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Summary of the Doctoral thesis

MORTUARY PRACTICES IN IRON AGE

NORTH MACEDONIA

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I INTRODUCTION

The topic of this thesis is very interesting and special mostly due to its problematic chronological framework, i.e. the chronological framework of the Iron Age in Republic of North Macedonia dates from the end of XI BC, i.e. X until VI BC and as I have mentioned in the next chapters, it is still not entirely fixed. Nevertheless, the Iron Age is marked as a period in which all of the post effects of the previous events from the end of the Bronze Age (end of XII BC) and the transitional period (XI BC) are still present. The Early Iron Age marks a period of social and economic instability, in which, despite the creation of the conditions for the formation of a pronounced, strongly expressive Iron Age culture from an economic, social and cultural aspect in North Macedonia. This image is best confirmed through the numerous and well-excavated sites of the next Middle Iron Age phase. Before I explain the objectives of this thesis, I must emphasize the importance of the following facts, i.e. the reasons of the “open” Iron Age chronological framework are the lack of approved, financed and carried out archaeological excavations on the territory on North Macedonia, mostly due to the political, economical and social problems in the past centuries. Henceforth, the first excavations have been carried out mainly by foreigners in the 20th century, and no additional financial support have been given for these needs, mostly because North Macedonia is not a part of the European Union therefore in a young country, in a transitional political and economical phase, it is very hard to complete an archaeological project or to continue with its implementation after its finished. Therefore, in the next chapters you will see that I did my best to obtain all of the recorded data for the Iron Age, including my projects in the recent years, to present a suitable and more sophisticated image, chronological frame and statistical and anthropological data, which no archaeologist in North Macedonia or in the neighboring regions have published officially before.

The first set objective in the preparation of the study is to acquire and obtain a picture as clear as possible of the circumstances, conditions and mechanisms concerning the Iron Age formation in North Macedonia.

Therefore, all of the acquired present recorded data about the end of the Bronze Age and the cultural and historical developments in the transitional period will be completely summarized in one chapter.

Although, these phenomena represent the communities relations among nowadays North Macedonian territory with one of the most significant prehistoric civilizations in the Balkans - The Mycenaean. Their influence will be of a great importance in the further Early Iron Age development and establishment on this territory. All of the cultural manifestations from that period, represented mainly through the Povardarska or Ulanci cultural group, will be fully portrayed, assuming them as prerequisites for the beginning of the new Iron Age phase in North Macedonia.

The second objective is to present and analyze the communities and necropolises from the Early Iron Age in North Macedonia, in accordance with their crucial role for a clearer and more precise determination of the Iron Age image formation within its features and character in North Macedonia. Thus, a special reference to all of the sites, i.e. Early Iron Age horizons, such as settlements and necropolises, will be bestowed in one chapter. Moreover, the conditions for their establishment, character and significance of the material culture associated with them will be presented.

The next objective is the detection of the social and economic status, as well as the Early Iron Age communities' beliefs primarily in the context of the burials.

In addition to their territorial and ethnical distinction, the data obtained from the necropolises and the burials type, will respond to the many questions related to the settlements cultural expression. Henceforth, the most important elements of its material and spiritual culture have been absorbed by every settlements burial rituals and customs.

Although, all these elements construct the image of the Iron Age communities on the North Macedonian territory, our central point is mainly focused on the Early and Middle Iron Age phases, as the least known recorded in the cultural development of the prehistoric communities in North Macedonia.

On the other hand, the need for its establishment in the scientific means is necessary and essential for further monitoring of the cultural and historical development of these communities, which in the next phase will be known as already formed historically witnessed nations.

During the Iron Age in North Macedonia, the metal findings seem to occupy a more prominent place in serious than the ceramic vessels. In that case what place is given to the vessels as grave goods in the graves? These pictures and charts in the presentation, under every explained necropolises grave goods gives a closer look to the assemblies in the other burial grounds, where shows actually a great diversity in the way of represent the burials in that peripheral area of the Ancient Macedonian territory.

II KEYWORDS

There are several hot spots that deserved to be mentioned in the content of this thesis, i.e. the keywords mainly include the geographical position, the prehistoric development, the chronological frame work, the excavated Iron Age necropolises and communities, altogether with the tribes and the first centers from the Late Archaic Period, where mortuary practices in all of the periods (necropolises, grave goods and burial rituals and customs) speaks mostly for the cultural, social and economical situation of living in that time.

Geographically, North Macedonia occupies the central part of the Balkan Peninsula, the enclosed area surrounded in the north with the mountains Shar Mountain, Skopska Crna Gora, Kozjak and Osogovo, while in the south with the river Bistrica. It lies between latitude 40° and 43° N, and mostly between longitudes 20° and 23° E. North Macedonia has some 748km of boundaries, shared with Serbia (62km) to the north, Kosovo (159km) to the northwest, Bulgaria (148km) to the east, Greece (228km) to the south, and Albania (151km) to the west. Within these borders, North Macedonia occupies an area of 25.713 km². The importance of the Roman Via Egnatia penetrates in the very distant past. The interconnection between Pelagonia and Polog, hence with Kosovo and the Ibar valley are recently also more pronounced.

In the determination of the characteristics for the North Macedonian prehistoric development, two important points are crucial: the position of the important natural communications in the old Balkans, and on the other hand, the relative isolation of the certain areas, conditioned by the very relief of the terrain, which led to certain specific forms of the cultural development, although they can basically fit into the wider adjacent areas.

The chronological framework of the Iron Age in Republic of North Macedonia dates from the end of XI BC, i.e. X until VI BC. Marked as a period in which all of the consequences and post effects of the previous events from the end of the Bronze Age (end of XII BC) and the transitional period (XI BC) are still present.

One of the most outstanding attempts to define the Macedonian and Serbian Iron Age chronology was made by prof. Milutin Garashanin; although, an attempt for the Iron Age chronology in North Macedonia among the other archeologists was made by Dragi Mitrevski, where three development phases are clearly distinguished.

- **Early Iron Age**, covering the period from the end of XI BC, i.e., X BC (900s BC) until the beginning of VIII BC (i.e., till 750s BC)
- **Middle Iron Age** refers to the events of the middle of VIII BC (750s BC) and VII BC
- **Developed Iron Age** covering the period of VI BC

Unfortunately, this is all of the recorded Iron Age chronological data, henceforth I have proceeded and observed the data from the Iron Age excavations of the recent years, and made a chronological table which shows the differences and present an analogy with the neighboring regions in that time.

The territorial frameworks in this study paper cover the nowadays boundaries of North Macedonia, hence in the manner of the fact that many of the cultural manifestations fall beyond the framework, the phenomena of the neighboring territories will be inevitably included in their analysis in certain regions (Republic of Serbia, Republic of Greece and the Republic of Albania).

In this part of the paper we can formulate the framework with at least six regions through which the further presentations, analyzes and conclusions will be carried out. The six regions are: The Bregalnica Valley (Northeast Macedonia), Skopje – Kumanovo region, Povardarie, Pelagonia, Ohrid – Prespa region and Northwest Macedonia.

Nevertheless, the chronological framework of the Bronze Age on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia should be sought in the middle of the third millennium BC. Therefore the end of the Bronze Age is clearly defined within a series of major ethno-cultural changes that have occurred in the XII and the beginning of XI BC.

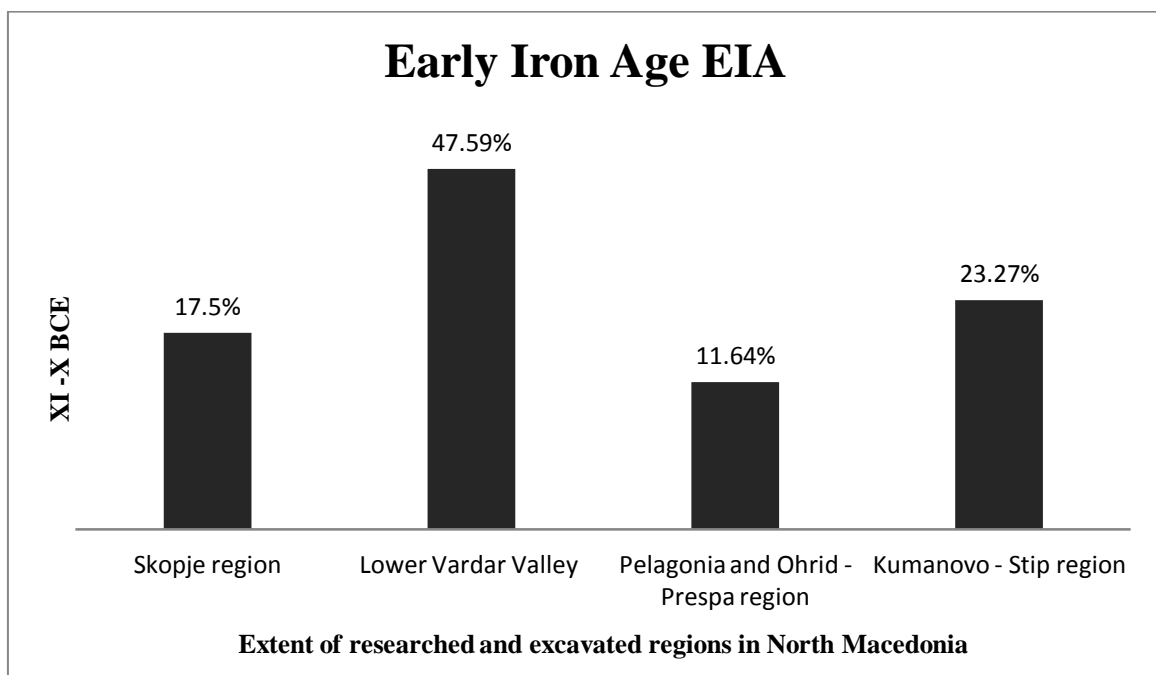
The Iron Age in North Macedonia is best explored through the necropolises, where so far over 1000 graves have been excavated of this period. The Iron Age necropolises represent only a new life phase in the inhumed – skeletal burials from the previous period. This period in North Macedonia also presents the new Hallstatt cultural elements with a background originating from the Northwestern Balkans. The next phase of the Middle Iron Age (VIII – VI BC), in which the Iron Age relations are entirely built and stabilized, is characterized by the peaceful development of the domestic cultural values.

All of this leads to the conclusion that the Early Iron Age is marked by the beginning of the cultural process of differentiation of the communities in North Macedonia.

The known and excavated necropolises from the Iron Age are: Orlovi Čuki – Stip, Vinica, and Zletovica – along the valley of the river Bregalnica; Vardarski Rid, Ograda – Oreshani, Varvara – Skopje, Mali Dol, Negotino – along the valley of the river Vardar. Bel Kamen – Zivojno, Visoi – Beranci, Saraj – Brod, Karanka – Bitola, Orle – Prilep in Pelagonia; Vojnik (soldier) and Strnovac in the Kumanovo region, as well as the newly recent excavated necropolises in Mariovo, Barata – Chanishte and Stragata – Krshevica.

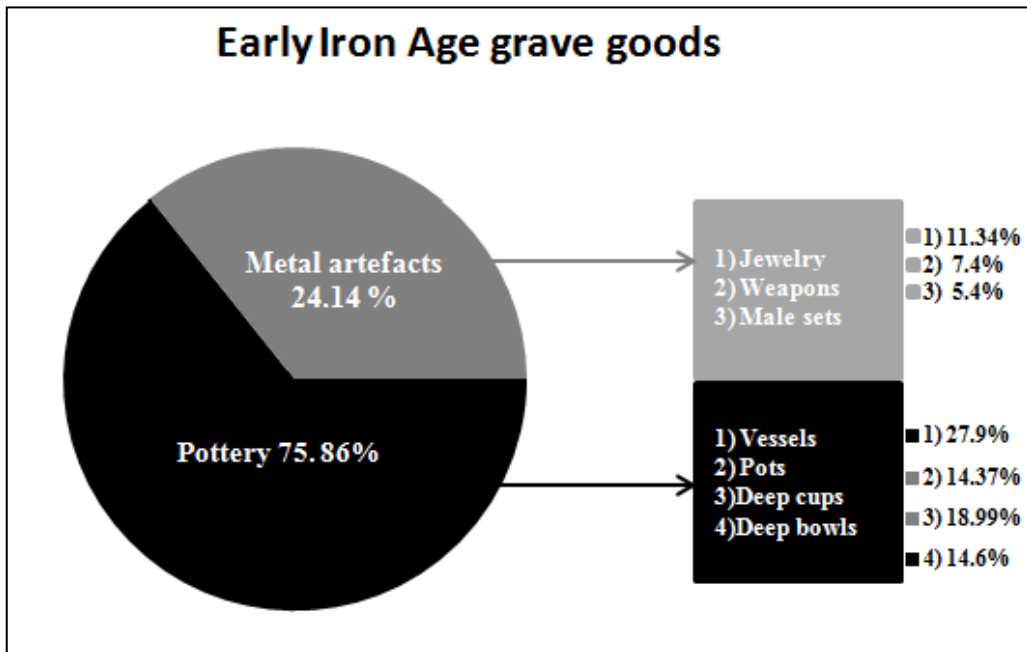
The Iron Age grave goods are divided in two groups: Early Iron Age grave goods and Middle Iron Age grave goods. The Early Iron Age jewelry is still made of Bronze, while the miniature double axes and long needles are the most impressive known forms from the previous - transitional period. Similar to the labryses and the long needles, their development in North Macedonia began in the transitional period.

There were several types of long needles in the findings of Ulanci, including a separate group of a textile needles with a slightly thickened neck.

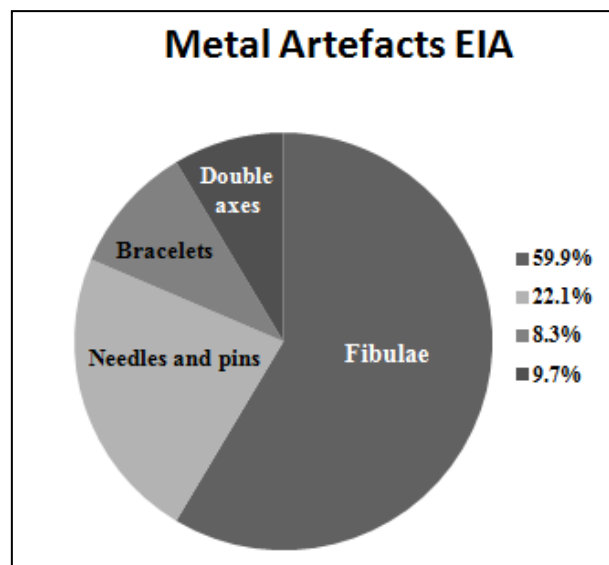


Graph I: Statistical data of the Early Iron Age extent researched regions in North Macedonia

For the first time in the material culture of the Early Iron Age in North Macedonia, among the jewelry that emerges as a novelty, several forms are well – known, of which the more prominent are: the arched fibulae from the so-called Labuan type, the high spiral bracelets, the bracelets with an open ends, the rings with spiral/coil heads, spiral-colored (glasses) pendants, glass pendants with spiral cylindrical coupling, round glass fibulae, torquays, faleris, etc.

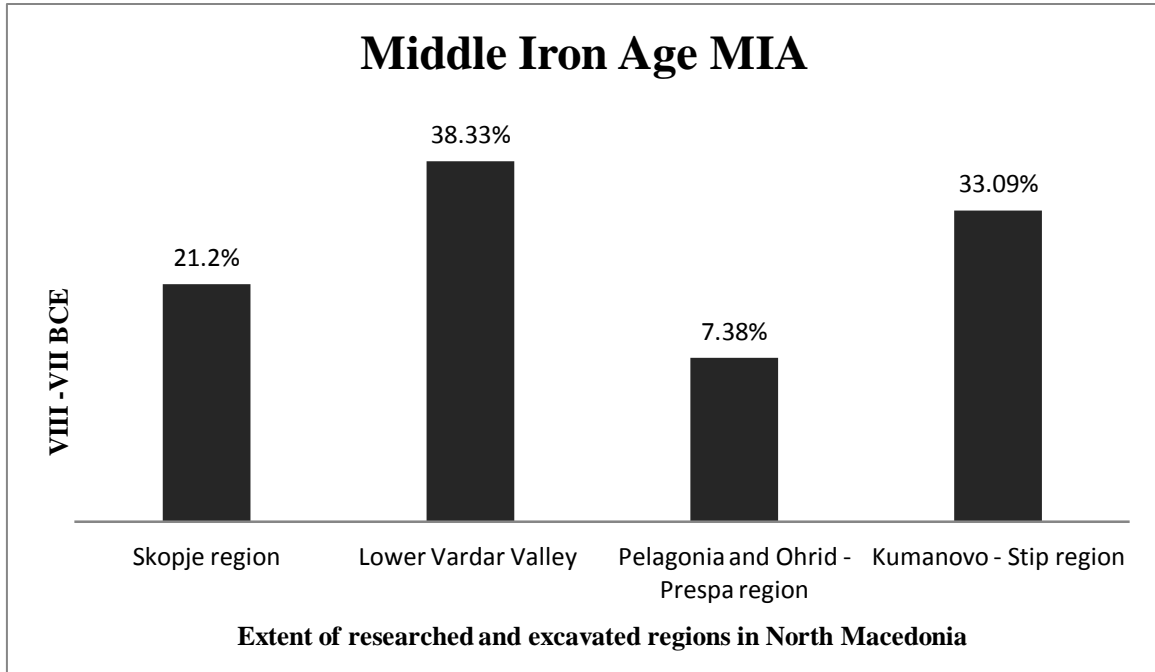


Graph II: Statistical data of the researched extent of EIA grave goods and metal artifacts



Graph II/1: Statistical data of the researched extent of EIA grave goods and metal artifacts

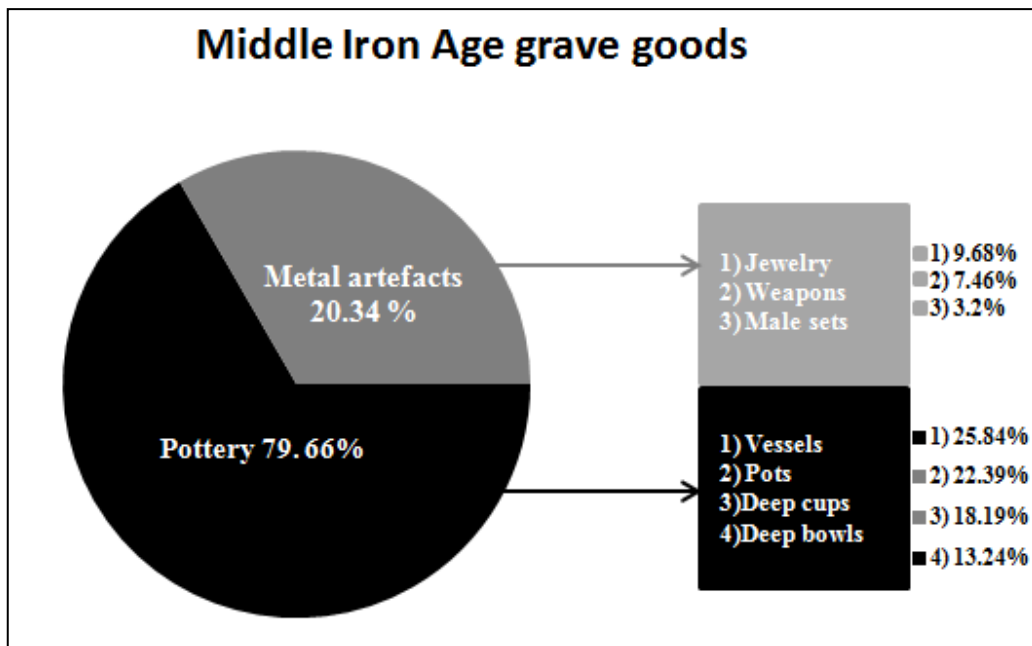
Among the Middle Iron Age metal artifacts, the repertoire of jewelry in North Macedonia includes objects that have been encountered throughout the Iron Age cultures in Europe and Asia Minor, such as: fibulae, needles, pins, various pendants, cult bronzes, bracelets, necklaces, buttons etc.



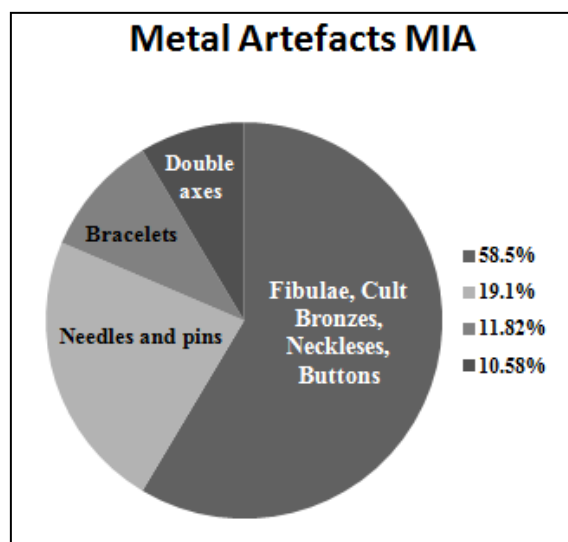
Graph III: Statistical data of the researched extent regions in North Macedonia

Among the forms of jewelry, most often made in bronze, there are three main categories: a) Decorated; b) Ordinary and c) Cult jewelry.

Full Iron Age Jewelry		
Decorated	Ordinary	Cult jewelry



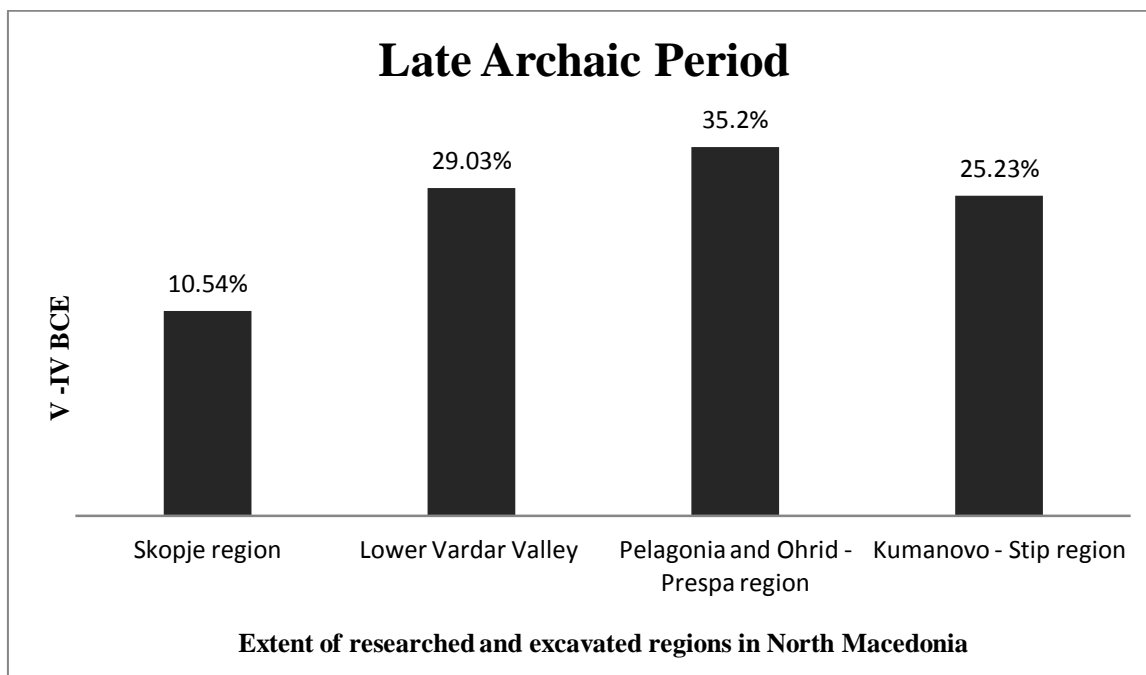
Graph IV: Statistical data of the researched extent of MIA grave goods and artifacts



Graph IV/1: Statistical data of the researched extent of MIA grave goods and metal artifacts

The curiosity of the Late Archaic period is the emergence of the wealthy, so called princely burials. The skeletal burial or inhuming burial type remains as a fundamental and widely practiced burial ritual. The monumental mounds build graves (masonry tombs) in North Macedonia are the famous mound build grave (masonry tomb) from Tetovo, from the last decades of VI BC or the monumental king's grave (ruler's tomb) from Brazda, near Skopje from V – IV BC. It is not uncommon or peculiar to find burials from this period, within a car, part of a horse harness or even a whole horse harness.

The grave goods of the princely burials are distinguished by their luxurious character, which is certainly the result of the increased demands and opportunities of the new tribal aristocracy class.



Graph V: Statistical data of the researched extent regions in North Macedonia

The jewelry in the North Macedonian Late Archaic graves includes one significant group of findings whose origins are in Asia Minor, Anatolia or in general in the eastern Mediterranean. Primarily, is alluded to: double needles for hair, the so-called Asia Minor type (Naïve fibulae), tapered earbuds (earrings) and conical beads of paste with embedded and applied colored eyelets. The weapons from this period include: certain types of bronze helmets mostly as grave goods in the military graves in our necropolises, as well as iron spears, knives and swords. There is a tendency for the spears to extend and thin the leaf, hence, not yet as in the known so-called “sarisi” from the arming of Philip's II army, as well as in those after his time.

In the written historical documents, the names of several tribe from the territory of North Macedonia were recorded. In the period between XIII – V BC the literary recorded history have had marked the names of several tribes, such as: Agrianes, Laeaeans, Derrones, Doberes, Mygdones, Siropaiones, Paeonians, Paeoplae, Bottiaeans, Eordaei, Emathians, Almopians, Pieres, Macedonians, Orestians, Elimiotai, Parauaei, Perrhaebi, Deuriopias, Pelagonians, Lynkestis, Enhelians, Bryges and others.

III SYNTHESIS OF THE IRON AGE IN NORTH MACEDONIA

Placed among the sub-Carpathian and Eastern Mediterranean region, Macedonia exhibits with a distinctive cultural development during the Bronze Age. The basic division of Early, Middle and Late Bronze Age – temporal development is not completely simultaneous as in other parts of the Balkan Peninsula. The reasons of this are due to the specificity of the exposure of the strong north and south flooding impacts, where certain phases of the Bronze Age are lasting differently i.e. longer or shorter in Macedonia.

In the transitional and tumultuous period of the historical turmoil and social changes, a mixture of different cultural elements have come into play, henceforth all of the outside elements had been accepted and adopted in accordance with the needs of the local population. In essence, these elements mark the actual last involved segment in the genesis of the Iron Age. Thus, the Early Iron Age in North Macedonia is marked as an important period of the final symbiosis and physiognomy regarding the Iron Age cultural development.

In the material culture of the transitional period, a great influence by the new cultural elements penetrating from the north i.e. from the northwestern Balkans was felt. During the Early Iron Age some of these elements will soon be abandoned, while the others will be accepted and will adapt to the taste of the local population hence will become favorites throughout the Iron Age. These elements are particularly recognizable in the ways of ceramics decoration, such as the cannelures or the engravings, or the imported findings of items that will be absorbed and tangled in the material culture of these communities, while developing numerous of variants (certain types of fibulae – the circular glass shaped fibulae). With the chronological frameworks which certainly have not been the same for the territory of North Macedonia, the thesis is focused on the individual groups whose names are derived from the most characteristic sites i.e. necropolises from North Macedonia, where a special overview of the burial types, ritual and customs for each group has been given separately: the Povardarska or Ulanci group, Ohrid – Prespa group, Skopje – Kumanovo region. The burial types and customs that are associating the necropolises of these cultural groups from the transitional period of the Bronze Age to the Iron Age with the cremated deceased and the graves with skeletal, inhumed deceased.

Several burials elements considered as a result from the Aegean Bronze Age benefits are playing a significant role in the development of the Ulanci group. Those are:

- Inhumation as a burial ritual where the body of the deceased was laid in a crouched position, in the burial structures of stone cysts.
- Appearance of a distinctive ceramics painted with mat decoration керамика (made by the template/after the pattern of Mycenaean ceramics) and domestic replications of Mycenaean forms of vessels.

For the first time in the Iron Age period, individual forms of fibulae, rings, pendants, bracelets, etc. appear, while the swords retain the same shape, except that in this period they are made of iron, and in the previous period were cast in bronze. The pottery in this period suffers at least changes, ie certain forms, decorations and techniques which will be retained in the Iron Age.

The general overview of the anthropological analysis of the Iron Age in Republic of North Macedonia is set to minimum firstly due to the lack of the needed data, and secondly because the already required data are not qualified or completed to be used as an example for analogies with the neighboring regions, i.e. almost all of the analysis of the skeletal series have lack of some important piece that put the North Macedonian Iron Age anthropological puzzle outside of the global picture.

The anthropological data of the 1st millennium in North Macedonia is defined through the 19 skeletal series, i.e. around 320 adult skeletons or 115 craniums. The heterogeneity of the population during the Iron Age in Ancient and North Macedonia is determined on a very high level. The index of the skeletal series is the ratio of the maximum width of the skull, i.e. from dolichocephalic to brachycephalic characteristics. The dolichocephaly is not characteristic for the necropolises of Vasharovine, Kriva Reka and Trebenishte. From the Iron Age anthropological data, only two prehistoric skeletal series are recorded. The preserved skeletal material from the site Tri Cheljusti – Trebeniste (VII – V BC) which belongs to the Illyrian cultural-ethnic circle, as well as the skeletal material from Suva Reka – Gevgelija (VI BC) which is linked to the Paeonians.

In accordance with the anthropological data of the three skulls, the group is characterized with a mesaticephalic and brachycephalic index. Thirty skulls from four necropolises, all of them from the Paeonian territory (Gevgelija – Valandovo and Skopje region) belong to the Paeonian cultural circle. Most of the skeletal material is dating from the second half of VII and VI BC.

The overall development of the Middle Iron Age in stable conditions, inevitably led to the needs for a qualitative changes in the character and structure of the protohistoric settlements in North Macedonia (VI BC).

Such determined culture is obtained by the upgrading and expansion of Late Archaic cultural elements, through the lower-Macedonian settlements, on the traditional, Paionian – Pelagonian cultural foundations. Historically, this period is marked as one with the greatest power and independence of the local settlements and tribal kings (tribal chiefs). In this regard the participation of the Northern and Central Balkan elements, as well as the influences from the Greek, proto-geometric, geometric and especially archaic culture must not be forgotten.

IV RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

When undertaking the study of burial practices in Ancient Macedonia, as well as in accordance with the nowadays findings of the territory of North Macedonia, there are some methodological and chronological problems. Due to the lack of the anthropological data, which have not been made since the first recorded research and excavation (footnote: only of some skeletons from the EBA from the necropolis Vardarski Rid), but the data is unpublished and hard reachable, mainly because of the political crises and situations in this part of the Balkans, is not possible firmly to determinate, and define fixed information about the age of the Iron Age skeletons which have been found in the graves of the Iron Age necropolises in North Macedonia. Almost all of the anthropological research had been made in other countries from the excavations in the recent years, for an example United Kingdom for certain, very specific necropolises mainly from the V BC and Archaic period, but the data is still not reachable and not allowed to be easily used. Therefore, we are going to provide the results from the other research and excavations, which have been made in the recent years with the complete anthropological and chronological data, as well as the use of some photos, from the necropolises of the Ancient Macedonian territory that now belong to the neighboring countries like Republic of Greece, Republic of Albania, Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Serbia and the other Balkans countries.

To determine the organization of the graves in the necropolises, beside the other needed material, a greater number of excavated graves is necessary, which have hitherto been enabled only from the necropolis from Vodovrati, Ulanci, and somewhat from the necropolis Klucka, Hipodrome. Nevertheless, the graves in other necropolises, observed through the highlights of the researched data in the previously mentioned necropolises, are still providing useful data in the direction of the formation of the general perception on this issue. The necropolises with burnt deceased, the graves – urns are evident by their organization i.e. covered by a mutual lid of river stones. In any case, these situations of clustered graves represent an expression for the awareness of the deceased's family affiliation, and basically reminiscent to the graves organization in the later tumultuous (tumuli) burials in North Macedonia.

The excavations have shown that the settlements on the necropolises with cremation as well as those that had belonged to the necropolises with inhumed deceased have noticeable differences in-between; hence the already existing findings from the archaeological sites are pointing to a good organization of the life in the transitional period, with all the necessary conditions for a permanent existence. The grave goods are marked as one of the most important archeological findings, due to the determination of the cultural – historical values and the chronological framework of the periods, in our case of the transitional period, are the most precise through them. Regardless of the type they belong to, the grave goods are considered through the three basic categories: ceramics, weapons, and jewelry. The ceramics is either of domestic or imported/foreign origin, while the metal tools, weapons and jewelry are made out of bronze.

The Early Iron Age features which were found on the ceramics, in the Middle Iron Age will be strongly expressed. The cannelured ceramics from the transitional period will receive a significant place in the Iron Age ceramography hence certain specific, recognizable varieties will be developed. The engraving is also manifested as a northern technique therefore will become one of the most favorite Iron Age ceramics decorations.

What is particularly interesting and takes an important place in the Iron Age ceramic production is certainly the appearance of the local matt painted ceramics, made on a potter's wheel. Thus in the Iron Age cultural genesis of North Macedonia, the basis for its full establishment and complete formation in a strong, recognizable and influential culture, are precisely provided by these elements of the Early Iron Age phase. The present recorded data of the archaeological excavated sites on the territory of North Macedonia obtained in the last decades will be used in an immense extent in the elaboration of this thesis, i.e. the subject matter. The Early Iron Age excavated or partially excavated sites (such as settlements and necropolises) may not be multitude, but provide answers to the numerous questions related to the cultural, social or economical life of North Macedonian settlements. Simultaneously, plenty of new questions are being opened with this extent of recorded data, which answers can only be provided by the future archaeological excavations.

The extent of excavation of the Late Archaic period in North Macedonia, as well as the data of the previous periods is not synchronized, however, despite the relatively small number of excavated graves and necropolises, the territorial prevalence of the findings is sufficiently broadened.

V THE THESIS OF THE DISSERTATION

This thesis presents an interpretive study into the development, distribution, use and deposition of the Iron Age within the chronological and territorial frameworks of the Republic of North Macedonia. The chronological framework of this thesis includes the burial customs and rituals during the Late Bronze Age, i.e. the transitional period to the Early Iron Age, Middle Iron Age, Developed Iron Age, the Archaic period, and the Late Archaic period, as well as the short introduction into the prehistory of the Ancient Macedonian Kingdom in accordance to the recorded history from the known ancient historians; more precisely, the monitoring of the development and the lifestyle manifestations, including the burial customs and rituals of the Iron Age communities, and the Paeonian and Ancient Macedonian tribes. Besides the burial customs and rituals, this thesis also presents the burials manifestations and grave goods from the above mentioned chronological periods, communities and tribes.

The territorial framework of this thesis in general covers the present-day territory of North Macedonia, with an exception due to the topic of this thesis; additionally the territories of the Ancient Macedonia during the Late Bronze Age, transitional, Iron Age, and Archaic period are also covered.

Following the decadent events caused by the wave of migrations and the collapse of settlements from the Late Bronze Age, in the first centuries of the first millennium, X – VIII BC, i.e. during the Early Iron Age period the conditions for the stabilization of the societies and the economic situation of the communities had been slowly created. Numerous influences that came mainly from the north, and have caused significant changes in their lives are noticeable. Throughout the Early Iron Age, a certain cultural and even ethnic stabilization of the communities took place among these relations. The most evident was the stabilization in the burial sphere, which had a dominant place in the material and spiritual culture of the Iron Age communities. Thus, the burial ritual with congested inhumation had been established as the only practiced ritual throughout the Iron Age. The stone constructions - cists made out of large stone slabs, the graves with amorphous stones, as well as the pits, have been reproduced and wrapped throughout the entire Iron Age, with particular emphasis on cists as a dominant form.

In spite of the tumulus burials, the appearance of the flat necropolises has been evident in the Early Iron Age, resembling as an individual single groups or graves that have been excavated along the main communications, which during the Iron Age will be developed into well-organized flat necropolises.

The selection of the locations where the settlements were established, had certainly been conditioned by the defensive strategy of the community, whereby dominant and secured positions have been selected. The burial types and customs will be separately reviewed within the basic regions for research and excavations: The Lower Vardar Region, The Vardar Valley and the valley of Bregalnica, Pelagonia and the Ohrid region.

In the Late Archaic period, there is a new ritual of cremated burials the digging of a pit in which the remains of the cremated deceased altogether with the grave goods. Stone stelae – tombstones (grave markers) and burials in special tegulas constructions appear in this period. The wealthy so-called princely graves represent one of the most interesting cultural phenomena, they are connected to the burials of the domestic tribe kings (tribe chiefs), on the periphery or further north in the “barbaric” background of the developed Hellenic – Mediterranean civilization.

This thesis includes the detailed explanation of the issues about the Paeonia and the Paeonians, Written historical records about the Paeonians, the Paeonians in the ancient written records, the Identification of the Paeonian culture and burials, Macedonia and the Macedonians, the Identification of the Macedonian culture and burials.

VI METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the content of this thesis is based on the research which has been implemented in the recent years, as well as on the current discoveries and excavations. In addition to the found and recorded archaeological material, which extent is very low, this thesis represents an important highlight in the prehistory and history of the Iron Age in North Macedonia. Due to the difficulty of determination of the previous and current state of knowledge, which is a result of the lack of material, implemented excavations, and perplexed historical gamogenetic on this territory, the only certain conclusion can be made in accordance with the burial types, customs, rituals, grave goods and other manifestations from the Iron Age period, within the analogies from the discovered archaeological material from the neighbouring regions, the other prehistorically chronological periods, and the recorded history.

The Iron Age methodology also includes the listed necropolises and certain graves from the six previously mentioned and divided regions in North Macedonia; their extent of research/excavation, the forms and burial types, the number of excavated graves in the necropolises, as well as the archaeological findings – grave goods.

The main and predominant burial type in the Lower Vardar region was the construction - cist of stone slabs, although there are certain constructions of meandering/embossed amorphous stones or rare burials in larger ceramic vessels – pithoi.¹ The inhumation in an extended, out stretched – position with placed arms beside the body or slightly bended/twisted on the stomach was practiced in all the cases. The practiced burials in this region were with meandering/embossed amorphous stones.²

The burial rituals, customs and the various remnants from the ritual manifestations in the necropolises along the Middle and Upper Vardar basin, as well as in eastern part of North Macedonia, especially in the valley of Bregalnica, are equalized to a great extent.

¹ Mitrevski D. 1991-a, p. 40 – 41;

² Kuzman P. 1985 p. 33 – 35;

VII DATA SOURCES

In accordance with the archaeological excavations which had been implemented in the last 20 years, the extent of the excavated and recorded Iron Age data in North Macedonia had elevated in a relatively satisfactory way. Although, the recent archaeological excavations significantly enriches the museum collections, while simultaneously are revealing uncovered important data within the answers for the still unresolved issues. Namely, these findings are related with the issues of the Iron Age settlements, or to some specific cultural phenomena such as the tumulus necropolises. Nonetheless, on this standing point more excavated Iron Age sites from the North Macedonian can be already mapped.

The relations that have been established in the previous early Iron Age phase, between the North Macedonian communities and the neighboring areas, taking into account the increased economic power, significantly and crucially had improved and became even narrower and more efficient during the Middle Iron Age period. In addition to this statement, the close relations between the population from the Upper and Middle Vardar Stream, as well as the Valley of Bregalnica, with the northernmost communities in Eastern Kosovo and South Morava are remarkably evident. Many identical or similar grave goods that have caused certain considerations in the direction of the only ethnic / cultural qualification had been excavated from the graves of these areas.³ The result of the subsequent consequences is the widespread appearance of similar manifestations in the material culture as an expression of an equivalent, uniformed central – Balkan trend. Although, contrary to this assertion, in the spiritual sphere, the manner of burials, burial rituals, as well as the artistically and religious beliefs and understandings (best illustrated by the iconic bronze from the group of “Macedonian Bronze”) the northern regions of North Macedonia are clearly distinguished from the northern neighboring exposing an organic relation with the southern settlements.

According to M.Garasanin, the emergence of the tumuli in the Republic of North is due to the so-called Third Wave of Migrations to the Aegean. Despite the tumulus burials, the flat necropolises with graves – cists were also present in North Macedonia.

³ Vasic R. 1987 p. 673;

The analysis of flat necropolises with graves – cists has no indication of pointing to larger organized flat necropolises from the early Iron Age but only to isolated groups of graves along the main communications, mostly individual graves, ie isolated groups of graves. The Iron Age is a period when notable changes have occurred in the largest part of the European territory, the Balkan Peninsula, thereby including North Macedonia, which are reviewed and analyzed through the significant events of that period, such as the Aegean migration, the great destruction of the Mycenaean civilization, the Hittite Empire and the destruction of Troy. Thanks to the necropolises of the earlier periods, which had continued their use throughout the Late Archaic period, most of the data still originates from the regions of the Vardar Valley, the valley of Bregalnica, Pelagonia and Ohrid. On the current, low level of excavation and collected data, it is not possible to reliably determine the exact number of the cremated graves in the necropolises from the Late Archaic period (VI – V BC).

The sources for these archaic Ancient Macedonian tribes are neither exclusive and unique nor chronologically synchronized. In accordance with the current extent of the archaeological, linguistic and historical research on the ethnic issues for the prehistoric tribes in North Macedonia, it is necessary to define several basic issues: the issue of Paeonia and the Paeonians, the issue of Macedonia and the Macedonians, the issue of the Enhelians, the issue of the Bryges, as well as the issues with the Illyrians, Dardanians and the Triballi in (Macedonia) North Macedonia. All of the historical stories about the Paeonians usually begin with Homer's writings in the Iliad about the participation of the “Paeonians from the Great Axios” in the Trojan War as allies of Priam, in the defense of the city from the united Greeks. The written historical records for the Macedonians and North Macedonia are clearly distinguished in two chronological intervals: data for the legendary (heroic) and data for the historical period.

Due to the Great Aegean Migrations in the Iron Age period on this territory, it is difficult to determinate a fixed chronological table of the excavated findings (skeletons and grave goods). For an example in the necropolis of Vergina, numerous of vessels have been modeled and the forms are covering a long period of use. The archaeologist Andronikos had proposed a phasing of the excavated tumuli in 1975s, in his publication *Trachzubehör der Eisenzeit zwischen Ägäis und Adriak*, while the archaeologist Kilian had proposed another relative wider of the Balkans and the Aegean Greece chronology of the same necropolis (Vergina I, II, IIIA, IIIB, etc.) which have been based mainly on the grave goods – metal tools and ceramics.

However, not all of the Vergina graves, as well as the other Iron Age necropolises could be integrated into this system, as we previously mentioned and presented the chronological framework above. Although, when it comes to the analogies with the other neighboring necropolis from the Iron Age period in the present day of North Macedonian territory, the Kilian's work has, for the first time, been able to gather a great deal of documentation and propose chronological correspondences between different cultural areas, the dating of the tombs of this necropolis would merit a precise re-examination in the light of the data provided by the excavations, which have been stratified habitats like Kastanas, Toumba Thessaloniki or Assiros.

Despite the importance of the Vergina necropolis, one of the most important on the territory on North Macedonia from this period is the necropolis of Trebenishte. Starting with the anthropological analysis of this necropolis, with the preserved archaeological excavations at the site Tri Cheljusti – Vrtuljka, village Trebenishte near Ohrid in 1972s⁴ 23 new graves has been discovered, chronologically determinate between VII – IV/III BC. From these graves 31 skeletons have been excavated, of which only 22 were qualified and sent to anthropological analysis.⁵ This necropolis had been excavated on more occasions, in the previous one and this century.

One of the most significant grave goods have been excavated from the princely burials of Trebenishte, speaking of the golden mask, hand gloves, weaponry, bronze helmets, gold and bronze jewelry, clothing, bronze and silver vessels and etc.

⁴ P.Kuzman 1985s;

⁵ Fanica Veljanovska 1994;

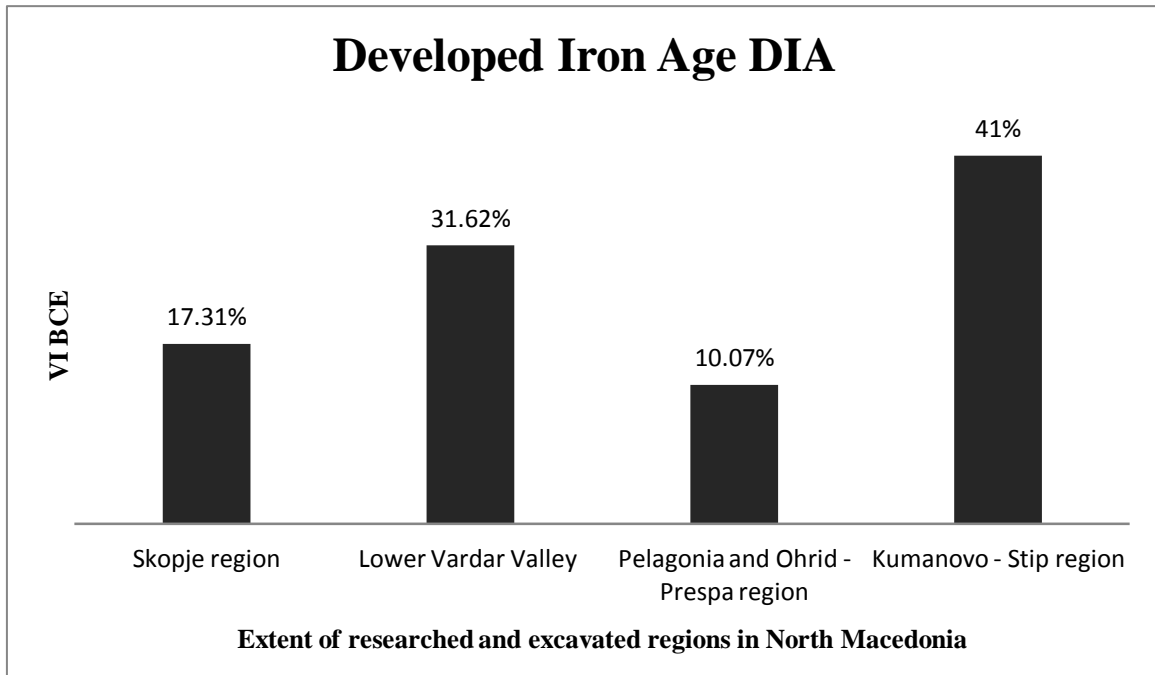
VIII PERSONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH

Most of the examined and excavated necropolises in Macedonia have been dated from the Iron Age. Most of them are from the period of the Middle Iron Age from VIII to VI BC, approximately 40 necropolises with over 460 examined graves, which is much more than the period from X to VIII BC, about 20 sites associated with burials at this early phase of the Iron Age. The latest recent statistical data have proved more than 1000 excavated graves from the Iron Age necropolises. Among the earliest graves from the Iron Age are the ones from Popadin Dol, Prilep and Rakida, Trojanci, in which two similar graves have been discovered. Arched fibula – Labuan type have also been found. The same are the children's grave from Budur Chiflik, Demir Kapija, as well as the grave from Lakavica, Shtip, the group of grave finds of Karanka in Rapes, Bitola, a scattered grave in Prilepec, the three graves – cists, in the ZIK fields - Pelagonija, the village Trap, Bitola, and the grave from the locality of Six Dwellings, the village Tremnik, Negotino. The individual graves have been discovered at the sites of Kasarni and Varos in Prilep, Najdenka in the village of Orel, Bitola and the village of Sudic, Shtip, as well as the two graves – cysts, of the Marta necropolis in the village Zovik, Bitola, Visoi in Beranci, Soldier in Kumanovo and Orlova Chuka in Star Karaorman. In addition to the complete and transparent presentation (presenting the findings, the documentation from the previous excavations and research), the appropriate categorization, typology and classification will be fully implemented and carried out. During the Middle Iron Age burials, the most intense were the tumulus (barrows). Despite the tumuli in Beranci, Soldier and Star Karaorman, the most important prominently examined and excavated necropolises are the ones in Dabici in the village of Sopot, Veles, Gorno Pole in the village of Star Karaorman, Stip, Krivi Dol in the village of Radanje, Stip, Kunovo Chuki in the village of Orizari, Kocani, Krshlanski Gumenja, village Krshna, Vinica, Slamite in the village of Rapes, Bitola, as well as the oldest graves from the great Trebenishta necropolis, more precisely the findings from the sites of Tri Celjuci and Vrtljaka near the village of Gorenci, the famous group of findings from Lozista near the village of Recica, Labino in the Old Town of Ohrid, the necropolis near the site Gradiste, Dolno Lakochery, the tumulus in Visoi, Beranci (where numerous fragments of ceramics and jewelry have been discovered), White Stones - the Tomb, the village of Zivojno, Slamite, the village of Rapes, the site Najdenka, the village of Orle, Bikricki Vis, in the village of Bukri and etc.

New Iron Age findings have been excavated from the archeological site Topolnichka Reka, village Damjan, due to the new settlements excavations which had been carried out in 2018s, where a special significance had been given to the two ceramic kilns (1 and 2) for smelting ore.

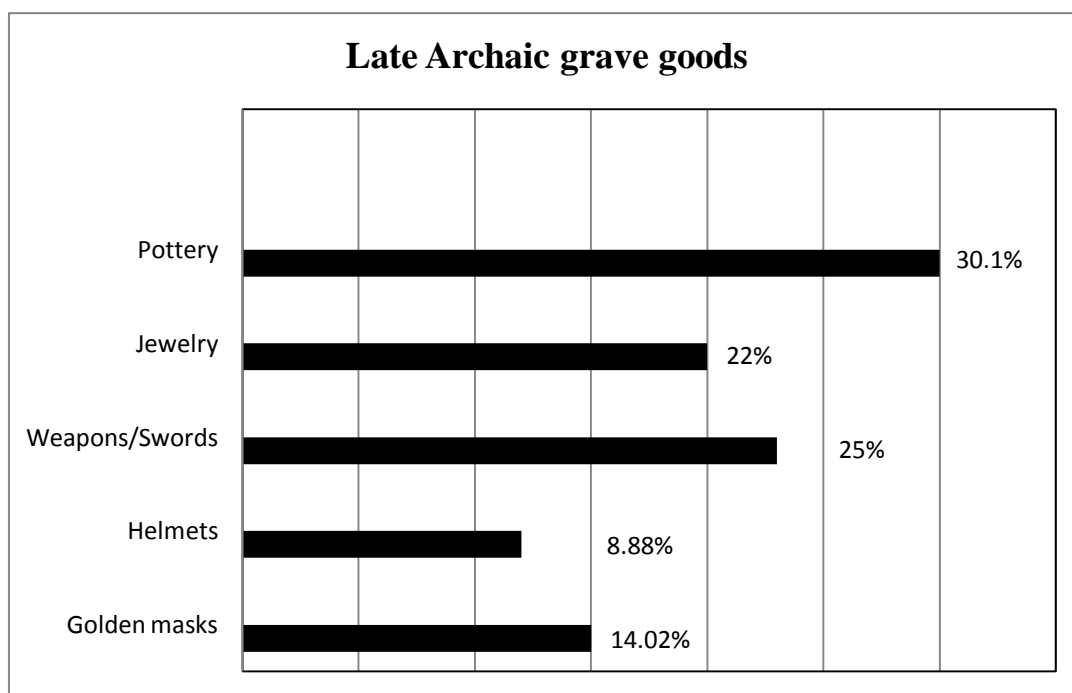
The burial types during the Middle Iron Age in Pelagonia are marked as a maintenance and further development of the old forms and customs. The skeletal burial is the only burial ritual, while in of the grave forms the most are the constructions – cysts of stone slabs. The graves under the tumuli as well as the graves organized in flat necropolises have continued to be practiced in parallel. The grave chamber was enclosed with a rectangular – elliptical/oval wreath of larger amorphous stones, while the unprocessed stone slabs were also used. The graves were differently oriented and organized in several bigger or smaller groups. There is also a double or triple burial in the same grave construction. The burials under the tumuli in North Macedonia have emerged as a new phenomenon with the establishment of the new Iron Age culture. Two basic types of tumuli are distinguished in North Macedonia, where the late ones remain as an Iron Age characteristic, while the earlier ones refer to the Middle Iron Age. The late tumuli stand out placed in a separate group of so-called “clan”, while the earlier ones belong in the “family” group of tumuli. The most famous and significant tumuli of the clan-genus type are Orlovi Čuki – Star Karaorman, Visoi – Beranci, Kunovo Čuki – Orizari, Chanishte – Krushevica in Mariovo, as well as the Tumul 2 in Strnovac near Kumanovo.

The anthropological research have not been recorded or published officially from the excavated necropolises and graves, but have been made on certain important Late Bronze Age, Iron Age and Archaic necropolises and graves. Nevertheless, we are going to compare the analogies with the data from the research that have been made on the first major Iron Age necropolises in the Ancient Macedonia – Vergina, whose data have been officially published and proceeding over the years from different scientists and archaeologists, mainly from the Republic of Greece. Henceforth, it is important to note that all of the anthropological published and unpublished data of the founded skeletons are dating from the Iron Age period in the territory of Ancient Macedonia, North Macedonia and the neighboring countries.



Graph VI: Statistical data of the researched extent of grave goods in North Macedonia

The old cist of stone slabs is still dominant among the grave forms in the Late Archaic period, especially in regions such as the valley of Vardar and Pelagonia, where this type of graves represents a traditional value since the centuries of the transitional period from the Bronze Age into the Iron Age. The spotlight, as a starting point in the identification of the certain cultural values, should certainly be sought in the Vergina necropolis, as well as in the princely necropolis Trebenishte. The necropolis of Vergina belongs to the Ancient Macedonian kings, connected with the first capital of the Kingdom of Ancient Macedonia - Aigai.



Graph VII: Statistical data of the researched extent of grave goods in North Macedonia

However, it is important to cross the results of these studies with those of the distribution of the functional categories, deduced from the shape and the physical properties of the vessels.

IX CONCLUSIONS

In addition to the already drawn conclusion, the Late Bronze Age in North Macedonia represents a specific phenomenon, due to the expansion of the southern Mycenaean influences, and the cultural elements penetrating from the north. These influences have been particularly pronounced in the regions where the communications were unhindered, such as the valley of the Vardar River. The Ulanci or Povardarska cultural group was formed due to the southern influences, while the northern influences the same was destroyed. This group had a peaceful and stable cultural character that was deeply canonized, with a strong manifestation of the openness and acceptance from the Aegean culture. Although, supplementary it lacks of a pronounced presence of weapons, i.e. the actual military burials have not been confirmed. This certainly points to the absence of the destructive processes, until the very end, which is precisely related to such events, initiated by the northern military invasions.

What definitely have had caused a commotion to the peaceful life of the Late Bronze Age communities/tribes in North Macedonia, were certainly the great and turmoil historical events associated with the second wave of Aegean migrations that had occurred during the second half of XII BC. Unlike North Macedonia, this phenomenon in the neighboring regions provides a completely different picture. On the other hand, precisely in the transitional period, a significant phenomenon will appear in the field of burials, which is referred to the tumulus necropolises. The development and appearance of the tumulus necropolises in North Macedonia is marked as a special cultural phenomenon. Furthermore, the tumuli in North Macedonia represent a social category and a cultural phenomenon, where the key role is played by the so-called Clan type of tumuli, which had an important contribution for the formation and development of the Early Iron Age.

The outcome of the increased economic power in the communities, the manner of the economic management and the rise of the metallurgy, especially with the use of iron, is the formation of the settlements on the territory of North Macedonia during the Middle Iron Age. By the end of the Iron Age, i.e. the beginning of VI BC, all these elements from the material culture are clearly indicating to the Paeonian bearers tribes as of the Iron Age culture in North Macedonia.

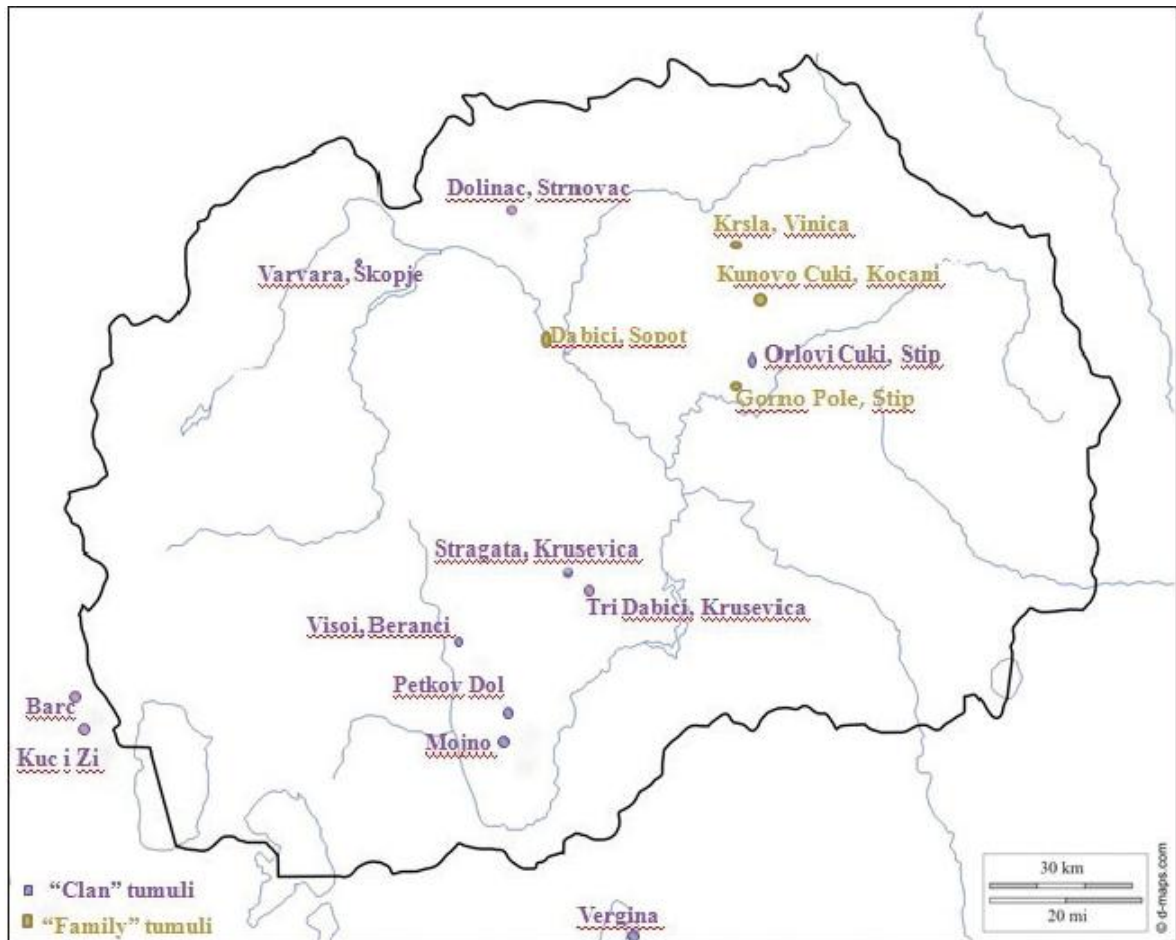
Although the anthropological analysis is not enough, this recorded data has a significant importance for the definition of the Iron Age in North Macedonia. Proving that the Iron Age communities on this territory has a strong link with the Paeonian tribes henceforth the nowadays population of the Republic of North Macedonia.

It is the study of the articulation between burial types that makes it possible to understand the specificity of each community. This field of study opens up prospects for new research to understand and illuminate the complex regions such as the Iron Age in North Macedonia which, under an apparent unity, reveals a richness and variety, not only at the level of representation systems but also in the burial modes.

Chronological table

Years BC	Ancient Macedonia	Northern Greece	Gorno Pole Karaorman	Vardarski Rid	Kastanas	Trebenishte	Balkans
480	Late Archaic Period V – IV BC	Hellenistic Greece	3 Tumuli 6 graves	Vardarski Rid III		56 graves	South Balkans
750	Kingdom of Macedonia	Classic Archaic Period					
808		Geometric Period					
1050	Developed Iron Age LIA VI – V BC	Proto – geometric Period	Krshlanski Gumenja Vinica	Vardarski Rid IV	11	13 princely burials	Pela Neapolis
1100	Middle Iron Age FIA VIII – VII BC		4 tumuli (1 tumulus VII BCE)		12		
					13		
					14		
	Early Iron Age EIA XI – X BC			15			
1200	Transitional Period XII – XI BC	Sub – Mycenaean Period		Skopje Fortress IV	16		West Balkans
1300							
1400	Late Bronze Age	LH III C		Vardarski Rid II	17		Dinara Glasinac Paracin Vatina Varvara
1500		LH III B2					
1600		LH III B3					
1600		LH III A2					
1700		LH III A1					
1800	Middle Bronze Age	LH II			18		
1900		LH I					
1900		MH III					
2000		MH II					
2100					22		Lower Vardar
2100					23		

2200	Early Bronze Age	EH III			24	Valley
					25	
					26	
		EH II			27	
					28	



Map 1: Iron Age Tumuli burials in North Macedonia (map by Aleksandra Papazovska, “New perspectives of the tumuli burials during the Iron Age in North Macedonia”)

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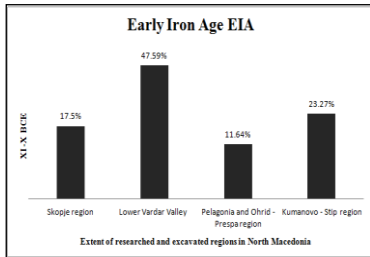
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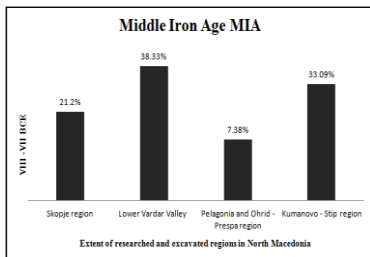
XI List of plates



Title: Graph I

Caption: Statistical data of the researched extent EIA regions in North Macedonia

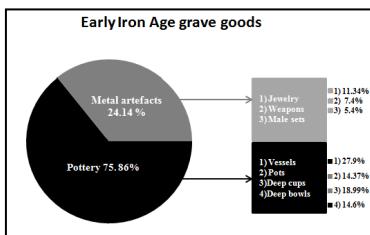
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Title: Graph III

Caption: Statistical data of the researched extent FIA regions in North Macedonia

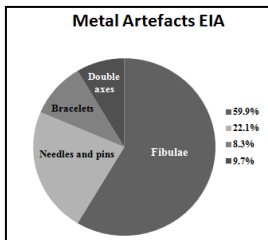
Made by: Mitko Shterjov



Title: Graph II

Caption: Statistical data of the researched extent of EIA grave goods and metal artifacts

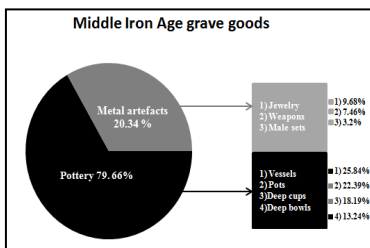
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Title: Graph II/1

Caption: Statistical data of the researched extent of EIA grave goods and metal artifacts

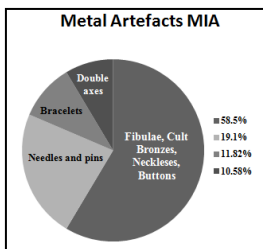
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Title: Graph IV

Caption: Statistical data of the researched extent of MIA grave goods and metal artifacts

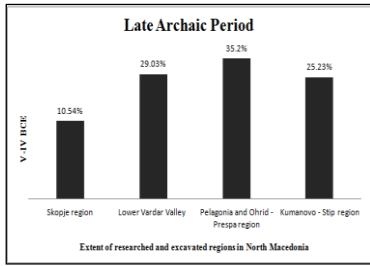
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Title: Graph IV/1

Caption: Statistical data of the researched extent of MIA grave goods and metal artifacts

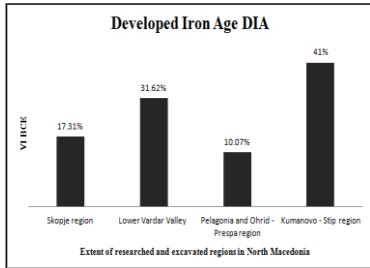
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Title: Graph V

Caption: Statistical data of the researched extent LAP regions in North Macedonia

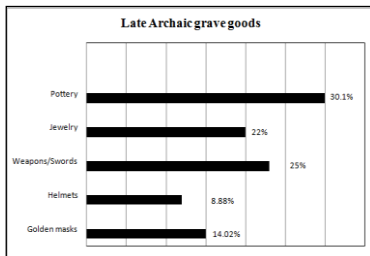
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Title: Graph VI

Caption: Statistical data of the researched extent LIA regions in North Macedonia

Made by: Mitko Shterjov



Title: Graph VII

Caption: Statistical data of the researched extent of LAP grave goods in North Macedonia

Made by: Mitko Shterjov

Year BCE	Ancient Macedonia	Northern Greece	Central Greece	Stagyras	Kassapa	Trichonichia	Balkans
450	Early Archaic Period	Geometric Period	6 Tumuli	Yanvarski Rid III			South Balkans
750	Kingdom of Macedonia						
800	Low Iron Age LIA VI - V BCE		Nyctambakia, Gostinitsa, Vinica		11	56 graves	Valina, Dale, Nerevitsa
1000	Full Iron Age LIA VIII - VII BCE	Pre-geometric Period	4 tumuli	Yanvarski Rid IV	12	15 proto-celtic	Nerevitsa
1100			10 tumuli		13		Dine, Spidex
1200	Early Iron Age LIA VI - V BCE	Sub-geometric Period			14		
1300	Transition Period XII - XI BCE	Mycenaean Period		Skopje, Farasat IV	15		West Balkans
1400	Low Bronze Age			Yanvarski Rid II	17		Skopje
1500					18		Gostinitsa
1600				Elzani Cultural group	19		Prezina, Valina, Yanvarski
1700					20		
1800	Middle Bronze Age				21		Central Balkans
1900					22		
2000					23		Lower Vardar Valley
2100	Early Bronze Age				24		
2200					25		
					26		
					27		
					28		

Title: Chronological table

Made by: Mitko Shterjov



Title: Map 1

Caption: Iron Age Tumuli burials in North Macedonia
Made by: Aleksandra Papazovska, "New perspectives of the tumuli burials during the Iron Age in North Macedonia"