

The bronze headbands of Prehistoric Lofkënd and their Aegean and Balkan connections

In memory of Berit Wells

Abstract

This paper begins with an overview of the bronze headbands from the prehistoric (Late Bronze to Early Iron Age) burial tumulus of Lofkënd in Albania, which were found among the richest tombs of the cemetery, all of them of young females or children. It is argued that these individuals represent a class of the special dead, those who have not attained a critical *rite de passage*: marriage. In their funerary attire these individuals go to the grave as brides, married to death. The significance of the Lofkënd headbands is reviewed, as is their shape and decoration, but it is their context that contributes to a better understanding of Aegean examples, including the many bronze, gold, and silver headbands found in tombs from the Early Bronze Age through the Early Iron Age, as well as those dedicated as votive offerings in sanctuaries. In addition to discussing the evidence for headbands in the Aegean and much of southeast Europe, this paper also attempts to uncover the word used in this early period in Greece for these distinctive items of personal ornament.

Introduction

Among the Early Iron Age tombs of the Athenian Kerameikos and the Areiopagos—not least the tomb of the so-called “rich Athenian lady”—the wealthiest burials of the period are those of women, not men.¹ The same

¹ These include the so-called tomb of the rich Athenian lady, Smithson 1968; Liston & Papadopoulos 2004; the “Booties” grave in the Agora excavated and fully published in Young 1949; as well as several burials in the Athenian Kerameikos, for which see, among others, Freytag gen. Löringhoff 1974, with further references to many more burials in Athens usefully assembled in Langdon 2008. A version of this paper was presented at the conference in memory of Berit Wells held at the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, Stockholm, 14–15 December 2009. I am grateful to the conference organizers, Arto Penttinen and Jenny Wallensten for the invitation and all their hospitality. My especial thanks are due to the Lofkënd team members for their assistance in various aspects connected with this paper, in particular, Vanessa Muros, Lyssa Stapleton, and Ilir Zaloshnja. My thanks, also, to Sophia Voutsaki for her help with the material from Grave Circle B at Mycenae, and to Susan Langdon for *Table 1*.

holds true not only for the heart of the Greek world, but also its distant frontier. The bronze headbands, conventionally referred to as “diadems,” from the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age (14th–9th centuries BC) burial tumulus of Lofkënd in Albania are among the most characteristic items of personal ornament in the richest graves of the tumulus, all of them of young females or else children.² In Albania bronze headbands are known in tombs from a number of other tumuli, as they are in the Balkans north of Albania, mostly decorated with various motifs, whether incised or repoussé. To the south, bronze headbands very similar to those of Lofkënd are known from neighboring Epirus and Macedonia, and they are also found elsewhere in mainland Greece. It is clear, however, that such headbands in the Aegean *in situ* in tombs go back to the Early Bronze Age, beginning with the celebrated silver “diadem” from Grave 14 at Dokathismata on Amorgos, perhaps the burial of a female child, and they continue into the Late Helladic period.

One aspect of the funerary record that has tended to be overlooked in the more recent literature is that these headbands are primarily worn by women—a fact not lost on Adolf Furtwängler—and at Lofkënd, by young women, or else children, who have not attained a critical *rite de passage*: marriage.³ In their funerary attire, they go to the grave as brides, married to death.

In the Aegean, similar headbands are also found as votive offerings in sanctuaries, especially those from Olympia, and bronze examples, including miniatures, are well represented among the votives in a number of other sanctuary sites; related gold headbands are known from both later Greek sanctuary sites and tombs.

The starting point of this paper is a discussion of the significance of the Lofkënd headbands in terms of funerary

² For the excavations at Lofkënd, see Papadopoulos *et al.* 2007, 2008.

³ See Furtwängler 1890, 46. For rites of passage, see van Genneep 1960 [1909].

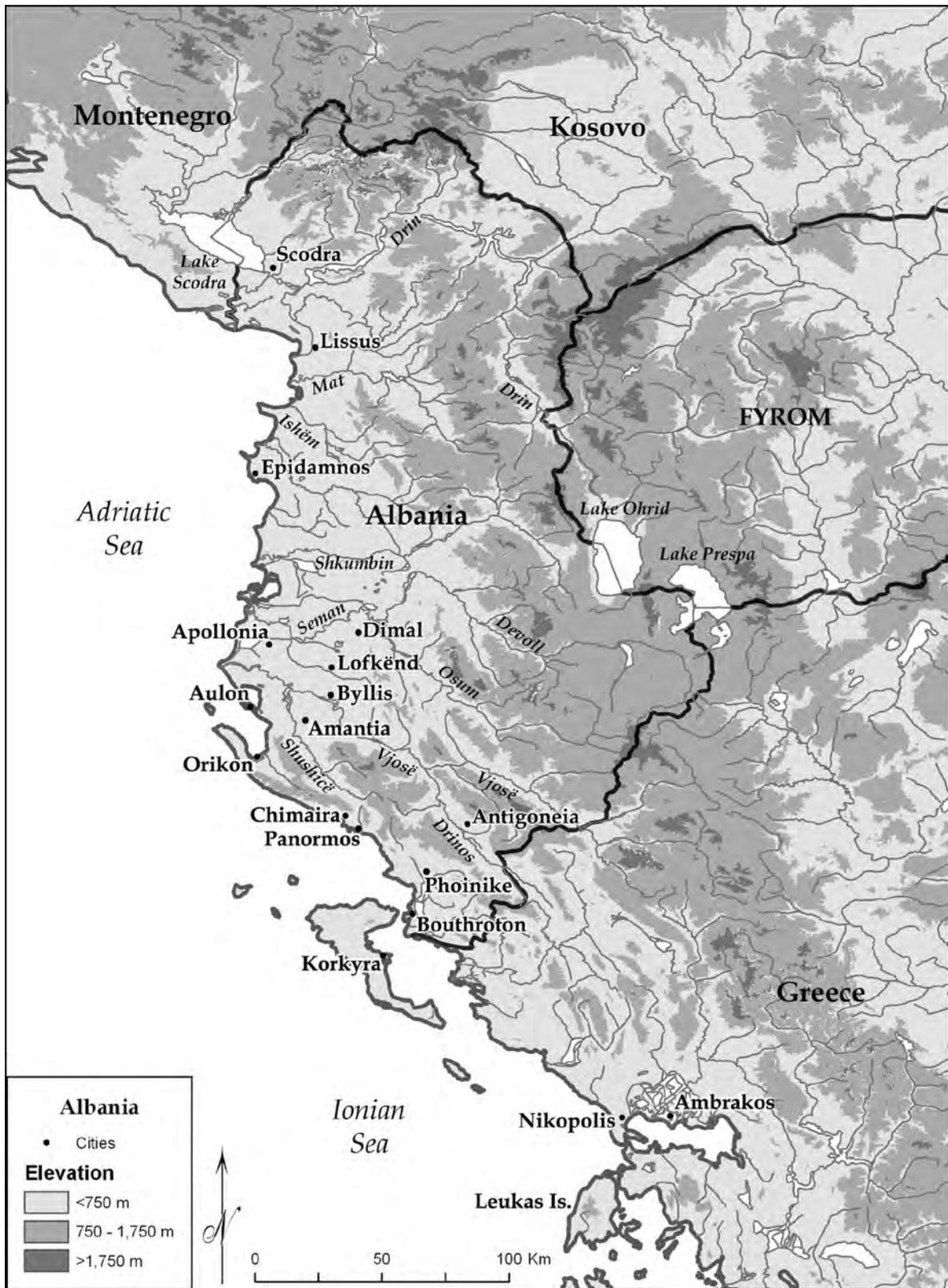


Fig. 1. Map of Albania and surrounding lands showing the location of the Lofkënd tumulus, map by S. Parfenov.

custom, as well as their shape and decoration; it is, however, their context that is most critical, as it contributes to a better understanding of Aegean examples. In addition to reviewing the evidence for metal headbands in the Aegean and much of southeast Europe, this paper attempts to uncover the word used in this early period in Greece to refer to these distinctive items of personal ornament, whether *στεφάνη* (anything that surrounds or encircles the head for defense or ornament) or *κρήδεμνον* (a woman's headdress or veil), or *ταινία* (most often a headband or fillet); ironically, the term by which they are most often referred to today—diadem (*διάδημα*)—remains the most unlikely, as a diadem in our Classical sources normally refers to a band or fillet worn by men and, in particular, a sign of royalty.

The bronze headbands of prehistoric Lofkënd

The Lofkënd tumulus lies in the Malakastër hills, which rise to the southeast of the modern regional center of Fier, not far from the village of Lofkënd (Fig. 1). Excavations were conducted at the mound from 2004 to 2007, with an additional season of survey and study in 2008, as a collaboration of the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and the Institute of Archaeology, Academy of Sciences, Tirana, with the International Center for Albanian Archaeology.⁴ By the conclusion of the 2007 season a total of 100 graves had been excavated, many of them multiple burials containing two, three, or sometimes more individuals, all dating to the period from the 11th or 10th century BC down to about 600 BC on the basis of the conventional chronology.⁵ Calibrated radiocarbon ¹⁴C dates from over 30 human bone, as well as charcoal, samples from Lofkënd carried out by Brian Damiata at the Earth System Science Department at the University of California, Irvine, have verified the conventional chronology and have pushed back the dates of some of the material in the earliest tombs to at least the 14th and 13th centuries BC, that is, contemporary with the Late Bronze Age or Mycenaean era in Greece.⁶

The choice of site and the overall aims of the archaeological project at Lofkënd are outlined in detail elsewhere.⁷ It was anticipated that the exploration of a major site in this

region pre-dating and partly overlapping in time both the foundation of the Greek colonies on the coast (especially Apollonia and Epidamnos) and the so-called proto-urban centers of the hinterland (including Margëlliç, Mashkjezë, Byllis, and Klos/Nikaia) would lead to a better understanding of the historical processes that contributed to the rise of urbanism in Illyria. Indeed, the careful excavation of an undisturbed burial tumulus such as Lofkënd has provided much new information on the processes of tumulus formation and construction; it has also yielded interesting evidence for a more complex relationship with both the proto-urban centers and the colonies than hitherto anticipated, and has revealed much new data on prehistoric and proto-historic mortuary customs in this part of Albania.⁸

There are four relatively well preserved bronze headbands from the Lofkënd tumulus. Several other ornaments worn on the head may have derived from similar headbands made of organic material, otherwise not preserved, but only these four bronze examples are sufficiently well preserved to warrant discussion here.⁹ Three of the four headbands may be assigned to Phase II (late 12th—11th century BC), and one to Phase Va (9th century BC), the absolute dates based on a series of over 30 AMS ¹⁴C dates.¹⁰ All of the Lofkënd burials are inhumations, with the exception of two only cremations. Consequently, any items of personal ornament worn by the deceased in the inhumation graves were preserved *in situ*.

