

Exceptional burials at the sanctuary of Eukleia at Aegae (Vergina):

the bronze and gold urns from the male teenager burial

At Aegae, the first capital of the Macedonia kingdom, an extended necropolis has been brought to light so far. Among the numerous tombs some are characterized by impressive architectural design and grave goods of great artistry. Despite the existence of the large necropolis three burials were discovered a few years ago in the area of the sanctuary of Eukleia, in the public sector of the ancient city. Although there were no structures to denote the spot of the burials, the components certainly match the elite burials in Macedonia: metal urns, purple cloths, gold wreaths, gold decorative attachments.

This paper aims at the investigation of the metal vessels of one of the burials that belonged to a male teenager and is dated to the late 4th c. BC: a cylindrical bronze vase and a gold pyxis. The latter was contained in the former. The bronze vessel is plainly decorated on the lid, the handles and the base, whereas the gold one bears no decoration at all; it seems that its shine in combination with a wide purple ribbon tied around its lip and lid created a considerably impressive effect. The scope of the study is to connect the two artifacts with other metal vases discovered in Macedonia or elsewhere and detect the network of actors involved in their production and use.

The examination of the two vessels builds on the publication of the gold oak tree wreath that “crowned” the cremains and advances the approach of the burial. Furthermore it is expected to shed more light on issues of ideology and mortuary practices addressed by the find.

Dr Athanasia Kyriakou
Laboratory Teaching Staff
Department of Archaeology
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki