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# THE ROCK-CUT MONUMENTS OF PHRYGIA, PAPHLAGONIA AND THRACE: A COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW

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**Abstract:** *Paphlagonian rock-cut tombs have been known for more than a century now. Their relation with Phrygian rock-cut monuments has long been acknowledged. However, the region remains understudied for pre-Hellenistic times.*

*Thrace has never been brought into the picture. This paper argues in favour of an interaction between Anatolia and Thrace that can be followed in the tombs, both rock-cut and stone-built. Thrace offers compelling examples of interrelations between rock-cut architecture and stone-built tombs. When earlier Phrygian parallels are included, the picture of the cultural exchange between the Balkans and Anatolia becomes more varied and insightful. It may be further elaborated once the Achaemenid contribution is also taken into consideration.*

*Paphlagonian rock-cut tombs present an excellent example of a survival of Phrygian rock-cut architecture. This fact poses questions of cultural tradition, adoption and adaptation that are equally vivid for Phrygia, Thrace and Paphlagonia.*

## PHRYGIA, PAPHLAGONIA VE THRAKIA'DAKİ KAYAYA OYULMUŞ ANITLAR – KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR BAKIŞ

**Özet:** *Paphlagonia'nın kayaya oyulmuş anıtları bir yüzyıldan beri bilinmektedir. Bu anıtların Phrygia ile bağlantısı da uzun zaman önce anlaşılmıştır. Bununla beraber bölge Hellenistik öncesi devirleriyle birlikte incelenmemiştir.*

*Thrakia bu konteksin içine hiçbir zaman dahil edilmemiştir. Bu bildiri Anadolu ile Thrakia arasındaki ilişkileri hem kayaya oyulmuş, hem de yekpare olarak inşa edilmiş mezarları inceleyecektir. Thrakia kayaya oyulmuş ile taştan inşa edilmiş mezarlar arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamak için ilgi çekici örnekler sunmaktadır. Eğer erken dönem Phryg örnekleri için içine katılırsa, Balkanlarla Anadolu arasındaki kültürel ilişkiler daha da netleşecektir. Akhemenid katkısı da dikkate alınırsa durum daha açıklığa kavuşacaktır.*

*Paphlagonia'daki kaya mezarları Phrygia kaya mimarisinin mükemmel bir devamıdır. Bu durum Phrygia, Thrakia ve Paphlagonia için kültürel geleneğin, kabülünün ve uyumunun güzel bir göstergesidir.*

Paphlagonian rock-cut tombs have long been known.<sup>1</sup> However, the pre-Hellenistic antiquities of the region remain generally understudied. Field survey projects carried out in the last decade or so<sup>2</sup> show a fresh insight into the archaeological and cultural context of these rock-cut monuments. More Iron Age sites that have yielded Phrygian pottery, as well as additional rock-cut monuments of different date, have been discovered and registered.<sup>3</sup>

After the Land of Pala and the fearsome Kashka who used to constantly trouble the Hittite lands in the 2nd millennium BC,<sup>4</sup> very little is known about the population of the southern Black Sea coast and Paphlagonia. Various tribal names are mentioned in the historical writings about the area. Their ethnic attribution is often disputed.<sup>5</sup> However scarce the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age

material from field surveys and excavations is, it points out to some north-western Anatolian and Balkan affinities, as well as to Central Anatolian traits. The Phrygians assuming they had come from the Balkans, reached the Paphlagonian territory on their way further east. Evidence has been produced on Paphlagonia bordering Phrygia and Bithynia in the 1st millennium BC. On the other side, ancient authors consider Phrygians and Paphlagonians very close regarding their customs (Herodotus 7. 72-73: similar clothing; Plutarch *De Iside et Osiride* 69). The Thracian background of the Bithynians has also been widely discussed, as well as Phrygian influence in the area.<sup>6</sup> It is generally accepted that Paphlagonia experienced a strong Phrygian influence; some authors suggest a Phrygian or Thraco-Phrygian background for the Paphlagonians.<sup>7</sup> Field surveys registered a number of sites as potential Phrygian settlements. However, it becomes clear that in these lands people of various stock met, even before the arrival of the Greeks and the Persians.

This paper aims at a comparative overview of the rock-cut monuments in Phrygia and Paphlagonia. A number of Thracian parallels are brought to light among the stone-built sepulchral constructions.

<sup>1</sup> Hirschfeld 1885; Leonhard 1915; von Gall 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Those of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara and of 'The 9th of September' University in Izmir (Matthews 1997; 2000; 2004; Laflı 2007, 49). See also the Sinop field surveys (Işın 1998; Doonan 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Matthews 2000, 20; 2004, 206.

<sup>4</sup> Bryce 1998, 10-11; Melchert 2003, 10-11; Matthews 2004, 202-03, 206.

<sup>5</sup> Such as the Bithynians, the Mariandini (Herodotus 1. 28; Xenophon *Anab.* 6. 2. 1; Strabo 7. 3. 2; *Schol.* Apollonius of Rhodes 2. 140), the Chalybes and Halizones (Homer *Iliad*, 2. 856-857; 5. 39; Strabo 12. 3. 20-22).

