THREE MONUMENTAL TOMBS FROM WESTERN LOCRI AND AITOLIA
(CENTRAL GREECE)
(Late Classical / Early Hellenistic – Roman Imperial periods)*

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Abstract. The monuments, which will be discussed in this paper, did not attract the attention of archaeologists for many decades, even though they were well-known to the locals. As the accepted terminus ante quem non of Greece’s Roman Occupation is 146 BC [occupation and destruction of Corinth] the previously mentioned monuments are dated to the late 4th c. BC, and thus can be discussed in this colloquium. We present the up to date results of our research.

During the years 2005-2006, the 10th Ephorate of Classical Antiquities (Delphi Region, Central Greece) decided to reconsider ancient monuments of Central Greece that were found, described [and partially excavated] by well known archeologists of the early 20th century – namely N. Pappadakis and E. Mastrokostas. Mrs Rozina Kolonia, at that time Ephor of the Antiquities and director of the Museum of Delphi took an active interest in monuments, such as the Macedonian tomb of Pente Oria, the Macedonian tomb of Artotina as well as the Heroon of Malandrino. The above monuments, which will be discussed in this paper, did not attract the attention of archaeologists for many decades, even though they were well-known to the local inhabitants.

As the accepted terminus ante quem non of the Roman occupation of Greece is 146 BC (with the occupation and destruction of Corinth) the previously mentioned monuments are dated to the late 4th c. BC, and thus can be discussed in this colloquium (fig. 1, map).

We present the up to date results of our research:

1. In the area called “To Pal’ati tou Vassilia” (“The King’s Palace”) (fig. 2, map), not far from the modern village Pente Oria (fig. 3) (identified as the ancient Locrian town of Tritaia), we excavated a monumental tomb of the Late Classical / Early Hellenistic period, that belongs to the type known as “Macedonian tomb”1. We cleared the area around it and we cut off the trees that had grown inside the monument (fig. 4). The monument’s superstructure, along with its entablature and part of its façade were uncovered.

The tile fragments that were found on top of the three huge stone slabs (fig. 5) covering the tomb, suggest that the tomb was originally covered with a wood-and-tile roof.

The tomb consists of two chambers and belongs to a type of funerary building that originates from Northern Greece – yet well-known among Central Greek populations2. The tomb’s relatively tall superstructure and its facade which supports rectangular bas-relief decorative patterns (fig. 6, 7, 8) is a reminiscent of the decoration of the “The house with the coloured stucco” in Pella, Macedonia3 – and, also, of the “fake-doorleafs decoration” pattern of the Macedonian tomb at Leukadia / Mieza4 (fig. 9).

* The accepted terminus ante quem non of the Roman occupation of Greece is 146 BC [occupation and destruction of Corinth]

1 Pappadakis 1920-21, p. 151
3 Akamatis 2003, p.27.
4 Romiopoulou 1997, pl.20
The "wave-pattern of cella walls" (γεισοειδές κύμα) of the monument's superstructure, that would have ended to a NE anta-wall capital [now missing], presents a shape very similar to a capital found in the area of *Ammon Zeus temple* in Chalkidike, Makedonia5 (fig. 10).

The above elements, along with the fine work presented in every detail on the monument, provide evidence towards a Northern Greek workshop that would have travelled along with the Macedonian army, during the South Greek campaigns of the 4th century BC (3rd - or probably 4th Sacred Wars) – building monumental tombs for the dead among high military officers. If we would like to be more accurate, we could place them immediately after the 338 BC destruction of Amphissa by Philippus and the punishment of the Locrians6.

This should be the case for the *Artotina tomb*, too.

2. In the area called “Chonokklissia” (Buried Church) (fig. 2, map), near modern village of *Artotina* (fig. 11), we performed a survey around a funerary monument that belongs to the same type as the *Pente Oria* tomb7. The tiles that were found (fig. 12) suggest that, in this case too, a wood-and-tile roof was used to cover the tomb. This time there were no stone slabs – but instead, a semi-cylindrical roofing (fig. 13) bordered by a rectangular walling, and surrounding the shaft, in which the structure was originally founded (fig. 14).

The Artotina Macedonian tomb is a one-chamber tomb, with a monumental, corridor door to the left – and a window to the right [the door area (fig. 15) was excavated in 19698].

