

A Terracotta Figurine of a War Elephant and Other Finds from a Grave at Thessaloniki¹

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Abstract

A cist grave found in a western cemetery of Thessaloniki, in the region of Xirokrini, contained the remains of a boy, accompanied by pottery, iron strigils, a game board set, knuckle-bones, a bronze coin of Antigonos Gonatas, and terracotta figurines, including an exceptional war elephant. Grave goods are connected with the world of children, but also with the world and the activities of adults, like athletics, board games and war. The grave can be dated during the first years of Antigonos' Gonatas reign, between 270 and 260 BCE, when war elephants and Gallic mercenaries were part of his army.

The excavation and the grave

The Hellenistic and Roman cemeteries of Thessaloniki provide important evidence for the extent of the city, the population size, its social and financial situation, as well as its commercial and cultural relations with other regions and its ancient burial customs.

In antiquity, the death of a person triggered a series of processes undertaken by the relatives of the dead to fulfill their obligations. Certain funerary rites, remaining basically unchanged over time, relied on the process of things defined by either written or unwritten laws. Selecting one or the other mode of burial was not always subject to firm rules, as there are cases when inhumation and incineration coexist even within the same tomb. After the burial, relatives had the duty to fulfill specific rites over a certain period of time in honour of the dead. Widespread were offerings to the dead (ἐναγίσματα), like burnt animals and pottery, while libations (χοές), sometimes through clay pipes above the tomb, justified the beliefs of the ancients, who wanted the propitiation of the dead².

¹ References are according to the citation system of the German Archaeological Institute. The authors would like to warmly thank Argyris Thanos, conservator of antiquities of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region, not only for the difficult conservation of all finds from grave 133 of Xirokrini but also for the identification of the terracotta figurine of the elephant and the fact that he informed us about two similar finds from Hephaistia at Lemnos. All finds of the grave are kept at the premises of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region, the former ΙΣΤ' Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities. Photographs were made by the photographer of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region, George Parassis and a small number by the authors.

² KURTZ – BOARDMAN 1971, passim, and TOYNBEE 1971, passim.

Map 1: Map of Thessaloniki indicating the fortification walls and the plot with the grave 133.

The eastern and western cemeteries of Thessaloniki are located outside the fortification walls, in direct correlations with the ancient road system, and corresponding to the location of the gates. Other important, physical parameters, which formed the boundaries of the cemeteries were the torrents which crossed the region. Today all these torrents have been concreted but they are identifiable for connoisseurs of the older geomorphology and for a trained eye during occasional rescue excavations³.

The western cemetery of Thessaloniki, having been quite widespread, is divided into at least five precincts, created by three big torrents. These played an important role in the spatial organization of the cemetery, as did three streets which in the beginning of the 20th century started out from the Vardari Gate: Monastiriou Street, Langada Street and a third one in the south which initially followed the alignment of the 26th October Street and then turned left, approximately aligned with the modern Thessaloniki-Katerini highway⁴.

The western cemetery, according to current archaeological data, extends outside the western fortification wall and included the districts of Tyroloi, Axios, Xirokrini and Ampelokipoi. The boundaries and its expansions are not definitely defined as archaeological research continuously adds new evidence⁵.

History and use of the western cemetery began in the early Hellenistic period, right after the foundation of Thessaloniki by Cassander, and lasted until the early Christian period according to the finds. The Hellenistic as well as the Roman phases of the cemetery are found in the same stratigraphic horizon without spatial organization and with dense arrangement, alternant layers and interlocking of the tombs. Tombs are usually enclosed by precincts. Of particular interest is the great variety of tombs with above-ground structures of special forms. The excavated and published tombs of the cemetery can be classified into barrel-vaulted (with or without decoration), cist-graves, tile graves, simple or gabled, pot burials for inhumations (ἐγχυτρισμοί), ash-urns, pit graves, stone and marble sarcophagi. The graves were first noted back in the 1880⁶ and more systematic research began from 1960 and continues to the present⁷.

The cemetery section (**map 1**), surrounded by the streets Kapatou, Ivanof and Galanaki, containing grave 133, covered 1.500 m² and is located in Xirokrini region of the the Municipality of Thessaloniki and excavation were conducted by the ΙΣΤ' ΕΡΚΑ from May to November 2004. 167 graves were located and researched, which in the majority belonged to the Hellenistic and Roman period, while a few belonged to the early Christian period. The tombs can be typed as follows: gabled or barrel-vaulted, tile graves, graves enclosed in built structures, altar like structures, altars, pot burials (ἐγχυτρισμοί), cist graves, either built with stones or mudbricks, or hewn into bedrock, coated or not with plaster, shallow shafts without covering, and simple pits surrounded on the surface by a row of rubble stones⁸.

Grave 133 (**fig. 1**) belonged to the type of rectangular cist-graves, cut into bedrock without cover. The entire cemetery plot dates between the end of the 4th and the end of the 1st century BCE. Grave 133 itself was aligned along a north-south axis. It measured 1,45 m. length, 0,75 m. width with approximately the same depth, and its interior walls were coated with white plaster⁹. Four roughly circular shallow cuts in the corners of floor were intended for

³ MARKI 2006, 50–53.

⁴ MARKI 2006, 59–60.

⁵ KONSTANTOULAS 2010–2012, 65–66.

⁶ CHATZIOANNOU 1880, 61–62.

⁷ VELENI – KONSTANTOULAS 1991, 221–229; MAKROPOULOU 1991, 257–270; LAMBROTHANASSI 1998, 558–559; ACHEILARA 2007, 215–222; ACHEILARA 2008, 265–278; KONSTANTOULAS 2010–2012, 65–82; LAMBROTHANASSI – ANTONIADOU 2011, in press.

⁸ For a preliminary report of the excavation, see LAMBROTHANASSI 2004, 173–174.

⁹ To the same type of grave, also coated with plaster, belongs a richly furnished tomb of a woman, dated to the early 3rd cent. BCE, from the same plot as grave 133. For the woman's grave see IGNATIADOU – LAMBROTHANASSI 2013, 21–38.



Fig. 1: Cist grave 133 at Xirokrini of Thessaloniki with the grave goods in situ (Photo Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).



Fig. 2: Grave goods from grave 133 (Photo: G. Parassis/Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).

the feet of the stretcher. On the bottom a few disintegrated bones of an otherwise undisturbed skeleton were unearthed, with the head of the deceased, facing south, at a distance of 0,30 m. from the north wall. From the small size of the skeleton, with a maximum length of 1,10 m., and from the grave offerings, we deduced that a boy was interred, accompanied by his beloved and necessary for his living objects, but also by those which were carefully selected by his family, providing escort and entertainment beyond this world (**fig. 2**). Along the eastern side of the grave were found knuckle-bones, glass counters, bone dice and a terracotta flower, while near the south-eastern corner was placed a bolsal. Unguentaria were placed on either side of the femoral bones, two on one and a single one on the other, two strigils along the eastern side of the grave near the head, a coin on the chest, and several terracotta figurines near the north-eastern corner and near the head, while a handle-less bowl was placed very close to the boy's face.

The N→S orientation of the deceased, also noticed on all graves of the discussed plot at Xirokrini, is not a common one during the Hellenistic period elsewhere in Macedonia¹⁰. We should note, however, the natural inclination of the ground from north to south¹¹. However, variation in tomb orientation has been observed in the Hellenistic cemeteries of Thessaloniki (eastern and western)¹² or a preference for E→W rather than N→S¹³ or a preference for W→E or N→S for the males and E→W or S→N for the females¹⁴.

Cist-graves cut into bedrock, as a type resulted perhaps from the wish to place a wooden couch or stretcher in a grave, as normally four circular or two rectangular cuts in the bedrock correspond to the feet of wooden structures. These graves are with or without covering of stone slabs or wooden planks and the walls are usually coated with plaster. They have been unearthed not only in the cemeteries of Thessaloniki¹⁵ but also in other late classical and Hellenistic cemeteries of Macedonia, like in Veria, Pella, Edessa, ancient Pydna, Amphipolis etc¹⁶.

Catalogue of finds and documentation

1. *Semiglazed bolsal of local workshop – ΙΣΤ 3026 (fig. 3)*

Height 0,0404–0,415 m., diam. of rim 0,082–0,0845 m., diam. of base 0,0405 m.

Almost complete, insignificant losses of the body. Mended from fifteen fragments. Tall, narrow ring base, almost truncated, with wide resting surface, nipples underside. Angular body with sharp carination at middle, conical lower half and with almost vertical walls in its upper half, slightly out-turned rim. Triangular handles, seen from above, rising above rim, elliptical in section. The grey to black metallic glaze was applied by dipping, covering the interior, leaving a small reserved area on the bottom, the handles and the upper half of the body and the rim in the exterior. The lower half of the body

¹⁰ E.g. a W→E orientation for males and E→W for females has been observed in the cemeteries in Archontiko (Pella), see CHRYSOSTOMOU – CHRYSOSTOMOU 2000, 479. For other examples of graves in Macedonia, of the 6th–4th centuries BCE, placed on the W–E axis, see NOULAS 1998, 89–90.

¹¹ LAMBROTHANASSI 2004, 173.

¹² ACHEILARA 2010, 217. 219.

¹³ KOUSOULAKOU 1993, 311; IGNATIADOU – LAMBROTHANASSI 2013, 35–36.

¹⁴ TSIMPIDOU-AULONITI – GKALINIKI – ANAGNOSTOPOULOU 2001, 218. The same orientation and sex differentiation has been noticed also in tombs of the 6th–early 3rd century BCE at Toumba of Thessaloniki, see SOUEREPH 2002, 281.

¹⁵ KOUSOULAKOU 1993, 311; TSIMPIDOU-AULONITI ET AL. 2001, 219.

¹⁶ LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI – AKAMATIS 2014, 19; CHRYSOSTOMOU 2013, 394; GRAIKOS 2006, 825; BESSIOS 1987, 209; ROMIOPOULOU – VOGELKOFF-BROGAN 2013, 105. 108.



Fig. 3, a. b: Semiglazed bolsal ΙΣΤ 3016 (Photo: G. Parassis / Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).

bears an ocher-brown slip, some areas bear a dilute black glaze, resulting from dipping. Orange-brown clay, with tiny inclusions.

Small sized or miniature vases are usually connected with burials of children¹⁷, while miniature bolsals in particular are found sometimes in burials of children. This is the case with a pair in a boy's grave at Nisyros, dated to the third quarter of the 4th century BCE¹⁸, or another pair in Corinth, dated 425–400 BCE¹⁹. However, small-sized bolsals, as detailed below, were not uncommon during the Hellenistic period.

Similar bolsals but slightly deeper and with greater diameter of ring base from ancient Lete were dated to the early 3rd century BCE. They come from local pottery workshops which imitated Attic bolsals but with smaller dimensions, e.g. two examples, measuring 0,039–0,04 m height, have non-uniform covering with glaze, oblique position of the triangular handles, which are elliptical in section, and clay with impurities²⁰. Corresponding features like the small size, only 0,028–0,41 m. height, the absence of decoration and triangular handles rising

¹⁷ GRAEPLER 1997, 174–175; BLEGEN ET AL. 1964, 80; NENNA 2012, 275–276.

¹⁸ PHILIMONOS-TSOPOTOU 2014, 178–179 fig. 3.

¹⁹ BLEGEN ET AL. 1964, 268 no. 412.7–8 pl. 67.

²⁰ TZANAVARI – PHILIS 2002, 178–179 fig. 44–45.

above the rim also occur on bolsals of local pottery workshops at Pella, found in adult graves of both sexes, of the last quarter of the 4th / early 3rd century BCE²¹.

Bolsals of local workshops are rare in the early Hellenistic cemeteries of Thessaloniki. Closer to the bolsal from Xirokrini is an example of the early 3rd century BCE from a tomb at the Thessaloniki International Fair²², and another from a tomb at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki²³, which, by the way, was found with one identical to the IET 3037 handle-less bowl from grave 133 at Xirokrini. A third, unglazed example comes from the Macedonian tomb at Sintrivani Square (300–280 BCE)²⁴, while a red glaze example was found in the Macedonian tomb in the Charilaou region, possibly of the early 3rd century BCE, with slightly wider base and rim²⁵.

Further from the bolsal IET 3036 are examples from the cemetery at Medeon, of the early 3rd century BCE, with a carinated body, narrow base and handles rising above the rim²⁶. A wider base and lower-set handles has a bolsal from Veria, in a tomb of the second half of the 3rd century BCE²⁷. Closer, and, with similar proportions, are two examples from Pella, one from the first half of the 3rd century BCE and the other dated to the reign of Antigonos II Gonatas respectively²⁸. Taking all examples into consideration, the bowl from Xirokrini can be dated to the early 3rd century BCE, most probably ca. 280 BCE.