<sup>6</sup> Gabelko 2005, 55-92; Dimitrov 2005; Corsten 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Saprikin 1991, 249-50; Laflı 2007, 53.

Over the last decade Thracian studies has seen significant developments in the research of rock-cut monuments and of sepulchral architecture in general.<sup>8</sup> Newly discovered Thracian monuments offer examples of interrelations between rock-cut architecture and stone-built tombs,<sup>9</sup> which, on the other hand, might find close counterparts in Paphlagonia. With earlier Phrygian parallels, the picture of cultural exchange between the Balkans and Anatolia becomes varied and insightful. It may be further elaborated once the Persian contribution is also taken into consideration.

The typological parallels between Thracian and Phrygian rock-cut monuments, perhaps suggestive of a similarity of ritual, have also been discussed.<sup>10</sup> There are no architecturally elaborate rock-cut façades in Thrace. Niches are the most popular among the rock carvings in Thrace, usually trapezoidal in shape. They often accompany rock-cut tombs, sun discs or other megaliths. Although the interiors of Thracian rock-cut tombs are unlike Phrygian rock-cut chambers, the arrangement of the monuments in complexes, sanctuaries and sacred 'cities' parallels the situation in Phrygia.

As is often the case with rock-cut monuments, Paphlagonian, Phrygian and Thracian monuments present similar difficulties in dating in view of the lack of archaeological context of material found *in situ*. And again, most of them were recurrently reused in later times. Despite the number of the rock-cut inscriptions, Phrygian monuments are equally difficult to date. A great number of them now seem to belong to the late 7th and the 6th century BC.<sup>11</sup> So far, Paphlagonian sites and monuments of Hellenistic and Roman times prevail in number.

The Phrygian affinities of the Paphlagonian rock-cut monuments have been acknowledged since their discovery.<sup>12</sup> Rock-cut façades with a niche, so popular in Phrygia, are found only rarely in Paphlagonia. The closest parallel to Phrygian small façades with horned akroteria is to be found in Kastamonu (Figs. 1-2).<sup>13</sup> Imitation of wooden architecture in the rock has been noticed for both areas. Many architectural details are carved in the living rock without any functional meaning.

The earlier Phrygian rock-cut tombs usually lack façade decoration or architectural embellishment. There are only few exceptions: the tomb at Yapıldak in the Kümbet valley (Fig. 3),<sup>14</sup> Aslantaş and the Broken Lion Tomb/Yılan Taş in the Köhnüş valley,<sup>15</sup> the latter two being

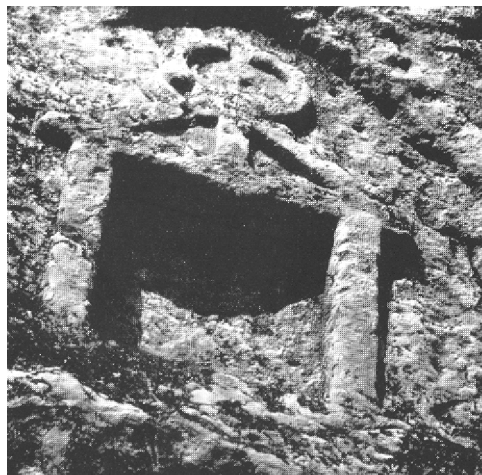


Fig. 1: The rock-cut niche at Kastamonu (after von Gall 1966, Taf. 5, 4)



Fig. 2: Phrygian rock-cut niche at Kümbet Asar Kale (photograph: D. Berndt)

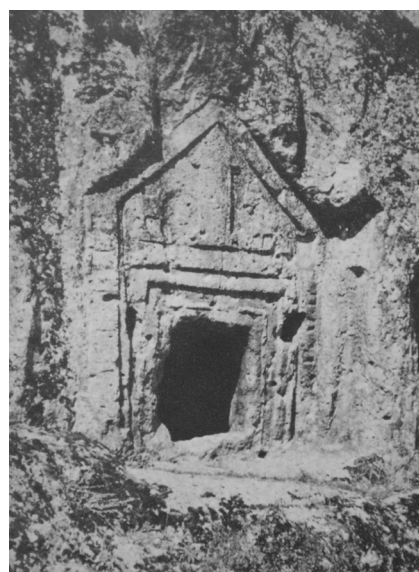


Fig. 3: Phrygian rock-cut tomb at Yapıldak (after Haspels 1971, fig. 118)

<sup>8</sup> Fol 2000; 2006; 2007 with bibliography.

<sup>9</sup> Kitov 2005; 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Vassileva 1997; 2005; Fol, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> See Berndt-Ersöz 2006, *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> Hirschfeld 1885, 5, n. 2; Leonhard 1915, 257, 260-63.

