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Over the last ten years, from 1987 until the end of 1996, mainly in the context of the rescue excavations of the 17<sup>th</sup> Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, approximately 170 burials have been systematically investigated in the necropolis of Aigai, 100 of which were excavated in 1996 and are presented here for the first time<sup>1</sup>. With the exception of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, this sample represents all the historical phases of the city from the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century until the Roman occupation, and although it is small compared to the area covered by the cemetery, in combination with the older excavations<sup>2</sup> and the various occasional finds, it can lead to some initial conclusions that can also serve as working assumptions for the continuation of the research.

The Early Iron Age cemetery, which dominates the area even today with the impressive sequence of its tumuli, can be considered as the core of the necropolis of Aigai, which is separated by the central part of the city of the historical times by the stream of Palaiopanagia. In the cemetery of the tumuli, M. Andronikos observed a tendency for horizontal expansion from the north, where the oldest burials are located, to the south and west<sup>3</sup>. This tendency seems to persist even after the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, since all the burials of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century BC found until today are located in the south and southwest of the Early Iron Age cemetery. The same tendency is generally observed also in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, when the necropolis expands mainly to the west, where there is plenty of free space, while in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC a number of tombs appear to the east and north of the cemetery of the tumuli<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Andronikos, *Archaeological Work in Macedonia and Thrace (AEMTh)* 1, 1987, 1 *et seq.*, AEMTh 2, 1988, 1 *et seq.* and Kottaridou, AEMTh 3, 1989, 1 *et seq.*, AEMTh 4, 1990, 35 *et seq.*, AEMTh 5, 1991, 23 *et seq.*, AEMTh 6, 1992, 51 *et seq.*, AEMTh 8, 1994 (under publication), AEMTh 9, 1995 (under publication).

<sup>2</sup> For the excavations in the Early Iron Age cemetery of the tumuli, see M. Andronikos, *Vergina I. The cemetery of the tumuli* (1969) [hereafter: Andronikos 1969]. F. Petsas, *ΑΔ* 17, 1961-62, *Μελέται*, 218 *et seq.* *id.*, *ΑΔ* 18, 1963, *Χρον.*, 213 *et seq.* K. Romiopolou – I. Kilian-Dirlmeier, *Praehistorische Zeitschrift* 64, 1989, Heft 1. For the royal tombs of the Great Tumulus see Andronikos, *Vergina, the royal tombs* (1984) with bibliography, for other Macedonian tombs of the necropolis of Aigai see K. Romaios, *Ο μακεδονικός τάφος της Βεργίνας* (1951). D. Pantermalis, *Ο νέος μακεδονικός τάφος της Βεργίνας*, *Μακεδονικά* 12, 1972, 147 *et seq.*, S. Drougou, AEMTh 1, 1987, 88 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Andronikos (1969) 279.

<sup>4</sup> Burials of the early Hellenistic times, often containing Cassander coins were found in the rescue excavation carried out for the construction of the Vergina-Palatitsia country road, see Petsas (1962-63) and (1964), while in the northeast, the Bella tumulus cluster, dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>

By observing the vast necropolis of Aigai, whose total expanse from east to west is over 3 km and from north to south is almost 2 km, one gains the impression of almost unlimited spaciousness that presupposes the possibility of unrestricted spatial expansion, although here, contrary to what happens elsewhere<sup>5</sup>, the cemetery occupies a lowland area particularly useful for cultivation.

Some burials of the Hellenistic era were found within the limits of the Early Iron Age cemetery. These graves, simple pits, tile-covered or more monumental cist-tombs are often integrated in the tumuli and as a result they have disturbed older burials<sup>6</sup>. But in general it seems that the people of Aigai respected the old gravesites, which would be marked in some way and, because there obviously was no obstacle to restrict them, they preferred to bury their dead in free space, gradually creating new clusters of graves, which appeared like small islands on the plain until the empty spaces separating them were completely covered. Horizontal expansion is the rule. This is demonstrated by the site selected for Philip's tomb in the west edge of the cemetery, where there was plenty of available space. It was obviously for the same reason that the Great Tumulus, which later<sup>7</sup> covered the older tumulus of the royal tombs, expanded eccentrically towards the north and northwest, because in the south and east the space had been occupied by older burials. The cases of vertical expansion, where newer burial pits have disturbed older ones, is the exception and it is either a choice imposed by special reasons<sup>8</sup> or it is the case of more recent burials made after 168 BC, when after the abolishment of the kingdom by the Romans a more general tendency to demise the traditional hierarchy appears, which is also obvious in the disregard for the city plan<sup>9</sup>.

