HERACLES TO ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Treasures from the Royal Capital of Macedon, a Hellenic Kingdom in the Age of Democracy

A collaboration between

the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

and the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism,
17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities

ASHMOLEAN
MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

2011

HERACLES TO ALEXANDER THE GREAT:
Treasures from the Royal Capital of Macedon,
A Hellenic Kingdom in the Age of Democracy

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
7 April–29 August 2011

Copyright © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, 2011

The authors and contributors have asserted their moral right to be identified as the authors of this work.

British Library Cataloguing in Publications Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

EAN 13: 978 1 85444 254 3

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any storage and retrieval system, without the prior permission in writing of the publisher.

Catalogue designed by Stephen Hebron
Typeset in Minion Pro and Foundry Sans
Printed and bound in Belgium by Deckers Snoeck Ltd.

Front cover illustration: Gold Medusa – originally attached to the linen cuirass of King Philip II
Back cover illustration: A celestial or solar symbol became the emblem of Macedonian royal power
Frontispiece: Back of the marble throne and eternal seat of the Queen Mother Eurydice

For further details of Ashmolean titles please visit:
www.ashmolean.org/shop

ASHMOLEAN
MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Editor:
Dr Yannis Galanakis

Catalogue:
Declan McCarthy
Elizabeth Stone
Emily Withers

Ashmolean Exhibition Organisation:
Aisha Burtenshaw
Dr Yannis Galanakis
Sadie Pickup
Agnes Valenčak

Hellenic Exhibition Organisation:
Ms Alexandra Alexopoulou
Dr Angeliki Kottaridi
Mrs Harikleia Lanara

Exhibition Design:
London Atelier (Pouya Zamanpour and Ralf Eikelberg)
Graeme Campbell
Greg Jones

Ashmolean Press Office:
Susie Gault
Claire Parris

Contents

Acknowledgements vii
Forewords x
Maps xiii

1. The Legend of Macedon: a Hellenic kingdom in the age of democracy 1
Angeliki Kottaridi
2. Macedon, *c.*650–336 BC 25
Robin Lane Fox
3. Royalty and Democracy: the case of Macedonia 39
Miltiades Hatzopoulos
4. Aegae: 160 years of archaeological research 49
Yannis Galanakis
5. The Mycenaean presence in Macedonia: new evidence from the region of Emathia 59
Elena Kountouri
6. Trade and exchange in the Macedonian court 67
Ioannes Graekos
7. War and Hunting: the world of the Macedonian king and his companions 75
Ioannes Graekos
8. Queens, princesses and high priestesses: the role of women at the Macedonian court 93
Angeliki Kottaridi
9. The occupants of Tomb II at Vergina: why Arrhidaios and Eurydice must be excluded 127
Jonathan Musgrave and John Prag
10. Burial customs and beliefs in the royal necropolis of Aegae 131
Angeliki Kottaridi
11. Aegae: the Macedonian metropolis 153
Angeliki Kottaridi
12. The royal banquet: a capital institution 167
Angeliki Kottaridi

13. Macedonian metallurgy: an expression of royalty 181
Stella Drougou

14. The royal presence in the agora of Aegae 193
Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli

15. Macedonian coinage before Alexander 205
Sophia Kremydi

16. Painting at the Macedonian court 209
Harikleia Brekoulaki

17. Pella: the 'greatest of the cities in Macedonia'. The new capital of the kingdom of Macedon 219
Maria Lilimpaki-Akamati

18. From *basileion* to *kaisareion*: the Roman heritage of Philip's palace at Aegae 225
Susan Walker

List of Exhibits 233
The Temenid Kings 254
Glossary 255
Endnotes 257
Bibliography 261
Illustration Acknowledgements 269

Acknowledgements

This exhibition is under the aegis of the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, Mr George A. Papandreou.

The exhibition was realised with the help and assistance of the staff at:

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism
The 17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities
The Museum of the Royal Tombs at Aegae
The Greek Embassy in London
The Ashmolean Museum and the Faculty of Classics, University of Oxford

We are grateful to the following individuals, institutions, companies and their staff for their immense efforts and help:

LEAD SUPPORTER

The George Economou Collection

EXHIBITION SUPPORTERS

Aegean Airlines
Coutts & Co
The Friends of the Ashmolean
Greek National Tourism Organisation
Associated events supported by Jaymount Investments Ltd, an affiliate of The Onassis Foundation
Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation
Exhibition Showcases supplied by Meyvaert

We are grateful to the following:

HONORARY COMMITTEE

Mr Pavlos Yeroulanos (Chair), Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Hellenic Republic
Dr Lina Mendoni, General Secretary, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism
Dr Maria Andreadaki-Vlazaki, General Director of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism
Professor Sir John Boardman, Emeritus Lincoln Professor of Classical Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford
Dr Christopher Brown CBE, Director, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

Mr Dimitris Dondos, Chairman, Saint Catherine Foundation
Mr Nicholas Egon and Mrs Matti Xylas-Egon
Mr Stamos Fafalios, Chairman, Hellenic Centre
Mr Robin Lane Fox, Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History, New College, University of Oxford
Mr George Lemos, Secretary, Hellenic Foundation
Mrs Edmée Leventis, The A G Leventis Foundation
Mr Haralambos K Leventis, The A G Leventis Foundation
Professor Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, MEP, Director of excavations at Vergina, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece
The Rt Hon The Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover KG, The Butrint Foundation
His Excellency Aristidis C Sandis, Ambassador of Greece in the United Kingdom

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Dr Angeliki Kottaridi, Director of the 17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities
Dr Elena Kountouri, Head of the Secretariat of the Central Archaeological Council of Greece
Dr Maria Lilimpaki-Akamati, Emeritus Director of the 17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Mrs Agatha Kalisperas, Director, the Hellenic Centre
Dr Angeliki Kottaridi, Director of the 17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities
Dr Victoria Solomonidis FKC, Minister Counsellor (Cultural Affairs), Embassy of Greece in the United Kingdom
Dr Maria Stamatopoulou, Lavery Fellow & Tutor in Classical Archaeology, University of Oxford
Dr Susan Walker, Keeper of Antiquities, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford

We thank especially:

Professor Ioannis N. Akamatis, Dr David Berry, Dr Olympia Bobou, Suzanna Choulia-Kapeloni, Vangelis Chrysostomou, Dr Kristina Glicksman, Helen Hovey, Agatha Kalisperas, Panagiotis Kamatakis, Elena Kavoukopoulou, Eva Kontogoulidou, Dr Nancy Kyriakou, Dr Maria Lagogianni, H.E. Dr David Landsman OBE, Mr Robin Lane Fox, Professor Irene Lemos, Dimitris Papoudas, Ilaria Perzia, Sadie Pickup, Dr Stella Skaltsa, Dr Victoria Solomonidis, Dr Maria Stamatopoulou, Jennifer and Arthur Stephens, Anna Tsamakda, Dr Maria Tsibidou-Avloniti, Professor John Wilkes

Catalogue edited by Dr Angeliki Kottaridi and Dr Susan Walker on behalf of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ashmolean Museum. Our thanks go to the catalogue contributors:

Dr Harikleia Brekoulaki, Assistant Researcher in the Research Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity, National Hellenic Research Foundation.
Professor Stella Drougou, Professor of Classical Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and co-director of the University of Thessaloniki Vergina excavations.
Dr Yannis Galanakis, Special Exhibitions Curator and Editor for the 'Heracles to Alexander the Great' exhibition, Department of Antiquities, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.
Mr Ioannes Graekos, archaeologist of the 17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities responsible for Beroia.
Professor Miltiades Hatzopoulos, Director of the Research Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity, National Hellenic Research Foundation.
Dr Angeliki Kottaridi, Director of the 17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities (Pella and Emathia) and Director of the excavations and of the Museum of the Royal Tombs at Aegae.
Dr Elena Kountouri, archaeologist, Head of the secretariat of the Central Archaeological Council of Greece.
Professor Sophia Kremydi, Associate Researcher in the Research Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity, National Hellenic Research Foundation.
Mr Robin Lane Fox, ancient historian, Tutor and Fellow at New College, University of Oxford.
Dr Maria Lilimpaki-Akamati, Emeritus Director of Antiquities, former Director of the 17th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities (Pella and Emathia) and co-excavator of Pella with Professor I. Akamatis.
Dr Jonathan Musgrave, University Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Comparative and Clinical Anatomy, University of Bristol.
Professor John Prag, Honorary Professor in the Manchester Museum and Professor Emeritus of Classics in the University of Manchester.
Professor Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, Member of the European Parliament and Professor of Classical Archaeology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and co-director of the University of Thessaloniki Vergina excavations.
Dr Susan Walker, Keeper of Antiquities, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

2 Macedon, *c*.650–336 BC

Robin Lane Fox

The Macedonians lived under the same political system uninterruptedly for some five hundred years. Nowadays we admire the ancient Greeks for their invention of democracy, but even among the Athenians democracy lasted much less long. Macedon's system was monarchy, the most stable form of government in Greek history. It persisted from *c*.650 BC to 167 BC and only stopped because the Romans abolished it.[1]

Why did it establish such deep roots? Were the Macedonians 'unpolitical' and mostly living outside urban settlements? Were they perhaps not 'really Greeks'? Were they only consumers, but never producers, of Greek culture? Modern students of archaic Greek history usually omit Macedonians as 'beyond the fringe', except for the few mentions of their king in Herodotus' account of the Persian wars in 480/79 BC and Thucydides' descriptions of the bewildering changes of alliance by their king Perdiccas II in the first four books of his *History of the Peloponnesian War* (431–424 BC). Instead, Macedonians burst dramatically onto the stage of history-teaching and essay-writing with the accession of Philip II, father of Alexander the Great, in 360/59 BC as if from a 'failed state'. The Macedonians' subsequent conquest from the Danube to southern Greece, Lake Ohrid to (eventually) north-west India can then be told as the biggest surprise of all ancient history.

There are still plenty of surprises in Macedon's success, but at least three decades of widespread, intensive archaeological research have complicated the old picture of Macedon as an isolated compound of forests, swampy plains and mountains. The identification of Vergina as Aegae, the kings' dynastic centre, has, since October 1977, the moment when Manolis Andronikos' great work began to uncover the royal tombs, led to the most rewarding excavations in the Greek world.

Both of the great Greek historians, Herodotus and Thucydides, appear to have visited the Macedonian court. They agree on the number of previous Macedonian kings and, if we follow them, we can date the Macedonians' awareness of their monarchy's history back to *c.*650 BC. The kings presented their first ancestors as migrants from Greek Argos in the southern Peloponnese, but legendary 'kinships' and genealogies were rife in the Greek world: the neighbouring king of Epirus claimed a fictitious descent from the mythical Greek Aeacus. Macedon's first kings were members of a family called 'Argaedai', whence, no doubt, their supposed link with the similar-sounding Argos. The historicity of this link is accepted nowadays only by a minority of scholars.

Careful research into surviving words, personal-names and month-names of the Macedonians has established that the 'Macedonian tongue' spoken even by Cleopatra in Egypt in the 40s and 30s BC, was a dialect of Greek, probably close to north-western Greek. It suggests an origin there for the royal family. Later sources testify to 'Argos Orestikon', a settlement in the north-west of the kingdom, up near the Pindus mountains: perhaps the 'Argeadai' originated there and came south-east. In the 440s/430s BC Herodotus was told a superb tale of three royal brothers, supposedly exiled from southern 'Argos', who entered Macedon's lowland plains. The route of the three, he claims, ran from 'Illyria' down the River Haliacmon to a settlement called Lebaia, recently located by excavation near modern Daskion, north-west of Velvendos. A fine folk-tale follows, by which the three pioneering brothers escape from Lebaia, cross the river and enter lowland Macedon, the fabled 'Garden of Midas', where Herodotus even comments on the 'sixty-petalled' roses. Here, they founded the line of the 'Argive' – Argead kings. To this day, it is awesome to retrace their route.

Behind this story may lie the fact of a new clan's arrival, speaking north-west Greek and perhaps landing a migrant group of herdsmen who had previously practised transhumance in the Pindus mountains. They came down the Haliacmon valley and then conquered or won over the various peoples whom they found already in residence in and around 'lowland Macedon'. Thucydides tells us of seven such peoples, from the Eordoi (west of Mount Bermion) to the Almopians (north of the future site of Pella), Pierians, Bottiaeans, Bisaltians and others to the east. Few, if any, of these people were Greek-speakers already, but like the Greek kings on Cyprus some five centuries earlier, the incoming Macedonians under their Argeadai spread their Greek language as rulers. They encountered a small settlement at Aegae–Vergina which they duly made their own. They conquered coastal Pieria and founded Dion, making it another religious centre for their subjects. Between *c.*650 and 550 BC they gained huge territory, an achievement ignored in modern history books of archaic Greece, which focus, instead, on the Greek 'tyrants' in the *poleis* and little islands of the south-east and the Aegean.