2. Handle-less bowl with outturned rim of local workshop – IET 3037 (fig. 4)

Height 0,036–0,038 m., diam. of base 0,057 m., diam. of rim 0,115–0,116 m.

Complete, with insignificant losses. Mended from three fragments. Wide ring base, slightly concave underside and leveled upper side, slightly angular body in the middle of its height, out-turned rim. Marks of the potter's wheel visible both inside and out. Relatively thick walls. Brown-to-red lustrous glaze covers the inside of the body as well as its upper exterior, having a grey-to-black hue in some spots due to uneven firing. Reserved areas have been covered with a clay-coloured slip, on the lower body two spots of diluted glaze, resulting from dipping. Sporadic black, biological accretions, few tiny open bubbles on surfaces. Clay ocher-brown with very few tiny inclusions.

Similar bowls with out-turned rim come from Veria, classifiable in the second group of type B, dated from the first to third quarter of the 3rd century BCE²⁹. We should also note the existence of similar examples found in tombs at ancient Lete with coins of Antigonos Gonatas. The bowls have been dated, in association with other finds, towards the end of the first quarter of the 3rd century BCE. On these bowls, the diameter of the rim corresponds to half of that of the base, the glaze is unevenly applied on the upper part of the body and its interior³⁰. Similar

²¹ LIMPAKI-AKAMATI – AKAMATIS 2014, 164.

²² TSIMPIDOU-AULONITI 1994, 82. 88 pl. 38, δ.

²³ PETSAS 1966, 336 pl. 358, β.

²⁴ DROUGOU 1988, 86 no. 24 pl. 8, δ. For the recent re-dating of the tomb, see TZANAVARI – TSIMPIDOU-AULONITI, in press. See also KOTITSA 2007, 57 note 181; 61.

²⁵ TSIMPIDOU-AULONITI 1986, 138–139 no. AE 9764 pl. 8; α–β.

²⁶ VATIN ET AL. 1976, 46 no. 59 fig. 60–61; 48 no. 60.4 fig. 68–69; 62 no. 75.6 fig. 109–110.

²⁷ ALLAMANI-SOURI – TSAKALOU-TZANAVARI 1994, 93 pl. 44, β.

²⁸ LIMPAKI-AKAMATI 1989–1991, 134 no. 1 pl. 49, στ; MISAILIDOU-DESPOTIDOU 1991, 102. 108.

²⁹ ALLAMANI-SOURI – TZANAVARI 1994, 99 pl. 47, ε.

³⁰ TZANAVARI – PHILIS 2002, 207–208 fig. 89.



Fig. 4: Handle-less bowl with outturned rim ΙΣΤ 3037 (Photo: G. Parassis / Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).

bowls have also been found together with coins of Antigonos Gonatas in tombs at Drymos (Thessaloniki)³¹, Pella, there with a slightly wider base³², and at Edessa³³.

Bowls with out-turned rim from a tomb at Pella, with exactly the same or very similar proportions as the Xirokrini example, have been dated to the first quarter or the early 3rd century BCE³⁴, while another example from the same city with a slightly wider base is dated to the second quarter of the 3rd century BCE³⁵. Directly comparable to the bowl from Xirokrini are examples from the first quarter to the early second quarter of the 3rd century BCE from the cemeteries at Aiginion (Pieria)³⁶. Accordingly, having taken into account the above examples, we can assign the bowl from Xirokrini to the early years of the reign of Antigonos Gonatas.

3. *Fusiform unguentarium of local workshop* – ΙΣΤ 3026 (fig. 5)

Height 0,11 m., diam. of base 0,02 m., greatest diam. of body 0,052 m., greatest diam. of rim 0,0245 m.

Minor parts of the body missing. Mended from nineteen fragments, while few very small fragments were not mended. Low, truncated base, slightly concave underside, fusiform body with the greatest diameter on the upper part, enhanced by a deep groove, slightly concave profile above the base, narrow neck, ring-shaped rim, triangular in section. All surfaces are coated with clay-coloured slip, flaked away to some degree. On the upper part of the body narrow orange-brown horizontal stripes, widely flaked, similar decoration once on the neck, as slight traces denote. Thin walls, visible marks of potter's wheel. Few sediments and black biological accretions on surfaces. Fine ocher-brown clay.

³¹ KERAMARIS 2009, 232 fig. 14.

³² LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI 1990–1995, 84 fig. 6.

³³ CHRYSOSTOMOU 2013, 169 no. 317. 442–443 pl. ΣΤ, Α, while similar proportions have three bowls found with coins of Philipp V, p. 185 no. 411. 413; p. 187 no. 424.

³⁴ LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI 1989–1991, 114 no. 13, drawing 39, pl. 41, β3; LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI – AKAMATIS 2014, 115 no. 440 fig. 461; 128 no. 496 fig. 509.

³⁵ LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI – AKAMATIS 2014, 32–33 no. 21 fig. 31, drawing 24.

³⁶ KOTITSA 2007, 92 nos. 13. 50–51. 105, drawing 26.



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Fig. 5–7: Fusiform unguentaria. – 5. ΙΣΤ 3026; – 6. ΙΣΤ 3027; – 7. ΙΣΤ 3028 (Photos: G. Parassis / Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).

4. *Fusiform unguentarium of local workshop – ΙΣΤ 3027 (fig. 6)*

Height 0,086 m., diam. of base 0,019 m., greatest diam. of body 0,053 m., greatest diam. of rim 0,0235 m.

Few parts of the body missing, as well as a small part of the neck. Mended from nine fragments, while few very small were not mended. Low truncated base, slightly concave underside, fusiform body with the greatest diameter on the upper part, concave profile above the base, narrow neck, ring-shaped rim, triangular in section. All surfaces are coated with clay-coloured slip, slight traces of orange-brown slip on the rim. Thin walls even at the base. Significantly flaked away surface, with several sediments and a few black, biological accretions. Fine ocher-brown clay, badly flaking.

5. *Fusiform unguentarium of local workshop – ΙΣΤ 3028 (fig. 7)*

Height 0,131 m., diam. of base 0,025 m., greatest diam. of body 0,0645 m., greatest diam. of rim 0,026 m.

Few parts of the body and the rim missing. Mended from twenty two fragments, while few very small fragments were not mended. Low truncated base, slightly concave underside, fusiform body with the greatest diameter on the upper part, slightly concave profile above the base, narrow neck, ring-

shaped rim, triangular in section. All surfaces coated with clay-coloured slip, flaked away to some degree. On the upper part of the body and the neck six narrow orange-red horizontal stripes, wider at neck. Slight traces on the rim denote a similar orange-red slip. Thin walls, visible marks of pottery wheel on surfaces. Faint black biological accretions on surfaces. Fine orange-brown clay, with minimal inclusions, grey core.

All three unguentaria share almost the same proportions and most likely were simultaneously fabricated. Similar examples were found in the Macedonian tomb at the Charilaou region of Thessaloniki, belonging to the early 3rd century BCE, but of grey fabric. Among them MΘ 9771 is the closest in terms of proportions to the examples from Xirokrini³⁷. Similar examples originate from the Macedonian tomb at the Sintrivani Square of Thessaloniki (300–280 BCE)³⁸, the cemetery at Thessaloniki International Fair, there dated to the late first quarter and the second quarter of the 3rd century BCE³⁹, the richly furnished cist tomb at Neapolis of Thessaloniki, recently re-dated to the early 3rd century BCE⁴⁰, the cemeteries of ancient Lete, of the first quarter of the 3rd century BCE⁴¹, and tombs at Epidaurus, dated to the first half of the 3rd century BCE⁴². Additionally, tomb assemblages of the early 3rd century BCE contained similar unguentaria, located in Staphidokambos (Elis)⁴³, Corinth⁴⁴, Aegina⁴⁵, Kerameikos of Athens⁴⁶, Demetrias⁴⁷, Pherai⁴⁸ and Pella⁴⁹, while other examples from Medeon⁵⁰ and, with some reserve, from Amphipolis⁵¹, were dated to the second quarter of the 3rd century BCE. Similar unguentaria, black-glazed or of grey fabric and decorated with stripes from Edessa, were placed in the early Hellenistic period and during the 3rd century BCE⁵², while others from Pella were dated more precisely around 260–240 BCE⁵³ and from Veria in the second quarter of the 3rd century BCE⁵⁴. Furthermore, similar unguentaria from the cemetery at Aiginion (Pieria), were dated either close to or into the second quarter of the

³⁷ TSIMPIDOU-AULONITI 1986, 136 nos. AE 9772. 9773; 137 no. AE 9771 pl. 4, α–β; 5, α–γ.

³⁸ DROUGOU 1988, 83–84 nos. 14–18 fig. 6. For the re-dating of the tomb, see above note 23.

³⁹ TSIMPIDOU-AULONITI 1994, 82 pl. 38, β; 38, ε; 39, α.

⁴⁰ DAPHPHA-NIKONANOU 1985–1986 p. 194 no. 3 pl. 7, β; TZANAVARI – TSIMPIDOU-AULONITI, in press.

⁴¹ TZANAVARI – PHILIS 2002, 199. 201 fig. 72 (nos. MΘ 22721. 22794–95).

⁴² PROSKYNITOPOULOU 2011, 171 no. E 9; 181–182 no. E 61. E 64.

⁴³ ARAPOGIANNI 1999, 199 fig. 83, α (unjustified the dating in the middle 4th century BCE).

⁴⁴ BLEGEN ET AL. 1964, 291 no. 491.10.

⁴⁵ WALTER-KARYDI ET AL. 1982, 88 no. 706 pl. 56.

⁴⁶ KNIGGE 1976, 162 pl. 68.

⁴⁷ NIKOLAOU 2011, 799–800 pl. 323, δ; BATZIOU-EUSTATHIOU – TRIANTAPHYLLOPOULOU 2003–2009, 228 fig. 38; 247 fig. 82.

⁴⁸ DOULGERI-INTZESILOGLOU 1994, 366, tomb 10.

⁴⁹ LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI 1994, 242 nos. 149–152.

⁵⁰ VATIN ET AL. 1976, 65 no. 75.11,12 pl. 115–116.

⁵¹ ROMIOPOULOU – VOGELKOFF-BROGAN 2013, 219 no. 1450A. 4500. 4501 and 4467.

⁵² CHRYSOSTOMOU 2013, 444–446 pl. Z, A.

⁵³ LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI – AKAMATIS 2014, 33 no. 23; 102 no. 378; 174 fig. 32 no. 406. For similar unguentaria which were dated earlier, see LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI 1989–1991, 107 no. 2 pl. 38, δ (late 4th–early 3rd century BCE); 118. 120 no. 1.4 pl. 45, α. δ (early 3rd century BCE); 125 no. 3 pl. 46, στ (late 4th–early 3rd century BCE). See also CHRYSOSTOMOU 1994, 63 fig. 19 (middle 3rd century BCE).

⁵⁴ ALLAMANI-SOURI – TSAKALOU-TZANAVARI 1994, 97 pl. 46, α.



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

Figs. 8–9: Iron strigil. – 8. IET 3025; – 9. IET 3038 (Photos: G. Parassis / Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).

3rd century BCE⁵⁵. Consequently, we can assume a date of the three unguentaria from Xirokrini in the early 3rd century BCE and most probably in its later part or even at the very beginning of the middle of the same century, not later than 260 BCE.

6. Iron strigil – IET 3025 (fig. 8)

Height 0,197 m., width of blade 0,033 m., length of blade 0,115 m., greatest width of handle 0,016 m.

Small size strigil, almost complete. Three minor parts missing on the blade were restored with epoxy. Slightly curved blade, semicircular in section, long and narrow strap handle, with leaf shaped adhesion on the external surface of the blade. Much corroded.

7. Iron strigil – IET 3038 (fig. 9)

Height 0,247 m., width of blade 0,035 m., length of blade 0,161 m., greatest width of handle 0,017 m.

Almost complete, with one minor part of the blade missing, restored with epoxy. Similar to the previous strigil but bigger. Curved blade, semicircular in section, long and narrow strap handle, with leaf shaped adhesion on the external surface of the blade. Much corroded.

⁵⁵ KOTITSA 2007, 58–59 no. 28 (280–265 BCE); no. 33 (270–250 BCE); no. 34 (270–250 BCE); no. 40 (260–240 BCE); no. 112 (270–250/40 BCE); no. 124 (270–250/40 BCE); nos. 126–129 (270–250/40 BCE), drawings 11–12. 15–16.

