

The largest tomb, Tomb A, measures 10.30 x 10.30 m. externally and possesses a burial chamber measuring 4 x 4 m., with walls about 3 m . wide, consisting of stone blocks laid in an alternating series of two and three courses. The chamber was covered by a horizontal roof of oblong slabs that rested on a wooden beam, whose sockets are visible in the walls. The roof was probably also supported by an unfluted column, part of which was found on the floor of the chamber, and by a lattice of planks that rested on the ledge at the top of the walls. The long stone roof slabs, which were gathered from both within and outside the burial chamber, measure 2.30 x 1.30 m

Inside the burial chamber, in the south-east corner, there is a door with only one jamb (on the left-hand side) and an opening measuring 1.58 m. The slots on the lintel and below, on the right- and left-hand sides, together with the groove on the left, indicate the existence of a door leading outside. However, when the earth was removed from the exterior, it was immediately apparent that there was no door opening on the other side but a solid wall, just as there was on the east side, where the earth was also removed down to a considerable depth. Our conclusion is that this door led to a crypt within the stonework beneath the lintel. However, in at least the two highest courses of stone there is no evidence of any gaps and the stonework is normal. The lowest courses of stone blocks used to fill in the doorway, however, raise certain doubts. In all likelihood this door was originally used to provide access to a small cist-shaped burial crypt and was then later filled in so that the main chamber could be used for burials.

Both within the tomb and outside it, at some depth on the south-west side, fragments of Doric capitals and cornices with guttae were found. Part of the base of a large Ionic column was also found in the north side, where a course of masonry had been plundered. These architectural members indicate the existence of a temple-like structure above the main chamber, leading to the conclusion that the tomb probably belonged to a king and functioned as a tomb-heröon. Inside, the main chamber preserves remains of painted decoration, such as an Ionic moulding, two female figures and a palmette. On the floor of the tomb two long gilded courses of masonry can be seen, which form part of the structure of a couch. The tomb, which was looted in antiquity, yielded a small number of grave goods, such as some gilded leaves of bronze, gilded clay beads, the bone stems of wreaths, 12 gilded silver ivy leaves and gold sheets with a sixteen-petal rosette stamped on them (the well-known Macedonian star), which has been

found in this form only at Aiani and Vergina (Aegae). If this star is a symbol, its presence here indicates the close relationship that existed between the two capitals. The tomb has been dated to the early 4th century BC. Outside the tomb, on the south-east side, quite deep down, the torso of a male statue was discovered; made from local marble in the 6th century BC, it is of the well-known

kouros

type, which has been discovered mainly in

Attica

and the Aegean islands. The discovery of this important statue – we know that

kouroi

and statues from the Archaic era in general are rare in

Macedonia

– led us to conclude that the torso in the old collection (cat. no. 191), whose provenance is unknown, came from a

kouros

of similar size.

Dr Georgia Karamitrou – Mentesidi

Photos:



