



INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE



75 YEAR JUBILEE OF
THE INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY
AND
ARCHAEOLOGY

Skopje 2024



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ART HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

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BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS

Edited by:
Antonio Jakimovski
Elizabeta Dimitrova

Skopje 2024

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FOREWORD

75 YEAR JUBILEE OF THE INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

In 2022 we celebrated the 75th jubilee of the research and educational activity of the *Institute of art history and archaeology*, which over the years has undergone through several different configurations (department, educational and research unit, institute) and represents one of the earliest constitutive components of the Faculty of Philosophy, established in 1920. In the beginning constituted as a research unit (for archaeology and ancient art), yet from 1947 established as an educational institute at the Faculty of Philosophy with its own curricula, the present-day Institute of art history and archaeology is dedicated to the education of young professionals from the fields of art history and archaeology (undergraduate, graduate and doctoral level), creating: researchers, custodians, terrain investigators, consultants for protection of cultural heritage, fine arts critics, essayists, managers of cultural institutions, project managers, organizers of archaeological camps, etc.

In that context and in honour of the 75th jubilee, we organized an international conference entitled “Archaeology, artistic creation and legacy – investigation and protection” in the period October, 12th – 14th, 2022, in the town of Dojran (Hotel La Terrazza). The aim of the Conference was the presentation of the latest research results in the fields of archaeology, art history and protection of cultural heritage, as well as exchange of ideas and experiences in the mentioned academic domains among domestic and foreign scholarly authorities in order to construct sustainable awareness of the significance, role and impact of the cultural legacy in contemporary life.

Respectfully Yours,

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INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

***75 YEAR JUBILEE OF THE INSTITUTE OF
ART HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY***

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Note: the arrangement of the papers in the Book of proceedings from the conference is according to the schedule of the presentations in the parallel sessions of the event.

Martina BLEČIĆ KAVUR

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ICONOGRAPHY'S OF THE SOCIAL ELITE ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE TREBENISHTA GRAVE 8

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Abstract: *The ancient necropolis of Gorenci near Trebenishta certainly has a special place in the context of Central Balkans archaeology. During several campaigns in the last century, some of the most valuable examples of arts and crafts from the 6th and 5th centuries BCE were discovered. Both older and more recent considerations of this material increasingly confirm the value of the Ohrid area in the dynamic processes of various intercultural relations and transmissions of leading members of society of that period, but also the spread of specific material culture of the narrower and wider region. An exceptional find is certainly Grave 8, which was systematically discussed in previous scientific discourse so that the preserved objects have undergone countless interpretations. However, they were rarely or never connected into a meaningful, coherent entity that represented the grave as a unique, cohesive unit. The present study focuses on the archaeological context of the grave and the analysis of symbolic grave goods, such as golden foils that covered various parts of the deceased's body, silver ceremonial drinking vases, an Illyrian bronze helmet, and a volute krater. Since the comparative analysis and iconographic interpretation of multidimensional visual art depicted on these objects are integral to understanding the archaeological context, their synthesis will revise previous knowledge and offer a new interpretation of the gender, age, and significance of the buried person as well as the burial ritual itself.*

Key words: Ohrid, Trebenishta Grave 8, archaic art, golden mask, Illyrian helmet, volute krater, iconography, semiotics

Introduction

If there is a treasure trove of scientific inspiration for different and always open archaeological interpretations in the Balkans, then it is undoubtedly the ancient necropolis of Gorenci near Trebenishta, only 10 kilometres north of Ohrid (Fig. 1). The artefacts excavated in graves during several campaigns in

the past century are among the most valuable examples of artisanship of the ancient world from the 6th and 5th centuries BCE. They are outstanding products of the arts and crafts with a distinct visual value that always poses a challenge to the eye of the observer and to the work of scientists.

In the last 20 years, interest for the study of this exceptional site and its prestigious objects has increased, first through new analyses of the material culture (Stibbe 2000; 2003) and then through very similar finds studied in the area of the Gorna Porta in Ohrid (Kuzman 2006; 2014; 2018). Restoration of items from collections of National Museums in Belgrade and Sofia and their exhibition in Skopje in 2018 on the occasion of celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the first excavations of the necropolis also contributed to their popularity. Numerous archaeological items were revised and/or reinterpreted as archaeological science developed – from the perspective of their manufacture to their provenance, from their economic to their status value. However, the strikingly equipped Trebenishta Grave 8 (Krstić 2018), which is also the subject of this study, was rightly presented exclusively.

From the available documentation of the research on the Trebenishta necropolis in the 1930s, we can deduce many fascinating data that, despite many disagreements, still put the inventory of that grave in a superior position than many others from the so-called circle of the 13 richest graves of the necropolis (Fig. 1). Nikola Vulić and Milovan Kokić systematically excavated it in 1930. Several publications by Vulić followed (Vulić 1930; 1931; 1932; 1933; 1934), and the inventory remains in permanent preservation in the National Museum in Belgrade, where it is still on display (Popović 1956; 1969; 1994a; Vasić 1987, T. 76-78; Krstić 2007; 2011; 2018). This extraordinary discovery has been extensively discussed in the scientific discourse, whether in terms of the material culture of the objects on display, the context and status of the grave within the necropolis, in relation to the type and ritual of the burial, and ethnicity (Katičić 1995; Kuzman 2006; Proeva 2006; 2007; 2018a; 2018b; cf. Delef 2018). It thus became an inevitable part of the major debates on the cultural and ethnic characteristics of the south-eastern European region in the last millennium of the Old Era (Bouzek, Ondřejová 1988; Vasić 1996; Kull 1997; Theodossiev 1998; 2000; Stibbe 2000; Бабић 2004; Babić 2007; Despini 2009; Pantić 2012; Verger 2014; Babić, Palavestra 2018; Saripanidi 2017; 2019; and many others).