The three bronze headbands from Tombs XVII, XVIII, and XXI are the earliest, all three more or less contemporary. Among these, the best preserved and probably the earliest of the group was that in Grave XVII, and it would be useful to begin with this example. The tomb contained the inhumed remains of two children, one aged seven (\pm two) years at death, the other, represented largely by dentition and cranial fragments, was four years (\pm 12 months) old.¹¹ Most of the grave goods were clustered around the cra-

⁸ For the project website see <http://ioa.ucla.edu/staff/papadopoulos/lofkend/index.html>.

⁹ For example, the gold/electrum disks published in Papadopoulos *et al.* 2007, 124, fig. 16, may well have been suspended from a headband made of organic material, such as leather or cloth.

¹⁰ The tumulus was a palimpsest of burials, in places as many five tombs being stratigraphically interrelated. On the basis of stratigraphy, the prehistoric burials were assigned to one of six phases, labeled I–Vb, and the validity of this relative chronology was later confirmed by the AMS (Accelerator Mass Spectrometry) radiocarbon dates, for which see Damiata *et al.* 2010.

¹¹ Determinations of age and sex were made by Dr Lynne Schepartz, the physical anthropologist of the Lofkënd project, who will be publishing all of the human remains from the tumulus. Unfortunately, there is no reliable way to determine sex from the bones of fetal or infant remains without well preserved DNA, but age can often be estimated quite accurately; see Liston & Papadopoulos 2004, p. 19.

⁴ For a preliminary report of the first two seasons see Papadopoulos *et al.* 2007; see also Papadopoulos 2006.

⁵ See Papadopoulos *et al.* 2007, 138–139.

⁶ For a preliminary overview of ¹⁴C dates from Lofkënd and Apollonia, see Damiata *et al.* 2010.

⁷ Papadopoulos *et al.* 2007; see also Papadopoulos *et al.* 2008.

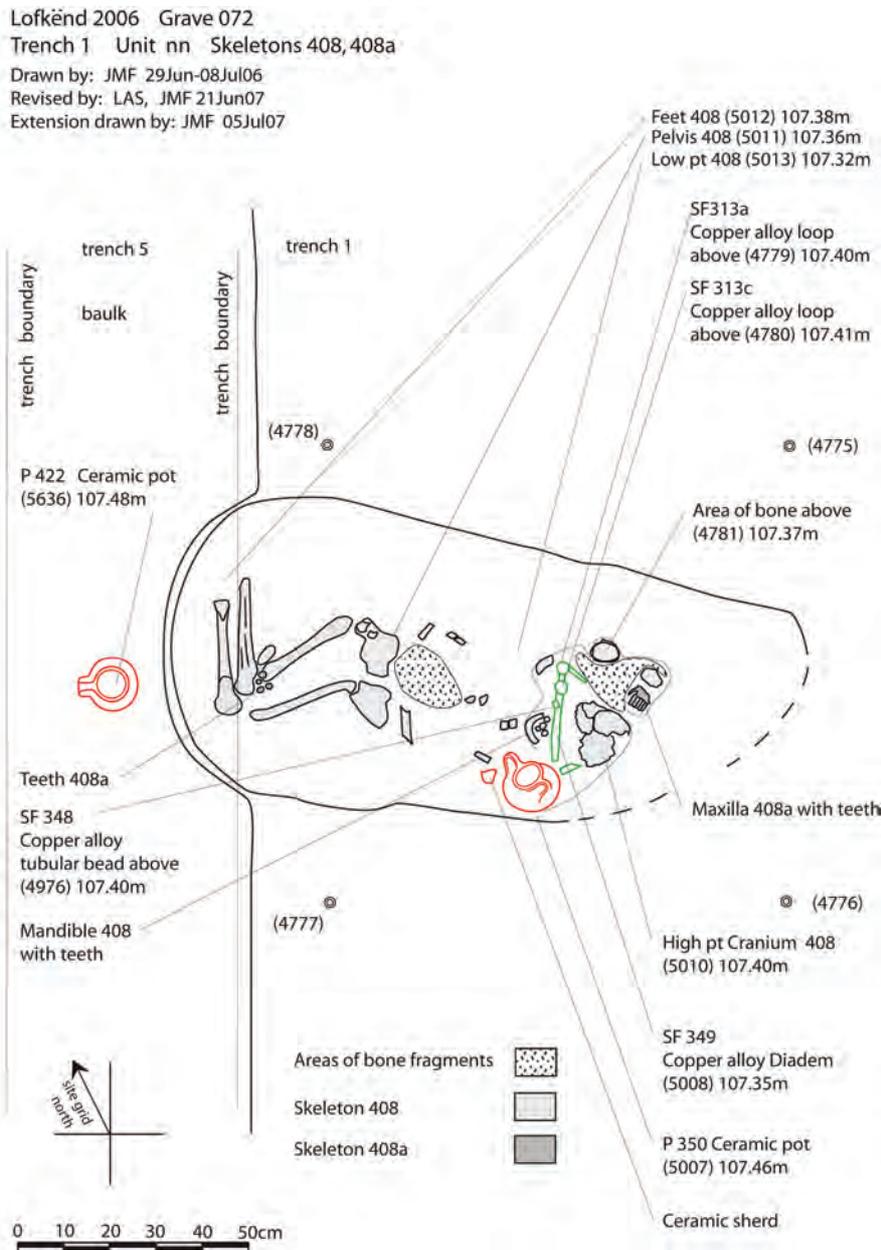


Fig. 2. Plan of Tomb XVII, drawing by M. Farrar and S. Martin-MacAuliffe.

nium of the more complete and older skeleton. The bronze headband (TXVII-2) was worn around the head and a handmade matt-painted kantharos (TXVII-1) was placed upright to the SSW of the cranium (Figs. 2–3). What were identified in the field as two bronze “earrings” (TXVII-3 and 4), together with two small bronze spiral coils, conceivably beads (TXVII-5 and 6), were found overlying the headband, and were originally thought to be part of it, but these may very well have been worn by the deceased

separate from the headband. A second handmade vessel (TXVII-7) was found to the west of the lower leg bones of the better preserved individual. Subsequent study of the excavated remains suggested that the more incomplete skeleton may have been the original occupant of the tomb and that the grave was reopened, the remains pushed toward the east in order to accommodate the interment of the older child. If this was indeed the case, then it is possible that the pot, TXVII-7, and some of the bronze jewelry found

near the bronze headband, may have been displaced from the younger, original inhumation. Although both interments were clearly children, sex could not be determined.

The bronze band was reconstructed complete from seven joining fragments (Figs. 4a–b). It measured 0.210 m across the front (the total length of all fragments lined up together is 0.495), with a width of 0.015, and a total weight of 23.0 g. The band itself is a thin strip of hammered sheet bronze. The upper and lower edges are decorated with incised lines that run around the headband. For the greater length of the band there are two additional incised lines between the two near the edges, resulting in four parallel incised lines. At one point near the center of the front of the headband there are two vertical incised lines running between the two horizontal lines near the edges, defining a small area or metope of incised herringbone decoration, with additional hatching, almost certainly part of a herringbone pattern to the right; this decoration, barely visible, was too poorly preserved to indicate on the drawing (Fig. 4a). There appear to be additional incised vertical and diagonal lines, some of which are perhaps scratches, on the exterior face near one of the terminals.

What is interesting about this headband is the system of tying together the two terminals. As preserved, the terminals are tied together by remnants of textile preserved in the bronze corrosion. The textile itself, which is mineralized, is a rectangular strap or cord, but with no clearly visible weave or thread, perhaps completely depleted. What is especially interesting is that the terminal on the side opposite the textile does not join with either of the ends on the other side, both of which appear to be smooth. It is therefore possible that the end was simply inserted into the two strips of tied bronze. Whether this was the original system or an expedient because the headband had broken is uncertain, but it is one way of accommodating a larger headband intended for an adult on the cranium of a child. As noted above, the two bronze rings and two spiral coils may have been attached to the headband or else were worn separately by one or other of the deceased (Figs. 5a–b).¹²

Tomb XVIII was also a multiple inhumation, containing the remains of three children. The tomb consisted of a small but clearly defined pit measuring 1.23 m long, 0.63 m wide, and 0.15–0.17 m deep (Fig. 6). Within the pit, and largely concentrated to the east and SE, were the



Fig. 3. Tomb XVII, detail of *kantharos* (TXVII-1) and bronze headband (TXVII-2), from above south.

disintegrated bones of at least two children. One of these, designated SU 412, to the north, was clear on account of the bronze headband, TXVIII-1, worn around the head of the deceased (Fig. 6); this individual was identified as a child aged four (\pm one) years at death. Immediately to the south, another cluster of very poorly preserved cranial bones were clearly part of a second individual, designated SU 421, and identified as a child of five (\pm 1.5) years old. The teeth of yet another possible individual, SU 412a, a child aged three (\pm one) years, were noted in the lab. In addition to the headband worn by SU 412, a bronze disk, TXVIII-2, was found at the center of the east end of the grave; the disk could not be directly associated with either of the skeletons.

The bronze headband, TXVIII-1, was reconstructed from numerous joining and non-joining fragments, preserving all or the greater part of the band (Fig. 7). Some fragments were better preserved than others, but most were extremely corroded and fragile. The headband was also made of a thin strip of hammered sheet bronze; the length of the longest group of joining fragments measured 0.140 m, which is close to the diameter of the band (the length of all fragments lined up was 0.444 m), its width 0.018 m, with a total of weight of 10.9 g. There was no visible incised decoration. The terminals of the band were connected by means of two well preserved bronze rivets, the diameter of each rivet head 0.006 m. The circumstances of the tomb were such that it was impossible to determine with which individual the bronze disk (Fig. 8) was associated or, indeed, whether it could have originally been part of the headband. With a diameter of 0.047–0.050 m and a weight of 10.7 g, the disk was preserved complete, but was slightly warped and split at one point, with additional cracks around the perforation. Almost flat as preserved, the disk was probably originally slightly domed, its edge a little irregular, as if cut

¹² For her study of the textile pseudomorphs associated with the Lofkënd metal finds I am grateful to Vanessa Muros, the project conservator; Ms Muros was also instrumental in stabilizing and conserving the bronze headbands. I am also grateful to the project draftsman, Ilir Zaloshnja, for his many detailed observations on the headbands.

