

Monumental Funerary Architecture in Thessaly in the Classical and Hellenistic Periods

An Overview

The contribution of Thessaly for the study of monumental funerary architecture of the Archaic to Hellenistic periods is little known, despite the existence of distinctive local styles and tomb monuments. As will become clear from the discussion below, the number of monumental tombs dating from the Archaic to Hellenistic periods is surprisingly small, especially when one considers the proverbial wealth of the Thessalian elite landowning families and the oligarchic systems by which the Thessalian cities were governed. Even so, the variability of the tomb monuments and their structural peculiarities make them unique both to the region and mainland Greece as a whole, and therefore worthy of discussion. During the late Archaic and Classical periods typical for the region is a series of built tombs that most likely deliberately imitate monuments of the ›heroic‹ (Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age) past, namely tholos tombs covered by mounds. At the same time, in the late 5th and 4th centuries, some Thessalians, most characteristically the Pharsalians, adopted grave periboloi of the Attic type, alongside a new, tomb-type, peculiar to Thessaly: built chamber tombs of square plan and a corbelled pyramidal roof. Both tholos and chamber tombs with pyramidal roofs cease to be made by the late 4th century B.C.. In the Hellenistic period, monumental funerary architecture is rare; tombs of the Macedonian type are the most elaborate funerary monuments in Thessaly although their number is small compared to the very strong presence of Macedonians in the region.

THOLOS TOMBS

We will begin this discussion with the most characteristic tomb type for the region, the built tholos tomb. Tholos tombs with corbelled vaults are known in Thessaly since the Mycenaean period; together with Messenia and Crete, the type continues in the Early Iron Age for collective burial¹. Tholos tombs are characterized by a tripartite arrangement: A thalamos (chamber) with corbelled-vault, preceded by a built (and roofed) stomion (entranceway) and a dromos (passageway).

The earliest known monument of the type post-dating the Geometric period was erected some time in the late 6th century over a Late Helladic IIB built chamber tomb, in the western cemetery of Pharsalos, the leading city of the tetrad Phthiotis (fig. 1 no. 11; figs. 2–3)². The tomb (conventionally named ›the

1 Galanakis 2008, vol. 1, 76–85; vol. 3, 131–146. 227–232; Georganas 2000; Stamatopoulou 1999 vol. 1, 36–39; Stamatopoulou 2016, 181.

2 On Pharsalos: Decourt u. a. 2004, 702–704 (cat. no. 413); Béquignon 1970; Katakouta – Toufexis 1994; Stamatopoulou 2007b. On the tomb:

Verdelis 1951, 157–163; Verdelis 1952a, 185–198 and pl. II for plan and sections of the tomb; Verdelis 1953, 128–132; Verdelis 1954, 153–155; Katakouta – Karagounis 2006, 319–324 figs. 2–11. The final publication of the tomb is underway by the authors.

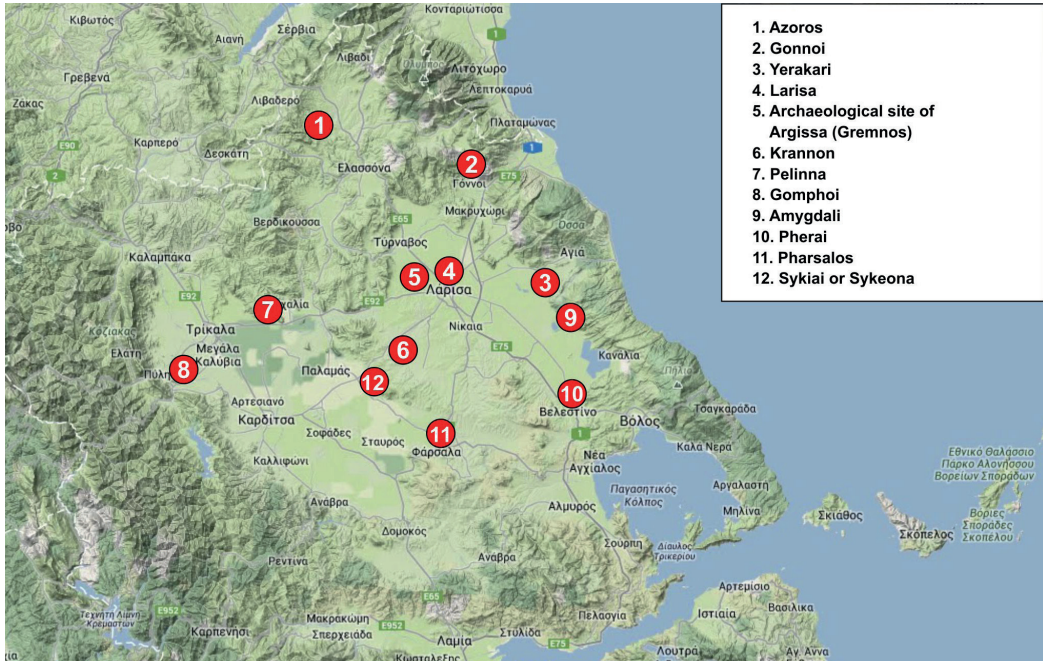


Figure 1: Map of Thessaly showing the sites with monumental tombs discussed in this volume.

Verdelis tomb) was built of local grey limestone and was covered by an earthen mound that was surrounded by a stone enclosure wall, that was 19 m in diameter and is preserved to a height of 1.50 m. The tomb consisted of a round chamber built in the polygonal system, 4.50 m in diameter, covered with corbelled roof, a roofed stomion (3.30 m long by 1.18 – 1.53 m wide) and a built dromos (3.95 m long by 1.12 m wide)³. Inside the tholos, on either side of the entrance, two monolithic sarcophagi were found looted and partially destroyed⁴.

The tomb's construction, in the polygonal style, is unattested in earlier funerary architecture of the region, but there are close similarities with sections of the city's fortifications, which have been dated on masonry evidence to the late 6th-early 5th centuries⁵.

Despite its looting numerous artefacts were retrieved from the tomb. Nails and decorative elements of a door, found near the entrance of the stomion in the dromos, suggest that the entrance to the stomion was closed by a wooden door. Notable among the finds is the black-figure crater in the Manner of Exekias, bearing on the main side a Homeric-style battle, possibly for the body of Pat-

3 Verdelis 1951, 158–159; Verdelis 1952a, 186 and pl. II on the dimensions of the tomb. Also: Koenigs u. a. 1980, 39.

4 Verdelis 1951, 158 fig. 31a; 159 dra-

wing IV.

5 Katakouta – Toufexis 1994, 197; Katakouta – Karagounis 2006, 320.



Figure 2:
View of the tholos
tomb at Pharsalos
(»Verdelis tomb«).

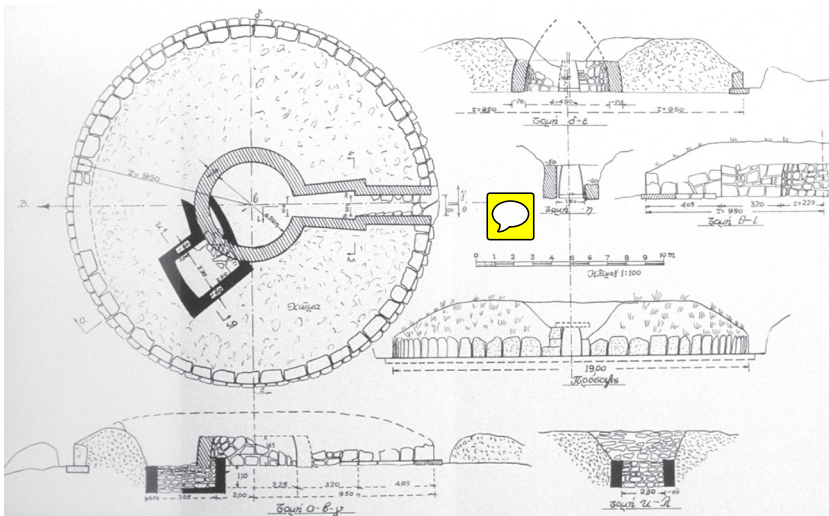


Figure 3:
Plan and elevations
of the »Verdelis
Tomb«.

roklos, and a four-horse chariot on the other; the majority of its fragments were found in the stomion, near the entrance⁶.

The finds of the tomb⁷, and the masonry style suggest a date of construction in the late 6th century B.C., perhaps the last third of the century, and a usage until, at least, the late 4th century B.C.⁸.

6 Verdelis 1951, 160–161; Verdelis 1952b. On the pottery from the tomb: Katakouta – Stamatopoulou (forthcoming a); also: Kavvadias 2010; Kavvadias (forthcoming). We should note here that, although the majority of the finds from the tomb have been located, we are still missing some of the pottery sherds illustrated

by Verdelis in his *Praktika* reports.

7 In particular the pottery from the foundations (Verdelis 1954, 153–154), the Laconian cup and the crater in the Manner of Exekias: Verdelis 1952b.

8 As is implied by the chytridia, the askoi and trefoil oinochoai: Verdelis 1952a, 189–190 figs. 5. 6.



Figure 4:
View of the second
late Archaic tholos
tomb in the western
cemetery of Pharsalos.

The tomb's location directly above a rich Mycenaean tomb⁹, in the immediate vicinity of two other Late Bronze Age tombs and near the edge of the Early Iron Age necropolis¹⁰; the tripartite arrangement of the tomb, the relatively large dimensions of the tholos and its type of roofing which bring to mind earlier tholos tombs from Thessaly; the discovery of the crater with the Homeric style battle over the body of a dead warrior, all are features that hint at a conscious reference to the past. Moreover, the discovery of

chytridia dating from the 4th century B.C. in the dromos, the area in front of it and the upper layers of the mound¹¹, similar to those regularly found in foundation deposits in houses of Pharsalos, indicate that commemorative rites/visits to the tomb took place in that period. All the above, have led scholars to characterize the monument as a ›heroon‹¹². It is evident that this tholos tomb was a point of reference in the western necropolis of Pharsalos during the classical period, since a 4th century peribolos tomb ›faced‹ the tholos and not the adjacent road¹³. At the same time, we do not think that on present evidence it is possible to fully evaluate and understand the nature of the funerary assemblage, or the nature of the later use of the tomb, i.e. whether it was used for burials or for tomb cult, because the tomb was found plundered, some of the decorated pottery from this tomb is still to be located, and the immediate vicinity of the tomb has not been investigated since the 1950s.¹⁴

A second tholos tomb, of roughly similar date, was discovered in the same cemetery, about 60 m southeast of the ›Verdelis tomb‹¹⁵. It consisted of a circular chamber, 4 m in diameter, and a short stomion, 1.80 m long, whose width de-

9 On the Mycenaean tomb: Verdelis 1952a, 190–192 and 1953, 128–132 no. 2; Katakouta – Karagounis 2006, 321 fig. 99; Papadimitriou 2001, 125 (90).

10 Katakouta 2012; among the tombs of the Early Iron Age necropolis were also tholos tombs.

11 Verdelis 1954, 153; Verdelis' archive in the Ephorate of Antiquities of Magnesia (Volos).

12 Marzoff 1994, 267, followed by Lipopolis u. a. 2007, 511. See also recently

Tsingarida 2003, 105–106 (who however erroneously places the first use of the tomb to the 8th century B.C.).

13 On this peribolos: Stamatopoulou – Katakouta 2013, 86. Verdelis 1954, 157–159; Verdelis 1955, 140.

14 For example we have no information on whether the mentioned pottery was used in enagismoi, bore traces of burning, was deliberately broken etc.

15 Verdelis 1955, 142–144 no. 3 (›grave B‹), 144 figs. 6–7 pls. 45β 46 α–β. In-

creased towards the entrance to the chamber (1.60 – 1.85 m wide) (fig. 4). The tomb was preserved to a height of 0.30 – 0.80 m, but the inward inclination of the walls confirmed that it was of the tholos type and not a circular enclosure, similar to those known from Pharsalos and Krannon¹⁶; however, its very fragmentary state does not allow further discussion of its architecture¹⁷.

Although looted, ten small stone repositories were still in the chamber, one with the name ΑΓΑΠΙΑ inscribed on the lid¹⁸, while many sherds of Attic black-figure vases were found in the chamber, mainly near the entrance of the tomb¹⁹. The recent re-discovery of the finds in Athens has provided significant information about the date and period of use of the monument and the interests of the burying group. At least four black figure Attic amphorae were placed in the tomb, as well as a black-glaze amphora and a black-glaze hydria of large dimensions. The style of the amphorae dates them in the period from the end of the 6th century to the end of the first quarter of the 5th century²⁰. The large number of Attic black-figure amphorae in a single burial context is unusual for the region. Also exceptional is the large number of ossuaries, ten, found in the chamber of the tomb. Cremation is relatively rare in Thessaly during this period; in all other tholos and chamber tombs from Thessaly that date to the late Archaic and Classical periods, inhumation in sarcophagi is the method of burial rite. The iconography of the vessels is common for the period, but would also fit the interests of the burying group: Dionysiac themes; male erotic pursuit; hoplite race.

The third and most developed example of a tholos tomb was discovered in neighbouring Krannon (fig. 1 no. 6), a major city of the Thessalian plain, ›home‹ of the legendary family of the Skopads²¹. The cemetery at Krannon extends over a very large area, about 2.5 km to the south of the city; many tumuli are still visible today, mainly along the road that led to south, towards Pharsalos. On the east side of this road, the single known example of a tholos tomb of the Classical period in Thessaly was excavated in 1960 (figs. 5–6)²². The tomb consisted of a semi-underground circular chamber, 3.28 m in diameter, and a short

formation on the tomb survives in the Archives of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Magnesia (Volos), D. R. Theodoris' Archive, file 28: ›Report on the year 1955‹ p. 2–3 no. 4 (with plans of the tomb); Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. II fig. 12.

16 See below n. 27.

17 Verdelis 1955, 142–143 pl. 45b fig. 6. Verdelis makes no reference in his report but we think it is likely that it too was covered by a mound.

18 Doulgeri-Intzesiloglou 2000, 152–3

(ΦΑ 9) pl. 71.

19 See n. 6 for a discussion of the findspot of the ›Verdelis‹ tomb vessels, some also near the entrance of the chamber.

20 For the pottery from the tomb, see Katakouta – Stamatopoulou forthcoming a; Mannack forthcoming; Katakouta – Stamatopoulou forthcoming b.

21 On Krannon: Decourt u. a. 2004, 694–5 (cat. no. 400); Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. II cat. no. 35; Batziou-Efstathiou Karagounis 2013.

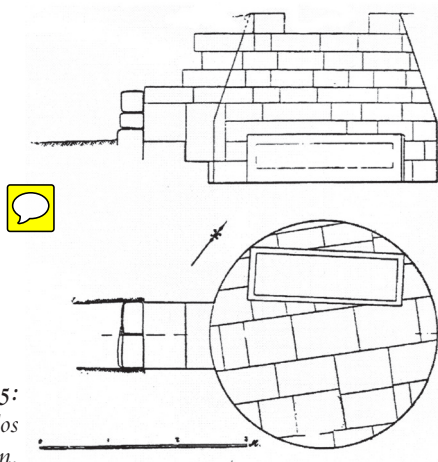


Figure 5:
Plan of the tholos
tomb at Krannon.

stomion, to the west of the chamber, made up of two wide steps (0.62 m long by 0.97 m wide)²³. The tomb did not have a built dromos. The entrance to the tomb was closed by a dry-stone wall, part of which survived. Inside the chamber, two poros sarcophagi were found, one badly destroyed. They had been placed on the paved floor of the chamber, on either side of the entrance; remains of a wooden coffin or cover were preserved inside the intact sarcophagus²⁴. Although the tomb was looted, the pottery fragments collected from the tholos suggest a period of use in the first half of the fifth century²⁵.

The Krannon tomb is exceptionally well built, in ashlar masonry, with decorative drafted margins on the corners of the blocks and a paved floor. Its plan, the semi-underground placement of the chamber, the existence of a stomion and the method of closing the entrance with a dry-stone wall are elements that recall built tholos tombs of the Early Iron Age²⁶. It is interesting to note that unlike Pharsalos, at Krannon there does not seem to have been a tradition of tholos tomb architecture during the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age; instead circular enclosures with a short passageway were used for collective burials²⁷. On present evidence the Krannon tholos tomb seems to be the latest example of the type in Thessaly.

22 Theocharis 1960, 179–181. 180 drawing 4; Archives of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Magnesia (Volos): D. R. Theocharis' Archive, file 24, p. 14–15, and drawings of the tomb (titled: Tomb 7 (B)) dated: 4.10.60.

