

# Archelaos I and the development of Macedon\*

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**ABSTRACT** The aim of this paper is to examine the figure of Archelaos I and developments in Macedon during his reign and the 5th century as a whole. Literary accounts point to what might have been an attempt to improve the administration and organization of the kingdom. A careful analysis of the sources is essential to understand the role played by Archelaos I, together with the position that Macedon occupied in the Greek world, in a series of developments during those years which offered the kingdom the opportunity to increase its power.

**KEYWORDS** Macedon, Archelaos I, reforms, developments

“For Philip found you vagabonds and helpless, most of you clothed with sheepskins, pasturing a few sheep on the mountain sides, and fighting for these, with ill success, against Illyrians and Triballians, and the Thracians on your borders; Philip gave you cloaks to wear, in place of sheepskins, brought you down from the hills to the plains, made you doughty opponents of your neighbouring enemies, so that you trusted now not so much to the natural strength of your villages as to your own courage. Nay, he made you dwellers of cities, and civilized you with good laws and customs”<sup>1</sup>.

For years, this passage reflected the way in which scholars understood the development of ancient Macedon. It was Philip II, the king who united all the regions of Greece into a single political body, who also brought civilization to his own people. The veracity of this account, however, is nowadays contested. Despite that it is unclear whether or not Alexander the Great actually pronounced this speech at Opis in 324<sup>2</sup>, it is the starting point here.

The above-mentioned passage reveals a conscious effort to enhance the agency of Philip II. Nevertheless, some of the strategies employed by this Macedonian ruler had already been adopted during the 5th century, especially in the final years. With this reasoning in mind, an attempt is made here to analyze the figure of Archelaos I. This sovereign had a plan of reforms and changes whose aim was to transform the kingdom into a state capable of competing with other powers. Taking advantage of the geopolitical circumstances at the time, he implemented a program to further Macedon’s development, fully aware of what his realm needed to prosper. Before identifying each

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<sup>1</sup> Arr. An. 7.9.2; translation by ROBSON 1929.

<sup>2</sup> ARCHIBALD 2010, 330: “this is not history, but a powerful metaphor”.

of the strategies and mechanisms that were employed, it is essential to dwell briefly on the kingdom's vicissitudes during the previous decades.

## 1. 5th-century Macedon

Alexander I, the first well-known king of Macedon in the sources, ruled from the beginning of the 5th century to ca. 452. In his book *The Macedonian State*, Hammond began the chapter "A period of weakness: 452-359" with his death<sup>3</sup>. For the British scholar there was a series of systemic problems in the years between the reigns of Alketas II and Amyntas IV. Macedon's shortcomings during this period were due to a combination of different factors, such as the succession policy and the continuous plots within the royal family, the kingdom's unstable frontiers and its internal organization.

For Archelaos I, his grandfather was undoubtedly a role model. Coinage was introduced in Macedon, with a series struck in silver, precisely during the reign of Alexander I<sup>4</sup>. The king also kept in contact with intellectuals and artists from the Greek world, as can be inferred from the fact that he is praised in some of Pindar's and Bacchylides' poems<sup>5</sup>. Although this does not necessarily imply that these poets and other representatives of the Hellenic intellectual elite were present at the Macedonian royal court, it is at least clear evidence of the scope of Alexander I's connections in this sphere. Likewise, he was the first Macedonian monarch to dedicate a statue at Delphi<sup>6</sup>.

The second relevant monarch during this century was Perdiccas II (448-413). Two major events occurring during his reign evince Macedon's problems. First, the Peloponnesian War, a conflict that prompted both the Athens and Spartans to cast about for allies and resources. As the contacts between Macedon and Athens had been frequent in the previous decades, the former became essential to the latter's interests, primarily because of Macedon's high-quality timber which was crucial for the Athenian economy of war<sup>7</sup>. Perdiccas II established a policy of alliances that protected his kingdom, but which reduced his room for maneuver. The loss of Amphipolis after the campaign of the Spartan Brasidas in the north led the Athenians to sign a treaty with Perdiccas II in 423-422, which ratified Athens as the only state that could receive timber from the king<sup>8</sup>. Second, there was the campaign launched by Sitalces a few years earlier in 429/428 –the actions of the Odrysian troops are narrated by Thucydides<sup>9</sup>. Perdiccas II had his work cut out to check the Thracians, but the invasion did not get any further than Pella and Kyrrhos<sup>10</sup>. The conflict revealed the weakness of the Macedonian army, which would be a perennial problem for Perdiccas II during the following years of his reign.

In 413, the sovereign died and was succeeded by his son Archelaos I, who ruled in Macedon until 399. Aelian records the unlikely story that his mother was a slave<sup>11</sup>. This tale also appears in the Platonic dialogue between Socrates and Polus, in which the latter accuses Archelaos I of having murdered his uncle Alketas, his cousin Alexander,

<sup>3</sup> HAMMOND 1989, 72-99.

<sup>4</sup> KREMYDI-SICILIANOU 2016, 41.

<sup>5</sup> Pind. Frg. 120-1 Snell; Bacchyl. Frg. 20, Snell.

<sup>6</sup> Hdt. 8.121; Solin. 9.13.

<sup>7</sup> KANATSOUKIS 1948, 62; MIKROGIANNAKIS 2007, 225.

