



Connections between the Balkans and the Aegean

Anne-Zahra Chemsseddoha

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Mario Gavranović, Daniela Heilmann,
Aleksandar Kapuran and Marek Verčík (Eds.)

Spheres of Interaction

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CLASSICAL
ARCHAEOLOGY



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Spheres of Interaction

Contacts and Relationships between the Balkans and Adjacent Regions in the Late Bronze / Iron Age (13th–5th Centuries BCE)

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Preface by the Editors of the Publication Series

With this volume, we are delighted to start a new publication series entitled **PeBA – Perspectives on Balkan Archaeology**. It assembles contributions of the participants of the second conference in the PeBA series, which was held in Belgrade in September 2017 at the Archaeological Institute.

The idea to organise a conference dedicated to Balkan Archaeology was born five years ago in Munich, when Daniela Heilmann and Marek Verčík, both then members of the Munich Graduate School for Ancient Studies “Distant Worlds” at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München – LMU Munich, wanted to organise an international conference focused on the Early Iron Age phenomena in the Balkan lands. This plan reflected their research interests as doctoral and postdoctoral researchers. They intended to create a forum specifically for younger researchers to present their fieldwork and discuss their ideas. It was named “PeBA – Perspectives on Balkan Archaeology”, and the name stuck. The team was completed by Mario Gavranović of the Institute for Oriental and European Archaeology (OREA), Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna.

The first PeBA conference entitled “The Early Iron Age: Methods and Approaches” was financed by the Munich Graduate School and the Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft München. It was held in Sarajevo on April 8–9, 2016 in the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The 21 participants came from a range of countries, including Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. This was the first international conference in this famous location since the Yugoslav Wars, and this fact has, therefore, carried a great scientific as well as symbolic meaning. The proceedings were partly published in the 47th volume of the *Godišnjak / Jahrbuch*, the journal of the Centar za balkanološka ispitivanja / Zentrum für Balkanforschungen of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2018.

The success of the first PeBA conference encouraged the organisers, Daniela Heilmann, Mario Gavranović, and Marek Verčík, to continue with the endeavour and turn PeBA into a scientific brand, so to speak, a conference series that takes place every two to three years at different locations of the Balkan Peninsula. Its integral concept is to create and sustain a network of scholarly exchange among archaeologists that transcends modern state and ideological borders.

In order to disseminate the proceedings of the conferences to a wide academic community we decided to create a monograph series dedicated to the proceedings of the PeBA conference and widen the scope of the subsequent publications from the original focus on the studies of the Iron Age period. Because of continuing and new affiliations of the organising team, it made good sense to choose the Institute of Pre- and Protohistoric Archaeology and the Archaeology of the Roman Provinces, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München – LMU Munich, the Institute for Oriental and European Archaeology (OREA) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, and the Institute of Classical Archaeology (ICAR) of the Charles University in Prague as the editorial home for this new publication series. All three institutes share a profound interest in encouraging and conducting archaeological research in the Balkans. Stationed in central European countries with long-standing research traditions in the prehistory of the Balkans, the institutes see PeBA as a profound opportunity to strengthen and stimulate further these interests.

Colleagues working in southeastern Europe have provided valuable input for PeBA. In our view, this part of Europe covers one of the most exciting as well as challenging regions in prehistory. Over the past decades, the image of the Balkans as a cultural, geographical, historical, scientific or even political “entity” has been critically evaluated through the lens of various academic disciplines, including critical reflection on the diverse understanding of the term itself and theoretical concept of its meaning. In any case, from the perspective of the archaeology of Europe, the region in the focus of this new publication series is key in analysing and modelling the human past. The diverse, yet connected, landscapes as well as the culmination of various outcomes of cultural dynamics over millennia partially explain its attraction to the many generations of archaeologists from around the globe. This new series caters to young

as well as senior scholars interested in southeastern Europe and has an impact beyond geographical or political frontiers. In the future volumes, we aim to broaden our chronological scope to represent the entire human history from practical archaeological as well as theoretical viewpoints in order to offer new *Perspectives on Balkan Archaeology* holistically.

We are, therefore, profoundly pleased that the *grand seigneur* of Balkan Archaeology, Rastko Vasić, was so kind as to write an introduction to this volume, which expresses the intention of the entire PeBA project wonderfully.

As the series editors, we have to thank various people for their commitment. First of all, to the editors of this specific volume, Mario Gavranović (OREA), Daniela Heilmann (LMU), Aleksandar Kapuran (Arch. Inst. Beograd), and Marek Verčík (Charles University) for their immense effort in not only organising the conference, but also in editing the individual contributions of the second PeBA conference volume entitled “Spheres of Interaction. Contacts and Relationships between the Balkans and Adjacent Regions in the Late Bronze / Iron Age (13th–5th Centuries BCE)” held in Belgrade on the 15–17 September 2017.

The final cast into a printable monograph was conducted in the OREA Institute by María Antonia Negrete Martínez and Ulrike Schuh. The English texts have been revised by Jana Mokrišová (London). We thank all of them for their work. The visual design of the PeBA series was intensively discussed among the editors of the series and of this volume. Our thanks for the final cover design go to Angela Schwab (OREA).

All PeBA-volumes have and will continue to undergo international peer-review process organised and coordinated by the series editors in order to guarantee a high quality of the contributions and a wider recognition for the authors. We are deeply thankful to the reviewers for their time-consuming efforts.

Last but not least, we would like to thank our colleague Bert Wiegel, owner of the VML-Verlag, for including the PeBA series into his portfolio and for his large support in the publishing of this volume.

Finally, we should note that this preface is written in difficult times. The third PeBA conference, organised in collaboration with Pero Ardjanliev (National Archaeological Museum, Skopje) and scheduled for May 2020 in Ohrid, Republic of North Macedonia, was planned to have taken place by now, but due to the current Covid-19 crisis it has been postponed to the next year. Nonetheless, we truly hope that the spirit of this fairly new and enthusiastic initiative will thrive in the future and that **Perspectives on Balkan Archaeology** will find a large international audience.

Munich, Prague, Vienna, April 2020
Carola Metzner-Nebelsick, Peter Pavúk, and Barbara Horejs

Prologue

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

It is a great pleasure and at the same time a particular honour for me to have the opportunity to write a few introductory lines for the collection of papers of the second PeBA conference, held in Belgrade in September 2017.

Perspectives on Balkan Archaeology is a relatively new enterprise and one may say very successful. They embrace a very broad range of themes and all new finds, new views and new ideas are welcome to be presented. The papers of the Belgrade conference are very varied. Authors, older and young, distinguished scholars and talented new hopes, come from all the Balkan lands and beyond, they tackle the problems of the Bronze and Iron Age from various sides and the content fully justifies the conference's title "Spheres of Interaction – Contacts and Relationship between the Balkans and Adjacent regions in the Late Bronze and Iron Age". I am sure that the impact will be considerable and expect further successful PeBA conferences in the near future. I hope also that the momentum will last and that together with many other "brothers and sisters in arms" we will persist on the road to our final goal – the truthful answers to various archaeological questions.

It is true that we have been marching towards this goal already for more or less two hundred years, that gigantic steps forward have been made and that we know much more about our past than before. Yet there are thousands of questions which await to be answered.