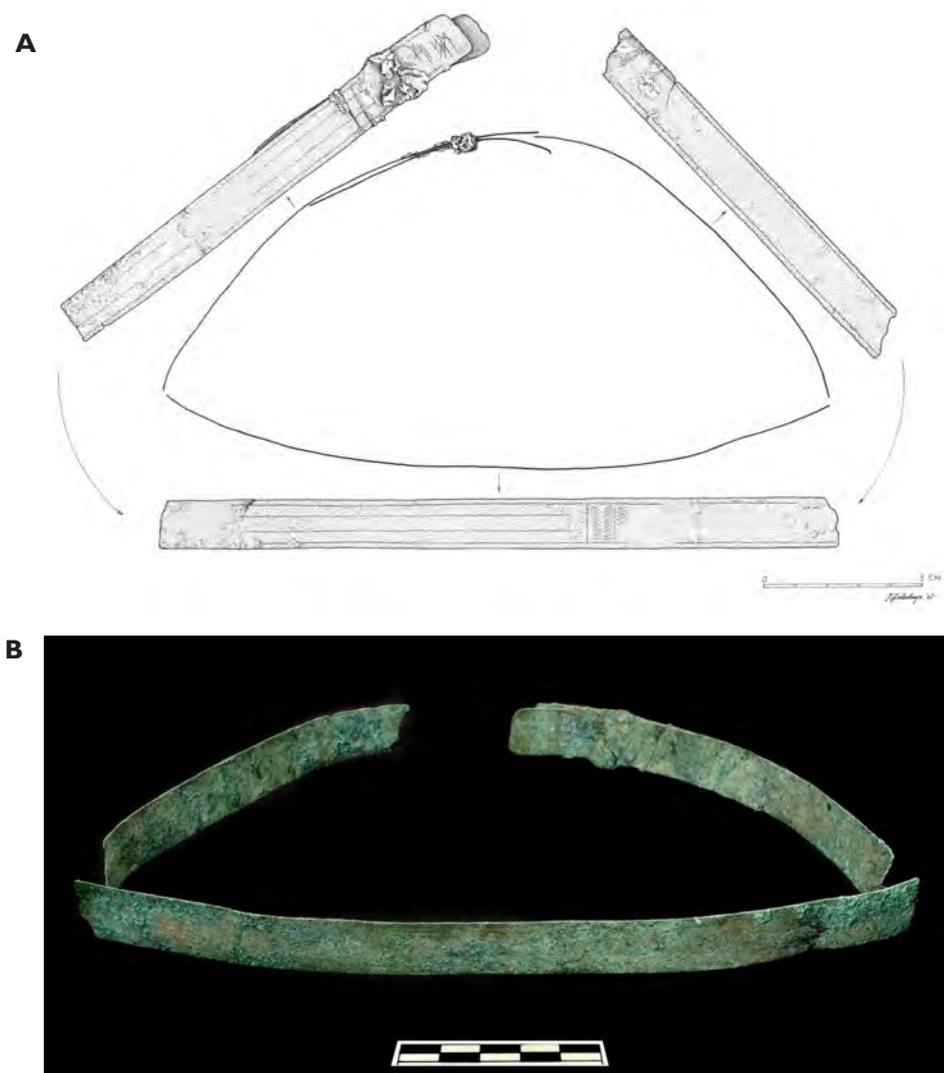


Fig. 4. Bronze headband (TXVII-2): a) drawing by I. Zaloshnja; b) photo by R. MacDonald.

rather than cast; the comparatively large central perforation, is also rather irregular. The repoussé decoration consists of a single ring of dots approximately half way between the edge and the perforation; the area enclosed by this ring is further decorated with four arches of dots, roughly equidistant from each other, defining a cross of sorts. As was the case with Tomb XVII, the gender of the deceased in Tomb XVIII could not be determined on account of the age of the children.

As for Tomb XXI, although the bronze headband was among the most poorly preserved, the sex of the deceased wearing it was clearly female. The remains of two individuals were placed within a clearly defined grave pit, measuring

1.48 m long, 0.65 m wide, and about 0.10 m deep (Fig. 9). The better preserved and more fully articulated individual (SU 326) was identified as a robust younger adult male, aged 20–25 years at death. The skeleton was oriented NE–SW (50°), head to the NE. The poorly preserved torso and the cranium, the latter largely crushed, appear to have been laid out in a supine position, with the arms probably folded across the lower torso. As for the legs, although the femurs were clearly articulated with the pelvis, the tibiae and fibulae were not only underneath the femurs, disarticulated, but at 90° to them and it was therefore clear that the lower legs were not in original position or were slightly disturbed. The very poorly preserved remains of the second skeleton were

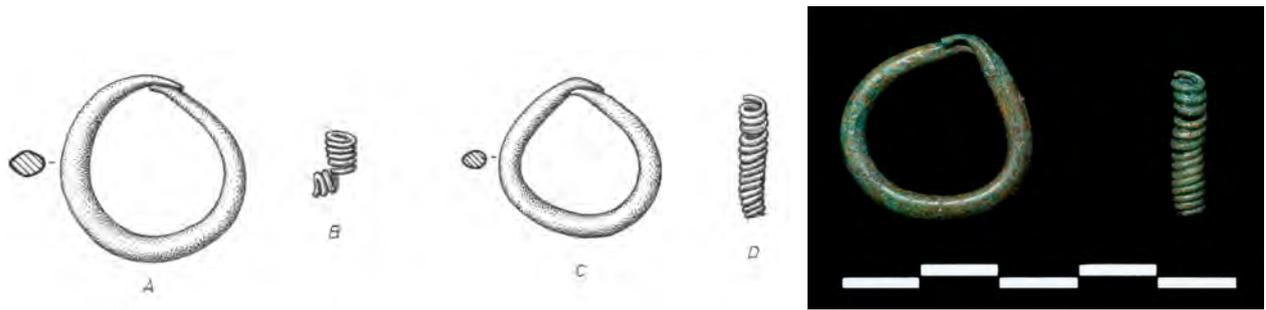


Fig. 5. a) Bronze rings and spiral coils found in Tomb XVII (TXVII-3 [D: 0.029]; TXVII-5; TXVII-4 [0.025]; TXVII-6 [L: 0.018–0.019]), drawings by I. Zalosbnja; b) Detail of TXVII-4 and TXVII-6, photo by R. MacDonald.

Lofkënd 2006 Grave 073
 Trench 4 Unit nn
 Drawn by: JMF 01Jul06
 Traced by: JMF 29Oct06

 Areas of bone fragments

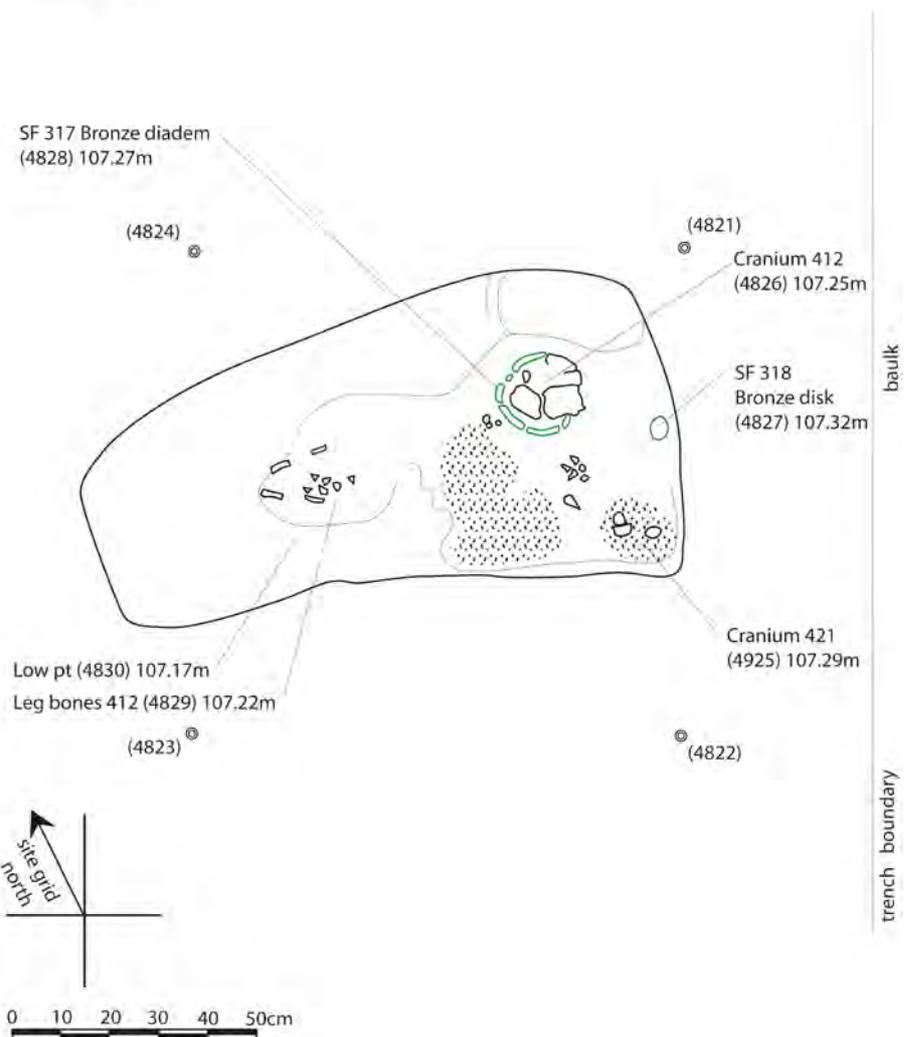


Fig. 6. Plan of Tomb XVIII, drawing by M. Farrar and S. Martin-MacAuliffe.

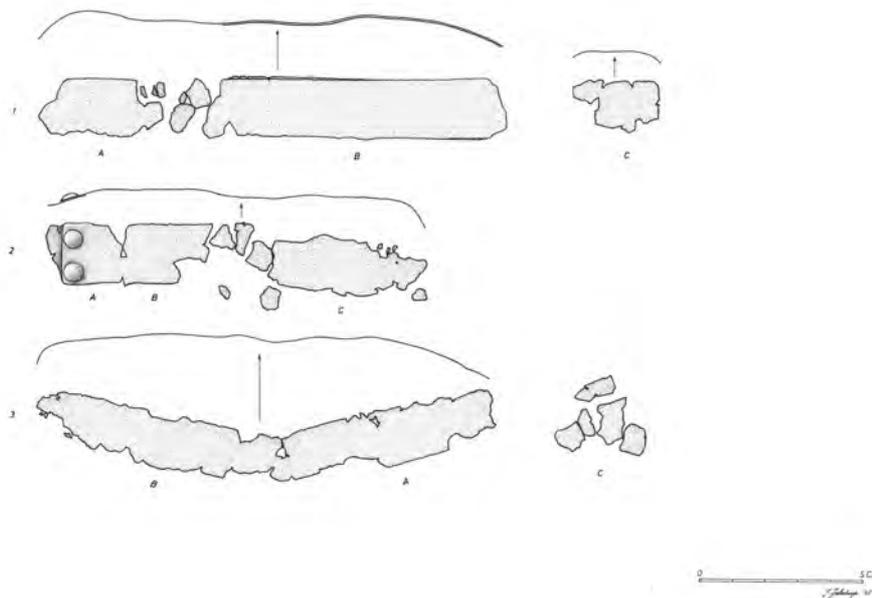


Fig. 7. Bronze headband (TXVIII-1), drawing by I. Zaloshnja.