The kings ruled with an entourage of companions, or *hetairoi*, who in turn probably had links with local settlements in their kingdom. Their subjects were organised, it seems, round 'hearths' (the *pyrokauseis* of later evidence) but already in the lowlands several townships formed, places like Beroia, Edessa and perhaps already Mieza. From the start, a 'Homeric' ethos of valour and prowess prevailed, lived out by warrior-males in battles and in hunts against the teeming wildlife of their local forests and river-valleys. A Macedonian could not recline at dinner unless he had killed a wild boar without using a net. Lions, bears and stags also tested a man's mettle. He could wear a belt only if he had killed an enemy in combat. This culture of male prowess was to characterise Macedon throughout its history, extending to the kings' dining and drinking parties, where reputations, too, were made and lost.

The growing kingdom had three main components by *c.*520 BC: the cantons of Upper Macedon to the west and north-west of Aegae, whose people were grouped in villages as members of *ethne* dominated by local ruling families; the lowland Macedonian plain; to the east and south-east, the 'Chalkidic' lands and adjacent territories. Here, Greek settlements had already proliferated for quite other reasons. Part of the inland territory had been inhabited by Thracians; importantly, too, the coastline had become dotted with many *polis*-settlements of Greeks from the Aegean and elsewhere, especially by Euboeans, one of whose home settlements, Chalkis gave its name to 'Chalkidike'. Already in the tenth century BC contact between Euboea's important settlement at Lefkandi and the coastline in, and adjoining, Chalkidike is archaeologically attested. One attraction was the local river-gold, arguably the gold which was then used in Lefkandi's remarkable 'Dark Age' jewellery. In the late 730s BC, another Euboean *polis*, Eretria, founded Methone on the coast only some 20 miles east of Aegae. Excavations have shown typical Euboean pottery reaching Vergina's site even earlier in the century: Methone itself is typified by Euboean goods and many related precious imports. By 730s BC Euboeans were already literate, being inventors, and users of their alphabet. They were on the Macedonian kings' doorstep, a morning's journey from Vergina.

Nonetheless, until 550–510 BC, the actions of the inland Macedonian kings are unknown to us. In or near Chalkidike we know only that the aspiring Athenian tyrant Pisistratus made contacts at a settlement, Rhaikelos, which is as yet unlocated in Chalkidike. His interest, once again, was precious metal for the funding of his tyrannical aims. In *c.*513 BC, the expanding power of the Persian king Darius suddenly illuminates the kingdom. Macedon's king, Amyntas I, submitted to Persia. Envoys were sent and according to Herodotus, were gallantly murdered by Amyntas's son Alexander while the Persians were harassing Macedonian women during a royal banquet. The tale is probably apologetic and exaggerated. No Persian reprisals are known for such 'murders'. Instead, King Amyntas married off his daughter, Alexander's sister, to the son of the most prominent Persian general. The truth was that Macedon, the future 'avenger' under Alexander the Great of the previous Persian sacrilege, medised between *c.*513 and 479 BC.

Herodotus' stories about Alexander I, Amyntas' successor, reflect the actions of a king who was at best playing a double game during the Persian war in Greece. Many scholars credit the growth of Alexander's kingdom to Persian support and campaigning. For Herodotus, however, the frontier of the kingdom, even in 513 BC, lay just east of Mount Dysoron, now located by inscriptional evidence as beyond the River Strymon, almost as far east as Philip II's future Philippi. Has Herodotus projected back in time the enlarged frontier of Macedon in his own age? Many think so, but in *c.*507 BC Amyntas, Alexander's father, had been able to offer the exiled son of Pisistratus, the Athenian tyrant Hippias, lands at Anthemus, or modern Galatista, in the 'Chalkidic' zone. It is therefore wrong to limit sixth-century Macedon only to the plains round Aegae and Beroia. By 510 BC the kingdom may already have been bigger than historians now imagine (Map 1). In the poetic *Catalogue of Women*, its eponym, Macedon, is presented as a son of Zeus and Thyia (linked with the god Dionysus). Homer had mentioned Pieria and Emathia as place-names, but had said nothing about the people 'beyond Olympus'. Now, Macedonians were linked to a Greek mythical genealogy. Accusations that their kings were 'barbarians' were henceforward the ignorant or insulting comments of enemies or misinformed outsiders in the south. The recent excavations at Aiane (centre of the local kingdom of Elimeia) and Pentavrysos (the probable centre of Orestis) show that fine Greek pottery and even Greek sculptures had been arriving at Upper Macedonian sites by *c.*500 BC. The 'golden burial' of the lady (Amyntas's queen?) at Aegae and the remarkable terracotta heads in another lady's grave there *c.*480 BC are evidence that Macedonians at the court were also surrounded by gifted craftsmen, working in a Greek style. I accept the clear ancient statement that Aegae, within daily view of Mount Olympus, had a festival called 'Olympia', obviously for Zeus. It may have been a yearly rallying-point for the king and his increasing number of subjects.

When Persian armies retreated in defeat in 479 BC, Alexander I prospered. During the war, he had helped, he said, to protect the medising Greek cities of Boeotia. Afterwards he was honoured with a praise-poem, or encomium, by the great Theban poet Pindar. He put up a golden statue of himself at Delphi, supposedly from spoils taken from the Persians. It is the earliest attested Greek portrait-statue. He had even been allowed, after a dispute, to compete in the Olympic Games (perhaps as early as the 490s BC), a mark of his acceptably Greek pedigree. A fine poem by Bacchylides, 'a golden wing from the Muses', connects drinking-parties in his presence with displays of gold and ivory, with trading abroad and young men's flighty thoughts of far-flung rule and conquest. There is a hint here that the young Alexander, too, might be over-ambitious.