A similar strigil was unearthed in a female tomb in the same plot at Xirokrini, dated to the early 3rd century BCE⁵⁶. Two more were found in tombs at Pella, one of the late 4th century BCE⁵⁷ while the other contained with a coin of Antigonus Gonatas⁵⁸. A fourth similar comes from a Macedonian tomb at Pyrgoi Eordaias (Kozani), around the beginning of the last quarter of the 4th century BCE⁵⁹, and a fifth from a tomb at Vitsa, ca. 350–325 BCE⁶⁰, while others from Elis belong to the middle of the 4th century BCE⁶¹. Strigils as grave goods accompanied non only males but also children, and even females⁶². They were linked not only to the world of males but also to that of children and adolescents⁶³. Their appearance in funerary context has been connected to the athletic activities of the dead – during his lifetime or to the exaltation of a dead by his family to the level of an athlete and victor in the otherworld⁶⁴. The presence of strigils in burials of children has been considered as indication of the public role they didn't accomplish after leaving the women's quarters (γυναικωνίτις) and entering the world of education and of palaestra⁶⁵.

Generally the placement of two or more strigils in burials was not uncommon⁶⁶. The simultaneous occurrence of different-sized strigils, may indicate use during different phases of age of the deceased but it cannot be excluded that they were gifts offered by relatives. In the tomb of the adolescent Euphoros at Kerameikos, circa 420 BCE, two strigils of different size were unearthed, while on his tombstone he is represented holding one strigil⁶⁷. Other pairs of strigils were found in burials at Kerameikos of the last quarter of the 4th century BCE⁶⁸, at Veria, dated to the third quarter of the 5th century BCE⁶⁹, and in four graves at Olynthus⁷⁰. As Kotera-Feyer draws attention, pairs of strigils are rare in Athens, in comparison to central or northern Greece, but they are frequent in children's burials⁷¹.

8. Knuckle-bones of sheep or goats – ΙΣΤ 3031 (fig. 10)

Greatest length 0,028 m., greatest height 0,018 m., greatest width 0,015 m.

Thirty knuckle-bones, mostly intact and the rest with small or bigger chips, and 19 small fragments. All without marks of processing, with the exception

⁵⁶ IGNATIADOU – LAMBROTHANASSI 2013, 37 no. 8; 38 fig. 1.

⁵⁷ LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI 1989–1991, 82 no. 3 pl. 27, στ.

⁵⁸ LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI 1990–1995, 85 fig. 8.

⁵⁹ KARAMEITROU-MENTESIDI 1997, 97 fig. 19.

⁶⁰ VOKOTOPOULOU 1986, 188 no. 5 fig. 107, ε; pl. 299, α.

⁶¹ GEORGIADOU 2005, 114 no. 3; 119 no. 3; 123 no. 2; pl. 48. 54. 58.

⁶² For strigils in burials of children, see ROBINSON 1942, 182. 202; DROUGOU – TOURATSOGLOU 1980, 41. 179; KOTERA-FEYER 1993, 89–90. 95; KALTSAS 1998, 139–140. 302; KOTITSA 2012, 93. For strigils in burials of women, see MASSA-PAIRAULT 1991, 197–209; COLIVICCHI 2006, 277–300.

⁶³ *Aristoph.* frag. 189; Paus. 9, 22, 2.

⁶⁴ THEMELIS – TOURATSOGLOU 1997, 166–167; GEORGIADOU 2005, 40.

⁶⁵ KALLINTZI – PAPAICONOMOU 2010, 17–138; PHILIMONOS-TSOPOTOU 2014, 186.

⁶⁶ THEMELIS – TOURATSOGLOU 1997, 49. 109. 166–167; KALTSAS 1998, 139–140; BESSIOS 2010, 154; KOTTARIDI 2011, 62. 124. For pairs of strigils on male burials from Elis, GEORGIADOU 2005, 114 no. 10; 117 no. 19; 123 no. 46; 147 no. 123 pls. 48. 52. 58. 85 (second quarter of the 4th century BCE – first quarter of the 3rd century BCE).

⁶⁷ SCHLÖRB-VIERNEISEL 1964, 92 no. 6 pl. 52, 1; KOTERA-FEYER 1993, 96 note 14 pl. 23.

⁶⁸ KNIGGE 1976, 185 pl. 96, 4.

⁶⁹ PSARRA – LIOULIAS 2006, 814.

⁷⁰ KOTERA-FEYER 1993, 90.

⁷¹ KOTERA-FEYER 1993, 96.



Fig. 10: Knucklebones of sheep or goats IST 3031 (Photo: G. Parassis / Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).

of two which bear a through hole in their middle. Considerably worn, with some sediments and black biological accretions on surfaces.

Knuckle-bones had multiple functions in antiquity, being used in the games of children and adults, as gifts or awards for the various children's performances, as votive gifts connected with the exit from childhood and the entrance into adulthood, or before marriage or as a mean of divination⁷². Children of both sexes, but mainly girls, are frequently depicted playing knuckle-bones or holding a leather pouch (φορμίσκος), filled with knuckle-bones⁷³. A practice in ancient Greece was the placement of knuckle-bones in children's burials as well as in that of adults of both sexes but more often of women, sometimes in great numbers, either along or around the body or gathered in a leather pouch⁷⁴. Sometimes a plethora of knuckle-bones accompanied burials of infants or children, like the 123 examples on the feet of a girl at Kassandreia, dated to the last quarter of the 4th century BCE⁷⁵, or the 56 in a child's burial of the 5th century BCE at Eleusis⁷⁶, or the 122 in a boy's burial at Edessa, dated to the 2nd century BCE⁷⁷, or the 65 in a child's burial of the middle of the 5th century BCE at Elis⁷⁸, or the 144 in a girl's tomb at Mieza, around the end of the 4th century BCE⁷⁹. In the cemetery of Olynthus the majority of knuckle-bones was unearthed in children's burials, as in many others cemeteries, with usually a number of 20–30 in each burial⁸⁰, while at Akanthos, burials

⁷² *Anth. Pal.* VI, 276, 308, 308; XII, 44; *Aristoph. Vesp.* 291–296; AMANDRY 1984, 347–380; GILMOUR 1997, 167–175; WÜNSCHE – KNAUS 2004, 390 fig. 39.11–22; DE GROSSI MAZZORIN – MINNITI 2012, 213–220.

⁷³ NEILS 1992, 225–235; CHIDIROGLOU 2012, 493–501.

⁷⁴ MYLONAS 1975, 296–297; SCHILARDI 1977, 220; KURTZ – BOARDMAN 1994, 208; THEMELIS – TOURATSOGLOU 1997, 59 nos. A54–55. A110; 129 nos. Z42α. Z33β; DUSENBERY 1998, 1145–1147; HERMARY 2010, 264; CARÈ 2010, 459–469; AMORE 2010, 643–645.

⁷⁵ SISMANIDIS 1997, 304.

⁷⁶ MYLONAS 1975, 296–297 pl. 361.

⁷⁷ CHRYSOSTOMOU 2013, 135 no. 142.

⁷⁸ GEORGIADOU 2005, 143–144 pl. 82.

⁷⁹ MISAILIDOU-DESPOTIDOU 1990, 128.

⁸⁰ ROBINSON 1942, 48. 198; KOTITSA 2012, 93.

of children contained from 2 to 100 knuckle-bones, placed on the left or the right side of the body⁸¹. A similar arrangement is also known from Aiani (Kozani)⁸².

Knuckle-bones, accompanying burials probably represented either toys of the prematurely deceased or they carried another more profound, metaphysical meaning. For example, on the painting Nekiya of Polygnotos at Delphi, the unmarried daughters of Pandareos, Kameiro and Klytie, were depicted as knucklebone players⁸³. This aspect is strengthened by the fact that the biggest known number of knuckle-bones needed for a game was four or five⁸⁴. Hence, their great number in burials, besides the number required for a game, denotes a special meaning, functioning more as gifts to the deceased, presumably apotropaic or prophylactic⁸⁵.

We should, however, mention that knuckle-bones of animals are present along with glass counters for board games in Hellenistic tombs at Koukkos (Pieria), Samothrace, Thasos, Edessa, Veria and Taranto, while glass knuckle-bones and glass counters for board games, dated to the late Hellenistic period, were found in tombs at Pella, Samos and Taranto⁸⁶.

9. Three bone dice – IET 3032 (fig. 11)

Dimensions of sides 0,01x0,013–0,016 m., greatest length 0,023 m., greatest width 0,009 m., greatest height 0,008 m.

Two intact and of good preservation, the third bears a few chips and black biological accretions. They are rhomboidal, with slightly unequal sides. All bear punched dots, between one to six, with each pair of opposite sides having always a total of seven.

Isolated dice of various materials rarely appear in tomb assemblages, but are already known from the Archaic period. Of special interest are bone dice found along with glass counters for board games in tombs from the prefecture of Pieria, dated to the second half of the 4th century BCE and attributed to local workshops⁸⁷. The three dice from Xirokrini constituted a set with the accompanying glass counters of three colours for the play of board games, suggesting three players. As D. Ignatiadou had observed, of the known sets containing glass counters and bone dice, the number of the latter is usually three, rarely five. Actually the number of three dice for games is recorded in ancient literature⁸⁸.

The rhomboid sides of the three dice are a particularly rare but not unknown in ancient Greece, though widely used were ›normal‹ dice with square sides. Ignatiadou discussed at length ›normal‹ dice which accompanied sets of glass counters for board games. She noted one rhomboid die from a tomb at Aiginion (Pieria), circa 275 BCE, not accompanied by counters and possibly connected with gambling. She also mentioned a set from a tomb of the late 4th century BCE at Koukkos (Pieria), consisting of 52 glass counters of four colours and five dice, three ›normal‹ and two rhomboid ones. A third rhomboid example was found in the Corycian Cave. According to Ignatiadou, we cannot be certain whether rhomboidal dice were used independently or were always connected with gaming counters, thus having a special

⁸¹ KALTSAS 1998, 302.

⁸² KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 2007b, 39–40; KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 2007a, 135 fig. 223.

⁸³ *Paus.* 10, 30, 2; CARTER 1998, 839.

⁸⁴ *Poll.* 9, 102–103, 126; LASER 1987, 117–122; SCHÄDLER 1996, 61–73.

⁸⁵ AMORE 2010, 643–645; CARÈ 2010, 459–469.

⁸⁶ See below, notes 106. 109. 111–114. 119.

⁸⁷ IGNATIADOU 2013, 214–218, 224–226.

⁸⁸ *Aischyl.* Ag. 33; IGNATIADOU 2013, 225.



Fig. 12: Eleven glass gaming counters ΙΣΤ 3030 (Photo: G. Parassis / Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).

Fig. 11:
Three bone dice ΙΣΤ 3032 (Photo: G. Parassis / Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).

function compared to ›normal‹ dice⁸⁹. The fact is that the examples from Pieria and Xirokrini bear a normal indication of numbers from 1 to 6 like ›normal‹ dice or that at least the latter examples have always a sum of 7 for the two confronting sides (1+6, 2+5, 3+4), again like ›normal‹ dice⁹⁰. Also, the three dice from Xirokrini were accompanied by counters of three colours, denoting three players, possibly favours the interpretation that they had the same function as ›normal‹ dice when played in board games. A recent find of similar, rhomboid dice with glass gaming counters from Piraeus deserves to be mentioned, as they were found in a dumped fill, connected with the late Hellenistic debris of the siege of Sulla in 87–86 BCE⁹¹.

Consequently, rhomboidal dice, although of a non-usual shape and with only a few extant examples, when compared with the frequent ›normal‹ cubic dice, were equally functional with ›normal‹ dice in board games and possibly each side had the numerical value with the dotted indication and no other. It is unknown when and where the first rhomboid dice appeared in Greece or if this invention was under influence from a distant region, e.g. Italy. It is certain that the oldest dated example, until now, was unearthed at Koukkos (Pieria), and from the Pieria we also know the oldest sets with glass gaming counters in Greece⁹². Bone dice from the Pieria were attributed by Ignatiadou to a local workshop⁹³, but the examples from Xirokrini and Piraeus indicate the existence of more workshops during the Hellenistic period.

⁸⁹ IGNATIADOU 2013, 224–226. For the example from the Corycian Cave, see JACQUEMIN 1984, 170 no. 13 fig. 13. For the gaming set from Koukkos, see also BESSIOS – NOULAS 2010, 138–139; BESSIOS 2012, 19 fig. 9.

⁹⁰ For the total of confronting sides on ›normal‹ dice, see IGNATIADOU 2013, 225.

⁹¹ CHRYSOULAKI – PEPPAS, in press. From Boscoreale, now in the British Museum, is known a die with two rhomboidal and four rectangular sides, BARDIÈS-FRONTY 2012, 98 no. 80.

