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GOLDEN FACE COVERS FROM THE NORTH PONTIC REGION: ANALYSIS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIAL

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This paper discusses golden covers that appear in funerary contexts concerning both Greek and non-Greek elites during the Late Hellenistic and Roman periods in the North Pontic region. The symbolic meaning behind this cultural trend and how it spread appears to be complex and multi-layered, as it seems to have been intertwined with the regional elite network that allowed for cultural emulation and the use of covers to become more popular and widespread. This study aims to gather and analyse the published archaeological material that relates to this subject. The focus is placed on the specific context in which the material has been found and its often-difficult chronology. Aspects such as the gender and age of the deceased who were equipped with gold covers is also taken into consideration in this study, in order to better understand the relationship between status and a given social role applied by ancient society. A possible direction in which this mortuary custom spread is discussed in relation to the opposition: *polis* – steppe/non-Greek world, which reveals that cultural trends among elites may have originated in a non-Greek environment.

Keywords: North Pontic region, elites, funerary rites, gold

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ЗОЛОТЫЕ ЛИЦЕВЫЕ ПЛАСТИНЫ ИЗ СЕВЕРНОГО ПРИЧЕРНОМОРЬЯ: АНАЛИЗ АРХЕОЛОГИЧЕСКОГО МАТЕРИАЛА

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В статье обсуждаются золотые пластины, которые появляются в погребениях как греческой, так и негреческой элиты в позднеэллинистический и римский периоды на территории Северного Причерноморья. Символическое значение этой культурной тенденции и то, как она распространяется, представляются сложными и многослойными, поскольку эти явления, видимо, были вписаны в региональную сеть взаимодействия элит, что способствовало культурному подражанию и популяризации использования лицевых пластин. Цель данного исследования — сбор и анализ опубликованных археологических материалов, относящихся к этой теме, причем основное внимание уделяется конкретному контексту находок материала и его часто сложной хронологии. Такие аспекты, как пол и возраст погребенных, на которых были обнаружены золотые пластины, также учитываются, что позволяет лучше понять взаимосвязь между статусом и конкретной социальной ролью усопшего. Возможное направление распространения этого погребального обычая обсуждается в связи с оппозицией «полис — степной/негреческий мир», и автор приходит к выводу, что культурные тенденции среди элит могли возникать и в негреческой среде.

Ключевые слова: Северное Причерноморье, элиты, погребальные обряды, золото

Golden funerary face covers have been found both in Greek and non-Greek cultural milieus in places such as Scythian Neapolis and Chersonesus, sites in the South-West Crimea such as “Sovkhoz 10” necropolis, the kurgan near Magarach farm, Zavetnoe, Chyornaya Rechka, Ust’-Al’ma, Opushki, Kul’chuk in the North-West Crimea, and also at Gorgippia, Phanagoria, Kytaiion, Baturinskaya and Stanitsa Yaroslavskaya in Kuban, as well as the settlement at Kam’yanka (in Russian literature known as Kamenka or Kamenskoye gorodishche) and finally, the city of Olbia (see Table and fig. 1 and 2)¹. They were in use roughly from the 2nd century BC until the 3rd century AD and, as a rule, they appear in graves associated with the high social strata of the local population. The tradition of covering the faces of the dead with golden covers has been attested in various regions (such as Asia Minor, Egypt and the Near East) throughout many centuries and appears to be cross-cultural². In many cultures

¹ Pogrebova 1957, 148, n. 1 also mentions Panticapaeum as one of the places where such face covers have been found; she refers to Chuistova’s article in a local Crimean newspaper: Chuistova 1952 (*non vidi*); the site is not discussed in this paper due to the lack of more detailed information as to the character of the finds and the place of their discovery. See also Zaytsev 2004b, 49.

² This includes Asia Minor, Egypt and Near East (Pogrebova 1957, 149–152; see the catalogue in Quast 2014, 292–297).

such a tradition appeared independently³. Consequently, drawing conclusions based on a wide diachronic and cross-regional perspective does not seem useful. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate these funerary objects from a local Black Sea perspective, which allows the focus to be placed on the distinctive local character of this funerary practice and its multiple cultural, social and religious meanings.

The covers and their possible symbolic meaning have been the subject of examination on several occasions, especially in connection with funeral assemblages from Chersonesus and Scythian Neapolis, where face covers have been discovered in larger quantities than at other sites⁴. Interpretations that have often come up in previous research suggest a possible apotropaic function of the covers. This interpretation is often based on Fodor's ethnographic research regarding the use of funerary face covers and masks by the ancient Hungarians during the 10th century⁵. According to Fodor, covering the face protected both the living (from interference by the dead) and the deceased (from evil spirits)⁶. This, however, is not the only possible interpretation of this funerary custom. As will be discussed later, comprehensive and comparative analyses of the graves in which the face covers were found have led to new observations which have gone far beyond the simplistic interpretation that face covers were associated with fear of/for the dead. The examination of new material, discovered during archaeological excavations carried out during the last few decades, may help to further our understanding of this

³ As noticed e.g. by Shul'ts 1953, 63 n. 48.

⁴ Pyatysheva 1956; Pogrebova 1957; 1961, 108–110; Zubar' 1982, 110–113; Zhuravlev, Novikova, Shemakhanskaya 2017; Zhuravlev, Novikova, Kovalenko, Shemakhanskaya 2017, 18–25 (cat. 29–41).

⁵ See Zubar' 1982, 111; Fodor 1972.

⁶ Fodor 1972, 172. Similar interpretations were also put forward by Oreshnikov 1894, 7–8 who mentions the apotropaic function of the covers, and Litvinskiy 1972, 141 who argues that a fear of the dead was the main reason behind this practice. See also Pogrebova 1957, 149; Rieth 1973, 29–30. It has to be pointed out that there is no good reason to interpret North Pontic face covers as a cheaper substitute of golden funeral masks as has often been argued (Oreshnikov 1894, 8; Shul'ts 1953, 63, n. 48; Zubar' 1982, 110–111; Zubar', Meshcheryakov 1983, 109–110; Papanova 2000, 124; 2006, 204–207; see also Kuftin 1941, 39, and Fodor 1972, 172–173 who argues that face covers and funeral masks bore exactly the same symbolic meaning). Golden funeral masks appeared in the northern Black Sea region later than face covers and in fact, it would be more convincing to interpret them as a more elaborate and more luxurious version of face covers. At any rate, it should not be ruled out that the masks bore a different symbolic and/or religious meaning than face covers and therefore, they should be examined separately (see Zaytsev 2004b, 49). There are three golden funeral masks known from the northern Black Sea region. The first mask, which has been lost, was discovered in a grave complex that included cremations at the necropolis of Olbia; the second, now kept in the Hermitage (Inv. no. Ol. 21), comes from a stone tomb located in a kurgan near Olbia and dates to the 2nd/3rd c. AD (Rusyaeva 1992, 180, fig. 2; Papanova 2006, 205; Butyagin 2009a, 172); it should be noted that this mask has a Sarmatian tamga carved on it, which suggests that it can be associated with a Sarmatian cultural milieu; the third and most famous mask comes from the Bosphorus and dates to the 3rd c. AD (Butyagin 2009a).

particular funerary rite, especially with regards to the gender, age, social status and cultural background of the deceased⁷.

The aim of this study is to gather and examine the archaeological material from northern Black Sea necropoleis, with special focus being placed on the chronological timeframe and the archaeological context in which golden face covers have been recorded. Several theories explaining the use of face covers will be touched upon, which will bring attention to the social and religious context of this funerary custom among North Pontic elites (belonging to both Greek and non-Greek cultural milieus), and to cultural contacts and emulation between elite families⁸. Multi-layered and overlapping meanings behind burial rites will also be discussed, concentrating on the diversity of cultural and social contexts in which funerary practices should be interpreted. Additionally, the importance of the use of gold in religious symbolism in funerary contexts will be addressed, in order to demonstrate the spiritual meaning of gold in mortuary rituals.

The catalogue of finds that accompanies this paper presents the chronological and geographical distribution of golden face covers discussed in the text (Table)⁹. It also provides references to the most important publications and, wherever possible, high quality illustrations. Plates 1 and 2 offer a reproduction of drawings and photographs published in the Soviet Union, access to which may be limited to non-Russian and non-Ukrainian readers. It is hoped that further archaeological excavations, especially at places such as Ust'-Al'ma, will provide further material that will broaden both the catalogue and our knowledge of northern Black Sea societies.

The earliest face covers were found in Scythian Neapolis (Table, no. 1) and are dated to between the end of the 2nd and the early 1st century AD. They were discovered in the city's Mausoleum in graves associated with the wealthiest members of the city, who were more than likely part of the local aristocracy. Most of the covers were found near the head of the buried individuals. A full set of eye and mouth covers was found in the following three graves: grave IX (skeleton no. 72; Plate 1, 7), family grave III (skeleton no. 5; Plate 1, 1) and child grave XIX (skeleton no. 24; Plate 1, 2). In collective grave II (skeletons no. 30 (Plate 1, 5) and 52), child grave XI (skeleton no. 9; Plate 1, 4) and grave VI (skeleton no. 3; Plate 1, 6) only eye covers were found. In six graves (I (skeleton no. 23), X (skeleton no. 53 or 54), XII, XIII (skeleton no. 56), XXIX (skeleton no. 10) and XXXII (skeleton no. 16)) only single eye or mouth covers or their fragments were found¹⁰.

In most cases in which covers were found *in situ* (i.e. near the head), they are associated with male or child burials¹¹. Remarkably, in both of the double child burials in the Mau-

⁷ See especially the volumes on the settlement and the necropolis of Ust'-Al'ma: Puzdrovskii, Trufanov 2016; 2017a; 2017b.

⁸ Notably, the question of the elite network and cultural transformations among non-Greek Crimean elites has thoroughly been discussed by Mordvintseva 2017, who has analyzed funerary complexes looking for the so-called prestige objects that were used to manifest power and status and reflected a given socio-political structure in the region.

⁹ A valuable (though incomplete) catalogue of finds of golden face covers and funeral masks from the Black Sea region (as well as from the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean) is provided by Quast 2014, 292–302.

¹⁰ Pogrebova 1957, 142; 1961, 108–110.

¹¹ Pogrebova 1957, 146; 1961, 108 argues that the deceased children were therefore also males.

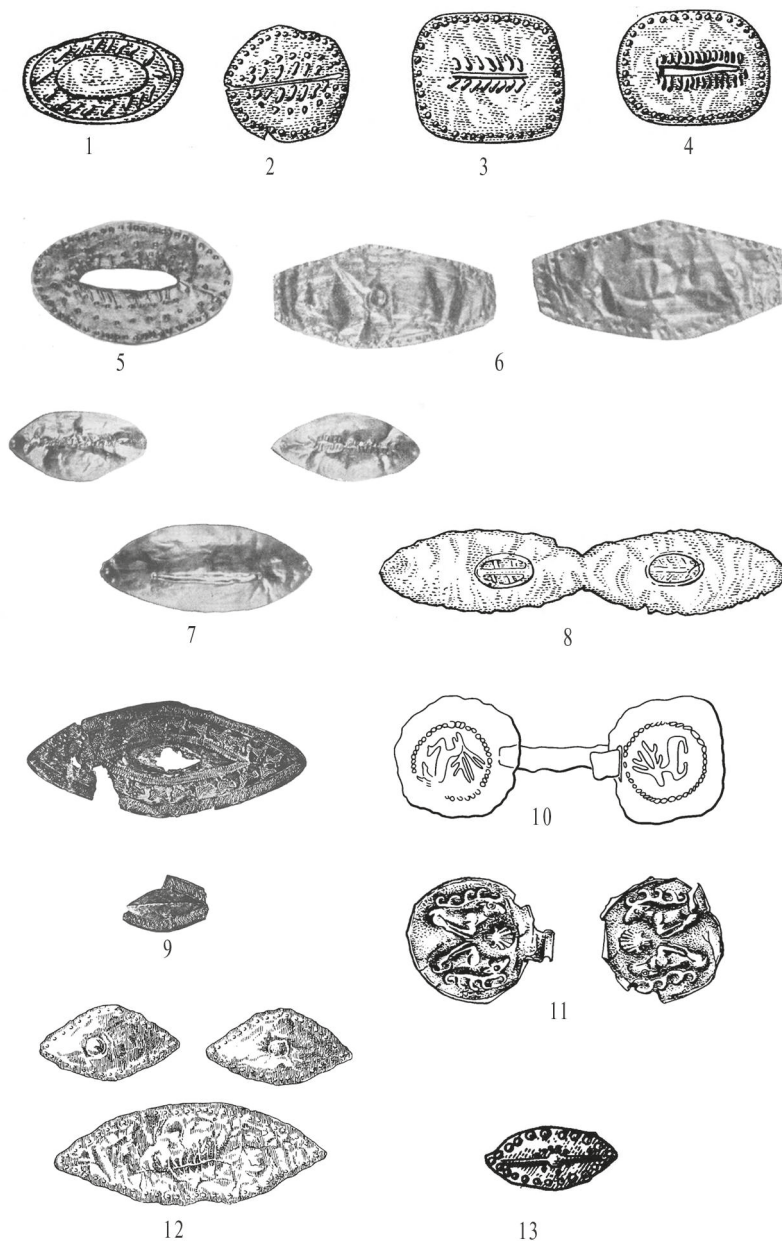


Plate 1. Face covers from Georgia, Kuban and the North Pontic region. No scale. 1–7. Mausoleum of Scythian Neapolis: 1 – Grave III; 2 – Grave XIX; 3–4 – Grave XI (after Dashevskaya 1991, tab. 66, 2–5); 5 – Grave II (after Pogrebova 1961, fig. 12, 12); 6 – Grave VI (after Pogrebova 1961, fig. 17, 8–9); 7 – Grave IX (after Pogrebova 1961, fig. 19, 4). 8 – Necropolis of Scythian Neapolis (Dashevskaya 1991, tab. 66, 13); 9 – Trialeti (after Kuftin 1941, pl. IX); 10 – Stanitsa Yaroslavskaya (after Chernopitskiy 1985, fig. 4); 11 – Baturinskaya 1 (after Chernopitskiy 1985, fig. 2); 12 – Kam'yanka (Kamenka) (after Pogrebova 1956, fig. 42); 13 – Necropolis of Belyaus (bronze; after Dashevskaya 1991, tab. 66, 1)

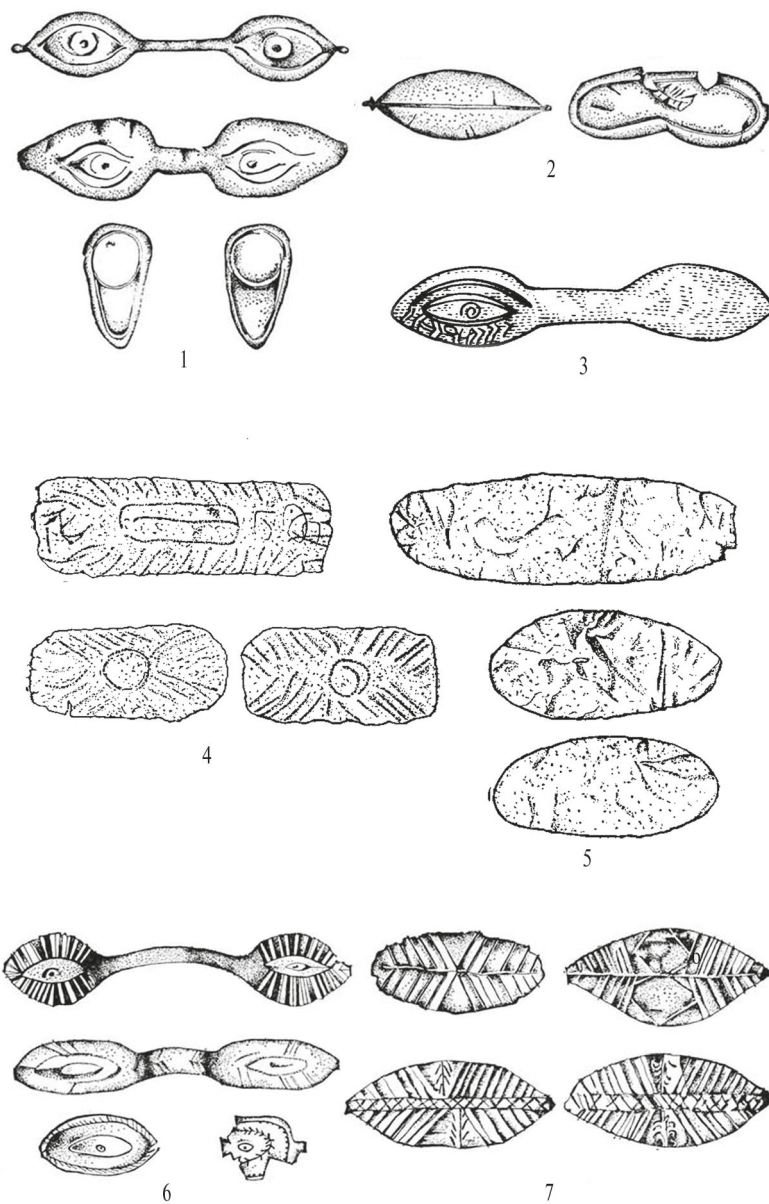


Plate 2. Face covers from the North Pontic region. No scale. 1–2 – Olbia (after Zubar' 1982, fig. 75, 12–17); 3 – Chyornaya Rechka (after Dashevskaya 1991, tab. 66, 14); 4–5 – Zavetnoe (after Bogdanova 1963, fig. 5); 6–7 – Chersonesus (after Zubar' 1982, fig. 75, 1–8)

soleum (graves XI and XIX) only one child was equipped with golden covers¹², which was perhaps associated with the child's gender. In grave X, a fragment from an eye cover was found near the skulls of a female skeleton (no. 53) and a child skeleton (no. 54)¹³. In this case the cover should most probably be associated with the deceased child rather than the female. Another such case is grave XIII in which an eye cover was found between the legs of a female skeleton (no. 56), in an area where the remains of a child skeleton (no. 64) also appeared¹⁴. The presence of the face covers in adult male burials in the Mausoleum suggests that the covers may have been used to indicate the male identity of members of the city's high social strata. Consequently, face covers found in child burials may demonstrate that in this cultural milieu such a male identity could have been imposed upon deceased underage individuals, rather than be acquired by them during their lives.

The Mausoleum functioned as an elite necropolis between the last quarter of the 2nd and throughout the 1st century BC¹⁵. Pogrebova rightly noticed that the stratigraphy and assemblages of the graves that included face covers indicate that most of them belonged to the Mausoleum's earliest burials¹⁶. Therefore, when the Mausoleum served as an elite necropolis, the newest burials containing face covers should be dated no later than the early 1st c. AD¹⁷. As Mordvintseva points out, graves situated in the upper archaeological layers of the Mausoleum that date to the late 1st c. BC – early 1st c. AD are as a rule poorly equipped and do not bear any markers of prestige. This seems to reflect a change in the socio-political structure of the region during that time¹⁸. Consequently, during the next few decades, an important transformation in the non-Greek elite's self-representation is visible. During the 1st and 2nd centuries AD some cemeteries (which included previously existing sites such as those at Scythian Neapolis and Ust'-Al'ma as well as new sites such as Zavetnoe and Vilino) started to resemble elite necropoleis. This in turn suggests that there was more than one non-Greek centre of power in the region at the time, in contrast to the previous period when Scythian Neapolis seems to have been the only non-Greek centre of political power in the Crimea¹⁹.

¹² Pogrebova 1957, 143; notably, in grave III Pogrebova attributes the mouth cover to skeleton 24 (arguing that this skeleton's assemblage was richer), even though the cover was found near the skull of skeleton 28 (see Pogrebova 1961, 204).

¹³ Pogrebova 1961, 197.

¹⁴ Pogrebova 1961, 200–201.

¹⁵ Zaytsev 2004a, 20 and Appendix 2; Mordvintseva 2017, 192–193.

¹⁶ Pogrebova 1957, 142.

¹⁷ Shul'ts 1953, 84–85 dates the burials as follows: grave II – end of 2nd c. BC; grave III – end of 2nd c. BC; grave VI – end of 2nd–1st c. BC; grave IX – end of 2nd–1st c. BC; grave XI – 1st c. BC; grave XIII – end of 2nd–1st c. BC; grave XIX – 1st c. BC; grave XXIX – 1st c. BC/1st c. AD. However, Pogrebova's dates seem more accurate: grave I end of 2nd – beginning of 1st c. BC; grave II – end of 2nd – beginning of 1st c. BC; grave III – end of 2nd c. BC – beginning of 1st c. BC; grave VI – end of 2nd – beginning of 1st c. BC; grave IX – 1st c. BC; grave XI – 1st c. BC; grave XII – 1st c. BC; grave XIII – end of 2nd – beginning of 1st c. BC; grave XIX – 1st c. BC; grave XXIX – end of 1st c. BC – beginning of 1st c. AD; grave XXXII – 1st c. BC (Pogrebova 1961, 189–210).

¹⁸ Mordvintseva 2017, 193.

¹⁹ Mordvintseva 2017, 194.

Funeral golden face covers continued to appear in 1st/2nd century AD burials in the Eastern necropolis of Scythian Neapolis. A double eye cover was found in a catacomb (grave no. 79) that contained 27 burials, including males, females and children (Plate 1, 8). Unfortunately, the poor state of preservation (due to robbery) does not allow the cover to be associated with a particular skeleton. The rich assemblage found in the grave suggests that the deceased were among the wealthier members of the city's society²⁰. The grave dates to the 1st/2nd century AD²¹. Zaytsev also mentions a single cover that was discovered at the necropolis, however further details are not provided²².

As Pogrebova pointed out, there are different stylistic types of covers and it is impossible to detect any stylistic evolution, since all of them date to the same period²³. It can be noticed, however, that several covers imitate the actual image of eyes and lips²⁴, whereas others represent them only schematically²⁵. Moreover, some covers do not bear any signs of facial features at all²⁶. It has also been pointed out that there are no identical covers, even within the same grave²⁷. Both the stylistic uniqueness of the face covers and the fact that they were made of pieces of very thin gold foil (which is especially visible in child grave XIX; Plate 1, 2) point to the fact that they were made individually and were specifically used for funerary purposes.

Notably, there are no known earlier analogies from other Greek or Scythian necropolises of the northern Black Sea region. It seems that the tradition of using golden face covers was a new cultural phenomenon that appeared in this region in the 2nd century BC and was present until the 3rd/4th century AD, as will be demonstrated later in this paper. As is often pointed out, face covers have also been found in Georgia and they are contemporary to the covers recorded in Scythian Neapolis, which may provide suggestions as to the origin of this tradition. The finds from Georgia were accidentally discovered in 1940 by local farmers who during their work, uncovered a partly preserved grave located close to the Algeti River near the village of Tsintsikaro. They informed Kuftin who during that time was carrying out excavations nearby in Trialeti²⁸. The rich funerary assemblage included one eye cover (the other eye cover was not preserved) and a mouth cover made of electrum and decorated with representations of birds (Table, no. 2; Plate 1, 9)²⁹. The mouth cover has two little hoops that were probably used to attach the cover to the

²⁰ *N.b.*: separate 'elite necropolis' emerged in the middle of the 2nd c. AD in the former Southern Palace (Mordvintseva 2017, 194–195; Zaytsev 2004a, 73 fig. 13).

²¹ Symonovich 1983, 52–54; pl. XLV, 27; first published by O.A. Makhneva in 1967 (Makhneva 1967).

²² Zaytsev 2004b, 48.

²³ Pogrebova 1957, 146.

²⁴ For example, eye covers from grave III (Plate 1, 1; for the assemblage from the grave, see Shul'ts 1953, 49); IX (Plate 1, 7) and a mouth cover from grave IX (Plate 1, 7; for the assemblage from the grave, see Shul'ts 1953, pl. XXVII).

²⁵ Mouth covers from graves III, XIX; eye covers from graves XI (Plate 1, 3–4), XXIX, XIX (Plate 1, 2) (see Shul'ts 1953, pl. XXVIII), II (skeleton 30).

²⁶ Eye covers from graves VI (Plate 1, 6), II (skeleton 52) and a mouth cover from grave XII.

²⁷ Pogrebova 1957, 146; e.g. grave II represents two different types of eye covers; see Shul'ts 1953, pl. XXIX.

²⁸ Kuftin 1941, 34.

²⁹ Kuftin 1941, 251 pl. IX.



Fig. 1. Distribution of golden face covers, 1st–4th c. AD: 1 – Olbia; 2 – Gorgippia; 3 – Chyornaya Rechka; 4 – Zavetnoye; 5 – Ust'-Al'ma; 6 – Sovkhoz; 7 – Chersonesus; 8 – Kyz-Aul; 9 – Phanagoria

face. However, the original location of the covers is unknown since the skeletons of the deceased that they accompanied were not preserved in the grave. Apart from precious jewellery, silver pottery and a bronze tripod, two golden plates adorned with the representation of the head of a goddess (most probably of a chthonic aspect, associated with the cult of the dead) were also found in the grave³⁰. Kuftin argues that the covers bear a representation of closed eyes and a closed mouth and therefore, they should be associated with the idea of closing the eyes and mouth of the dead³¹. The grave was dated by Kuftin to the Achaemenid period. However, according to Pogrebova, the assemblage should be dated to the Late Hellenistic period³².

Another important find is a golden double eye cover that was made from two pieces of gold foil attached to each other. It was found in a rich burial in Ostryy kurgan at Stanitsa Yaroslavskaya in Kuban (Table, no. 3; Plate 1, 10). Both parts of the eye cover are decorated with a relief representing a deer³³. The kurgan included two individuals (who were most probably dressed in shirts made of mail armour) buried on their backs with their heads facing west, whose grave goods included objects such as vessels made from silver, bronze and glass, an iron knife, amulets, a gold plaque and bracelets, a mirror, a bronze cauldron and a stone axe, the last two items being prestigious symbols of cult

³⁰ Kuftin 1941, 34–38 and pl. IX–XII bis.

³¹ Kuftin 1941, 39.

³² Pogrebova 1957, 146.

³³ OAK 1896 (1898), 58, fig. 283. Gushchina, Zasetskaya 1989, 128, tabl. 1.20.

and power³⁴. The eye cover belonged to the individual buried in the southern part of the chamber and was found near their legs³⁵. The burial was initially dated to the 2nd/1st century BC³⁶. However, several objects that accompanied the burial seem to be of a much later date, for example a gold bell and the silver handles of a vessel³⁷. With this in mind, revised dates of the burial vary from the 1st century BC to the first half of the 1st century AD³⁸.

A similar golden double eye cover was discovered in Grave 1 of Kurgan 15 at the kurgan complex of Baturinskaya 1 in Kuban, associated by Chernopitskiy with the local Sauromatian population (Table, no. 4; Plate 1, *1I*). The assemblage from the burial dates to between the 4th and 1st centuries BC. Similarly to the find from Stanitsa Yaroslavskaya, the cover is decorated with a relief representing deer³⁹. The cover has been preserved in two pieces but the remaining gold band suggests that it was initially used to connect two parts in the same manner as the cover from Stanitsa Yaroslavskaya. The distinctive assemblage that accompanied the dead body, which included a ritual stone plate, the bones of a ram, an astragal and pieces of realgar, indicates that the burial may have belonged to a person associated with cultic activity, whom Chernopitskiy conventionally terms a “priestess”. The deceased was placed on their side with their legs slightly bent. One part of the cover was found near the left temporal bone, whereas the other part was found near the right ulna. The stylistic resemblance of the eye covers and funerary rites, as well as similar “archaic type” funeral assemblages from Stanitsa Yaroslavskaya and Baturinskaya 1 has been pointed out by Chernopitskiy, who suggests that such an archaizing trend could have been in fashion among the local conservative society in the territory of Kuban during the Late Hellenistic period⁴⁰.

It should not be excluded that the custom of placing gold face covers in burials of individuals who held special positions in society (be it an elite rank or a cultic-magic status), that became popular among non-Greek societies in the Late Hellenistic period in the territory of Georgia and Kuban, was appropriated by Scythian Neapolis’ elite. The stylistic nature of the face covers discovered in Scythian Neapolis indicate that they developed independently from their eastern “prototypes”, perhaps representing different beliefs behind the use of face covers during the funerary ceremony. As mentioned above, the covers either imitate the image of eyes and lips or they represent them schematically, whereas the covers from Georgia and Kuban are adorned with animals. Notably, several mouth and eye

³⁴ Gushchina, *Zasetskaya* 1989, 81–82; for a catalogue of the assemblage and a description of the Ostryy kurgan, based on the excavations carried out by N.I. Veselovskiy in 1896, see Gushchina, *Zasetskaya* 1989, 91–96; 123–124 and pl. 1–2. Interestingly, a similar stone axe, which was a symbol of a high social position, has been found in another kurgan in this region in a female grave, namely the Khatazhukayevskiy kurgan (*ibid.* 1989, 82).

³⁵ According to Veselovskiy, they could have accidentally been moved during the excavation (Gushchina, *Zasetskaya* 1989, 124). However, it should not be ruled out that the funerary rite did not include placing the covers on the face of the deceased.

³⁶ Pogrebova 1957, 147.

³⁷ Gushchina, *Zasetskaya* 1989, 93, № 7 and 8 (see tabl. 1.7 and 1.8); the bell is dated by the authors to the 1st–2nd c. AD, whereas the handles are dated to the 1st c. BC – 1st c. AD.

³⁸ 1st c. BC – 1st c. AD (after Quast 2014, 272); 1st half of 1st c. AD (after Trufanov, Mordvitseva 2017, 56).

³⁹ Chernopitskiy 1985, 252–253, fig. 2.

⁴⁰ Chernopitskiy 1985, 252–254.



Fig. 2. Distribution of golden face covers, 3rd/2nd–1st c. BC: 1 – Scythian Neapolis; 2 – Trialeti; 3 – Stanitsa Yaroslavskaya; 4 – Baturinskaya; 5 – Kam'yanka (Kamenka); 6 – Opushki; 7 – Kul'chuk

covers from Scythian Neapolis come complete with either holes (as if the mouth/eye was open) or a thin cut, around which eye lashes or lines imitating wrinkled lips are carved⁴¹.

Another, perhaps more convincing opinion concerning the possible direction of the stylistic influence has been put forward by Zaytsev, who points out the similarity between several face covers from Scythian Neapolis (and also from Belyaus⁴²) and Celtic shields (see Plate 1, 1 and 13)⁴³. An elite network already existed between the Crimea and the La Tène culture in the 3rd century BC⁴⁴ and it should not be ruled out that stylistic emulation was possible. More importantly, there are ritual objects known from Celtic-Roman sanctuaries located in modern North-East France that stylistically resemble North Pontic face covers and are contemporary with them⁴⁵. These objects, however, were not used in a funerary context. What might have given a new ritual meaning to face covers in the northern Black Sea region was the new socio-cultural context in which they started to be used. Gold face covers seem to have been known in Greek culture and were connected with the ritual of

⁴¹ E.g. eye and mouth covers from grave IX (skeleton 72; Plate 2, 1), a mouth/eye cover from grave XXIX (skeleton 10), and eye covers from graves XIX (Plate 1, 2), XI (skeleton 9) (Plate 1, 3–4), II (skeleton 30; Plate 1, 5), and XIII; Shul'ts 1953, 84–85, pl. XXIX. The lines carved on the covers may give the impression that the eyes and lips are sewn, however this seems improbable due to the cuts and holes. Alternatively, one can argue that the cuts and lines were to remain deliberately ambiguous.

⁴² For Belyaus, see n. 59 below.

⁴³ Zaytsev 2018, 316 and fig. 23; see Mordvintseva 2017, 199 for further discussion.

⁴⁴ Mordvintseva 2017, 202–203.

⁴⁵ Similar objects have also been recorded in North Italy; see Mordvintseva 2017, 199 and n. 80 and 81 with further literature.

*prothesis*⁴⁶. As Mordvintseva points out in her analysis of funeral assemblages, the 2nd century BC was the time when the non-Greek Crimean elite appropriated features of the Hellenistic culture; this may have provided the impetus to introduce a new element to the funeral ceremony, which could at the same time be used to express power and social status⁴⁷.

It seems probable that the trend of using face covers spread from Scythian Neapolis to other North Pontic regions such as the Scythian settlement of Kam'yanka (Kamenka) in the Lower Dnieper region, non-Greek settlements in the Crimea (attested by finds from the necropoleis in Opushki and Kul'chuk and the kurgan near Vilino; Table, no. 6–8) and the Greek city of Chersonesus (Table, no. 15). The finds from Kam'yanka include a pair of eye covers and a mouth cover which were found accidentally by a local farmer who was digging out clay (Table, no. 5; Plate 1, 12). As it turned out, the covers belonged to a rich catacomb burial situated on the slope of the ancient settlement's western rampart that lay on the farmer's property⁴⁸. The burial dates to the 2nd century BC. It is noticeable that the covers from Kam'yanka stylistically resemble those from Scythian Neapolis and are contemporary with them. The decoration on the eye covers imitate pupils and are similar to the eye cover in grave VI (skeleton 3) in Scythian Neapolis, whereas the carved lines on the mouth cover resemble the imitation of a wrinkled mouth that was carved on mouth covers in Scythian Neapolis. Interestingly, the mouth cover from Kam'yanka gives the strong impression that the mouth was sewn, not wrinkled, which may point to a new meaning behind the use of the cover, connected to the idea of closing the mouth of the dead. More importantly, if one looks at the local landscape and the architecture of the settlement, the burial is situated in a special place, similar to the Mausoleum in Scythian Neapolis. Namely, the catacomb lies close to the settlement's walls and most probably, close to the main gate⁴⁹, analogically to the Mausoleum which was situated near to the southern defensive wall and the central gate⁵⁰. Also, as pointed out by Pogrebova, the assemblage of the burial (pottery, beads and the golden covers) resembles the assemblage found in the Mausoleum of Scythian Neapolis. Therefore, it seems probable that the elites of Kamenskoe gorodishche, which was in the past perceived as the Scythian capital, followed the same fashion trends as the elites from the new political and cultural capital of Scythian Neapolis⁵¹.

During the first few centuries AD golden face covers frequently appeared in the graves of Chersonesus' wealthy citizens. They were found in family tombs, simple pit burials, and complexes that include cremations (Table, no. 15; Plate 2, 6–7). According

⁴⁶ Kurtz, Boardman 1971, 212–213 with fig. 43 representing a 7th century BC gold lip band from Rhodes. The shape of the gold bands seems to have been connected with the idea of closing the mouth of the dead, which is likely to be also represented on Athenian vases in which the deceased has his mouth held shut by two bands tied around the head; see also Mordvintseva 2017, 199.

⁴⁷ See Mordvintseva 2017, 199.

⁴⁸ Pogrebova 1956, 94 and fig. 42.

⁴⁹ Pogrebova 1956, 97 with n. 8.

⁵⁰ See Zaytsev 2003, 77 fig. 7.

⁵¹ Pogrebova 1956, 96–97; see also Mordvintseva 2017, 198 who points out that during this period it was highly likely that the Crimean elite and the elite of the Lower Dnieper region belonged to the same polity.

to Pyatysheva, there are more than 70 burial complexes in which face covers have been discovered⁵². This suggests that access to them was probably less restricted than it was a few centuries earlier in the Scythian capital, where they seem to have been limited to the local aristocracy that were buried in the Mausoleum. Even though face covers from Chersonesus represent a distinctive schematic style with characteristic carved lines and eye pupils, it is still noticeable that each of them has its own uniqueness and individual shape. Therefore, it seems more probable that face covers were still produced individually on request rather than being purchased at the market⁵³.

As can be assumed, the use of face covers spread among the high social class in Chersonesus as a cultural novelty that was influenced by the elites of Scythian Neapolis. Such a scenario seems more probable than Zubar's explanation, according to which face covers came to Chersonesus from the Eastern Mediterranean⁵⁴. His argument that there is a chronological gap between the finds from Scythian Neapolis and Chersonesus is not valid, since face covers are known from the eastern necropolis of Scythian Neapolis that date to the same period as those from Chersonesus. Also, there is no need to interpret the introduction of this funerary rite as a sign of the "barbarization" of the Greek population of Chersonesus, as Pogrebova wanted to perceive it⁵⁵. Analyses of Chersonesean face covers suggest that the rite acquired a local Greek character and new symbolic meaning. The local character and perhaps a new ritual meaning of Chersonesean face covers is highlighted by the wreaths made of thin gold leaves that accompanied the covers⁵⁶. Funerary wreaths made of thin gold foil represent a Greek tradition. They frequently appear not only in Hellenistic and Roman Greek burials in the North Pontic region, but also in other parts of the Greek world⁵⁷. The appearance of gold face covers together with gold wreaths in Chersonesean graves may point to new eschatological thinking connected with the Greek idea of apotheosis of the dead, as suggested by Papanova⁵⁸.

As argued by Whittaker, the practice of covering dead bodies with gold can be associated not only with great wealth and an increased interest in the ostentatious display of said wealth, but also with the development of new ideas regarding the fate of the individual after

⁵² Pyatysheva 1956, 30 n. 7; Zubar' 1982, 110; thirteen finds are kept in the State Historical Museum (Zhuravlev, Novikova, Kovalenko, Shemakhanskaya 2017, cat. 29–41).

⁵³ Cf. Zubar' 1982, 109. Also, a relatively small number of face covers found at the necropolis suggests that they were still a luxury and/or access to them was limited by social or religious regulations. Cf. Papanova 2006, 207 who argues that face covers were affordable to the middle-class.

⁵⁴ Zubar' 1982, 112–113.

⁵⁵ Pogrebova 157, 153.

⁵⁶ Zubar' 1982, 109.

⁵⁷ Blech 1982. For the North Pontic region, see Treister 2014; Papanova 2006, 204–207. As a matter of fact, gold diadems and bands were an element of Greek funerary rites as early as the Bronze age (see the catalogue of finds prepared by Blech 1982, 425–426). The earliest funerary gold wreaths date to the end of the 5th/beginning of the 4th c. BC (ibid., 425). Notably, a gold wreath together with an eye cover has been found in a 1st-century AD female grave in Olbia (Oreshnikov 1894, 4–8), in a 2nd-century AD burial of two girls in Gorgippia (Mordvintseva *et al.* 2010, 241, cat. 1–5; pl. 1–3), and also in a 3rd-century AD grave at the Eastern necropolis of Phanagoria (Treister 2015, cat. 164–166).

⁵⁸ Papanova 2006, 204–207.

death⁵⁹. According to Whittaker's analysis of rich Mycenaean graves from the late Middle Helladic and early Mycenaean periods, especially those that belonged to Grave Circle A, a conceptual link between gold and the idea of survival after death was detected⁶⁰. She has noticed that the appearance of objects made of gold in burial contexts is contemporary with a general increase in the quantity and richness of grave goods at Mycenae. These gold objects include funerary masks, diadems and other ornaments made of thin gold foil that had been made specifically for funerary use, which means that they had not been used to display status in other contexts. Whittaker stresses the symbolic importance of gold in funerary contexts: the unique qualities of gold may have served to reinforce both social and religious meanings. The indestructibility and immutability of gold can be contrasted with the impermanence of the human body. Gold can serve as a symbol of immortality, whereas its shiny colour can be associated with the sun as the source of life⁶¹. Therefore, gold is commonly associated with the gods. It seems quite plausible that similarly in Chersonesus, the social expression of status and wealth in funerary contexts was intermixed with eschatological and cosmological concepts related to the idea of apotheosis of the dead and/or immortality.

Face covers found in complexes that included cremations in Chersonesus suggest that the symbolic and religious meaning behind their use was not limited to the funerary ritual during which they were displayed. The fact that they do not bear signs of burning (which indicates that they were placed in the grave after the process of cremation) suggests that they may have been important with regard to the concept of afterlife⁶². Perhaps having another pair of eyes and another mouth was perceived as necessary in the hereafter. Such an interpretation would explain why in certain situations face covers are not found near the head of the deceased. It should not be ruled out that in certain situations laying the dead in a grave included putting the face covers aside⁶³. It is also possible that gold face covers played a more important role as funerary votive offerings, as argued by Zaytsev⁶⁴. A notable analogy are plaques that were used as temple offerings that came in the shape of eyes

⁵⁹ As far as the northern Black Sea region is concerned, there are several examples of funerary face covers made of material other than gold. These examples include a silver eye cover and two bronze eye covers from the Late Scythian necropolis of Belyaus in North-West Crimea (Dashevskaya 1991, 39 and tab. 66, 1 and 40; 2014; for a bronze eye cover, see Plate 1, 13). Mordvintseva 2017, 199 rightly points out that the use of other materials rather than gold may suggest a hierarchy among Crimean elites that belonged to the same polity (with Scythian Neapolis being the capital of political power).

⁶⁰ Whittaker 2006.

⁶¹ Whittaker 2006, 283–284.

⁶² Notably, the tradition of covering the face of the dead with golden plaques before cremation has been attested in India (Litvinskiy 1972, 141).

⁶³ E.g. in Catacomb 1119 at the Ust'-Al'ma necropolis (in which eye covers were found, one on top of the other, on the chest of the deceased: Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2018, 33 and 39, fig. 5, 2), and the abovementioned kurgan at Baturinskaya 1. Cf. Zhuravlev, Novikova, Kovalenko, Shemakhanskaya 2017, 20 and Zhuravlev, Novikova, Shemakhanskaya 2017, 233 who argue that the placement of covers on the faces of the dead may have been more important during the funeral ceremony, whereas their location in the grave may have played a less significant role.

⁶⁴ Zaytsev 2004b, 49.

(as well as hands, arms and legs) from the so-called Bactrian treasure (dated to between the 4th and 2nd centuries BC) which is kept in the Miho Museum in Kyoto, Japan⁶⁵.

The Greek idea of placing gold wreaths in the grave together with face covers seems to have influenced local non-Greek elites in the South-West region of the Crimea⁶⁶. A golden funeral wreath/diadem, together with a set of face covers, has been found in Grave 195 at the necropolis of Zavetnoe near Bakhchisaray (Table, no. 11; Plate 1, 5b)⁶⁷. Another golden diadem was discovered in Grave 93 at the same necropolis⁶⁸. Interestingly, in that particular society, face covers do not appear in warrior burials with weapons, which seem to constitute a separate group of graves in which gold objects have not been attested⁶⁹. In contrast, in Kurgan 1 situated at “Magarach” farm (3 km south-west of the village of Vilino) a golden wreath and face covers have been discovered in a double warrior burial (Grave 13; Table, no. 13)⁷⁰. Another example is the necropolis at Ust’-Al’ma, where a number of rich graves with face covers have been discovered (Table, no. 12)⁷¹. The graves are usually earthen catacombs located along the road leading towards the fortified settlement of Ust’-Al’ma. As a rule, funerary assemblages of male graves include weapons such as swords, bows and arrows, which points to a possible warrior identity being applied to the dead, as well as to the military character of the power structure in that society⁷². Of special importance is the skeleton found in Grave no. 1074 (dated to the middle of the 1st century AD), located in a side-chamber, that belonged to a male aged between 25 and 35. Analysis of the skeleton revealed that this individual suffered many injuries from edged weapons during his lifetime, which could have occurred in battle⁷³. Interestingly, analysis of the grave has revealed that it was re-opened in order to perform a post-burial rite which included wrapping the bones of the deceased with a gold ribbon⁷⁴. An analogous rite that included arranging a long gold plate on the pelvic bones has been recorded in Catacomb 777 in male burial no. 3 and also in the abovementioned burial in the Ostryy kurgan, which may suggest a similar element of burial rites among non-Greek societies in the Kuban and the Crimea⁷⁵. The expression of male values through military ideology with regard to gold funerary objects seems to be another element that closely resembles the ideas displayed in Mycenaean graves, in which gold funerary masks have been

⁶⁵ Miho Museum 2002, 92, fig. 82; Zaytsev 2004b, 49; see also Zhuravlev, Novikova, Kovalenko, Shemakhanskaya 2017, 19–20; Zhuravlev, Novikova, Shemakhanskaya 2017, 232–233.

⁶⁶ For a more detailed analysis of this phenomenon in relation to power structures during Roman times in Crimea, see Mordvintseva 2017, 207–209.

⁶⁷ Bogdanova 1963, 105; 1989, 46; Bogdanova, Gushchina 1964.

⁶⁸ Bogdanova 1989, 46 with table XII, 6.

⁶⁹ Bogdanova 1989, 65.

⁷⁰ Voloshinov, Loboda 2005, 26–27.

⁷¹ Gold face covers together with gold wreaths have been discovered in Catacombs 138, 612, 777 (4 burials), 806, 1119 and Grave no. 1074; wreaths without face covers have been found in Catacombs 54, 88 (4 burials), 92, 120, 620, 777 (1 burial) and 791 (Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2017, 58).

⁷² Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2017, 59.

⁷³ Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2017, 50 fig. 5 and 53–54 fig. 8–10.

⁷⁴ Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2017, 54.

⁷⁵ Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2017, 59–60.

discovered together with weapons⁷⁶. This suggests that gold had a cross-cultural character and was used for face and body coverings to display power and male identity.

Catacombs 612 (Burial 1) and 1119 at the Ust'-Al'ma necropolis demonstrate that face covers were not gender specific in that society. Catacomb 612 contains three skeletons, two male and one female⁷⁷. Only the female skeleton was equipped with a set of face covers, which may point to her special position in the community and/or in her family. Similarly, the woman buried in Catacomb 1119 equipped with a funeral wreath, a set of eye covers and other grave goods (which comprises golden earrings, 57 plaques and ten amphora-shaped pendants, an iron knife, beads of a necklace made of gold and glass, an unguentarium, incense burners, two ceramic spindle whorls and pottery) may have been a member of the local elite. Her special position in society is likely to be highlighted by the fact that the catacomb contained only her skeleton, which appears unusual compared to other elite burials at this necropolis that frequently included several human remains⁷⁸.

Other examples of female burials with golden face covers include (possibly) the aforementioned kurgan at Baturinskaya 1, as well as Tomb no. 1 at the necropolis of Chyornaya Rechka near Inkerman in South-West Crimea (dated to the 1st/middle of the 2nd c. AD) in which a double eye cover has been discovered (Table, no. 10; Plate 2, 3)⁷⁹. The female buried in the tomb was approximately twenty years of age and was placed with her head to the North-East. Interestingly, anthropological examination of the skull has revealed features characteristic of the local Taurian population⁸⁰. The deceased was accompanied by a rich grave assemblage that included elaborate pottery, fibulae, pieces of gold, silver and bronze jewellery, and a bronze mirror. Also, a golden double eye cover was found near her legs⁸¹.

During the Roman period, golden face covers also appear in Greek female burials. Examples of which include a female grave equipped with a mouth cover from the necropolis of Kytaion at Kyz-Aul (possibly the 3rd century AD; Table, no. 16)⁸², sarcophagus 1 in Tomb II in Gorgippia, in which probably two girls were buried and equipped with golden wreaths, two mouth covers and two pairs of eye covers (third quarter of the 2nd century AD; Table, no. 8)⁸³, and a rich female grave from Olbia (discovered by local farmers), in which a golden wreath, two double eye covers⁸⁴, two mouth-covers and a set of ear-covers were

⁷⁶ As Whittaker points out, the dead were accompanied by a large number of weapons and were most probably dressed as warriors. Adult masks occur with male burials only. Interestingly, in Grave Circle A, the bodies of two children found in Grave III had also been provided with masks; their sex has not been determined, but they were most probably males (Whittaker 2006, 284). As a rule, female burials were accompanied with gold crowns or head-dresses (Whittaker 2006, 287).

⁷⁷ Loboda *et al.* 2002, 311, Abb. 9, 2–4.

⁷⁸ Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2018, 31–35, 41.

⁷⁹ Babenchikov 1963; dating after Quast 2014, 272 with Anm. 36.

⁸⁰ Babenchikov 1963, 113.

⁸¹ Babenchikov 1963, 114–115. According to the author, most finds were not found *in situ* due to the tomb being flooded with water; Babenchikov 1963, 114.

⁸² Gaydukevich 1959, 203, fig. 77, 3–4.

⁸³ Mordvintseva *et al.* 2010, 44, cat. 1–3.

⁸⁴ Notably, the burials of two young individuals in niche grave 114 at the “Sovkhoz 10” necropolis (dated to the 2nd/3rd c. AD; Strzheletski *et al.* 2003–2004; see Table, no. 14) suggest that, at least in certain situations, double eye covers may have been preferred in graves containing young people and women, as in the case of Olbia, Chyornaya Rechka and Baturinskaya 1.

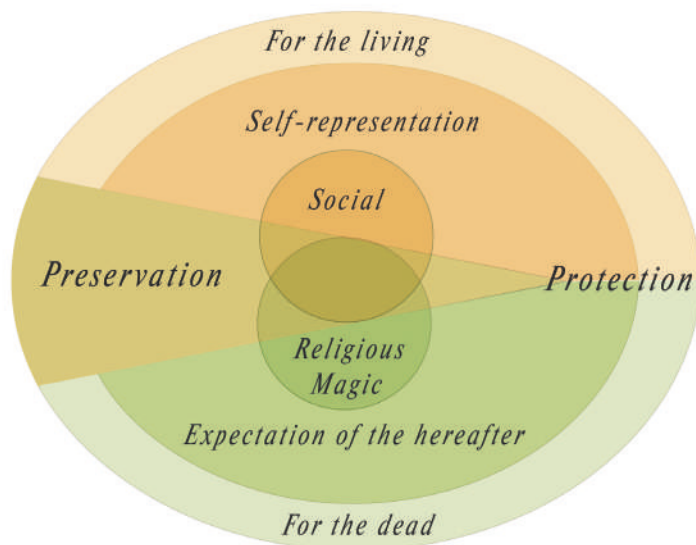


Fig. 3. Multiple and overlapping meanings behind funerary practices (after Quast 2014, 280, Abb. 12, changed; courtesy of D. Quast)

found (the 1st century AD; Table, no. 9; Plate 2, 1–2)⁸⁵. If the grave did indeed belong to a single individual, as stated in the archaeological report, the appearance of a double set of face covers might suggest their votive character. It is important to note that the covers from Olbia resemble those from Chersonesus stylistically and are contemporary with them. Also, the presence of a golden funeral wreath in the grave seems to suggest a cultural link and emulation between the elites of these two Greek *poleis*.

Even though this may seem an obvious observation from a post-colonial perspective, it is important to point out that cultural trends did not always originate in the Greek *polis*. The material gathered in this paper demonstrates that the custom of placing golden face covers in graves was cross-cultural, and it most probably originated in a non-Greek cultural milieu connected either with the steppe world in the East or with the La Tène culture in the North-West. Presumably, the expression of status and/or social identity in a funerary context was often more important to Black Sea societies than the expression of ethnicity. Or alternatively, the expression of ethnicity was not based on the use of prestige funerary objects (which circulated as cultural trends between Greek and non-Greek elite families) that served to express power and status.

As discussed above, the reasons behind the use of golden face covers in the North Pontic region were both social and religious and they changed over time. In funerary contexts, the social expression of status and wealth was likely to be intermixed with eschatological and cosmological concepts, which was reinforced by the unique qualities of gold that served to express social as well as religious meanings, as argued by

⁸⁵ Oreshnikov 1894, 1–13, fig. 1–9.

Whittaker⁸⁶. In certain situations, face covers may have been used to express a warrior identity, which seems to hold true especially in the case of male burials with weapons at Stanitsa Yaroslavskaya, and most probably at Trialeti, Ust'-Al'ma, and Kurgan 1 near the village of Vilino. As can be assumed, the idealization of the warrior role in relation to status and authority may have been intertwined with the idea that the passage from life to death meant the acquisition of divinity and/or immortality, which seems to be especially expressed in warrior graves. In other cases, the presence of face covers seems to indicate that the deceased held a special position in society and/or was of high social status, for example in Scythian Neapolis, Chersonesus and the necropolis of Zavetnoe. Moreover, a votive aspect of face covers and their importance with regard to the concept of the afterlife should also be taken into consideration, especially in those cases in which face covers were deliberately put aside in the grave, such as in Catacomb 1119 at the Ust'-Al'ma necropolis.

Multiple and overlapping meanings behind funerary rites have clearly been presented by Quast in his study regarding golden funeral masks and face covers (fig. 3)⁸⁷. It is not always possible to distinguish which aspects of the funerary ceremony are social and which are religious, since funerary rites are often performed both for the dead and the living. The use of golden face covers may have been connected with the self-representation of the family and the need to display their social status by using rich golden objects during the funeral. It is not without significance that gold was associated with the divine and may have alluded to the acquisition of immortality and power in the afterlife. This may have been intertwined with the need to preserve the body for the hereafter and to provide the dead with a new set of eyes and lips represented by votive plaques. Additionally, preserving the body from decay during long funeral ceremonies may have had an important social meaning to the family⁸⁸.

One of the aspects of funerary rites is protection⁸⁹. Closing the eyes and the mouth of the dead with golden plaques, among various other means, may have indeed had an apotropaic function. The necessity of closing the sightless eyes and the dumb mouth of the dead is common to many cultures. It was believed that the eyes of the dead must be closed in order to prevent the dead person haunting anyone in the future. However, this practice can also be connected with the Greek idea of the soul being released from the body by these means, as assumed by Rohde⁹⁰. The idea of releasing the soul with a hand closing the eyes of the dead is expressed by Homer in the *Odyssey*, when the deceased Agamemnon says (Hom. *Od.* 11, 425–426):

...ἰόντι περ εἰς Ἀΐδαο, / χερσὶ κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐλέειν σὺν τε στόμ' ἐρεῖσαι.

She [Clytemnestra] would not even close my lips nor my eyes when I was dying.

⁸⁶ Whittaker 2006.

⁸⁷ Quast 2014, 279–282, and fig. 12.

⁸⁸ See Butyagin 2009b, 15.

⁸⁹ See Quast 2014, 279–281 with further literature on ethnographic research.

⁹⁰ Rohde 1925, 46–47, n. 25.

This gesture was the duty of the next of kin, mother or wife⁹¹. The same concept seems to be expressed in the Greek epitaph for Lucius Minicius Anthimianus found in Rome and dated to the 3rd century AD (*IGUR IV 1702*):

ἄχρις ὅτου ψυχὴν μου μητρὸς χέρεις εἴλαν ἀπ' ὄσσων.

Until my mother's hands took away my soul from the eyes.

It should not be ruled out that in a Greek cultural milieu this specific meaning was applied to golden eye covers during the funeral, a meaning that may have not been recognizable to other societies. Even though trends were transferred between different cultural milieus through elites who followed similar fashions, symbolic meanings may change in a new cultural context and acquire new ideological and social implications. Also, over time the symbolic religious and social meanings of funerary rites may have been modified and influenced by other traditions through mutual cultural emulation and contact between elite families.

Table

Chronological and geographical distribution of golden face covers in the north-east Black Sea area

No.	Site	Grave type & content	Date	References
1	Scythian Neapolis, Mausoleum and Eastern Necropolis (Simferopol, Crimea)	<p>Mausoleum</p> <p>Grave I, male skeleton no. 30 (aged 40–50): fragment of an eye cover found under the skull</p> <p>Grave II, male skeletons no. 30 (aged 40–45) and 52 (aged ca 50): two eye covers found near the skull of skeleton no. 30</p> <p>Grave III, male skeleton no. 5: a set of face covers found under the skulls of skeleton no. 5 and female(?) skeleton 38</p> <p>Grave VI, male skeleton no. 3: two eye covers found under the skull</p> <p>Grave IX, male skeleton no. 72: a set of face covers found under the skull</p> <p>Grave X, female skeleton no. 53 and child skeleton no. 54: fragment of an eye cover found near the skulls</p> <p>Grave XI, poorly preserved child skeletons no. 9 and 12: two eye covers found south of the skull of skeleton no. 12</p> <p>Grave XII: an eye cover, not <i>in situ</i></p>	late 2 nd –1 st c. BC/ early 1 st c. AD	<p>Pogrebova 1957; 1961; Mordvintseva 2017, fig. 7.</p> <p>Plate 1, 5.</p> <p>Plate 1, 1.</p> <p>Plate 1, 6.</p> <p>Plate 1, 7.</p> <p>Plate 1, 3–4.</p>

⁹¹ Rohde 1925, 46, n. 25.

No.	Site	Grave type & content	Date	References
		Grave XIII, skeletons no. 56 (female) and 64: an eye cover found between the legs of skeleton 56 and near skeleton 64 Grave XIX, child skeleton no. 28 (or 24?): two fragments of a mouth cover found near the skull Grave XXIX ⁹² male skeleton no. 10 (old age): two fragments of a mouth cover found near the skull Grave XXXII, male skeleton no. 16: fragment of an eye cover, not <i>in situ</i> Eastern necropolis Catacomb 79; double eye cover Grave not specified; eye/mouth cover	1 st –2 nd c. AD	Plate 1, 2. Makhneva 1967; Symonovich 1983, 52–54 and pl. XLV, 27; Zubar' 1982, fig. 76; Dashevskaya 1991, tab. 66, 13. Plate 1, 8. Zaytsev 2004b, 48.
2	Trialeti (Algeti Valley, Georgia), accidental find	Skeleton not preserved: eye cover and a mouth cover	Late Hellenistic (after Pogrebova 1957, 146)	Kuftin 1941, 39; pl. IX. Plate 1, 9.
3	Stanitsa Yaroslavskaya (Kuban, Krasnodarskiy kray, Russian Federation), kurgan complex	Burial in the Ostryy kurgan; double eye cover found near the legs	2 nd –1 st c. BC (after Pogrebova 1957, 147) 1 st c. BC – 1 st c. AD (after Quast 2014, 272) 1 st half of 1 st c. AD (after Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2017, 56)	<i>OAK</i> 1896 (1898), 58; Gushchina, Zasetskaya 1989, 95, 124; pl. I, 20. Plate 1, 10.
4	Baturinskaya I (Kuban, Krasnodarskiy kray, Russian Federation), kurgan complex	Kurgan 15, grave 1 (female?); two fragments of a double eye cover, one found near the left temporal bone and the other part near the right ulna	3 rd –1 st c. BC	Chernopitskiy 1985, 255 and fig. 2. Plate 1, 11.
5	Kam'yans'ke/Kamenskoe gorodishche (Kam'yanka, Zaporizhzhia Oblast, Ukraine)	Catacomb: a pair of eye covers and a mouth cover	2 nd c. BC	Pogrebova 1956, 94; fig. 42 Zubar' 1982, fig. 76. Plate 1, 12.
6	Opushki necropolis (near Simferopol, S-W Crimea)	Grave not specified: two eye covers	1 st c. BC	Zaytsev 2004b, 48.