However, for a comprehensive understanding of the archaeology of death in terms of the grave-deceased, individual-society paradigm, despite the scope and stylistic definition of individual items, thoughtful iconographic interpretation of symbols and signs (cf. Robb 1998; 2020) is needed to grasp the archaeological context. Their coherent synthesis should be read synchronically. In the eschatological idea, some items can be placed in the canon of heroization of the deceased, so Grave 8 will serve as an example of this kind of interpretation of the grave inventory. The comparative analysis and iconographic interpretation of elements of multidimensional visual art will provide a new aspect to the "eternal" question of *who was buried in Grave 8?*

Time in a “mosaic” picture

Most of interpretations proposed so far, tried to specify what kind of ritual activities and what kind of burial it was, and to determine the gender and identity of the deceased. The grave itself was recognised primarily as a symbolic cenotaph since no osteological material was preserved or discovered during the excavation. Because not even an *ustrinum* was detected on the necropolis, it was assumed that it was an inhumation burial in which the bones were not preserved due to certain unspecified conditions. Such interpretation also enabled assumptions that it could have been a cremation burial, i.e., a biritual burial on the necropolis (Vulić 1932; 1934; cf. Popović 1956, 9-10; Vasić 1987, 729-730; Mitrevski 1997, 267; Krstić 2007; 2011; Palavestra 2011; Benac 2012). Given the abundance of heterogeneous material culture and its binary treatment, a double burial of male and female was assumed. This extraordinary collection of finds and grave goods, however, articulated the prevailing interpretation that established the male gender of the deceased and his social status as an outstanding warrior/horseman and supreme military commander/general who was buried with all the highest honours (Vulić 1932; Vasić 1987, 729; Mitrevski 1997, 231-272; Stibbe 2000, 88; cf. Popović 1956; 1994a), while the others saw in this grave the ruling or even political ("royal/princely") figure of the community (Popović 1966, 23; Popović 1994a; 1994b; Палавестра 1984, 69, 92-93; Vasić 1987, 732-733; 1996; 2018, 113; Гараšанин 1997; Proeva 2007; Чаусидис 2010; Benac 2012; cf. Verger 2014; David 2017a; Kuzman, Ardjanliev 2017, 18; Eftimovski 2022), as well as those that emanated from a wealthy, economically isolated group of leading men at an important geographic/controlling node, but without the political power of the Late Archaic period (Бабић 2004, 73; Palavestra 2011; Babić, Palavestra 2018; Delev 2018, 159). There are certainly a handful of more extravagant interpretations, but they are omitted here for good reason.

All of the above-mentioned arguments were based on logical premises that corresponded to the research conditions of the time, and each of them was basically twofold: a) by the presence or absence of a “characteristic” material culture and b) by the evaluation of the items in a typological-stylistic, a broader cultural-chronological and theoretical context. They received innumerable interpretations, but rarely or never formed a meaningful, cohesive entity that represents the grave as a unique event (Fig. 2).

Grave 8 was located in the so-called middle part of the necropolis, north of Grave 1, at same distance of the Grave 2 (Figs. 1, 2). It was a simple rectangular burial pit, 2 m deep, filled with stones and a large amount of charred wood (Vulić 1931; 1932; Krstić 2018, 47). Considering the shape and nature of the pit, it is clearly a grave burial rather than a tomb, as frequently stated in the literature (cf. Stibbe 2003; Socorro 2012; Verger 2014). Together with Grave 1, these were the richest graves in the Trebenishta necropolis, to which from the first day of discovery a far more prominent position in terms of status, so-called ruler properties, was attributed (Vulić 1932; Vasić 1987; 1996; Гараšанин 1997; Чаусидис 2010; Benac 2012). However, in the nearby Graves 1 and 2, a full set

of military equipment (helmet, shield, spear(s), sword) was preserved, and these individuals were represented as certainly males of exceptional rank. It should be noted that the inventory of Grave 2 was significantly more modest than that found in Grave 1, implying that the deceased was treated in a somewhat lower status (Filow 1927, Abb. 3-4; Stibbe 2003, fig. 3-4; Verger 2014, 263-266, figs. 3-4) (Fig. 1). Grave 8, therefore, did not contain the bones of the deceased,¹ and a complete military equipment as in other graves was not present, graves that were assumed to be of male individuals. The location of the bronze Illyrian helmet and the gold mask supports the thesis of the burial of a male individual in west-east orientation. They were located next to each other on the far west side of the grave and indicated a standard position of the head in agreement with the helmets from previously discovered Graves 1 and 5 (Filow 1927, Abb. 3, 7; Stibbe 2003, fig. 3, 7), although a gold mask was found lying on a nearby stone (Krstić 2018, 46-47) (Figs. 2, 3, 5). In contrast, fragments of large bronze vessels then occupied the position at the legs in the eastern part of the grave.² With regard to the placement in the necropolis - surrounded by the graves of status-declared mature male deceased as interpreted in terms of discovered material culture, to the assumed position of the deceased with the head on the western side, as well as to the grave inventory - it is thus defined as a representative grave of a man with warlike features, who had a prominent position in his community and enjoyed a special reputation. Thus, a consensus was reached within the scientific discourse, and the narrative was accepted almost absolutely. While this defined the position and form of the grave, the ritual itself and the type of burial remained undefined.

Portrait, symbols and honours

Grave 8 contained more than 50 luxurious and prestigious objects, but only a few have been selected for this discussion, differing in material and decoration, as well as in their purpose and role in the grave inventory (Fig. 2). However, they are all interrelated, not only as consciously chosen accessories for the transcendental rite of passage of this particular deceased, but also as a set of interrelated information that, in a semantic and semiotic sense, represents both the deceased and, even more, the community of the living that carried out his burial. A golden mask, an Illyrian bronze helmet and a bronze volute krater with a tripod belong to this group of finds. Despite the prestige value of precious metal objects, bronze glamorous objects are of fundamental importance in visual art and crafts.

¹ Since most of the skeletal material was not preserved, the only anthropological analysis performed on the burnt bones from Grave 10 confirmed the burial of a female individual (Vulić 1933; Popović 1956; Palavestra 2011, 34; Krstić 2018, 39).

² It is worth mentioning that no skeletal material was found in the rich graves from the previous so-called "Bulgarian" campaign either, although in the monographic publication by Bogdan Filow, exactly according to the position of the enclosed objects, only the presumed position of the bodies of these individuals was shown graphically with lines (Filow 1927).

The so-called face mask differs already at first sight from all others archaic gold masks from a not-so-small and culturally heterogeneous area from Chalkidiki to Ohrid (Popović 1956; 1994b; Vasić 1987, 732; Vokotopoulou 1997; Kuzman 2006; 2018; Proeva 2006; 2018a; 2018b; Despini 2009; Despoini 2016, 14-18; Babić 2007, 59-67; 2011, 64; Krstić 2011, 36-39; cf. Theodossiev 1998; 2000; Guštin 2009; Chrysostomou, Chrysostomou 2012a; Chrysostomou 2016; Kuzman, Počuća Kuzman 2016; David 2017b; Kuzman, Ardjanliev 2018; Saripanidi 2017, 104-114; 2019, 183-184) (Figs. 3-4). It is made of a thin gold sheet, irregularly cut, with a rim that does not touch the forehead. The entire rim area of the mask was pulled out by pressing, and the border was indented and made with zigzag lines of comparable strokes and punched dots on the (wooden) matrix. The face is depicted very plastic and voluminously with details in repoussé technique, i.e. completely different from the canonical portrait of known archaic masks (Popović 1956, 15-16; 1987, 125, no. 1; 1994b; Vasić 1987, 732, T. 76, 12; Živanović 1994; Garašanin 1997; Krstić 2018, 271, no. 97). In fact, it shows short hair in a special way along the entire length of the forehead, in the manner of elongated stripes in relief instead of a border, which also makes it unique. Underneath, there are close-fitting, closed and compressed, almond-shaped slanted eyes with geometrically accentuated, semi-circular and luxuriant eyebrows that emerge from the root of the nose and follow the shape of the strong eye sockets. The nose is naturalistically designed with lateral depressions that connect it to rounded, accentuated, high-set cheekbones. Below the nose is a smaller closed mouth depicted in an archaic smile, and below that again is a plastically drawn and rounded parted chin that realistically resembles a young man's beard with stamped points on both sides (Fig. 3).

The described physiognomy of the face is skilfully determined by soft transitions and flexible surface treatment, so that with the way of execution of certain effective artistic solutions and bold gestures they present the mask as unique and without direct parallels in the artistic expression of the wider region. All the listed attributes represent a frontal portrait, in which in a naturalistic way the individuality is shown, directly reminiscent of a young man, made with a clear intention with just such a visual impression and, one must agree, a successful artistic transmission. Since portraiture implies showing a person with a predominant face and expression, personality and even his mood, one must consider the so-called golden archaic masks as portraits of the deceased, to whom, it is still believed, they were placed in the graves (cf. Popović 1987, 16; 1994b). Indeed, the portrait reduces the face to the concept of itself by making it a mask, and the mask as a closed form permanently represents the essence of the face in a mimetic sense, which was one of the most influential concepts in Greek and Macedonian aesthetics of the time. Thus, the representation is only successful if it conforms to the conventions of its time and social context, which is reinforced by the character of the face mask, which attempts to capture the features of life (cf. Belting 2017). Masks certainly had many functions in various social practices – as objects of exchange or inheritance, as expressions of status

or family tokens, and as objects for display in burial rites and/or aristocratic ceremonies.

Portraiture thus comes to the fore wherever the person portrayed was absent but still wanted to realize his position, role, and right within the community (Belting 2017; cf. Kull 1997, 260-268; Babić 2007; Reichenberger 2010, 170-172). The mask as a portrait therefore represented a symbolic presence, as if the person was still alive or as if he or she lived forever in the repetitive cycles of life. Glamorous material, as symbolic matter and eternal energy, had to apostrophize this idea, for they knew well the resilience of this noblest metal, and in the sense of a symbol of solar and epiphanic value, immortality and eternity (cf. Kuzman 2006; 2018; Часидис 2010, 164-166; Chrysostomou 2016; David 2017b). The golden portrait mask in question from Grave 8 in no way fits the performance pattern of other masks attributed to males from the region or the wider area up to the Thermaic Gulf, which is also supported by their chemical analyses (cf. Chrysostomou 2016; Despioni 2016, 12-13; Saripanidi 2017, 111; Penkova, Ilieva 2018, 66). Namely, this is the period of the so-called visual uniformity in Greco-Macedonian funerary and figurative art (cf. Boardman 1991; Osborne 1998), which did not aim to represent the character we can easily trace on this mask (Fig. 4). Technological analyses of the gold masks, hands, and sandals from the Trebenishta graves have shown that they were technically and professionally quite competent manufactured, which can be attributed to their necessarily rapid production prior to the actual funeral ritual (Penkova, Ilieva 2018) and not to the clumsiness, conservative, or provincial production of local artisans (Popović 1994b), as previously imagined. After all, the gold masks are local, i.e. regional, production and not imported or replicated. Although the graves with gold masks (and other gold foils) were part of a mosaic of ethnically diverse communities along the Candavian Road (Fig. 4), their eschatological rites were very similar, suggesting that their prominent/wealthier members were connected by shared values, trends and visual iconographic paradigms that facilitated communication and cross-cultural interactions, and perhaps later by the acceptance of the common ethnic identity of Macedonians led by the Temenidae/Argeadae (Theodossiev 2000; Babić 2007; Proeva 2006; 2007; 2018a, 82-84; Sprawski 2010, 134; cf. Saripanidi 2017, 110-111; 2019, 176, 181-182, 191-192).