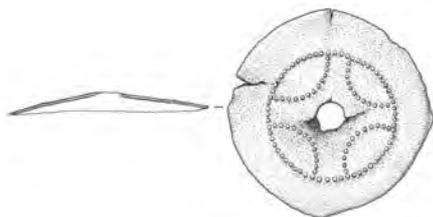


Fig. 8. Bronze disk (TXVIII-2), drawing by I. Zaloshnja.

encountered in the NE corner of the grave, to the ESE of SU 326. Designated SU 341, this individual was identified as a young female aged 15 (\pm three) years. All that survived of this individual were parts of the cranium, including the maxillary mandibular teeth. The cranium appeared to share the same orientation as that of the male, but nothing could be said about the position of the deceased.

Grave goods were plentiful. A handmade dark-fabric kantharos (TXXI-1) was found to the SE and beside the left arm of the male (SU 326), but the vessel was also just to the SW of the cranium of the female (SU 341); consequently, the pot was difficult to assign to either the male or female on the basis of its location *in situ*. Probably associated with the male was the bronze fibula of Cassibile type (TXXI-2), found directly over the upper torso of SU 326, as well as the poorly preserved and much corroded fragments of an

unidentified object of iron (TXXI-3), a short distance to the SE.¹³ Clearly associated with the female was the bronze headband (TXXI-4) (Fig. 10), a bronze button or small boss (TXXI-5), perhaps associated with the headband (Fig. 11), as well as two tubular iron beads (TXXI-6 and 7), a glass paste bead (TXXI-8), and part of an iron coil or spiral (TXXI-9). In the process of cleaning the skeletal remains in the lab, a fragmentary bronze ring (TXXI-10) was found associated with the male.

The headband, TXXI-4, was reconstructed from numerous joining and non-joining fragments, preserving all or the greater part of the band. As with TXVIII-1, most of the pieces of TXXI-4 were heavily corroded and very fragile. As with the other headbands, TXXI-4 was made of a thin strip of hammered sheet bronze. The length of all the fragments lined up together was 0.495, with a width as

¹³ There are three examples from Lofkënd of the distinctive type of fibula that we have conventionally referred to as “Cassibile” type, named after the site in Sicily excavated by the great Paolo Orsi (see Orsi 1899, 117–146, esp. 137–138, pl. XIII, nos. 6–7, and cf. also nos. 1–4). In discussing this characteristic fibula, Orsi (1899, 137) writes: “... ultima emanazione la serpeggiante ad occhio,” and the type is often referred to in the Italian literature as “fibula serpeggiante” (e.g. Lo Schiavo 1983–1984, 135, fig. 47, no. 2), and as “Schlangenfibeln” in German (e.g. Sundwall 1943, 136–169; Philipp 1981, 287–289, nos. 1031–1045), with Klaus Kilian specifically referring to the type as “sizilien Schlangenfibeln” (Kilian 1970, 332, pl. 9, I, no. 3), and Juliette de la Genière as “fibule à arc serpentant de type ‘sicilien’” (de la Genière 1968, 315, pl. 31, no. 5).



Fig. 9. Tomb XXI from above NW, photo by R. MacDonald.

great as 0.026, and a weight of 23.4 g. Such a width is an anomaly; the average width of TXXI-4 was more or less consistent, but at one point the joining fragments appear to define a slightly greater width, as if the strip of bronze develops into a disk. This point does not appear to be associated with the fastening of the terminals, so it may well represent the center of the headband, to be worn at the middle of the head. It is precisely at this point where very fugitive traces of possible, but very poorly preserved, fine incised decoration was noted. As for the fragmentary small bronze boss that is probably associated with the headband (Fig. 11), it has a preserved length of 0.031 m, an estimated diameter of 0.032–0.035 m, and a weight of 2.1 g. The boss is circular, slightly domed, and is also made of thin sheet bronze; it has a small embossed dot at the center.

The last of bronze headbands from Lofkënd to be discussed here (TLXX-2) comes from the late Phase Va Tomb LXX. This was the first of the rich tombs of adolescent females to have been uncovered. As with many other burials, this was a simple pit, within which the remains of two individuals were interred (Fig. 12). The first to be uncovered and the latest of the two was the young female (SU 126) aged 17–20 years at death. She was oriented SW–NE (250°), head to the SW; her torso was in a supine position, head to the left facing north, arms crossed over the lower chest; the legs were flexed, knees pointing north. The bones of the second individual (SU 197), a mid to mature adult male aged >45 years, appear to have been disturbed by the interment of the female, as if pushed slightly to the north and east to accommodate the later burial, but there was

enough articulation among the surviving remains to indicate that he had been interred first. The tomb measured 1.32 m long and 0.60 m wide, with an average depth of 0.23 m, though the pit itself was a little deeper, 0.31 m.

All of the grave goods associated with this burial belonged with the young female. A handmade stemmed goblet (TLXX-1) was found placed on its side, the rim facing ENE, beside the left leg and pelvis; the bronze headband with hook-shaped ornaments and other attachments (TLXX-2), including the rings (TLXX-2a, 2b), was found above and below the skull and was clearly worn on the head. The jewelry included a large bronze spectacle fibula with triple connecting loops (TLXX-3), found beside the upper left humerus, beneath the mandible, and thus was worn at the upper left torso; an iron fibula (TLXX-4) was found over the upper right ribcage, and the large bimetallic pin (TLXX-5) was uncovered above the upper right humerus, and was thus worn on the upper right torso, a worthy counterpart to the spectacle fibula on the other side. A bead of semi-precious stone, carnelian or sardonyx (TLXX-6), was found immediately adjacent to the front of the skull on the north side, and a fragmentary iron pin (TLXX-7) was found in the lab during the cleaning of the cranium and was thus associated with the upper body. The combination of fibulae and dress pins indicated that the female was buried wearing an elaborate garment, her head crowned with a bronze headband. Traces of textile pseudomorphs were encountered in the iron corrosion of the pin, and clearance of the upper torso and cranium of the female revealed a dark discoloration, thought to be the decomposed

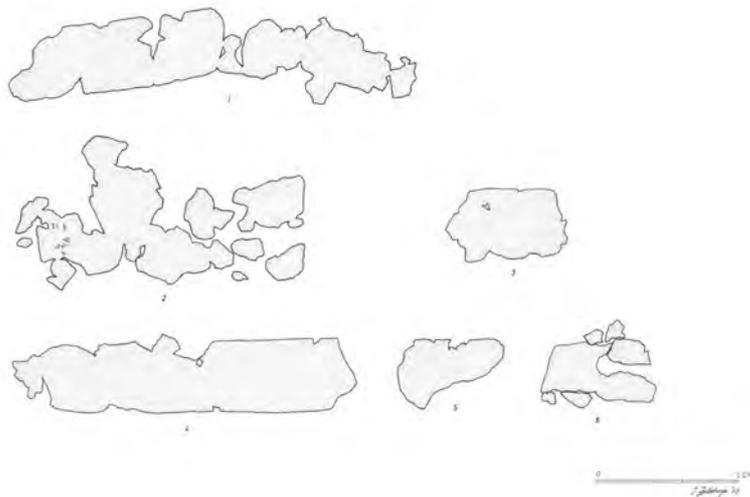


Fig. 10. Bronze headband (TXXI-4), drawing by I. Zalosbnja.

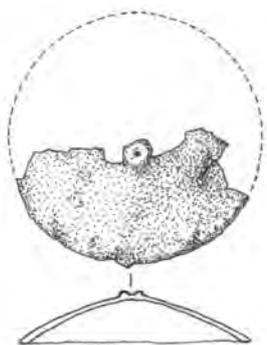


Fig. 11. Bronze boss (TXXI-5), probably associated with the headband, drawing by I. Zalosbnja.

remnants of the textile worn by the deceased. A selection of some of the grave goods associated with this burial has already been published;¹⁴ here only the headband and its attachments are presented.

The bronze headband (TLXX-2) is the most elaborately decorated of the Lofkënd headbands (Fig. 13a–b). With a constant width of 0.025 m, this is the widest of the Lofkënd bronze headbands; the total preserved length of all the main joining or nearly joining fragments is 0.586 m. The attached hooks have a height of 0.045 and a width, at their lower terminal, of 0.058 m. The rivet heads have a diameter of 0.005. The weight of all fragments, including chips, is 41.4 g. The headband has been reconstructed as shown (Fig. 13a–b), from numerous joining and

non-joining fragments that preserve most of the band. The bronze, however, is corroded and extremely fragile, with the incised decoration only visible under raking light. The various components of the headband on the drawing are labeled “a” through “f” for the purposes of describing the incised decoration. The band is made of a hammered strip of sheet bronze, the terminals connected on one fragment by means of two rivets (Fig. 13a). The neatly articulated terminals of the headband are framed on either side by a hook, each hook connected by three rivets. The bronze rings (SF 091d and SF 091e, TLXX-2a and TLXX-2b, see below) may have been originally associated with the hooks.

The entire band is decorated with fine incision, as shown. For the main part of the headband the decoration consists of three registers of finely incised multiple horizontal zigzags, each register separated, as well as framed above and below, by a row of fine repoussé dots. For portion of the band (labeled “b” on the drawing), the upper and lower registers are decorated with hatched dogtooth instead of the multiple zigzags. The three registers of multiple zigzags on the fragment labeled “c” on the drawing are framed, probably on either side, by hatched dogtooth set vertically and framed by repoussé dots. Similar registers of horizontal multiple and vertical zigzags and hatched dogtooth appear to frame a series of circles on fragments “a,” “c,” “e” and “f” on the drawing, each formed of fine repoussé dots, except, perhaps, for the circle on fragment “a,” which is very poorly preserved and barely visible (it, too, may have been formed by repoussé dots, but too little survives to be certain). All

¹⁴ Papadopoulos *et al.* 2007, 120, fig. 12.

