ANCIENT MACEDONIA

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ΑΡΧΑΙΑ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ

ΕΒΔΟΜΟ ΔΙΕΘΝΕΣ ΣΥΜΠΟΣΙΟ
ANCIENT MACEDONIA
VII
MACEDONIA
FROM THE IRON AGE
TO THE DEATH OF PHILIP II

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VII

Η ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ
ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΕΠΟΧΗ ΤΟΥ ΣΙΔΗΡΟΥ
ΕΩΣ ΤΟ ΘΑΝΑΤΟ ΤΟΥ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ Β’

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According to Herodotus’ account the initial expansion of Macedonia started from the area near the Bermion Mountain, where the three brothers, descendants of Temenos, came after they had been expelled from Lebaea. There, “according to the Macedonians”, the Gardens of Midas, son of Gordias, were to be found, famous for the roses that had sixty petals apiece, and where Silenos was caught. “Here the brothers made their abode, and from this place by degrees they conquered all Macedonia”1. The legend about Perdiccas, the younger brother and the founder of the Macedonian dynasty, claims their origin from Argos: thus Alexander I was able to prove his Hellenic descend at the Olympic Games2. Thus, the Phrygian King Midas turned to be present in the earliest story about the beginning of the Macedonian royal house, a story which, according to Herodotus, was told by the Macedonians themselves.

It is difficult to estimate how much of Herodotus’ story is based on an official list of the Argead kings, as some scholars claim3. However, the account seems to be generally known and accepted by this time, as it does not differ much from Thucydides’ narration4. Thucydides did not, of course, mention the legendary adventures of the three brothers at Lebaea, or the Gardens of Midas. The origins from Argos and the eight kings before Arche-laos seem to be well known by the end of the fifth century B.C. Thucydides’ source must have been a local one, bearing in mind his good knowledge of the situation in southwestern Thrace. Herodotus must have also used a Macedonian source, but it was legendary and folklore in nature. That is why there is no point in discussing whether Thucydides’ version is dependent on Herodotus or not5: these are just different kinds of texts. However, it is most likely that the stories about the Argive origins of the Macedonian dynasty were what Macedonian kings wished to be believed about them, no matter

2. Hdt. 5.22.
4. Thuc. 2.99.3-4; 2.100.1-2.
whether these accounts took shape under Alexander I⁶, or under Perdiccas⁷.

At the end of the fifth century B.C. the legendary forefather of the Macedonian kings, Perdiccas, was substituted in the royal list by Archelaos, also a son of Temenos, in Euripides’ play *Archelaos*⁸. It is obvious that the tragic poet wanted to make a gesture towards his host, the Macedonian king⁹. Euripides’ play was based on a legend that repeated in general the plot of Herodotus’ novel about Perdiccas: the king refused to give the promised award after the hero had completed the labour. Here Mygdonian Kisseus was the unjust ruler, while Archelaos, lead by a goat, founded the capital city of Aigai.

In the fourth century B.C. Karanos was considered the founder of the Macedonian dynasty, being included in the royal list as the father of Perdiccas¹⁰. Satyros and Diodorus added two more kings between Karanos and Perdiccas: Koinos and Tyrimas¹¹. Some of the versions are very similar to Archelaos story and that is why Kazarov assumed that Euripides just substituted Karanos with Archelaos¹². Hammond claims that Karanos was the first change in the Macedonian royal list because of the prophecy given at Delphi about the founding/expanding of the kingdom assigned both to him¹³ and to Perdiccas¹⁴. Other scholars have justly criticized this view, because none of the legendary versions can be dated earlier than Euripides’ *Archelaos*, staged 408/407 B.C.¹⁵.

Greenwalt is probably right in assuming that after the death of Archelaos, the rivalry between the representatives of the three different branches of the Argead family, each of them a descendant of a different son of Alexander I, lead to the imposing of a more neutral figure as a forefather: ο闾讗, which means “a chief”¹⁶. This is a very plausible hypothesis; however, the variants

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9. Hammond – Griffith, op.cit. (n. 3) 5, 10-11; Borza, op.cit. (n. 5, 1982) 11-12; Borza (n. 5, 1992) 83; Greenwalt, op.cit. (n. 3), 44.
10. FGrHist 115F 393; 630 F1; Just. 7. 1; Euseb. 1, 200; 1. 230.
11. FGrHist 631F 1; Diod. 7.15; FGrHist II B1, 400-401.
14. Diod. 7.16; Hammond – Griffith, op.cit. (n. 3) 5, 8-11.
16. Greenwalt, op.cit. (n. 3) 47-49; LSJ 877.
where Midas is mentioned and which stem most possibly from Theopompos, could offer other suggestions as well.

Justin/Trogus gives the already canonical version with Karanos, whose source is Theopompos\textsuperscript{17}. Macedonian royal list, which included Karanos, was further confirmed by the Hellenistic writers Marsyas\textsuperscript{18} and Satyros\textsuperscript{19}. This sequence in the literary tradition seems more plausible than Hammond’s later view that \textit{Makedonika} by Marsyas of Macedon was the source for the beginning of Justin’s Seventh Book\textsuperscript{20}. At the time of Alexander III Karanos was the generally accepted founder of the dynasty\textsuperscript{21}. Theopompos played a significant role in the shaping of the stories about wise Silenos who talks to Midas before being released. The legend about Midas capturing Silenos in Macedonia was known earlier, but Theopompos made him tell the Phrygian king about an utopic place, Meropis, surrounded by the Ocean, where the Blessed lived\textsuperscript{22}. Rhode suggested a late date for this passage which, according to him, was influenced by the incredible stories told about India by the historians of Alexander the Great\textsuperscript{23}. If Rhode is right, this would suggest that narratives about Midas in Macedonia were used by Alexander III’s propaganda. Thus, it can be assumed that Theopompos also contributed to the editing of Karanos legend. Midas is mentioned only by Justin and by Euphorion, which would mean that most probably Theopompos had a great share in placing the Phrygian king into the narrative about the origin of the Macedonian dynasty\textsuperscript{24}, possibly following Herodotus.

According to Hyginus’ summary of Euripides’ play, Archelaos was expelled from Argos and went to Thrace, where he had to serve King Kisseus\textsuperscript{25}. Here, unlike Herodotus’ story, the founder of the dynasty first comes to Thrace. According to Justin/Trogus, whose source was Theopompos, Karanos, having taken Edessa and renaming her Aigai, expelled from the country Midas and “other local kings” to found the Macedonian Kingdom\textsuperscript{26}. By the

\textsuperscript{17} FGrHist 115 F 393; FGrHist II B 1 401-2; Iust. 7.1.7-12; Hammond – Griffith, \textit{op.cit.} (n. 3)
\textsuperscript{18} Hammond – Griffith, \textit{op.cit.} (n. 3)
\textsuperscript{19} Hammond – Griffith, \textit{op.cit.} (n. 3)
\textsuperscript{20} Hammond – Griffith, \textit{op.cit.} (n. 3)
\textsuperscript{21} Hammond – Griffith, \textit{op.cit.} (n. 3)
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\textsuperscript{23} Hammond – Griffith, \textit{op.cit.} (n. 3)
\textsuperscript{24} Hammond – Griffith, \textit{op.cit.} (n. 3)
\textsuperscript{25} Hammond – Griffith, \textit{op.cit.} (n. 3)
\textsuperscript{26} Hammond – Griffith, \textit{op.cit.} (n. 3)
name of Kisseus Euripides most probably made a reference to the Thracian king Kisses in *The Iliad*, the grandfather of Iphydamantes, killed by Agamemnon. Some mythographic versions have Hecuba as a daughter of Kisseus. The associations with the homonymous city or mountain in Macedonia are late, while Euripides’ context is a Thracian - Trojan one. Literary references to Dionysiac religion are implied by the goats which lead Perdiccas/Archelaos - Karanos in Macedonia/Aigai, as well as by Kisseus as an epithet of Apollo and of Dionysos, derived from ἵβος, “ivy”. The name of Edessa (= Aigai in Theopompos - Trogus) is Thracian.