An extraordinary Illyrian bronze helmet of the variant III A1-b was found in the immediate vicinity, about which there have already been many detailed discussions (Krstić 2007, 108-109; 2018, 276, no. 104; Vasić 1987, T. 76: 1; 2010, 39, 43, Pl. IV, 3-4; 2018, 108-109, fig. 2-3; cf. Blečić 2007; Blečić Kavur, Pravidur 2012, 54-63) (Fig. 5: 2). We know well the direct parallels with identical helmets from Olympia on the Peloponnese and Găvojdia in Banat found in rivers (cf. Blečić 2007; 79-82; Blečić Kavur, Pravidur 2012, 59-60, fig. 11; Sîrbu 2012) (Fig. 5: 1, 3). Measuring about 23x24 cm, they are all smaller than the usual undecorated examples of Illyrian helmets of type III. Probably metonymy and/or decorative elements of the same helmets are represented in the graves of younger male individuals (young men/boys) from Atenica I at Čaček and Zagrade on Gla-

sinac and most probably Vičja luka on the island of Brač (Blečić 2007, 82-83; Blečić Kavur, Pravidur 2012, 60-63; Blečić Kavur, Kavur 2016, 246-247) (Fig. 6). It should be noted that until today, it is the only helmet of the mentioned variant and striking iconographic content that has been studied in a closed grave context, which gives it additional value in the interpretation not only of Illyrian helmets, but also of the grave as a whole. Similar to the gold mask, it was not ritualized but carefully placed in that grave. Therefore, it obviously did not play the role of a military accessory, but probably a representative, symbolic equipment. The helmet from Olympia will provide an additional argument for this thesis, since it was found in the river Alfeios and not in the sanctuary, like many other sacrificed helmets, not only Illyrian ones (Blečić 2007, 79-82). The *barbarians* from the northern parts of the peninsula, like the Macedonians, gladly worshipped and endowed the Panhellenic sanctuary of the male principle at Olympia, as an expression of their political propaganda, power and authority. Only adult males could sacrifice or donate weapons there (Sprawski 2010, 141-142). This explains why, of all things, the most luxurious and eloquent example of the Illyrian helmet was not found in the sanctuary, suggesting that it belonged to a younger person who had not yet entered the society of adult men.

In this example and in this context, the applied decoration of the heraldic concept of a boar between two lions on the front of the helmet and naked riders, young men/ephebea on horses on both cheekpieces directed at the opening of the helmet, attracts particular attention (Fig. 5).³ If we associate seemingly separate figurative-symbolic scenes, a complex system of flat and spatial elements of the visual language, their interactions and effects on the user and/or observer, opens up to us, i.e. an artistic narrative in a clear connection between two mythically anchored conventions that allude to the afterlife. Namely, the emblem of the boar, which, especially in the artistic conventions of Greek and Macedonian art, was in different ways a symbol of the liminal state, of transition and a sign/symbol of male initiation.

Based on some mythological and/or literary figures, we learn how the initiation of adolescents into the company of mature men was common in archaic society, as heirs in the military, political, and economic sense (Burkert 1990, 263-264, 285-286; cf. Kukoč 2009, 81-83). In fact, as an ambivalent emblem of death/chthonic and lifelessness/vitality, the boar heroized the deceased, especially a young man who had not yet or had just been initiated into the society of mature men, thus legitimizing his social status (Theodossiev 2000, 197-198; Blečić 2007, 88-89; cf. Barringer 2001). This was precisely the characteristic of Macedonian (royal) hunting and certainly of real animals from their natural environment because European lions lived at that time only in the area betwe-

³ All these applications, as well as the same ones found in other graves of the necropolis (6 and 7) or in other graves of the Central Balkans, were made of silver and not of gold! After all, silver was used to solder the balls into the rims of the helmets of this particular variant. In certain examples, the appliqués could be gilded, as is known for the boar appliqué from Atenica (Djuknić, Jovanović 1966; cf. Blečić Kavur, Pravidur 2012, 54-63).

en the rivers Achelous and Nestos (*Herodotus, Histories*, VII, 125-126; Bartosiewicz 2009).

The conceptual battle between the lion and the boar, an otherwise popular theme in Greek painting from the Archaic period onward, should be understood in the context of scenes of heroic victory. In the end, the boar on the helmet becomes the sacrifice and the lion triumphs to guard the grave. The boar, as the most powerful animal of the Balkan fauna, symbolizes such a young warrior and all the unpleasant temptations he had to overcome, which he unfortunately failed to do, just as Meleager metaphorically did not "survive" the battle against the Calydonian boar (Barringer 1996, 51-66; 2001, 147-161; cf. Kull 1997, 288-289)! His metonymies remain independently fixed in the graves, probably in relation to the circumstances of local belief, as a kind of apotropaic sign and as a real symbol of the adolescent buried in Atenica and Zagrađe (Blečić Kavur, Pravidur 2012, 62-63) (Fig. 6).

This element, which is only apparently artistic/decorative and has an extremely mythical meaning, should be closely associated with another group of silver ornaments on the cheekpiece. These are naked horsemen/ephebes on horses, which also have a special place in the autochthonous iconography of the Macedonian visual art of the 6th and 5th centuries BCE (on the tradition of the equestrian cult cf. Dimitrova 2002; Liapis 2011; Sakellariou 2015). However, the mentioned group stands out as lateral assistance to the main scene in an appropriate summary concept of the whole narrative of the helmet (Fig. 7: 1-3). It is a canonized form or visual iconographic identification of ephebes who had not yet undergone the initiation rite and, as beardless, i.e. immature, were not allowed to carry weapons (Winkler 1990; Hoffmann 1997, 68-70). Similar to the young Trojan prince Troilus in the Trojan cycle, the aforementioned Meleager, artistically immortalized exclusively as a naked horseman without military equipment, is therefore associated with Apollo, who deals him the legendary final blow, as well as with Ares, who represents his mythological father (Barringer 1996; 2001, 147-148).

Silver appliqués of horsemen, also made in *repoussé* technique, come from Trebenishta grave 7 (Filow 1927, 12, Abb. 9, T. V, 7-8; Verger 2014, 260, Pl. 1, 6-7; Chukalev 2018, 266, no. 84) (Fig. 7: 4) and probably from graves in Vičja luka (Blečić Kavur, Pravidur 2012, 60-61, fig. 7; Blečić Kavur, Kavur 2016, 247, fig. 6) (Fig. 6), while the one made of bronze is known from nearby Plaošnik (Ardjanliev, Verčik 2018, 173, fig. 11). Further north in the Central Balkans, the same motif appears in a completely different medium, i.e. we can see it on a magnificent triangular amber pectoral pendant from Novi Pazar (Palavestra, Krstić 2006, 100-103, 112, fig. 47, no. 2) and plastically in shallow relief on a pendant from Lisijevo polje, where a rather damaged but still recognizable independent amber pendant of a boar was discovered (Palavestra, Krstić 2006, 352-354, no. 574, 577). However, these "amber" horsemen are not represented independently, but are contextualized with accompanying symbols of floral and faunal motifs. Overall, it should be noted that in both artistic-esthetic and symbolic-semantic

terms, certain conventions imported from the wider archaic world had to be fully accepted and understood in the vast area of heterogeneous cultural communities of the Central Balkans (Палавестра 1984; Бабић 2004; Babić 2007), because communication between elites used these repetitive signs that created mental images of what these objects meant.

Most intriguing, however, is the depiction of four ephebes on a bronze volute krater with a tripod (hypocraterion) (Krstić 2007, 104-107; 2011, 72-73; 2018, 291, no. 134; cf. Gaunt 2010; Bottini 2011; Verger 2014, 264-268, Pl. VI, 7; Чausидис 2010, 164-166, T. II: 1, 4-6; 2017, 975, Д75), in the same grave in its lower part, in the area of the assumed position of legs (Figs. 2, 8). Thus, they not only repeat and confirm the precisely chosen motif of the ephebes on the Illyrian helmet but also support the understanding of the proposed thesis.⁴ Namely, the selection of symbols/signs in the visual arts was never merely decorative or random, certainly not in votive and/or burial rituals and practices as a *modus vivendi* of these interconnected and intertwined aristocratic societies. Such luxury objects, as the krater from Trebenishta, Koreshnica or Vix, and even the much younger one from Derveni, were usually made on special and very demanding orders (Stibbe 2000; Rolley 2003; Barr-Sharrar 2008; Bottini 2011; cf. Osborne 1997; Чausидис 2010). This example is the only currently known archaic volute krater, which has appliqués of nude horsemen with galloping horses to the right on the frieze of the cylindrical neck. They are stylistically comprehensively defined, comparatively considered, and chronologically interpreted (Rolley 1982, 58-59, 60-62, fig. 180; Hitzl 1983; Stibbe 2000, 90-91, fig. 61; cf. Gaunt 2013). Although attributed to different production, from Laconian and Corinthian to even Aeginian provenance,⁵ the motif itself was otherwise common in Laconian, Boethian and Attic vase-paintings from the 6th century BCE onward (Hitzl 1982, 266-270; 1983, Abb. 4-5; Rolley 1982, 62-66; 1998, 295-296; Barringer 1996, 56-58; Stibbe 2000, 90-98; 2003, 71; Bottini 2011; Gaunt 2013; Mutafchieva 2018, 88-90) (Fig. 7: 5).

In all the above examples, the horsemen are depicted in the so-called specific adolescence, like young men without beards, and their feet do not pass over the horse's belly. They are naked and, unlike the horses, their genitals are not depicted (Fig. 8). A very similar example of a bronze appliqué also comes from Dodona (Hitzl 1982, T. 30: 6; 1983, Abb. 6; Stibbe 2000, 91; Чausидис 2010, 164, T. II: 4), which may indicate the existence of a volute krater also on this location.⁶ The rider on horseback is iconographically identified as the horseman or hero on a horse of the entire ancient world and must have been, in

⁴ See a different interpretation proposal in Verger 2014.

⁵ It is certainly necessary to distinguish between the possible geological origin of the material and the artisanal, artistic signature, as Gaunt (2013) rightly pointed out.

⁶ There are three other examples of appliqués of horsemen on galloping horses in the museums of the Louvre and Mainz and Fleischman's private collection (Hitzl 1982, Pl. 30b: 22; 30a: 23; 1983; True 1994, no. 18; Stibbe 2000, 91). However, they do not correspond to the above examples, because the appliqués from the Louvre (MNE 21; Br 4445) and Mainz

general, an idealized type of image to represent the heroization of the deceased who, freed from his human weaknesses, passes into other ontological or higher divine spheres (LIMC VI-1, *Herōs Equitans*; cf. Чаясидис 2010, 164-166; Liapis 2011). Idealization could be reinforced and the so-called heroic nudity, a convention that begins in geometric, but becomes extremely complex and ambiguous in archaic Greek art because it reflects the omnipotent representations of archaic elite society and its reality (Bonfante 1989; Winkler 1990; cf. Osborne 1997; Brouwers 2010, 116-121). Certainly, the meaning of such a representation is undeniably determined by context and subject rather than by an abstract principle, as Jeffrey Hurwit (2007) has aptly pointed out. Therefore, considering the objects and sites where they were found, mostly in funerary contexts, (naked) horsemen on horses, in stand-alone representations or enriched with additional symbols, are undoubtedly connected to the underground, chthonic world they both herald and represent (Liapis 2011). In addition to all the paradigms of male nudity of the archaic and classical Greek art, the naked horseman could also represent the fallen deceased, regardless of who he actually was (Hurwit 2007, 55-58).