23 Theocharis 1960, 180 plan 4 pl. 154β–γ; Miložić 1960, 175–176 Abb. 18.

24 The existence of the second sarcophagus that is not depicted in the published plan of the tomb (see above n. 23), is clear from the drawing by D. R. Theocharis in the Archives of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Magnesia: Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. II fig. 7b pls. 9a. 13c. See also: Batziou-Efsta-

thiou – Karagounis 2013, 17, 28–29 figs. 29–31. In 2016, many fragments of one of the sarcophagi, bearing painted decoration (mostly mouldings) were located in the Volos Museum; they are under study by the authors.

25 Theocharis 1960, 181 pl. 155a. The pottery from the tomb was identified in the Volos Museum in 2013 and is under study by the authors.

26 Stamatopoulou 2016, 187.

27 See for example the round peribolos enclosure with a passageway that was investigated at the locality Girelnia, dating to the Early Iron Age: Tziafalias – Zaouri 1999, 144 fig. 2. 146–7 figs. 9–10. At Agios Georgios near



Figure 6:
View of the tholos
tomb at Krannon.

BUILT CHAMBER TOMBS WITH CORBELLED PYRAMIDAL ROOF

During the 5th century a typically Thessalian tomb type emerges in the region, the built chamber tomb of rectilinear plan with a corbelled pyramidal roof²⁸. To-date four examples are known from Thessaly, two from Krannon, one from Pharsalos and the last one from Yerakari at the northern edge of the eastern Thessalian plain (fig. 1 no. 3). Despite differences in details and masonry style, all tombs, which were found plundered, display the same basic features. The tomb chamber, of square plan, was of relatively small size (side ranges from 2.25 m – 4 m) and was carefully built in the isodomic or pseudo-isodomic style with ashlar blocks. Its paved floor was set slightly below the surface of the threshold, and the walls of the chamber created a toichobate and orthostate course on the lower vertical part, while their upper part inclined inwards to form a corbelled pyramid. The chamber was in all cases preceded by a short stomion, whose upper part/lintel was emphasized; in at least two examples the dromos that led to the tomb had built side walls. Although only in the two Krannon tombs is the existence of the mound confirmed, it is highly likely that all were originally covered by an earthen mound. The roofing system of these chambers (corbelling), the presence of a stomion and/or dromos, the placing of sarcophagi in the chamber, are features that relate the chamber tombs to the Pharsalos and Krannon tholos tombs and thus to the Thessalian tradition of built corbel-

Krannon the periboloi, less canonical in shape, more ellipsoid, and constitute adaptations of this type; they are covered by a tumulus and date to the Archaic period: Ziafalias 1994 (with earlier bibl.); Stamatopoulou 2016,

187; also Katakouta 2012, 241, 248 fig. 3 for examples from Pharsalos.
28 For a discussion of these tombs: Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. I 39–47; Stamatopoulou 2016, 187–190; Stamatopoulou – Katakouta forthcoming.



Figure 7: vaulted tombs. Although looted, the masonry style, the pottery and other finds (discussed below) suggest that they were constructed and in use from the second half of the 5th century to the late 4th century B.C..

The emergence of built chamber tombs with pyramidal roof at a time when tholos tombs ceased to be constructed in the region, in the second half of the 5th century B.C., may be linked to the preferred burial mode, inhumation in stone sarcophagi, for which a rectilinear plan was more appropriate. Although in the Late Bronze Age built chamber tombs with chambers of rectilinear and round plan co-existed²⁹, we think that in the Classical period the appearance of the chamber tomb with pyramidal roof is an adaptation of the tholos tomb. Given the importance of these tombs and the fact, that so far they are unique to the region³⁰, it is worth offering a brief description of the individual tombs. We shall begin with the Krannon tombs, one of which was found directly opposite the already discussed tholos tomb (figs. 7–8). Conventionally named 'tomb A', it had a small chamber (side: 3.15 m; maximum preserved height: 3.23 m) and a stomion to the south, formed by a projection of the chamber walls, that was emphasized by a large monolithic lintel³¹. The recent restoration works of the

29 Galanakis 2008, vol. 1, 76–85; Stamatopoulou 2016, 182.

30 Theodossiev 2007 for a discussion of the Thessalian tombs in the context of

Thracian funerary architecture, where tholos architecture is popular in the 4th century B.C.

31 Theocharis 1960, 177–179; Protono-



Figure 8 (above): Krannon, chamber tomb, detail of the upper part of the walls of the chamber.

Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa have revealed the existence of a dromos in front of the entrance of the tomb, consisting of work-chips and beaten earth. In addition, two stone rectangular slabs were found at the outer part of the dromos, set upright; in the space between them a burial was placed in the 2nd century B.C.. They had originally served as guides when the fill needed to be removed for new burials³². The entrance to the chamber was sealed by a pair of probably wooden doors³³. On the outside of the stomion, towards the dromos, the opening was closed by a dry-stone wall. The upper part of the tomb is destroyed, but its capstone suggests that it was covered with a pyramidal roof. Inside the chamber one or more sarcophagi were placed on the paved floor; only fragments survived the looters³⁴. The pottery recovered from the tomb suggests a date in the late 5th – early 4th century B.C..

The second tomb of this type at Krannon (conventionally named: the ›Deilaki‹ tomb) was located about 250 m south, along the same road (fig. 9)³⁵. This tomb had a dromos consisting of two parts: the inner, stone-built, part was set slightly

Figure 8 (below): Krannon, View of the ›Deilaki‹ Tomb.

32 Stamatopoulou – Katakouta forthcoming.

33 Theocharis 1960, 179 plan 3.

34 Notes in the unpublished notebook of D. R. Theocharis in the Archives of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Magnesia (Volos), dated 12.10.60.

35 Protonotariou-Deilaki 1960; Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. II figs. 9–11 pls. 17–18.

Figure 10:
Krannon, View
of the painting on
the back wall of the
chamber.



Figure 11:
Krannon, Painted
sarcophagus lid.



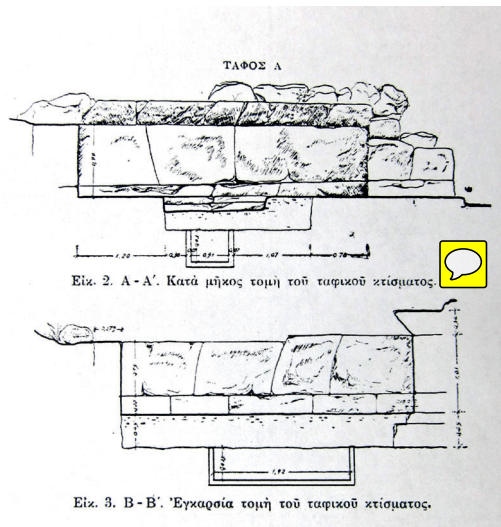
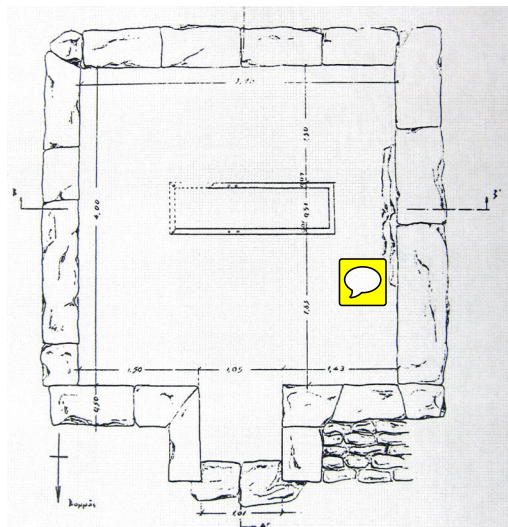
off-centre and its sides were higher towards the chamber; the outer part, towards the street, was not built but near its end two large stone slabs were found on either side of it, serving as guides for the users of the tomb, when the fill was removed for new burials³⁶. The entrance to the tomb was again emphasized by a monolithic lintel, with a pediment carved on its upper part. The walls of the chamber, built of yellowish sandstone in an ashlar manner, preserved punch marks that create a decorative effect. Holes for iron nails on the upper vertical part of the walls suggest that various objects or garlands hung on them, a practice better attested in neighbouring Macedonia³⁷. The rear wall of the chamber, opposite the entrance, bore figure painted decoration, a *unique* for Thessaly that according to the excavator depicted a banquet scene on a white background (fig. 10)³⁸. Inside the chamber two monolithic stone sarcophagi were placed on either side of the entrance, covering the entire length of the

36 Archives of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa.

37 Protonotariou-Deilaki 1960, 33–34; also: von Mangoldt 2012, 36 n. 317

(for Macedonia).