<sup>13</sup> von Gall 1966, Taf. 5.4; Laflı 2007, 57. Bittel and Naumann (1965, 79) and Berndt-Ersöz (2006, xx, n. 2) doubt its Phrygian origin. The closest Phrygian parallel seems to be the niche at Kümbet Asar Kale (Haspels 1971, fig. 99).

<sup>14</sup> Haspels 1971, 115, figs. 110, 118-119. The façade of the tomb at Delikli Kaya in the same area points to reuse in Roman times.

<sup>15</sup> Haspels 1971, 118, figs. 131-133; 129-33, figs. 141-156.



unique and still difficult to situate in Phrygian tradition.<sup>16</sup> However, a pediment with a kingpost and rafters are often rendered in the interior of the Phrygian tombs,<sup>17</sup> as has also been executed in the interior of the Paphlagonian tomb at Iskilip.<sup>18</sup> Sometimes the entrance has a receding door-frame, as on those façades whose central niche imitates a doorway.

Tombs with an open porch and free-standing columns, like the Paphlagonian ones, do not appear in Phrygia until later times (most of the examples are dated to the Hellenistic period and later, see for example Gerdekkaya<sup>19</sup>). Doorframes continued to be carefully rendered behind the columns. Beams were imitated on the ceiling of the porch.

Usually the Phrygian influence on Paphlagonian tombs is seen in the decoration of the gable: the kingpost and the relief images on both sides. Sometimes the kingpost takes the shape of a column or a 'pillar'. The arrow-shaped kingpost resting on a short base on the Gerdek Boğazı tomb façade (at Karakoyunlu, Paphlagonia: Fig. 4)<sup>20</sup> finds a parallel on the pediment of the tomb façade at Yapıldak, Phrygia, in the interior of Tomb no. 5 in the Köhnüş valley<sup>21</sup>, and in the painted version of the Balkaya façade, near Sivrihisar (Fig. 5).<sup>22</sup> On both sides of the kingpost in Yapıldak there are relief representations of a horse and a bull.

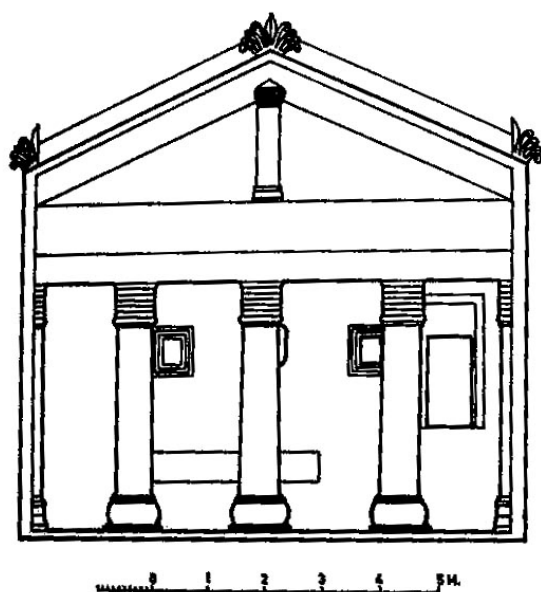


Fig. 4: Drawing of the Gerdek Boğazı tomb façade at Karakoyunlu (after von Gall 1966, Abb. 8)



Fig. 5: The painted façade at Balkaya, near Sivrihisar (photograph: the author)

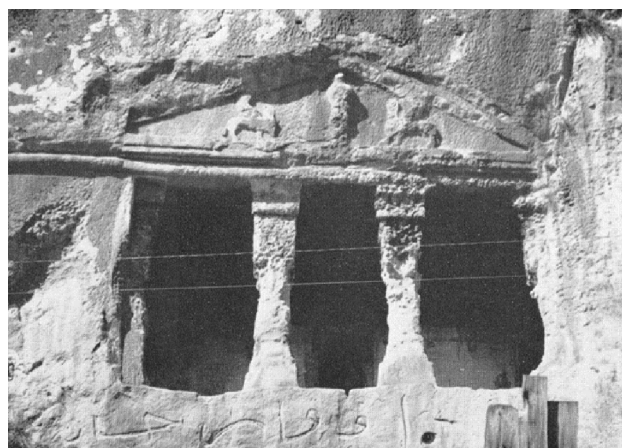


Fig. 6: The façade of 'Evkayisi' tomb in Kastamonu (after von Gall 1966, Taf. 6.2)

The so-called 'Evkayisi' tomb in Kastamonu displays an anthropomorphic kingpost flanked by two antithetic sphinxes and is dated to the second half of the 4th century BC (Fig. 6).<sup>23</sup> The sphinxes have been compared with those on the 6th-century BC Phrygian façade Arslankaya (Fig. 7).<sup>24</sup> The image in the middle of the pediment resembles strongly some of the Matar images in the Phrygian niches. It seems closer to the Phrygian representations of the goddess than the female figure with a *polos* above one of the columns on the Terelik kaya tomb.<sup>25</sup> Both the columnar kingposts, pointed or not, and

<sup>16</sup> Haspels 1971, 137-38.

<sup>17</sup> Haspels 1971, 112.

