



Institute for Balkan Studies

ANCIENT MACEDONIA

SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM



ΑΡΧΑΙΑ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ

ΕΒΔΟΜΟ ΔΙΕΘΝΕΣ ΣΥΜΠΟΣΙΟ

**ANCIENT MACEDONIA
VII**

**MACEDONIA
FROM THE IRON AGE
TO THE DEATH OF PHILIP II**

**PAPERS READ
AT THE SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
HELD IN THESSALONIKI, OCTOBER 14-18, 2002**

**ΑΡΧΑΙΑ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ
VII**

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

**ΑΝΑΚΟΙΝΩΣΕΙΣ
ΚΑΤΑ ΤΟ ΕΒΔΟΜΟ ΔΙΕΘΝΕΣ ΣΥΜΠΟΣΙΟ
ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ, 14-18 ΟΚΤΩΒΡΙΟΥ 2002**

Ζ' ΔΙΕΘΝΕΣ ΣΥΜΠΟΣΙΟ
ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΑΡΧΑΙΑ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΑ

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ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΜΕΛΕΤΩΝ
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ISBN: 978-960-7387-42-4

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KING MIDAS AND THE EARLY HISTORY OF MACEDONIA

Maya Vassileva

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 descent 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 Archelaos 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

1. Hdt. 8.138, translation by G. Rawlinson.

2. Hdt. 5.22.

3. N. G. L. Hammond – G. T. Griffith, *A History of Macedonia II: 550-336 B.C.*, Oxford 1979; W. Greenwalt, *GrRomByzSt* (1985) 43-49.

4. Thuc. 2.99.3-4; 2.100.1-2.

5. Greenwalt, *op.cit.* (n. 3) 43-44, no 3; E. N. Borza, "Athenians, Macedonians, and the Origins of the Macedonian Royal House" in: *Studies in Attic Epigraphy, History and Topography Presented to Eugene Vanderpool*, Hesperia Suppl. 19, Princeton 1982, 7-13. E. N. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus. The Emergence of Macedon*, Princeton 1992².

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: *χάρανος*, which means "a chief"¹⁶. This is a very plausible hypothesis: however, the variants

6. E. Badian, "Greeks and Macedonians" in: B. Barr-Sharrar – E. Borza (eds.) *Macedonia and Greece in Late Classical and Early Hellenistic Times. Studies in the History of Art 10*, Washington D.C. 1982, 33-51; Borza *op.cit.* (n. 5, 1982) 9-11; Borza, *op.cit.* (n. 5, 1992²) 83.

7. W. Greenwalt, "Thracian Influence on the Ideology of Argead Kingship" in: *Actes 2e Symposium International des études thraciennes. Thrace ancienne I. Epoque archaique, classique, hellenistique, romaine*. Komotini 20-27 septembre 1992, Komotini 1997, 130, no 37.

8. Hygin. *Fab.* 219.

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; Iust. 7. 1; Euseb. 1. 200; 1. 230.

11. FGrHist 631F 1; Diod. 7.15; FGrHist II B1, 400-401.

12. G. I. Kazarov, *King Philip II of Macedon. A History of Macedonia till 336 B.C.*, Sofia (in Bulgarian) 1922, 35-37.

13. Schol. Clem. *Protr.* 2. 11.

14. Diod. 7.16; Hammond – Griffith, *op.cit.* (n. 3) 5, 8-11.

15. Borza, *op.cit.* (n. 5, 1982) 12; Borza, *op.cit.* (n. 5, 1992) 83; Greenwalt, *op.cit.* (n. 3), 45.

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 Theopompos¹⁷. Macedonian royal list, which included Karanos, was further confirmed by the Hellenistic writers Marsyas¹⁸ and Satyros¹⁹. This sequence in the literary tradition seems more plausible than Hammond's later view that *Makedonika* by Marsyas of Macedon was the source for the beginning of Justin's Seventh Book²⁰. At the time of Alexander III Karanos was the generally accepted founder of the dynasty²¹. 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 lived²². 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 Great²³. 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 Euphotion, 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 dynasty²⁴, 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 Kisseus²⁵. 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 Kingdom²⁶. By the

17. FGrHist 115F 393; FGrHist II B 1 401-2; Iust. 7.1.7-12; Hammond – Griffith, *op.cit.* (n. 3) 12.

18. FGrHist 135 F 14; Hammond – Griffith, *op.cit.* (n. 3) 35, n. 3.

19. FGrHist 630 F1.

20. Iust. 7.1.1 - 7.4.2; N. G. L. Hammond *CIQ* (1991) 41, No. 2, 501-502.

21. Plut. *Alex.* 2.1.

22. FGrHist 115 F 75c; FGrHist II D1, 367; L. Roller, *CIAnt* (1983) 2, 306; a similar story in Arist. fr. 44 Rose.

23. E. Rhode, *RhM* (1893) 48, 112, n. 1.

24. The same view in G. L. Huxley, *GrRomByzSt* (1972) 13 no. 3, 313.

25. Hygin. *Fab.* 219; criticism of the attempts to amend "Thrace" to "Macedonia" in: Hammond – Griffith, *op.cit.* (n.3) 10, n. 3.

26. Iust. 7.1.

name of Kisseus Euripides most probably made a reference to the Thracian king Kisses in *The Iliad*, the grandfather of Iphidamantes, killed by Agamemnon²⁷. Some mythographic versions have Hecuba as a daughter of Kisseus²⁸. The associations with the homonymous city or mountain in Macedonia are late²⁹, 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 Apollo³⁰ and of Dionysos³¹, derived from κισσός, "ivy". The name of Edessa (= Aigai in Theopompos - Trogus) is Thracian³².

According to Justin/Trogus and the commentator of Clement Karanos renamed, not founded –as in the other versions– Edessa to Aigai.³³ 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 Europe³⁴.

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 was³⁵. 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.

27. Hom. *Il.* 11. 221-223; Hammond – Griffith, *op.cit.* (n. 3) 10; K. Jordanov, "La Thrace et la Macédoine: La mythologie royale" in: *La razón del mito. I congreso de mitología mediterránea. Terrassa, 1, 2 y 3 de Julio de 1998*, Madrid 2000, 122-123.

28. Euripides: *Hec.* 3; Apollod. *Bibl.* 3. 12. 5.

29. Cf. Strabo 7. fr. 24

30. Macrobian. *Sat.* 1. 18. 6.

31. Suid. *s.v.*

32. D. Detschew, *Die Thrakischen Sprachreste*, Wien 1976², 164-165; G. Mihailov, "On the Character of the Thracian Language. Onomastic Problems" in: *Fourth International Thracian Conference. The Bronze Age in the Thracian Lands and Beyond*, Boston 7-10 June, 1984, Milano 1986, 384-385; P. Dimitrov, "Notes sur la théorie de la racine en Thrace" in: *Studia in honorem Georgii Mihailov*, Sofia 1995, 153.

33. Clem. *Protr.* 2. 8-12.

34. This text is omitted by Hammond – Griffith, *op.cit.* (n. 3), 9.

35. N. G. L. Hammond, *AW* (1996) 27, 68.

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 I³⁶. 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, Theopompos being again one of the sources.

Another text in which Midas and the Phrygians came from Asia to Europe is a fragment by Nicandros³⁷. Having left Asia, Midas from Odonia³⁸ lived in his Emathian estates. Lycophron also mentions the movement of the Phrygians from Asia Minor to Europe³⁹. 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 Europe⁴⁰. These verses echoed the synonymic use of Trojans and Phrygians in Greek tragedy as well.

In the rest of the legendary stories Perdikkas⁴¹, Archelaos⁴² and Karanos⁴³ went (with or without a prophecy) respectively to Botiaea, to Thrace, or helped the Orestae against the Eordae. The Botiaei 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 expansion⁴⁴. Scholarship has long acknowledged the "Phrygian" affinities of this ethnonym because of Βοττιάειον, a city in Phrygia⁴⁵. The Orestae were a Molossian tribe according to Hecataeus⁴⁶, while the Eordians were mentioned

36. B. A. v. Groningen, *Euphorion*, Amsterdam 1977, 96-97.

37. Nicand. fr. 74 Scheider (= Athen. 15. 683b).

38. i.e. Edonia, cf. commentary in A. S. F. Gow – A. F. Scholfield, *Nicander, Poems and Poetical Fragments*, Cambridge 1953, 211.