<sup>8</sup> IG I<sup>3</sup> 89.

<sup>9</sup> Thuc. 2, esp. 95-101.

<sup>10</sup> ZÄHRNT 2006, 590-593.

<sup>11</sup> Ael. VH 12.43.

and his own younger brother<sup>12</sup>. A more likely reason is that Archelaos I was the son of Perdiccas II, albeit perhaps not the first-born<sup>13</sup>. Thus resulting in a typical conflict over succession<sup>14</sup>. The reign of Archelaos I came to an abrupt end<sup>15</sup>. Depending on the version, he was assassinated by his lover Crataeas, whose aim was to seize the throne, and had two more accomplices in the plot<sup>16</sup>, or was injured involuntarily by him while out hunting<sup>17</sup>. Considering the context, it would not be surprising if he had been murdered<sup>18</sup>, while it is indeed feasible that the fatal blow was struck when he was out hunting. Greenwalt has offered in a recent paper a suggesting theory that considers the royal hunt not as a mere entertaining activity, but as a complex mechanism of monarchic authority, an institution. The king acted as the protector of the realm and the guarantor of justice. In this sense, the murders would have chosen precisely the royal hunt as the best scenery for accomplishing his aim, that is, to kill a king that from their point of view was unjust<sup>19</sup>.

## 2. Modernizing the kingdom

The work of Thucydides, who had a close relationship with Macedon<sup>20</sup>, contains the most relevant reference to Archelaos I's policy. The historian first mentions that the king reorganized his army to the point of having more cavalrymen, arms, and resources than the previous eight monarchs together<sup>21</sup>. More specifically, Thucydides compares the situation of Macedon under Perdiccas II and the attack of the Odrysian Sitalces. At the time, the Macedonians had been incapable of defending themselves adequately with their infantry, for which reason they had relied on the support of the cavalry of their inland neighbors<sup>22</sup>. '*Prudens rei bellicae*' is the way Solinus describes Archelaos I, to whom he even attributes the invention of naval warfare<sup>23</sup>.

In his insightful study, Noguera Borel has calculated that in the 5th century the Macedonian army would have had between 500 to 700 noble horsemen, 1000 hoplites from the Greek cities in Macedon, and around 4000 *peltasts* and *psiloi* drafted from among the Macedonians and allies. If Perdiccas II had had a more powerful army at his disposal, he would not have been forced to establish such an intricate web of alliances<sup>24</sup>.

We do not know how Archelaos I went about reforming his army, but considering Thucydides as a reliable source, he certainly improved it. Moreover, the reform had a noteworthy influence on other spheres. From a socio-economic perspective, increasing the number of hoplites available required more landowners, who for Hatzopoulos were

<sup>12</sup> Pl. *Grg.* 470d-71c.

<sup>13</sup> BORZA 1990, 161-162.

<sup>14</sup> OGDEN 1999, 7-8, talks about an amphimetric dispute. In this regard, Psoma suggests interpreting the succession in Macedon as the king's decision, namely, with each monarch appointing his heir: PSOMA 2012, 81-86.

<sup>15</sup> Curt. 6.11.26.

<sup>16</sup> Pl. *Alc.* 2.141d; Arist. *Pol.* 1311b; Ael. *VH* 8.9.1.

<sup>17</sup> D.S. 14.37.6.

<sup>18</sup> GREENWALT 1999, 181-183. LANE FOX 2011b, 215 points out that, since Aristotle had access to court sources, his story should not be disbelieved.

<sup>19</sup> GREENWALT 2019, 16.

<sup>20</sup> HAMMOND-GRIFFITH 1979, 137.

<sup>21</sup> Thuc. 2.100.2.

<sup>22</sup> Thuc. 2.100.3-6.

<sup>23</sup> Solin. 9.15.

<sup>24</sup> NOGUERA BOREL 2017, 101.

‘middle class’<sup>25</sup>. As occurred in the Greek world, this was the social class from which states usually recruited hoplites.<sup>26</sup> This reform hints at the ambitious scope of the king’s plans.

Noguera Borel has also inquired into the reference made by Anaximenes of Lampsacus, who mentions a sovereign called Alexander who introduced reforms affecting both the cavalry and an elite infantry force called the *pezhetairoi* or ‘foot companions’<sup>27</sup>. Although it is uncertain as to which king the author is referring, Alexander the Great can be ruled out because Demosthenes already mentions the *pezhetairoi*. Between the reigns of Alexander I or II, the Spanish scholar places the accent on the problems in the army during the reign of Perdiccas II. Besides, Alexander II’s early death does not necessarily imply that he could not have begun this reform<sup>28</sup>. Accordingly, this stage in the development of the Macedonian army could be understood as part of a modernization process that had got underway with Archelaos I a few decades before<sup>29</sup>.

In the same passage, Thucydides alludes to the building of strongholds and walled towns, in addition to “the cutting of straight roads” (Thuc. 2.100.2)<sup>30</sup>, namely, urban development. Unfortunately, archaeology has yet to produce hard evidence confirming such a building policy<sup>31</sup>. Some time ago, Hammond suggested that at Manastir, on the Paeonian side of the Demir Kapu or ‘Iron Gates’ of the Axios, there was a settlement which was an appendage of the Macedonian kingdom in the late 5th century. As a walled fortress dating from that period stood on the hill above the site, Archelaos I would have cut a road through the narrow pass in order to maintain contact with the settlement<sup>32</sup>. However, it is rather speculative to assume that the Macedonians controlled that territory at the time.