<sup>18</sup> von Gall 1966, 95, Abb. 17. This tomb and the one at Süleymanköy (Abb. 18) resemble closely the plan and interior of Phrygian rock-cut tombs.

<sup>19</sup> Haspels 1971, 159-60, figs. 85-87.

<sup>20</sup> von Gall 1966, 74, Abb. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Haspels 1971, 115, fig. 118; 120, fig. 535.1-3. See above Fig. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Sivas 2005, 219, fig. 4; Berndt-Ersöz 2006, no. 41. All three monuments are discussed by Berndt-Ersöz 2006, 32, 154, who cites the Paphlagonian parallels and associates this peculiar kingpost with *Matar*.

<sup>23</sup> von Gall 1966, 67-73, 80, Abb. 7, Taf. 6.2.

<sup>24</sup> Haspels 1971, 88, fig. 186. According to Simpson (2010, 94, n. 193), the sphinxes do not need to be compared with Greek Archaic images as there are earlier Near Eastern parallels; thus, the façade is earlier.

<sup>25</sup> von Gall 1966, 83, Abb. 11a-b.



Fig. 7: Phrygian rock-cut façade Arslankaya (after E. Simpson and K. Spirydowicz, *Gordion. Wooden Furniture*, Ankara 1999, fig. 32)

the female images were probably related to the symbolism of the Mother Goddess.<sup>26</sup>

H. von Gall did not fail to notice the hybrid nature of the Paphlagonian tombs: they were designed to look from outside like temples but functioned as tombs. Archaeological research of Thracian tumuli and stone-built chambers suggested that some of them functioned as sanctuaries before having been used as tombs.<sup>27</sup> The so-called 'Horizon' tomb near Starosel (south central Bulgaria) is shaped as a Greek temple with a colonnade and a front porch; however, it is buried under an earthen mound.<sup>28</sup>

The relationship between Phrygian rock-cut façades and tombs, both wooden and carved in the rock, has also been discussed.<sup>29</sup> Formally, it can easily be detected in the imitation of wooden construction elements in the rock (beams, pediments, etc.) or in the frame of a pitched-roofed façade that is carved around the entrance of some of the tombs.<sup>30</sup> The two standing lions, their forelegs on both sides of the frame of the entrance of the Arslantaş tomb, can be compared with the ones flanking the image of the goddess on the Arslankaya façade.<sup>31</sup> It might be suggested that the goddess from the central niche on the Phrygian façades was later lifted to a central position on the

pediment of Paphlagonian tombs. If such symbolism is to be accepted, then Paphlagonian monuments would provide further proof of the funerary functions of the Phrygian Mother Goddess. So far the evidence from Phrygia on funerary context of the goddess's images is scarce and scholars can only hypothesise about the role of Cybele in burial rites.<sup>32</sup>

The same interrelation (or interchangeability) of features and symbolism is also characteristic of Thracian monuments. The rock-cut tombs with opening on the top are considered as places for mystery rites.<sup>33</sup> Some of the stone-built chamber tombs are supposed to have been used as temples/sanctuaries.<sup>34</sup>

Further parallels could be discussed in relation to other architectural elements of Paphlagonian rock-cut tombs. Von Gall discussed the columns of the Paphlagonian tombs. The short, heavy columns with bull protomes as capitals have evoked parallels with Persian architecture.<sup>35</sup> The thick, torus-like column bases were assigned to the same architectural tradition. However, their similarity with those of the Broken Lion Tomb in Phrygia, in the Köhnuş valley, has been known since R. Leonhard's study.<sup>36</sup> Actual stone bases of similar shape were found in Gordion (unpublished, from a Middle Phrygian context, thus again probably from Persian times) and more recently in Kerkenes Dağ.<sup>37</sup> So, we cannot rule out a Phrygian influence in this element as well.

The abovementioned Gerdek Boğazı tomb in Karakoyunlu displays a unique feature: the lantern (or corbelled or diagonal) roofing<sup>38</sup> of one of its side chambers (Fig. 8).<sup>39</sup> This type of vaulting is characteristic of stone-built tomb chambers and has wrongly been called the 'Galatian vault' for some time.<sup>40</sup> As it is popular in Thrace, it was assumed that the Galatians picked it up on their way from the Balkans to Asia Minor.<sup>41</sup> Ethnic labelling of this type of sepulchral construction is inappropriate as shown in a recent study.<sup>42</sup> There are a number of chambers roofed in this way in Thrace, most of them dated to the 4th century, or late 4th-early 3rd century BC.<sup>43</sup> Those from Kurt-Kale at Mezek (Fig. 9),<sup>44</sup> from Plovdiv (ancient Philippopolis),<sup>45</sup> and

<sup>32</sup> The geometrical symbolism of the grave-goods in the Gordion wooden tombs points to the goddess (Simpson 1998; Vassileva 2001), but is still very cautiously considered (Roller 1999, 74, 223); more positively evaluated by Buluç 1988, 19-21.

<sup>33</sup> Fol 1998, 25-26.