A bestiary suggesting hunting scenes (dog, fox, snakes, etc.) is depicted far below on the hypocraterion, which must be "read" together with the krater (Rolley 1982, 69, 91, figs. 204-206; Stibbe 2000, 92-95, figs. 60, 62; Verger 2014, 264-266; cf. Gaunt 2010) (Fig. 8). Thus, they can conceal in the common composition the metaphor of the heroic, divine pursuit of immortality, associated with the sacrificial ritual or the chthonic realm (Stibbe 2000, 97, cf. Eftimovski 2022), but only in assistance of the tripod, and not as a central motif! The central and most important scene are certainly the four ephebes, contextualized with two Gorgons high on the frieze of this extraordinary vessel, which in connection with the ephebes from the helmet, among other things, can also refer to, or symbolically affirm youth and thus the aspect of gender and the age of the deceased.

A youth separated from the men

Considering the known data and the interpretations offered, we must agree that only one male person was buried in Grave 8, who had distinctive status both within the part of the necropolis and within the system of its community of the living. It was they who placed in the grave a variety of objects with different, but certainly not standard meanings. The analysis of the material culture, especially volute krater, Illyrian helmets, gold masks and silver applications, in comparison with other finds and the visual content of the same and in other media and according to certain mythological patterns, can be related more generally to the Macedonian production, which was rich in gold and silver (Ignatiadou, Tsigarida 2009; Popov 2018). They created, following the example

(0.21296) represent clothed horsemen, while the appliqué from the Fleischman collection (True 1994, no. 18) does show a nude horseman, but in a completely different final depiction with the horseman's head turned to the right, i.e., away from the viewer. The appliqué of the horsemen from Dodona, which also showed traces of lead filling, would best fit the horsemen from Trebenishta (cf. Hitzl 1983, 9).

of Greek (Athenian and Laconic) painting, a very similar selection of mythological and metaphorically canonized forms that exerted a strong influence not only on Macedonian creativity, art and aesthetics, but also on the representation of a prominent collective that was much needed at that time.

The fact that the military panoply, which normally adorns a socially and militarily-politically mature man, was not found in the grave can also be understood by the presence of the so-called sword scabbards, which have not been preserved (Krstić 2018, 46) (Fig. 2)! Namely, sword scabbards have not been discovered in any grave of the Trebenishta necropolis, and the fact that not a single one, not even the smallest fragment, has been preserved calls into question their actual existence. If the scabbard happened to be connected to the grave, it most likely had the same symbolic-metonymic role as the helmet, which alluded to the sword and possibly to the equipment of an adult male, although it was not connected to the grave. The fact that there were also no other expected weapons in the grave either (spear, arrows, sword, knife, shield...), and that the scabbard is only a note from a field diary, reinforces and confirms the idea of the Illyrian helmet (and greave?) as a status symbol, not as a military emblem (cf. Socorro 2012). Certainly, weapons were buried in graves in Greece, but after the Early Iron Age, they were usually dedicated in temples rather than found in graves. This was the consecration of personal objects, which could only be done by adult males.

In Macedonia the situation is different, but the same *codex praxis* was applied in the burial inventory, as the military-political elite was typically buried with a complete panoply (cf. Sindos, Archontiko, Ahlada, Florina; Vokotopoulou 1997; Panti 2012, 473-475; cf. Despoini 2016; Chrysostomou, Chrysostomou 2012a; Chrysostom 2018; Galanakis, Shapland 2019, 5).

Also of interest is varied and very luxurious jewellery, from silver pins and fibulae (Krstić 2018, 279-286, no. 108-129; Tonkova 2018) to gold epistomia for the mouth (Krstić 2017; 2018, 275, no. 101) to amber and glass (Krstić 2018, 287, no. 130), all of which, are associated with female costumes and equipment, again suggesting important family valuables. For epistomes, in particular, are exclusively significant for female graves, as are the golden hand/glove (Krstić 2007, 112; Despoini 2009, 41-44; Chrysostomou 2016, 76-77) and golden sandals with Gorgons (Vasić 1987, 726, T. 78; Krstić 2007, 110-111; 2018, 272-274, no. 98-100) (Fig. 9). Although they are mostly found in women's graves (Цермановић 1956; Vokotopoulou et al. 1997, no. 117, 182, 206; Despoini 2016, 22-31; cf. Despoini 2009, 23; Gergova 2016), they were given to young men as a sign of the immortality of the body and as an allusion to the return (Kukoč 2009, 51). The Gorgon, as a mythical motif not chosen at random, marked the liminal states of the cosmological order. It denoted a dual character, i.e. both all the creative aspects of life as well as the destructive ones associated with death, which is why it is the primary archaic motif in the art of funerary symbolic rituals of divine protection and why it is represented on the volute craters of the period (Чаусидис 2010, 158-162; 2017, 509-510, A61:9). All the so-called ornaments of the female principle

were collected and placed in the grave of a young person for a specific reason, to whom older female families and the immediate community, regardless of gender, give the most precious objects as social markers and family symbols.

In this sense, we can also semantically understand the silver goblets and drinking horn (Krštić 2007, 115-117; 2018, 288-290, no. 131-133) (Fig. 10). These are symposiastic vases of the most important burials of rich and powerful heirs, which are summarised in many symposia. Numerous Iron Age scenes show us a horn for libation as an attribute of warriors and heroes, and divine goblets, evoking fertility/creativity, are often in the graves of prematurely deceased heirs of a family line or dynasty (Kull 1997, 377-382; Kukoč 2009, 50-51, 139-140; Чаусидис 2017, 325-327, 328-330, B9: 4, B 10: 6; Babić 2011, 150-151; cf. Sideris 2016a, 497-498; 2016b, 82-83). Finally, Grave 8 is the only rich grave of the Trebenishta necropolis that most likely also contained a silver miniature cart (Krštić 2018, 294, no. 138), like the also silver but younger cart with two wheels from the nearest grave 132 of the Gorna Porta (Kuzman 2018, 210, n. 392). Miniature carts are not only an important equipment category of the richer Macedonian graves, but also the signs that distinguish them from the surrounding cultural areas (Manakidou 2010; Chrysostomou, Chrysostomou 2012b, 372; Despioni 2016, 212-224; Saripanidi 2017, 128; cf. Kull 1997, 278-279; Socorro 2013, 56-58; Dima 2020, 26-29). They reconnect the Ohrid region more closely with the Macedonian cultural sphere and related rites of passage in eschatological practice from the second half of the 6th century BCE.

In summary, the golden mask and sandals, the silver goblets, the horn and jewellery, the bronze Illyrian helmet and a volute krater are not only significant for Grave 8. We find them distributed (quantitatively and qualitatively different) in the other 12 rich graves of the Trebenishta necropolis. As shown, however, only those from Grave 8 differ from the others and reflect an exclusive aesthetic and semantic dimension associated with special ritual ceremonies. Such a rich archaeological heritage and their complex iconographic picture testify to us that an adolescent, i.e. a young man, must have been buried there, which clearly speaks for the presence of defensive weapons with symbolic meaning. If we add the carefully selected signs and the artistic synopsis on the helmet with ephebes, the volute krater with ephebes and a Gorgon, as well as golden sandals and a hand with a Gorgon, familial "female" jewellery, symposiastic silver vases and the portrait of a young man immortalised by physiognomy and gestures in the form of a golden mask – the explicitly presented ideological concepts are unravelled into a visual synthesis that, in conjunction with the available archaeological record of the position and organisation of the grave and the ritual that was most likely performed by cremation,⁷ reveals the burial of

⁷ This is indicated by two facts: the absence of osteological material and the presence of charred wood, following the data from the publications. Cremation and burial rituals in wooden chests or urns are not a common practice of the Archaic period but were certainly not completely uncommon in a larger area and over a longer period of time (Kottaridi 1999, 113-115; 2020, 89-90; cf. Panti 2012; Salminen 2018, 95-97, 182; Saripanidi 2017; 2019). The

the young man/adolescent/heir and his youthful heroism in the third quarter of the 6th century BCE. In the archaeology of the narrower space and time, he is marked as completely different from others, which is his greatest importance, much greater than the possible ethnic group to which he belonged! By far not the quantity, but especially the quality and variability of these preserved, selected objects for display in funeral rites reflect so strongly, multidimensionally and metaphysically the message of heroization of destiny, perhaps even the divinisation of the death of the dear, unrepentant deceased in an almost ideal, universal status with eternal belief in his vitality and possible return.⁸

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nearest examples are two cremations, from rich grave 132 at Ohrid's Gorna Porta (Kuzman 2018) and from Petilep near Beranci (Mikulčić 1966, 221, Fig. 9; Vasić 1987, 721, T. 75), while the most luxurious example is from Central Macedonia and a cremation burial in the much younger Derveni crater from tomb β (Barr-Sharrar 2008, 18-31, 181-182). Thus, the exceptional volute krater might have served as an urn if the deceased was not buried in a coffin. For if the body of the young man was so disfigured, during the initiation practices (ritual hunting, of which the visual-artistic disposition of the crater with the tripod speaks) that the ritual washing and thus the process of mourning (in processions) was not possible, i.e., the rite of cremation at the site of the event itself, the cremated remains were subsequently taken to a dignified burial site to mark the premature departure of the fallen deceased. Finally, the cremated bones of a female from Grave 10 were found in metal vases (Vasić 1987, 729).

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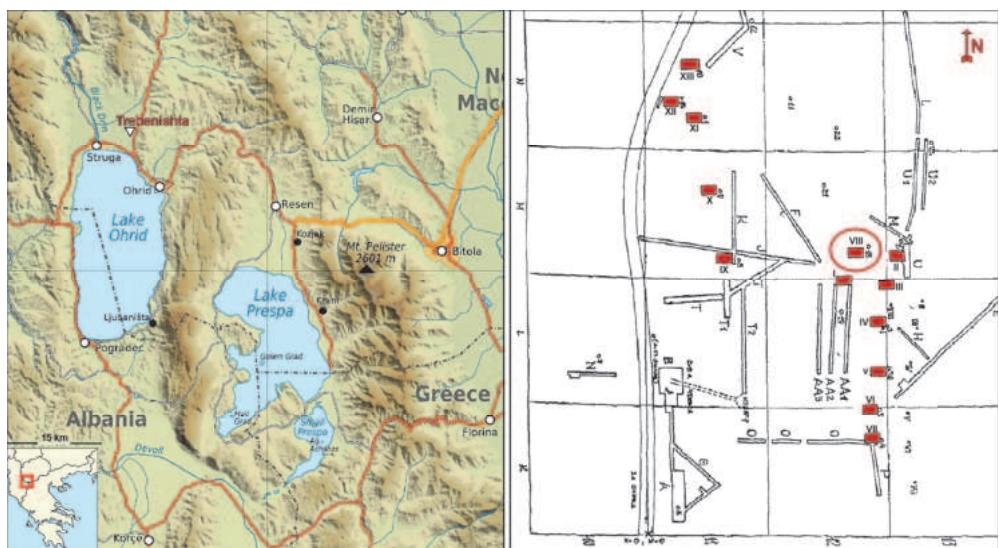


Fig. 1. Ohrid and Prespa Lakes with the position of the Gorenci necropolis near Trebenishta, and a partial plan of the necropolis with 13 rich graves (after Stibbe 2003, elaborated by the author).