From the mid-460s BC Alexander had to compete on his eastern frontier with the rising power of the Athenians and their allies. They, too, were attracted by the local silver mines and soon allied themselves with Berge, an inland polis which lay strikingly far from the coast up the River Strymon. In the mid-460s BC we first hear allegations, often to be repeated that an Athenian leader (in this case, Cimon) had been bribed by a Macedonian king. Alexander's revenues were vastly increased by his own exploitation of silver-mines near Lake Prasias and his silver coins give the best hint of his new vigour. We see a horseman, surely the king himself, mounted on a superbly formed horse (perhaps improved by Persian bloodlines, retained since 479 BC), armed with two hunting spears and accompanied by a small dog (probably, a 'Melitaean' breed) (fig. 5). Later sources allege that an Alexander, in my view Alexander I, even forced through an infantry reform, creating centralised royal 'foot companions' beside the old companion nobles and newer companion cavalrymen who had also been wooed with this honorific title. If Alexander reformed the infantry, there is no sign of them in the next century of Macedonian history. Perhaps he was cited only as a plausible 'founder' by later generations, Philip and Alexander's men. On his death, probably in the mid- to later 450s BC, the kingdom was torn apart.

King Alexander had been polygamous, a practice known in Greece among only a few previous ruling 'tyrants'. Herodotus thought wrongly that the royal succession passed by primogeniture: one modern theory is that it passed by porphyrogeniture, to the first prince born to a Macedonian king during his actual reign. The historical reality seems to be that no rule prevailed, that polygamy complicated the range of candidates and that companion nobles probably made or broke the chances of aspiring Argead family candidates. Succession struggles became endemic, and for centuries Macedonian kings were plagued by matrimonial intrigue and 'second-wife syndrome'.

Perdiccas II emerged as Alexander's successor, the king best known from Thucydides (who perhaps met him) and from an Athenian comic poet's quip that from Perdiccas' Macedon Athenians received only 'ship-loads of lies'. In fact Perdiccas has to keep changing his allegiances in order to hang on to his kingdom. One of his brothers rebelled against him; so did a highland prince. Perdiccas allied himself first with the dominant Athenians (to whom the Greek cities in Chalkidike were paying a yearly tribute) and then with the Spartan army led north by the audacious Brasidas in 424 BC. In response to the Athenian pressure in the later 430s BC and their foundation of a settlement, Brea, in western Chalkidike, Perdiccas encouraged the neighbouring Chalkidians to form a Chalkidian League, centred in the city of Olynthos. It was such a good idea that its power than returned to haunt him and his successors.

In 413 BC Archelaos succeeded him, a king more effective than the previous seven, according to Thucydides, who once again may have gone up to the royal court. Archelaos developed roads, built new strong points and distributed arms to his subject-soldiers. As the Athenian power diminished locally, he preferred to side with them. Above all, he intensified the kings' tradition of cultural patronage. He started a 'festival of the Muses' at Dion, near the slopes of Mount Olympus. It was he, not his successor, who developed the site of Pella. The fine artist Zeuxis was summoned to decorate his palace there. Two talented visitors stand out amongst his guests, the great sculptor Callimachus and the poet Euripides. Callimachus' presence at Aegae has been confirmed by a funerary verse-inscription and by clear signs of the local impact of his craftsmanship and skills. A rare word in the verse-inscription suggests that it may even have been composed for him by Euripides himself. The ageing Euripides was Archelaos' great catch. He even wrote a play, the *Archelaos*, about a legendary royal ancestor, invented in Archelaos' honour. Above all, it was in Macedon that he wrote his late masterpiece, the *Bacchae*, verses of which imply that it was to be performed at Pella itself. Macedon had various cults of Dionysus, including those for groups of young women who worshipped him in rites on the mountains. The historian-psychologist George Devereux has observed that the *Bacchae*'s scenes of ecstatic possession follow a plausible, near-clinical pattern, so much so that Euripides may have seen the ecstatic state and its therapy, probably in Macedon. Macedonians may not have written plays or sculpted statues, but they cannot be classed as ignorant 'consumers': their king was a very shrewd patron of the top contemporary talent. The great modern commentator on the *Bacchae*, E. R. Dodds, considered that the play was unlikely to have been performed in Macedon because its ideas were too intellectual and 'contemporary' for a Macedonian public. In fact it is excellent evidence for what a Macedonian court-audience in *c.*406 BC could enjoy. They would also have enjoyed Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* and its able characterisation of Achilles, the future role model of Alexander the Great. However, Euripides left the play unfinished when he died in Macedon. He was honoured with a tomb at Arethusa out in the eastern 'Chalkidic' territories.

With the eclipse of Athens's empire in 404 BC Macedon ought to have prospered once again. Instead, the kingdom nearly fell apart. Archelaos' death from a plot while out hunting in 399 BC ushered in six years of succession problems with no fewer than five kings, only the last of whom, Amyntas III, survived for a long reign. Even so, in 393/2 BC, Illyrian tribes nearly drove the new king Amyntas out; in the late 380s BC, Macedon's creation, the Chalkidian League, invaded the lowlands and nearly did the same. Amyntas only survived with the help of a Spartan army. His one success was marriage to Eurydice, one of his two wives, who was a solid link with her home canton in Upper Macedon and proved an admirably resourceful protectress of her children and kingdom's interests. Like Archelaos, Amyntas at least re-founded the lowland coastal city of Pydna: in return, the citizens honoured him with a shrine in his lifetime, an 'Amyntaion', for honours 'equal to the gods'. Amyntas did not necessarily impose this cult, but it was the first such temple-cult for a living Greek ruler. Only in Macedon did Greek kings interrelate with autonomous Greek cities, the breeding-ground for such divine honours.

After a long but turbulent reign, Amyntas III died in 369 BC, apparently peacefully (a rarity in Macedonian history). His sons Alexander II and (initially with a regency) Perdiccas III succeeded him, but the former was quickly murdered in 368 BC and the latter died in 360 BC in a battle against the Illyrians in the north-west. Under Amyntas, first Sparta, then Athens had become essential allies: in 369/8 BC under Alexander II and his successor, the Thebans, too, became arbiters of the Macedonian succession and even took two sets of Macedonian hostages, eighty in all, back home to their city. From 368 to 365 BC, one hostage was Amyntas' third son, Philip. The kings' traditional patronage of external Greek talent continued (Aristotle's father came as court-doctor; a student of Plato, Euphraios, taught at Perdiccas' court) but for forty years the kingdom was basically a casualty of its neighbours.