For the end a verse from Longfellow's "The Psalm of life"

*Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.*

Rastko Vasić

Connections between the Balkans and the Aegean: The Case of Iron Age Burial Customs in Northern Greece

Anne-Zahra Chemsseddoha

Abstract

Northern Greece is a stimulating area to observe cultural contacts. It is both turn toward sea with the Chalcidice peninsula, the Thermaic Gulf, the Pierian coast, as well as toward the northern hinterland with the mountainous passes as well as with the Axios/Vardar and the Strymona Rivers. Contacts between north and south are visible in the prehistoric period, and especially in the Mycenaean period, as well as during the Early Iron Age and the early archaic period with the Greek colonization. Through the modern literature, scholars have given different roles to this specific region: a corridor north/south, a periphery of the Greek world or of the central Balkans. Since few decades, the many excavations and research programs, have shown that this region is the centre of complex cultural relationships between the central Balkans and southern Greece. These contacts are expressed in varied manners depending on communities and spheres of human activities. In this paper I will focus on the Early Iron Age burial customs between the Pindus and southwestern Rhodopes mountains (11th to the end of the 7th century BCE). A geographical approach of the burial customs at a large scale raises many questions about collective identities and contacts between communities. The result of this study varied if we consider in one hand the spatial distribution of the treatments of the deceased, the architecture, and the organisation of the graves, and on the other hand the funerary ideologies visible through the grave goods, as their regional spatial patterning seems to be different.

Résumé

La Grèce du Nord est une région stimulante pour étudier les contacts interculturels. Cette région est à la fois tournée vers la mer, avec la péninsule chalcidienne, le Golfe Thermaïque et la Piérie, mais regarde aussi vers le nord et l'intérieur des terres, grâce aux passages montagneux ainsi qu'aux fleuves Axios/Vardar et Strymon. Les contacts entre le Nord et le Sud sont attestés dès la préhistoire et la protohistoire, en particulier à l'époque mycénienne, mais aussi à l'âge du Fer et aux époques historiques avec la colonisation grecque. Dans la littérature scientifique, cette région a été envisagée de différentes manières : un couloir nord-sud, une périphérie du monde grec ou bien des Balkans centraux. Depuis quelques décennies, les nombreuses fouilles et programmes de recherches ont permis de montrer la position centrale de cette région impliquée dans des relations complexes entre les Balkans centraux et la Grèce du Sud. Ces contacts s'expriment de manière variée selon les communautés et les sphères d'activités humaines. Dans cet article, il est question des pratiques funéraires du début de l'âge du Fer attestées entre la chaîne du Pinde et les Rhodopes sud-occidentaux (entre le XI^e et le VII^e siècle avant notre ère). Une approche géographique du fait funéraire soulève de nombreuses questions relatives aux identités collectives et aux contacts entre les communautés. Les résultats de cette étude varient si l'on considère d'une part la distribution géographique des types de tombes, du traitement des défunts et de l'organisation des tombes, et, d'autre part les thématiques et les idéologies funéraires visibles à travers le mobilier dont la logique spatiale à une échelle régionale semble différente.

Περίληψη

Η Βόρεια Ελλάδα είναι μια συναρπαστική περιοχή για τη μελέτη των διαπολιτισμικών επαφών. Η γεωγραφική θέση της είναι πολύ σημαντική, καθώς επικοινωνεί από τη μία με τη θάλασσα, μέσω της χερσονήσου της Χαλκιδικής, του Θερμαϊκού Κόλπου και της Πιερίας, αλλά από την άλλη με την βόρεια ενδοχώρα, με τα ορεινά περασμάτα και με τους ποτάμους Αξιός/Βαρδάρης και Στρυμόνας. Οι επαφές μεταξύ Βορρά και Νότου επιβεβαιούνται από την προϊστορική περίοδο, ιδιαίτερα στην μυκηναϊκή εποχή και μετά στην Πρώιμη εποχή του Σιδήρου αλλά και στην αρχαϊκή επόχ με τον ελληνικό αποικισμό. Στην ακαδημαϊκή βιβλιογραφία, αυτή η ιδιαίτερη περιοχή θεωρήθηκε άλλοτε σαν έναν διάδρομο μεταξύ Βορρά-Νότου και άλλοτε σαν μια περιφέρεια του ελληνικού κόσμου ή των κεντρικών Βαλκάνιων. Ωστόσο πριν από μερικές δεκαετίες, χάρη στην αύξηση των ανασκαφών και των ερευνητικών προγραμμάτων, αυτή η περιοχή βρίσκεται στο επίκεντρο πολύπλοκων διαπολιτισμικών επαφών και αλληλεπιδράσεων μεταξύ των κεντρικών Βαλκανίων και της Νότιας Ελλάδας. Αυτές οι

επαφές αναδεικνύονται με πολλούς τρόπους ανάλογα με τις κοινότητες και τις διάφορες ανθρώπινες δραστηριότητες. Αυτό το άρθρο επικεντρώνεται στα ταφικά έθιμα που είναι γνωστά από την περιοχή ανάμεσα στην οροσειρά της Πίνδου και τη νοτιοδυτική Ροδόπη (11ο ως 7ο αι. π.Χ). Μια αναλύση των ταφικών εθίμων με άξονα τη γεωγραφία υποβάλλει πολλά ερωτήματα για τις συλλογικές ταυτότητες και τις επαφές μεταξύ των κοινοτήτων. Τα αποτελέσματα αυτής της έρευνας διαφέρουν, εάν αναλογίζεται κανείς τη γεωγραφική διάδοση της ταφικής τυπολογίας, των νεκροταφείων και της διαχείρισης των νεκρών, αλλά και τη γεωγραφία των νεκρικών ιδεολογιών που αναδεικνύονται μέσα από τις ταφικές προσφορές σε συμβολικό επίπεδο.

Keywords

Early Iron Age, northern Greece, burial customs, collective identities

Introduction

Contacts between cultures can be expressed in many ways through different activities and in different spheres of ancient societies. This paper will focus on the Early Iron Age burial customs in northern Greece (11th to the end of the 7th century BCE) between the Pindus mountain range and the southwestern Rhodopes, including adjacent areas.¹ For a long time, our knowledge of burial customs in northern Greece was based on a small number of sites. The excavations of the Early Iron Age cemetery of Vergina in the middle of the last century marked a watershed in the local funerary archaeology.² The tumulus gradually became an emblematic architecture marker of the hinterland in northern Greece. This image was accentuated by the presence of the Macedonian grave mounds, the tumuli, and the pre- and proto-historic tell settlements, all creating a landscape of artificial hills.³ This landscape was also emphasized during the 1960s and the 1970s by researches of population migrations in the prehistoric southern Balkans, who frequently used the tumulus to illustrate or justify migratory phenomena.⁴ This situation in the hinterland could be juxtaposed quite naturally with the coastal region, especially the Chalcidice, one of the key areas of the Greek colonisation, where the cemeteries display different burial customs as shown, for example, by the Protogeometric cemetery of Torone⁵ and the cemetery at Mende of the Late Geometric and Archaic periods.⁶ However, this image broadly outlined here to foreshadow what follows has been challenged by the excavations undertaken in the last thirty years, which have revealed new major Early Iron Age cemeteries, such as Palio Gynaikokastro in the region of Kilkis,⁷ Nea Philadelphiea near River Gallikos,⁸ and others, found under the suburbs of Thessaloniki⁹ and in the regions of northern Greece. In total about a hundred Early Iron Age burial plots are known now, albeit admittedly not of the same size and importance, but this region has nonetheless gradually revealed a high potential for further studies.¹⁰ The synthesis of these new data highlight a high diversity of burial customs during the Early Iron Age and reveal a multifaceted region, and depending on the perspective also in regards to the neighbouring cultural contexts. In this paper, I will show how a geographical approach to the burial customs can raise some questions about contacts between communities. I will argue that in this vast region the funerary map differs when considering on one hand the treatment of the deceased, the architecture, and the organisation of the graves, and on the other hand the funerary ideologies and beliefs visible through the grave goods, as their spatial patterning distribution seems to be different.

¹ I would like to thank the organisers for my participation in this symposium and the research laboratory PLH (EA 4601) at the Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès for its support.

² Andronikos 1969; Bräuning/Kilian-Dirlmeier 2013.

³ Fotiadis 2001.

⁴ Hammond 1967; 1976; Müller-Celka 2007.

⁵ Papadopoulos 2005.

⁶ Moschonissioti 2010.

⁷ Savvopoulou 2004.

⁸ Misailidou-Despotidou 2008.

⁹ Havela 2012, 308–312.