The Macedonian state tended to establish a more centralized system, but some cities claimed to have more self-sufficiency<sup>33</sup>. Hatzopoulos suggests that the fortification of towns and the promotion of a ‘middle class’ are inherently connected to that idea of independence. On the other hand, we should not interpret this development as comparable to the dynamics the Greek polis. The key point here is to understand this process not as the result of the perfect and complete integration of cities recently incorporated into the realm, but to see it as their acceptance of the monarch’s suzerainty over them, while maintaining a certain degree of self-sufficiency and their civic values<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> HATZOPOULOS 2011a, 58.

<sup>26</sup> GREENWALT 1999, 169-172.

<sup>27</sup> Anaximenes. *FGrHis* 72 F4

<sup>28</sup> NOGUERA BOREL 2017, 105-111. Among other bibliography regarding this debate, it is worth pointing out the works of BRUNT 1976, 151-153, who dates the reform under Alexander I, and GREENWALT 2017, 89-90, who opts for Alexander II, connecting his premature death with a miscalculation of the intransigence of the aristocratic class with respect to the military reform.

<sup>29</sup> HAMMOND 1980, 54 suggested that Archelaos could have carried out the reform, instead of any king called Alexander. But this hypothesis does not sound convincing: when Thucydides says διεκόσμησε τά [τε] κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον ἵπποις καὶ ὅπλοις καὶ τῇ ἄλλῃ παρασκευῇ (2.100.2), instead of translating ὅπλοις as “arms”, Hammond prefers “hoplites”. Current translations understand the term as “arms” and most scholars deny the possibility of Archelaos performing this reform. We can see this in MINOR MARKLE III 1978, 485.

<sup>30</sup> Note the reference to “the cutting of straight roads” (ὁδοὺς εὐθείας ἔτεμε), surely linked to the felling of trees, owing to the importance of the timber trade, as will be seen below (HAMMOND 1989, 97).

<sup>31</sup> SEKUNDA 2010, 449.

<sup>32</sup> HAMMOND 1989, 79.

<sup>33</sup> Mari 2011, 91-92.

<sup>34</sup> HATZOPOULOS 2011b, 237-239. Philip II would elaborate on this idea.

The earliest reference to the reign of Archelaos I dates from 410, when Pydna seceded from his kingdom. The king besieged the city with the support of an Athenian contingent led by Theramenes. When the city eventually surrendered, he decided to transfer it 20 stadia inland<sup>35</sup>. The sources do not mention any further conflicts involving cities, which might suggest that the relationship between the kingdom and the Macedonian cities was fluid<sup>36</sup>.

In the realm of numismatics, Archelaos I resumed the minting of silver staters of good alloy, which were of the same type as the tetradrachms struck by his grandfather, Alexander I<sup>37</sup>. Albeit unlikely, some scholars have suggested that Archelaos I took control of the Bisaltae mines<sup>38</sup>. The minting of bronze coins was another innovation of this period<sup>39</sup>, their varied iconography reflecting the monarchy's enhanced power and status<sup>40</sup>. This bronze coinage was not introduced towards the end of the reign of Archelaos I, but during it. As Gatzolis shows in his comparative analysis of coins struck in northeastern Greece, the king's coinage initially had two types, subsequently followed by a third<sup>41</sup>. It is therefore safe to say that Archelaos was able to carry out his program of reforms thanks to his stronger financial position<sup>42</sup>. Besides, it would have been a prerequisite for funding his army improvements, among others.

### 3. Cultural strategies

The arrival of Greek intellectuals and artists in Macedon is another feature of Archelaos I's reign. Although this was not the first time that they had visited this kingdom, it is indeed when the first conscious and public attempts to adopt southern cultural traits are detected<sup>43</sup>. As this occurred during the Peloponnesian War, the promise of a safe haven in Macedon might have contributed to encourage those intellectuals and artists, who were seeking a different milieu, to accept the king's invitation<sup>44</sup>.

The playwright Euripides was a close friend of the Macedonian king, as mentioned in several sources<sup>45</sup>. He even wrote the tragedy *Archelaos*, preserved just fragmentarily<sup>46</sup>, which was performed in 408-407. It added a new mythical figure to the genealogies that connected the royal family with the Greek world<sup>47</sup>. By that time,

<sup>35</sup> D.S. 13.49.1-2. Cf. BORZA 1990, 161-162. Shifts in population and the promotion of settlements also occurred under Perdiccas II, which gave the Chalcidians the idea of moving to Olynthus and fortifying the site. He gave them farmland in Mygdonia (Thuc. 1.58.2). In the case of Pydna, archaeological works in the area of the former location of Pydna have confirmed that the site was not completely abandoned. In fact, after the reign of Archelaos it seems that more population came back. The good location of the place, on the shoreline, was probably a significant factor for the continuation of its activity: BESIOS 2010, 114.

<sup>36</sup> HATZOPOULOS 1996, 469-470.