From 360 to 336 BC Philip turned it round. He is the greatest kingdom-builder in ancient history, a man who designed a new model army with new tactics and balanced weaponry, who introduced Attic *koinē* Greek as his official diplomatic language, who struck the first Greek gold coins to have more than a local circulation, who resettled Macedonians in new sites across his kingdom, who extended Macedonian power from Lake Ohrid to the distant Black Sea and Danube, and who subjected the southern Greek powers in a new alliance with him, their leader, and then unveiled a grand ambition (Map 2): the invasion of the Persian Empire. He even increased massively his kingdom's horsepower by planned land-grants to horse-owners and horse-breeding initiatives. Many of Philip's innovations were crucial to the subsequent Hellenistic age and in every way he was a crucial model, and spur, to his son Alexander. His newly founded Philippi is a precursor of his son's many Alexandrias.

Unlike previous kings, Philip had seen life outside his home kingdom. As a boy he served as a hostage, first among the Illyrian tribes, then for three years at Thebes, the most innovative Greek military power of the 360s BC. The experience formed him in a new way. In a dazzling accession year he asserted himself against Macedonian rivals and then against foreign enemies on all four points of the compass. He initiated his new army; he moved fast and spoke well in public; he had the charm and energy of a young king aged 22 whereas Macedon's neighbours were all ruled by ageing dynasts. At first he pursued the traditional aims of previous Macedonian kings: a conquest of the Illyrians, involvement in neighbouring Thessaly, the capture of Amphipolis. Then, in 356 BC, he founded his new city of Philippi, and from 353 BC onwards became engaged, by Theban invitation, in the festering Sacred War in central Greece. Concluding it in 346 BC, he swore peace and alliance with the Athenians, although (in my view) he regarded it as only temporary. By then, perhaps even by the late 350s BC, I believe he had already conceived the grand design of invading Asia. First, he had to subdue his barbarian neighbours, the Illyrians and Thracians (in 341–339 BC). Then he had to deal with the Greek enemies whom his growing power and ambition had inevitably raised against him. He returned to win the decisive battle of Chaironeia in August 338 BC against southern Greek opposition, led by his former allies, the Athenians and Thebans. No Macedonian king had ever been so powerful, the master of all the Greek mainland and of Europe up to the River Danube (Map 2).

Philip was a master of political 'spin' and of vague promises which recipients unwisely over- interpreted. One-eyed after a wound in 355/4 BC, he was nonetheless praised by an Athenian visitor as handsome, seductively charming, a fine drinker, and a speaker with a good memory. Others were more hostile. The contemporary historian Theopompus centred a long history on Philip and began it by calling him 'such a man as Europe has absolutely never borne'. He then attacked Philip for his dissolute personal life, his extravagance and even the extreme homosexuality of his male 'companions'. In part, he mistook Philip's ostentatious 'culture of the gift' at court and the increasing gold and ivory splendour of his surroundings. Philip's gifts of gold, land and silver treasures bound Macedon's local leaders and neighbouring non-Greek tribes to his cause. He had to rule a Macedon which still differed from region to region. The cantons of upper Macedon, which he had reintegrated into his kingdom, were still largely under-urbanised. Each made up an *ethnos*, or tribe, led by a noble or a local royal house: most people's lives here still centred on villages. Lowland Macedon was populated with towns, administered by officials whose Macedonian names went back before Philip's reforms, *skoidos* (a judicial post), *tagos* or *peliganes*, the 'grey(-haired)' elderly local councillors. There were also 'overseers', *epistatai*, in the townships who were locally appointed for fixed periods. By contrast, the Chalkidic territories and adjoining conquests had mostly been populated with self-governing *poleis*, city-states with a long history of freedom. Philip drew this diversity together by giving local land to beneficiaries whom he resettled from elsewhere in the kingdom and turned into royal king's men of the future. His companions had strong local links too, and through the new magnet of service at his court and in his army they and their dependent communities could be unified to follow the king's demands. The kingdom rested on patronage, military success and the new riches of Philip's conquests. The productive gold and silver mines which he seized for the kingdom were crucial, especially the newly found gold mine at a 'hill of Dionysus' near his new city, Philippi. Philip's court became 'the place to be', and success and gifts entrenched loyalty to the kingship through the court based in Pella and Aegae.

Philip intensified the patronage of Greek talent from outside the kingdom, his predecessors' tradition. As the contemporary Isocrates told a Greek king on Cyprus, Greek culture 'tamed' those whom it benefited. It made them think; it gave them skills; it also enhanced the magnetic splendour of the lowland court. Significantly, Philip invented a corps of young Royal Pages, some of whom were from former highland families, and sent them with his growing son Alexander to be tutored by the great Aristotle beside the caves and lush green landscape near Mieza, still an enchanted site. Patronage of the best talent began early in his reign. Already in 360/59 BC (in my view) a statue of Attic marble (recently discovered at Aegae) was carved by the great Cephisodotos' workshop in Athens as a portrait-statue of Philip's mother, Eurydice, and sent up to her at court: she dedicated it to Eukleia, goddess of 'Fair Repute', in answer to the scandalous rumours of murder which her rivals were wickedly circulating against her. As Philip's power grew, the greatest painters, sculptors, jewellers, metal-workers and theatre-actors followed this same trail to Macedon from all over the Greek world. His culminating glory was his vast new palace above Aegae's theatre, excitingly restored to a date in his reign by Dr Angeliki Kottaridi and her team working there since 2007. At Olympia, Philip had also paid for a rounded building, his 'Philippeion', which was filled with gilded ivory statues of himself and four family-members. Conspicuously, it stood right inside Zeus' precinct, an unprecedented honour. At Olympia, Philip's central statue looked across to the nearby shrine of Zeus. In Macedon, on Aegae's hill, he was now ruling from a ceremonial palace, 12,500 metres square.

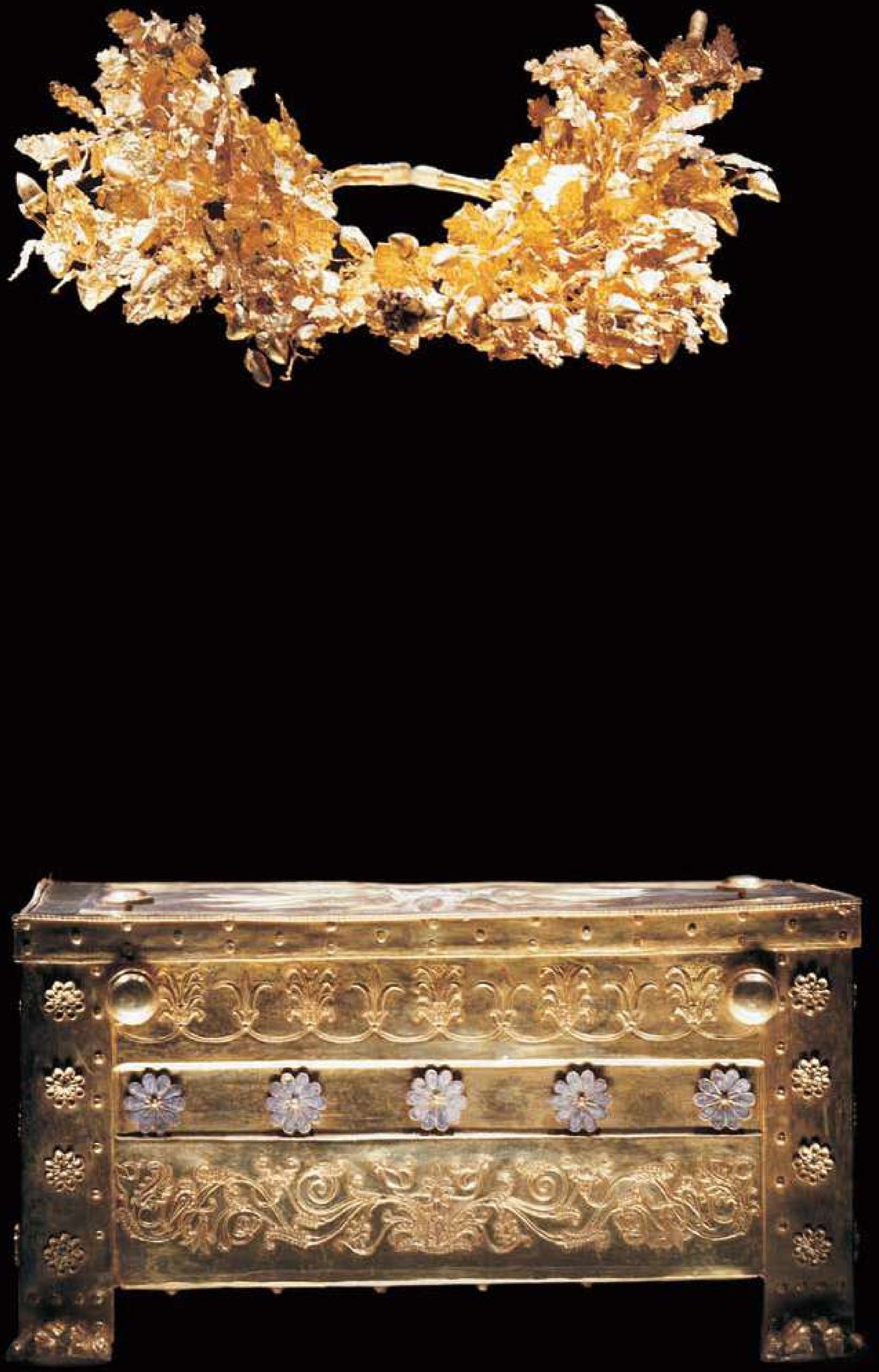
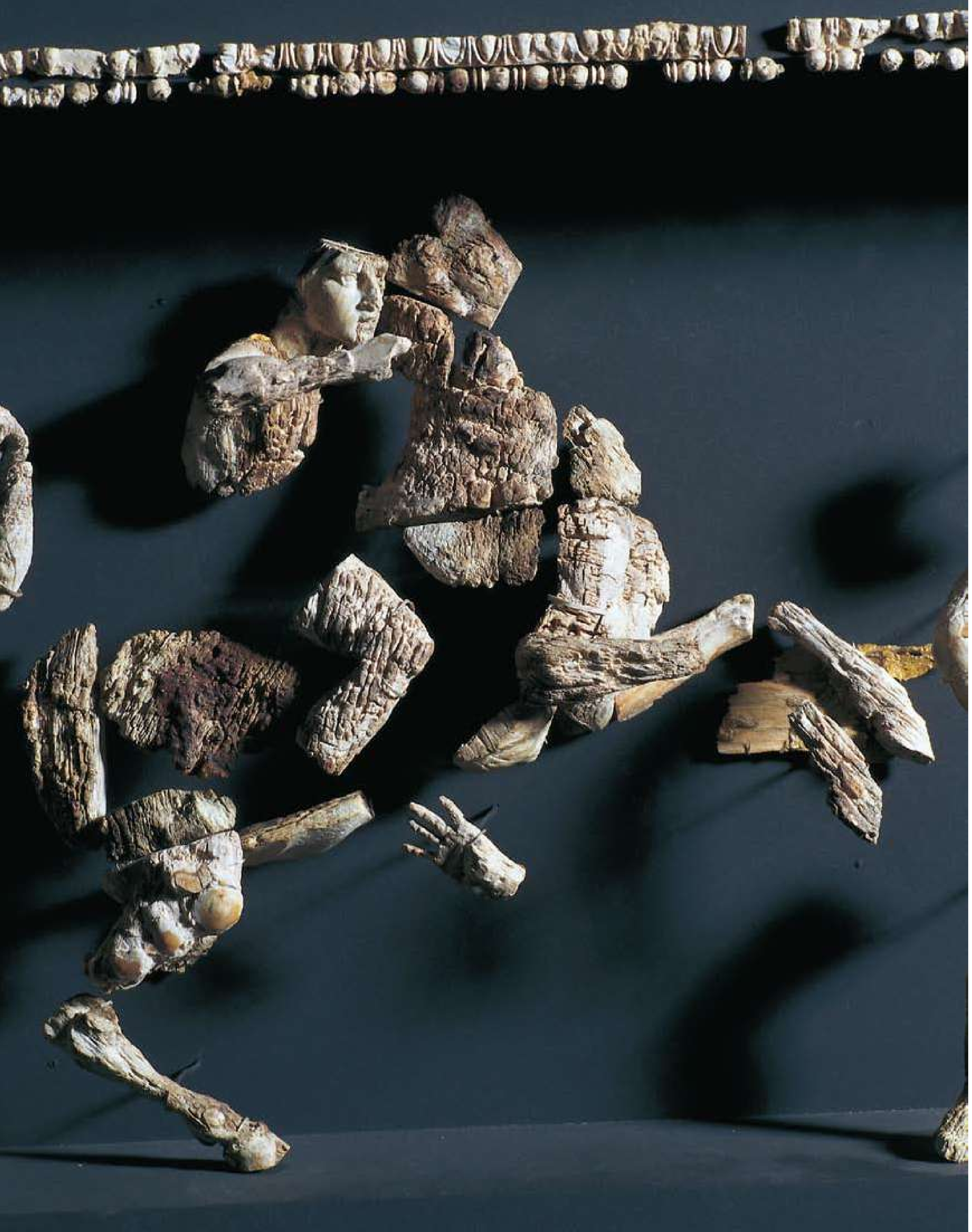


