When Was the Argead/Temenid[1] Dynasty Founded?

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ABSTRACT Without much argument, it has long been generally accepted that the Argead/Temenid Dynasty was founded between 700 and 650 BCE. Our reconsideration of the written evidence, now reinforced by a growing body of material evidence, suggests that this foundation should be down-dated to *ca.* 575 BCE.

KEYWORDS Macedonian kingdom, Argead/Temenid dynasty, foundation, textual evidence, funerary remains.

1. THE WRITTEN EVIDENCE

Without much scrutiny, it seems to be accepted that the Argead dynasty was founded between 700 and 650 BCE[2]. In Hammond's reconstruction, the window for this event was opened by the Cimmerians but, although they may have provoked a long lasting instability in Anatolia and the Balkans which ultimately may have benefitted the Argeads, their issue is beyond the scope of this paper[3]. Otherwise, the primary reason for pinpointing the foundation of the Argead dynasty to *ca*. 650 BCE seems to be found in Eusebius' *Chronicle*, which lays behind a long discussion found in Dascalakis[4]. In chapters 86 and 87 of the *Chronicle* there are given two Argead King Lists[5]. Although

[1] Hereafter, the two terms will be used interchangeably. Although the authors disagree, at least at this time, as to how to read the ancient evidence on the naming of this dynasty, they agree that it is not a matter of great importance for this paper.
[2] For example, see BELOCH 1923, 49-52; HAMMOND 1972, 33; 1989, 8; BORZA 1990, 76 (although Borza writes "Makedones" here, it is clear in his subsequent text that he places their rise with the establishment of the Argead dynasty); KING 2018, 19; ARCHIBALD 2024, 365. See also the more extended and somewhat more fanciful account of DASCALAKIS 1965, 119-127. EDSON 1970, 2-44, esp. 20, puts the foundation ca. 700 BCE.
[3] HAMMOND 1972, 427 ff. Doubt has been cast on Hammond's read of the Cimmerians' impact, for example see IVANTCHIK 2001, 307-339.
[4] *Supra* n. 2.
[5] BELOCH (*supra* n. 2) does not rely upon the testimony of Eusebius in dating the foundation of the Temenid dynasty. Rather, he starts with the king list as produced in Herodotus (8.139), and then assumes (we assume) the logic of the Egyptians as produced by the same author (2.142), where three human

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they are not identical (either in the monarchs or the number of years in each of their reigns), Eusebius does us the favor of listing the number of years he found in his sources for the lengths of their reigns. It behooves us now to consider these lists:

Chapter 86:		**Chapter 87:**
Caranus	30 years	30 years
Coenus	28	28
Tyrinias	43	43
Perdiccas (I)	48	48
Argaeus (I)	31	*38*
Philip (I)	33	33
Aeropus	20	20
Alcetas	18	18
Amyntas (I)	49	*42*
Alexander (I)	44	44
Perdiccas (II)	22	*23*
Archelaus	17	*24*
Orestes	3	---
Archelaus	----	*4*
Aeropus	6	----
Amyntas (II)	----	*1*
Pausanias	1	1
Amyntas (III)	----	6
Argaeus (II)	----	2
Amyntas (III)	----	18
Alexander (II)	----	1
Ptolemy (Alorus)		3
Philip (II)	24	*27*
Alexander (III)		12

generations are equated to a century. If one then again assumes that a king's reign can be equated to a generation, then each of the kings before Perdiccas II in Macedonia would have reigned about 33 years. Seven multiplied by 33 equals a span of 231 years. If we add the assumed lengths of these early kings to the approximate year of Perdiccas II's "accession" (450 BCE), this puts the foundation of the dynasty at about 680 BCE –far too early as we will argue. HAMMOND 1989 (*supra* n. 2) spells out his assigning of a 30 years reign to each of the earlyTemenids kings: his justification being non-existant. We can only assume (so many assumptions!) that he felt compelled to align himself with the chronology of either the Egyptians through Herodotus, or, the figuring of Eusebius. We are not the first to doubt the assumptions that one century equals three generations, and that one generation equals one king's reign: *e.g.* MOSSHAMMER 1975, esp. 101-112.

Before proceeding, it is interesting to note a couple of things. First, although Eusebius has identical lengths of reigns for his first four kings and for most of the early spans, he has more variation when he came to more recent monarchs –and indeed, omits some of his kings in both lists. Second, if one takes the year of Alexander III's death (323 BCE) and counts backwards, Eusebius places the foundation of the dynasty by Caranus in either 760 BCE or 786 BCE, that is, around the time of the foundation of the Olympic Games: 776 BCE. This is in itself suspicious. Eusebius, of course, is wrong to include in his lists the reigns of Caranus, Coenus and Tyrinias (or, at least, so thinks Greenwalt). It has long been accepted that these were spurious, later additions to the tradition[6]. Why these inventions were added is not known for sure, but it seems very likely that they were added during the 390s BCE for propagandistic reasons during a period of civil war[7]. Regardless, Eusebius is not consistent in his Argead King Lists although his lists appear back-to-back in his text. Thus, and for additional reasons touched on below, *no one* can date the foundation of the Argead dynasty from Eusebius, even if one were to knock-off the 101 years of the combined spans allotted to Caranus, Coenus and Tyrinias, which would, in fact, bring the date for the foundation of the dynasty to the mid-seventh century BCE, that is, to the consensus date for the Argead rise. Greenwalt has been guilty of accepting this date himself, mostly because he did not pay much attention to the importance of the date of the dynasty's foundation. We cannot say for certain why others have accepted the date of *ca.* 650 BCE because the reasons for that acceptance have simply not been openly argued. It is time to consider the probability of this date directly, with an argument.

In what follows it is not necessary for us to be absolutely accurate. Many have argued the precise length of various Argead kings and the years of their accessions, but we need not be that concerned, for example, when exactly Amyntas III gave way to Alexander II, or with any other transition of authority from the time of Alexander I on. The accession of Alexander is the chronological divide which is the anchor of this note, but even so, for our purposes we need not be overly concerned with the year of Alexander I's accession –an approximate date will suffice. We know that the conclusions we will draw will not meet the standards needed for a true statistical analysis, for, as we all know, large numbers are needed to make the conclusions of any statistical analysis truly valid. Nonetheless, as rare as common sense can be at times, we are going to embrace it when we put forward a *probable* argument as to the foundation date of the Argead dynasty. We are convinced that this argument produces a date which is vastly more probable than the accepted date for the "accession" of Perdiccas I in or around 650 BCE, especially since the literary argument complements

[6] TIVERIOS 2019, 195-212 argues that Perdiccas I was *not* the first accepted founder of the Temenid dynasty, but rather that Caranus was, and bases his argument on the fact that the coinages issued first under Alexander I and Perdiccas II, depicting helmets prominently on the reverses of circulating light-tetrobols, were intended as "speaking symbols", each intended to pun the word helmet ("kranos") with Caranus. There is no doubt that the images of these helmets had some (perhaps even "mythical") meaning for the Macedonians who saw and used them, but it seems too great a stretch to believe that this wordplay trumps Herodotus and Thucydides as to the earliest identification of the founder of the Macedonian royal house, especially since the coins here referred to were in circulation (during the reigns of Alexander I and Perdiccas II) at the time when Herodotus was himself in Macedonia. Herodotus has been accused of misreading the evidence at his disposal, but he has just as frequently been found to have had justification for reporting things as he did, whether dealing with ancient Egypt or gold digging "ants". It is difficult to believe that he would not have been exposed to the local currency during his visit, or that he would have persisted in naming Perdiccas I as the dynasty's founder, when the locals would have told him that the helmet on the reverse of these light-tetrobols stood for the dynasty's founder "Caranus". After all, Herodotus was fond of puns.

[7] GREENWALT 1985, 43-49.

the archaeological one so well. We put quotes around the word accession because that word is loaded. Greenwalt has argued, and will continue to argue, that the Argead kingdom lacked much of what we subconsciously associate with stable monarchy until very late in its history. It had no written law, it lacked accepted arbiters of law beyond the king and those *Hetairoi* who served at his whim and for no fixed terms. It lacked: regularly meeting courts of law, any officials with terms of office, any bureaucracy, any institutionally prescribed court ritual. Of course, there was court ritual and, beyond accepted religious duties, this included *symposia*. While these *were* extremely important, there remains the fact that no permanent formal institutions existed that supported the king in the administration of his responsibilities. Monies were collected (whether one understands these as taxes or tribute), but we know nothing about how they were collected: no records seem to have been archived and no class of civil servants existed[8]. As far as we know, there was no codified protocol associated with the accession of the monarch (not even the word *basileus* was used as a title until Alexander III's conquest of Persia), and no authority existed which designated the legitimacy of a newly ensconced monarch beyond that of public acceptance. It appears that the *only* two things the Argead king needed to claim his position in the king list were: 1) that he was an Argead (essential for the king's religious duties), and 2) that he convinced enough Macedonians that he was *the* man for the job. Of course, in all of this the *Hetairoi* played a vital role, and so (one imagines) did previous *symposia* which would have seen the king, his kinsmen and the aristocracy intermingle. There appears, however, to have been no formal vote in any pre-ordained forum mandated for such a purpose, or anything like a traditional legal procedure. Clearly sons of kings had the advantage over collateral relatives, but with the exception of the passing of the baton between Amyntas III and Alexander II, *every* known death of an Argead ruler brought tension and/or open warfare. One might as well imagine a pit being dug at the death of a king into which were thrown all royal contenders, with the provision that whoever crawled out, was the new royal leader. As such, the word "accession" seems a little bit pompous, if one associates that word with broadly accepted institutionalized procedures or established individuals and/or bodies which had the authority to elevate a new king. At least this appears to be the case until the fourth century, and perhaps even then.

Since Herodotus explicitly credits Perdiccas I with the foundation of the Temenid dynasty and then lists five additional kings between the founder and Alexander I, and since Thucydides seems to accept Herodotus' account of the early dynasty without correction, we can accept that, as the historical era of Macedonian history emerged, it was generally accepted that there were six acknowledged Temenid kings before Alexander I[9]. Despite the fact that we are told of a few things about the reign of Amyntas I, mostly because they involve activities (probably fabricated) involving his son, we must acknowledge that Alexander I was the first Argead monarch to be noticed by non-Macedonian authors and their readers (although we know precious little of his reign from the literary sources).

For the sake of argument, let's assume Alexander I came to the throne peacefully in 495 BCE, and, that we know from various sources *all* of the kings who at least for a short while ruled in Argead Macedonia thereafter through the end of the dynasty. (Nothing here is certain.) The list of kings that we know from Alexander I through Alexander IV is as follows: Alexander I, Perdiccas II, Archelaus, Orestes, Aeropus II, Amyntas II, Pausanias, Amyntas III, Argaeus II, Alexander II, Ptolemy Alorus (regent),

[8] GREENWALT 2010, 151-163; 2011, 148-156; 2019, 11-17; 2021, 513-518.
[9] Hdt., 8.137-138; Thuc. 2.99.3, 5.80.2. See BORZA 1990, 82, 83.

Perdiccas III, Philip II, Alexander III, Philip III/Alexander IV. If we include Ptolemy and consider the reigns of Philip III/Alexander IV as separate we have 16 rulers from *ca.* 495-310 BCE. Of course, given the civil wars of the 390s, the unrest of the 360s, and the dual monarchy in place after Alexander III, some of these monarchs may have, or did have, reigns which overlapped. Then again, for all we know, similar situations may have existed before Alexander I as well. Anyway, if we ignore Ptolemy and count Philip III/Alexander IV as one royal unit, we have 14 "kings". From 495 to 310 we have 185 years. Thus, the average length of a reign during the post-Amyntas I period of Argead history is either 11.56 or 13.21 years.

Now, if we consider the reigns between the purported foundation of the dynasty *ca.* 650 until our hypothesized beginning of the reign of Alexander I in 495, that leaves us with six reigns to cover 155 years, for an average of 25.83 years per reign. This is a ridiculously high average given the life expectancies for the period and given the fact that none of these early kings seems to have had any stable or permanent political infrastructure to bolster his reign against foreign enemies or domestic challenge. It is *extremely* unlikely that the reigns of the early Argead kings averaged twice the length of those who came after Alexander. Thus, if the king list as accepted during the lifetime of Herodotus is accurate, or even close to accurate, we must down date the foundation of the Argead dynasty considerably, and we think we must do with the average length of reign from 495-310 in mind. Let us for the sake of argument assume that the pattern which emerged during the historical period was true during the "pre-historic" phase of the Argead dynasty. And, let us also take the higher average length of an historical reign as our benchmark (although it does not matter much), and figure the length of an Argead reign to have been 13 years as opposed to almost 26 allotted for the pre-Alexander I's monarchs. Doing so we come to a foundation date of 573, not *ca.* 650 BCE. We are in sympathy with those who would argue that there is so much we do not know about the early dynasty. For example, maybe there were many early kings who are unknown to us. Maybe… but we must be guided by the evidence we have or throw out all of it. Leaving behind the fantasies of Eusebius' sources (which likely (?) had something to do with aligning the foundation date of the Argead dynasty with the Olympic Games), the evidence we have from a variety of attested sources puts the foundation of the Argead dynasty about 575 BCE, rather than 650. As we will see, an archaeological approach to this issue reinforces a date for the founding ot the Temenid dynasty near 575 BCE.

2. THE MATERIAL EVIDENCE

The systematic analysis of the funerary remains from Lower Macedonia within their broader Aegean and Balkan context from a diachronic perspective (spanning roughly the period from the 11th to the 4th c. BCE) strongly suggests that no kingdom emerged in the region west of the Axios River before the first quarter of the 6th c. BCE. Since the related evidence has been presented elsewhere in detail and is too extensive to repeat here, we shall only provide a summary of the main arguments in favor of such a chronology, adding certain clarifications[10].

The funerary practices of the communities that inhabited Lower Macedonia during the 7th c. BCE –when most scholars date the foundation of the kingdom– remained

[10] SARIPANIDI 2017; 2019a; 2024 with detailed bibliography.

strongly rooted in those of the immediately preceding centuries[11]. The inhabitants of Vergina/Aigai and Archontiko near Pella (for all sites see Map 1), for instance, kept on burying their dead at the same sites and in the same ways as their Early Iron Age predecessors[12]. In fact, since the archaeological record of this part of the north attests to no significant break at the end of the 8th c. BCE (in contrast to that of the south Aegean world), it is often impossible to distinguish between 7th-century and earlier burials.

Map 1. Sites with cemeteries mentioned in the text.

During the Early Iron Age, the predominant ritual was that of single inhumation in tombs whose form largely depended on the geomorphology of each site and the available construction materials. Most burials received offerings[13], usually one or two, rarely more. These offerings were not randomly chosen but were associated with specific social practices, namely, with feasting (clay pots for storing, serving and consuming solid and liquid products), personal adornment (jewelry, dress accessories and tweezers), warfare (offensive weapons) and craft production (tools, such as knives, whetstones and spindle whorls, but also finished products, such as pottery and pieces of jewelry). During this period, pottery was predominantly local, and metal artifacts were typically made of bronze or iron, with gold appearing rarely and only in the form of small-sized objects (such as hair spirals). Imported goods had a negligible presence and consisted mainly of small beads of exotic materials, such as amber and faience. A few types of offerings appear to have been age specific. Feeding bottles, for instance, were offered only to children. Moreover, some types correlated with gender. Weapons, whetstones and tweezers were buried only with men, spindle whorls and most, though

[11] For an overview of the evidence and bibliography, see CHEMSSEDDOHA 2019, mainly 345-354, 373-407; SARIPANIDI 2024, 84-86.
[12] On Vergina, see more recently BRÄUNING–KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 2013. On Archontiko, see CHRYSOSTOMOU–CHRYSOSTOMOU–SARIPANIDI *forthcoming*.
[13] At Archontiko, for instance, about 20% of undisturbed burials from this period were completely unfurnished, see CHRYSOSTOMOU–CHRYSOSTOMOU–SARIPANIDI *forthcoming*.

not all, types of ornaments were buried only with women. Besides age and gender distinctions, grave assemblages from this period further attest to status inequalities that were signified by means of metal objects. In the case of women, status distinctions relied on the variety but also on the quantity of ornaments, which in some cases numbered up to a few dozen. In male burials, differences in the quantity of offerings were much less pronounced, with male inventories never exceeding a dozen of objects. Still, not all men received weapons, and swords were more exclusive than spears and arrows.

Both the aforementioned functional categories of grave goods and the patterns of their correlation with the age, gender and status of the deceased are evinced throughout Lower Macedonia. Nevertheless, one can also observe some intersite variation. The presence of metal artifacts was not equally strong at all sites, and neither was the presence of status differentiations. At Archontiko, for instance, pottery prevailed over metal objects, and no female burial was as richly equipped as the most ostentatious female burials at Vergina. Furthermore, although the various communities of the region used grave goods for the signification of the same social practices, they did not necessarily select the same types of artifacts for this purpose. At Vergina, for example, the most popular pottery shape was the handmade jug with cut-away neck, whereas at Archontiko it was the handmade bowl with horizontal rim handles[14]. Similarly, Vergina has yielded several wheel-thrown skyphoi with pendent semicircles, which were virtually absent from the Archontiko burials[15]. The fact that such skyphoi have come to light at the settlement of Archontiko indicates that their absence from local burials was dictated by local funerary traditions and not by the exclusion of the site from regional trade networks. According to these local traditions, the most appropriate type of drinking cup for funerary use was a type of wheel-fashioned gray mug that is scarcely known from Vergina[16].

There is little doubt that, within the Early Iron Age villages of Lower Macedonia, some individuals and families used burials to legitimize their claims to leading positions by advertising their privileged access specifically to metallurgical products, elaborate elements of costume and warfare equipment. Anthropologists have long stressed that, especially in non-state societies, where power is more ritually than institutionally underpinned, ceremonial events, such as funerals, can play a major role in the consolidation of social inequalities[17]. During such events, aspiring or already established political actors typically invest in the material symbols of those social practices (such as metallurgy and warfare), control over which allows them to accumulate power[18]. Given that few Early Iron Age cemeteries in Lower Macedonia are entirely published and that burials from this period are difficult to date with precision, assessing the nature of leading positions within the local communities remains challenging. In neoevolutionary terms, at least some of these communities may have experienced the emergence of ephemeral, prestige-relying Big Men or, perhaps, of more firmly established rulers in the context of simple chiefdoms[19]. In any case, nothing suggests that, at that time, the various villages of the region were politically

[14] BRÄUNING–KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 2013, 13-14, 28; CHRYSOSTOMOU–CHRYSOSTOMOU 2001, 487 fig. 2 (left).
[15] BRÄUNING–KILIAN-DIRLMEIER 2013, 26.
[16] CHRYSOSTOMOU–CHRYSOSTOMOU 2001, 487 fig. 2 (right).
[17] E.g., DEMARRAIS–CASTILLO–EARLE 1996.
[18] For an overview of approaches of grave goods analysis with relation to prestige and status, see SELBITSCHKA 2018, 2-12.
[19] On Big Man collectivities and simple chiefdoms, see JOHNSON–EARLE 2000, 203-241, 265-280.

unified within a single, large-scale, polity. Although their funerary remains indicate that they shared strong cultural affinities, they also point to decision-making processes that were locally anchored.

The funerary evidence further challenges the view that Vergina acquired a central role in Lower Macedonia as early as the 7th c. BCE. It is true that this site has yielded the largest known Early Iron Age cemetery in the region, as it is also true that burials from this early period attest to vertical social differentiation. Nevertheless, particularly in the 7th c. BCE, lavishly equipped female burials disappeared from this site and, throughout the entire century, only a single man was buried with a sword. In other words, while local funerary practices remained otherwise essentially unchanged, status inequalities among the local population, as these were represented in the funerary sphere, appear to have undergone significant attenuation. Had this been the time when the site became the capital of a new kingdom and the seat of a new dynasty, one would normally expect to observe the exact opposite.

In support of the view that the kingdom was founded in the 7th c. BCE, it has been argued that a series of inurned cremations that appeared at Vergina during that century must evince the arrival of Greeks from the south, among whom were the first Temenids that came from Argos[20]. Yet, this suggestion is highly problematic. Historians have repeatedly questioned the historicity of the Temenid genealogical myth[21]. Anthropological research has actually emphasized that, throughout human history, foundation myths involving an allegedly "stranger-king" have served as a strategy of power legitimation across diverse cultures[22]. More importantly, the association of the aforementioned cremations with newcomers –let alone with kings– is difficult to accept for a number of reasons[23]. First, inurned cremation was already practiced at Vergina before the 7th c. BCE, albeit rarely. Second, during that century, cremated remains were predominantly deposited in a type of cooking pot that had been in use in the region since the Bronze Age. Third, 7th-century cremations at Vergina, which were equally often associated with male and female individuals, did not stand out from other burials in terms of either location or offerings. Such outstanding burials did not appear at this site until the second quarter of the 6th c. BCE.

While the Early Iron Age funerary traditions of Lower Macedonia persisted into the first quarter of the 6th c. BCE, sometime around 570 BCE they began to undergo a rather drastic transformation[24]. At some sites, such as Archontiko, earlier cemeteries remained in use[25]; at others, such as Vergina, new cemeteries were established[26]. However, the main change, which transpired at all sites, pertained to grave furnishing practices. Although grave goods continued to signify the same social practices as in the previous period, they became substantially more varied. Feasting accessories took the form of local and imported vessels for the storage, mixing, pouring and drinking of wine that were made of clay or metal; of other metal feasting accoutrements, such as miniature furniture, spits and firedogs; and, to a lesser extent, of clay vessels for the preparation and serving of foodstuffs. Even though several earlier types of jewelry and dress accessories survived, personal ornaments were enriched with a wide array of new local and imported forms, some of which were made from newly introduced materials,

[20] KOTTARIDI 2020, 129-131.
[21] E.g., BORZA 1990, 80-84.
[22] SAHLINS 2008.
[23] For a detailed discussion of these cremations, see KAKAMANOUDIS 2019.
[24] For an overview of the evidence and bibliography, see SARIPANIDI 2024, 86-94.
[25] CHRYSOSTOMOU–CHRYSOSTOMOU 2012.
[26] KOTTARIDI 2020, 130, 133.

such as silver. In parallel, gold ornaments became much more common and diverse, and they even appeared in the form of foils that decorated various parts of the body of the deceased and their equipment, including their face, clothes, shoes and weapons. Another addition to the arsenal of personal adornment consisted of imported and local containers for perfumes and other cosmetic products, made of clay, metal, glass, faience or wood inlaid with ivory. Warfare equipment was enhanced with defensive armor, namely, with helmets, shields, cuirasses and, more rarely, greaves. Craft production was signified by means of both earlier and new types of tools, such as knives, stone-working implements and spindles, as well as by the wide variety of grave goods that were locally manufactured. Finally, the material symbols of long-distance contact and exchange, which had previously a very limited presence at graves, became abundant. Apart from the various materials and goods that were imported from south and east Greece, the Baltic region, the central Balkans and Naucratis, supraregional contacts were further alluded to by metal models of carts and wagons.

Significantly, the change in the repertoire of grave goods was accompanied with changes in status differentiation patterns. As already noted, in the preceding period some adults were left unfurnished, but most burials received one or two artifacts, and none more than a few dozen. As of *ca.* 570 BC all burials received offerings, with the exception of those belonging to young infants, and even the most modest ones contained 3 to 4 objects. This period was also marked by the appearance of highly ostentatious burials, some of which received more than 150 artifacts (that is, a lot more than the most elaborate earlier burials). Yet, the majority of burials fell between the most ostentatious and the most modest ones, representing all possible intermediate degrees of wealth. Burials from this period actually form a continuous spectrum in terms not only of the quantity but also of the variety and quality of their offerings. Before *ca.* 570 BCE the most modestly furnished graves received a single artifact, which could belong to any among the categories that were considered appropriate for funerary use (for example, a clay pot or a bronze pin or an iron knife). After this date grave inventories became standardized, in that they all –even the most modest ones– had to combine artifacts of the following categories: men had to receive vases for the consumption of wine and cosmetic products, as well as weapons; women had to receive vases of the same categories, together with ornaments. However, the precise number and types of grave goods clearly correlated with status, and the process of their selection was structured by a system of hierarchization of artifacts, based on their type, material and provenance. It is important to note that, as of *ca.* 570 BCE, this hierarchization did no longer pertain only to metal ornaments and weapons. It pertained to the material symbols of all social practices that were signified in the funerary sphere, including those of feasting and long-distance contacts. For example, while the poorest burials received only one clay drinking cup, the wealthiest received large feasting sets that consisted of more than 15 artifacts of various forms and materials. In terms of size and form of their feasting sets, burials in between attest to numerous intermediate versions. The combined examination of the various versions of the feasting set suggests that, within the local system of evaluation, pouring and mixing vessels were, in general, ranked higher than drinking cups, imported clay vases higher than their local counterparts, metal vessels higher than clay ones, and other types of feasting equipment higher than vases. To give another example, even though all male burials received weapons, their quantity and their variety correlated with the general wealth of the grave. All men were buried with spearheads, but fewer with swords, even fewer with helmets, and only a fraction with shields and cuirasses. The fact that similar patterns of hierarchization and unequal access are observed among all categories of offerings indicates that, by this

time, all associated social practices had come to play a role in the production of social inequalities and the accumulation of power.

The funerary evidence further suggests that, according to the prevailing social norms of this period, some of the social practices signified by grave goods involved gender-specific roles. Regarding craft production, for instance, textile tools were only offered to women, whereas stone-working tools only to men. In addition, some practices were more closely associated with a specific gender group. For example, as in the previous period, men received jewelry and dress accessories of a much more limited variety than women. The only practice strictly reserved for individuals of a specific gender group was warfare, with weapons appearing exclusively in male burials. Thus, the vast majority of types of artifacts that contributed to the representation of status inequalities were equally often offered to male and female individuals. Given that, beginning from this period, the most ostentatious male burials received as many artifacts as their female counterparts, and that burials of both gender groups attest to the same patterns of status differentiation, it appears that, within the local communities, status inequalities were more pronounced within gender groups than between them[27]. Interestingly, as of *ca*. 570 BCE, age-specific types of offerings disappeared. The only material aspect of the local funerary rituals that was reserved for a particular age group consisted in the absence of grave goods from infant burials.

As already stressed, the funerary change of *ca.* 570 BCE can be observed all across Lower Macedonia. In fact, this change also entailed a stronger homogenization of furnishing practices throughout the region. Both local and imported types of offerings became much more uniform across sites and, although some intersite variation persisted, it was rather minor and mostly of a different nature than in the earlier period. In the previous centuries, the inhabitants of Vergina, for instance, preferred to equip their dead with jugs for the pouring of liquids and those of Archontiko with bowls for food consumption. After the funerary change, differences lied primarily in the selection of different types of artifacts serving the same function. At Sindos, for example, graves contained mostly lebetes, whereas at Agia Paraskevi mostly kraters[28]; but both shapes served the mixing of wine with water. Furthermore, burials at different sites evince the same patterns of correlation of grave goods with age, gender and status. The only difference with regard to the representation of social identities pertains to the range of status degrees attested at each site. While the continuum pattern is attested at all cemeteries, burials representing the upper degrees of the spectrum are only known from certain sites, namely, Vergina, Archontiko, Edessa, Sindos, Thermi and Vasiloudi[29]. At the remaining sites, such burials are absent and, consequently, so are the most exclusive types of offerings, such as shields and face masks. In addition, Vergina is the only site where the most ostentatious burials were spatially isolated, since they were made in two separate plots, one to the northeast of the new necropolis, which was reserved for men, the other to the southeast, which was reserved for women. In this respect, these burials were outstanding both at the local and the regional level.

Overall, the nature of the changes that occurred in the funerary practices of the inhabitants of Lower Macedonia around 570 BCE indicates the emergence of stronger social inequalities, which were grounded in differential access to a broader range of

[27] See also SARIPANIDI 2020.
[28] DESPOINI *et al*. 2016, 182-183 (V. SARIPANIDI), 281-290 (A. DESPOINI); SISMANIDIS 1987, 793.
[29] KOTTARIDI 2020, 131-133; CHRYSOSTOMOU–CHRYSOSTOMOU 2012, 493-497, 501-503; CHRYSOSTOMOU 2013, 229-237; DESPOINI 2016, 33-34, 38-41, 41-43, 56-58, 63-65, 68-69, 71-72, 97-99; SKARLATIDOU 2002; MISAILIDOU-DESPOTIDOU *et al.* 2012, 447-452.

social practices than those previously exploited by political actors. In the context of these practices, some individuals and families appear to have gained greater control over a substantially enriched pool of economic resources (such as imported goods and goldwork products), over an expanded and ranked warrior force, as well as over collective ideology (by adopting, for instance, more elaborate costumes and burying their dead in a more ostentatious manner). The fact that child burials, beyond those of infants, reproduced the same pattern of status differentiation as those of adults leaves little doubt that, during this period, status was inherited and, therefore, inequalities more stable and permanent. Moreover, the fact that the material and symbolic aspects of the funerary rituals of the various communities reached a higher degree of uniformity suggests that, alongside the increase in social complexity, there was also an increase in regional integration, which extended well beyond cultural affiliations, encompassing shared economic and political structures. At the same time, the presence of highly ostentatious burials only at certain sites, in combination with the fact that such burials were spatially separated only at Vergina, points to the emergence of a site hierarchy with three tiers. Taken together, the aforementioned developments can only be understood as symptomatic of the formation of a large-scale regional polity, in other words, the foundation of the kingdom of Lower Macedonia. Accordingly, burials at the two separate clusters that were formed at Vergina during this period are very likely to belong to the first Temenids and the women of the royal family.

The process of formation of the kingdom, which must have involved an alliance between warrior forces of the local villages and a joint offensive war that led to the conquest of the region immediately east of the Axios, will not be discussed here in detail[30]. What will be discussed, instead, is the meaning of the term "kingdom" in this particular context, since, according to neoevolutionary approaches, this form of rulership can be associated with two distinct societal types, namely, complex chiefdoms and states[31]. Whether the Macedonian polity entered statehood under the Temenid dynasty remains an open question and, as Greenwalt notes in this paper, if it did (which is doubtful), this development must not have occurred before the late Classical period. In any case, no evidence suggests that the 6th-century kingdom possessed permanent governing institutions, bureaucracy or any form of codified law. On the other hand, the funerary evidence speaks in favor of a complex chiefdom under a king, that is, a paramount chief, who was based at Vergina. The integration of male, female and child burials in the same hierarchical scheme, in which status largely transcended gender and age, points to a society that was organized on the principles of kinship and rank, the latter being defined on the basis of lineage. According to ethnographic research, although in complex chiefdoms the paramount chief was theoretically defined by his position in the higher ranked lineage, this rule was rarely upheld in practice, inasmuch as it was not embedded in a prescriptive legal framework. Succession processes were, therefore, usually marked by conflict. Furthermore, in the absence of hard-and-fast rules, even once a chief was established, he had to constantly struggle to preserve his position. As T. Earle has put it with regard to Hawaiian chiefdoms, "few paramount chiefs died peacefully on their sleeping mat"[32]. Not surprisingly, succession struggles and regicides are recurrent themes in literary sources about the Temenid kingdom of the Classical period. Returning to the 6th c. BCE, it is clear that one of the ideological strategies employed by the royal and other leading families of the kingdom to legitimize

[30] *Supra* n. 10.
[31] On complex chiefdoms and premodern states, see JOHNSON–EARLE 2000, 281-365. On chiefdoms, see also EARLE 2011.
[32] EARLE 2011, 40.

and maintain their position was the public display of their power –and its sources– within the context of funerary rituals.

It must be stressed that, while neoevolutionary taxonomies may still serve as a useful starting point for understanding sociopolitical organization, they have been strongly criticized for obscuring cultural and historical specificities and, by extension, the immense variation in the organizational forms of past societies[33]. In this sense, it is interesting to dwell a bit more on the structures of the Macedonian kingdom of the 6th c. BCE. A key indication in this regard is offered by the continuous spectrum formed by burials of the leading family of Vergina, burials of the leading families of other villages and burials of the rest of the population. This funerary pattern, which makes impossible the distinction of two bounded status groups –one belonging to elites and another to subalterns– indicates that, even though the material and symbolic resources of the kingdom were unequally accessed, they were still rather broadly distributed and not monopolized by a few political actors. Simply put, this pattern must be symptomatic of the absence of strong power centralization[34]. Of course, one should not assume that the structures of the Temenid kingdom remained unchanged over time or that they evolved in a linear manner. Specifically with regard to political centralization, the funerary evidence strongly suggests a considerable increase in the early 5th c. BCE, under Alexander I, and then a decrease at the time of Philip II[35]. Significantly, this interpretation of the funerary record meshes well with textual evidence on the reforms of Philip, which aimed at curbing the power of the already established elite by ceding power to a broader segment of the kingdom's population[36].

Before concluding, two points warrant clarification. The first pertains to the limitations that are inherent in the analysis of funerary evidence from a sociopolitical perspective. Ethnographic and archaeological research has long pointed out that the relationship between the funerary record and social reality is not isomorphic[37]. Mediated by religious and other ideological factors, the representation of real-life social relations in ritual practices may be subject to varying degrees of distortion. For this reason, any reconstruction of sociopolitical structures based on the funerary record must be tested against evidence from settlement contexts and written sources. In the case of 6th-century Macedonia such evidence is, at best, scanty. Nevertheless, while the absence of signification of status inequalities in the funerary record of any given community does not necessarily reflect the absence of such inequalities in real life, its presence requires some interpretation. Although the interpretation proposed in this paper cannot be tested against comparative evidence, the contextual analysis of the funerary remains at multiple spatial and temporal scales leaves little room for alternative interpretations. The consistent adherence of the inhabitants of numerous sites to the same principles of funerary representation of age, gender and status cannot but reflect their adherence to the prevailing social norms (even if the funerary record is little informative of the extent to which these norms were respected in real life). It is repeated here that the interpretation that was formulated by means of this approach particularly with regard to the reign of Philip II is further corroborated by literary sources. Moreover, the diachronic analysis of funerary patterns may provide significant insight into continuity and change in sociopolitical structures, and can serve as a tool

[33] See more recently FEINMAN 2023.
[34] On variation in the degree of power centralization in complex societies, see BLANTON *et al*. 1996.
[35] SARIPANIDI 2019b.
[36] GREENWALT 2007; ANSON 2008.
[37] E.g. PARKER PEARSON 1999.

for assessing whether funerary remains misrepresent social relations due to other factors. In the case of archaic Lower Macedonia, it has allowed, for example, to exclude the possibility that highly ostentatious burials belonged to subaltern groups emulating elite practices[38]. Finally, one should keep in mind that the simultaneous change in funerary practices, which transpired across the region around 570 BCE, could be hardly explained by means of the concepts of diffusion, imitation or acculturation. It has been thoroughly demonstrated that these concepts, which are deeply rooted in the culture-historical approach, are highly inadequate as interpretative frameworks for understanding archaeological and societal change[39].

The second point that requires further clarification concerns the chronology of the funerary change and, eventually, that of the kingdom's foundation. First of all, it must be specified that the onset of the funerary change can been securely placed around 570 BCE thanks to well-dated pottery that was imported from Corinth, East Greece and Athens. Such pottery first appeared in graves in Lower Macedonia precisely in the context of this change. Although this date is approximate, it is beyond doubt that the shift in funerary practices had begun well before the middle of the 6th c. BCE. Of course, the sociopolitical transformation of the communities of the region did not occur overnight and must have been underway for some time before the emergence of the first new-style burials. Even so, there is no reason to assume that the kingdom was founded before the first decades of the 6th c. BCE. Indicatively, in the late 18th-early 19th c., Chief Kamehameha managed to unify politically most of the Hawaiian Islands within a decade and all of them within less than thirty years[40]. Besides that, societal transformation need not have been fully completed by the time new-style burials appeared. The mobilization of funerary rites may have been one of the first strategies employed by the emerging elites to consolidate their position.

Thus, the chronology proposed by Greenwalt for the foundation of the kingdom and its first dynasty, based on the King List, meshes well with the chronology suggested by the funerary record. It seems, after all, that even texts that have been subjected to over a century of analysis can still be approached in a fresh light, and that archaeology can do far more than merely enable us to "construct the stage and furnish props for Macedonian life"[41]. The combination of the two approaches may perhaps finally unshroud early Macedonia from its darkness.

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[38] On this phenomenon, which is known as expressive redundancy, see CANNON 1989.
[39] Cf., for example, DIETLER 2017.
[40] KUYKENDALL 1980, 29-60.
[41] BORZA 1999, 76.

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