¹⁰ This paper includes the results of a Ph. D. thesis submitted at the Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès in November 2015 and recently published, see Chemsseddoha 2019. A first detailed description of the corpus can be found in Chemsseddoha 2017, 382 note 3.

Methodological approach

Distribution maps and spatial analysis have become essential tools for archaeologists, especially to discuss connections between communities. The study of chrono-spatial evolutions of specific burial practices, such as inhumation and cremation, and grave types, which have been already done, are relevant for the understanding of the evolution of each tradition and cultural practice.¹¹ Nonetheless, it is more fruitful to consider all the features attested together in cemeteries when dealing with material expressions of cultural contacts and collective identities. Some of such studies have already been done for large parts of Greece,¹² central Macedonia,¹³ eastern Macedonia, and Thrace.¹⁴ Here I propose to discuss these questions at a larger scale for an area extending from the Pindus to the western Rhodopes including the adjacent regions.

A cemetery can be defined by all the burial practices performed and accepted by the community within a funerary space. Therefore, we will consider, on the one hand, the organisation of the graves and the form of internment, which are defined at a community level and refer to general collective choices, and, on the other hand, the grave goods, which concern mostly the individual and which can refer, as we shall see, to ideologies that can be expressed in the same way at various cemeteries. In time, sets of burial practices based on ancestral heritage can be created locally and/or influenced by foreign traditions depending on social, political, and cultural factors. Each cemetery has its own history and internal dynamics. These combinations or “sequences”, a more appropriate concept taken from J.-M. Luce, who has raised the question of the funerary geography for the rest of the Early Iron Age Greece, have a temporal depth as well as a geographical extension, as several cemeteries can have the same burial practices.¹⁵ This extended analysis enables to identify funerary regions, and observe similarities, differences, and clear dissimilarities between sites and groups of sites. Such a geographical perspective applied to northern Greece is the result of an analytical approach, with a construction of a frame of references and a selection of specific features, which can be classified in four broad categories: the spatial organisation of the tombs (especially the identification of collective tumuli and the material used for their construction), the type of tomb, the presence of secondary container (ash-urn or *enchytrismos*) and the treatment of the deceased.¹⁶ We must bear in mind that only the visible and archaeologically identifiable burial customs have been recorded and that the present catalogue depends on their discovery and publication. In any case, the primary systematic collection of available information about northern Greece between the Pindus mountain range and the southwestern Rhodopes shows a high variety of practices.

The Late Bronze Age burial customs

Before focusing on the Early Iron Age, it seems relevant to have a quick look at the Late Bronze Age burial customs. They are documented by a limited number of sites located mostly in the southern part of the region, along the middle course of the Haliakmon river, as well as in Pieria and east of the Strymon river (**Fig. 1**). To briefly summarize, the cemeteries display up to eight main funerary features: collective tumulus or flat cemetery, stone enclosure, inhumation, secondary cremation, simple pit grave, slab cist, boulder cist, and ash urn (**Fig. 2**). As we shall see, this is much less than in cemeteries of the Early Iron Age. Most of the tombs of the Late Bronze Age have been found in organised cemeteries.¹⁷ As in the rest of Greece, the use of secondary cremation has already been known since the Neolithic, and the custom spread widely

¹¹ Cavanagh/Mee 1998, 181–182 fig. 4.1–2; 194–196 fig. 5.1–3; 214–217 fig. 6.1–4; 235–237 fig. 7.1–3; Snodgrass 1971, 178 fig. 66; 181 fig. 67; 188 fig. 68; 191 fig. 69.

¹² Luce 2007; 2010.

¹³ Havela 2012.

¹⁴ Baralis 2007.

¹⁵ Luce 2007, 40; 44; *ibid* 2010, 416.

¹⁶ For central and southern Greece, a consideration of the position of the body in a tomb is relevant for the

Early Iron Age, as it seems to vary from a region to a region (Luce 2009, 416–418). However, in northern Greece, it seems to be a rather relevant feature in a diachronic approach, as it varies from the Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age. It seems less relevant in the Early Iron Age when most of the inhumed deceased are in supine position with stretched legs.

¹⁷ Apart from 17 burials found in the Toumba settlement of Thessaloniki, see Andreou/Efkleidou 2008, 325–326.

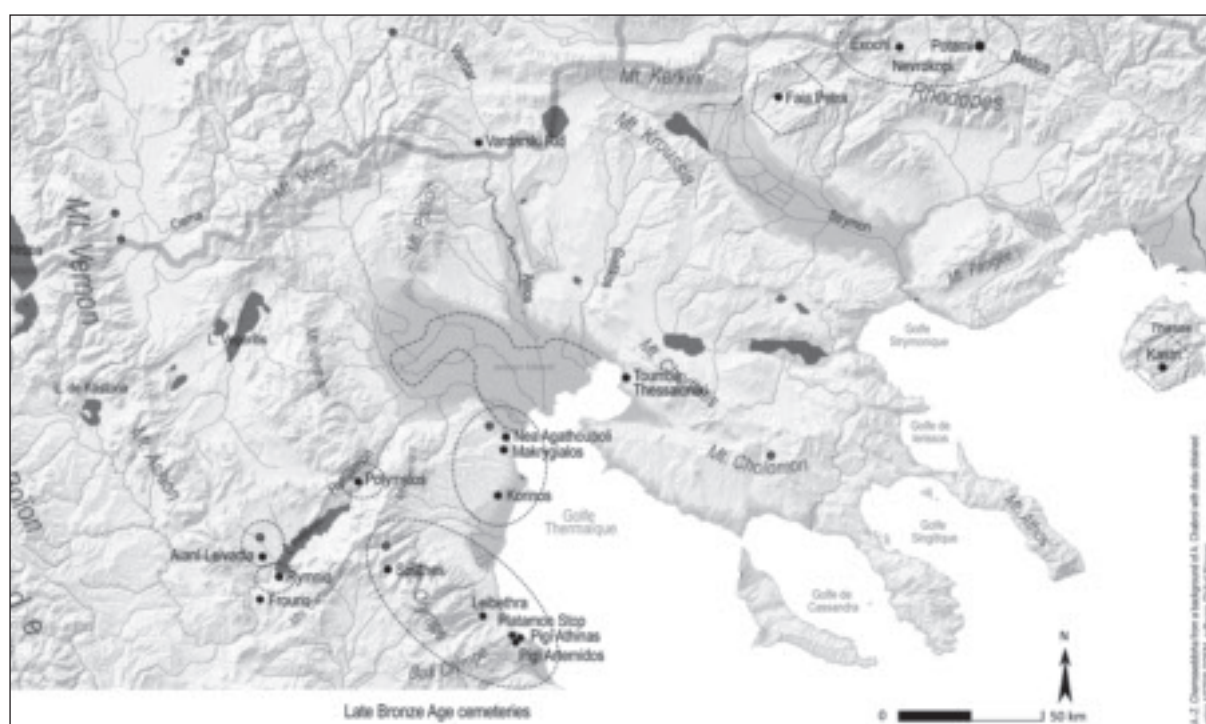


Figure 1 – Map of the Late Bronze Age cemeteries mentioned in the text (A.-Z. Chemsseddoha)

during the Early and Middle Bronze Age, especially in the Chalcidice and Western Macedonia,¹⁸ followed by a decline in the Late Bronze Age along with the abandonment of cemeteries that were in use during the preceding periods. However, it becomes popular again at the end of the Late Bronze Age especially east of the Strymon River, where tumuli and collective structures, mostly associated with ash-urns, are predominant.¹⁹ In the rest of the region inhumations in individual graves prevail.²⁰ The architecture of the graves varies from a simple pit to a more elaborated cist graves lined with boulders or slabs,²¹ primarily located in southern Pieria,²² and along the middle course of the Haliakmon river.²³ Tombs with inhumations are organized in flat cemeteries or are grouped under tumuli in a few cases.²⁴ The identification of

¹⁸ In Chalcidice (Agios Mama, Kriaritsi Sykia, and Nea Skioni), in western Macedonia (Xeropigado and Goules), and sporadically in Pieria (Pigi Athinas). See Asouchidou 2001; Tsigarida/Mantazi 2004; Poulaki-Pander mali 2013, 35–38.