According to Justin/Trogus and the commentator of Clement Karanos renamed, not founded -as in the other versions- Edessa to Aigai. These are the only two texts where Midas is mentioned. The first passage relates how the first Macedonian king-to-be expelled Midas and the other rulers, while the second states that Edessa was populated by Phrygians and Lydians who Midas had brought to Europe.

The investigation of the tumuli near Vergina lead to a hypothesis about another city of Edessa, identified with Vergina. According to Hammond, the one was Edessa (known also as Voden in Bulgarian which is actually a translation of the Thracian toponym) at the foothills of the Bermion Mountain, where Herodotus placed “the Gardens of Midas”, the other was the renamed Aigai (= Vergina), where the royal necropolis was. Such a distinction seems unlikely, as the post-Herodotean writers only mention the Phrygian ruler in connection with the renamed Aigai. The popularity of the Silenos’ capture by Midas would rather suggest that the fourth century B.C. authors continue to associate the legendary Phrygian king with the gardens at the Bermion Mountain. Otherwise, it should be supposed that the fourth century B.C.

28. Euripides: Hec. 3; Apollod. Bibl. 3. 12. 5.
31. Suid. s.v.
33. Clem. Protr. 2. 8-12.
34. This text is omitted by Hammond – Griffith, op.cit. (n. 3), 9.
Macedonian tradition moved the setting of the earlier texts to Aigai - Vergina.

The end of Clement’s *scholion* is a quotation from Euphorion, the librarian of Antioch. Modern editors cannot decide where precisely Euphorion’s text started. Probably not the whole story about the prophecy of Apollo given to Karanos belongs to the Hellenistic writer. It is debated whether the two sentences about Edessa are his, but the last one, stating that Midas had brought Lydians and Phrygians to Europe is a quotation. Probably the Alexandrine scholar at Antioch was using a fourth century B.C. popular version, Theopompus being again one of the sources.

Another text in which Midas and the Phrygians came from Asia to Europe is a fragment by Nicandros. Having left Asia, Midas from Odonia lived in his Emathian estates. Lycophron also mentions the movement of the Phrygians from Asia Minor to Europe. The Hellenistic poet tells us about Midas who was in Thrace to revenge the evil that his Trojan kinsmen had suffered after the sack of Troy. According to Huxley the story is part of the Herodotean tradition about the clash between Asia and Europe. These verses echoed the synonymic use of Trojans and Phrygians in Greek tragedy as well.

In the rest of the legendary stories Perdiccas, Archelaos and Karanos went (with or without a prophecy) respectively to Botiaeia, to Thrace, or helped the Orestae against the Eordae. The Botiaeai were a Thracian tribe whose territory was located between the Vardar (Axios) River and the gathering of the Muglenitsa and Bistritsa Rivers before the Macedonian expansion. Scholarship has long acknowledged the “Phrygian” affinities of this ethnonym because of Βότιέιον, a city in Phrygia. The Orestae were a Molossian tribe according to Hecataeus, while the Eordians were mentioned

37. Nicand. fr. 74 Scheider (= Athen. 15. 683b).
39. Lycoph. Alex. 1397-1408.
41. Diod. 7. 16.
42. Hygin. Fab. 219.
43. Diod. 7. 15.
44. Detschew *op.cit.* (n. 32) 76-77.
45. Steph. Byz. 179. 11; L. Zgusta, *Kleinasiatische Ortsnamen*. Heidelberg 1984, § 164, as well as in view with the other Phrygian cities: Doryleion, Mideion, Gordeion, Dokymeion, Thembraion; Zgusta *op.cit.*, 126; the Bithynian personal name Boteiras and the Bithynian city of Nikaa which was Βότειρας and Νικαία: Steph. Byz. 179. 11; Detschew, *op.cit.* (n. 32) 77-78 can also be added here.
in the southwestern Thracian lands before the name of the Macedonians spread over in this zone. Ethnic definitions are hardly possible for the numerous tribal names in the Southwestern Balkans. However, this area was a contact zone between the Thracian, the Ilyrian and the Macedonian tribes.