⁹² For a catalogue of gaming sets consisting of glass counters and bone dice from the prefecture of the Pieria, see IGNATIADOU 2013, 212, 214–218.

⁹³ IGNATIADOU 2013, 226.

10. Eleven glass gaming counters – ΙΣΤ 3030 (fig. 12)

Diam. 0,009–0,015 m., greatest thickness 0,007 m.

Intact are eight, two are complete, mended from three and four fragments respectively, while the eleventh survives in two non-joining fragments. Five are small and dark (three of blue glass and two of deep purple glass), the rest are of greater size, of which three are colourless, with a light green hue, while the rest three are of light green glass. Semitransparent are the light-coloured counters, opaque are the dark-coloured. Plano-convex shape, circular or almost circular. To a great extent they are covered with milky weathering and pitted at spots or to a greater extent. Made by firing⁹⁴.

Glass counters from Xirokrini can be related to a board game, with the three colours corresponding to equal number of players, as the presence of three dice in the same tomb denotes. Older known counters were made of stone, as a verse from *Alcaeus*⁹⁵ states and as actual finds prove⁹⁶. Of great interest is the attestation of *Ovid*, although later than our finds, about the use of glass counters for the board game ›latrunculi‹⁹⁷.

A detailed discussion of glass counters, dice and the kind of board games connected with them and used during the 4th century BCE was made by D. Ignatiadou in her dissertation, where she indicated the frequent presence of gaming sets in richly furnished male tomb assemblages in the Pieria prefecture (seven sets from ancient Pydna, Aiginion, Methone, Sevaste and Koukkos), at Derveni (tomb B) and at Amphipolis (two sets in a Macedonian tomb and in a possible child's tomb), almost always with counters of three main colours (colourless, blue, and olive-green)⁹⁸. The number of counters in these tombs ranges from 2 to 52 and in six instances, all from the Pieria prefecture, glass counters were accompanied by three or five bone dice. The small number of glass counters can either indicate a different sort of board game, requiring few counters, or a decimated set, since missing glass counters could have been replaced by pebbles or shells. That is the case of a set from Aiginion, consisting of only three glass counters and shells.

The oldest gaming set in Greece was unearthed in Sevaste (Pieria), dated to circa 350 BCE, while gaming sets from the Italian peninsula belong to the 6th and 5th centuries BCE (from Perugia, Spina and Bologna). According to D. Ignatiadou, glass counters and dice from Macedonia were used for the game ›Five Lines‹ (›πέντε γραμμαί‹). In this game, two or three players move counters across a board of wood, stone or other material, with five or eleven parallel lines engraved, with the central line named ›sacred‹ (›ἱερά‹)⁹⁹. Not irrelevant to the subject and indicating the occurrence of such games among the elite, is the passage in *Athenaeus*, stating that Philipp II was playing dice but he pushed awkwardly the board of the game under his couch when he heard the arrival of Antipater¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁴ For the technique of manufacture, see IGNATIADOU 2013, 228–229.

⁹⁵ *Alk. Frg.* 82.

⁹⁶ IGNATIADOU 2013, 219. 227.

⁹⁷ *Op. ars* 2, 207–208: »latrocinii sub imagine calculus ibit, fac pereat vitreo miles ab hoste tuus.« PLANTZOS 1997, 456. Compare with a verse from Martial, *Mart. Epigr.* 7, 72, 7–8: »Sic vincas Noviumque Publumque mandris et vitreo latrine clusos.« IGNATIADOU 2013, 228. See also TRIANTAPHYLIDIS 1998, 134.

⁹⁸ IGNATIADOU 2013, 212–219. About the richly furnished male tomb of the late 4th century BCE at Koukkos, containing 52 glass counters of four colours and five dice (three ›normal‹ and two with rhomboidal sides, see BESSIOS – NOULAS 2010, 138–139; BESSIOS 2012, 19 fig. 9. We should note a male tomb at Archontiko (Pella), with a saltcellar containing a coin of Cassander and 19 pebbles (12 white and 7 grey), see CHRYSOSTOMOU – CHRYSOSTOMOU 2000, 480.

⁹⁹ IGNATIADOU 1999, 507–516. For board games, dice and gaming counters, see IGNATIADOU 2013, 220–229. Detailed about the game of five lines, see SCHÄDLER 2009, 173–196.

¹⁰⁰ *Athen. deipn.* 10, 435d.

To the examples of gaming sets listed by D. Ignatiadou, we can add a few more, like the set found in the tomb of Seuthes III at Golyamata Kosmatka, south of the town of Shipka, Bulgaria dated to circa 300 BCE, consisting of 21 glass counters (nine colourless, nine blue and three yellow-green) and three bronze dice¹⁰¹. Into the middle of the 4th century BCE belongs a gaming set with glass counters of three colours and a wooden board, found in a rich tomb (Tomba della quadriga infernale) at Sarteano, Etruria¹⁰². Another tomb at the Pianacce necropolis of Sarteano, Etruria, in use from the end of the 6th century to the 4th century BCE, contained thirty glass counters and two bone dice¹⁰³. More gaming sets consisting of glass counters and bone dice derive from two 4th century male chamber tombs in the region of Perugia¹⁰⁴. These gaming sets contradict the observation of D. Ignatiadou¹⁰⁵ that with the exception of finds in Macedonia, there is no gaming set dated to the 4th century BCE or that during the 4th century BCE glass counters are not found in the Italian peninsula.

According to D. Ignatiadou, the presence of glass counters in Macedonia ceased around the end of the 4th century BCE, but the tomb assemblage of Xirokrini and glass counters from other tomb assemblages, dated to the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE, mentioned below, testify to the continuation of the use of such sets not only in Macedonia but also in the rest of Greece during the Hellenistic period. Since D. Ignatiadou discusses in detail glass counters of the 4th century BCE, we can add the following examples of the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE.

1. In a male cist tomb at Abdera, circa 175 BCE, 51 glass counters were found¹⁰⁶.
2. In a small cist, found inside a rock-cut tomb at Veria, after 150 BCE, belonging to a boy, were found an iron strigil, pottery, a bronze rattle, and knuckle-bones. Five small glass round pieces (two light blue and three brown), having diam. 0,004–0,009 m, along with small gold sheets found at the height of the boy's skull were associated with the decoration of a funerary wreath¹⁰⁷. However, the glass pieces should perhaps be interpreted as glass counters, the remains of a decimated gaming set, as already D. Ignatiadou has suggested, since colour, size and technique of construction are similar to known gaming counters¹⁰⁸. Additionally, there are not known wreaths or diadems with small round glass inlays, besides those with gemstones, always of red colour¹⁰⁹.
3. On a couch in a rock cut tomb of a female at Pella, after 150 BCE, five glass counters and four glass beads of yellow, blue and green colour, were found along with a blue knuckle-bone¹¹⁰. Glass beads probably replaced the missing glass counters¹¹¹.

¹⁰¹ NANKOV 2013, 278–279 fig. 9–10; DIMITROVA 2015, 205–207. 293 no. 44; 314 no. 69; 323 no. 83 fig. 164–165. 262.

¹⁰² MINETTI 2006, 20. 66–67.

¹⁰³ MINETTI 2012, 142 no. 14.44; no. 14.50.

¹⁰⁴ NATI 2008, 91–92 (15 glass and one limestone counters and two bone dice, early 4th century BCE), 117–118 (eleven glass counters and two bone dice, last quarter of the 4th century BCE).

¹⁰⁵ IGNATIADOU 2014, 228. 230–231.

¹⁰⁶ KALLINTZI 2004, 267; KALLINTZI 2007, 259 fig. 1.

¹⁰⁷ DROUGOU – TOURATSOGLOU 1980, 25. 41 no. M 935 pl. 15.

¹⁰⁸ IGNATIADOU 2013, 316–317.

¹⁰⁹ DESPOINI 1996, 55 fig. 8; 75–76 fig. 34–35; GIALOURIS 1996, 93 fig. 60. For the multiple uses of glass gemstones, e.g. on jewellery, but not on wreaths or diadems, see TRIANTAPHYLIDIS 1998, 132.

¹¹⁰ LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI 1994, 147 no. 120–121 pl. 19 (glass counters are reported as glass lentoid beads, without hole).

¹¹¹ For a similar case of a gaming set containing glass counters and glass beads and bracelets, substituting lost glass counters, from a tomb in United Kingdom, 1st century BCE, see IGNATIADOU 2013, 226 note 812.

4. On the southern couch in a rock cut tomb at Edessa, dated to the 2nd century BCE, were placed eight glass counters (one green, three yellow and four colourless), ten natural knuckle-bones and three clay vases¹¹².
5. In a tiled grave, partially plundered, at Thasos, dated to the 2nd century BCE, were found a miniature terracotta Gallic shield, six glass counters (three blue and three brown), having diam. 0,014-0,015 m., two glass (one blue and one white) and twelve natural knuckle-bones¹¹³. This grave could have belonged to a child, like that of Xirokrini, since besides the gaming pieces, no other find in the grave could be connected to the world of adults.
6. A tomb with a double inhumation at Samothrace, dated to 275–250 BCE, contained 35 glass counters (20 blue, 2 greenish, 11 colourless or light blue and one white-grey) and 82 natural knuckle-bones¹¹⁴.
7. Three tombs at Samos, dated to 2nd–1st century BCE, contained a) five glass counters of various colours, a knuckle-bone of yellow glass and 45 natural knuckle-bones, b) two glass counters and one knuckle-bone of yellow glass, c) five glass counters of three colours and knuckle-bone of green glass¹¹⁵.
8. A tomb at Elis, dated to ca. 250 BCE, contained nine glass counters (blue, green, white and yellow), two terracotta miniature Argolic shields, pottery (bowl, kantharos, two unguentaria) and a bronze phiale. No skeletal remains were found in the tomb, but it was attributed to a man due to the shields and the counters¹¹⁶.
9. A cist tomb at Pylos, dated ca. 150–100 BCE, contained two glass counters of two colours¹¹⁷.

It deserves to be noted that the tradition of glass counters in the Italian peninsula continued in the Hellenistic period¹¹⁸, like the 20 glass counters of four colours and four ivory dice from a richly furnished tomb of a female at Chiusi, dated to the 3rd century BCE¹¹⁹. Two more gaming sets from tombs were found at Taranto, one dated to 125–100 BCE, consisting of 42 glass counters, eight glass and many natural knuckle-bones, and a second consisting of 32 glass counters and natural knuckle-bones¹²⁰. More Hellenistic gaming sets were unearthed from tombs at Ancona¹²¹, while a tomb of the 3rd–2nd century BCE from Herakleia Lucania contained 105 glass counters and two glass knuckle-bones into a wooden chest with iron fittings¹²².

¹¹² CHRYSOSTOMOU 2013, 156 no. 241 pl. 46.

¹¹³ GHALI-KAHIL 1954, 242 fig. 28.

¹¹⁴ DUSENBERY 1998, 1135.

¹¹⁵ TSAKOS 1977, 360. 386. 398 pl. 123, γ.

¹¹⁶ GEORGIADOU 2005, 155 pl. 94.

¹¹⁷ KALTSAS 1983, 13 no. 7 pl. 18, a.

¹¹⁸ IGNATIADOU 2013, 227–228 refers from Italy only board game sets of the 6th and 5th centuries BCE.

¹¹⁹ ELDRIDGE 1918, 286–287 fig. 17; 293. For another, however later, female tomb with 70 glass counters from Rome, dated to the 1st century CE, see ZAHN 1950–1951, 280–281 fig. 1; PLANTZOS 1997, 456 fig. 7.

¹²⁰ DE JULIIS 1985, 393. 459–460. 490.

¹²¹ COLIVICCHI 2002, 123–124 no. 15.5 (5 glass counters); 147 no. 21.7 (3 glass counters); 155 no. 22.13 (many glass counters and glass knuckle-bones); 176 no. 24.19 (glass counters); 203–204 no. 29.1 (glass counters); 211 no. 30.13 (stone counters and bone die); 221–222 no. 32.3 (glass counters); 226 no. 33.6 (glass counters); 249 no. 36.2 (glass counters).

¹²² SALVATORE 2002, 66.

From the glass counters listed above, their wide diffusion during the Hellenistic period, not only in Greece but also in the Italian peninsula and ancient Thrace, becomes evident. Another interesting aspect concerning the existence of the gaming set in the boy's burial at Xirokrini: all known gaming sets of the 4th / early 3rd century BCE in Macedonia were found in male tombs. The exception remains the undetermined sex of the deceased in the Amphipolis tomb 318. However, apart from the Xirokrini example, glass counters from Veria accompanied a boy, as was perhaps the case of the tiled grave at Thasos. We should also mention two gold sheeted dice with a wooden core from a rich boy's burial at Gorna Porta, Bulgaria, dated to the late Archaic period¹²³, as well as the two small stone dice from a little child's pot burial at Olynthus¹²⁴.