39. Lycoph. *Alex.* 1397-1408.

40. Huxley, *op.cit.* (n. 24) 314-315.

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 Nikaia which was Βοττιάϊων ἄποινος: Steph. Byz. 179. 11; Detschew, *op.cit.* (n. 32) 77-78 can also be added here.

46. Steph. Byz. *s.v.*

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 Illyrian and the Macedonian tribes⁴⁷.

Consideration of the Brygians and their migration to Asia Minor falls beyond the scope of this work and is done elsewhere⁴⁸. 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 authors⁴⁹. 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 moment⁵⁰. 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 discussed⁵¹. Besides the very popular texts about Olympias and Philip being initiated in the Samothracian mysteries, about Alexander III being initiated in “oral” and “secret” rites⁵², another text is also worth reminding here. This is a letter by the Macedonian queen to her son Alexander III, quoted by Athenaeus⁵³. *Ta Argadistika*, which Alexander is supposed to maintain, is a *hapax* and provo-

47. On the archaeological aspect of the problem cf. R. Georgieva, “Les relations culturelles dans l’interfluve du Vardar et de la Struma au premier âge du fer” in: *I. Ilirio-tracki simpozijum. Paleobalkanska plemena između jadranskog I crnog mora od eneolita do helenističkog dola*, Sarajevo - Beograd 1991, 169-177.

48. M. Vassileva, *DIOS* 1 (1999) 43-49.

49. *Apoll. Rhod.* 4. 330; 470.

50. Borza, *op.cit.* (n. 5, 1982) 13; Badian, *op. cit.* (n. 6) 33-51.

51. Most recently: Jordanov, *op. cit.* (n. 27) 118-125; especially on the similar code of royal-/aristocratic representation cf. Greenwalt, *op.cit.* (n. 7) 121-134; W. S. Greenwalt, “The production of coinage from Archelaos to Perdiccas III and the evolution of Argead Macedonia” in: I. Worthington (ed.) *Ventures into Greek History*, Oxford 1992, 127-131.

52. *Plut. Alex.* 2; 7.

53. *Athen.* 14. 659F-660A.

ked many discussions⁵⁴. 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?⁵⁵ The role of the southwestern Thracian lands in the context of the Thracian Orphism has long been emphasized⁵⁶. 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 well⁵⁷. The inclusion of Midas could possibly refer to the Phrygian allies of the Trojans in *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"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 Gordion knot⁵⁹. 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 known⁶⁰.

54. Cf. E. A. Fredricksmeyer, *CIPhil* (1966) 179-182; E. A. Fredricksmeyer *TAPhA* 127 (1997) 103-104.

55. Hdt. 5. 7-8.

56. In the numerous works of A. Fol, cf. A. Fol, *Thrakische Dionyssos. Erste Buch: Zagreus*. Sofia 1993; A. Fol, "The Paredroi between 'Midas' City' and 'Midas' Gardens' " in: R. Gusmani – M. Salvini – P. Vannicelli (eds.) *Frigi e frigio. Atti del 1o Simposio Internazionale Roma, 16-17 ottobre 1995*, Roma 1997, 261-266.

57. Borza, *op.cit.* (n. 5, 1982) 10.

58. Badian, *op.cit.* (n. 6) 47, n. 23.

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 Gordion Knot" in: *Thracia 15. Studia in honorem A. Fol*, Sofia 2003, 371-382.

60. Plut. *Caes.* 9.3; Hygin. *Fab.* 274; Hesych. s.v. Μίδα θεός; Diod. 3. 59. 8; Arnob. *Adv. nat.* 2. 73; 5. 7; M. Vassileva, *AnatSt* 51 (2001) 51-63.