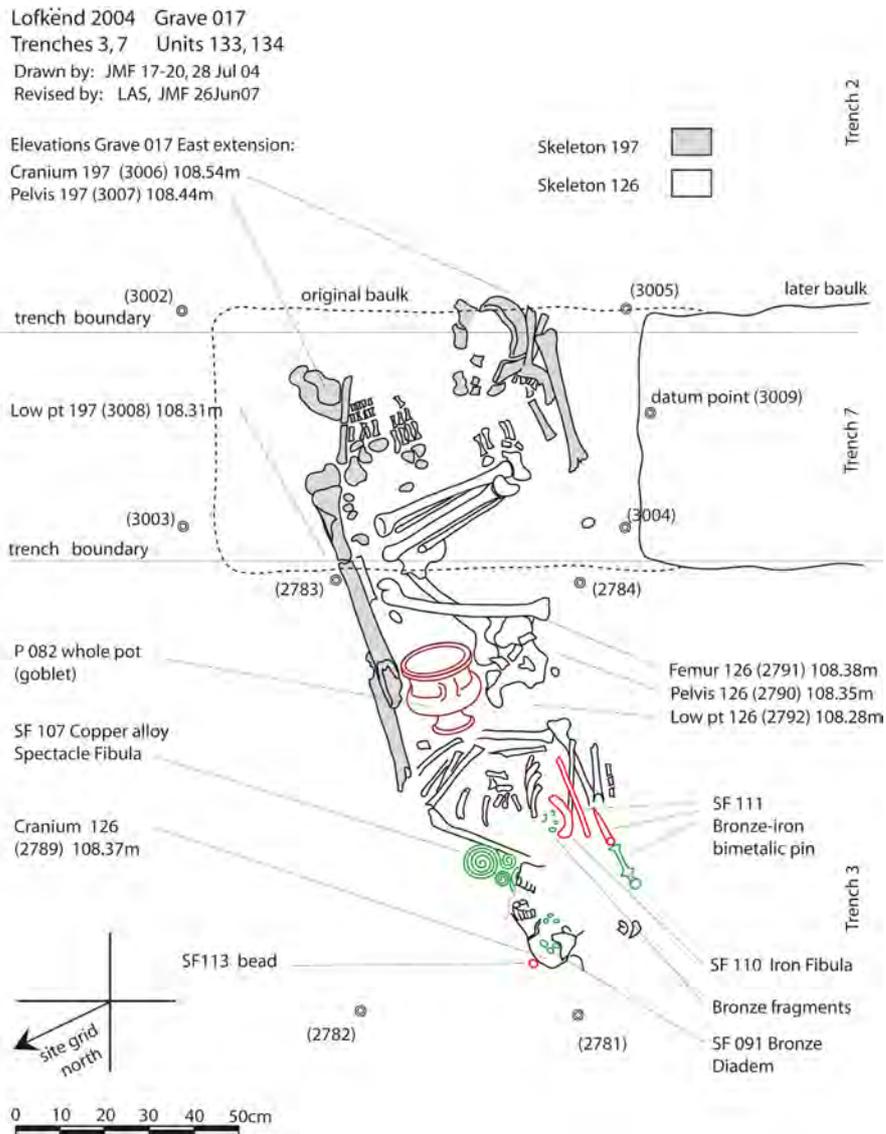


Fig. 12. Plan of Tomb LXX, drawing by M. Farrar and S. Martin-MacAuliffe.

the circles, except perhaps for that on fragment “f,” are further decorated with hatching set in groups as shown, but too poorly preserved to determine the precise design. Although headbands with incised and repoussé decoration are known from other contemporary or near contemporary sites in Albania, I know of no parallels for the decoration on this piece.

Associated with this headband were two bronze rings (TLXX-2a and TLXX-2b), with diameters of 0.021 and 0.024 m respectively, and weights of 1.4 and 3.1 g (Fig. 14). Both are plain rings, the smaller of the two circular to ovoid

in section, the larger plano-convex in section. Also associated was a small piece of iron (weight: 0.4 g).

Cultural affiliations: The central Balkans, Europe, and Greece

The Lofkënd bronze headbands provide an important assemblage of such items of personal ornament found *in situ* in the tombs of children and young females. In Albania

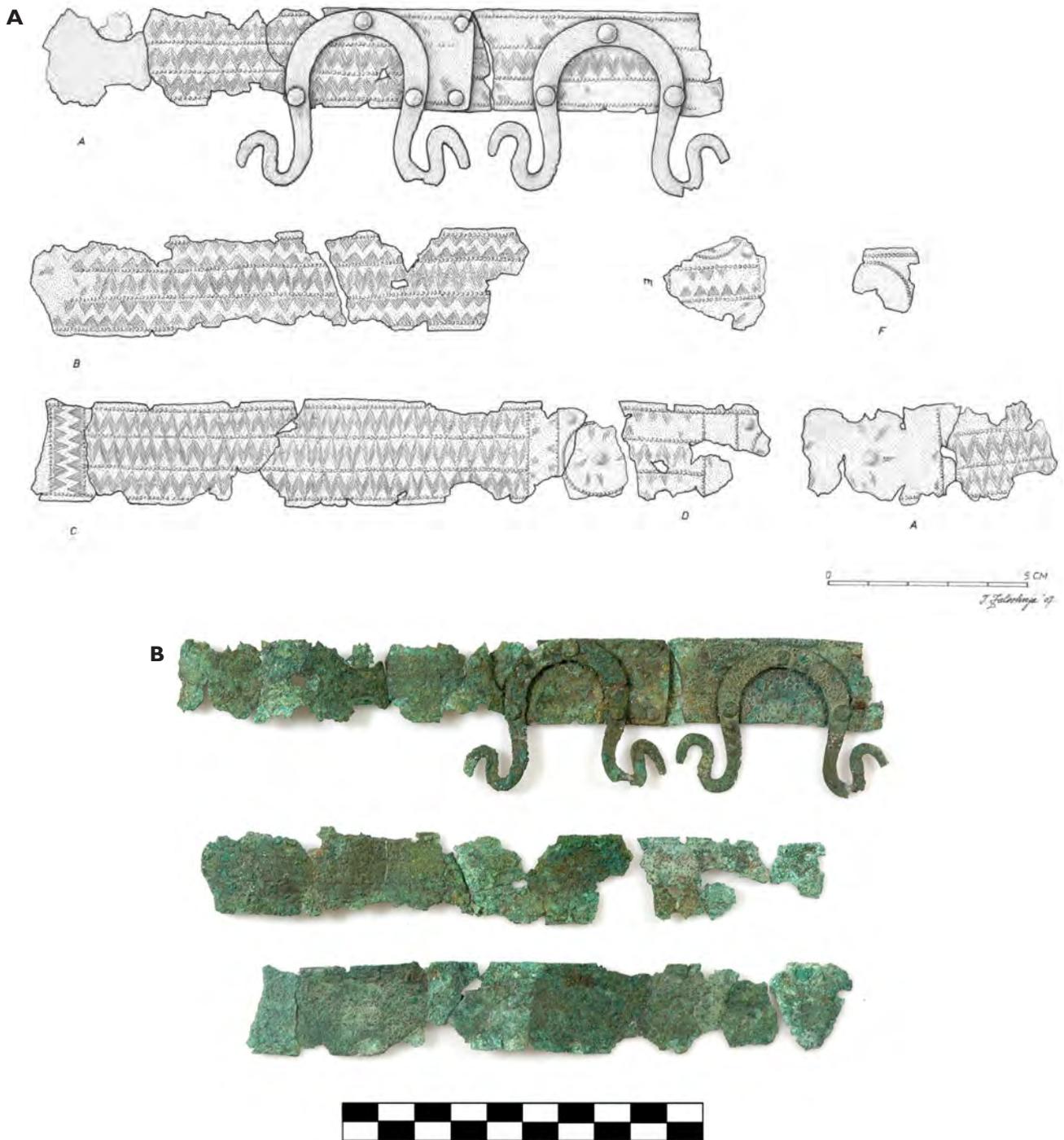


Fig. 13. Bronze headband (TLXX-2): a) drawing by I. Zalosbnja; b) photo by R. MacDonald.

bronze headdresses, usually referred to as diadems, are known in tombs from a number of Late Bronze and Early Iron Age tumuli, all of them decorated with various motifs, whether incised or repoussé, including Patos, Burrel, several from the tumuli at Shtoj, Shtikës, as well as Tumulus I at Barç.¹⁵ In virtually all of these burials, the human remains were never systematically studied and some not even collected. Bronze headbands continue to be used in later burials in Albania, as the magnificently decorated bronze example of the Classical period from Tomb 20 in Tumulus I in the necropolis of Apollonia testifies.¹⁶

In the Balkans north of Albania, bronze headbands are well represented in Bosnia-Herzegovina, at Donja Dolina,¹⁷ and in the various graves of the Glasinac region, including ones that can be assigned to the later stages of the Bronze Age and to the Early Iron Age.¹⁸ Farther north, bronze headbands, variously referred to individually either as “Stirnband” or more simply as a “Bronzeband,” are well known in a number of funerary contexts.¹⁹ A copper diadem from Vyčapy-Opatovce in Slovakia, with pointillé decoration, is assigned to the Early Bronze Age by Marija Gimbutas, though the absolute date remains something of a problem.²⁰ Copper and bronze headbands with a backing of leather of the Late Bronze Age are found at Straubing and elsewhere.²¹

To the south of Albania, in neighboring Epirus and Greek Macedonia, bronze headbands very similar to those of Lofkënd are known at Vitsa Zagoriou,²² in the tumulus burials at Pogoni, which should date to the period of transition between the Late Bronze and the Early Iron Age,²³

Dodone,²⁴ and Vergina;²⁵ the Vitsa and Vergina examples date to the 9th century BC. There is also an example from an Early Iron Age burial at Spelaion near Grevena;²⁶ and elsewhere in western Greece, there is a repoussé-decorated piece of sheet bronze from Ithake, which is perhaps from a belt rather than a headband, with very similar decoration to the example from Vitsa.²⁷ Bronze headbands, whether decorated or plain, are known from other sites in Greece, including an example from east Lokris with an attached double axe.²⁸

In Greece, one of the earliest studies of bronze “diadems,” all of them with incised decoration, was Adolf Furtwängler’s seminal 1890 publication of the bronzes and other small finds from Olympia.²⁹ In his brief but typically illuminating analysis, Furtwängler noted a number of early terracotta figurines, of Geometric or Early Orientalizing date, of human figures wearing headbands, many of them with incised decoration.³⁰ Two of these are clearly female (nos. 265, 290), but in the case of the third, which has both a headband decorated with incised zigzag and a belt with similar zigzag (no. 264), gender is not clear; there are no breasts and no clear genitalia and, as such, a young girl is probably what is indicated. In his discussion of the “diadems,” Furtwängler wrote:

“Wie die primitiven Bronze- und Terrakottastatuetten lehren, war ein breites Diadem mit linearer Verzierung (vergl. 264, 265, 290) ein charakteristischer Teil der Frauentracht, den ja auch die ältere Poesie mit den beliebten Beiworten *καλλιστέφανος* *εὐστέφανος* *χρυσάμπυξ* und dergleichen an den Frauen hervorhebt. Zahlreiche kleinere und grössere Diademe aus dünnen Bronzeblech mit geometrischen Ornamenten haben sich in den tiefsten Schichten um die Altäre in Olympia gefunden, die offenbar selbständige Weihgaben waren. Sie fanden sich mit den bereits besprochenen primitiven Tier- und Menschenfiguren zusammen und gehören ohne Zweifel der selben ältesten Epoche an wie diese. Besonders häufig waren sie in der Gegend des Pelopion.”³¹

¹⁵ For Patos, see Korkuti 1981, 44, pl. VII (Tomb 68); also the fragmentary examples, 44, pl. VII (Tomb 63). For Burrel, see Kurti 1983, 91, 96, 103, pl. I (Tomb 4, no. 19), which derives from one of the richest tombs in the tumulus. For the tumuli at Shtoj, see Koka 1990, 64, pl. II (Tomb 3, no. 8); 35, 66, pl. IV (Tomb 5, no. 53), the latter with incised motifs including some found on matt-painted pottery; Jubani 1992, 27, 49, pl. II, (Tomb 8, no. 3). For Shtikës, see Aliu 1996, 63, 76, pl. IV, no. 1. For Barç see Andrea 1985, 23, pl. IV, no. 2 (Tomb 19); 25–26, pl. V, no. 2 (Tomb 34); 32–33, pl. IX, no. 1 (Tomb 78).