19 The two tumuli in the region of Nevrokopi (Grammenos 1979), the cemetery of Tsiganadika on Thasos, where the excavations have yielded four (or perhaps even five) ash urns among the more numerous inhumations (Koukouli-Chryssanthaki 1992, 641) and the cemetery of Faia Petra, which displays unusual partial cremation of the bodies (Valla 2002). See also Baralis 2007, 13–16. In western Macedonia, the only few secondary cremations have been found among the Late Helladic IIIA–B graves of the cemetery of Aiani-Leivadia. See Karamitrou-Mentessidi 2011a, 97 and 101 and 109.

The expression “individual grave” is used here according to a formal classification. It refers to graves with a size close to the size of the body or the secondary container, with an access from the top. The

grave receives a single burial most of time but can host several burials accumulated through times. It is different from a "collective grave" like the tholos or the chamber tomb, which have a lateral access and receive mostly collective burials. The formal classification is preferred since the use of the graves can be difficult to identify. See Snodgrass 1971, 141.

For example, the Late Helladic IIIA-B graves of Leivadia-Aiani (Karamitrou-Mentessidi 2011a, 89–135) in northern Pieria. See, for example, graves found in Nea Agathoupoli (ancient Methone), Makrygialos (ancient Pydna), Kitros, and Korinos. See also Besios 2010, 61–65.

²² Pigi Artemidos, Platamon Stop (ancient Herakleia), Leibethra, and Spathes near Agios Dimitrios. See Poulaki-Pander mali 2013, 46–62.

²³ The Late Helladic IIIC cist graves of Rymnio. See Karamitrou-Mentesdi 1991, 304 pl. 115β.

²⁴ The cemetery of Polymylos and Rymnio near the Haliakmon river. See Karamitrou-Mentessidi, Vatali 1999; Karamitrou-Mentessidi 1991, 304 pl. 115β and 116.

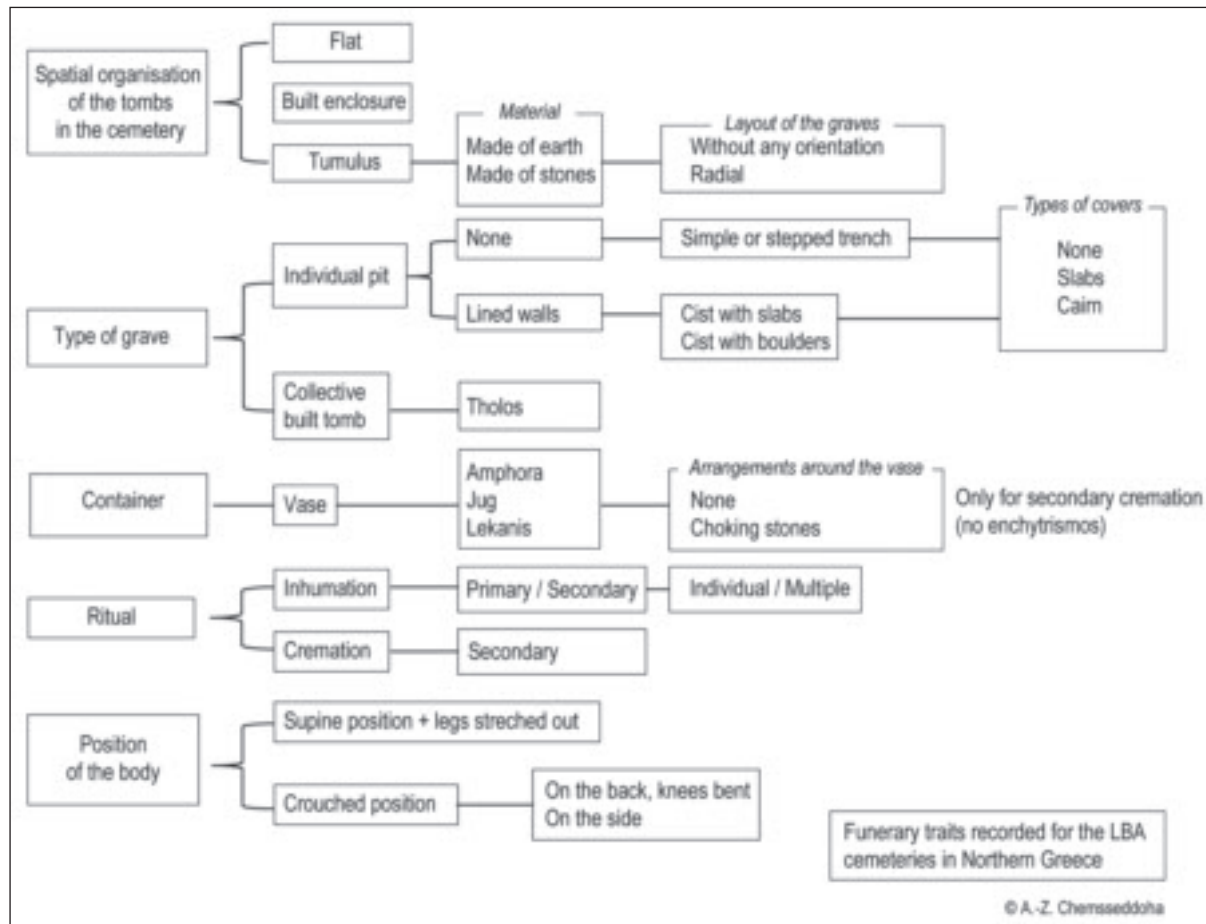


Figure 2 – Funerary traits recorded in the Late Bronze Age cemeteries (A.-Z. Chemsseddoha)

the combinations of burial practices (or “sequences”) for each cemetery and their comparison allow for a distinction between several funerary regions (**Fig 1**). This method reveals more clearly, for example, a distinction between the northern part of Pieria, which is quite homogenous with mainly simple pit graves possibly covered by mounds of earth individually,²⁵ and the southern part where cemeteries comprise various types of simple graves,²⁶ which find very close parallels with those of Thessaly.²⁷ The difference is at the level of the collective funerary monumentalisation. Until the end of the Late Bronze Age, the Tempe pass and the Cambounian mountain appear as the limit for the tholoi and the chamber graves;²⁸ the latter, however, appears during the Protogeometric period in Pieria, showing a kind of spread of practices from the south to the north.²⁹

The Early Iron Age burial customs: diversification and regionalism

From the 11th–10th century BCE onwards, three major changes can be seen in the burials customs that clearly show the crucial position of this region between the central Balkans and the Aegean Sea. The

²⁵ Besios 2010, 61–62.

²⁶ Poulaki-Pandermali 2013, 37 (tumulus 4 of Pigi Athinas with a second layer of graves dated to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age), 45–62 (Late Bronze age cemeteries).

²⁷ Georganas 2011.

²⁸ The northern limit is represented by the cemetery of Frourio-Kambos where two tholoi and four chamber graves dating to the 12th–11th centuries BCE have been found. See Chondroyanni-Metoki 1998, 297–299.

²⁹ Chemsseddoha 2017, 387.

adoption of new funerary practices leads to a complex geographical distribution of these practices, displaying at a large-scale clear regionalism (**Fig. 3** and **4**).