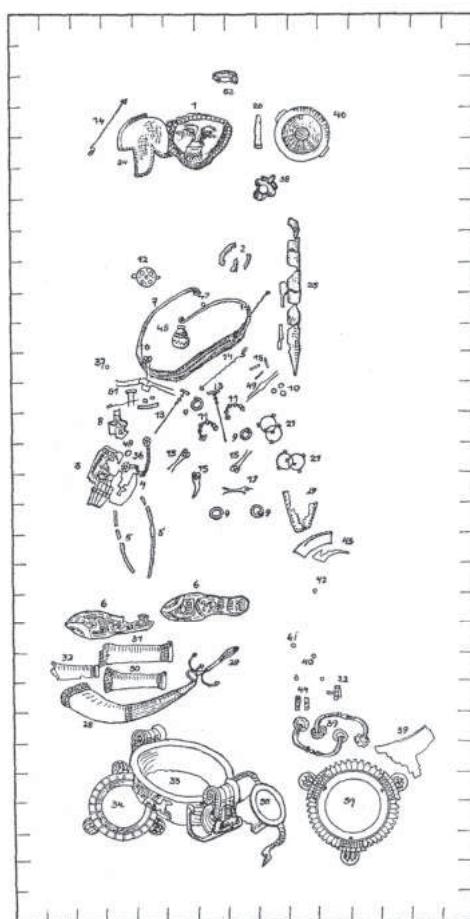


Fig. 2. Trebenishta, Grave 8 (after Vulić 1932; Krstić 2018).



Fig. 3. Golden face mask (after Krstić 2018; Vasić 1987).



Fig. 4. Distribution map of the golden masks in the Central Balkans (supplemented after Kuzman, Arđanliev 2018).

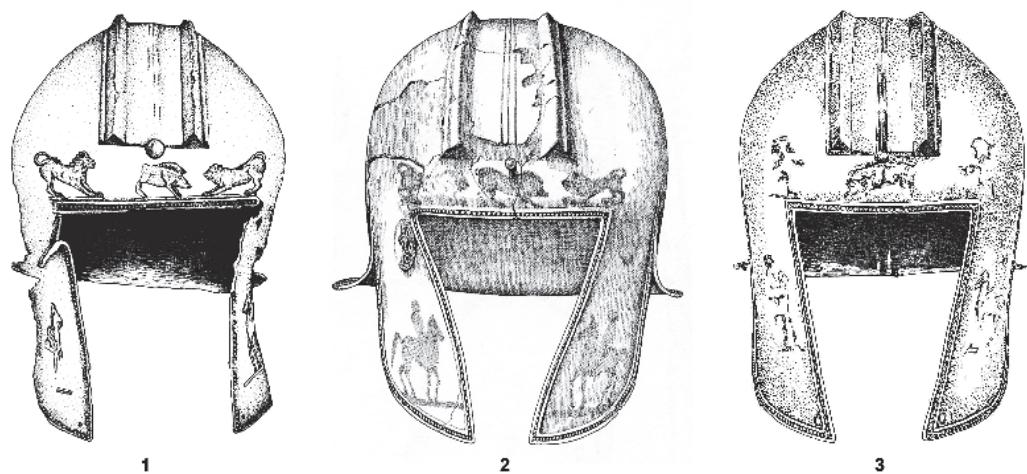


Fig. 5. Helmets of the Illyrian type III A1b variant from 1 Olympia, 2 Trebenishta, Grave 8, 3 Găvojdia (elaborated after Vasić 1987, Sîrbu 2012).

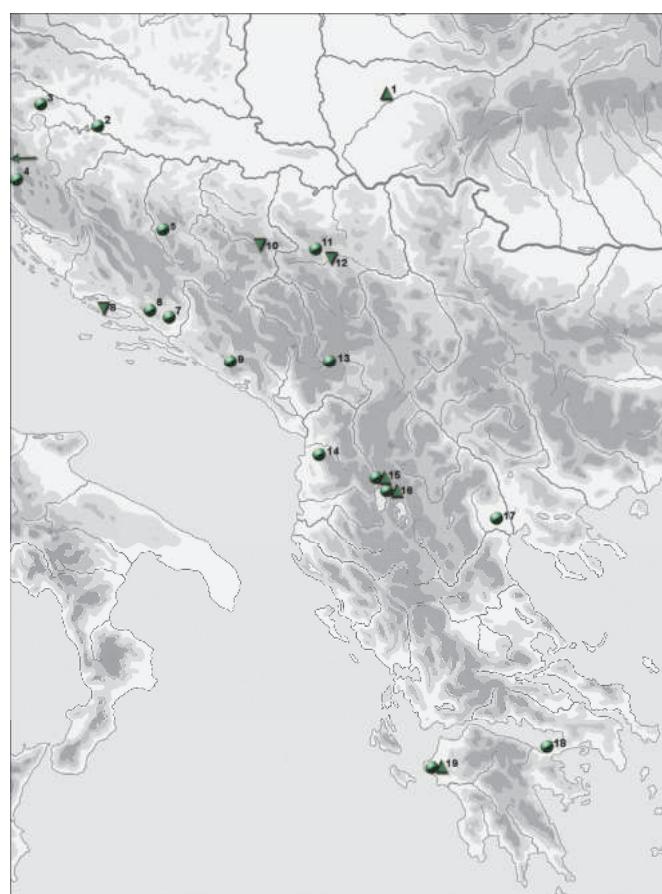


Fig. 6. Spatial distribution of Illyrian helmets III A1a variant (●), III A1b variant (▲) and silver applications (▼) (elaborated after Blečić Kavur, Pravidur 2012).



Fig. 7. Naked horsemen/ephebes from cheekpieces of Illyrian helmets from 1 Olympia; 2 Trebenishta, Grave 8, 3 Găvojdia (after Sîrbu 2012); 4 Silver appliqués from Trebenishta, Grave 7 (after Chukalev 2018), 5 Boeotian kantaros with the motif of four naked ephebes on horses in motion (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 06.1021.28).



Fig. 8 Bronze volute krater with details of four naked horsemen/ephebes on galloping horses (after Krstić 2011; Bottini 2011).



Fig. 9. Golden epistomia, hand/glove, ring, sandals and ribbons/appliqués (after Krstić 2018).



Fig. 10. Silver goblets, drinking horn and hook (after Krstić 2018).