<sup>37</sup> WESTERMARK 1989, 302; KREMYDI-SICILIANOU 2011, 163-164. For the quality of the alloy of the coins and a possible strategy of the king for competing with the Chalcidian League, see GREENWALT 1994, 110-115.

<sup>38</sup> WESTERMARK 1993, 20, for previous bibliography supporting the theory. For the Bisaltae mines and Mount Pangaion, see FARAGUNA 1988, 375-377; PICARD 2006, esp. 279-281.

<sup>39</sup> KANATSOUKIS 1948, 63; WESTERMARK 1993, 17.

<sup>40</sup> BORZA 1990, 240-241.

<sup>41</sup> GATZOLIS 2013, 125.

<sup>42</sup> GREENWALT 1994, 105.

<sup>43</sup> BORZA 1990, 171-177; 1993, 237-238.

<sup>44</sup> KUCH 2013, 368-369.

<sup>45</sup> *Ant. Pal.* 7.51; *Ael. VH* 13.4; *Solin.* 9.15.

<sup>46</sup> Eur. *TrGF* 228-64. The fable of Hyg. *Fab.* 219 was possibly inspired by this play.

<sup>47</sup> DI GIUSEPPE 2004, 125-127.

Euripides had become a permanent member of Archelaos I's court, where he died a short while later<sup>48</sup>. If Solinus is to be believed, when Euripides died the Macedonian king, who used to entrust all his decisions to the poet, defrayed the cost of his funeral and even shaved his own hair<sup>49</sup>. Other similar figures at Archelaos I's court included the poets Agathon<sup>50</sup>, Choerilus of Samos, and Timotheus of Miletus<sup>51</sup>, as well as the painter Zeuxis of Ephesus<sup>52</sup>. Perhaps to these should be added the sculptor Callimachus, if the identification of an inscribed epigram found in Aegae as his funerary inscription is correct<sup>53</sup>.

The circulation of intellectuals and artists throughout the Hellenic territory was a matter of course<sup>54</sup>. In the sphere of political thought, during the 5th century the ties between many of them and democratic leaders were strong. However, after the death of Pericles there was a gradual shift towards other sorts of governments<sup>55</sup>, a trend that continued at the beginning of the 4th century. The relationship between authoritative rulers and intellectuals became stronger; we know of many cases all over the Greek world, such as Plato in Syracuse<sup>56</sup>. It is in this context in which Archelaos I should be framed. Antisthenes, one of the disciples of Socrates, was interested in the monarchy, and wrote a book, now lost, about the Macedonian king, as well as another about Cyrus<sup>57</sup>. This should not be interpreted as a mere coincidence.

The aim of Archelaos I's attempts to attract intellectuals and artists to his court was not just to expand his network of contacts or the mere celebration of symposia, but also to learn from them and to introduce reforms in his kingdom following their advice. That is why, for example, Euripides is supposed to have overseen the financial administration of the kingdom<sup>58</sup>. Archelaos I's reign coincided with a moment when places like Macedon might have been perceived as being safer than others such as Athens, where the ravages of war were becoming increasingly more conspicuous and where some intellectuals did not encounter an atmosphere conducive to the development of their ideas. At the same time the connections of the kings with the Greek community would improve their reputation.

Not everybody accepted Archelaos I's invitation to join his court, though. According to Aristotle, Socrates rejected such a proposal, arguing that it was disgraceful not to be in a position to return a favor, as well as an injury<sup>59</sup>. In the same vein, the contemporary

<sup>48</sup> D.S. 13.103.5; Paus. 1.2.2; Plu. *De ex.* 604d-e. In this connection, SCULLION 2003, 389-399 discusses a possible misinterpretation of the sources and holds that Euripides might have actually remained and died at Athens, but his arguments are not convincing. For this debate and previous bibliography, see LAMARI 2017, 46, who states that the strongest argument in favor of this theory is the reference to the presence of Euripides at Archelaos I's court made by Aristotle, who had lived there when his father was a physician to King Amyntas III. STEWART 2021, 95-97 goes further and suggests that Euripides' stay in Macedon should be divided into two periods, approximately from 412/411-410 and 408-406.

<sup>49</sup> Solin. 9.15.

<sup>50</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 83-5; Pl. *Symp.* 172c; Ael. *VH* 13.4. Although the presence of Agathon in Macedon is not certain; in this respect, see MÜLLER 2016, 175-181.

<sup>51</sup> ROISMAN 2010, 156-157; MOLONEY 2014, 603.

<sup>52</sup> Plin. *HN* 35.36.62.

<sup>53</sup> PASPALAS 2011, 185.

<sup>54</sup> WALLACE 2005, 217; LAMARI 2017, 9.

<sup>55</sup> WALLACE 2005, 226-230.

<sup>56</sup> PRÉAUX 1984: 27-46.

<sup>57</sup> LURAGHI 2013, 139-140. As PRINCE 2015, 162-163 suggests, the form of the title, *Ἀρχέλαος ἡ Περί βασιλείας*, implies that this work was probably written as a dialogue between Archelaos I and, possibly, Socrates.

<sup>58</sup> Eur. *TrGF* A 1, 6.

<sup>59</sup> Arist. *Rhet.* 1398a [25].

sophist Thrasymachus called Archelaos I a barbarian in his speech in defense of the Larissaeans, who ran the risk of being enslaved by the monarch<sup>60</sup>.