¹⁶ Mano 1971, 142, pl. XLIII, no. 1.

¹⁷ Truhelka 1904, pl. XI, no. 1.

¹⁸ See Benac & Čović 1956, 55, pl. XXIV, no. 2 (Podlaze, Tumulus LXXXX, Grave 1); note also the incised decorated band from Mlad, Tumulus X, Grave 9: 57, pl. XXIX, no. 4; Benac and Čović 1957, 66, pl. VI, no. 12 (Ilijak, Tumulus IV, Grave 1); 67, pl. X, no. 11 (Rusanovići, Tumulus XXV, Grave 2); 69, pl. XIII, no. 7 (Ilijak, Tumulus III, Grave 2); 69, pl. XV, no. 14 (Ilijak, Tumulus III, Grave 9).

¹⁹ E.g. Åberg 1932, 49, fig. 67 (top); 81, fig. 169 (left), fully discussed on p. 78.

²⁰ Gimbutas 1965, 40, fig. 10, no. 26.

²¹ See Gimbutas 1965, 254, fig. 163, nos. 30–31; cf. 599, fig. 420.

²² Vokotopoulou 1986, 152–153, fig. 3; fig. 108c, pl. 245a, inv. 2350, from the richly furnished female inhumation, Tomb 113.

²³ Andreou & Andreou 1999, 81, figs. 12, 14–15.

²⁴ Evangelides 1935, 235–236, fig. 9, nos. 53–55; pl. 23a, no. 1; pl. 24a, no. 23.

²⁵ Andronikos 1969, 251–254, fig. 88; Radt 1974, 132–133, pl. 40, no. 1.

²⁶ Rhomiopoulou 1971, 38, fig. 1.

²⁷ Benton 1953, 352, pl. 69, nos. E.243, E.243a (= Kilian 1975, pl. 16, no. 12).

²⁸ Dakoronia 2006, 502, fig. 26.12.

²⁹ Furtwängler 1890, 46–48, pls. XVIII–XIX, nos. 297–316.

³⁰ Including Furtwängler 1890, pl. XV, nos. 264, 265; pl. XVII, no. 290.

³¹ Furtwängler 1890, 46.

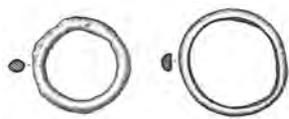


Fig. 14. Bronze rings (TLXX-2a and TLXX-2b) associated with the headband (TLXX-2), drawing by I. Zaloshnja.

The Olympia headbands were dedications at the Sanctuary at Olympia, but their context provides little evidence for their use, though one might speculate that given Furtwängler's connection of these headbands with women, they were perhaps dedications to Hera, rather than to Zeus. Be that as it may, many of the Olympia diadems are decorated with incised zigzags, not the same as, but not unlike those on Lofkënd TLXX-2, whereas others are decorated with repoussé dots, sometimes defining circles, semicircles, or running spirals.³² A number of related sheets of decorated hammered bronzes are classified as "Armrings," and one or two of them may conceivably be headbands.³³ One of these is decorated with opposed diagonals (no. 381), another with meander (no. 382), and a third with zigzag (no. 380). In a similar vein, one or two of the so-called belts from Halstatt, particularly some of the smaller and more fragmentary examples, might be from headbands,³⁴ so too some of fragmentary pieces from Emporio on Chios classified as belts.³⁵

In addition to the pieces already cited, bronze headbands, including miniatures, are well represented among the votive offerings in a number of Greek sanctuary sites, including the Athenian Acropolis, the Argive Heraion, Bassai, Lousoi, Perachora, Troizen, Thessalian Philia, and the Sanctuary of Apollo at Crimisa in southern Italy, to mention only a few.³⁶ Related gold headbands are well known from

both Greek sanctuary sites,³⁷ and from tombs.³⁸ Although the context of the headbands dedicated at sanctuary sites does not provide any information as to the gender or sex of the dedicant, the examples from tombs can be associated with the deceased, the sex of which may be determined either by the analysis of the physical anthropology, or else deduced or guessed at by the contents of the burials. The former method remains the most accurate, the latter is not infallible, as many graves goods can be associated with both males and females.³⁹ What is interesting about the bronze headbands from sites in Epirus and Macedonia is that the majority belong, whenever there is enough evidence to determine the sex/gender of the deceased or to venture a guess, to female tombs. This pattern, however, is not standard across Greece in the Early Iron Age. For example, the gold headband in Geometric Grave 43 in the Athenian Kerameikos was associated with a male, as was another gold headband associated with Kerameikos Grave hS 109, which

³² For examples with incised zigzags, see Furtwängler 1890, pl. XVIII, nos. 297–302; for repoussé dots see, Furtwängler 1890, pl. XVIII, nos. 303–309; pl. XIX, nos. 310–312, 316.

³³ Furtwängler 1890, pl. XXII, nos. 381–382; p. XXIII, no. 380.

³⁴ See especially Kilian-Dirlmeier 1972, pl. 49, nos. 660, 679; pls. 52–53, nos. 549, 553; and some of the pieces on pl. 48.

³⁵ Boardman 1967, 220–21, fig. 143, no. 323; cf. also some of the "bracelets," especially 212–214, pl. 87, nos. 261–265.

³⁶ E.g. Bather 1892–1893, 251, fig. 20 (Athens, Acropolis); Waldstein 1905, 266–267, pl. XCIX, nos. 1590–1599 (Argive Heraion); Kourouniotis 1910, 324–325, fig. 47 (Bassai); Reichel & Wilhelm 1901, 56, figs. 102–104 (Lousoi); Payne 1940, 181, pl. 81, nos. 2–5 (Perachora); [cf. also the bronze mask with slits for eyes, 181, pl. 81, no. 1]; Bouzek 1982, fig. 7, no. 1 (Troizen); Kilian-Dirlmeier 2002, 68–69, pl. 66, nos. 1024–1033 (Athena-Itonia sanctuary near Philia in Thessaly, though not all are certainly headbands); Orsi 1933, 97, fig. 58 (silver headband, from the Sanctuary of Apollo at Crimisa).

³⁷ Payne 1940, 185 (Perachora); Orsi 1933, 87–88, fig. 149 (Crimisa); cf. the gold/electrum "strips" in Hogarth 1908, 109, pl. IX, nos. 29, 52 (Ephesos). For gold headbands see, generally, Kourouniotis 1913, especially 290–296, various examples, pls. XIV–XVI; Reichel 1942; Ohly 1953; Szilgágyi 1957; Greifenhagen 1970, pl. 3, nos. 1–5; pl. 4, nos. 1–3; pl. 6, nos. 4, 6; pl. 11, nos. 5–7; Greifenhagen 1975, pl. 2, nos. 6–8; pl. 3, nos. 1–6; pl. 74, no. 7; Higgins 1980, 96–97.

³⁸ Kübler 1954, 190, 238, pl. 158, M 111, Grave 43 (Athens, Kerameikos); Brückner & Pernice 1893, 109–111, fig. 7; 125–127, fig. 24 (Athens, Kerameikos); Schlöb-Vierneisel 1966, 7–8, Beil. 13, no. 6 (Athens, Kerameikos); Droop 1905–1906, 91–92, fig. 12 right (Athens, Kynosarges [Geometric]); Stavropoulos 1965, 78, pl. 44α, β (two headbands, Athens, Kavalotti Street [Geometric]); Alexandri 1968, 23, fig. 3 (Athens, Kriezti Street [Middle Geometric]); Popham, Sackett, & Themelis 1979–1980, 188, pl. 187, Toumba Tomb 33, nos. 6–7; 190, pls. 189, 232a, Toumba Tomb 36, no. 2 (Lefkandi, Subprotogeometric II–III); Bérard 1970, 36, pl. B1, B2, no. 14.4, fully discussed 36–45 (Eretria); Gjerstad *et al.* 1934, 250, pl. LV, 2 (Lapithos, Cyprus, Tomb 425, nos. 7–8, Cypro-Geometric II); also the "diadems" and gold bands: pl. LXXVIII, 3, Enkomi Tomb 3, nos. 94–95, 111, 150–51, 156–58, 160, 198, 235–36 (Late Cypriot II); pl. LXXX, 2, Enkomi Tomb 8; pl. LXXXI, 2, Enkomi Tomb 10, nos. 57–58; pl. LXXXVII, 1, Enkomi Tomb 17; pl. CXLVI, CXLVII, no. 1; cf. the gold foil headband and related objects from the Danish oak-coffin graves: Randsborg & Christensen 2006, 18, fig. 8; as well as from the so-called goldsmith's workshop: Themelis 1983, 163, fig. 13, no. 14.

³⁹ As I have noted elsewhere, the identity of the deceased cannot be determined accurately on the basis of grave goods alone, and the only way to determine precisely the identity of those interred in a tomb, whether an inhumation or cremation, is through the study of the physical remains, see Liston & Papadopoulos 2004, 32.

also contained an iron sword and spearhead.⁴⁰ Among the burials in Grave Circle B at Mycenae gold bands referred to as “diadems” were found in the tombs of both males and females, though the preponderance of gold headbands actually worn on the head by the deceased was with females, including one thought to be a girl aged five years at death.⁴¹ So it is clear that metal headbands, whether of bronze or gold, in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age were not solely associated with females or males.