Whether or not a wooden board was placed in the Xirokrini grave, we will never know, since such finds are perishable and hence extremely rare, as for example iron elements and bronze hinges once attached to a wooden board, accompanied the gaming set from the tomb B at Derveni would indicate¹²⁵. On the gaming set from Xirokrini one notices the small number of glass counters, compared to other sets of the second half of the 4th century BCE from Macedonia, which contained as many as 52, although some contained only 2 (Amphipolis), 3 (Aiginion) or 11 (Methone)¹²⁶.

It cannot be excluded that the Xirokrini counters constitute a decimated set which originally counted more pieces, lost or destroyed during the passage of time or in that case, missing counters were substituted with pebbles or shells, not having been noted during the excavation of the grave. Indeed in Greece gaming sets of the 3rd–2nd centuries BCE include a small number of glass counters, from 2 to 9 (usually of two and rarely of three or four colours), with the exception of Samothrace with 35 counters and Abdera with 51 counters. Perhaps the smaller or bigger quantity was connected to different sorts of games, requiring different number of counters, rather than to explain it as a phenomenon of attrition. The apparent inconsistency in the number of colours of gaming sets of the 3rd–2nd centuries BCE reinforces this suggestion, although it is attested to a lesser degree in those of the 4th century BCE.

Another important thing is the provenance of the gaming set of Xirokrini, since it is the first attestation from the city of Thessaloniki. It lies not far from Derveni, and while its dating in 3rd century BCE constitutes additional evidence of the continuation in the placement of gaming sets with glass counters in burials well after 300 BCE.

Apart from tomb assemblages, glass counters found in sanctuaries or residential districts are not easily attributed to gaming sets or even dated. Abundant ones were found in the Hellenistic glass workshop at Rhodes¹²⁷, fewer at Delos¹²⁸, the sanctuary of Artemis at Epidauros¹²⁹, at Corinth¹³⁰, at Minoa of Amorgos¹³¹ and at Olynthus, of unknown context¹³².

It deserves to be investigated whether it carries a special meaning when placing a board game in a child's grave. Board games placed in tombs have been connected from the so far

¹²³ DAVID 2014, fig. on p. 48.

¹²⁴ ROBINSON 1942, 69 (tomb 341).

¹²⁵ For the identification of fittings once attached to a hinged wooden board for games, see IGNATIADOU 1999, 513 fig. 10–12; IGNATIADOU 2013, 213–214 no. MGC4; 223; KOTOULA ET AL. 2012, in press. Unique is a small faience tablet from Pella, with incised grid pattern, which was identified as a board for games, exhibited with twelve glass counters in the Archaeological Museum of Pella.

¹²⁶ For these gaming sets, see IGNATIADOU 2013, 212–213. 217 no. MGC 1, 3, 9.

¹²⁷ WEINBERG 1969, 146 pl. 80, b.

¹²⁸ DEONNA 1938, 308 no. 794. 796–798 pl. 90 (identified as decorative elements of rings or necklaces).

¹²⁹ PROSKYNITOPOULOU 2011, 107. 228 no. E 285.

¹³⁰ DAVIDSON 1952, 223. 226 no. 1784 pl. 101.

¹³¹ TRIANTAPHYLIDIS 1998, 131–135 (detailed about the various uses).

¹³² ADAM-VELENI – IGNATIADOU 2011, 373 no. 430 (D. Ignatiadou).

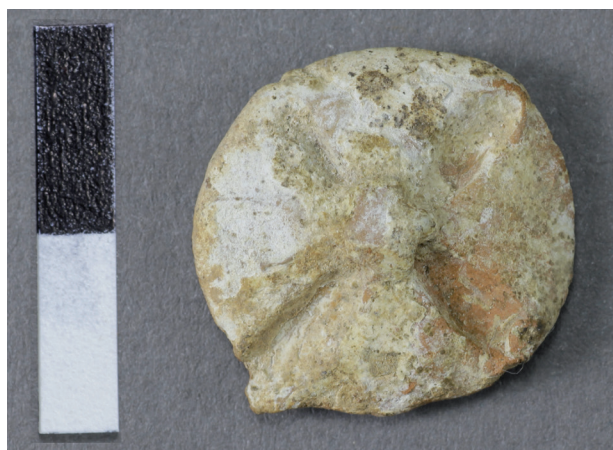


Fig. 13:
Terracotta flower IΣT 3033 (Photo: G. Parassis /
Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki
Region).

research with afterlife beliefs, with the entertainment of the deceased in the underworld, the prominence of the social status, the aristocratic ideal and the elevation of the dead in the level of Homeric heroes, like Achilles and Aias. These two heroes are frequently depicted, in archaic and early classical vase painting, playing board games, probably Five Lines, a game that already existed from the early Archaic period in Attica, as terracotta boards found in burials denote¹³³. The original connection between strategic skills and board games is reflected in the attribution of the invention of playing with counters (πεσσεῖα) or dice (κυβεία) to Palamedes, as an entertainment and educational means for the Greeks waiting at Aulis as they were unable to depart for Troy due to a strange lack of wind. Additionally, Polygnotos in his famous painting ›Nekyia‹, depicted Homeric heroes, Palamedes and Thersites playing dice, watched by Aias¹³⁴. Therefore, the gaming set from the Xirokrini grave could not only be connected with afterlife beliefs for a pleasant resort of the deceased in the otherworld but could also carry a deeper meaning, the elevation of the child to the level of the Homeric heroes and the introduction to the world of adults.

11. Terracotta imitation of an open flower – IΣT 3033 (fig. 13)

Diam. 0,019 m., thickness 0,006 m.

Intact. Circular in shape and oblate, flat in back, hand modeled. In front an open four petalled flower is rendered, with lanceolate impressions and raised centre. White colour covers the front of the flower and a little part of the back, while remains of red colour are apparent in one impression. A little protrusion in the periphery is probably accidental. Fine brown clay.

Terracotta flowers contained in tomb assemblages are normally connected with gilded wreaths or rarer they formed a kind of a headdress ornament¹³⁵. In rare cases single finds formed independent votive offerings to sanctuaries, substituting the offering of real flowers, like the terracotta flowers from the Thesmophorion at Pella, of which one is similar to the Xirokrini example¹³⁶. Found in funerary contexts, imitations of flowers may have alluded to the children's death before the flower of their youth (ἄνθος ἥβης)¹³⁷ or when found in burials of

¹³³ WHITTAKER 2004, 279–302; SCHÄDLER 2009, 173–196.

¹³⁴ ZOGRAPHOU-LYRA 1987, 259–269.

¹³⁵ LAZARIDIS ET AL. 1992, 21 pl. 6, 38; pl. 21; KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 1997, 96.

¹³⁶ LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI 1996, 76–77 nos. 244–245 pl. 29, ζ. η.

¹³⁷ HUYSECOM-HAXHI ET AL. 2012, 350.

Figs. 14–15:
Terracotta figurine of
Eros IΣT 3035 – front
and back view (Photo:
G. Parassis / Ephorate
of Antiquities of
Thessaloniki Region).



Fig. 14



Fig. 15

adults they may have had a different meaning or a less profound one, like the four examples from a tile grave of a mature woman at Athens¹³⁸.

12. *Terracotta figurine of Eros* – IΣT 3035 (figs. 14–15)

Height 0,122 m., width 0,071 m.

Right wing and left foot missing. Surface mostly scraped mainly in front of body and face. Mended from three fragments. Solid, with a deep small oval hole on the back for suspension in the area of the neck. Mold made, free modeled legs and some work on back of head and body. The figurine represents a dancing or flying boy in a short tunic, clinging tightly to the body, with short sleeves, almost unfolded, and reaching above the knees, and an himation, covering the right wrist and falling down in a small bunch. He probably wears shoes. The right leg, slightly bent, projects forward with the foot pointed down, with the left leg back set. Child's belly is protruding. Left hand is raised at right angle and towards the back, touching the wreath, while the right hand is equally bended at right angle but rests behind on his waist. Head, leaning down, sits a full wreath, rendered with small round impressions. Relatively small, chubby round face, with slightly protruding eyes and mouth, long curly hair at the level of the neck, rendered by small impressions. In back one remaining, spread wing preserved, with vertical feather-incisions in the lower half. Patches of white slip, with exception of the back of the body, head and wing covered with clay-coloured slip. Traces of light pink colour preserved on the flesh, ochre on the cloth, faint traces of red also on the hair and bright pink on the wing. Few black organic accretions, several sediments. Fine brown clay, grey core.

¹³⁸ Kovacsovics 1990, 47 nos. 4–7 fig. 32.

Eros wears a thick wreath, often referred to as »Immortellenkranz«, which is made of the perennial immortelle (commonly: straw-flower) or ἐλίχρυσον according to finds from Egypt. Considering its use, terracotta figurines wearing it are mainly males, e.g. Eros figurines and herms, but also females, on occasions such as feasts and symposia¹³⁹. Another interesting feature of the Xirokrini Eros is the hole in the back. Similar holes have been also observed on other contemporary Eros figurines, which were intended for suspension, giving figure the impression of flying¹⁴⁰.

Hellenistic terracotta figurines of Eros are not particularly popular among grave offerings in northern Greece¹⁴¹. A notable exception are nine figurines in a girl's tomb at Pella, of the early 3rd century BCE¹⁴². However, none of the published terracotta figurines from northern Greece can be paralleled with the Xirokrini figurine. Typologically very close, with the main difference lying on the movement of the left hand, are nine terracotta figurines of Eros from the tomb of Nikarete at the Athenian Kerameikos, which were dated, with deficient archaeological data, to the second half of the 3rd century BCE¹⁴³. Those figurines depict Eros at a smaller age, comparing with the Xirokrini figurine, and they hold with the right hand phiale, kithara, ball or wreath. The same figurines have been compared with another Eros figurine from Halae, dated to 334–280 BCE¹⁴⁴. Same age, headdress and wreath bear terracotta figurines of boys from the Menon's cistern at Athens, circa 300–280 BCE, which are thought to be precursors of the Kerameikos figurines¹⁴⁵, while the same head, hair and wreath appear on Eros figurines from a rock cut tomb at Pella, dated to the early 3rd century BCE¹⁴⁶.

However, closest and of equal quality to the Xirokrini figurine, with only difference lying on the shorter headdress and the slightly smaller age, is a recently published figurine from the sanctuary of Nymph Koronia at mount Helicon, dated to the middle of the 3rd century BCE¹⁴⁷. The Xirokrini figurine is important, since it was found in well-dated context and consequently confirms the chronological order proposed from the research for the rendering of Eros figurines from attic and boeotian workshops, already from the second half of the 4th century BCE and mainly of the 3rd century BCE, as boys with gradually smaller age features¹⁴⁸. The provenance of the Xirokrini figurine from a Boeotian workshop, due to the similar example from the sanctuary at mount Koronia, cannot be excluded, but it is more likely to have been produced in a local workshop, following Boeotian prototypes¹⁴⁹. In this direction leads the same fabric and colours used for the figurine and the rest figurines found in the same grave.

¹³⁹ Detailed about this kind of wreath, see RUMSCHEID 2006, 183–184.

¹⁴⁰ LAZARIDIS 1960, 26; HUGUENOT 2008, 137–138.

¹⁴¹ HUGUENOT 2008, 114 notes 906–909.

¹⁴² LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI 1989–1991, 115–117 nos. 1–4. 6. 10–11. 14 pl. 42–43.

¹⁴³ VIERNEISEL-SCHLÖRB 1997, 110–111 no. 341–349 pl. 62.

¹⁴⁴ GOLDMAN – JONES 1942, 409 no. V.h.3 pl. 24; HUGUENOT 2008, 140 note 899.

¹⁴⁵ MILLER 1974, 212–217 pl. 37–40; VIERNEISEL-SCHLÖRB 1997, 111.

¹⁴⁶ LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI 1989–1991, 115 no. 1–3 pl. 42, α–γ.

¹⁴⁷ VASSILOPOULOU ET AL. 2015, 477 fig. 11.

¹⁴⁸ HUGUENOT 2008, 140–141.

¹⁴⁹ For the reproduction of Tanagra type terracotta figurines from local coroplastic workshops in Macedonia, already from the early 3rd century BCE, TZANAVARI 2012, 352–379.



Fig. 17:
Head from a terracotta figurine
of Eros or Attis ΙΣΤ 3023 (Photo:
authors / Ephorate of Antiquities of
Thessaloniki Region).