<sup>34</sup> Kitov 2007.

<sup>35</sup> von Gall 1966, 119-20.

<sup>36</sup> Leonhard 1915, 275.

<sup>37</sup> Summers *et al.* 2004, 30-31, figs. 23-25.

<sup>38</sup> Fedak 1990, 170-71.

<sup>39</sup> von Gall 1966, 76-77, Abb. 9.

<sup>40</sup> Mellink 1967, 173: 'Galatian corbelled roof'. The term still appears in some recent works: Ginouvès and Guimier-Sorbets 1994; Hellmann 2002.

<sup>41</sup> Young 1956, 252; Fedak 1990, 171.

<sup>42</sup> Theodossiev 2007.

<sup>43</sup> All examples discussed and illustrated in Theodossiev 2007.

<sup>44</sup> Filov 1937, 79-83.

<sup>45</sup> Rousseva 2000, 113-18.

<sup>26</sup> As noted by von Gall (1966, 68-73) and Berndt-Ersöy (2006, 154).

<sup>27</sup> Kitov 2007.

<sup>28</sup> Kitov 2005, 36, fig. 37.

<sup>29</sup> Vassileva 1994.

<sup>30</sup> Such as the Pişmiş Kale tomb (Haspels 1971, 128, fig. 541.6-10).

<sup>31</sup> Haspels 1971, 118-19, figs. 131-132; 88-89, fig. 187.

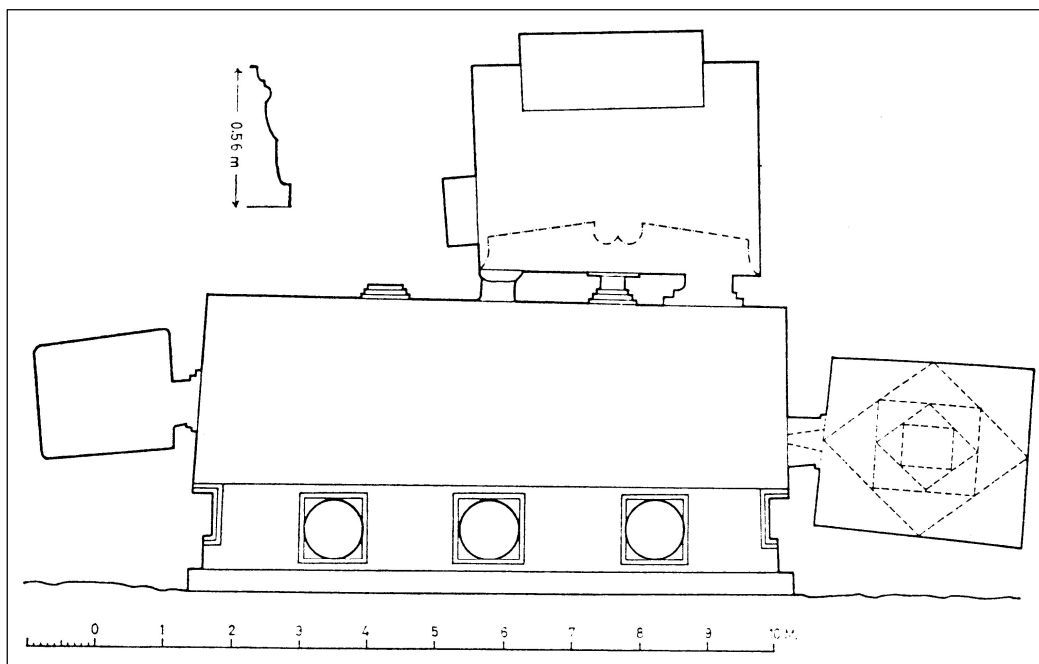


Fig. 8: Plan of Gredek Boğazı tomb (after von Gall 1966, Abb. 9)

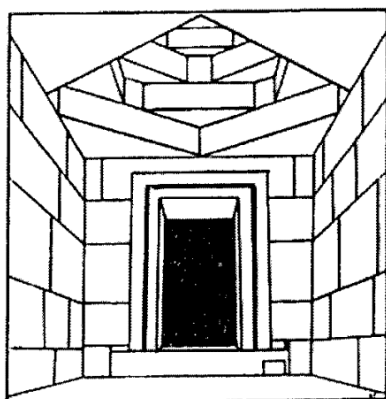


Fig. 9: Drawing of the interior of the Kurt-Kale antechamber, Mezék (after Filov 1937, Abb. 95)

Strelcha<sup>46</sup> rank among the most famous examples. They also occur in Anatolia – in Mysia, Bithynia, and Phrygia.<sup>47</sup> The earliest example seems to be the chamber of the Belevi tumulus where the pottery found ranged between the 6th and 4th centuries BC.<sup>48</sup> It is situated on a hill and part of the *crepis* is embedded in the rock; the place for the stone blocks of the chambers is also cut out of the rock. The excavator suggests that the larger room, that with the lantern roof, was used for ceremonies, while the next, smaller one was the actual burial chamber.