What is more consistent, however, at least in Early Iron Age Greece and now in contemporary Albania, is that there is a category of particularly wealthy burials that appear to be associated with younger females. Susan Langdon has assembled no fewer than 43 such burials in Greece, which she refers to as “maiden graves,” ranging in date from Protogeometric to the end of Late Geometric II; I replicate here her table of these tombs (*Table 1*).⁴² Unfortunately, the sex of the deceased in many of the tombs assembled by Langdon could not be determined on the basis of physical anthropology, but rather by the grave goods deposited in the grave. Eight of the 43 tombs contained gold bands,

including Kerameikos Geometric Grave 50, Erechtheion Street Tomb Θ2, Kynosarges Tombs III, IX, and XII, and Lefkandi Toumba Tombs 33, 36, and 42. Of these, Kerameikos Grave 50 and Toumba Tomb 36 were clearly children, while the individual in Tomb Θ2, who was buried with no fewer than 83 pots, was considered to be a girl by the excavator.⁴³ At least one of the individuals in Grave Ξ in Grave Circle B may well have been such a “maiden,” namely the individual thought to be a girl aged five years at death, richly equipped with many ornaments of gold, silver, and semi-precious stone, in addition to the gold band worn on the head.⁴⁴

But how early do such burials appear in the Aegean, especially tombs with headbands? One of the earliest headbands *in situ* in a grave in the Aegean dates back to the Early Bronze Age: it is the celebrated silver “diadem” from Grave 14 at Dokathismata on the island of Amorgos (*Fig. 15a*).⁴⁵ In describing the tomb, Christos Tsountas noted that of the human remains only the cranium with the “diadem” was preserved, and it was behind the cranium that the silver pin, surmounted by an animal, was found, perhaps a hair-pin (*Fig. 15b*).⁴⁶ The fact that only the cranium survived, or was well preserved, recalls many of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age tombs at Lofkënd, and it may well be that Tomb 14 at Dokathismata was that of a child. Although this burial may not be as lavishly furnished as some of the graves of Mycenae or Early Iron Age Athens or Lefkandi, in the context of the Early Cycladic period this is one of the richest burials in captivity, with silver objects never very common in tombs of the time. The silver headband from Dokathismata Tomb 14 is not the only silver band from an Early Cycladic context. The unique but fragmentary silver band from Tower B at the site of Chalandriani on Syros with repoussé decoration depicting what is usually interpreted as a “bird goddess” and a “collared beast” is referred to as a “diadem” by Emily Vermeule, but more simply as a “tainia” by the excavator, Tsountas (*Fig. 16*).⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Kübler 1954, 190, 238–239 (the grave is dated by Coldstream 1968, 14 to the transitional Early Geometric II–Middle Geometric I period). For Tomb hS 109 (hS = heiligen Strasse), see Schlörb-Vierneisel 1966, 7–8 (which is Middle Geometric II). For further discussion of gold bands associated with male Early Iron Age burials in the Kerameikos, see Strömberg 1993, 75, 91. There may well be a further diachronic element at play, in that gold bands were more often found with male burials in the Kerameikos during Middle Geometric (see Strömberg 1993, 91) and with young females in Late Geometric (see Langdon 2008, 132–133, *Table 3.1*), at which time male graves in general become metal-poor.

⁴¹ The information is based on Mylonas 1973, which includes a chapter by J. Lawrence Angel on the human skeletons from the Shaft Graves (Angel 1973), but the evidence has been synthesized and carefully analyzed by Dr Sofia Voutsaki, to whom I am most grateful for sharing with me the results of her work. Grave Ξ was thought to be a girl aged 5, who had a gold band with three affixed cross-shaped ornaments on the head; a similar band was also worn on the head of a female (aged 37 years) in Grave Y (perhaps around the hair); and there were two gold bands on the right of the head of the individual in Grave O, thought to be a female by Mylonas. The gold “diadems” in Graves A, I, and N were associated with males, that in Grave N around the neck of the deceased (a male aged 45 years at death); another male in Grave N (aged 28 years) was buried with, among other things, seven fragments of a gold band cut into pieces. The gold bands in Graves Γ, E, and Λ, could not be clearly associated with an individual or else there was insufficient evidence to determine the age and sex of the deceased. In addition to Grave Circle B, gold bands, conceivably headbands, are also common in Grave Circle A, but there their context is less well recorded, see Karo 1930, pls. XXXVI–XXXVII, nos. 232–35; pl. XXXVIII, nos. 219, 286–87; pl. XXXIX, nos. 231, 236–39; 70, pl. LXXII, no. 219; pl. XLV, nos. 292–93, 311; cf. also some of the “Goldbänder” and “Armbänder,” 124, fig. 45, nos. 638, 654; pl. XLIII, nos. 255, 257; they are also found in the Aigina Treasure, see Evans 1893, 210–211, nos. L, M.

⁴² Langdon 2008, 130–143, especially 132–133, *Table 3.1*.

⁴³ For further details, see Langdon 2008, 130–143; for Erechtheion Street Tomb Θ2 see Brouskari 1979.

⁴⁴ In addition to the gold band, the individual had beads of semi-precious stone, gold spirals as hair ornaments, a silver pin, gold earrings and a ring, simple gold wire, and a necklace of additional beads of various materials. There was also, near the right hand, a gold walnut-shaped object that was perhaps a rattle. The tomb also contained a number of pots. I am grateful to Dr Voutsaki for this information; for illustrations of the material in Grave Ξ, see Mylonas 1973, pls. 155–160.

⁴⁵ Tsountas 1898, 154, pl. 8, no. 1; Åberg 1933, 72, fig. 130.

⁴⁶ Tsountas 1898, 154; for the pin, see pl. 8, no. 66.

⁴⁷ See Vermeule 1972, 33, 53, fig. 9; Tsountas 1899, 123, pl. 10, no. 1. As Vermeule (1972, 33) elaborates, the context is unusual, for it is clear that the acropolis of Chalandriani was abandoned while still filled with storage jars and valuables such as the silver band.

Table 1. Young female burials arranged by date. From *Art and identity in Dark Age Greece, 1100–700 BC*, by Susan Langdon. Copyright © 2008 Susan Langdon. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.

Burial	Grave type	Date	osteo. sex/age	hair spiral	HIW doll	total HIW ware	model boot	tc chest	kalathos	figurine	horse pyxis	gold band	pomegranate	basket	gold objects	total jewelry	total pottery
1 Agora I5:2	I	PG	f 20													18	2
2 Kerameikos PG5	C	PG	f	2 g											2	4	4
3 Kerameikos PG13	* C, P	PG	f					2								2	12
4 Kerameikos PG22	I	PG	f	2 g				1							2	3	3
5 Kerameikos PG25	C	PG	f	1 g											1	1	1
6 Kerameikos PG39	C, P	PG	f	3 bz		15				1						8	22
7 Kerameikos PG48	C, P	PG	f		2	99										2	39
8 Kerameikos PG33	C	PG	n/a		2	3										2	4
9 Agora F9:1	I	PG	child	3 bz												4	8
10 Erechtheiou Iota	C, P	PG	f 5-10	2 g											2	2	1
11 S Acropolis XLII	I	PG	child?	2 g											2	2	3
12 Nea Ionia Pyre B	* C, P	PG	n/a		2	37		1	3?								many
13 Lefkandi P22	I	LPG	f	2 gt	1	1		1	4	2						5	30
14 Lefkandi T63	* I	LPG	n/a	2 gt					6						17	26	12
15 Skyros, Ayia Anna gr. 2	* I	LPG			2											1	14+
16 Agora D16:2	C	EG I	prob f	2 e			2 pr				1					6	21
17 Pouloupoulou 20, TH	* I	EG I	n/a	1 bz		10			2							4	5
18 Ag. Demetriou 20	* I	EG I	child		2	2	2 pr									4	6
19 Lefkandi T51	I	SPGI/EGI	n/a	2 gt						1					3	12	12
20 Lefkandi T42	P	SPGI	n/a									1	1		8	11	8
21 Lefkandi T36	P	SPGII/III	child c. 6									1			c.16	c.29	1
22 Lefkandi T33	I	SPGIII	n/a									1			19	12+	5
23 Lefkandi T74	I	SPGIIIa/MGI	n/a		1	2			3	2					15	21	10
24 Agora I18:1	I	MGI	f 14													3	18
25 Eleusis alpha	I	MGI	n/a			4	1 pr		3	1					4+	8	35
26 Mitsaion/Zitrou B	* C	G	child			xx	1 pr										many
27 Eleusis XIX	* C	MG	child				1						1				?
28 Kynosarges III	C	MGII/LGI	n/a	1 gt								2			4	4	6
29 Kynosarges IX	I	MGII/LGI	n/a	2 gt							1	1			1	3	2
30 Merenda G 19	* I	LGIa	n/a						8	3							35
31 Agora G12:17	I	LGIa	f 15	2 bz					2		3					9	22
32 Kerameikos VDAk 1	I	LGI	f "young?"								2					6	45
33 Erysichthonos V-VI	I, P	LG	n/a	2 g									1	1	4	3	c. 10
34 Agora G12:9	I	LGIb	f 19								1					6	7
35 Kerameikos G50	I	LGI	child							5	1	1	1	1	1	1	9
36 Erechtheiou T2	I	LGII	girl?								2	1			1	1	83
37 Kynosarges XII	I	LGII	n/a	2 gt							1	1			1	3	14
38 Spata 3	I	LGII	n/a								3				1	3	14
39 Anavyssos 22	* C	LGII	n/a										2	1		?	?
40 Anavyssos 33	* C	LGII	n/a										2	1		?	?
41 Corinth North Cem 21	I	LGII	n/a						1			1					2
42 Würzburg grave group	*	LGIa	n/a										1	3			9
43 Lambros grave group	*	LGIa	n/a								1		1				20

Abbreviations: C = cremation, P = pyre, I = inhumation, g = gold, bz = bronze, gt = gilt, e = electrum, pr = pair.

Consequently, something of a pattern can be observed with regard to “maiden graves” from the Early Bronze Age, into the Shaft Grave period and the Early Iron Age. The important point is that these tombs are of young women or children that have not attained a critical rite of passage: marriage.⁴⁸ In the context of Late Bronze and Early Iron

Age Lofkënd, this issue is effectively explored by Lyssa Stapleton in her work on the burial customs of the tumulus.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Stapleton forthcoming; also discussed in Stapleton 2008. The fact that two of the four Lofkënd bronze headbands are associated with children, as opposed to younger adults, does not undercut the association of the headbands with females and marriages. The children with bronze headbands are probably female, an aspect that is more fully discussed by Stapleton.

⁴⁸ Van Genneep 1960 [1909].

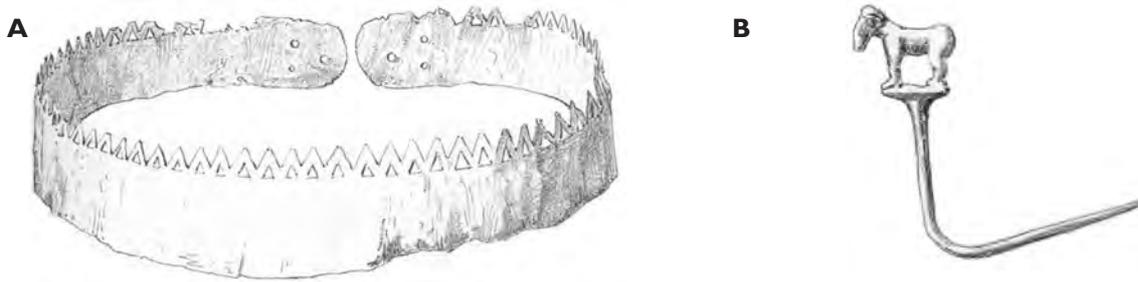


Fig. 15. *Dokathismata* (Amorgos), Early Cycladic Tomb 14 a) silver headband; b) silver pin surmounted by an animal, after Tsountas 1898, 154, pl. 8, nos. 1 and 66.