Fig. 16:
Terracotta figurine of Eros ΙΣΤ 3029α-β
(Photo: authors / Ephorate of Antiquities of
Thessaloniki Region).

13. *Terracotta figurine of Eros – ΙΣΤ 3024α-β (fig. 16)*

(α) Max. height 0,062 m., max. width 0,032 m., depth 0,0265 m.

(β) Max. height 0,051 m., width 0,031 m., depth 0,013 m.

Two non joining parts of a figurine. On (α) only the belly and the right thigh have been preserved, with a small part from the back side. Restored from four fragments. On (β) the left thigh and small part of the knee are preserved, with vertical and fan like folds of a himation covering part of it. Mold made, with solid feet and hollow body. A standing figure of a nude small boy, with chubby belly and a himation wrapped around, under the waist, with a few oblique folds and overhang covering the left thigh. Traces of white slip and of light pink colour on surfaces.

Despite the fragmentary state, similar figurines of this Eros type were unearthed at Abdera, holding various objects, dated ca. 250–200 BCE and thought to follow imported prototypes of central Greece¹⁵⁰. A similar example was found in the sanctuary of Nymph Koronia at mount Helicon, dated to the middle of the 3rd century BCE¹⁵¹, and another was unearthed from a cistern in the Athenian Agora, dated to 275–225 BCE¹⁵².

¹⁵⁰ LAZARIDIS 1960, 26–27. 55 no. A 26–30 pl. 13; HUGUENOT 2008, 141 pl. 28.1.

¹⁵¹ VASSILOPOULOU ET AL. 2015, 477 fig. 11.

¹⁵² BURR-THOMPSON 1984, 34 fig. 5.



Fig. 18: Parts from terracotta figurines ΙΣΤ 3029 (Photo: authors / Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).

14. *Terracotta figurine of Eros or Attis – ΙΣΤ 3023 (fig. 17)*

Height 0,0315 m., width 0,02 m.

Major part of head. A head of a boy, wearing a low Phrygian cap, with the tip bending to the left. Much worn, with several flakes. Together with it were collected five small irregular and unidentified fragments of figurine or figurines.

Judging from the head, it cannot be certain the identity of the figure. Similar cap wear the Eros figurines from the Macedonian tomb of ›the Erotes‹ in Eretria¹⁵³ but identification as Attis cannot be excluded. Many terracotta figurines of boys and of Attis were found in two late 4th century BCE incinerations of children at Pella¹⁵⁴.

15. *Parts from terracotta figurines – ΙΣΤ 3029 (fig. 18)*

- A pair of feet, with traces of white slip and light pink colour. Length 0,021 m., height 0,013 m.
- Small part of a wing from an Eros figurine. Covered with white slip, traces of pink and grey colour. Length 0,021 m., width 0,015 m.
- Two parts, mended from several fragments, rendering in low relief the surface of a rock. Covered with white slip. Max. dimensions 0,075 m x 0,041 m x 0,018 m.
- At least four small fragments from nude thighs or knees of figurines are preserved. Covered with white slip. Max. length 0,04 m.

¹⁵³ HUGUENOT 2008, 137–153 pl. 26, 75–77.

¹⁵⁴ CHRYSOSTOMOU – CHRYSOSTOMOU 2006a, 645–646; LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI ET AL. 2011, 266–267.



Fig. 19: Terracotta figurine of a male doll IET 3029δ (Photo: authors / Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).



Fig. 20: Head from a terracotta male figurine IET 3029γ (Photo: authors / Ephorate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).

16. *Terracotta figurine of a male doll – IET 3024γ (fig. 19)*

Max. height 0,043 m, max. width 0,026 m.

Only head and upper part of chest are preserved. Mended from few fragments. Surface widely worn and flaked. Molded with untreated back side. Oval and thin face with short curly hair. From the narrow and nude upper part of the body, arms are not rendered. Scarce traces of white slip and of light pink colour at spots.

Terracotta dolls are mainly found in tombs of children or in sanctuaries of Artemis, Aphrodite, Demeter and the Nymphs. They were most probably connected with fertility and the unmarried status of the deceased rather than representing toys of children¹⁵⁵. Male dolls occur rarely compared to female dolls. In some instances pairs of both male and female dolls are found in tombs, like those from a richly furnished tomb at Neapolis of Thessaloniki, of the early 3rd century BCE¹⁵⁶, while other examples were found in the Hellenistic multi-chambered rock-cut tomb at Pella¹⁵⁷, at the Kerameikos of Athens¹⁵⁸, in Menon's cistern at Athens, of the early 3rd century BCE¹⁵⁹, at Abdera¹⁶⁰ etc.

¹⁵⁵ HUYSECOM-HAXHI ET AL. 2012, 343–361.

¹⁵⁶ DAPHPHA-NIKONANOU 1985–1986, 183–184 no. 3–5 pl. 2, α–γ.

¹⁵⁷ LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI ET AL. 2008, 89 no. 118 pl. 19.

¹⁵⁸ VIERNEISEL-SCHLÖRB 1997, 56–57 no. 170–176 pl. 32.

¹⁵⁹ MILLER 1974, 211. 239 no. 78–79 pl. 36.

¹⁶⁰ LAZARIDIS 1960, no. B 62 pl. 23.

17. Terracotta head of a male figurine – IΣΤ 3024δ (fig. 20)

Height 0,035 m, width 0,021 m.

Only neck and head are preserved. Worn and in some spots flaked away. Molded, untreated back side. Similar to the above mentioned figurine. Oblong and thin face with short curly hair, parted at top and rendered with impressions. Relief eyes and eyebrows. Scarce traces of white slip.

Is it not certain whether it belonged to another doll or to a figurine of an adolescent, as it cannot be connected to other fragments of figurines found in the grave.

18. Terracotta figurine of a war elephant – IΣΤ 3022 (figs. 21–23)

Height 0,121m, length 0,073 m.

Several parts of the head, the neck and the front part of the body missing, as well as a small part near the tip of the trunk and the right hand of the rider. Mended from several fragments. Modeled in two molds, one for the elephant, and one for the turret. The heads of the soldiers in the turret have been modeled freehand. The elephant stands in the slightest of movement with the front left leg a bit forward and the left rear one lifted, as if to take a lumbering step forward. The trunk stands in a vertical position, as also the non-joining tip of the trunk indicates, which was not attached to anything. Horizontal relief lines – skin folds – ring the feet. A thick textile covers the body, while on its back is mounted a rectangular turret, with two warriors, characterized by two schematized heads which are projecting from the narrow sides of the turret. Three shields are rendered in relief on three sides of the turret: two Gallic shields on the long and one Macedonian on the narrow rear side. Above the head of the elephant and in front of the front side of the turret is sitting a very schematic rider, holding firmly with the left hand a small round Macedonian shield and perhaps wearing a helmet (?) on the head. Covered with white slip, partially flaked away, some traces of bright pink color are preserved on the textile and the turret, ochre on the nude parts of the elephant and the Macedonian shield of the turret, red color on the heads.

The figurine depicts a war elephant, a >πολεμιστήριος ἐλέφας<, according to the term used by *Aristotle*¹⁶¹, although the term >πολεμιστήριος< in ancient literature was used in connection to horses, chariots and flatboat¹⁶². The elephant or >therion< (θηρίον), as it is named in ancient literature, rendered in the figurine is an Indian one¹⁶³. Small-sized elephants of the wild forests in Africa were unsuitable to hold a turret on their back, for obvious reasons, contrary to the Indian elephants¹⁶⁴. Besides, frequently are mentioned in the ancient literature Indian riders of the elephants. It is mentioned that Antigonos Gonatas used Indian riders in 276 BCE¹⁶⁵. It seems that there had been no special term to describe the riders of elephants, with the exception of the word >ἐλεφαντιστής<, used by *Aristotle*¹⁶⁶ and >ἐλεφανταγωγός<, used by *Pollux*¹⁶⁷. The riders wielded with their right hand a sickle-like tool, for the handling and conformity of the animal. In a passage of *Aelian*, three warriors are mentioned in connection

¹⁶¹ *Aristot. hist. an.* 97b 28. For the depiction of war elephants on the funeral carriage of Alexander the Great, see *Diod.* 18, 27.

¹⁶² *Hdt.* 1, 192; *Xen. cyr.* 6, 1, 29; *Aristoph. ach.* 572. 1132.

¹⁶³ For the distinction between African and Indian elephants, see *SCULLARD* 1974, 15–20. 23–24 pl. 1. 4.

¹⁶⁴ *SCULLARD* 1974, 60–62; *CHARLES* 2007, 306–311.

¹⁶⁵ *Ael. VH* 11, 14.

¹⁶⁶ *Aristot. hist. an.* 97b, 28.

¹⁶⁷ *Poll.* 1, 140.



Fig. 21



Fig. 22



Fig. 23

Fig. 21–23:
Terracotta figurine of a war elephant IΣT 3022 (Photo: G. Parassis / Epho-
rate of Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).

to elephants, with a fourth holding the sickle-like tool (ᾠρη)¹⁶⁸, while *Aristotle* named the same tool ᾠρηπικόν.¹⁶⁹ but elsewhere a third name for it was used, ᾠρηγός.¹⁷⁰ Silver decadrachms commemorating Alexander's victory over of the Indian king Poros at the battle of the Hydaspes, depict a war elephant with one warrior and a rider on the back, holding goad and spear in left hand¹⁷¹.

The coloured pink textile which covers the body of the elephant figurine from Xirokrini, can be identified with the purple-dyed textile (πορφύρεα) which was used to cover Eumenes' elephants. The specific elephants held a turret on their back and after the defeat of Eumenes, they were consequently gained by Antigonos the One-eyed¹⁷².

Elephants and turrets

The crucial moment in ancient warfare concerning the first placement of a turret on an elephant, named πύργος or θωράκιον in ancient literature, constitutes a subject of lively debate among scholars¹⁷³. In this debate, the contribution of the terracotta figurine from Xirokrini is important. It is the tangible and well-dated proof that turrets were certainly in use from the early years of Antigonos' Gonatas reign. The known examples of war elephants bearing a turret in art-forms or early attestations in ancient literature, like the passage from *Plutarch's* Eumenes mentioned above, have been considered with skepticism or even been seen as figments of imagination. The turret was unknown to the Indians, while it is not known whether the elephants of Seleucus I were provided with turrets in the battle of Ipsos. One of the older, positive testimonies for turrets on elephants was provided by a plate from Capena, most probably manufactured in the wake of Pyrrhus' military operations in Italy. It depicts a turret on the elephant, equipped with two warriors. In the battle of Raphia, 217 BCE, also known as the battle of elephants, those of Antiochus III and of Ptolemy IV were equipped with θωράκια, while those of Hannibal with θωράκια and οἰκίδια, that is with a curtain-protective shield on a flat base¹⁷⁴. However, of extreme interest is the information attested in a passage of *Plutarch* concerning the fact that Pyrrhus removes the turrets from his elephants during the siege of Argos in order to pass through the gates of the city. With the help of these elephants Pyrrhus had previously defeated Antigonos Gonatas. Also *Zonaras* testified that in the battle of Herakleia the elephants of Pyrrhus had turrets with soldiers in them. So it is almost certain that Pyrrhus was the first to place turrets on elephant, perhaps in Italy¹⁷⁵, and this innovation was shortly after adopted by Antigonos Gonatas.

Shields of Macedonian and Gallic type

On the turret's vertical sides of the Xirokrini elephant figurine, are rendered in relief two types of shields: two belonging to the Gallic type and one to the Macedonian, accommodated in the shape of the turret, while a similar one is held by the rider. The Macedonian type shield is easily recognizable by the absence of a rim, a standard feature of all known bronze

¹⁶⁸ *Ael. VH* 13, 9, 22.

¹⁶⁹ *Aristot. hist. an.* 9.1.610a, 28.

¹⁷⁰ *Hesych.*, s.v. ᾠρηγός.

¹⁷¹ *Polyb.* 1, 40, 15. III, 46, 7, 11, XI, 1, 2 ; *Liv.* 38, 14, 2; *Diod.* 18, 27 ; 18, 34 ; 18, 80.

¹⁷² *Plut. Eum.* 14, 4.

¹⁷³ SCULLARD 1974, 240–245; CHARLES 2008, 338–362; RANCE 2009, 91–111.

¹⁷⁴ GOUKOWSKY 1972, 473–502; CHARLES 2007, 306–311; RANCE 2009, 91–111.

¹⁷⁵ *Plut. Pyrrh.* 32, 2; SCULLARD 1974, 104–105. 117–119.

examples¹⁷⁶, with the second being their smaller diameter comparing with Argolic shields. The Gallic type shield has an ovoid shape with a long central ridge on the longer axis, an added element to provide structural reinforcement¹⁷⁷. The coexistence of the two types of shields requires discussion as it provides an additional and firmer dating element of the figurine, besides the date given by the grave's overall context and the bronze coin.

