsmanship and imaginative decoration. The type's basic structure, a hoop that widens towards the front before attaching onto the earlobe, becomes here a band of gold lace that ends in a multi-petalled 'lively' daisy, a rosette, with a daffodil flowering in its centre, similar to that featured on pins. Two buds frame the rosette making for an even more impressive central motif. Granulation and filigree, two extremely complex techniques, were employed masterfully and generously in order to capture the flower's beauty through the magic of geometry, creating a gentle harmony from the play of light and dark.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 115, n. 330.

A.K.

7. Bow fibulae

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 1972 and BM 1973.

Gold. Complete.

Max. L. 6cm, max. W. 3.5cm.

These large and heavy bow fibulae are made entirely of gold, which is rather unusual for this time period. Thick gold wire forms the pin and coil behind it; it is then flattened into a narrow strip and curved to form a tubular bow that ends in a clasp. The clasp takes the form of a snake's head with two large gold globules for eyes. Three ribbed gold beads are threaded onto the tubular bow.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 114, n. 333.



A.K.

8. Pins

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 2016 and BM 2017.

Gold. Complete.

Max. L. 28.5cm, head D. 3.5cm.

Almost a foot long, these two gold pins are the largest and most precious examples of this type of jewellery discovered thus far. The tubular gold shaft features a solid silver core that makes it more durable and therefore more functional. The impressive and elegant head, which accounts for more than one third of the pin's total length, is as intricate as comparable examples from the Sindos cemetery, though more minimal and articulated with greater geometric precision. It recalls a popular Archaic type known from much smaller silver or bronze pins, which some scholars associate with Peloponnesian workshops.

Three ribbed beads are threaded onto the solid silver core and separated by concave rings of increasing size to create a rhythmical sequence that culminates in the usual disc, on the centre of which blossoms a gold daffodil. Delicate filigree motifs decorate the flower, the disc's edge, even the rings that separate the beads, catching the light and shadow and making this heavy ornament appear lighter, a sign of the goldsmith's great skill.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 116, n. 334.



A.K.



9. Pin

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/ΑΙΙ.

Aigai Archaeological Museum,

inv. n. BM 2020.

Gold. Complete.

L. 7.2cm.

Gold double pin with bilobe head.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 114, n. 335.

A.K.



10. Spiral bracelets

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/ΑΙΙ.

Aigai Archaeological Museum,

inv. n. BM 1997 and BM 1998.

Gold. Complete.

D. 8cm.

Bracelets forming a single spiral before ending in embossed snake heads. They are made of a relatively strong, thin metal strip, which – as its rounded section suggests – covered a somewhat elastic core made of organic material.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 110.

A.K.



11. Finger ring

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/ΑΙΙ.

Aigai Archaeological Museum,

inv. n. BM 2021.

Gold. Complete.

Max. D. 2.1cm.

Made of a relatively strong gold strip, this simple band was probably reinforced with a solid core made of organic material.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 110.

A.K.



12. Double rectangular plaque

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/ΑΙΙ.

Aigai Archaeological Museum,

inv. n. BM 1992.

Gold.

L. 12.2cm.

Wide double rectangular sheet decorated with embossed triangles and drop motifs. It was found slightly below the deceased's waist, where it was sewn onto her garment by means of the small holes at its corners.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 117, n. 337.

A.K.



13. Strip

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/ΑΙΙ.

Aigai Archaeological Museum,

inv. n. BM 2157.

Gold.

L. 60.2cm.

Long gold strip decorated with an embossed braid motif. Originally sewn onto the epiblema's hem.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 110.

A.K.



14. Strips

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/ΛII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 2152, BM 2155, and BM 2156.

Gold.

L. 55.7 (BM 2152), 30.4 (BM 2155), and 27.3cm (BM 2156).

Three gold strips decorated with mythical scenes embossed onto the metal using the same matrix as on the diadem. Originally sewn onto the epiblema's hem.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 110.

A.K.

15. Strip

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/ΛII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 2158.

Gold.

L. 35.7cm.



Long gold strip, originally sewn onto the epiblema's hem. The decoration is worn and therefore cannot be identified.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 110.

A.K.

16. Strips

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/ΛII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 2001, BM 2002, BM 2003, BM 2007, BM 2011, BM 2012, BM 2000, BM 2013, BM 2005, BM 2006, BM 2008, BM 2009, BM 2010, BM 2014, BM 2044.

Gold.

L. 8.5 (BM 2001), 8 (BM 2002), 7.1 (BM 2003), 8.2 (BM 2007), 10.9 (BM 2011), 9.8 (BM 2012), 7.8 (BM 2000), 16.2 (BM 2013), 6.7 (BM 2005), 5.2 (BM 2006), 8.4 (BM 2008), 6.7 (BM 2009), 8.6 (BM 2010), 9.5 (BM 2014), 7.8cm (BM 2044).



Fifteen gold strips with embossed rosettes, originally sewn onto the epiblema's hem.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 110.

A.K.



17. Triangular plaques

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum,
inv. n. BM 2040 and BM 2043.

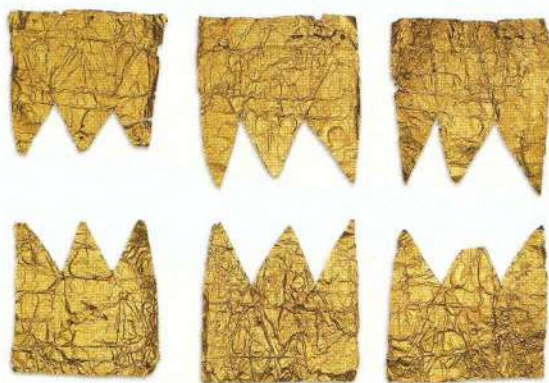
Gold.