The first practice, which is connected to a broader central Balkan phenomenon, is the multiplication of cemeteries with collective tumuli. Even if this type of organisation is well known since the Early Bronze Age in western, southern Greece and the present area of interest,³⁰ the increase of such collective architecture in the Early Iron Age is particularly pronounced in northern Greece as well as in the adjacent northern and western regions. Indeed, dating to the Bronze Age, including the Early, Middle, and Late periods, we have recorded up to ten burial mound cemeteries, which are relatively well distributed between the Pindus and the southwestern Rhodopes,³¹ whereas for the period between the 11th to the 7th centuries BCE up to twenty sites have been recorded.³² Not only does the number of tumuli increase, but so does the number of graves inside collective monuments.³³ Moreover, it is worth noting that in the Early Iron Age, just as during the Bronze Age, the tumuli are far from being similar in terms of their construction. They are made up of earth (at Vergina),³⁴ or of stones (in southern Pieria and east of River Strymon),³⁵ or display unusual and original architecture (such as the stone enclosures containing several ash urns in Palio Gynaikokastro³⁶ or the tholos-like collective tombs set in stone mounds in Almopia).³⁷ Additionally, unlike northern Epirus and southern Albania, the collective tumulus is not the only type of organisation by far. No Early Iron Age tumulus cemetery has been recorded so far in Chalcidice and in the eastern part of the Thermaic Gulf. Even if a few tumuli have been observed or assumed to have existed at some sites, such as Nea Philadelpheia, it does not seem to be the structuring form for most of the graves, which are mainly organised in large flat cemeteries.³⁸ It is still difficult to understand in detail the development of tumulus cemeteries at the beginning of the Early Iron Age, but we can say that there is not a single explanation for this complex phenomenon, especially when we consider the diversity of the architecture of collective monuments and the diverse treatments of the deceased inside them. Moreover, apart from southern Pieria and western Rhodopes where it is possible to follow the evolution of the practices from the Bronze Age and where it seems that the development of tumuli follows a pre-existing local practice, the lack of funerary data directly prior to the Early Iron Age at sites elsewhere makes it difficult to assume any definitive conclusion.

The second important Early Iron Age phenomenon is the expansion of the use of secondary cremation. The chronological development of this practice can be documented in the same way as in the rest of Greece with a first more prominent reappearance around the 12th–11th centuries BCE, especially in the north, at cemeteries such as Apsalos “Verpen”³⁹ and Palio Gynaikokastro.⁴⁰ These structures recall

³⁰ Müller 1989; 2007.

³¹ The Early and Middle Bronze Age stone enclosures associated with ash urns in Chalcidice, more exactly in Kriaritsi Sykia and in Nea Skioni (Asouchidou 2011, 34–40; Tsigarida/Mantazi 2004); in southern Pieria, the burial mounds made of stones with mostly inhumations attested from the Middle Bronze Age to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age (Poulaki-Pandermali 2013, 35–47); the Late Bronze Age tumuli with ash urns in the region of Nevrokopi (Grammenos 1979); in western Macedonia, the Late Bronze Age tumuli of Polymylos and Rymnio (Karamitrou-Mentessidi 1991, 304).

³² Among them are Agios Panteleimona, Amphipolis-Kastas, Apsalos-Verpen, Dion, Drama, Konstantia, Nevrokopi-Exochi, Palio Gynaikokastro, and Vergina.

³³ For example, the Late Bronze Age tumuli of Polymylos contained one to four burials around a central grave (Karamitrou-Mentessidi/Vatali 1999). The same can be observed in the older tumuli of Pigi Athina and Valtos in southern Pieria (Poulaki-Pandermali 2013, 35–44). In the same region at the foothill of the

Mount Olympus near the ancient Dion, tumuli of the Early Iron Age contained up to 13 graves (Poulaki-Pandermali 2013, 70). In Vergina, more than half of the Early Iron Age tumuli contained more than 10 graves each (Andronikos 1969), and exceptionally at least 60 burials in the case of Tumulus LXV (Bräuning/Kilian-Dirlmeier 2013, 110).

³⁴ A very few of them are made up of earth and layers of stones, see Bräuning, Kilian-Dirlmeier 2013, 89.

³⁵ East of the Strymon river, e.g., the cemeteries of Drama Industrial Zone (Peristeri 2004, 261–263), Amphipolis-Kastas (Koukouli-Chryssanthaki 1993, 683–686), Nevrokopi Exochi, and Potamoi (Grammenos 1979). For Pieria see Poulaki-Pandermali 2013, 68–69.

³⁶ Savvopoulou 2001.

³⁷ Chrysostomou A. 2011.

³⁸ Seven stone circles might have belonged to eroded tumuli (Misaïlidou-Despotidou 1998, 264; Havela 2012, 308).

³⁹ Chrysostomou A. 1997.

⁴⁰ Savvopoulou 2001.

those of the western Rhodopes near Nevrokopi⁴¹ or those found in the cremation cemeteries attributed to the so-called transitional period (end of the 12th–11th century BCE) identified further in the north at cemeteries such as Klučka near Hippodrome of Skopje,⁴² considered as the heir of the Donja Brnjica culture, which develops from the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE in the south of Serbia and in Kosovo and which expands from the south Morava toward the southern Balkans.⁴³ On the other hand, secondary cremation reappears in southern Chalcidice at the end of the 11th century BCE. The cemetery of Torone displays a connection with Ionian traditions visible through the imported wheelmade ash containers or local pottery displaying influences from southern Greece (Attic, Euboea and then Cyclades, Thessaly, Locris and Crete), visible as well through the treatment of the deceased and the shape of the graves, which are not unlike the first Submycenaean secondary cremations discovered in Athens.⁴⁴ In Greece, the development and origins of cremation after the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces have long been debated, with proponents of the Balkan and eastern origins or the role played by northern Italy.⁴⁵ Regarding the data, northern Greece seems to be on the crossroads of several traditions, showing that there is not a single answer to this crucial issue.

The third remarkable Early Iron Age phenomenon in northern Greece is the resurgence of the inhumation in vessels, namely the *enchytrismos*. It is especially used for both adults and children in the eastern followed by the central part of the region. It is clearly related to an Aegean tradition and seems to follow the same chronological development as the rest of Greece. Indeed, this practice, attested from the Late Neolithic period onward, is still used during the Early and especially the Middle Bronze Age.⁴⁶ In northern Greece, western Macedonia⁴⁷ and Chalcidice,⁴⁸ this practice is well known since the Early and Middle Bronze Ages respectively. In these regions, however, it seems to disappear during the Late Bronze Age.⁴⁹ Our knowledge of Late Bronze Age burial customs is limited. Yet, the decline of the *enchytrismos* at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age has already been observed in the rest of Greece. It reappears sporadically around the Late Helladic IIIC,⁵⁰ and it is much more popular during the Protogeometric and Geometric periods.⁵¹ We can observe a similar situation in northern Greece. The custom develops from the beginning of the Early Iron Age onwards mainly in the eastern and central parts of the region. On the mainland, the oldest example of *enchytrismos* has been recorded in eastern Chalcidice at the cemetery of Ierissos (site of the ancient colony of Akanthos), where it is used as a main practice for adults and children.⁵² In Thasos, a few pithoi found in the cemeteries of Kentria and Tsiganadika are dated to the phases IIA and IIB1 (from the 11th to the early phases of the 10th century BCE)⁵³ and seem to have contained only child burials. The same pattern can be observed during the following centuries in the region east to Strymon River and in the Drama plain.⁵⁴ The association of pithos burials with stone tumuli also finds parallels in Aegean Thracian burial practices (such as at Tumulus 2 near the ancient Zone).⁵⁵ During the 9th and the 8th centuries BCE, the *enchytrismos* spreads in the rest of Chalcidice as well, such as at the cemetery of Nikiti-Ai Giannis,⁵⁶ and represents the main form of treatment for new-borns and young children deceased in the Late Geometric and Archaic cemetery of the ancient Mendè.⁵⁷ In this cemetery the use of wheelmade amphorae as containers for the burials can be compared with contemporary cemeteries of southern Greece (Euboea, Attica, and Corinthia), which foreshadows a popularity of this treatment in the Archaic period not only on the Chalcidian

⁴¹ Grammenos 1979.

⁴² Mitrevski 1992–1993; 2000.