It is known that in the battle between Pyrrhus and Antigonus Gonatas and his Gallic mercenaries in 274 BCE, the former won and in order to commemorate the event he dedicated the shields of the Macedonians in the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona, those of the Gaul mercenaries in the sanctuary of the Thessalian League, that of Athena Itonia. Both offerings were accompanied by epigrams¹⁷⁸, while the elephants of Antigonus were captured by Pyrrhus. However Gaul mercenaries were also in the service of Pyrrhus and were responsible for the plundering of the tombs of the Macedonian kings at Aegae, the ancient capital of Macedonia, in 276 BCE¹⁷⁹. Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy, namely Ptolemy II Philadelphus, or less likely Ptolemy Keraunos, king of Macedonia from 281 BCE to 279 BCE, who died in the battle against Gauls, dedicated a golden <πεζικόν θυρεόν>, a Gallic infantry shield, having a thunderbolt as a badge, at Delos¹⁸⁰. Also at Delos, a <ίππικός θυρεός>, a Gallic cavalry shield, was dedicated by Ptolemy, son of Lysimachus, whose mother was married to Ptolemy II Philadelphus¹⁸¹.

It is not for the first time that Gallic and Macedonian shields are attested side by side on the terracotta figurine from Xirokrini. Several terracotta miniatures of Macedonian and Gallic shields were found in the Macedonian tomb of <the Erotes> at Eretria of ca. 275–250 BCE, where they were originally hanging from the walls or the vault of the tomb. It deserves to be noted that most probably the tomb belonged to a noble Macedonian family of hetairoi, as according to historical data, a Macedonian garrison was established in Eretria for at least ca. sixty years of the 3rd century BCE¹⁸². A corresponding set of miniature shields from a tomb at Tanagra is kept in Berlin¹⁸³, while another testimony for the coexistence of both Macedonian and Gallic shields is provided by a clay plate from Eretria, depicting the shields in relief on the rim, of the 2nd century BCE¹⁸⁴. Additionally, jewellery of the 3rd–2nd centuries BCE is decorated in the form of miniature Gallic shields, as inscriptions referring to votive offerings and extant finds denote. For example Stratonike, sister of Antigonus Gonatas, dedicated at Delos a gold

¹⁷⁶ Detailed about shields of Macedonian type and depictions in various means of art, see LIAMPI 1998. Few are the preserved Macedonian shields. Actually only the bronze revetment is left, usually with embossed decoration of a star in the centre and stellar decoration near the circumference. The until recently known examples are: 1) from the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodone, booty of Pyrrhus from Antigonus Gonatas (DAKARIS 1968, 58 fig. 2 pl. 42, γ); – 2) from the sanctuary of Zeus at Dion (PANTERMALIS 2000, XVIII–XXII); – 3) from Vegora (Florina) (ADAM-VELENI 1993, 17–28); – 4) from ancient Orestis (Kastoria) (TSOUVGARIS 2009, 579–589); – 5) from Bonče at F.Y.R.O.M. (BITRAKOVA-GROZANOVA 2007, 863–873); – 6) from Pergamon (PELTZ 2001, 331–343); – 7) of unknown provenance, perhaps from central Macedonia, with the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ, being the earliest known example (MISAILIDOU-DESPOTIDOU ET AL. 2014, 93 no. 59); – 8) another of unknown provenance appeared in Christie's auction, with the inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ (Christie's Antiquities Sale, New York, 13 December 2013, 85 no. 115).

¹⁷⁷ For shields of Gallic type, see KÜNZL 2003, 279–305 and for various depictions of Gallic shields, see BIENKOWSKI 1928, *passim*.

¹⁷⁸ *Paus.* 1, 13, 2–3; *Plut. Pyrrh.* 26; *Diod.* 22, 11; BRINGMANN ET AL. 1995, 169–170 no. 105; 173–174 no. 107–108.

¹⁷⁹ *Plut. Pyrrh.* 26; *Diod.* 22, 12.

¹⁸⁰ BRINGMANN ET AL. 1995, 206–207 no. 149.

¹⁸¹ KUZMIN 2010, 131–135.

¹⁸² HUGUENOT 2008, 153–175 nos. 29–67 pl. 29–30. 78–79.

¹⁸³ KRISELEIT 1977, 13–20.

¹⁸⁴ ACKERMANN 2011, 38–43.

necklace mounted with 49 miniature Gallic shields of onyx¹⁸⁵. Also terracotta miniature Argive and Gallic shields were found in a deposit connected with a sanctuary of a god or a hero at Corinth, in the South Stoa of the city, dated to the middle of the 3rd century BCE¹⁸⁶.

Terracotta figurines of elephants and other depictions in art

The terracotta figurine of an elephant from Xirokrini constitutes an extremely rare find inside and outside of Greece and simultaneously the first one found in a grave in Greece. A fragmentary terracotta figurine of an elephant (?), preserving the back of the animal with the feet of two riders, was found among the remains of a terracotta workshop at Ktio Diporou (Grevena), dated to the Hellenistic period¹⁸⁷. Two more terracotta figurines of elephants, in equally fragmentary state, one of a war elephant with a turret and two Argolic shields at each long side, were unearthed in a sanctuary at Hephaistia of Lemnos, in honour of the house of Seleucids, thought to be dated to the beginning of the 3rd century BCE. The war elephant was probably the product of a terracotta workshop in Asia Minor¹⁸⁸. The presence of a sanctuary in honour of the Seleucids is implied by *Athenaeus* quoting the citizens of Lemnos making a toast in honour of Seleucus with a >κύαθος<, ladle¹⁸⁹.

To the few depictions of elephants from Greece one more can be added, namely a small lead tablet from Kakoureika (Arcadia), with the depiction of elephants¹⁹⁰, while from the Hellenistic agora of Pella come parts of a small ivory figure of an elephant¹⁹¹. Certainly, in antiquity depictions of elephants must have been more frequent. For example, one of the four pictures adorning Alexander's lavish funeral carriage, showed war elephants with Indian riders and Macedonian soldiers¹⁹². Additionally, situated in the middle of the market-place of Argos was a marble building, in the spot where the corpse of Pyrrhus was burned, upon it were sculpted in relief elephants and everything he used in battle¹⁹³.

Outside Greece, two intact, identical terracotta figurines of elephants from Myrina and of a third fragmentary one are important. One intact comes from an unknown context, formerly in a private collection, the other intact one was found in a tomb, with a glass bowl and one terracotta female bust, while the fragmentary figurine was found in a late Hellenistic tomb of a woman and a man. The two identical intact figurines represent an Indian elephant, with the textile covering a lesser part of the body compared to the Xirokrini figurine, while the turret bears two Argolic shields on the long sides, which have crenellated walls and –surprisingly – no warriors. A bell hangs from the neck of the animal. The rider has lowered both arms, while the elephant is trampling on a Gaul soldier. When one of the Myrina elephants was found, traces of red colour were preserved on the turret and the textile and blue on the shields. Another element different from the Xirokrini elephant is its marching, though at a slow pace, and certainly not entangling in a combat with a figure, as the tip of the trunk denotes. The manufacture of the Myrina elephants has been connected with a historical event, the victory of Antiochus I over the Gauls in 275 BCE, with the determining participation of his elephants, or,

¹⁸⁵ BRINGMANN ET AL. 1995, 214 no. 161. See two gold pendants in the form of a Macedonian and a Gallic shield from the Macedonian tomb at Philippi, 2nd century BCE, VOKOTOPOULOU 1993, 277 nos. 358–359.

¹⁸⁶ DAVIDSON 1942, 118–124 fig. 8–12; DAVIDSON 1952, 335–336. 340–342 nos. 2926–37 pl. 139–141.

¹⁸⁷ KARAMITROU-MENTESIDI 2007c, 27–28 fig. 5.

¹⁸⁸ SOUCHLERIS 2004, 93–101; SOUCHLERIS 2014, 282–287 fig. 7–13.

¹⁸⁹ *Athen. deipn.* 6, 254f–255a; BRINGMANN ET AL. 1995, 72–73 no. 23.

¹⁹⁰ SOUCHLERIS 2014, 285 note 36.

¹⁹¹ AKAMATIS 2002, 442.

¹⁹² *Diod.* 18, 27, 1.

¹⁹³ *Paus.* 2, 21, 4.

less probably, with the victory of Eumenes II against the Gauls at Magnesia near Mount Sipylus in 168/167 BCE. According to Lucian, the trophy that Antiochus I erected after of his victory was a stone war elephant, inspiring imitations in other means of art, like the terracotta figurines from Myrina¹⁹⁴. However, the Myrina elephants should be dated later, in the 2nd century, as already Pottier and Reinach proposed¹⁹⁵, and connected with the victory of Eumenes, taking into account the tomb assemblage.

Another terracotta elephant figurine from Myrina, today in the Louvre, bears the couple of Dionysus and Ariadne and was connected to the Indian triumph of the god, while the same origin have two more terracotta figurines, also from Myrina, which depict Eros on an elephant, holding a shield, and Psyche. These two figurines were also connected with the Indian triumph of Dionysus in which the winged god participated¹⁹⁶.

More examples of elephant depictions may be found in Italy, there connected with the battle of Pyrrhus at Beneventum in 275 BCE. There elephants also participated, four of which adorned the triumph of Manius Curius Dentatus. Thus plastic vases in the form of elephants with riders were unearthed at Anzio and Centuripe, a black glazed askos in form of an elephant comes from Vulci, and plates with painted depictions of elephants from Aleria, Capena and Norchia; furthermore, two terracotta figurines of elephants were discovered in the *Portonaccio sanctuary* of ancient Veii¹⁹⁷, while other terracotta figurines were found in tombs at Centuripe of Sicily and at Arpi of Apulia¹⁹⁸.

The presence of elephants for war purposes in Macedonia

The Macedonians first faced elephants in the battle of Gaugamela, in 331 BCE, with Alexander the Great having been the first European who acquired elephants. In Macedonia elephants were used for military purposes in the aftermath of Alexander's the Great death. It has been attested that Polyperchon used 65 elephants in the siege of Megalopolis in 319 BCE¹⁹⁹. It is also known that elephants starved at Pydna, during the suffocating siege of the city by Cassander in 316 BCE, as the Macedonians, who supported Olympias, fed them with sawdust²⁰⁰. During the same year, Cassander, having managed to establish his throne in Macedonia, transported his elephants from Megara to Epidaurus with rafts, as the Isthmus was under the control of Alexander, son of Polyperchon, while later the former moved towards Argos, Ermionis and Messenia²⁰¹.

In the battle of Pyrrhus against Demetrius Poliorcetes in 288 BCE, the former captured the elephants of the latter. Before Pyrrhus landed in Italy, he brought with him 20 or 50 elephants,

¹⁹⁴ One intact figurine from a tomb at Myrina is preserved in Louvre Museum (REINACH – POTTIER 1885, 485–493, pl. XI; MOLLARD-BESQUES 1963, 125 pl. 150, d. f–myr 284). According to the excavators, it was found along with two terracotta figurines of children, accompanied by a goose and a rooster respectively, however these figurines have disconnected from the tomb and attributed to other tombs of the 2nd–1st cent. BCE (MOLLARD-BESQUES 1963, 134 pl. 160, a. f–myr 310–311; MROGENTA 1996, 30). The terracotta female bust from the same tomb was dated to the early 2nd century BCE (MOLLARD-BESQUES 1963, 33 pl. 38, e). The second intact figurine is in the collection of Misthos, National Archaeological Museum of Athens (BIENKOWSKI 1928, 141–142 fig. 213). For the third elephant figurine, see MROGENTA 1996, 189.

¹⁹⁵ REINACH – POTTIER 1885, 485–493, pl. XI. See also the late dating of the elephant, in the middle of the 2nd century proposed by MOLLARD-BESQUES 1963, 125 pl. 150, d. f–myr 284.

¹⁹⁶ PERDRIZET 1897, 211–212 fig. 1; MOLLARD-BESQUES 1963, 180–181. 273. 639.

¹⁹⁷ AMBROSINI 2005a, 165–187; AMBROSINI 2005b, 187–207.

¹⁹⁸ AMBROSINI 2005, 181 fig. 23.

¹⁹⁹ *Diod.* 18, 68. 18, 70; *Paus.* 1, 12, 3; SCULLARD 1974, 64–76. 82–83.

²⁰⁰ *Diod.* 19, 49, 2–3; HAMMOND – WALBANK 1988, 142–143.