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centuries BC, was excavated by Andronikos, see Andronikos (1984) 35 *et seq.*

<sup>5</sup> Like in coastal areas, where the cemeteries are usually in the infertile sandy coast, *e.g.* Samothrace (Karadima – Koutsoumanis, AEMTh 6, 1992, 677 *et seq.*), Paros (Ch. Doumas, *AD* 17, 1962, Χρον., 273), Akanthos (Trakosopoulou-Salakidou, AEMTh 1, 1987, 297 *et seq.*), Mendi (Vokotopoulou – Moschonisiotou, AEMTh 4, 1990, 411 *et seq.*) etc. or in some mountainous places like, for example, in Thira [D. Kurtz – J. Boardman, *Thanatos* (1985) 212], in Vitsa [Vokotopoulou, Βίτσα, *Τα νεκροταφεία μιας Μολοσσικής κώμης* (1986)] etc.

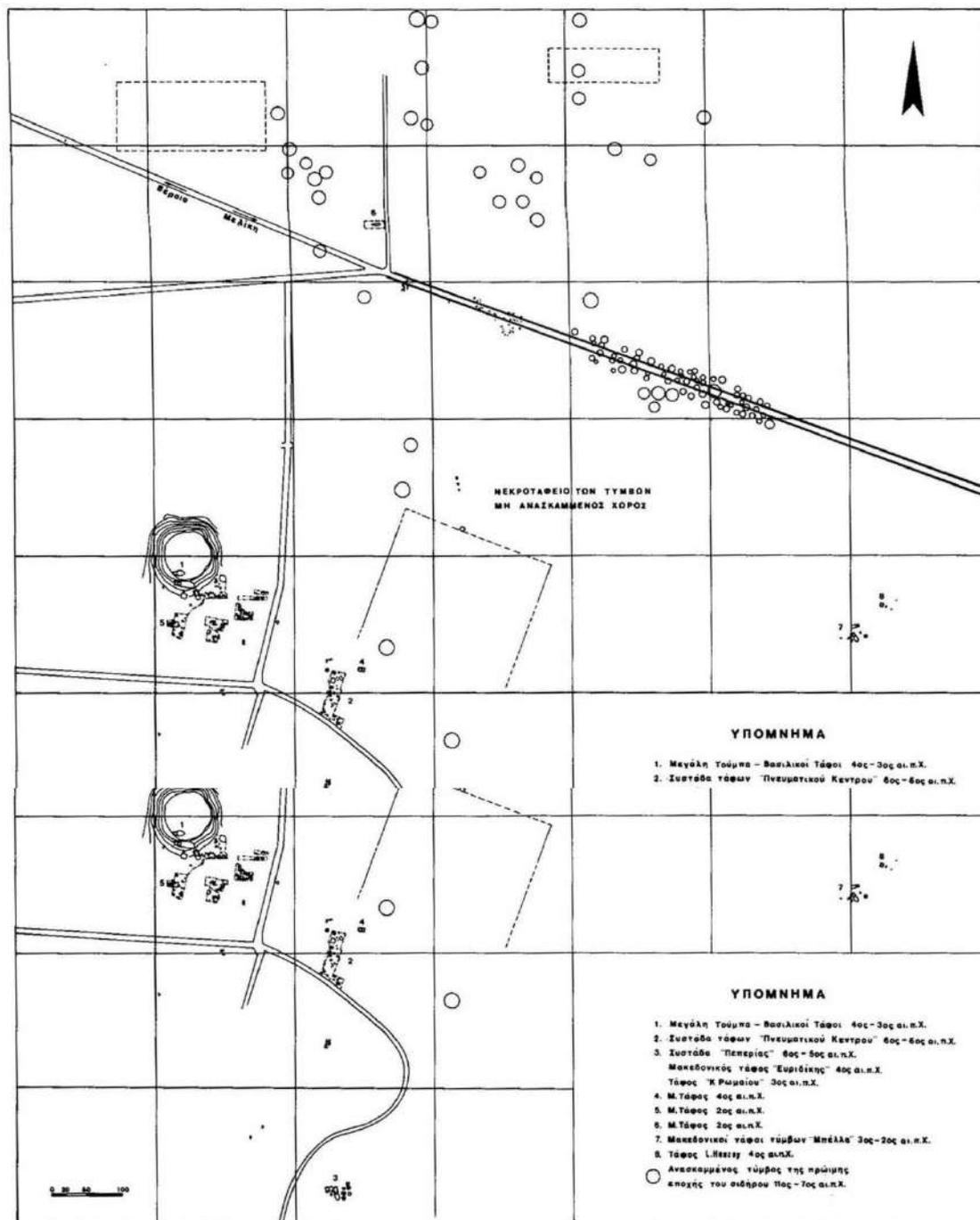
<sup>6</sup> Cf. Petsas, *op. cit.* and Andronikos (1969) 22 *et seq.*, 27, 31 *et seq.*, 43, 58.

<sup>7</sup> This is proven by the stratigraphic study. While many of the funerary stele found in the deposit of the Great Tumulus date to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC, see Andronikos (1984) 55 *et seq.* and Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, *Τα επιτάφια μνημεία από τη Μ. Τούμπα της Βεργίνας* (1984).

<sup>8</sup> Like, for example, in the cluster of the exceptionally rich women's graves to the northwest of the central part of the ancient city, where it was found that the more recent Macedonian tomb of "Romaïos", but also the "tomb of Eurydice" had disturbed archaic burials. Despite the restricted, due to the stream and the neighbouring buildings of the city, space, which was already filled with older graves, it seems that for some unknown reason the prominent dead women of the two Macedonian tombs of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (the presence of the marble throne in the tomb of "Romaïos" can be considered as an indication for determining the gender of its holder) had to be buried here.

<sup>9</sup> In the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC an extensive destruction is observed in all the excavated parts of the city, which is possibly related to the abolishment of the Macedonian kingdom by the Romans after which new buildings are often constructed using material probably taken from public buildings and even from sanctuaries, while in the acropolis houses trespass the wall that no longer exists. See Kottaridou, AEMTh 1, 1987, 117 and Faklaris, AEMTh 3, 1989, 37 *et seq.*, AEMTh 6, 1992, 59 *et seq.*, AEMTh 7, 1993, 61 *et seq.*

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*Im. 1*

Contrary to the Early Iron Age burials, which are distributed along a radius from the centre of the tumulus<sup>10</sup>, the burials of the historical era lie in almost parallel rows or form clusters, implying a sort of consistency. In this case it is possible that the burials belonged to members of the same family, covered by a

<sup>10</sup> Andronikos (1969) 151 *et seq.*

common tumulus or defined on the surface of the soil by a common enclosure.

All the burial pits that postdate the end of the Early Iron Age are oriented according to either the north–south or the east–west axis, a feature observed in other ancient necropolises as well<sup>11</sup>.

In the Archaic times burials follow one of the two axes. In the 5<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC apparently it is the north-south axis that prevails, while from the time of Philip II onwards the east-west axis is the exclusive rule<sup>12</sup>.

When the pit is oriented along the north-south axis, the dead are buried irrespective of their gender with their head to the south. In the other case, the position of the dead changes according to gender, women having their head to the east and men to the west<sup>13</sup>.

A particularly dense arrangement of graves is observed to the southeast of the royal tombs of the Great Tumulus, where a pattern of parallel burial pits with little distance between them is formed. This regular arrangement is possibly related to the existence of a road that led from the city to the west and towards which the so-called “heroon” of the royal tombs must have also been oriented.

The sample of the investigated burials includes mortuary monuments of various types. The simpler, poorer and, apparently, the most recent graves are the tile-covered ones, which are almost always without grave offerings and can be dated only by their stratigraphic position in relation to the other graves. Most common are the simple rectangular pits, the pit graves as they are called, with their size and depth varying according to the age and of course the social position of their holders<sup>14</sup>.

On the bottom of the pit a rather wide step is usually formed, along the one side of which the narrower main grave is opened, where the dead is placed.

The position of the grave offerings; the occasional traces of wood found, wherever the chemical composition of the soil allowed it; sometimes also the iron nails attest the presence of a wooden sarcophagus or of some kind of wooden lining on the sides of the pit, which would support the wooden cover protecting the burial from deposited earth material<sup>15</sup>. In some rare cases the floor is coated with

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<sup>11</sup> *Cf., e.g.* the necropolis of the Dorian city of Taras, C. W. Neeft, *Catalogo del Museo Archaeologico di Taranto III*, 1, 1994, 189 *et seq*

<sup>12</sup> In the cemetery of Sfikia, which lies at app. 20 km southwest of Vergina in the Pieria mountains the graves of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC are oriented along the N-S axis with the head of the dead looking north, while the graves of the Classical and Hellenistic eras are oriented along the E-W axis. *Cf.* Kottaridou AEMTh 8, 1994 and AEMTh 9, 1995 (under publication).

<sup>13</sup> This custom is also found in other Macedonian cemeteries as well, in Aiani, in Pieria, in the area of Anthemous, in Sindos etc. See Karamitrou-Mendessidi AEMTh 2, 1988, 19 *et seq.* Bessios, AEMTh 4, 1990, 241 *et seq.*, AEMTh 6, 1992, 245 *et seq.*, AEMTh 7, 1993, 201 *et seq.*, AEMTh 8, 1994 and AEMTh 9, 1995 (under publication). Lazaridou, AEMTh 1990 (oral presentation).

<sup>14</sup> There are pit graves that have no offerings or are very poor, but also some exceptionally rich ones, as in the case of the Peperia cluster, which is reminiscent of the rich in gold pit graves of Mycenae.

<sup>15</sup> Similar constructions, which left clear marks on the ground due to the composition of the soil were also found in the archaic cemetery of Sfikia on the Pieria mountains, See Kottaridou, AEMTh 8, 1994 and AEMTh 9, 1995 (under publication).

clean yellowish clayish earth, while in one grave<sup>16</sup>, which belonged to a warrior and dates to the time of Philip II, four big circular holes, used for fixing the legs of the wooden *kline*, can be clearly seen on the floor of the spacious pit.

Less frequently found are the built cist-tombs, which usually are bigger and more monumental compared to the pit-graves. Rudimentary “cist-graves” with rubble masonry walls appear already in the Early Iron Age tumuli<sup>17</sup>. With well-bound rubble stones forming strong walls are built two graves of the Cultural Centre cluster dating to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, with inner dimensions of about 2x2 m. In the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century the floor and the walls of some big burial pits are lined with limestone slabs, while in the second half of the same century the limestone cist-graves take the form of rather spacious underground chambers with white mortars and coloured decorative bands on the walls<sup>18</sup>.

Less impressive compared to limestone but equally effective as structural material, unbaked mud-bricks were also used, and rather frequently at that, in order to cover the inner sides of the burial pits. A typical example of the potential of the use of unbaked mud-bricks in funerary architecture is a large (inner dimensions about 2x3 m) mud-brick grave of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC found very close to the royal tombs of the Great Tumulus, covered with massive limestone blocks and sporting mortars with painted multi-coloured ornaments<sup>19</sup> on the walls. This grave was looted, but the few fragments of gilded bronze wreaths and gilded clay figures that evaded the grave robbers’ attention attest to a one-time rich burial.

The effort to create a monumental underground chamber led to the design of the vaulted Macedonian tombs<sup>20</sup>, and it is not a simple coincidence that in 1987 the hitherto oldest known monument of this category was discovered at the royal necropolis of Aigai. The magnificent Macedonian “tomb of Eurydice”, which outwardly gives the impression of a simple, but huge cist tomb, dates exactly to 344/43 BC<sup>21</sup> and provides answers to many a problem related to the origin and the evolution of the type of the Macedonian tombs.

The highest concentration of this type of monuments is observed in the necropolis of Aigai, which apparently is no accident. A total of twelve Macedonian tombs<sup>22</sup> have been found so far. The last tomb, one of the most recent of this group,

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<sup>16</sup> Excavated in 1996 to the south of the Great Tumulus.

<sup>17</sup> Cf., e.g. Andronikos (1969) tumulus E burial VIII, tumulus P burial II, tumulus AA burial V etc.

<sup>18</sup> Grave K1 (430-420 BC) of the Peperia cluster, Kottaridou, AEMTh 3, 1989, 1 *et seq.*, grave K5 (430-420 BC) of the Cultural Centre cluster.

<sup>19</sup> An Ionic *cymatium* can be seen, traces of coloured bands, probably also traces of a decoration with vegetal patterns, but the conservation and the study of the fragments is not completed until this moment.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Andronikos, BSA 82, 1987, 1 *et seq.*

<sup>21</sup> In the funerary pyre were found fragments from at least two Panathenaic amphorae with the name of Lykiskos, a prominent lord of the year 344/43 BC, while in its interior two red-figure *aryballoid lekythoi* of the “painter of the Mystai”, see also Kottaridou, «Βασιλικές πυρές στη νεκρόπολη των Αιγών», *Proceedings of the 6<sup>th</sup> international congress for Ancient Macedonia* (under publication).

<sup>22</sup> “The tomb of Eurydice”, 344 BC, the tomb of Philip, 336 BC, tomb III of the Great Tumulus, ca 310 BC, “the tomb of Heuzée” and the tomb of the Cultural Centre, end of 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the tomb with the

was found this year to the south of the royal tombs. Built in the shadow of the Great Tumulus it dates to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and it was apparently built after the great destruction of Aigai, which is probably related to the abolition of the kingdom by the Romans in 168 BC and the following turbulence. The tomb consists of one chamber with an opening to the east, its façade has no particular design and it is entirely built with second hand material, mainly with pieces of limestone pillars, probably coming from a *stoa*-shaped building of the city. This tomb, as well as all the other Macedonian tombs of Aigai, with the exception of the two royal tombs of the Great Tumulus, had been looted.

It is worth noting that pillaging is a widespread phenomenon here, which tends to be the rule and it is often observed even in simple pit graves that were not particularly rich, a fact justifying the ancient fame of the rich in gold necropolis of Aigai, but also makes archaeological research more difficult. The thirst for easy profit has led ancient grave robbers to seek their fortune in the shady underground chambers of the tombs, defying both fear and moral stain. And it is this greed that brought punishment upon them, since, the sacrilegious companions in order to share the loot among fewer numbers would often murder one another, leaving those who have died a violent death to haunt the monuments that they had previously trespassed themselves<sup>23</sup>.

Burials of men, women and children are intermixed the one next to the other in the various rows and family clusters and in close temporal sequence. Exception to this rule is a group of ten pit graves located in a secluded spot at the westernmost edge of the necropolis. Here, all ten dead are men, possibly soldiers who died in the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, a short while before Philip II assumed power<sup>24</sup>.

Another group that in many ways is an exception and stands out to the general picture is formed by the nine important tombs found in a prominent location to the northwest of the city<sup>25</sup>. They all belong to women. One of them was probably queen Eurydice, mother of Philip II, another one, the dead woman in the only pit grave that eluded the grave robbers, had a sceptre embroidered with amber stones on her right side, a sign of office, possibly analogous to the triple double axes of the Early Iron Age found in the cemetery of the tumuli<sup>26</sup>. The

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freestanding pillars, “the tomb of Romaios” and “the tomb of the warrior”, first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, the tomb with the *kline* and tomb III of the Bella tumulus, end of 3<sup>rd</sup>-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, the tomb to the northeast of Vergina and the tomb of 1997 to the south of the Great Tumulus, end of 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC

<sup>23</sup> A dead grave-robbler was found in the ante-chamber and another one on the roof of the “tomb of Eurydice” and two more in front of the looting hole of the cist-grave K3 of the same cluster. See Kottaridou AEMTh 4, 1990, 35 *et seq.*

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Kottaridou, AEMTh 8, 1994 (under publication).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Kottaridou, AEMTh 3, 1989, 1-11.

<sup>26</sup> In total, six triple double-axes were found, Andronikos (1969) 248 *et seq.*, im. 87; Petsas, (1961-62) 247 *et seq.*, table 134, 150; Romiopoulou-Kilian-Dirlmeier (1989) 130 im. 26,7; obviously having no functional purpose and all found in tombs of particularly richly dressed women, it can now be said with certainty that this was a symbol of the special position or function of the dead woman. Cf. Andronikos (1969) 160, 250 and Romiopoulou-Kilian-Dirlmeier (1989) 131, with

inscription “*Peperias*”, engraved on the bowl lying at the feet of the dead –the oldest known written monument coming from Aigai- and most probably denoting the object’s possessor, revealed the name of the rich in gold lady who died in 500 BC, just before Alexander I assumed power. “Their excellences”, the women buried here seem to belong to the royal family, while some of them could have been holders of a hieratic office.

With regard to their wealth and monumental character another group of cist tombs of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC stands out, found near the Cultural Centre of Vergina<sup>27</sup>, and of course the group of the royal tombs of the Great Tumulus.

However, most of the tombs investigated in the last ten years belonged to common people, thus offering the opportunity to acquire an image of life in Aigai beyond and behind the glow of the royal opulence, while simultaneously providing us with a realistic and particularly reliable criterion, since it comes from the same time and place, in order to make right assumptions about the social hierarchy and the differentiation that is expressed through the burial customs of the Macedonian capital.

The usual burial practice traditionally applied in Aigai is interment. The dead lies facing up, hands on the side along the torso. The excavation data –built legs, support holes, remains of ivory and metal ornamental elements and amber marbles- attest that in the rich cist and pit graves of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC decorated *klinai* existed, which herald the gold and ivory *klinai* of the Macedonian tombs of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>28</sup>. Simpler wooden *klinai* or couches could also have existed in humbler graves, but they are almost impossible to trace<sup>29</sup>.

The dead were dressed with one or more apparels<sup>30</sup>. Men wore the wool cloak that wrapped the whole body, closing on the chest with one or two double bronze or iron pins. On the right hand they usually wore one or more rings, made of iron, bronze and, more rarely, silver. In most cases the ring bezel is engraved to be used as a seal. In the times of Philip the gilded bronze mortuary wreaths appear and some interred, men usually, wore these on their heads.

In the women’s burials, one or two pairs of –bronze and rarely silver- arched pins at the shoulders and upper arms attest to the presence of a *chiton*, while the less common pins, to the presence of a *peplos*. In the Classical times the minimal Ω-shaped earrings are in fashion, while during the Hellenistic period small, golden

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relevant examples from other areas, always from graves of women, and bibliography.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Kottaridou – Riga, AEMTh 9, 1995 (under publication).

<sup>28</sup> For the golden-ivory klinai of the royal tombs of the Great Tumulus (1994) 96 *et seq.* Generally for the klinai of the Macedonian tombs, K. Sismanidis, Klinai and klinai-shaped structures in Macedonian Tombs (1990).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Kurtz-Boardman (1985) 81 *et seq.*

<sup>30</sup> For the funerary ceremonies and the burial gifts in general cf. Kurtz – Boardman (1985) 169 *et seq.*, 237 *et seq.*, with the bibliography, especially for Attika, see Morris, Death-Ritual and social structure in classical Antiquity (1992) 103 *et seq.*, with a sociological approach to this issue and more recent relevant bibliography. Especially for the burial gifts in Archaic Macedonia cf. also the catalogue of the Sindos (1985) exhibition and the relevant entries of the catalogue of the “Μακεδόνες, οι Έλληνες του βορρά” exhibition (1993) and of its revisions.

