
PILLOWS/CUSHIONS IN THE FUNERAL CONSTRUCTIONS AND COMPLEXES

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(S u m m a r y)

In some of the Thracian monumental tombs have been discovered funeral beds. Such tombs are the Big Arsenalka, Helvetia, The Griffins' tomb, Ostrusha, Shushmanetz (where only the side stone plates are presented), Sashova mound, the tombs at Varna, Malko Belovo (rather a sarcophagus), Mezek, Mugliz, Ivanski and Alexandrovo. Only the beds from the tombs Helvetia, Sashova mound, Ivanski and Mugliz have a stone pillow, while the tombs of Big Arsenalka, Griffins', Ostrusha, Shushmanetz, Alexandrovo and Mezek have rather cushions.

The article emphasises on the difference between the pillow and the cushion. Cushion is a hollow for the head, grooved in one of the bed's short sides. Sometimes there is a cushion on the one side of the bed and another hollow or projection on the other side — for the feet or for other purpose. The pillow is a separated object, placed on the bed or formed from the bed's stone block.

There is a significant similarity in the forming of the cushions in the Thracian and some of the Lydian tombs. In the sepulchral monuments of Etruria are also presented stone beds with pillows or cushions — for example, one of the tombs from the necropolis of Cerveteri, a tomb at Regina etc., dated in c. 6th—4th BC. The discoveries in the Apri necropolis and in tomb C — Hypogeum Crystalline, Naples, contribute to the specification of the pillows/cushions problematic.

The present article pays attention to the symbolic world of the ancient Egyptians, where many cushions are known from, including amulets — representation in miniature.

My suggestion is that the pillow/cushion is in service of the head. Placed there, it has a symbolic — marking significance, attributed by the people concomitant in the ritual. The pillow/cushion is made of stone with magical power, designated to protect the dead person. That is why stone pillows or cushions have been placed under the buried one's head in graves or tombs.

On the other hand, the human head could be related with the Sun. Hence, when the head is on the pillow/cushion, it is raised and represents the Sunrise to the Horizon and the ascension of the dead to the Other world. The pillow/cushion have to keep and to present the most important part of the human body — the head. This is determinant for the outer way of the dead in the world of immortal Gods and imperishable souls. Therefore it is oriented towards the Outer world and the related ideas and concepts.

A prophesy, said by the Pythia's mouth — the great prophetess of Apollo in Delphi, summarises in the best way the presented thesis:

“Watch over the head, for the head of the body brings the salvation.”