²⁰¹ *Diod.* 19, 54; HAMMOND – WALBANK 1988, 136.

bestowed by Ptolemy Keraunos, after having married his sister with Pyrrhus²⁰². Soon after, according to the historian *Memnon*, Ptolemy Keraunos, during the battle against the Gauls in 279 BCE, he was thrown by his elephant and torn to bits by the Gauls, while according to *Georgios Syncellus*, Ptolemy Keraunos possessed elephants in his army and as a consequence he rejected peace settlement²⁰³.

More are the attestations connecting the name of Antigonos Gonatas with elephants. His marriage in 277 BCE (?) to Phila, daughter of his sister Stratonice and Antiochos I of Syria, may have facilitated the purchase of Indian elephants which were used in the armies of the Seleucids. In 277 BCE Antigonos Gonatas defeated the Gauls in the battle of Lysimacheia and deterred the Gaulish threat but at the same time he triumphed against claimants to the throne of Macedonia, designating himself as indisputable occupant of the throne²⁰⁴. However, soon after the first hostile relations between the Hellenistic kingdoms and Gauls and the use of victories against them as a powerful mean of propaganda by the kings, having resulted in the assignation of the title savior and benefactor of the Greek cities, a useful tool of legalization of the royal policy and military power, Seleucids and Ptolemies began to recruit Gauls into their mercenary armies²⁰⁵. Antigonos Gonatas was no exception to these practices. He was the first king to receive the title of saviour. Indeed Menedemos from Eretria, friend of Antigonos, persuaded his compatriots to honour Antigonos as a Saviour²⁰⁶. Antigonos recruited Gaul mercenaries, under their leader Kiderios and promised them payment, but the greedy Gauls wished payment also for their women and children. According to another source, Antigonos recruited many Gauls under their tribal leader Kerethrios, after the battle at Lysimacheia and with their help he defeated Antipater Etesias, who aimed for the throne of Macedonia. At the same time, Apollodorus, who had established tyranny at Cassandreia, had in his service Gallic mercenaries, who honoured them with gifts and defined them as faithful guards and instruments of punishment, committing brutalities and assaults, but in 276 BCE he was defeated by Antigonos²⁰⁷.

After his defeat by Pyrrhus in 274 BCE, resulting in the capture of his 24 elephants, Antigonos Gonatas was restricted in the control of coastal cities in Macedonia, like Thessaloniki, where he actually found refuge. The defeat of Antigonos and his few Gallic mercenaries was considered by Pyrrhus as his biggest victory, although he himself had Gallic mercenaries in his army²⁰⁸. In the next two years, Pyrrhus used the elephants of Antigonos Gonatas in the siege of Argos as well as Gallic mercenaries, who after the inglorious death of their patron, were incorporated in the army of Antigonos²⁰⁹. Later on, during the siege of Megara by Antigonos, in 266 BCE, the citizens of Megara plotted a stratagem in order to counteract the power of the former's elephants, namely they spread tar on pigs and set fire to them. Consequently, the elephants rampaged at the screams of the pigs and the Megarians defeated them. In order to prevent a similar phenomenon, Antigonos ordered the Indians to breed pigs along with elephants so the latter would get used to the view and screams of the former. Gallic

²⁰² *Paus.* 1, 12, 3; *Iust.* 17, 2, 14; SCULLARD 1974, 100; HAMMOND – WALBANK 1988, 246.

²⁰³ *Memnon Frg.* 14; *Synk.* 21; HAMMOND – WALBANK 1988, 252–253.

²⁰⁴ HAMMOND – WALBANK 1988, 256–258. About the connection between destruction layers in various cities of Macedonia and the Gauls, after 279 BCE, see ANDRONIKOS 1984, 62; POULAKI ET AL. 2003, 56–60; KOUKOUVOU – PSARRA 2011, 229–230.

²⁰⁵ EMILOV 2005, 324–325.

²⁰⁶ STROOTMAN 2005, 113.

²⁰⁷ *Diod.* 22, 5; *Polyain. strat.* 4, 6, 18; HAMMOND – WALBANK 1988, 257.

²⁰⁸ *Plut. Pyrrh.* 26, 5; *Paus.* 1, 13, 2; HAMMOND – WALBANK 1988, 259–267.

²⁰⁹ *Plut. Pyrrh.* 26, 19, 26, 24, 32, 2, 33, 5; SCULLARD 1974, 117. According to *Liv.* 45, 30, 6–7, the Macedonian kings had installed Gauls in the region Bottia in Macedonia, see GOUNAROPOULOU – CHATZOPOULOS 1998, 253 no. 195.

mercenaries participated in the siege of Megara and when they rose against Antigonos, he suppressed them²¹⁰.

Having taken all the aforementioned events into account, the frequent presence of elephants in Macedonia, and mainly in connection to Antigonos Gonatas, stands out and as well that of Gauls in his service. The terracotta figurine of an elephant from Xirokrini visualizes all these events, the time when Gauls were recruited into the Macedonian army and elephants were used for military purposes, namely at the early years of the reign of Antigonos Gonatas.

Discussing the meaning of the elephant figurine in a grave

Grave goods of martial character are extremely rare in burials of children during antiquity, so some of them deserve to be mentioned. The majority is related to terracotta shields, figurines of warriors or actual weapons. A miniature terracotta Gallic shield was found in a tile grave at Thasos of the 2nd century BCE, along with game counters and knuckle-bones²¹¹. The grave could have belonged to a child, like that of Xirokrini, since finds connected with adult life were lacking, while a similar picture is provided by another grave, at Elis, containing two miniature Argolic shields and glass counters, dated to the middle of 3rd century BCE²¹². At Amphipolis, a terracotta figurine of a Gaul warrior was found in a child's tomb, dated to the 2nd century BCE²¹³, while other similar figurines were connected with a burial of a girl (?), found in a rock cut tomb at Pella, after the middle of the 2nd century BCE²¹⁴.

Regarding the existence or real weapons in children burials, we can refer to a boy's tomb at ancient Pydna, dated to the 4th century BCE, accompanied by bronze arrowheads, which are thought to be connected with the wish of the family for future activities of the boy, like hunting and war, both highly regarded by the Macedonian aristocracy²¹⁵. In the Macedonian tomb III of the Great Tumulus at Vergina, the adolescent occupant was accompanied by real weapons²¹⁶, while an iron sword and a spearhead were found in a boy's tomb of the 5th century BCE at Dourouti (Ioannina)²¹⁷. At Archontiko (Pella), iron spearheads and knives were found in two tombs of boys, dated to the late 6th century BCE²¹⁸, while another contemporary tomb of a boy contained small-sized iron weapons (sword, spearhead, and knife)²¹⁹.

Since objects of martial character were rarely placed in children burials, it cannot be ruled out that the elephant figurine was the child's toy during his lifetime and consequently it was considered appropriate to accompany him into the underworld. However, the elephant-figurine could have been linked with an important event that left its impact on the citizens of Thessaloniki, such as the natural presence of elephants in the city. Another possible explanation for the inspiration behind the manufacture or the purchase of the figurine could have been the profession of the child's father, perhaps an ὑλεφάνταρχος or τῶν ἐλεφάντων ἡγεμῶν²²⁰.

²¹⁰ Polyain. strat. 4, 6, 3; Iust. 26, 2, 1-6; Ael. NA 11, 14. 16, 36; SCULLARD 1974, 113-116; HAMMOND – WALBANK 1988, 282.

²¹¹ GHALI-KAHIL 1954, 242 fig. 28.

²¹² GEORGIADOU 2005, 155 pl. 94.

²¹³ MALAMA 2000, 65 fig. 20.

²¹⁴ LILIMPAKI-AKAMATI 1994, 169 no. 226; 236-237 pl. 27.

²¹⁵ KOTITSA 2012, 93.

²¹⁶ The bronze greaves found in the tomb betray a person with a robust body and probably were gift of a member of the family, see ANDRONIKOS 1984, 217.

²¹⁷ ANDREOU 1981, 142-143 nos. 2-3 fig. 17, a-b.

²¹⁸ CHRYSOSTOMOU – CHRYSOSTOMOU 2006b, 705.

²¹⁹ CHRYSOSTOMOU – CHRYSOSTOMOU 2007, 124.

²²⁰ The word ὑλεφάνταρχος was used in ironic away by Demetrius Besieger for Seleucus I Nikator, according to Plut. Demetr. 25; SCULLARD 1974, 98. See also Plut. Eum. 16, 8.



Fig. 24–25:
Bronze coin of Antigonus Gonatas
ΙΣΤ 3034 – obverse and reverse
(Photo: G. Parassis / Ephorate of
Antiquities of Thessaloniki Region).

The elephant can definitely not be considered as a traditional choice of object to be placed in a child's burial. These were usually figurines of pets, substitutes of the real ones which kept company with the children or animals with chthonic attributes or symbolizing fertility. Rare were figurines of animals connected with strength and courage, two important properties for deceased children in order to face death and to acquire protection, like lions, bulls, and rams, with the horns representing strength²²¹. In this last category we may integrate the figurine from Xirokrini.

However, a potential chthonic meaning of the elephant is apparent through a terracotta votive offering from the *Portonaccio sanctuary* of Veii, probably connected with the aftermath of Pyrrhus defeat at Beneventum in 275 BCE, including two figurines of elephants, one big war elephant and one of a young age, symbols of victory and longevity, as well as of Cerberus, the guardian of Hades. We should also note that elephants were depicted in the funeral carriage of Alexander the Great as well on the monument at Argos, in the place where Pyrrhus was cremated, while terracotta figurines of elephants were found in tombs at Myrina, as mentioned above, as well as at Arpi²²².

19. Bronze coin of Antigonus Gonatas – ΙΣΤ 3034 (figs. 24–25)

Diam. 0,017–0,019 m., thickness 0,003 m., weight 5,4 gr.

Intact. On the obverse: head of a beardless Heracles in profile to the right.
On the reverse: rider on a horse in profile to the right. The right hand is raised. Between the horse's legs one can discern – with difficulty– the ANT monogram. Corroded.

The same iconography on both sides of coins occur on bronze coinage of Philipp II, Alexander III and Cassander, but this should be attributed to Antigonus Gonatas on the basis of the monogram and the lack of any other inscription. It can be classified to series III according to B. Poullos recent research. Coinage with the specific iconography and monograms belong to the earliest mintage of Antigonus, after his establishment to the throne, the triumph over the Gauls and the death of Pyrrhus at Argos, leaving him the undisputed king of Macedonia. Wishing to confirm his legal claim to the throne, he had chosen to adopt the already known

²²¹ PHILIMONOS-TSOPOTOU 2014, 185. 187; HUYSECOM 2003, 91–103.

²²² AMBROSINI 2005b, 189–200.

numismatic iconography. The first coins of the Herakles / rider type and in particular those of series III, have been dated by B. Poulios in the period 269/268–262/261 BCE²²³.

Conclusions

Concerning the dating of the grave, pottery can certainly be attributed to the later part of the early 3rd century BCE and towards the middle of the same century, while the elephant figurine, due to the presence of both Gallic and Macedonian shields on the turret cannot be dated before Antigonos Gonatas recruited Gaul mercenaries in his army, namely shortly after the battle at Lysimacheia in 277 BCE. One of the later testimonies for the use of elephants in Greece is connected to the siege of Megara by Antigonos Gonatas during the Chremonidian war, in 266 BCE. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the elephant figurine was manufactured between 277 BCE and 266 BCE or a bit later. The bronze coin of the grave also confirms such a date, since it was minted during the reign of Antigonos Gonatas, and according to B. Poulios in the period 269/268–262/261 BCE.

Grave 133 of Xirokrini contained objects connected with the world and the activities of adults, like athletics, board games, that demand not only luck but also strategy, and even war. To the world of children belong knuckle-bones and the terracotta figurines of Eros or winged daemon, who is eternally young and innocent, mediator between immortals and mortals, taking care of the transition to the other world, the continuation of earthly activities and the euphoric residency of the deceased²²⁴.

No matter which historical fact inspired the manufacture of the figurine or which was the purpose of placing such an object in a child's grave, it certainly echoes contemporary events that marked the history of Macedonia, throwing light on an undocumented and an illustrated aspect of Hellenistic military history in this particular geographic region.

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²²³ POULIOS 2001, 237–293 and especially 264–265, 279, 288–289. About the pottery from Aiginion (Pieria), which seems to correspond to the dating of Antigonos Gonatas coinage by B. Poulios, of the type Heracles / rider, see KOTITSA 2007, 22 note 10.

²²⁴ Details about the presence in tombs of terracotta figurines of dressed winged children, identified as Eros or daemon, see HUGUENOT 2001, 92–114 and HUGUENOT 2008, 137–153.

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