38 Protonotariou-Deilaki 1960, 34–35 fig. 8; Milošević 1960, 177; Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. II pl. 1.



chamber. The northern sarcophagus bore painted decoration, which according to the excavator consisted of ornaments on the body and a boar hunt scene on the pediment on the lid. The fragments of the painted sarcophagus were recently re-discovered in the storerooms of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa (fig. 11); it is evident that both pediments were decorated with painted scenes. The southern sarcophagus contained a wooden coffin whose edge had a relief meander band³⁹. Based on the finds retrieved from the tomb and its masonry a date in the second half of the 4th century was proposed by the excavator⁴⁰. In Pharsalos, the only known tomb of this type was excavated in the western cemetery of the city. It had a square chamber, the largest known so far (side 4 m), and a short stomion facing the road (fig. 12)⁴¹. Its walls were only preserved to a height of 1 m and most of their upper part is missing. Still, the inward inclination of the upper part of the walls, to form a corbelled roof, is clear. A sarcophagus was found inside the chamber, placed in a pit in the bedrock, a unique arrangement so far for this type of grave⁴². Until recently the only evidence for the date of the tomb was Verdelis' brief statement that it contained pottery

Figure 12a-b:
Pharsalos, chamber tomb: plan and sections of the tomb.

39 Protonotariou-Deilaki 1960, 36–41 and drawing 17 on p. 43. The study of the painted decoration of the tomb is underway by the authors.

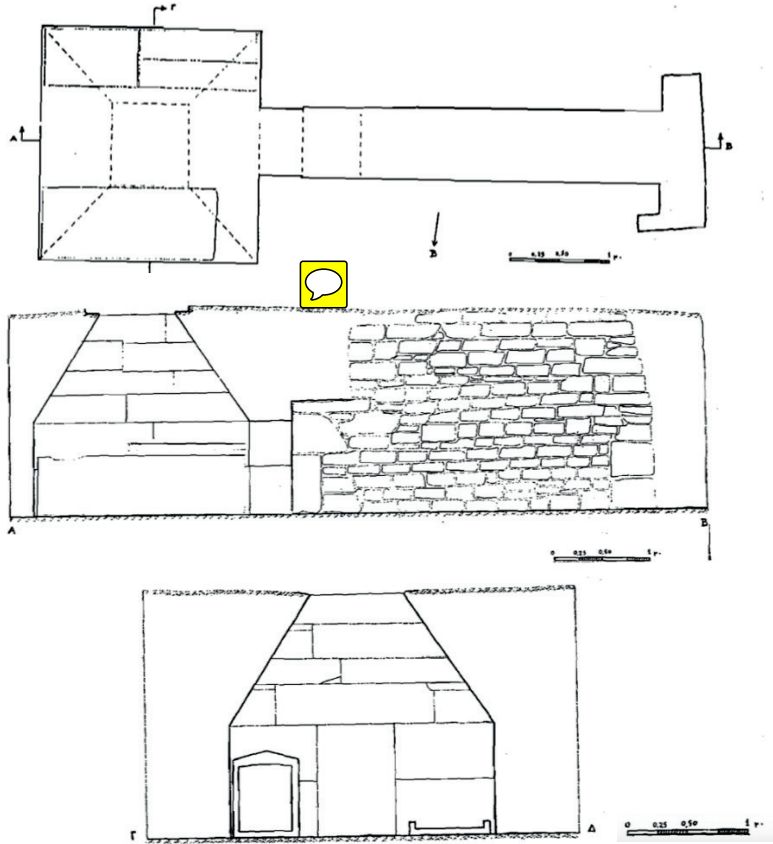
40 Protonotariou-Deilaki 1960, 42–43; Theocharis 1960, 175 pl. 154α (for the jewelry); Stamatopoulou 2016, 437–348.

41 Verdelis 1955, 140–142 no. 2 pl. 44α–

β. 45α; Orlandos 1955, 44–46; Archives of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Magnesia, D. R. Theocharis' archive, file 28, »Pharsalos: Report for year 1955« p. 2 no. 3 (with detailed measurements of the stomion); Katakouta – Karagounis 2006, 324–325 fig. 12; Stamatopoulou – Katakouta (forthcoming).

42 Verdelis 1955, 142 pl. 45α.

Figure 13a-b:
Yerakari, chamber
tomb: plan and sec-
tions of the tomb.



sherds of the second half of the 5th century⁴³. The recent, preliminary, study of the pottery from the tomb, which despite the looting was plentiful, suggests a date for the construction of the tomb in the third quarter of the 5th century; the use of the tomb extended until the end of the 5th century B.C.⁴⁴.

Moving further north, the fourth example of a chamber tomb of this type was discovered at *Yerakari* (fig. 1 no. 3; fig. 13) 1 km east-northeast of the settlement on the hill *Palaiokastro*⁴⁵. The settlement, which remains unexplored, controlled the basin of *Ayia* and the eastern part of the Thessalian plain. Unfortunately neither the settlement nor the cemetery have been investigated systematically.

43 Verdelis 1955, 142.

44 For a discussion of the pottery from the tomb, see *Katakouta – Stamatopoulou* forthcoming b.

45 Gallis 1973a and 1973b; Stama-

topoulou 1999, vol. II cat. no. 67 (with earlier bibliography); *Stamatopoulou* 2016, 189–190 and recently: *Stamatopoulou – Katakouta* forthcoming.

Unlike the other tombs of this type, here the small chamber (side 2.25 m) was almost completely underground; it had a relatively long built dromos (3.65 m long), which formed a roofed low stomion (0.70 m wide \times 0.90 m high) towards the entrance. The construction of the chamber was in the pseudo-isodomic style; judging from the published images and plans it seems less careful/decorative than the Krannon tombs. The few finds, most notably the bolsal and a Corinthian type skyphos, can be dated to the late 5th – early 4th centuries.

The tomb is very interesting, both for its type and location. Its discovery at the northern edge of the eastern Thessalian plain at a considerable distance from Krannon and Pharsalos suggests that such tombs were not concentrated in the central Thessalian plain but were geographically widely dispersed.

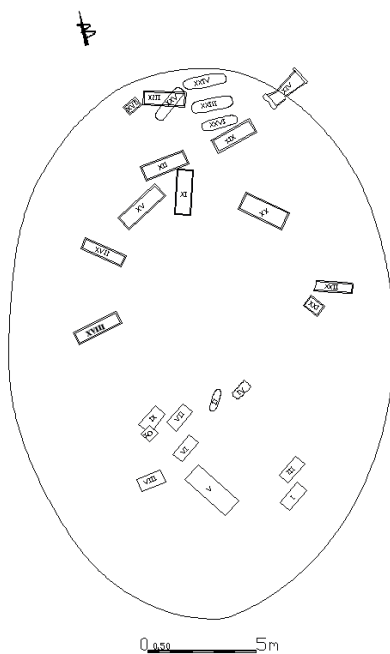


Figure 14:
Krannon, plan of
the Sarmanitsa
tumulus.

MONUMENTAL TOMBS OF THE CLASSICAL PERIOD IN THEIR THESSALIAN CONTEXT

Bearing in mind the limited research on Thessalian necropoleis and the large number of tumuli in the plain that remain uninvestigated, it is reasonable to assume that built tholos or chamber tombs must have been more numerous than the existing sample suggests. Even so, their number is very small compared to tholos tombs that date to the Late Bronze Age or, especially, the Early Iron Age and thus seem to have been used by a small, select, group. It is worth pointing out that, even though some Thessalian elite groups chose to bury their dead in funerary monuments that consciously, if not systematically, archaize, not all affluent Thessalians chose this mode of self-representation in burials. At Krannon tumuli covering cist graves, built of monolithic and well-dressed stone slabs, stone sarcophagi, occasionally tile-covered graves, and stone repositories co-existed in the vicinity of the mounds protecting built tombs. Notable among them is the ›Sarmanitsa‹ tumulus, located to west of the acropolis (fig. 14)⁴⁶. It contained twenty-six graves, of both adults and children, which were

46 Hourmouziadis 1970; Zaouri 1989; Tsiaka forthcoming, for the pottery of

the tomb; Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. II cat. no. 35.

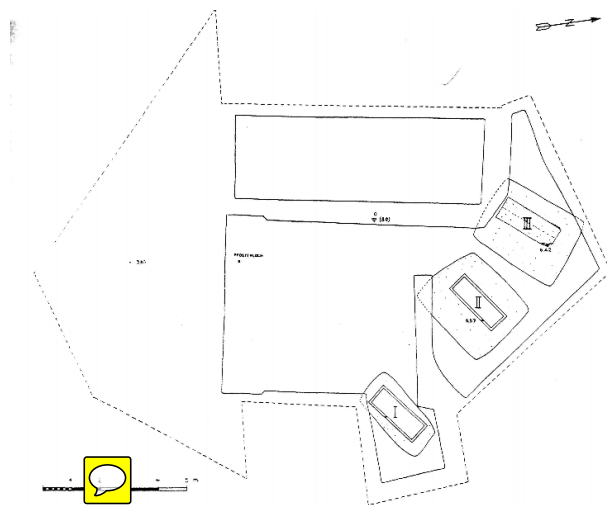


Figure 15:
Plan of the *Schismeni Magoula*
tumulus.

and early 5th centuries BC is still limited, but it is clear that in the period of construction and initial use of the tholos tombs there were also individual burials in stone sarcophagi that were not grouped under tumuli⁴⁹. In the late 5th and 4th centuries B.C., remarkable variety characterizes the grave typology in this cemetery: peribolos tombs of the Attic type (although smaller and less elaborate)⁵⁰; tumuli covering a small number of burials in stone sarcophagi and/or cists, secondary cremations in metal urns placed in stone repositories⁵¹.

Typical of affluent burials in the Thessalian plains during the Classical (but also the Hellenistic) period are tumuli used for a limited number of burials in stone sarcophagi or elaborately made stone cists. A good example is the *Schismeni Magoula* tumulus, situated about 1.5 km from the settlement on the site Gremnos (fig. 1 no. 5; fig. 15)⁵². The well constructed tumulus covered three monolithic sarcophagi, sunk in pits in the bedrock, that were used for single inhumations, which were well-furnished in organic materials but sparse in metal offerings or pottery. The pottery and a silver coin found in the tombs date them in the second half of the 4th century B.C.

clustered at its two ends. The tumulus was used from the end of the 6th century to the third quarter of the 5th century B.C.. The burials are rich by contemporary Thessalian standards as is inferred by the care of the construction of the sarcophagi (monolithic, with well-dressed interiors and traces of red plaster)⁴⁷, the discovery of imported Attic pottery (mostly lekythoi) and of an iron sword inside sarcophagus XX⁴⁸.

Turning to Pharsalos, the two late Archaic tholos tombs already discussed were part of a large, organised cemetery. Our knowledge of the western cemetery of the city during the 6th

47 In particular grave V where the stone sarcophagus was placed in a protective stone casing: Hourmouziadis 1970, 279–280 pl. 237γ.

48 Hourmouziadis 1970, 280–282; Zauri 1989, 232 gr. XX. Also: Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. I 31–32; Stamatopoulou 2016, 190–191.

49 As for example the single sarcophagus found in 1952, east of the tholos tomb: Verdellis 1952a, 201–203.

50 Verdellis 1951, 155–157; Verdellis 1952a, 199–203; Stamatopoulou – Katakouta 2013.

51 Verdellis 1951, 154–155; Verdellis 1953, 127.

52 On the tumulus: Milojčić 1956, 170–172; Biesantz 1957; Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. I 52; vol. II cat. nos. 23. 57. It is noteworthy that traces of an axial post (0.20 m. thick) with remains of wood were observed at the centre of

Further east, in the intensively investigated area around the Gulf of Pagasai, modern Volos, no built tholos/chamber tombs of the Archaic or Classical periods have been found to-date, despite the strong Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age tradition of built tholos tombs⁵³. In this region, the most elaborate tomb types and best furnished burials tend to be in monolithic sarcophagi or well-dressed stone-lined cist tombs. The same seems to apply to Pherai, the leading city of the region; the best known example is the ›Thymarakia‹ tumulus (fig. 1 no. 10), in the still largely uninvestigated, northern cemetery. This tumulus is situated on a prominent site, on a hill near

the road to Larisa. It was the resting place of a family, and was in use from the second half of the 5th century to the early 3rd century B.C.⁵⁴. The cist graves of this tumulus were very carefully constructed of monolithic stone slabs that fitted perfectly. The inner face of these slabs was carefully finished and decorated by a single incised line running along the sides creating a Π-shaped frame that was often accentuated with colour, while the most elaborate examples were further decorated with incised Ionic columns, some preserving red and blue colour on the capitals (fig. 16). The offerings of these tombs, although lacking metal vessels or jewellery, imply substantial investment and care by the burying group. The custom of using cist graves with incised Ionic columns in the interior for affluent burials seems to be particular to the area around the Gulf of Pagasai, with Pherai and/or Pagasai the possible centres of production⁵⁵. In the central Thessalian plain, cist tombs with interior decoration imitating architectural features are known from Larisa (fig. 1 no. 4) and, recently, from the vicinity of the village Amygdali near Lake Karla (fig. 1 no. 9), but in both cases the tombs here

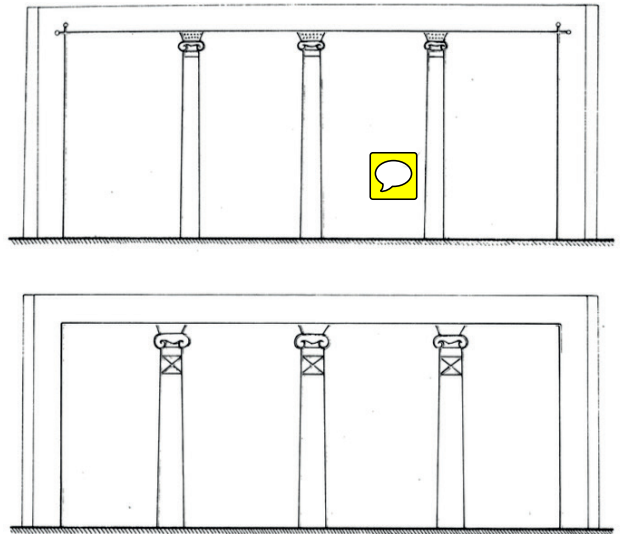


Figure 16:
Drawing of the interior decoration of the Thymarakia tumulus tombs.

the mound: Biesantz 1957, 38–43. Remains of enagismoi were visible above each sarcophagus: Biesantz 1957, 40; Biesantz 1959, 74 fig. 1. Important documentation exists in the archive of the excavations in the Institut für Ur- und Frühgeschichte und Vorderasiatische Archäologie in Heidelberg. M. Stamatopoulou would like to thank P. Marzolf for alerting her to the existence of this ar-

chive and for his significant practical help.

- 53 Morgan 2003, 95–102; Stamatopoulou 2016, 192–193.
54 Adrymi-Sismani 1983; Doulgeri-Intzesiloglou 1994, 79; Arachoviti 1994, 127 fig. 1; Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. II cat. no. 63.
55 List of examples: Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. I 23–26 (with earlier bibliography); vol. II pl. 5.

date to the Hellenistic period and the rather rudimentary columns have Doric capitals, not Ionic⁵⁶. There has been much speculation about the meaning of these architectural features. Some scholars see them a reference to the sanctity of the tomb and a higher/heroized status of the deceased whereas others explain them as an allusion to elaborate domestic architecture⁵⁷. It is very difficult to come to a satisfactory all encompassing interpretation, especially because in most cases the tombs were found looted. When intact, as for example in the Thymarakia tumulus at Pherai and the Military Airport tumulus in the eastern cemetery of Larisa, the grave goods hint at a concern with the afterlife or the needs of the deceased for the journey to the Underworld, but there is no evidence for a 'higher/heroized status of the deceased'⁵⁸. The similarity of the arrangement to the interior decoration of the Judgement Tomb at Lefkadia might imply an allusion to domestic architecture, peristyle courts of elaborate houses, at least for the Hellenistic tombs⁵⁹. In any case, our appreciation of the practice of decorating the interior of tombs with columnar features will undoubtedly be enhanced following the discovery in Macedonia, at Aigai, of two large built chamber tombs with interior decoration of Ionic half columns, dating – according to the excavator – to the 5th century B.C.⁶⁰.

The Macedonian control of large parts of Thessalian territory from the late 4th century onwards did not alter significantly the burial landscape of the region. As with the Classical period, built tombs remained a minority choice. More

56 Well made cists tombs with interior incised decoration were found in Larisa, especially at the Military Airport tumulus: Tziafalias 1980, 281; Gallis 1982, 62–63. Also: Toufexis 1991 (163 Thessalonikis st; 31 Augoustou and Elladiou st); Katakouta 1994 (Camp of 1st Army's Division Headquarters); Toufexis 1996 (Ch. Smyrnis st). Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. I 26–27; Karapanou – Katakouta 2000, 163. For the Amygdali tomb: Archives of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa.

57 Imitation of temple architecture: Papazapheiri 1961–62, 30 (the sanctity of the tomb); Psarra 1999, 601 n. 17; Karapanou – Katakouta 2000, 163. The tomb as house of the deceased: Kurtz – Boardman 1971, 272; Fedak 1990, 177.

58 Stamatopoulou – Kravaritou 2018, 148–152.

59 It is well known that elaborate domestic architecture is a phenomenon of

the late Classical and especially Hellenistic periods, yet, Ionic columns are often represented in scenes of the prothesis on black-figure pottery and funerary plaques, alluding to an open space, perhaps the courtyard of the house. For examples, see Shapiro 1991, figs. 1. 7; but see Lynch 2006 on the danger of reading too much in the depiction of columns on vases.

60 Kottaridi 2013, 131. Also announcement in the Greek e-journal *Archaeologia*: of 20 March 2013 (<http://www.archaeologia.gr/blog/2013/03/20/νέοι-βασίλικοι-τάφοι-στις-αιγές/>). We would like to thank A. Kottaridi for showing us these tombs and discussing the evidence for their date. Besides Aigai/Vergina, the practice of decorating the interior of cist tombs with Ionic columns is attested in Macedonia on the island of Agios Achillios in the Prespes region: Psarra 1999, 601. The commonalities bet-

popular seem to have been tumuli containing cist graves, monolithic sarcophagi or stone repositories. Typical examples include: the tumulus at Pilaf Tepe, near the border of the territories of Pherai and Demetrias, where a ram was buried in a specially prepared cist, that was situated above a stone theke that contained the cremated remains of the deceased in a silver situla and numerous grave gifts⁶¹; the tumulus at Sykiai or Sykeon (fig. 1 no. 12), a site neighbouring Krannon, that was used from the late 4th century to the middle of the 3rd century B.C. for five well furnished burials in monolithic stone sarcophagi, some which were protected in stone casings⁶². Further west, at the border city of Gomphoi (fig. 1 no. 8), with its strong Macedonian connections during this period, a tumulus that was investigated in 2000, and remains unpublished, contained six cist graves, that date to the 3rd century B.C.. Nearly all graves were furnished with gold jewellery. Among the numerous offerings of grave 2, were two silver ossuaries, one bearing the decoration of a dog in high relief on its lid, gold threads and an intact sword in its case⁶³. At Pelinna, modern Petroporos (fig. 1 no. 7), a tumulus (15 m in diameter and 1 m high) in the southern cemetery of the city covered three graves, which were grouped within a stone peribolos enclosure⁶⁴. These were: a stone theke containing the cremated remains of probably a man in a large bronze pyxis together with a spear head and a gold danake; a monolithic sarcophagus, with the inhumed remains of a woman laid on a stretcher and reportedly those of an infant buried in a lebes, and numerous grave goods, among them a gilt wreath, gold hair ornaments, a gold danake, and more importantly, the two famous gold ivy-shaped leaves with ›Orphic/Bacchic‹ texts that had been placed on the adult female's chest. This was most likely a family tumulus, since only a generation separates the burials: from the 1st to 2nd quarter of the 3rd century B.C.⁶⁵.

ween Thessaly and Macedonia are a very interesting topic that requires further exploration.

- 61 We have already mentioned the tumulus in the eastern cemetery of Larisa, inside the Military Airport of the modern city, in use during the 2nd century BC: Tziafalias 1980, 281–282; Gallis 1982, 62–63. For the Pilaf Tepe tumulus: Edmonds 1900. The tomb is under study for publication by Stamatopoulou.
- 62 Hatziaggelakis 1999; Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. II cat. no. 52 pl. 10c–d; on stone casings: Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. I 31–32.

63 Archives of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa.

64 Tziafalias 1992, 133–134; Karapanou – Katakouta 2004, 120–126. On the cemeteries of Petroporos: Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. II cat. no. 48; Karapanou 1997; Katakouta 1997.

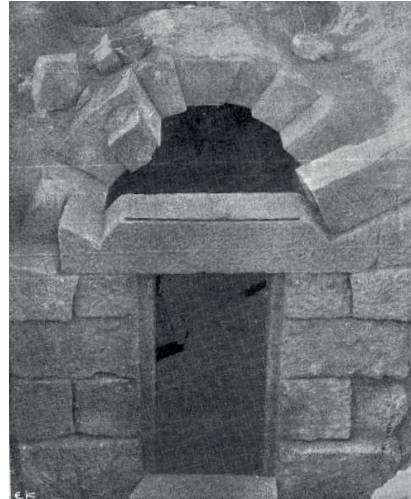
65 We should also note here grave 4 at the locality Koulia at Petroporos: a monolithic stone sarcophagus was covered under a low tumulus. The grave contained a male adult inhumation burial and distinctive/unusual finds: Karapanou 1997, 521–522; Karapanou – Katakouta 2004, 115–120.

MACEDONIAN TOMBS IN THESSALY

As mentioned earlier, the most elaborate tomb type during the Hellenistic period in Thessaly was the Macedonian tomb; still their number is very small – three examples – and, if at all meaningful, the geographical distribution shows a concentration in the northern regions. Further south, in the former perioikic regions of Pthiotis, Malis and Ainis, six examples are known, from Lamia, Mexiates (twin tomb), Hypata, Perivoli Pthiotidos, all situated along routes/major passages⁶⁶.

Figure 17:
Larisa, Macedonian
tomb at Palaio-
choria.

All three Macedonian tombs found in Thessaly, in Larisa, Petroporos and Azoros were only partially investigated in the early part of the 20th century by A. Arvanitopoulos; they had been looted already in antiquity, and remain unpublished. As will become clear from the presentation below all were quite small, with simple facades that bore no elaboration⁶⁷. The Macedonian tomb at Palaiochoria Larisas (fig. 1 no. 4; fig. 17) was situated about 5 km south of the city. Although its exact location is not known today, on the basis of a military map of the Greek Kingdom dated 1909 it appears that the tomb was situated south of the city, on the hills south-east of the modern cemetery of Larisa. The tomb was thus located within the chora of ancient Larisa, most likely related to an isolated rural installation/private estate and not part of the organised cemeteries of the city⁶⁸. It was a small single-chamber tomb⁶⁹, built of ashlar poros blocks in the pseudo-isodomic style and roofed by a barrel vault. No traces of a dromos



66 Dakoronia 1983; Bougia 2005 (Argyrochori Hypatis); Huguenot 2006; Huguenot 2008, 255: she links the location of Macedonian tombs along major passes/routes to movements of Macedonian garrisons in the region. Also: von Mangoldt 2012, 167–168 cat. no. B 68 (Lamia); 203–206 cat. nos. B 85–86 (Mexiates); 230–232 cat.no. B 104 (Perivoli); 305 cat. no. B 145 (Hypati).

67 For a brief discussion of these tombs: Huguenot 2008, 260–263.

68 It was excavated between 17–24 October 1906: Arvanitopoulos 1906,

127–128; Arvanitopoulos 1909, 27–44; *Apχ. Apβ.* 4, 19–33: 14.10.1906–24.10.1906, with drawing of the east (front) side of the tomb on p. 26; Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. II cat. no. 46; Huguenot 2008, 260; von Mangoldt 2012, 168–170 cat. no. B 69 (with earlier bibliography; he hypothesizes that the tomb was situated near Kranon, which is evidently not true).

69 Outer dimensions: L 3.77 m; W 2.58 m; H 2.95 m; Inner dimensions: L 2.87 m × W 1.68 m wide, preserved H 2.45–2.65 m.



Figure 18:
Petroporos, Macedonian tomb, view of the roof of the dromos and the chamber.

were observed. Access to the tomb was from the east, where the entrance was emphasised by a large monolithic lintel, whose sides bear clear traces of a relieving margin; the entrance was closed with a single marble slab⁷⁰.