Somewhat different offshoots of this architectural detail can also be observed in the monolithic chamber (i.e.

similar to a rock-cut room) in the Ostrousha tumulus, south central Bulgaria (dated to the mid-4th century BC) (Figs. 10-11),<sup>49</sup> as well as in the 2nd-century AD Mylasa tomb near Ephesus.<sup>50</sup> The ceiling of the Ostrousha tomb combines coffers with a central ‘lantern’, but less high than the original lantern vaults.<sup>51</sup> So the ceiling would appear almost flat. The excavator of the Ostrousha tomb suggests that it was initially used as a temple and then as a tomb-mausoleum.<sup>52</sup> The paintings in the coffers are defined as Late Classical in style.<sup>53</sup> Coffers hewn on a flat ceiling are also known from Paphlagonian rock-cut tombs (at Araç, of Hellenistic date).<sup>54</sup>

A rock-cut tomb of Hellenistic date at Zahren Deresi, south of Kütahya, displays an unfinished façade in the Phrygian tradition: gable roof, geometrical design around the entrance, which occupies the place of the central niche on the façades. Two ‘windows’/‘shutters’ are carved on the gable. Coffers with traces of blue and red paint are cut out on the sloping ceiling.<sup>55</sup>

The Gerdek Boğazı rock-cut lantern roof displays again a connection between rock-cut and stone-built tombs. It is worth noting that the lantern roof was used mainly for side or antechambers of the stone-built tombs in Thrace, as is the case with the Paphlagonian monument under consideration, while more often than not the Anatolian examples offer diagonal roofing of the main burial

<sup>46</sup> Kitov 1977; Rousseva 2000, 47, 116.

<sup>47</sup> Tumulus O at Gordion (Young 1956); one at Daskyleion; an exhaustive list of the Anatolian monuments in Theodossiev 2007. Against the Galatian attribution of Tumulus O at Gordion: Winter 1988, 64.

<sup>48</sup> Kasper 1975, 227-28, 230; 1976-77, 142, 154, Abb. 8.

<sup>49</sup> Kitov and Krasteva 1994-95.

<sup>50</sup> Fedak 1990, 171, fig. 254.

<sup>51</sup> Kitov and Krasteva 1994-95, 17-18.

<sup>52</sup> Kitov and Krasteva 1994-95, 23, 25. Theodossiev (2007, 606) calls it a *heroon*. Kasper also terms the Belevi tomb a *heroon* (Kasper 1975, 230).

<sup>53</sup> Valeva 2005, 157-63.

<sup>54</sup> von Gall 1966, 104, Abb. 24.

<sup>55</sup> Haspels 1971, 161, pls. 131-134, figs. 550 and 551.1-2.

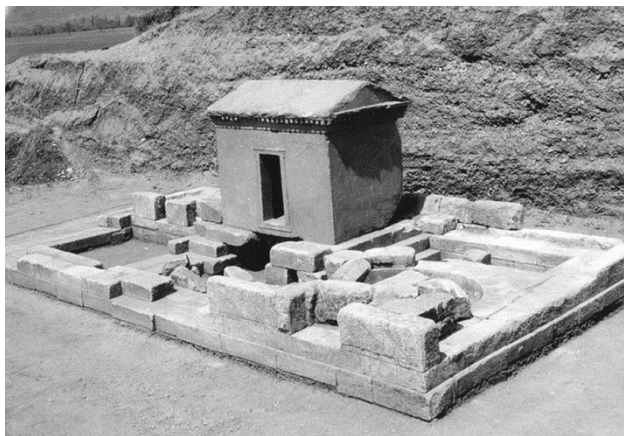


Fig. 10: General view of the Ostrousha cult complex (courtesy TEMP)



Fig. 11: The coffer ceiling of the Ostrousha tomb (courtesy TEMP)

chamber.<sup>56</sup> The actual burial chamber at Belevi had no entrance and the small opening was blocked, so the dead must have been placed here during construction of the chamber, or have been lowered down before the roof was built.<sup>57</sup> The same situation is observed in Phrygian wooden chambers at Gordion.<sup>58</sup> Thus, it is possible to assume that lantern-roofed rooms were meant for special ceremonies, as proposed for the Belevi tomb (see above).

One cannot be definite about the origin of this architectural element. The distribution of the stone-built chambers suggests a common Thraco-Anatolian phenomenon, especially popular in the 4th century BC. Their spread predates the Galatian invasion. The zone of interaction was probably around the Propontis.