⁹² 1 Cf. Mordvintseva 2017, 294 fig. 7, 3 where the cover is mistakenly attributed to grave XXVIII.

No.	Site	Grave type & content	Date	References
7	Kul'chuk necropolis (Tarkhankut Peninsula, N-W Crimea)	Grave and find not specified	1 st c. BC	Zaytsev 2004b, 48.
8	Gorgippia ⁹³ (Anapa, Taman Peninsula, Krasnodarskiy kray, Russian Federation)	Tomb II, sarcophagus 1 (two girls?): two mouth covers and two pairs of eye covers	3 rd quarter of 2 nd c. AD	Mordvintseva <i>et al.</i> 2010, 44, cat. 1–3; pl. 1, <i>I–I</i> and <i>2–I</i> , <i>I–2</i> and <i>2–2</i> .
		Tomb II, sarcophagus 2: a pair of eye covers and a mouth cover	2 nd half of 2 nd c. AD (150–170 AD)	Mordvintseva <i>et al.</i> 2010, 44, cat. 8–9; pl. 3, 8 and 9.
9	Olbia (Mikolaivs'ka oblast', Ukraine) accidental find	Female burial: two double eye covers, two mouth-covers and a set of ear covers	1 st c. AD (after Quast 2014, 296, Nr. 9)	Zubar' 1982, fig. 75; Pyatysheva 1956, 38, fig. 10; Oreshnikov 1894, 4–6, fig. 4, 5, 8, 9; Quast 2014, 296, Nr. 9. Plate 2, I–2.
10	Chyornaya Rechka (near Inkerman, S-W Crimea)	Tomb no. 1 (female), double eye cover	1 st – middle of 2 nd c. AD (after Quast 2014, 272 with Anm. 36)	Babenchikov 1963, 113–115; fig. 19; pl. VI, <i>I</i> . Plate 2, 3.
11	Zavetnoe necropolis (near Bakhchisaray, S-W Crimea)	Grave 195, two eye covers and a mouth cover	1 st –3 rd c. AD	Bogdanova 1963, 105, fig. 5, 3, 6, <i>II</i> ; Bogdanova, Gushchina 1964, fig. 3, 9–10. Plate 2, 4–5.
		Grave not specified, two eye covers and a mouth cover		Bogdanova 1963, 105; fig. 5, 2, 4, 5.
		Grave not specified, two eye covers and a mouth cover		Zaytsev 2004b, 48.
12	Ust'-Al'ma necropolis (near Bakhchisaray, S-W Crimea)	Catacomb 612, burial 1(female); two eye covers and a mouth cover found at the skull	1 st c. AD	Loboda <i>et al.</i> 2002, 311, Abb. 9, 2–4; Zaytsev 2005, 16, № 23.
		Catacomb 777, burial 1: two eye covers and a mouth cover found near the skull	1 st c. AD	Zaytsev 2005, 19, № 66; Puzdrovskiy, Trufanov 2017a, pl. 11, 2–3 and fig. 86, 2.
		Catacomb 777, burial 2: two eye covers and a mouth cover found near the skull	1 st c. AD	Zaytsev 2005, 20; Puzdrovskiy, Trufanov 2017a, pl. 11, 5–6 and fig. 86, 13.
		Catacomb 777, burial 3: two eye covers and a mouth cover found near the skull	1 st c. AD	Zaytsev 2005, 19, № 68; Puzdrovskiy, Trufanov 2017a, pl. 12, 3–4 and fig. 86, 20.

⁹³ According to Zaytsev 2004b, 48 there is also a set of face covers from another burial complex in Gorgippia that is kept in the State Historical Museum in Moscow. However, the inventory number has not been provided. He also mentions several face covers that have been discovered at the necropolis of Gorgippia. However, no further details are provided. See also Quast 2014, 294, Fundliste 2. 3c.

No.	Site	Grave type & content	Date	References
		Catacomb 777, burial 5: two eye covers and a mouth cover found near the skull	1 st c. AD	Zaytsev 2005, 19, № 64 (wrongly attributed to burial 4); Puzdrovskiy, Trufanov 2017a, pl. 13, 3–4 and fig. 86, 34.
		Grave no. 1074 (burial in a side-chamber): two eye covers found by the right collar-bone and a mouth cover found over the teeth	middle of 1 st c. AD	Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2017; fig. 8.
		Catacombs 138 and 806: eye and mouth covers	2 nd half of 1 st /1 st half of 2 nd c. AD	Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2017, 58.
		Tomb no. 987: fragmentary eye cover	1 st –2 nd c. AD	Puzdrovskiy, Trufanov 2016, 28–29, fig. 42, 9; 43, 1a; Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2017, 58.
		Catacomb 944: scattered fragmentary eye covers	1 st –2 nd c. AD	Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2017, 58; Puzdrovskiy, Trufanov 2017b, pl. 15, 10.
		Catacomb 1119 (female): two eye covers	1 st half – middle of 1 st c. AD	Trufanov, Mordvintseva 2018, fig. 2, 5 and 8
13	Kurgan at “Magarach” farm (near Bakhchisaray, S-W Crimea, 3km SW of the village of Vilino)	Kurgan 1, grave 13: two mouth covers	1 st half – middle of 1 st c. AD	Zaytsev 2004b, 48; 2005, 15, № 6.
14	Necropolis “Sovkhoz 10” (Sevastopol’skiy) (S-W Crimea)	Niche grave 114 (burials of two young individuals): double eye cover and a mouth cover	2 nd –3 rd c. AD	Strzheletski <i>et al.</i> 2003–2004, 169; pl. 16, 38 and 38a.
15	Chersonesus Taurica (Sevastopol, Crimea)	Family tombs	1 st –4 th c. AD	<i>OAK</i> 1896 (1898), 188 (№ 681); 197 (№ 798); <i>OAK</i> 1897 (1900), 116 (№ 888); 125 (№ 982); 101 (№ 1095); 3 (№ 1204); 61 (№ 2139).
		Complexes with cremations		<i>OAK</i> 1893 (1895), 69 (№ 392); 71 (№ 406); <i>OAK</i> 1894 (1896), 74 (№ 636); 115, fig. 8.
		Earthen burials		<i>OAK</i> 1892 (1894), 119 (№ 313); <i>OAK</i> 1893 (1895), 61–62 (№ 333).

No.	Site	Grave type & content	Date	References
		Grave no. 175		Pyatysheva 1956; Zhuravlev, Novikova, Kovalenko, She-makhanskaya 2017, cat. 29–41. Minns 1913, 507, fig. 339; Kuftin 1941, 40, fig. 37 r. Plate 2, 6–7.
16	Kyz-Aul, necropolis of Kytaiion (Kerch Peninsula, Crimea)	Grave 11 (double burial): a male with eye covers and a female with a mouth cover	1 st c. BC – 2 nd c. AD (after Gaydukevich 1959, 203); 3 rd c. AD (?) (after Quast 2014, 293, no. 18 and 295, no. 11)	Gaydukevich 1959, 203, fig. 77, 3–4; Quast 2014, 293, Nr. 18 and 295, Nr. 11.
17	Phanagoria, Eastern Necropolis (Taman Peninsula, Krasnodarskiy kray, Russian Federation)	Grave no. 21/2004 (Burial no. 4), one eye cover	1 st half of 3 rd c. AD	Treister 2015, pl. 54, 2; fig. 39; cat. 166.

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