The conspiracy that supposedly ended with the death of Archelaos was hatched precisely in this circle of intellectual companions. The attack was orchestrated by Decamnichus, who was furious at the king for having handed him over to Euripides to be flogged after the young favorite had remarked on the playwright's bad breath. The plotters also included the above-mentioned Crataeas, a resentful lover of the monarch and the one who killed him, as well as Hellanocrates for similar reasons. In both cases, Archelaos I had made them promises that he subsequently broke<sup>61</sup>.

Another aspect that should be considered in the cultural field is the creation of agones. Dion, the main sacred site of Macedon, became the seat of the Olympia, a festival in honor of Zeus and the Muses. The existence of these agonistic competitions is attested in both the literary and epigraphic sources<sup>62</sup>. The nature of the extant accounts of the Olympia makes it difficult to paint a detailed picture of the organization and sequence of the festival, and especially so to determine its real origin<sup>63</sup>. It is Arrian who mentions Archelaos I as the founder, although in his account the historian refers to the agones of Alexander the Great at Aegae, before the expedition to Asia and immediately after performing sacrifices to Zeus Olympios<sup>64</sup>. Assuming the reliability of Arrian's account of this episode, since he had access to first-hand sources, this information can be interpreted as a reference to a special edition of the Olympia at Aegae, whereas the traditional one would have taken place at Dion<sup>65</sup>. In fact, that Archelaos I did not found the agones, but may have instead reorganized them, should not be ruled out<sup>66</sup>.

Archelaos I is supposed to have been interested in Panhellenic games. According to Solinus, he obtained victories in the chariot races at the Pythian and Olympic Games<sup>67</sup>. This account, albeit difficult to accept<sup>68</sup>, is certainly in keeping with the king. Archelaos I may have chosen Dion for the Olympia due to its proximity to Mount Olympus, an iconic place for all Greeks<sup>69</sup>. Although some scholars have considered this festival as a sort of counter-Olympics<sup>70</sup>, it was more likely an attempt to forge stronger links with the southern neighbors, thus allowing for a more fluid communication<sup>71</sup>, as well as to create a flagship festival for the Macedonians. There is no reason to believe that those

<sup>60</sup> Thrasym. fr. 2 DK / D18 B2 Laks–Most: “δουλεύσομεν Ἕλληνες ὄντες βαρβάρῳ”.

<sup>61</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 1311b.

<sup>62</sup> Thuc. 1.126.5 (Scholia); D. 19.192; D.S. 17.16.3-4; Dio Chrys. 2.2; Arr. *An.* 1.11.1; Philostr. *Ap.* 1.34; Steph. Byz., Διον; *SEG* XLVIII 781; *IG* IV 682, ll. 5-6; *BE* 1939, No. 139. Perhaps also Luc. *Her.* 7; *IG* VII 2486; *IG* XI 4, 1059; *I. Sardis* 79, ll. 11-15.

<sup>63</sup> The most thorough attempt to examine the origin, nature, and organization of this festival can be found in MARI 1998.

<sup>64</sup> Arr. *An.* 1.11.1.

<sup>65</sup> MARI 1998, 148-149.

<sup>66</sup> MARI 1998, 162-164.

<sup>67</sup> Solin. 9.16.

<sup>68</sup> BADIAN 1982, 35. This is connected with the debate on the participation of Alexander I in the Olympic Games (Hdt. 5.22). To put it succinctly, there is no evidence of the presence of the king. In fact, the passage in Herodotus should be read from a political perspective. For further information on this debate and a previous bibliography, see FEARN 2011, 116-118, esp. n. 34.

<sup>69</sup> ALBANIDIS 2009, 8. GRAZ 2016, 67 wonders whether Dion became the federal sanctuary of the Macedonians as a result of the introduction of the Olympia.

<sup>70</sup> BADIAN 1982, 35-36; BORZA 1993, 240-241, who initially supported the thesis, but then changed his mind.

<sup>71</sup> ALBANIDIS 2009, 9; MARI 1998, 164-165.

games could compete with the Great Games and, at the time, the Olympia may have been more a local than Panhellenic affair<sup>72</sup>.

Thanks to the literary sources, we know that the Olympia included both athletic and artistic competitions, plus drama and singing contests. Perhaps Archelaos I was inspired by the Panathenaic Games<sup>73</sup>, although Graz reasonably argues that this combination does not draw from previous models, but from the new festivals created in Hellenistic and Imperial times<sup>74</sup>. Regarding the drama competitions, precisely Euripides' *Archelaos* and *The Bacchae* are thought to have been performed for the first time at the Olympia of Dion<sup>75</sup>. The archeological site contains the remains of two theaters, from Hellenistic and Roman times, respectively. However, there is evidence that the former was already in use in the Classical Age. The oldest coins found there come from the city of Scione and circulated between the beginning of the 5th and the mid-4th century<sup>76</sup>, thus including Archelaos I's reign. Likewise, there are remains of a tier of seats below the Hellenistic ones<sup>77</sup>.

Euripides' *Archelaos* bears the mark of Archelaos I. As noted above, the play introduces a new character, Archelaos son of Temenos, as the founder of the dynasty<sup>78</sup>. He is presented as a humble, noble, accomplished, and loyal person. A trustworthy leader guided by Delphi that replaces the previous characters of the shepherds featuring in the episode of Herodotus<sup>79</sup>. There is no doubt that this new character received the king's stamp of approval. Archelaos, however, did not remain in the royal lineage for long, whereas Karanos, who was introduced later on<sup>80</sup>, did indeed. Whether this new version should be dated to the period of troubles following the death of Archelaos I, or perhaps later on, with Philip II, is unclear<sup>81</sup>. The key point here is to see this maneuver as a useful means for the sovereign to consolidate his position on the throne, which obviously was not devised by Archelaos I himself, but borrowed from earlier cases.

In Macedon itself, he could also resort to the example of the founding myth of the three brothers from Argos<sup>82</sup>. Narrated by Herodotus, it is hard to determine the tale's historicity. Given the historical context, it seems prudent to treat it with skepticism<sup>83</sup>. Likewise, to assume that Alexander I was the author or promoter of this embellished

<sup>72</sup> ALBANIDIS 2009, 9-10.

<sup>73</sup> ALBANIDIS 2009, 10.

<sup>74</sup> GRAZ 2016, 73.

<sup>75</sup> HATZOPOULOS 2011a, 58-59.

<sup>76</sup> KARADEDOS 1986, 339.

<sup>77</sup> KARADEDOS 2012, 74.

<sup>78</sup> E. *TrGF* 228a Kannicht.

<sup>79</sup> Hdt. 8.137-9. Cf. MÜLLER 2017, 189-190.

<sup>80</sup> D.S. 7.15.1.

<sup>81</sup> For Philip II, see MOLINA MARÍN 2015, 21-25; MÜLLER 2017, 191-192; MLADENOVSKA-RISTOVSKA 2017, 36 for further bibliography. One of the possible reasons could be the fact that the lineage of Archelaos I died out soon afterwards. Since Amyntas III belonged to another branch of the royal family, the creation of a new character might have been a useful way for Philip II to assert his position. This would explain why this addition to the genealogy succeeded. Had Archelaos I and his heirs ruled for years, the figure of the mythical Archelaos would have surely prevailed. However, the commencement of a new line of the Argeads, with Philip II and Alexander the Great as its archetypes, led to the introduction and consolidation of Karanos in the official royal lineage. Regarding this, MOLINA MARÍN 2015, 24-25 connects the creation of Karanos to the introduction of the phalanx in the Macedonian army, something that happened under Philip II. Among other aspects, this theory considers the importance of Pheidon of Argos in the myth of Karanos. The Argive tyrant is shown as the probable father of Karanos. Since Pheidon is thought to have created the hoplite phalanx, the myth incorporates a new perspective: Philip II would resemble the figure of Pheidon of Argos.

<sup>82</sup> Hdt. 8.137-9.

<sup>83</sup> BORZA 1982, 9-12.



genealogy is risky to say the least. It is preferable to surmise that the myth was born at the royal court at a moment when the ruling family desired to stress their common bonds with the Greek world, which dovetails with the situation at the end of the Archaic Age and at beginning of the Classical period.

Although the debate on the Hellenicity of the Macedonians and/or their kings is not specifically addressed here, and notwithstanding the fact that the need to understand Macedon under the Greek/non-Greek dichotomy is also rejected<sup>84</sup>, the differentiation between Macedon and Greece can occasionally be observed. The regions of northern Hellas possessed traits akin to those of their southern neighbors, as well as their own particularities, and had things in common with northern communities, such as the Thracians and the Illyrians. The result is an amalgam of characteristics that should urge scholars to refrain from interpreting ancient realities in such a structured and rigid way, and to accept that both ethnicity and identity flowed in a more dynamic and permeable manner. In this context, just as Archelaos I was aware of the potential of the reception of foreign ideas and knowledge, mainly from the south, so too did he know that many people would not see the Macedonians as Greeks, for which reason he made a conscious effort to foster this multiculturalism. At the same time, by attracting intellectuals to the royal court, he would also enhance its prestige<sup>85</sup>.

#### 4. From Aegae to Pella

“Pella belongs to lower Macedonia, which the Bottiaei used to occupy; in early times the treasury of Macedonia was here. Philip enlarged it from a small city, because he was reared in it. It has a headland in what is called Lake Ludias; and it is from this lake that the Ludias River issues, and the lake itself is supplied by an offshoot of the Axios”<sup>86</sup>.

The passage offers us a general idea of the location of Pella. The first preserved account about the site is to be found in Herodotus, who refers to it as a coastal settlement in Bottiaea<sup>87</sup>. Subsequently, Thucydides mentions it in the context of the campaign that Sitalces launched against Perdiccas II in 429/428<sup>88</sup>. Despite that neither of these two passages refer to any specific advantage that Pella might have had over Aegae, it was converted into the main center shortly afterwards<sup>89</sup>.

Although there is no explicit reference in the written sources, it is commonly believed that the prerogatives of Aegae were transferred to Pella during the reign of Archelaos I<sup>90</sup>. For some scholars, however, this happened at a later date, during the

<sup>84</sup> BORZA 1993; HALL 2001.