Fig. 27 Golden wreath with oak leaves and acorns and golden *larnax* – the container for the cremated remains of King Philip II



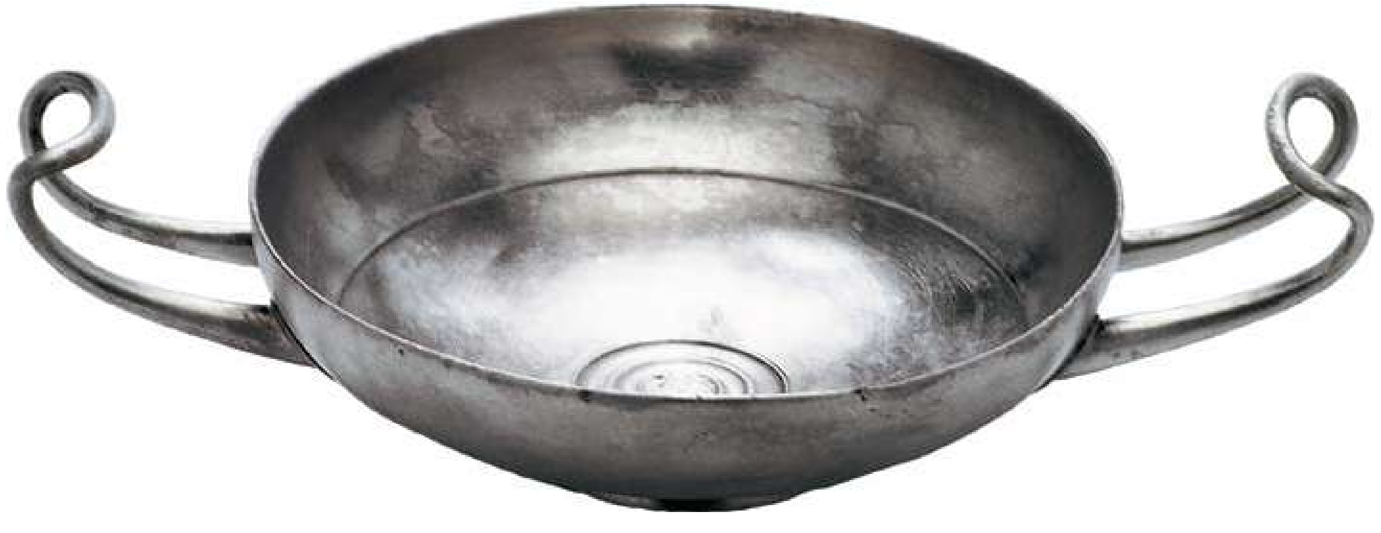
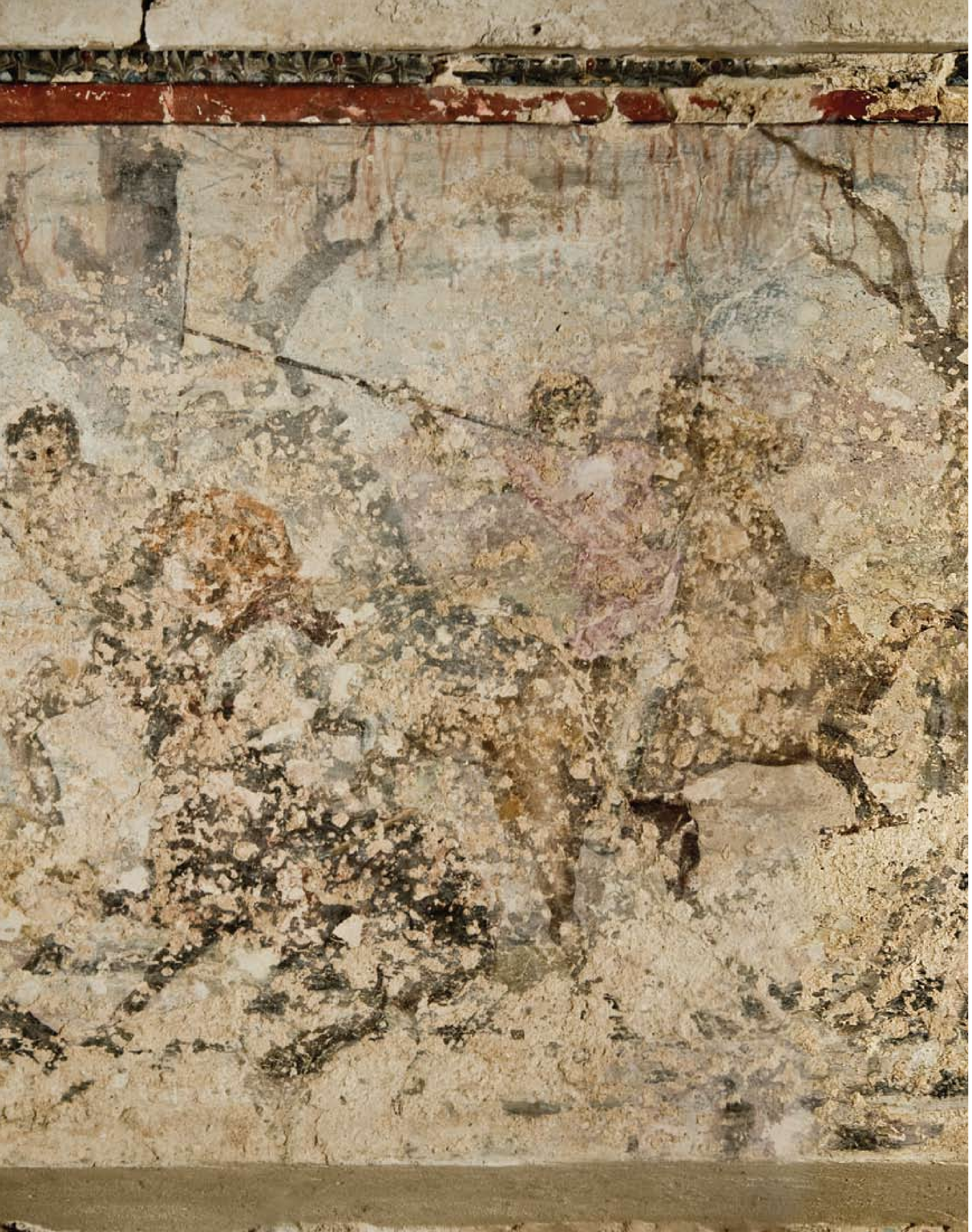


