The burial tumulus of Lojkënd lies in one of the richest archaeological areas of Albania (ancient Illyria) home to a number of burial mounds spanning the Bronze and Iron Ages of later European prehistory. Modern understanding of the pre- and protohistory of Illyria has largely been shaped by the contents of such burial mounds, yet some were robbed long ago, others reused for modern burials, and few were excavated under scientific conditions. What inspired this systematic exploration by UCLA was more than the promise of an unplundered necropolis; it was also the chance to revisit the significance of this tumulus and its fellows for the emergence of urbanism and complexity in ancient Illyria. In addition to artifacts, the recovery of surviving plant remains, bones, and other organic material contributed to insights into the environmental and ecological history of the region. Full analysis of all the skeletal remains, informed and revised, enhanced knowledge about the demography and human population in this region of Albania. Finally, an intensive survey of the environment around the burial mound revealed the long-term history of its human and natural landscape.

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The Excavation of the Prehistoric Burial Tumulus at Lofkënd, Albania
Volume 1: Text

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**INTRODUCTION**

Artifacts made from organic materials generally do not survive in the archaeological record because they require specific burial conditions for their preservation. Often information about these objects is obtained not from the objects themselves but from impressions or pseudomorphs (the replacement of organic materials with minerals or metallic corrosion products) found on other artifacts. At Lofkënd, no organic materials such as cloth, wood, or cordage have been preserved in the burials, but evidence of these materials has been found as pseudomorphs on several of the metallic finds, providing technological information about the objects and people who used this tumulus. This report documents the textile and wood pseudomorphs found on the Lofkënd objects and attempts to provide a preliminary interpretation of the pseudomorphs in order to identify the organic materials and any technological information that can be obtained from the scant remains (for textiles and pseudomorphs from the Aegean and Cyprus, see Barber 1991:174, n. 12; for the Ukraine and the former U.S.S.R., see Barber 1991:144, n. 7; for central Europe, see, especially, the work of Hans-Jürgen Hundt 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1967, 1969, 1974).

**EXAMINATION AND DOCUMENTATION METHODS**

As part of the routine examination of artifacts conducted by the project conservators, all iron and copper alloy finds brought to the lab were examined for the presence of organic pseudomorphs using a stereomicroscope (7–45x magnification). Objects that would have been attached to cloth or textile, such as pins and fibulae, beads that would have been strung together, and blades or other tools/weapons that would have had handles were found in many cases to contain some trace of a previously existing organic material. When pseudomorphs were identified, they were documented in written form, using a description and sketches, as well as through photography, using a digital SLR camera for both macro- and microphotography. Among the 160 iron and copper alloy objects treated in the conservation laboratory, pseudomorphs were found on 35.

The pseudomorphs found were often in a poor state of preservation. Since the organic component of the material has been replaced with iron or copper corrosion products, the pseudomorphs were often powdery, brittle, and friable. On many of the objects, most of the organic material was gone and only very small areas contained any traces of cloth, cordage, or wood. When pseudomorphs were present, they were often obscured by soil and corrosion that could not be removed due to the fragility of the pseudomorphs. Areas of cloth or textile pseudomorphs were often abraded or damaged.

All the textile or fiber pseudomorphs found are recorded and described in Table 12.1, listing when possible the direction of spin, the angle of spin, the diameter of the yarns (in both directions), estimated thread counts (in both directions), and the weave structure. For pseudomorphs in better states of