⁴³ Mitrevski 2000; Jung 2007, 224; Luci 2007; Vasić 2013, 175 fig. 3 and 176–179.

⁴⁴ Papadopoulos 2005, 394 and 490–493.

⁴⁵ Jung 2007.

⁴⁶ Cullen/Keller 1990, 187–190 (with bibliography); Cavanagh/Mee 1998, 17 and 26 and 38 and 46.

⁴⁷ Cemeteries of Xeropigado and Tourla Goulon. See Ziota 2010.

⁴⁸ Cemeteries of Agios Mamas (Pappa 1992) and Nea Skioni (Tsigarida/Mantazi 2004, 149–155).

⁴⁹ Only one jar burial has been recorded in the Late Bronze Age cemetery of Vardarski Rid near Gevghelea in the valley of Axios. See Mitrevski 2003, 48 and 50 fig. 8.

⁵⁰ Snodgrass 1971, 183.

⁵¹ Luce 2007, 47; Cullen/Keller 1990, 195.

⁵² Trakossopoulou-Salakidou 2004.

⁵³ Koukouli-Chryssanthaki 1992, 653; 660–661.

⁵⁴ Amphipolis-Kastas, Drama-Industrial Zone. See Koukouli-Chryssanthaki 1993, 683–686; Peristeri 2004.

⁵⁵ Iliopoulou 2015, 26–27.

⁵⁶ Rhomiopoulou 2012.

⁵⁷ Moschonissioti 2010.

coast, but also in Aegean Thrace (at Abdera for example).⁵⁸ In central Macedonia, the *enchytrismos* is well recorded in the cemeteries discovered in the region of Thessaloniki⁵⁹ and, as we shall see, also in the plain of Emathia at the cemetery of Vergina. In contrast, it is less often used in the farther western and northern hinterland.⁶⁰ It is barely recorded in Epirus⁶¹ and is totally absent from the cemeteries discovered in Albania.

The Early Iron Age cemetery of Vergina can be used as an example of the dynamic character of the burial customs of a community at the crossroad of different cultural expression.⁶² The excavations have yielded at least 41 tumuli with a total of at least 391 burials, dating between the beginning of the 10th century and at least the end of the 7th century BCE.⁶³ During the early phases until the 8th century BCE, the inhabitants seem to have used a limited range of practices to bury their dead, associating the collective tumulus with inhumation in a simple pit or boulder cist. This combination of practices can be compared to the burial mound cemeteries known in southern Albania, such as the tumulus of Barç.⁶⁴ The adoption of pithos burials in the 8th century BCE,⁶⁵ which altogether comes to represent in total 16.4% of the Early Iron Age graves, reflects an opening of choices for the treatment of the deceased and stronger connection with the Aegean as well as other sites in central Macedonia. However, this new practice does not change radically the internal organisation of the graves inside the mounds. The pithoi are found in the internal periphery of the mounds, either with an orientation following the curve of the tumulus, or, like most of the pit graves, with a radiating orientation toward the centre of the monument with an opening of the vessel turned toward the outer circle, probably to facilitate the insertion of the deceased.⁶⁶ Moreover, the richest burials are found in simple pits, which might or might not be lined with stones like in the case of Tomb AZ-VII.⁶⁷ However, the *enchytrismoi* are not the poorest burials. Tomb LXV-X, probably a female burial, contained three vases (kantharos, jug, and bowl), bronze fibulae, spiral coils and buttons for headdress, and a necklace of amber beads.⁶⁸ The pithos tomb A-3 stands out with respect to its arrangement. Inside the vessel which was surrounded by stones, the deceased lay on a bed of smaller stones with the head placed toward the bottom of the container and the feet inserted inside a second vessel used as a lid for the pithos. The grave goods include two vessels (jug and kantharos) and an iron spearhead, originally placed diagonally on his body. According to the stratigraphy and the chronology of the graves, the practice of the *enchytrismos* was integrated into the necropolis where the organisation of the burials in collective tumuli was already established since its foundation. This strict and conservative organisation was nonetheless open to changes, as shown by the development of secondary cremation from the beginning of the 7th century BCE, now located mostly in the southern parts of the excavated plots, which have partly modified the initial spatial organisation of the monuments.⁶⁹

The development of collective tumuli and the use of pottery as containers for cremation remains as well as for primary inhumation in the Early Iron Age play an important role in the diversification of burial customs, together with the possibility of combining different treatments and types of grave

⁵⁸ Skarlatidou 2010, 349–351.

⁵⁹ For example, the cemetery of Nea Philadelphiea. See Misaïlidou-Despotidou 2008, 39–40 fig. 28.

⁶⁰ For example, a few have been mentioned to have been found during the old excavations of the cemetery of Agios Panteleimona (Rey 1932, 45). Elsewhere, the practice of *enchytrismos* is attested during the Late Iron Age, around the 7th century BCE, in the cemetery of Krepeni near Kastoria (Tsougaris 2001–2004), in the region of Almopia in the cemetery of Nea Zoi-Terikleia (Chrysostomou A. 1998), and in Axioupoli in the Axios valley (Savvopoulou 2012). These sites are roughly contemporary and have the use of small pithoi and pyraunoi as container for the burials in common.

⁶¹ The only two cases recorded have been found in the cemetery of Ephyra (Xylokastro) in Thesprotia

and seems to have contained infant burials, see Papadopoulos 1987, 137 and 139–141 (with references).

⁶² The following counts are based on two monographs: Andronikos 1969 and Bräuning/Kilian-Dirlmeier 2013.

⁶³ Bräuning/Kilian-Dirlmeier 2013, 135–139.

⁶⁴ Andrea 1975.

⁶⁵ Phase Late Helladic IIIC according to the chronology proposed by A. Bräuning and I. Kilian-Dirlmeier, see Bräuning/Kilian-Dirlmeier 2013, 90.

⁶⁶ In total, about 74% of the 220 burials identified by M. Andronikos radiate from the centre of the tumuli.

⁶⁷ Andronikos 1969, 75–76 pl. 125–129.

⁶⁸ Bräuning/Kilian-Dirlmeier 2013, 221–222 and 228–229 fig. 147–149.

⁶⁹ Bräuning/Kilian-Dirlmeier 2013, 142.