It has been known to the archaeologists since the early 20th century – but the reported stone benches (κλίναι)9 of its interior are no longer visible (because of various debris gathered there) (fig. 16). The west-slope ceramics10 once visible in the surrounding area – along with the tomb’s position away from the ancient settlement reported by Pappadakis11 – but situated on a hill supervising a road that leads from Aetolia to Coastal Lokris, suggest a military tomb – and a dating similar to the Pente Oria tomb.

3. In the search for architectural features that could justify the date attributed to these tombs, we could refer to:

A) …”Tomb 1” of Dion, Macedonia, dating to the late 4th century BC, didn’t have a semi-cylindrical roof, but a flat-top, made of stone slabs (similar to the *Pente Oria*’s tomb). Its excavator argues that this type of roof reflects the monumental buildings of its era12, something that endures the impression of a monument erected for an important person. We should bear in mind that “group A” of the “Macedonian” tombs found in Eastern Macedonia, is consisted of flat-roofed tombs13.

B) “Macedonian” tombs with facades of Doric order and jabs instead of columns (fig. 17, Aggista), that tend to be dated to the late fourth century BC14.

C) Workshops, that are specialized in the construction of “Macedonian” tombs, have already been identified in late fourth century Macedonia and thus, it is natural to assume that the elaborate *Pente Oria* tomb can be accredited to one of them15.

D) Many one-chambered, cylindrical roofed “Macedonian” tombs, such as the *Derveni-C* tomb16, that present a door bordure similar to the *Artotina tomb*, and are dated to the late 4th and / or the early third c.

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5 Petsas 1975, p.85, pl.1  
6 A.Kallegia 2003, p.34  
7 Pappadakis 1920-21, p.153  
8 P.Vokotopoulos 1969, p.242-3: «έσοδος τετειχισμένη προς την οποίαν οδηγεί διάδρομος»  
9 K.Sismanides 1997, p.25, pl.1  
10 Pappadakis 1920 – 21, p.153, «μελαμβαφή με γραπτόν κισσόν»  
11 Pappadakis 1920-21, supra – a Κώμη Βομίκου  
12 D.Pandermalis 2000, p.14  
13 Ch. Koukouli - Chrysanthaki 2000, p.28-9, the Argilos tomb.  
15 Chryssostomou 2000, p.12 –Pella
BC. The “irregular trapezoidal” masonry of the Artotina tomb points towards a late 4th century BC chronology.

4. In the area called Asprovryssi (“White Fountain”), not far from the modern town of Malandrino (fig. 2, map) the cemetery of the ancient polis of Fyskeis is located. Fyskeis used to be (as early as the 4th c.BC) the capital of Western Locris.

E. Panayotopoulos, a retired Guard of the Department of Antiquities, showed us the field where, in 1950, the archaeologists L. Lerat et E. Mastrokostas excavated the foundations of a building which the local tradition attributed to the temple of Athena Ilias – a goddess worshipped by the Fyskeans, and known from a number of inscriptions found in Malandrino and published by Mastrokostas.

We excavated the (remaining) first level of a krepis / foundation of a wall belonging to a building that would be dated not later than the 1st half of 5th c. BC (as the gamma shaped crambons that connect the stones suggest) (fig. 18). The preparation of the stones and the signs of anathyrosis on them – suggest that the interior of this structure was to be found to the south, even though there is no other part of the foundation preserved (fig. 19).

The dimensions of the uncovered foundation stones are similar to those of the first treasury house to the east of the ancient theatre of Delphi, whose crambons are also of the “gamma” type. So, we opened an test trench in the spot where we expected to find the center of a hypothetical building, with the same dimensions of this particular treasury (i.e. 6 X 5.5m.). Inside this new trench we discovered the remnants of a funerary fire – with bone fragments and a fragment of a fine ware bowl of Roman Imperial period17.

If we suggest, as Lerat did18 – and under the light of our new finds – that we are dealing with the foundations of a funerary monument, then the uncovered krepis should be described as the base of a sculptural syntagma, standing on top of an important Heroon, of the polis’ cemetery. This monumental tomb was re-used as a tomb centuries after its first sepulchral use – something that points towards a population – tradition stability through Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods in this part of Central Greece.

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17 Hayes 1972, pl.64,3
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Fig. 14

Fig. 15

Fig. 16a. Section

Fig. 16b. Plan