Fig. 28 (above) Silver cup (*kylix*) from the tomb of Philip II (Cat. no. 476)

Fig. 29 (opposite) Rider in battle – detail from one of the gold and ivory couches from the tomb of Philip II

His 'Philippeion' was made ready for the last Olympics before he and his army left for Asia. His palace at Aegae was ready to host Greek guests to his daughter's wedding in autumn 336 BC. By then the gold, ivory and marble of his court made the contemporary arts in Athens look decidedly provincial. On the day of the wedding celebrations for his daughter, Philip was murdered in public in Aegae's theatre, a victim (it was said) of court scandals. Some blamed a homosexual grievance; modern historians identify two other tensions, one of which Philip had tried to counter, the other of which was his own creation. In the murder and its aftermath there were signs of the local factions and loyalties within Macedon which Philip's court, royal army and land-grants had tried to break down. There was also matrimonial tension, centring on Philip's seventh wife, his first Macedonian bride, mother of a daughter and, days before, of a son. In his early forties Philip had upset his household.

The style of Philip's funeral testifies to 'Homeric' Macedon's new splendour (fig. 27). He was cremated in a specially built wooden 'house'; his bones were then deposed with silver vessels (fig. 28), fine ivory couches (fig. 29), much weaponry and his great royal shield in the back chamber of Aegae's royal 'Tomb II'. No text or inscription attests this tomb as his, but the occupant was a king in his mid-forties (as the bones testify) and a woman (in her mid- to late twenties) was also cremated and laid in the front chamber. There are only two royal candidates, Philip II or the half-wit Philip III, his son, who was murdered at Aegae in October 317 BC. Philip III has been championed by some,



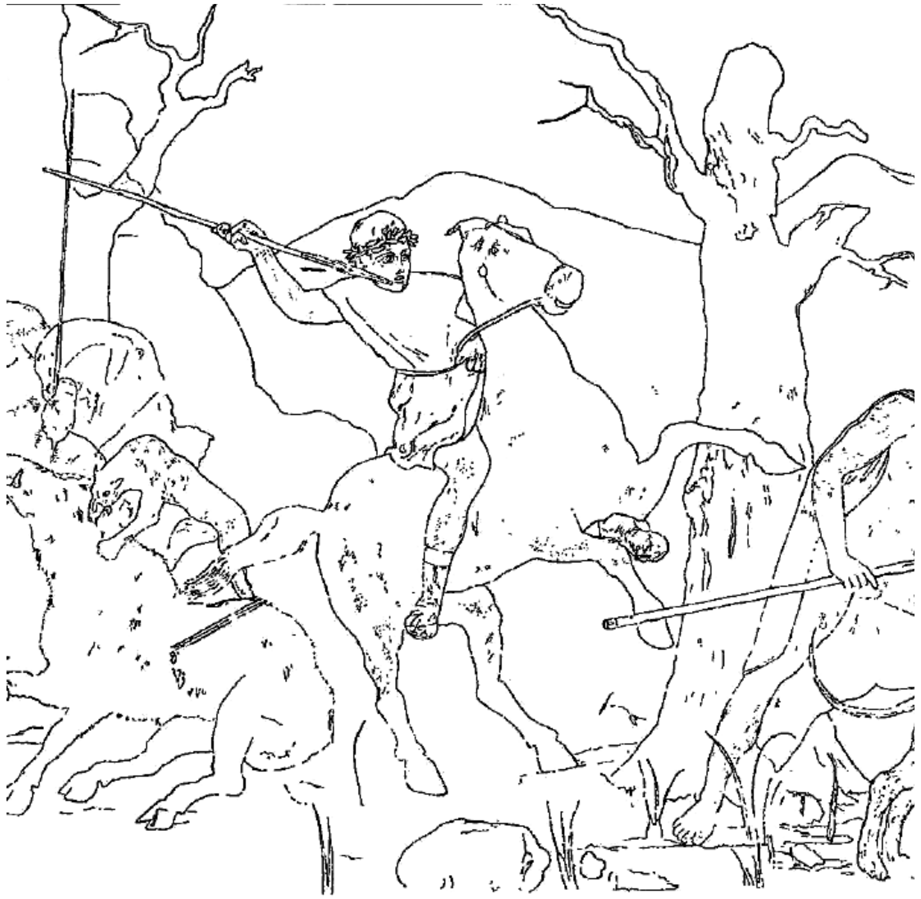


Fig. 30 (opposite) Above the door of the tomb of Philip II his son Alexander, the new king, is represented

Fig. 31 (right) Line drawing of the same scene

but he is now seen to be excluded by the fact of the great cremation (he was reburied at Aegae after he had been dead and rotting in the ground for several months and unfit for such a cremation). He is also at odds with the subject of the tomb's painting (it shows Alexander and Philip II hunting with able-bodied royal pages, not a scene for the defective Philip III) (figs. 247–50). The age of the accompanying female also does not fit the woman buried with him (she was his valiant wife, Philip II's granddaughter, and was killed when only 18–19 years old). Nothing in, or about, the great Tomb is inconsistent archaeologically with a dating to 336 BC, the date of Philip II's death. He alone fits the fact of the cremation and admirably suits the subject of the accompanying painting, which shows himself (one-eyed in profile) hunting a lion with the Pages, his own creation.

Above the door of this tomb Alexander is represented, the new king who paid for this masterpiece (figs. 30–31). With him, the Macedonians were to go east beyond even Philip's immediate dreams. But Alexander remained a Macedonian in large measure, and it is to Macedon that his own formation must be traced and assessed in a contemporary context, not just in terms of modern moral values and priorities. Even in Asia, thoughts of this green homeland accompanied him and his men. It was to Aegae that his body was intended to return and it was to Macedon that his ageing successors, Antigonos and even 80-year-old Seleukos, aspired to return as conquerors. From coastal Syria to the River Euphrates and beyond, their Macedonians named the local landscapes and their new settlements after place-names in their former homeland. Their Macedonian upbringing never deserted them.