

## **New observations in the Alexandrovo Tomb**

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The Alexandrovo Tomb was discovered near Haskovo in southeast Bulgaria in the end of 2000. The tomb consists of a long corridor (14.4 m), which leads eastwards and two rooms: a rectangular room, with trapezium-shaped roofing, and a domed room of circular plan. The end of the dromos as well as all the walls of the chambers are covered with paintings, some of them badly damaged. The tomb had been laid out as a temple and was also used as a mausoleum. It was built in the middle of the 4th century BC, painted also by that time, and was probably in use until the beginning of the next century, at the earliest.

The wall-paintings comprise monochrome bands, strips of plant and geometric decoration, imitation of walls made of marble ashlar, separate representation fields, and two friezes with figures of mounted and infantry warriors, standing or seated men and women, animals. Best preserved is the central frieze in the circular room. It represents hunting scenes in which four armed horsemen, four armed men on foot, two wild boars, two deer (a red deer and a stag of a fallow deer) and nine dogs take part.

By the end of 2003 the tomb was completely studied by the methods of archaeology and was prepared for conservation and restoration. New observations also were made on the wall paintings as well as the three-dimensional composition and the general layout of the structure.

It has been established that not four, but at least

seven standing and seated figures are represented on the preserved part of the lower frieze in the domed chamber. All of them are participating in the sacrifice of a bull. Two of the figures are holding rhytons (a silver, and a golden one) and the third is holding a silver phial. Two men are seated, on a stool, and on a throne respectively. There are also two tables represented. Two yellow askoi are to be seen under one of them, while the other one is piled with golden vessels and food (?).

A tiny graffiti was discovered on the band painted in Pompeian red in front of the entrance into the circular chamber. It consists of a half-faced young man's head and an Old Greek inscription in two lines above it. Dr. Vassilka Gerassimova read the inscription as "KOΞIMACEC XPHCTOC" and interpreted it as "Kodzimasēs the Master". Steadiness of hand, well illustrated by the inscribed letters and the intelligent, expressive and individualized profile, points to a gifted artist, who completely justifies the nickname of Master. Most probably this is a self-portrait of the artist, who made the wall paintings. As established by Dr. Gerassimova, the paleographic peculiarities of the inscription date it to the second half of the 4th century BC, which corresponds to the dating of the frescoes.

The observations on clothing give grounds to differentiate particular types of Thracian tunics and chytions. They are white, red or gray and have opposing by color white or red vertical stripes.