Another curious element is presented by the wheel carved in relief on the ceiling of the Direklikaya tomb in Salarköy (Figs. 12-13).<sup>59</sup> Should it be interpreted as a



Fig. 12: The rock-carved wheel on the ceiling of the Direklikaya tomb in Salarköy (after von Gall 1966, 57-61, Taf. 5.3 and Abb. 4)

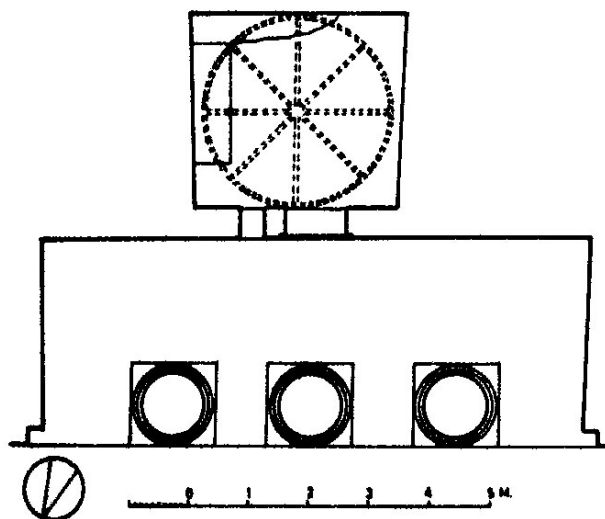


Fig. 13: Plan of the Direklikaya tomb (after von Gall 1966, 57-61, Taf. 5.3 and Abb. 4)

solar symbol? Bearing in mind the interpretations offered of the symbolism of Thracian tombs, this is a possibility. Again, a few parallels can be found in Thracian stone-built chambers: 15 'rays' (trapezoidal thicker stone slabs) 'radiate' from the key-stone of the domed ceiling of the main round chamber of the Shoushmanets tomb, near the city of Kazanluk (Fig. 14).<sup>60</sup> This tomb is the only example showing a central column both at the entrance and in the main room.<sup>61</sup> The central part of the floor of the main round chamber of the tomb in the 'Big Arsenalka' tumulus is occupied by another circular construction, resembling a solar disc with a 'cup-mark' in the middle (Fig. 15); a similar arrangement of the floor paving is to be found in the burial chamber of the 'Griffins Tomb'.<sup>62</sup> The Thracian examples are placed in domed, circular chambers, while the wheel in the Paphlagonian tomb is carved on a square, flat roof. The latter resembles more a

<sup>56</sup> The exception among the Thracian tombs is that in Philippopolis, while two Anatolian examples (later, 2nd and 1st centuries BC) show lantern roof of both antechamber and main room: those at Gordion and Karalar (see Theodossiev 2007, fig. 7.22-24).

<sup>57</sup> Kaspar 1975, 229.

<sup>58</sup> Young 1981, 263-64.

<sup>59</sup> von Gall 1966, 57-61, Abb. 3-5, Taf. 5.3.

<sup>60</sup> Kitov and Dimitrova 1998-99, 49.

<sup>61</sup> Kitov and Dimitrova 1998-99, figs. 13-14, plan on fig. 15.

<sup>62</sup> Kitov and Dimitrova 1998-99, 38, 47.

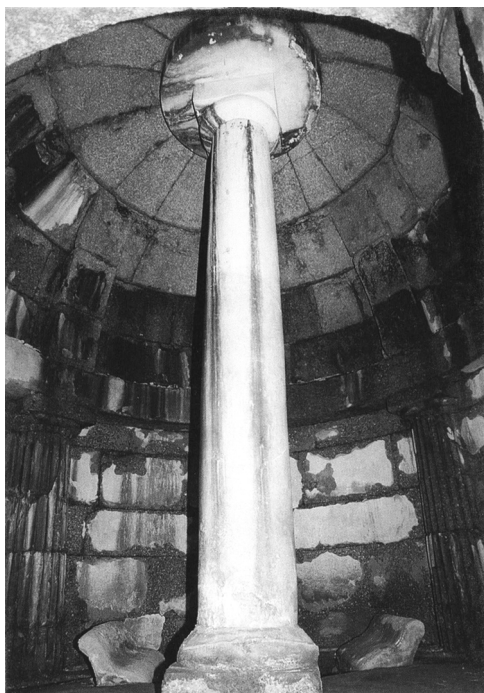


Fig. 14: The main chamber of the Shoushmanets tomb, near Kazanluk (photograph: G. Dimov, VIFOR, courtesy TEMP)



Fig. 15: The floor of the main round chamber of the 'Big Arsenalka' tomb near Kazanluk (courtesy TEMP)

chariot-wheel than a 'sun'. Von Gall has already noted that this wheel is more appropriate for a round chamber, but his seeking prototypes in the round house architecture in Old Smyrna seems to me less persuasive.<sup>63</sup>

The animal reliefs on the façades of Paphlagonian tombs have long been interpreted in terms of Greek art. Especially strong views on the Greek character of the lions were expressed by E. Akurgal,<sup>64</sup> followed more recently by C. Marek.<sup>65</sup> Parallels for the lions and

griffins on the Paphlagonian tomb façades have been sought in Assyrian and Persian art. Leonhard assigned them to the 'Graeco-Persian' art of the 5th-4th centuries BC.<sup>66</sup>

The somewhat clumsy imitations of Greek temple architecture in Paphlagonian rock-cut tombs are well known. Ionic and Aeolic capitals cut from the rock in Phrygia are also considered as an imitation of Greek order (the interior of the Yapildak tomb;<sup>67</sup> cf. the abovementioned columns in the Shoushmanets tomb). The sphinxes on the Arslankaya gable were compared with representations on Archaic Greek stelae.<sup>68</sup> Similar peculiar use of these elements can be observed in Thracian stone-built tombs. Attached columns, pilasters and antis, designed for rectangular free-standing buildings, were applied in Thracian round chambers. An instructive example is the one in the Chetinyova Mogila tumulus at Starosel, south central Bulgaria, dated to the 4th century BC. The main circular chamber is embellished with ten attached semi-columns, topped by a frieze of metopes and triglyphs, still bearing colour decoration (Fig. 16).<sup>69</sup> In addition to the free-standing columns in the Shoushmanets tomb, the round chamber displays two rows of architectural elements: the first consists of seven attached columns and the second of seven pilaster-like features.<sup>70</sup>



Fig. 16: Detail from the round chamber of the Starosel complex (photograph: the author, with the permission of TEMP)

A stone slab with a lion looking backwards in painted relief was found in the Zhaba Mogila tumulus (the one with the lantern vault) (Fig. 17).<sup>71</sup> It has been suggested that two antithetic lions crowned the entrance of, or stood on both sides of, a niche on the second construction

<sup>66</sup> Leonhard 1915, 257; again recently Dönmez 2007, 108. The term 'Graeco-Persian' has lately been much criticised. See most recently Miller 2006.

<sup>67</sup> Haspels 1971, fig. 119; Berndt-Ersöy 2006, 25, n. 85.

<sup>68</sup> Berndt-Ersöy 2006, 115.

<sup>69</sup> Kitov 2007, 309.

<sup>70</sup> Kitov and Dimitrova 1998-99, 47-49, fig. 14.

<sup>71</sup> Kitov 2007, 308-09.

<sup>63</sup> von Gall 1966, 64.

<sup>64</sup> Akurgal 1955, 64-65.

<sup>65</sup> Marek 2003.

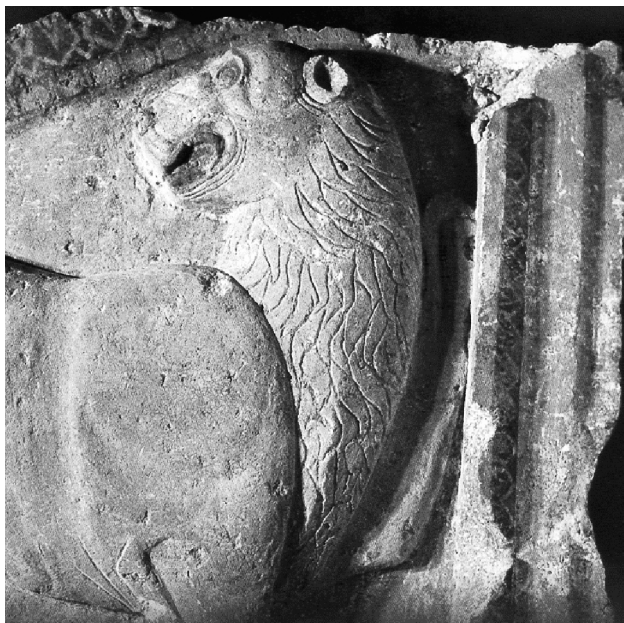


Fig. 17: The lion relief from the Zhaba Mogila Tumulus near Strelcha (courtesy TEMP)

found in the tumulus. A similar arrangement (of sphinxes) is to be found on some of the Lycian tombs and recently reconstructed for a free-standing tomb at Daskyleion.<sup>72</sup> Those monuments are considered examples of ‘Graeco-Persian’ art. Some Achaemenid affinities have been recognised in both Thracian sepulchral architecture and wall paintings.<sup>73</sup> Thus, both the Paphlagonian tombs and the Thracian buildings might have been similar local reflections of Greek, or more particularly ‘Graeco-Persian’ art and architecture.

To conclude, Paphlagonian rock-cut tombs display a blend of multifaceted influences and traditions. In some aspects they can be considered as survivals of Phrygian rock-cut architecture. Phrygian features are related to the worship of the Phrygian Mother Goddess, Cybele. I would suggest that Paphlagonian rock-cut tombs and Phrygian monuments reflect a similar rituality. On the other hand, Greek and Persian affinities are obvious in Phrygia, Paphlagonia and Thrace. A ‘Graeco-Persian’ stylistic interpretation, especially for the 5th-/4th-century BC and later monuments, seems plausible. The parallels offered by Thracian stone-built tombs support the already observed interrelations between rock-cut cult monuments and sepulchral architecture. They suggest long-term Balkan-Anatolian cultural interactions that culminated in the 4th century BC in similar features.

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### Abbreviations

TEMP Thracological Expedition for Exploration of Tumuli.

<sup>72</sup> Karagöz 2007, 202-03, Abb. 16.

<sup>73</sup> Most recently Vassileva 2010.

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