Eros figures appear, as well as simple silver hoops. There also are gold, acorn-shaped amulets, necklaces from glass or gilded clay beads and rings, bronze or silver, like those from the male burials.

Contrary to ordinary women, queens and ladies like Peperia descend to Hades stepping on gold<sup>31</sup> soles, dressed in gold and purple from head to toes. Silver and mainly gold were the materials, granulation and the elaborate filigree the techniques used to create the jewels that the ladies of Aigai loved. But some more unusual materials were also used. A dead woman of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC had some heavy iron pins along, more reminiscent of a weapon than of a jewel, while the elaborately processed amber necklace belonging to one of the dead women of the Peperia cluster is unique in the Greek area. As the technique used in its processing shows, this jewel had been made in the Italian peninsula, in the Po valley or somewhere further south, a fact attesting to contacts between Aigai and not only the East but also the West.

As jewellery is necessary for women, more so are weapons for a warrior to accompany him to his grave; they characterize him and indicate his former status among the living. Two spears or lances with iron heads, placed to the right of the dead are the rule in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards. Usually, a small iron knife with a wooden or bone handle completes the deceased's weaponry. Swords are extremely rare in interments. In the investigated sample only two swords in two pit graves of the time of Philip II were found. One of them was a *machaira* with an ivory bird-shaped handle and a wooden case with silver rings for the baldric. Defensive weapons have not been identified. Another typical male accessory, the strigil, iron or, more rarely, bronze, is found even in the poorer graves from the 6<sup>th</sup> century until the Late Hellenistic period.

The *obol* given as a payment to Charon<sup>32</sup> tends to be a custom also here from the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The dead usually holds in his/her right hand and more rarely in his/her mouth one, and sometimes two, bronze coins. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, the coin is usually placed in a *kyathion* held in the deceased's hands. The rest of the offerings, usually clay vessels, are placed in the pit near the feet of the dead, a habit that changes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, when the vessels are assembled behind his/her head.

The dead are always thirsty<sup>33</sup>. Libations are their favourite offering; a goblet, sometimes even a jar or a ewer, their usual supplies for their journey. In the Early Iron Age burials there always is a cut-away clay *prochous* and a *kantharos*-like vessel or cup<sup>34</sup>. In the Archaic period the goblet can be a local clay *kantharos* or an

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<sup>31</sup> The shoes of Peperia had soles that were silver-gilt on the visible side, while the shoes of the dead woman of the looted pit-grave AIV had entirely golden soles, cf. Kottaridou (1989) 1 *et seq.*, 7.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Arist., *Frogs* 140, Kurtz – Boardman (1985) 249 *et seq.* For an interesting approach to the subject, I. Morris (1992) 104 *et seq.*

<sup>33</sup> See e.g. Aeschylus, *Choephoroi*, Sophocles, *Electra*, 84, Euripides, *Alcestis*, 74 *et seq.*, 424 *et seq.* Cf. also M. Minck, *Die Bedeutung des Wassers im Kult und Leben der Alten*, *Philologus Suppl.* XIV (1921), A. B. Cook, *Zeus III* (1940) 354 *et seq.* 370 *et seq.* Ginouvés, *Balaneutiki* (1962) 239 *et seq.*

<sup>34</sup> Andronikos (1969) 163 *et seq.*

expensive *kylix* from Attica<sup>35</sup> or Ionia or even a Corinthian *cotyle*. The *omphalos* bowls –the vessel principally destined for libations- made of clay, silver, but mainly of bronze, have been found in large quantities, but only in burials distinguished for their wealth<sup>36</sup>.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, Attic black-glazed footless *kylikes* appear also in Aigai, but from the middle of the century onwards, until the time of Philip II (359-336 BC), *skyphoi* prevail, usually black-glazed, sometimes bearing beautiful red-figure decorations, either imported from Attica or as local imitations. At the same time, the smaller and probably cheaper bolsal-type *skyphos* appears, prevailing from the third quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century onwards, to be replaced by the small black-glazed *kantharoi*, which will become popular in the Hellenistic times.