<sup>85</sup> As MOLINA MARÍN 2017, 239-245 shows, another mechanism employed by Macedonian kings – and continued by Hellenistic monarchs – was to change the name of people, centers, and subjects. This would include the founding myths of the dynasty. In this sense, the choice of Heraclid kinship and other elements linked to the Greek sphere could contribute to the differentiation between the kings and their people.

<sup>86</sup> Str. Frg. 7.20, Jones.

<sup>87</sup> Hdt. 7.123.3.

<sup>88</sup> Thuc. 2.100.4.

<sup>89</sup> This paper follows the theory of MOLINA MARÍN 2020, 279, among others, that rejects the view of a capital in the Macedonian kingdom as we understand that concept today. Rather than a city that always functioned as the administrative center, this location would shift according to the place where the sovereign resides.

<sup>90</sup> GREENWALT 1999.

reign of Amyntas III<sup>91</sup>. The main sources for this theory are Demosthenes and Strabo, who state that Philip II grew up in this town, then an inglorious and small place<sup>92</sup>. Be that as it may, this passage does not necessarily imply that it was Archelaos I who applied the change. Xenophon, who surprisingly does not allude to Archelaos I in any of his works, refers to Pella as the greatest city in Macedon already in times of Amyntas III<sup>93</sup>.

For those who point to Archelaos I as the founder of Pella, the remaining question is whether it happened at the beginning or at the end of his reign. In Hammond's view, the latter is more likely, insofar as the king would have already consolidated his position and created a robust administrative and economic apparatus<sup>94</sup>. Greenwalt, on the other hand, suggests an earlier date. According to this author, the rapprochement between Macedon and Athens would have played a major role, especially for the importance of timber. Archelaos I would have aimed to boost trade and, for that purpose, Pella was much better placed than Aegae. This, combined with the promotion of agriculture, would have helped to generate surpluses. The potential of Pella, with its harbor, was evident<sup>95</sup>. The mention of shipyards for Athens in the treaty with Archelaos I, in 407-406<sup>96</sup>, could refer precisely to the new center, which had access to the sea. Following this reasoning, the foundation of Pella and its harbor should be dated to the beginning of his reign.

Unfortunately, the archeological evidence from the area of the classical town does not clarify matters. The royal palace dates mainly to the second half of the 4th century and, despite some findings from the first half of that century, nothing points to the existence of this complex at the end of the 5th century. However, the location of the palace and the Hellenistic city might not be the same as a hypothetical palace of Archelaos I<sup>97</sup>. Besides, the modern town of Pella stands on one of the two acropoleis in the area where the remains may be located, thus hindering their excavation<sup>98</sup>. In sum, it is hard to establish when Pella was founded, and the archeological evidence is silent as to Archelaos I. Whether or not this implies that the change occurred at a later date is difficult to tell. On the other hand, it is reasonable to assume that the king transferred his main residence –and therefore the administration core of the territory– to a more adequate location in an attempt to redistribute power in his kingdom for both administrative and economic reasons<sup>99</sup>.

## 5. Interactions

The presence of Athens in northern Greece is one of the keys to understanding the growing involvement of the neighboring territories in developments taking place in the south. It should be stressed, though, that the evolution of Macedon was not simply the

<sup>91</sup> HATZOPOULOS 1987, 40-44; 1996 472; PSOMA 2011, 124.

<sup>92</sup> D. 18.68: “χωρίῳ ἀδόξῳ τότε γ’ ὄντι καὶ μικρῷ”; Str. fr. 7.20: “ἠϋξῆσε τὴν πόλιν ἐκ μικρᾶς Φίλιππος τραφεῖς ἐν αὐτῇ” [translated above].

<sup>93</sup> X. *HG* 5.2.12-13: “μεγίστη τῶν ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ πόλεων”. Cf. MIKROGIANNAKIS 2007, 224.

<sup>94</sup> HAMMOND–GRIFFITH 1979, 139-140.

<sup>95</sup> GREENWALT 1999, 166-177.

<sup>96</sup> *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 117.

<sup>97</sup> AKAMATIS 2011, 394-401.

<sup>98</sup> MAKARONAS 1966, 99.

<sup>99</sup> In this connection, that the mint for Archelaos I's new coinage was located in Pella, as suggested by GREENWALT 1994, 115-119, should not be ruled out.

result of Athenian influence. Linking most of the developments in the Greek world to Athenian policy-making is a practice that should be avoided at all costs. Although the power and authority of this polis and its influence over other regions cannot be denied, it is also essential to recognize the importance of local trends and the interaction between other different territories. In plain English, the influence of Athens should be properly contextualized.

As already observed, timber is a matter that often crops up when examining the relationship between Macedon and Athens. The need for raw materials for maintaining the Athenian fleet influenced the way in which the polis interacted with northern Greece. For the purpose at hand, two inscriptions are worth mentioning. The first is a treaty between Perdiccas II and Athens, which was signed in the last years of the king's reign. The document establishes, among other aspects, that Macedon should provide timber –especially oars– only to Athens<sup>100</sup>. From this text and the historical context, it can be deduced that Perdiccas II was in no position to negotiate a more advantageous deal. As Psoma points out, after losing Amphipolis the Athenians shifted their attention to Macedon. The ups and downs in the relationship between these two powers enabled Macedonian timber to be imported mainly between 421 and 418 –perhaps earlier, if the dating of the inscription to 423-422 in *SEG* X 86 is accepted. The situation changed soon afterwards at the beginning of Archelaos I's reign, which coincided with the Athenians' disastrous campaign in Sicily. From 413 to 404, Athens would yet again import timber from the Macedonian forests<sup>101</sup>. The fact that Archelaos I had a greater quantity of silver at his disposal, which allowed him to mint more coins than Perdiccas II, could be tied in with the sale of timber to the Athenians. Since the king needed resources to implement his reforms, the exportation of this raw material to Athens might have offered him the opportunity to replenish his coffers.