Consideration of the Brygians and their migration to Asia Minor falls beyond the scope of this work and is done elsewhere. Here it suffices to say that their ethnonym faded away during the fifth century B.C. Literary evidence about this tribe is very scarce and legendary. It is possible that the Greek epic tradition of Nostoi influenced the Phrygian "movement" to the west and the Illyrian location of the Brygians in the later authors. This same literary tradition could have coined a similarly sounding tribal name, if not taking advantage of one already heard of in Chalcidice.

Thus, the founders of the Macedonian royal house were legendary and the narratives about them served the political claims of the Macedonian rulers. The versions were being further developed in the 4th century B.C. Their elaboration followed the convenient political moment. The aspirations of the Macedonian royal court to join the Hellenic epic past found a good resource in the name of the famous Phrygian ruler. Thus Midas was included in the stories about the beginning of the Macedonian dynasty. His name became especially popular in the 4th century B.C.

However, there might be still another reason for Midas and the Phrygians to appear in a Macedonian context. The similarities between Thracian and Macedonian religion and royal cult have widely been discussed. Besides the very popular texts about Olympias and Philip being initiated in the Samothracian mysteries, about Alexander III being initiated in "oral" and "secret" rites, another text is also worth reminding here. This is a letter by the Macedonian queen to her son Alexander III, quoted by Athenaeus, Ta Argadistika, which Alexander is supposed to maintain, is a hapax and provo-
ked many discussions\textsuperscript{54}. However, the word might refer to aristocratic rites, performed in the royal court. Could this evidence possibly parallel Herodotus statement that the Thracian kings worshipped Hermes separately from the people?\textsuperscript{55} The role of the southwestern Thracian lands in the context of the Thracian Orphism has long been emphasized\textsuperscript{56}. Thus, the similarities in ritual between Thrace and Macedonia on one hand, and Phrygia on the other, could have also contributed to the localization of Midas’ gardens in Macedonia, as well as to his presence in the Macedonian royal legends.

The considerations presented above allow us to assume that King Midas appeared in the stories about the early history of Macedonia because of political reasons. The 5th century B.C. fashion to place the mythic events in the scenery of ancient Argos had undoubtedly played role in the shaping of the Macedonian royal legends as well\textsuperscript{57}. The inclusion of Midas could possibly refer to the Phrygian allies of the Trojans in \textit{The Iliad}, although his name was not mentioned by Homer, thus relating Macedonian earliest history with Hellenic epic past. For the 5th-4th century B.C. Greeks King Midas was the emblematic Phrygian figure. The same was valid for the Macedonians, because, as Badian stated, it was the Greeks themselves that offered a mythological material to the ambitious barbarian kings for their “ancient history”\textsuperscript{58}. The versions of the Macedonian dynastic legends were elaborated in the 4th century B.C. as well, following the political and ideological impetus. The same motives would drive the historians of Alexander the Great to tell the episode of the Gordian knot\textsuperscript{59}. However, the observed parallels in cult and religion between Thrace, Macedonia and Phrygia also contributed to the placement of Midas in the Macedonian early history, as his role in the cult of Cybele was well known\textsuperscript{60}.

\textsuperscript{55} Hdt. 5. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{57} Borza, \textit{op.cit.} (n. 5, 1982) 10.
\textsuperscript{58} Badian, \textit{op.cit.} (n. 6) 47, n. 23.
\textsuperscript{59} Just. 11. 7. 3-16; Curt. 3. 1. 11-18; Arr. Anab. 2. 3. 1-8; Plut. Alex. 18; cf. M. Vassileva, “King Midas and the Gordian Knot” in: \textit{Thracia 15. Studia in honorem A. Fol}, Sofia 2003, 371-382.
\textsuperscript{60} Plut. Caes. 9.3; Hygin. Fab. 274; Hesych. s.v. Μιδας θρός; Diod. 3. 59. 8; Arnob. \textit{Adv. nat.} 2. 73; 5. 7; M. Vassileva, \textit{AnatSt} 51 (2001) 51-63.