The cut-away *prochous*, the traditional Macedonian vessel, remains very popular in Aigai even after the end of the Iron Age. Therefore, shortly after the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century BC a Corinthian ceramic workshop produces one of these vessels for their clients in the north<sup>37</sup>, while in Macedonia these vessels are still produced even in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, and from the middle of this century plain unglazed *olpe*-like *oenochoae* replace the previous type, to be in turn superseded by the Hellenistic ladles, with a lamp placed inside them from time to time.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, Attic red-figure *pelikes* are rather popular, which hold a tradition in Aigai from the time of Hermonax (470-460 BC)<sup>38</sup> and appeal to clients willing to pay a little extra. *Kraters* are a lot rarer. Only two or three examples are known until now and come from burials-cremations that are richer than the interments. The large in capacity *amphorae* seem to be a privilege for the rich<sup>39</sup> and only the plain unglazed ewers, the “Macedonian” *amphorae* of the late Hellenistic times<sup>40</sup> will become the usual funerary gift for the many. Another category of vessels related to everyday needs, the various small *skyphoi*, the plates and the so-called “saltboxes”, either imported from Attica or local imitations, appear by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and remain rather popular until the Hellenistic times, yet traces of food have never been found in them.

Closely connected to the funerary ceremonies is perfumed oil. Vessels related to these practices, *exaleiptra* and *unguentaria* of any kind are among the most characteristic and common grave offerings in the Aigai necropolis regardless of the gender of the dead. *Exaleiptra*, either Corinthian, Attic or locally made are

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<sup>35</sup> Cf., e.g., the black-figure Attic band *kylix* the Kessel-type *kylix* from the pit grave ΛΙ of the Peperia cluster (Kottaridou, *Μακεδόνες, οι Έλληνες του βορρά*, n. 127) or the Ionic *kylikes* from the Cultural Centre cluster.

<sup>36</sup> In the burial of Peperia, which was unlooted, 12 bronze and 1 silver-gilded *omphalos* bowls have been found.

<sup>37</sup> It has been found in the ΛΙ pit grave of the Peperia cluster and dates to 540-530 BC.

<sup>38</sup> For the *pelike* of Hermonax see Kottaridou, AEMTh 3, 1989, 1. Cf. also Kottaridou, AEMTh 5, 1991, 23 *et seq.*

<sup>39</sup> They have been found in the pyre of the Cultural Centre cluster (6<sup>th</sup> century BC) in Macedonian tombs and in the magnificent pyres of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. Cf. also Kottaridou (1996) (under publication).

<sup>40</sup> See Kottaridou, AEMTh 5, 1991, 23 *et seq.*

dominant from the 6<sup>th</sup> until the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. The Corinthian *aryballoi*, very popular in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, are replaced by the Attic *lekythia* used in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. Attic red-figure flasks appear in Aigai by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and are rather common until the Early Hellenistic years, when they are replaced by the black-glazed *guttus*-type flasks, only to be in turn replaced a little later by the spindle-shaped *unguentaria*, which are dominant until the late Hellenistic years.

For the rich, there are of course many expensive and extravagant variations on this subject: iron and marble *exaleiptra*, glass multi-coloured Phoenician *unguentaria*, alabaster and marble *alabastra* and *lekythoi*, beautiful white Attic *lekythoi*, elegant red-figure *lekythoi* with a rounded belly, like the ones of the “painter of the Mystai” found in the tomb of Eurydice, even exotic ostrich eggs<sup>41</sup>.

Clay figurines, fairly popular in the Archaic times, are apparently found in rich burials irrespective of the deceased's gender. There are sculptural compositions of local origins depicting animals devouring one another, Samian ones depicting divine or demonic figures, while there also are masks, related in this case with the goddess of the dead. In the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC the figurines are only found in burials of children and young girls. The busts of the goddess are still very popular, however, new types appear, the crawling baby, the pedagogue, the *kourotrophos* [child-nurturer] etc. It must though be noted that in Aigai the presence of figurines in graves is generally much more limited compared to other places of Macedonia, such as Pella or the neighbouring Veroia.

Burials of infants, often those of little children as well, in general bear no grave offerings. No toys were found, apart from some *astragaloi*. It is worth noting that no mirrors were found to date, while even jewel or cosmetics cases are rare, except in the late Hellenistic period when the cylindrical jewel cases made of clay become a typical offering in women's graves.

Objects relating to the social status of the aristocrats –iron *obeloi* and an iron miniature four-wheel cart were found in Peperia's burial. Gold foils, used to decorate clothes and weapons, were found in noticeable quantities even in looted burials of aristocratic men and women, a phenomenon echoing similar customs relating to the graves of the Geometric era in southern Greece<sup>42</sup>.

The metallic vessels and utensils, a typical offering in royal and aristocratic graves, are almost completely absent in the burials of simple people. In the late Archaic pit graves of the Peperia cluster, on the step next to the burial pit, bronze *lebetes* and iron tripods obviously related to the ceremonial bath of the dead<sup>43</sup> were found, not to mention bronze *oenochosae*, *lecanides* and bowls that were used for the funerary libations and were left upturned on the spot. The 26 life-sized clay

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Andronikos, AEMTh 1, 1987, 81 *et seq.* and Kottaridou, AEMTh 3, 1989, 1 *et seq.* and AEMTh 5, 1991, 23 *et seq.* and AEMTh 6, 1992, 81 *et seq.*

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Kottaridou, AEMTh 3, 1989, 1 *et seq.* and Kottaridou, *Μακεδόνες, οι Έλληνες του βορρά*.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. the bath utensils found in Philip's tomb –*lebes*, tripod, bowl, bucket with sponge- which must also have been used for the funerary bath.

heads found in the deposit of one of the pits of this cluster seem to be the remains of an enigmatic ceremony<sup>44</sup>.