Information about the contents and the appearance of the chamber is limited. It was apparently simple, with the floor made of packed earth and the walls covered with whitish plaster⁷¹. Based on information by locals, the excavator proposed that the burial mode may have been cremation with the remains deposited in a hydria, which in turn, was placed in a stone cubic repository that was found nearby⁷². Among the few finds from the chamber, the pots and sea-shells with traces of coloured powders in their interior and the bronze mirror disc, imply that least one of the occupants of the grave might have been a woman⁷³. The simplicity of the tomb's construction, its almost complete plundering, and the uncertainty concerning its exact location, make an accurate date difficult; the early 3rd century B.C. has been proposed on the basis of the pottery and its masonry style⁷⁴.

The second Macedonian tomb in the region, at Petroporos⁷⁵ (fig. 18) was situated by the road connecting Larisa with Trikke, in the southern cemetery of ancient Pelinna. The tomb was covered under a large tumulus and was placed

70 On the roofing of this tomb, its façade and the similarities to the tomb at Argyrochori Hypatis: Bougia 2005, 17–18.

71 Arvanitopoulos 1909, cl. 33. 36.

72 Arvanitopoulos 1909, fig. 2.

73 Arvanitopoulos 1909, cls. 38–40 fig. 3.

74 Arvanitopoulos 1909, cl. 40–41; von Mangoldt 2012, 170.

75 It was excavated in November 1906: Arvanitopoulos 1906, 128–130; *Αρχ. Αφβ.* 4, 47–59 with drawings of the tomb; also unpublished manuscript by the excavator written on 30.11.1906 and titled: »Τύμβος

off-centre⁷⁶. It consists of single chamber (measuring 5.70 × 4.50 m), preceded by a short, stone built and flat-roofed, dromos (dimensions: 2.00 × 3.80 m); the entrance to the dromos was carefully sealed with poros blocks. The walls of the tomb were built of soft poros blocks, except for the roof of the dromos, which was constructed of reused white limestone beams/blocks. Much of the chamber walls and most of the vault had collapsed already in 1906. Light pink plaster covered the surface of the walls and the floor of the tomb; in addition, plaster remains with blue colour were retrieved from the chamber, one bearing part of a relief moulding with blue and white colour. At the southwestern corner of the chamber a stone cylindrical ossuary was found in situ, therefore, as in the Larisa tomb, cremation was most likely the burial rite⁷⁷. On the basis of a few pottery fragments retrieved from the fill of the tumulus (one with West-slope decoration), a date to the 3rd century has been tentatively proposed for the construction of the tomb⁷⁸. The presence of a Macedonian tomb at Pelinna, a city with a consistent pro-Macedonian policy, is hardly surprising.

Further north, in Perrhaibia, a region under direct Macedonian control until the early 2nd century B.C., the only known Macedonian tomb discovered to-date is the single-chamber tomb at Azoros (fig. 1 no. 1), partially investigated in 1913 by Arvanitopoulos⁷⁹. According to the excavator the single chamber tomb was closed by an elaborate marble two-leaf door⁸⁰, and contained two sarcophagi in the interior.

At Demetrias, a city fully integrated in the Macedonian kingdom, no Macedonian tombs have been discovered to-date despite the very extensive exploitation of its necropoleis⁸¹. The only monument that could potentially be linked to its monarchical/dynastic connections is the unfinished edifice on a large terrace

Παλαιού Γαρδικίου» in the archive of the Greek Epigraphic Society. Cleaning operations undertaken by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa in 2000 led to a reconstruction and new study of the monument: Katakouta – Karagounis 2006, 325–326 and figs. 13–15; see also von Mangoldt 2012, 233–234 cat. no. B 106.

76 Based on Arvanitopoulos' unpublished reports. The mound's perimeter was 99 m and its height 6 m: Arvanitopoulos 1906, 128. There have been many interventions at the site because of modern building and because of the setting of a look-out post during World War II.

77 Katakouta – Karagounis 2006, 325–326 and Archives of the Ephorate of

Antiquities of Larisa; Huguenot 2008, 257.

78 von Mangoldt 2012, 234.

79 Arvanitopoulos 1914, 192–193; Αρχ. Αρβ. 41, report on 15.3.1913. More recently: Lucas 1992, 111; Lucas 1997, 168 fig. 10 on 158; von Mangoldt 2012, 115 cat. no. B 38 (with earlier bibliography).

80 Lucas 1992, 111 fig. 48.

81 On the cemeteries of Demetrias: Arvanitopoulos 1928, Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. II cat. no. 12. More recently: Nikolaou 1995; Nikolaou 1996 (northern cemetery); Nikolaou 2000a; Nikolaou 2000b; Batziou-Efstathiou – Triantaphyllopoulou 2003–09.

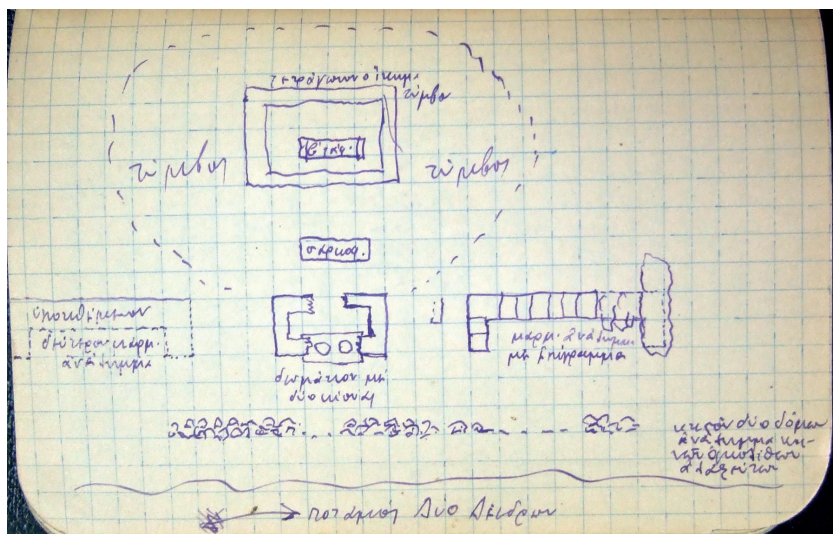


Figure 19:
Tsiourba Mandria:
1916 daybook page,
showing a sketch/
plan of the excavated
area.

above the theatre («Hill 84»), which was identified by P. Marzollf as the heroon for the ktistai archegetai of Demetrias⁸², Demetrios Poliorketes and Antigonos, whose cult is epigraphically attested in the city⁸³. Marzollf's hypothesis is very attractive, but the lack of conclusive evidence for its purpose cannot allow further discussion.

Other than Macedonian tombs, the only other elaborate tomb complex of Hellenistic date was partially investigated by Arvanitopoulos in 1911 and 1916, in Perrhaibia, in the chora of Gonnoi, at the locality *Tsiourva Mandria*, ancient Gonnokondylos (fig. 1 no. 2)⁸⁴. The excavation was not completed and the last season of the excavation was never reported⁸⁵. Two built structures were found on a small terrace by the torrent Dyo Dendra, dating to the 3rd century B.C., with further graves in the vicinity that date as late as the 1st century B.C. (fig. 19). A third built structure lay about 3.80 m to the east of the portico,

82 Arvanitopoulos 1912, 161–165; Marzollf 1987; Marzollf 1996, 107–120; Marzollf 1994, 268 and fig. 27.

83 Kravaritou 2013.

84 Arvanitopoulos 1911, 323–329, with plan of the area on fig. 8. p. 321 (the area is indicated in the plan by the letter N) and 9 on p. 325; Arvanitopoulos 1914, 210–213. See also: *Ap̄. Ap̄.* 37, 13–21 Sept. 1911 (with drawings of the buildings and architectural members); *Ap̄. Ap̄.* 42,

20 Aug. 1913: where he proposes that there was a mound in the area. See also: Helly 1973a, 39–44. 88 and fig. 5 on p. 40, cartes II–IV and pls. 30–31; Marzollf 1994, 268 and fig. 28 on p. 271; Stamatopoulou 1999, vol. I 221–224. vol. II cat. no. 62.

85 The only reference is in the daybooks of Arvanitopoulos in the archive of the Archaeological Society of Athens: *Ap̄. Ap̄.* 45: 1916: 12–22 Sept. 1916 (with plan of the excavated site).

space between the first and second courses of the limestone wall is too shallow for a monumental staircase, and the poros corners are not strong enough to support such a staircase⁸⁸. A block of grey marble, found in front of the building, which probably belonged to the upper courses of the wall, preserved half of a funerary epigram, inscribed in letters of the 3rd century B.C., identifying the owner of this monument with Damokrates, son of Aristokrates, who died in battle⁸⁹.

