

APOTHEOSIS OF THE DEAD

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The Ancient Greeks idolized their dead: not only honored citizens but also their relatives. It is precisely this idea that was connected with the rite of funeral feast, the building of grandiose crypts, the erection of tumuli. This cult came into being in archaic time.

Apotheosis of the dead has spread in Olbio since the time of Hellenism and achieved its acme in the first centuries AD. During that period the most of tumuli of Olbio necropoleis were built and stone crypts were erected.

The ritual of burying with a golden wreath, and in the first centuries AD with a golden mask, is connected with considering the dead a hero. Two specimens of golden funeral mask from Olbio necropolis are known. They both were found in stone crypts under Tumuli, in which according to the rite there were cinerary urns with ashes.

Funeral masks, as ancient people thought, guarded the alive from the dead, and were the receptacle of the souls, played the role of apotheosis. These masks were traditional for rich and noble people burial ground, and olbiopolites were not exceptions. As Professor A.S. Rusyaeva thinks, one of Olbio funeral masks belonged to the representative of Sarmat stock of Farzoy.

Golden funeral wreaths and masks are of local production (origin). Their purchase took place in the Sanctuary of Dyonissos chthonios, whose cult was honored in Olbio.