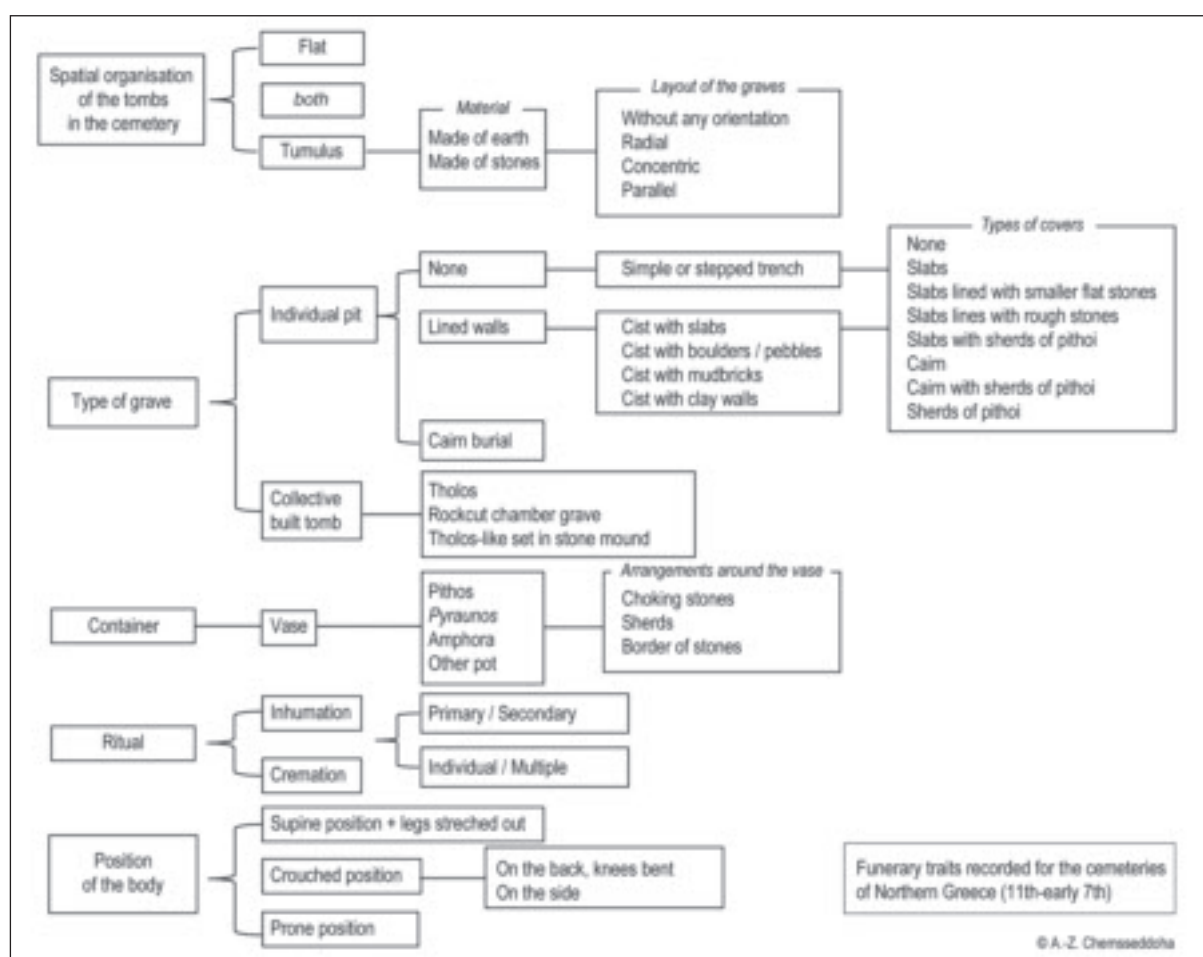


Figure 4 – Funerary traits recorded for the Early Iron Age cemeteries (A.-Z. Chemsseddoha)

a higher variability of mortuary practices as can be seen in the region of Thessaloniki where cemeteries combine predominantly inhumation in simple pits covered with slabs with other types of elaborated pit graves pithos burials, and secondary cremations.⁷⁶ One of the examples that speaks to this trend is the Early Iron Age cemetery of Nea Philadelpheia where an ash urn placed directly on the cover of a slab cist grave has been found among the 2228 excavated burials.⁷⁷

This central region concentrates all the burial customs known in the wider area. The geographical position at the centre of communication roads must have played an important role. However, this heterogeneity is more a matter of choice than geographical determinism. Some neighbouring regions display a strong diversion from one another despite their geographic proximity and the very probable regular mobility of people. This is the case of Almopia in the river basin of Aridaia. This region is characterized by tumulus cemeteries and unusual grave architecture. In the cemetery of Konstantia, which is relatively representative of the region, tumuli made of stones covered built chambers equipped with a dromos and/or a simple entrance, sometimes with doorjambs, paved floors, walls lined with orthostates, and usually without a roof or just covered with slabs, creating symbolic tholos-like structures mixed with a very unusual megalithic aspect.⁷⁸ This is one of the most homogeneous regions, coherent within the local topography, which displays a certain conservatism until perhaps the 5th century BCE and which in terms of burial architecture clearly diverges from the neighbouring customs, especially the region of the mega-tumuli near the Vegoritis Lake represented by the site of Agios Panteleimona.

⁷⁶ Havela 2012, 308–312.

⁷⁸ Chrysostomou A. 2011.

⁷⁷ Misaïlidou-Despotidou 2008, 38 fig. 24.

These two regions are separated by the southern end of the Voras Mountain but connected by the valley of Edessa. These communities could not ignore each other especially when displaying such visible burial practices in the plains and along the natural passes.

The first results from the study of the geographical distribution of burial customs in Early Iron Age northern Greece and the consideration of the new available data challenge the past interpretation of this region and reflect a clear regionalization of burial customs here like in the rest of Greece, albeit more fragmented. From a cultural point of view and of burial customs, northern Greece cannot be just considered as a periphery of the Aegean or the central Balkans. There is a diversity of traditions, both inherited and adopted, and the local dynamics makes this vast area specifically distinct. The opposition between regions reflects that some communities express their collective identity through burial customs. It is still difficult and premature to interpret this distribution, however. The direct comparison between antique regions and ethnic groups are hazardous, since the available written sources come from later periods. Moreover, there is no direct connection between cultural features and ethnic identity, since we have long abandoned the old essentialist theoretical models. Identity is a complex construction and a discourse for which the burial customs may have played an important role, but it is still difficult to prove that burials have been used consciously as identity markers by the populations.⁷⁹ Indeed, when we look at the grave goods associated with burials, it reflects a different less fragmented, but not less complex, picture.

Grave goods and funerary ideologies

If burial practices, namely the treatment of the deceased, the funerary architecture, and the spatial organisation of graves, fall under collective decisions of the community, which recognize them as standard or nonstandard, the grave goods left inside or by a grave follow a different logic. When deposited into a grave, like in sanctuaries, the objects lose their functionality and take on a greater symbolic meaning.⁸⁰ Worn by the deceased or placed near the body, the objects carefully chosen by the relatives compose a discourse on the *social persona* of the dead.⁸¹ This image, created to be remembered and realised in the grave, is based on codes and values and refers to funerary ideologies,⁸² which can go far beyond the spatial boundaries of a cemetery or a funerary region and which are likely to change through times. The starting point of this reflection is the argument proposed by S. Houby-Nielsen, who has identified three different successive phases of the expression of social status of the elite in Attic graves through the analysis of specific categories of objects from the Protogeometric to the end of the Archaic period.⁸³ According to her, the period from the Protogeometric to the Middle Geometric was dominated by warrior ideology expressed in graves by depositing weapons in male burials and jewellery in female burials. From the Late Geometric period onward, it was replaced by *symposion* ideology, seen in deposition of large quantities of fine table wares, especially in the early 7th century BCE together with the offering trenches found along the cremation burials.⁸⁴ Finally, from the 6th century BCE onwards, the increase of perfume vases and the general decrease of burial gifts in graves reflected another change in the funerary ideologies, now with a tendency to reduce social differences visible through grave gifts.

In northern Greece, we can observe some changes in the categories of grave goods from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age with a decrease of perfume vessels in favour of table wares, weapons, and jewellery. From the Early Iron Age to the Archaic period, there is an increase of perfume vessels, either together with or without sympotic vessels, as well as weapons and jewellery, depending on the site. In fact, it is impossible to identify a homogeneous trend in this vast area. Not only is there a chronological evolution of grave goods categories, but also a significant geographical disparity especially in the Early Iron Age. The fragmentary published data do not yet allow to refine the development

⁷⁹ Luce 2007.

⁸⁰ Luce 2003, 63; 2011, 54.

⁸¹ Binford 1971, 18–19.

⁸² D'Agostino/Schnapp 1982, 19–21; Vernant 1982, 5–7.

⁸³ Houby-Nielsen 1992.

⁸⁴ However, the *symposion* ideology seems to be already visible in the grave assemblages from at least the Protogeometric. See Luce 2003; Belletier 2003.

of grave goods categories during this period. However, it is possible to identify at least some tendencies in their geographical distribution, which completes the multifaceted image given by the burial customs.