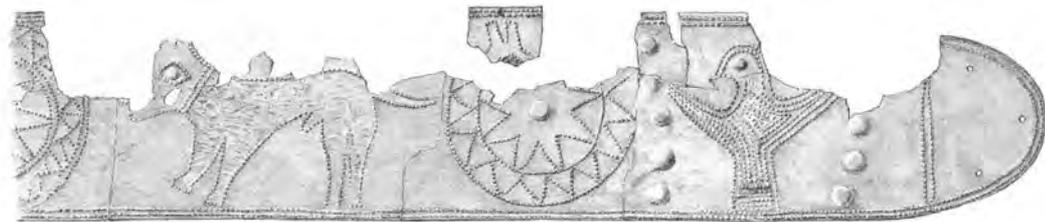


Fig. 16. Silver “diadem” with repoussé decoration from Tower B at Chalandriani on Syros (after Tsountas 1899, pl. 10, no. 1).

Following John Oakley and Rebecca Sinos, Stapleton refers to the important symbolism of the “wreath” in Athenian weddings of the Classical period:⁵⁰ “the wedding was the time for the most extravagant adornment of a woman’s life.”⁵¹ Indeed, the emphasis placed on marriage as a rite of passage in many different cultures around the world reflects the importance of the reproductive capacity of the younger generation: the death of a young man or woman is a loss of potential that affected the entire community.⁵² Moreover, death prior to marriage was a disruption of the natural order.⁵³ In the same way that the unmarried dead of ancient Greece required special sympathy, so too do they in traditional Modern Greece.⁵⁴

The tragedy of the death of an unmarried youth and its effect on a community is well captured in Loring Danforth’s *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece*, together with the poignant photograph by Alexander Tsiaras, the caption to which reads:

“Thanasis’s death was one of the most tragic anyone could remember. He had lived and worked in the United States for seven years and was about to be

married. During this time his mother had begged him repeatedly to come back to Greece to see his family. Living abroad for so long was almost like being dead. Finally Thanasis relented and returned to Greece. Upon his arrival in Athens, airport officials took him into custody, and he was inducted into the army immediately. Three months later an army truck he was driving went off the road and rolled over. Thanasis died instantly. His skull had been crushed.

When Thanasis finally returned home, when his mother finally saw him after so many years, he had been dead for several days. Some people suggested that the funeral take place right away. His mother, however, insisted that Thanasis remain in the house overnight and be buried the following day. It would be the last chance she would have to see him, the last night he would spend at home with his family.

Because Thanasis had never married, his funeral was celebrated ‘like a wedding.’ A white wedding crown was placed on his head, and wedding songs were sung over his body as funeral laments. Thanasis’ funeral would be his wedding. He was about to marry the black earth!’ [emphases mine].⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Stapleton forthcoming; Oakley & Sinos 1993, 8, 12, 16; see also Rehm 1994, 14.

⁵¹ Oakley & Sinos 1993, 16.

⁵² Garland 1985, 86; Pader 1982, 43; Stone 2000, 133.

⁵³ Stapleton forthcoming; Pomeroy 1975, 62; Ferrari 2003, 36.

⁵⁴ Garland 1985, 87.

⁵⁵ Danforth 1982, caption to plate 2.

What Danforth and Tsiaras recorded in the modern village of Potamia is very similar to what we see in the archaeological record at Lofkënd and in so many other tombs of pre- and proto-historic Greece.

By what word were headbands known in antiquity?

We may never know by what word the ancient Illyrians of Lofkënd referred to their bronze headbands, but Greek literature is replete with several terms by which these distinctive items of personal ornament may have been known. Of the words that immediately suggest themselves, it is ironic that the term by which most examples are identified in the modern literature, *διάδημα*—diadem—is the least appropriate or least likely to have been used in antiquity. In several Classical sources, a *διάδημα* (as in *διαδέω*, to bind on either side) was a band or fillet round the *τιάρα* worn by the Persian king.⁵⁶ A *διάδημα* was also worn by Alexander the Great and his successors, and by kings generally. Indeed, the word is not common—if at all attested—before the Persian Wars.⁵⁷

The most likely term instead is *στεφάνη*. The term generally means anything that surrounds or encircles the head for defense or ornament.⁵⁸ It can refer to both a woman's headdress and the brim of a helmet.⁵⁹ The word is attested in Homer and Hesiod and, when applied to women, it often refers to a coronal. In *Iliad* 18.597–598 the dancing maidens and youths are contrasted in the following terms:

“καί ῥ’ αἱ μὲν καλὰς στεφάνας ἔχον, οἱ δὲ μαχαίρας εἶχον χρυσείας ἐξ ἀργυρέων τελαμώνων.”

“and the maidens had fair wreaths, and the youths daggers
of gold hanging from their silver baldrics.”

In the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite (6.1), the song begins with gold-crowned and beautiful Aphrodite: “*Αἰδοίην, χρυσοστέφανον, καλὴν Ἶφροδίτην.*” Several lines down in the same poem, the well-wrought crown of gold is noted

⁵⁶ *LSJ* s.v. *διάδημα*; especially Xenophon, *Cyropedia* 8.3.13; Plutarch 2.488d.

⁵⁷ For references to the diadems worn by Alexander and the successors, see *LSJ* s.v. *διάδημα*, especially Arrian, *Anabasis* 7.22.2; Herodian Grammaticus, *Herodiani Technici reliquiae* 1.3.3.

⁵⁸ *LSJ* s.v. *στεφάνη*.

⁵⁹ Other meanings for *στεφάνη*, in the medical writers, as well as in geometry, geography, etc. are enumerated in *LSJ* s.v. *στεφάνη*.

more fully: “*κρατὶ δ’ ἐπ’ ἀθανάτῳ στεφάνην εὐτυκτον ἔθηκον καλὴν*” (6.7). In a similar vein, a *στεφάνη* in Hesiod (*Theogony* 578) refers to the crown of gold made by Hephaistos himself. It is worth adding that in Modern Greek, *στέφανα*, in the plural, refers to marriage wreaths; a *στεφάνη* or *στεφάνι* or *στέφανος* can refer to a wreath (especially in marriage), a crown, or to a hoop of a barrel; as a verb, *στεφανώ* is to crown or to celebrate marriage, *στεφανόμαι* to marry or get married.

Two other words are worth considering, *κρήδεμνον* and *ταινία*, of which the former is perhaps the most interesting. The word *κρήδεμνον* (Doric *κράδεμνον*) refers to a woman's headdress or veil, a kind of *mantilla*.⁶⁰ In *Iliad* Book 22, when Andromache sees Hektor's body being dragged by Achilles, she fell backward, the darkness of night coming down over her eyes. The rest of the passage, laden with the numerous bride-gifts brought to her by Hektor, is worth quoting in full:

“*τῆλε δ’ ἀπὸ κρατὸς βάλε δέσματα σιγαλόεντα, ἄμπυκα κεκρύφαλον τε ἰδὲ πλεκτὴν ἀναδέσμη κρήδεμνόν θ’, ὃ ῥά οἱ δῶκε χρυσέη Ἶφροδίτη ἡματι τῷ ὅτε μιν κορυθαίολος ἠγάγεθ’ Ἐκτωρ ἐκ δόμου Ἡετίωνος, ἐπεὶ πόρε μυρία ἔδνα*” (*Iliad* 22.468–472).

Given the complexity of Andromache's headdress, I prefer to cite the translations of two established Homeric scholars. A.T. Murray translates the passage thus:

“Far from her head she cast the bright attiring thereof, the frontlet and the coif and kerchief and woven band, and the veil that golden Aphrodite had given her on the day when Hektor of the flashing helm led her as his bride forth from the house of Eëtion, after he had brought bride-gifts past counting.”

Richmond Lattimore translates the same passage in this way:

“..... and far off
threw from her head the shining gear that ordered
her headdress,
the diadem and the cap, and the holding-band woven together,
and the circlet, which Aphrodite the golden once
had given her

⁶⁰ *LSJ* s.v. *κρήδεμνον*.

on the day when Hektor of the shining helm led her forth
from the house of Eëtion, and gave numberless gifts
to win her”

It is clear that in English at least, the various components of Andromache’s headdress could be rendered in any number of ways. Elsewhere in Homer κρήδεμνον appears several times. In *Iliad* 14.184 and in *Odyssey* 1.334 it is translated as a “veil” by both Murray and Lattimore, but the context of both passages is more straightforward. There is, however, a related metaphorical meaning for the word, which, at least in Homer, always appears in the plural, κρήδεμνα, referring to the battlements that crown a city’s walls.⁶¹ The word appears in both the *Iliad* 16.100 (“Τροίης ἱερὰ κρήδεμνα λύωμεν”) and the *Odyssey* 13.388 (“Τροίης λύομεν λιπαρὰ κρήδεμνα”). In both passages, Murray translates κρήδεμνα as the “diadem” of Troy, whereas Lattimore prefers to render the word as “coronal.” In the *Shield of Herakles* 105, Hesiod writes: “ὅς Θήβης κρήδεμνον ἔχει ῥύεταί τε πόλῃα,” and here the term κρήδεμνον, in the singular, refers to the “veil” of walls that guards the city of Thebes, and this is the way in which it is most often given in English. At a later time, I would like to think that the distinctive crown often worn by Tyche showing the battlements of a city, such as the well-known marble statuette of the Tyche of Antioch in the Vatican, may have been called in Greek κρήδεμνον.⁶²

There is, finally, the word ταινία, which has several meanings. The word most often refers to a band, fillet, and especially a headband, worn as a sign of victory (whether athletic, military, or even a beauty contest); it can also be a breastband worn by young girls, or else an abdominal band or even a bandage.⁶³ Other meanings abound, as ταινία can mean: a stripe in fur; the pennon, or banner, of a ship; a strip or tongue of land; a fillet or fascia in joinery; a tape-worm; as well as a long thin fish.⁶⁴ There is even a diminutive of ταινία: ταινίον. As a verb, ταινιώ refers to binding with a headband, to be crowned. Such bands, ταινίαι, can also be draped on victory monuments and on funerary stelai.⁶⁵

⁶¹ *LSJ* s.v. κρήδεμνα.

⁶² The style of the statuette (H: 0.895 m) is discussed and illustrated in Ridgway 1990, 234–236, pl. 115; and Pollitt (1986, 1–4) provides a penetrating overview of the Hellenistic obsession with fortune. For the “couronne murale des villes” see, generally, Deonna 1940.

⁶³ *LSJ* s.v. ταινία.

⁶⁴ *LSJ* s.v. ταινία.

⁶⁵ For bands or fillets tied around funerary stelai see, among others, Vermeule 1979, 10, fig. 5; and cf. the fillets dangling from the top of the representation on an Athenian white-ground lekythos of a boy on a pillow asleep in his tomb, 27, fig. 20.

Consequently, whatever the Illyrian word for the distinctive headbands of Lofkënd, there are several words by which the Early Iron Age headbands in Greece may have been called: στεφάνη, ταινία, and perhaps even κρήδεμνον.

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