The subsequent intensive use of the area (cultivation, rebuilding) in the excavated part of the necropolis is possibly the reason that in most cases no remains of offerings have been found (*khoes*, sacrifices), except perhaps for the Cultural Centre cluster, where some of the pits with traces of *pyre* surrounding the main graves could be related to such practices. For the same reason, we lack sufficient evidence regarding the way of marking the graves of the historic era that have been investigated so far. It is however highly possible that the headstones found in the deposits of the Great Tumulus and date from the 5<sup>th</sup> until the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC come from the graves of the area. It seems sure though that for the marking of the prominent tombs, and those alone, piles of white stones (cobbles) that don't exist in the area and were brought here especially for this purpose were also used.

The practice of cremating the dead, which is generally more expensive than simple burials, is used in few cases<sup>45</sup>. Almost unknown in the Early Iron Age, cremation becomes particularly magnificent in the Archaic times and the funerary *pyres* of the warriors of the Cultural Centre cluster are reminiscent of the Homeric burial customs and are eventually succeeded by the majestic royal *pyres* of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The pot burials, rare in the Archaic and Classical periods, become more common in the Hellenistic era. In the times of Philip II, the practice of cremating the dead within the burial pit (primary cremation), used according to the data at hand in the case of warriors, is relatively common. In the richer burials, however, the cremation of the dead is performed elsewhere and the remains are transported and thrown over the grave (secondary cremation). This mainly happens in the cases of the Macedonian and built cist-tombs, to the south of the Great Tumulus however, in a simple pit grave of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, a secondary cremation was found this year: the burnt bones of the dead, along with his ring, had been placed wrapped in a piece of fabric in the middle of the burial pit inside a wooden box, of which very few traces have been saved. Around the wooden *larnax* the rest of the grave offerings have been found –an iron spearhead, a sword and a few clay vessels- which were of no different value from those found in the rest of the pit graves of this cluster. It has been found in general that the practice of cremation is mainly used for men; however some cases of cremation of women also exist.

Although there are not yet enough data from the excavation of the city, and thus we are not able to compare the funerary gifts to the total household of a family in Aigai in order to properly assess the value and significance of the dowry

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<sup>44</sup> See Kottaridou, AEMTh 3, 1989, 1 *et seq.* and *id.*, *Μακεδόνες, οι Έλληνες του βορρά*, 153 *et seq.*, n. 14.

<sup>45</sup> For cremations in general see Kurtz – Boardman (1985) 78 *et seq.*, 112 *et seq.* 169 *et seq.* with bibliography. Especially for Aigai see Kottaridou, 1996 (under publication).

of the dead compared to the economy of a household<sup>46</sup>, however what is at first sight impressive, is the enormous difference in wealth between the burials of the aristocrats and members of the royal family on the one hand and those of simple people on the other, a phenomenon that can only be perceived in the context of the specific political-sociological system and that would provoke the democrats of the south, where the city would often limit the expenses made for a burial by law<sup>47</sup>.

All statistics aside, however, behind any effort to classify and interpret the various finds, there always lie the human beings themselves, death, tears and the beloveds' mourning, the unnamed infant, the delicate lass, the handsome youth, the warrior and the recently mothered, the kings and the queen mothers who found refuge in the arms of "formidable Persephone", in earth's embrace. Some of them possibly knew the mystic way and were not lost in the darkness of the Underworld:

"In the chambers of Hades you will find on your right the well with the white cypress. Don't go near it, steer away and you will find refreshing water flowing from the spring of *Mnemosyne*. Wardens stand watch over it. They will ask you, what you seek. Tell them the truth, tell them 'I am a child of the earth and sky with all its stars, my name is Asterios, my mouth is dry from thirst, let me drink from the spring'"<sup>48</sup>.

The dead ask for remembrance, remembrance to defeat death and we, who systematically bring back to light whatever the earth preserved from them, building bridges across time, we owe the departed their reminiscence...

"Without us you are a minority  
we without you bare bones –and don't heed  
words of upper and under world-  
you are our homeland and we are emigrants"

M. Ganas, *Παραλογή*.

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. similar effort for Athens, Morris (1992) 128 *et seq.*

<sup>47</sup> Cf. e.g. the inscription found in Ioulis F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des Cités grecques* (1969) n. 77, see also Kurtz – Boardman (1985) 237 *et seq.* with the bibliography.

<sup>48</sup> N. M. Verdelis, *AE* 1950/51, 80 *et seq.*