

Summary

“Circular Rock-cut Ostotheques”

A New Type of Grave Discovered at Trebenna and a Reexamine of Similar Hollows

A new type of grave, discovered during the periodical surveys at Trebenna and its territory, which is situated at the border where Pamphylia, Lycia and Pisidia meet, has not only proven to be a new type, but has also shed light on the function of similar hollows that have to date been interpreted incorrectly, because these graves were not found with all their elements intact.

This type of grave, cut into the main rock, together with sarcophagi or in isolation, labeled as “rock-cut circular ostotheques”, can be described in short as: A cylindrical through, with or without a groove for a cover at its opening, and a conical cover closes it. Fifteen such cylindrical troughs cut into the rock close to each other, and six lids were found at the Trebenna Dereözü Necropolis. Finding five such covers was the lucky part of the work. Besides, there were traces of a sixth one. The form of this sixth cover preserved by a Byzantine wall which was built over, at a time when the cover was in place on the grave, proves clearly that the five other lids found in proximity belonged to these graves. The third lid, with the inscription “Trokondas has built this grave for his wife Artemeitos and himself”, leaves no doubt as to the function of these circular graves serving as ostotheques, as well as showing that they were cut for either one or more persons.

Like the sarcophagi cut into rocks, ostotheques with square or rectangular shapes are also known. Individual counterparts of circular ostotheques cut into rock, which stand on the altar, can be seen, numerous examples exist such as those at the Side and Burdur Museums. At the moment, the types of lids are not known, except for the Sagalassos examples in the Burdur Museum. The bell-form chosen for the lid was not a coincidence but an exclusive design and what exactly is the iconography represented by this form has not been determined yet. But the similar objects are small bells which are hanging from the goats.

As there are probably a lot more examples of this grave type in the Trebenna Necropolis, to add to these already known, graves of this type are to be expected in other settlements too. The six examples which we found in Doyran –Kisle indicate there are more to be found as the surveys continue.

Although there is no absolute datum for determining the date of these graves, the middle of the 3rd. century A.D. appears to be the date of the transformation of the characters of the lettering contained in the inscription on the lid numbered 3. Moreover, the sarcophagi they were found with are generally from the 3rd century A.D. This date also accords with the Roman settlement period when the state buildings at Trebenna were erected.