Max. W. 2.8cm.

Plaques in the shape of double triangles decorated with embossed triangles and drop motifs. Tiny holes along the edges indicate that they were sewn onto a garment's hem.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 110.

A.K.



19. Plaques with dentate border

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, BM 2034,
BM 22037, BM 2032, BM 2033, BM
2035, BM 2036.

Gold.

L. 6.5 (BM 2034), 6.7 (BM 22037), 7.1
(BM 2032), 6cm (BM 2035).

Four rectangular gold plaques with
dentate border, decorated with embossed

18. Triangular plaques

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum,
inv. n. BM 2039, BM 2042, BM 2038,
BM 2042.

Gold.

Max. W. 5.6cm.

Four triangular plaques in the form of
single triangles decorated with embossed
triangles and drop motifs. Tiny holes
along the edges indicate that they were
sewn onto a garment's hem.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 110.

A.K.



20. Discs

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n.
BM 2004, BM 2045, BM 2046, BM
2047, BM 2048, BM 2049, BM 2050,
BM 2051, BM 2052, BM 2053, BM
2054, BM 2055, BM 2056, BM 2057,
BM 2058, BM 2059, BM 2060, BM
2061, BM 2062, BM 2063, BM 2064, BM
2065, BM 2066.

Gold. D. approx. 2.5cm.

Twenty-three gold discs decorated with
embossed rosettes and originally sewn
onto the deceased's garment by means of
two holes in their centre.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 110.

A.K.



21. Shoe soles

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n.
BM 2163 and BM 2164.

Silver, gold.

BM 2163: L. 25cm, W. 9cm.

BM 2164: L. 24.6cm, W. 8cm.

Two gilt silver plaques that covered the
soles of the deceased's shoes, the gilt
surface on the bottom.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 110.

A.K.

22. Model of a four-wheeled cart

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 2167.

Iron, gold.

H. 9.5cm, L. 29.5cm, W. 9cm.



Four thin rods form the carriage's floor; the vertical rods in the corners belonged to the railing, which is now lost. A thicker rod forms the axle, on which the four wheels and forked drawbar are attached. The latter ends in a well-preserved the yoke. The animal figurines that drew the carriage were probably made of wood and are now lost; only the thin gold sheet that decorated the figurines is preserved.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 97, 100, n. 243.

A.K.

23. Aryter

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 2295.

Bronze.

H. 20.5cm, rim D. 12.5cm.



The aryter, a jug with a flat base, wide rim, squat neck, and almost hemispherical body, usually made of clay, was one of the most characteristic and popular vase shapes in Macedonia from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods. With its cast, twisted handle attached by means of a relief lion head onto the body, the cut-out leafy kymation on the rim, and the spool with the incised rosette, this bronze aryter, which was found upside down next to the burial of the Lady of Aigai, is one of the most precious and elaborate examples of this type of vase discovered so far.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 243.

A.K.

24. Perfume bottle

Approximately 500 BC

Glass.

Aigai, Tomb 1988/AII.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BO 1420.

H. 5.8cm.



This arybaloid perfume bottle with the tiny S-shaped handles and fluted body is made of dark blue opaque glass. Thin horizontal lines of yellow and light blue glass decorate the walls and become wavy because of the vertical fluting. The elegance of this precious and 'exotic' object underlined the value of its contents.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 53, n. 250.

A.K.



25. Iron exaleiptron with bronze tripod base

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/ΑΙΙ.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BM 3977.

Iron and bronze.

D. 19cm, H. 13cm.

Generally imported from Corinth, exaleiptra became an indispensable accessory in the Macedonian funerary rituals during the last decades of the sixth century BC. The great demand led to the

production of local imitations, which often surpass the imported originals in luxury and sophistication. The iron exaleiptra from Sindos, Archontiko, and Aigai (particularly the one from the rich tomb of the Lady of Aigai) – all in a material then especially precious – are representative examples of this trend. The iron body, which recalls an inverted mushroom, is made of two hammered iron sheets, one forming the shallow bowl and the other the inturned convex rim, which prevented the liquid inside from spilling. The three cast bronze spool-shaped attachments for the moving horseshoe-shaped iron handles (traces of the latter are preserved) are attached on the exaleiptron's periphery, above the seam between the two lower and upper bodies. The tall bronze tripod base, which literally 'incorporates' the body, is particularly ornate. It consists of three cast column-feet, which follow the body's curved contour and end in lion paws. Curved rods connect the feet to the

bronze ring that forms the exaleiptron's foot ensuring the object's stability. The characteristic linearity of the decorative elements of the feet and handles indicate the exaleiptron's Macedonian origin.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 122, n. 243.

A.K.

26. Female bust

Approximately 500 BC

Aigai, Tomb 1988/ΑΙΙ.

Aigai Archaeological Museum, inv. n. BΠ 343, BΠ 932, BΠ 934.

Terracotta. BΠ 343: white slip and red paint preserved in places; BΠ 932: traces of white slip.

BΠ 343: Max. W. 12.5cm, max. H. 16.5cm.

BΠ 932: H. 17.5cm, W. 12.5cm, max. W. 8.5cm,

BΠ 934: H. 17cm, W. 20cm.

Terracotta female busts with suspension hole on the back. With obvious East Ionian stylistic features, this image of a goddess, who in this context can be no other than Persephone, the queen of Hades, has almond-shaped eyes and a characteristic smile. Her head is covered by the epiblema and crowned by a



wreath-diadem, which hides her hair, whereas her earrings with their decorative rosets recall those of the Lady of Aigai.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Kottaridi 2011a, 243, 244.

A.K.