The second structure, about 2 m. further north, was a rectangular building, 5.10 by 2 m, built of grey limestone ashlar blocks, that rested on an euthynteria of white marble slabs (fig. 20); seven courses survived to a preserved height of 1.35 m⁹⁰. An opening, 4.30 m wide on the western side faced the torrent, while another one on the eastern side, 1.36 m wide, may have been closed by a two-leaf stone false door (a block was found inside the building: fig. 21). The discovery of an inscribed architrave block inside the structure, mentioning Aristokrates, son of Damokrates (0.335 by 1.105 by 0.52 m)⁹¹ and unfluted column shafts in the nearby torrent bed⁹², led the excavator to propose that the western opening was in antis. A number of marble pan and cover tiles and lion-head spouts seem to have belonged to the building, as well as part of life-size clay sculpture⁹³. The structure has been dated on epigraphic and architectural evidence in the 3rd century B.C.. Helly had wondered whether the monument was in fact a ›Macedonian‹ Tomb⁹⁴. However the marble rooftiles exclude such an identification⁹⁵. The building is definitely of funerary character. The plan of the building, the elaboration with columnar architecture and the discovery of statuary could fit with a family ›heroon‹/mausoleum⁹⁶, such as those known from many sites, Mamousia Aigialeias, the Charmyleion of Kos or Late Hellenistic Messene⁹⁷. However, more work must be done on-site before this tentative hypothesis can be elaborated further.

88 As proposed by B. Helly, *ibid.*

89 Arvanitopoulos 1911, 324; Arvanitopoulos 1915, 22–24 no. 261 and fig. 11; Helly 1973b, 208–209 no. 211.

90 Arvanitopoulos 1911, 324–326; Helly 1973a, 41–44 fig. 6 pl. 30,2; 31,2.

91 Helly 1973b, 214–215 cat. no. 219.

92 Description of the unfluted column drums in *Αρχ. Απβ.* 45, 17 Sept. 1916, no. 233.

93 Arvanitopoulos 1911, 327; *Αρχ. Απβ.* 37, pages dated 17 Sept. 1911 and 20 Sept. 1911 with drawings noting the findspot of all finds, 21 Sept. 1911 no. 213 (description of marble rooftile); *Αρχ. Απβ.* 45, 12–14 Sept. 1916.

94 Helly 1973a, 43 n. 5.

95 Huguenot 2008, 40 n. 38 also excludes the possibility that it was a Macedonian tomb.

96 First proposed by Arvanitopoulos 1911, 328–329. Also: Helly 1973a, 43–44 and 88; Marzloff 1994, 268, characterizes this sepulchral complex as being of royal inspiration.

97 The funerary building of Hellenistic date (late 3rd century B.C.) from Mamousia Aigialeias, ancient Keryneia, in Achaia, consisted of a []-shaped retaining peribolos wall, 17 m long, whose front took the form of an architecturally articulated facade, with half-columns, a false door and re-

CONCLUSIONS

The inadequate exploration and publication of the Thessalian necropoleis allows only very general conclusions about the choices of the local communities. It seems however that the funerary landscape of the region did not change dramatically from the late 6th to the 2nd centuries B.C. and that mortuary variability was pronounced, reflecting differing choices and aspirations on the part of the burying groups.

In the late Archaic and Classical periods, built tholos and chamber tombs with corbelled and pyramidal roofs imitate in a selective (and often random) manner features that recall earlier funerary architecture with elite associations. The close proximity of built tombs of tholos and rectilinear plan in the same necropolis, as at Pharsalos and especially Krannon, makes the difference in choice of tomb type all the more interesting. Still, the phenomenon of the parallel existence and association of rectilinear and curvilinear corbel-vaulted tombs is attested in Thessaly, already in the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age⁹⁸.

The date of the construction of the built corbelled vaulted tholoi and chambers in the late 6th and 5th centuries B.C., and their concentration at Krannon and Pharsalos are significant. The limited archaeological exploration of the cemeteries of Larisa (since the major eastern cemetery is in the site of the modern military airport), and of the tumuli cemetery at Krannon and the archaeological site of Argissa (to which the Schismeni Magoula tumulus belongs) form a serious obstacle in appreciating the full extent and diffusion of this typical Thessalian architecture. As we have argued elsewhere, the use of this archaizing funerary architecture occurred at a period, when elite competition was very strong in the region at both local and Pan-Hellenic level⁹⁹. The prominence of the aristocratic families of Thessaly in choral poetry and public life, the appearance of a hero-cult in relation to the monumental Mycenaean tholos tomb at Georgikon, and the strong variability in funerary practices imply a strong competition among these groups, and an attempt to ›build‹ their own identity within the emerging cities. These monuments continued throughout the 5th and into the 4th centuries B.C., periods when factional strife characterized political life in the region¹⁰⁰. The small number of the surviving tholos and chamber tombs reveals that even though monuments of the past probably influenced the appearance of a few imposing tomb structures, this did not prompt a uniform reaction nor a wide diffusion of tholos architecture. Given the deliberate archaizing choices

lief shields (preserved height: 1.40 m) and two graves behind the false doors: Dekoulakou 1994; Vordos – Kolia 2008, 48–49 and fig. 21. For Hellenistic heroa: Hellmann 2006, 281–283 fig. 390 (Charmyleion); 308–310; Themelis 2000; Fedak

2006, 84–85.

98 Galanakis 2008, 84.

99 Stamatopoulou 2007a; Stamatopoulou 2016, 191–194.

100 On the political situation in Thessaly in this period, see also Bosnakis 2013, 19–36. 186–188.

in this funerary architecture, and the concentration of the built chamber tombs in necropoleis such as Pharsalos and Krannon, homes of well-known Thessalian landowning elite families, it is tempting to associate the built tombs to them and cists tombs under tumuli to other affluent Thessalians. Yet, due to the looting of all these built tombs and the absence of epigraphic testimonia, such an identification would be hazardous.

On present evidence this distinctive local funerary architecture reached its end towards the end of the Classical period (late 4th century B.C.). The reasons behind the abandonment of these, typically Thessalian, tomb types are not yet fully understood. As affluent burials in tumuli with stone cists and sarcophagi continue it appears that the abandonment of the tholos-like built tombs may be related to the local circumstances of specific families/burying groups, since we cannot see a clear link between burials and historical events.

In the Hellenistic period monumental funerary architecture remained a choice of a very small minority. The impact of Macedonian funerary architecture in the region seems to have been small. In the case of Macedonian tombs, their plundering and inadequate exploration hinder a full understanding of the funerary rite, and the identity/status of the deceased. Most are of modest dimensions, bear minimal ornamentation in comparison to those from Lower Macedonia, and seem to have been used for women as well as men (although evidence is minimal). They may be related with Macedonians permanently resident in the region or with Thessalians who were either related to the Macedonian army/court or wished to emulate their customs¹⁰¹. The direct association of Macedonian tombs with garrisons is difficult to accept, given their absence at Gonnoi, Demetrias and Pharsalos and their small numbers in areas where the presence or movement of Macedonian armies is attested by literary testimonia, numismatic hoards and epigraphically¹⁰².

Thus, the favoured choice throughout Thessaly during the periods under discussion in this paper seems to have been grouping a small number of graves, mostly monolithic sarcophagi or well-made and occasionally decorated cists, under tumuli. The use of a tumulus for just a few generations and the discovery of burials of both sexes as well as children suggest that they were predominantly used by families.

To conclude, in the Classical and Hellenistic periods only a very small section of affluent Thessalians, obviously the elite, chose to invest in monumental built

101 Huguenot 2008, 48–49. 255–263.

102 It is worth noting in this context the Macedonian-type tomb at Argyrochori Hypatis, which has been dated to the 2nd quarter of the 2nd century B.C., the latest example of this type in the valley of Spercheios. Its date

of construction, postdating the end of the Macedonian control of the region, indicates that the type was popular to the local elite regardless of ethnic origin or pro-Macedonian attitudes: Bougias 2005, 22–23.

tombs. This is in agreement with the overall impression gained from the study of the funerary practices of the region. Throughout the periods under study, monumental chamber tombs were the exception rather than the rule, and well-built (and often decorated) cist tombs or stone sarcophagi placed under mounds and well-equipped with grave goods, offered alternative means for the burial of affluent Thessalians.

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