There is no doubt that the cemetery of Vergina is dominated by the warrior ideology, along with display of female jewellery in women's tombs, to express the social status of the deceased.⁸⁵ In total, more than 2000 objects have been found associated with burials, among them up to 60% are metal finds. Most of them are jewellery and dress ornaments (about 40%), but weapons are well represented as well – 90 of them are associated with at least 69 burials. The pottery represents only a third of the total number of the grave goods (672 vessels). Most of the graves contained only two vessels, which were usually handmade even in rich burials accompanied with metal finds. Even if commensality is visible through the shapes – mostly jugs and kantharoi representing 65% of the total – the *symposion*, and feasting more generally, does not seem to have been chosen to express the status of the local elite in death.⁸⁶ This picture given by the cemetery of Vergina is far from being representative of the entire region studied, but seem to be typical of the cemeteries located in the hinterland especially in the north (Axios valley and Almopia) and the west (from the Haliakmon to Kastoria and in the region of the Lake Vegoritis), as shown by the cemeteries of Agios Panteleimona,⁸⁷ Chauchitsa,⁸⁸ and even the small burial group of Agrossyia.⁸⁹

In contrast, the combination involving mainly weapons and jewellery does not seem to be chosen by some communities living in coastal regions, such as at Pieria and in Chalcidice, to express the social status of the deceased. Indeed, in the tumuli excavated near ancient Dion at the foothills of Mount Olympus, the graves display a slightly different repertoire of grave goods.⁹⁰ When metal finds are present, they tend to be less numerous than in Vergina,⁹¹ and a part of the finds includes large quantities of wheelmade decorated pottery of Protogeometric and Subprotogeometric style with shapes such as the skyphos, the crater-bowl and the oenochoe,⁹² clearly related to the Aegean tradition for which the *symposion* is an essential marker of social identity of the deceased. The same is much more visible in southern Chalcidice, especially in the cemetery of Torone. With a total of 118 secondary cremations and 16 inhumations, the pottery comprises 85% of grave goods, while metal comprises 13% of the finds. In 118 cremations burials only five ornaments have been found (two fibulae, one spiral ring, and two beads). The shapes used as ash urns and lids (wheelmade amphorae, amphoriskoi, skyphoi, kraters, lekanides, and handmade two-handled jars) and those found in the pyre remains (mostly amphorae, skyphoi, lekanides, cups, kraters, jugs, and cooking pots) clearly refer to the practice of the *symposion*.⁹³

The regional dissimilarities of the funerary ideologies can be explained by the intensity of exchanges between the coastal area of Thessaly and southern Greece during the Mycenaean period and in the later colonial context. However, as in the case of burial practices, this is more a matter of choice, as shown by the example of the Early Iron Age cemeteries in the region of Thessaloniki. In these burial plots, the graves contain not only a limited number of table vessels, but also a very few proper weapons. The wealthy grave goods are almost exclusively found in female burials accompanied with a rich collection of metal jewellery.⁹⁴ An example is the site of Nea Philadelphieia.⁹⁵ Located near River Gallikos, ancient Echedoros, the site is known by the visible *toumba* and *trapeza*. The excavations conducted at the end of the 1990s revealed a part of a Geometric period settlement and a part of an Early Iron Age cemetery (containing 2228 burials), used mainly between the 9th and the end of the 7th/

⁸⁵ Chemsseddoha 2014.

⁸⁶ These numbers are based on the published material from the excavations by M. Andronikos (Andronikos 1969) and Ph. Petsas (Bräuning/Kilian-Dirlmeier 2013). For a detailed analysis of the funerary assemblages and ideologies expressed in the cemetery of Vergina based on a selection of burials see Chemsseddoha 2014.

⁸⁷ Rey 1932, 44–45; Heurtley 1939, 104–105; Hammond 1972, 340–344; Chrysostomou 2001–2004, 385–387 and 434–436 and 466–469 and 507–511; 2017, 134.

⁸⁸ Casson 1919–1921; 1923–1925.

⁸⁹ Chrysostomou P. et al. 2007.

⁹⁰ Poulaki-Pandermali 2013, 67–83.

⁹¹ Poulaki-Pandermali 2013, 71–72.

⁹² Poulaki-Pandermali 2013, 74–78. The term “crater-bowl” refers to an open vase close to the skyphos but with a function supposed to be similar to the crater. See Lemos 2002, 46–48.

⁹³ Counting and analysis have been based on Papadopoulos 2005.

⁹⁴ Havela 2012, 308–312.

⁹⁵ Misailidou-Despotidou 2008, 25–65.

beginning of the 6th centuries BCE,⁹⁶ and a part of another cemetery used from the 6th to the beginning of the 3rd centuries BCE (with 168 burials). The data are not fully published yet. According to the excavator, however, among the 40% of graves containing offerings, the burials were unequally equipped, either very rich or poor. First, they contained a low number of vessels characterised by a limited range of shapes (such as bowls, cups, kantharoi, amphoriskoi, and feeding-bottles). Female burials were among the richest graves, characterised by rich bronze ornaments. Tomb 948 dated to the 7th century BCE had more than thirty objects, consisting mostly of jewellery, some pieces of which were worn and part of them was piled in a corner of the cist grave and included two very long bronze spiral armlets and four torques. The ostentation of some female burials contrasts with the low visibility of male burials. Iron knives were found in both male and female graves, and only two swords have been recorded. They constitute an exception in this cemetery, but foreshadow changes that will have occurred in this region at the turn of the 6th century BCE marked by an increase of the deposition of weapons in male burials, a well-known phenomenon in the Archaic cemeteries. Consequently, during the Early Iron Age only feminine ornaments prevail to express a certain social status. The weapons were not deposited in male burials and do not seem to have been replaced by other special gifts. According to the preliminary reports, the graves were not always furnished with pottery. Yet, a lot of pottery, especially local fine decorated ware of Geometric style as well as imports, has been found in the Geometric settlement. It seems that neither the warrior ideology nor the *symposion* were used to express the social status, and it was perhaps the domestic sphere that had functioned for that purpose. Hopefully the future publications of the cemeteries and the settlements of the Thermaic Gulf will bring more secure material to support these preliminary observations.

Conclusion

In the Early Iron Age, funerary ideologies display far less diversity than the burial practices and are less fragmented. Different cemeteries can use the same types of assemblages to express social status of the deceased. This reflexion between these two geographies of death in northern Greece show that the contacts between populations may have had a strong, but different, impact on burial customs when we take the collective practice and treatment of the deceased and the types of grave goods together, as both participate in the construction of identities. On the level of grave goods, when a certain opposition between the hinterland and the coastal land is seemingly visible, the many exceptions testify to a more complex pattern. Regarding all the data available, we observe that the ideology of interring jewellery dominates in northern Greece, not only in terms of the quantity and variety of objects, but also by the geographical extension of this phenomenon, covering almost all the region and extending further into the central Balkans. Beyond expressing social status of women, the specific element of northern Greece is the deposition of metallic finds. This accumulation of metal in graves clearly differentiates Vergina from Torone for example. In Torone cemetery, the quantity of pottery (85% of the total assemblage) compared to metal finds (13% of the total assemblage) can find some parallels in Attica, especially in the Kerameikos cemetery, where the ratio is almost the same.⁹⁷ In Thessaly, we can observe a varied situation depending on each cemetery. Importance is given not only to the pottery, especially the decorated painted pottery and sympotic shapes (such as at Marmariani),⁹⁸ but also to metal finds and jewellery especially (such as at Nea Ionia).⁹⁹ The quantitative relation between metal finds and pottery creates a sort of a line between the north, where metal takes on a great value in the graves, and the South, including Torone, where the pottery plays a major role in the choice of grave goods and the definition of the social status of the deceased. During the Early Iron Age, the development of the metal technology must have played a crucial role in the establishment of important families, who controlled different networks, in which Northern Greece was certainly involved. This question deserves a deeper investigation, and

⁹⁶ After the 6th century BCE this cemetery continues to be used sporadically up until the 3rd century BCE.

⁹⁷ Observations have been made from data gathered by M.-P. Belletier. See Belletier 2003.

⁹⁸ Heurtley/Skeat 1930–1931.

⁹⁹ Batziou-Efstathiou 1999.

even if this first synthesis raises more questions concerning contacts and identities than it solves, it can provide a basis for further studies.

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