

THE THREE PILING OF TUMULI AND THE ASTRAL ASPECTS OF THE IMMORTALIZATION

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The excavations of the tumuli of the Hellenistic period on the territory of the ancient Thracian center "Dausdava-Helis" revealed that the tumuli with tombs under their embankment have been piled up in three phases and comparative studies showed that the practice concerned also the rest of the tumuli with tombs in Thrace during the Early and Late Iron Age. The three times building of the embankment was connected with the immediate piling of a small tumulus over the tomb and its covering with white stones (1st phase), of a bigger one of dark brown or red soil (2nd phase) and of truncated form and finally of a tumulus of conical shape of bright soil (3rd phase).

The three phases of the piling of the tumular embankment are synchronous with the consequent phases of specific treatment of the bones of the dead, of the sacrificed animals and of the gifts during the 1st and the 2nd phase of building the tumulus, as well as with the pits and sacral structures made on its top at the end of the third phase. The rites during the 1st and 2nd phases took place inside and outside the tomb their entrance being closed and filled with soil during the 3rd phase.

It may be assumed that the piling of the three layers, an activity directed to the heavens and the gods should be connected with the astral aspects of the rites of the moralization, according to which the soul, liberated from the prison of the body, was supposed to pass through the atmosphere and purified there to merge with the divine celestial body of the Moon by the help of the Sun rays. That is why Zalmoxis, one of the most famous prophets of the idea of the immortalization was also a man, a daemon and a god.

The special attention paid to the construction of the tumuli over the tombs, to their shape and color of the soil at each phase, independently of the geological context and the geotechnical requirements, gives ground to treat them as symbols of the three stages of the immortalization of the soul, of the recreation of man and also as an expression of the human energy of the living which they spend in order to support the soul on its path to the God. The covering of the tomb and the first tumulus with leukoma was symbol both of purity and of the silver egg from which according to the Orphic understanding the first man was born. The eschairae, the human and animal sacrifices over it and the dark color of the second tumulus might correspond to the idea of the recreation of man by soil mixed with blood, while the conical shape of the last tumulus and the bright color of its embankment should correspond to the sacral moment of the divination, of the new life. The phallic symbolism of the conus, the pits and the other sacral constructions on the top are the materialization of the mystery of the recreation and immortalization.

The comparative data from archaeological and written sources, originating mainly from Macedonia, South Italy and Etruria as well as from Asia Minor, connect these rites with the images of the Dactyls - the teachers of Orpheus - and with his Egg cosmogony as well as with the image of ithyphallic Hermes - the god of the beyond, thus increasing the data about the significance and the spread of the Orphic rites of the immortalization in the ancient world and their archaeological identification.