The second epigraph is the aforementioned stele dated to 407-406, in which there is reference to shipwrights being sent to build triremes in Macedonian dockyards –probably in Pella. Since it honors King Archelaos I as *proxenos* and *evergetes*<sup>102</sup>, its language and tone clearly differ from those of the previous treaty between Athens and Perdiccas II<sup>103</sup>. It is in this context that the support of Theramenes' troops at the siege of Pydna by Archelaos I in 410 can be better understood<sup>104</sup>. Athens needed a fluid relationship with the Macedonian king<sup>105</sup>. To this should be added a passage in Andocides, in which the Athenian orator recalled his connections with Archelaos I since the time of his own father, when the Four Hundred had ruled in Athens. Andocides himself had been allowed by the sovereign to avail himself of as much timber as he needed and to dispatch it to Samos<sup>106</sup>.

It should be borne in mind that other territories might have influenced Archelaos I's projects and decisions. This is the case of the Molossians. In Molossia, an Epirote kingdom to the west of Macedon, the literary sources refer to Tharyps as the king who introduced Greek customs, writing, and human laws in his realm –quoting Plutarch<sup>107</sup>.

<sup>100</sup> *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 89.

<sup>101</sup> PSOMA 2015, esp. 5, where the Greek scholar offers an appraisal of the different periods in which these transactions might have taken place and suggests a correlation between the provenance of the timber and the presence of Athenian owl coins in Macedonian territory.

<sup>102</sup> *IG* I<sup>3</sup> 117.

<sup>103</sup> POWNALL 2020, 96.

<sup>104</sup> D.S. 13.49.1-2.

<sup>105</sup> KARATHANASIS 2019, 709-712.

<sup>106</sup> And. 2.11.

<sup>107</sup> Plu. *Pyrrh.* 1.4; Just. 17.3.9-13. Recent scholarship regarding political developments in Molossia and Epirus in the 4th and 3rd centuries has contested the traditional hypothesis of an Epirote Alliance formed

This monarch ruled approximately from 430 to 390. A remarkable parallel can be drawn with Macedon regarding the spread of Greek culture in both kingdoms. This can be understood as a reflection of foreign policy in northern Greece, above all as regards Athens, combined with the personal initiative of the kings themselves. That the policy-making of Tharyps, already an experienced sovereign when Archelaos I ascended the throne, might have been another source of ideas for the Macedonian king, is mere speculation. But the fact that Euripides wrote his work *Andromache* for anti-Spartan and pro-Molossian propaganda purposes, among other goals, should be considered<sup>108</sup>.

In the final years of his reign, Archelaos I began to meddle in the affairs of Thessaly, specifically Larissa. Whereby the speech of Thrasymachus to the Larissaeans, in which the orator called Archelaos I a barbarian and advised them to avoid being enslaved by him<sup>109</sup>. The reason behind this rebuke was Archelaos I's support for the family of the Aleuadae, who were vying for the control of the polis. When the Aleuadae finally came out on top, for his good offices the Macedonian king was ceded part of Perrhaebia, the border region between Macedon and Thessaly<sup>110</sup>. Regrettably, there is not enough information on Archelaos I's involvement in Thessalian affairs to be able to reach further conclusions<sup>111</sup>. But it is clear enough that the monarch implemented an active policy aimed at expanding the kingdom's territories and scope of influence in a context in which Macedon actually occupied a powerful position.

Odrysian affairs also affected Macedon. Both kingdoms were located in an area where communities tended to move and interact, including the Greek coastal colonies<sup>112</sup>. As a result, they shared many features<sup>113</sup>. During the reign of Perdiccas II, the Odrysian kingdom reached its peak, with Sitalces' unsuccessful campaign (431-424) in Macedon<sup>114</sup>. This conflict, together with the series of clashes between the Spartans and the Athenians in the region, evinces the problems of the Macedonian army, which, as already observed, Archelaos I was determined to remedy. Indeed, the relationship with the Odrysians improved before the king's ascent to the throne. In the realm of political alliances, Seuthes (424-410?) married Stratonice, the sister of Perdiccas II<sup>115</sup>. During the reign of Archelaos I there were no more serious threats from the north.

At home, Archelaos I succeeded in countering major menaces. In the highlands, a possible conflict with the Lycestian kings Sirrhas and Arrhabaeus was neutralized by marrying one of his daughters off to the king of Elimeia. Archelaos I followed the same procedure when dealing with his own son, Amyntas, in the hope of putting an end to the rivalry between him and another son that the king had sired by his wife Cleopatra<sup>116</sup>.

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around 331 and its subsequent transformation into the Epirote Koinon in 232. In this respect, see MEYER 2013, who rejects the formation of the alliance; PASCUAL 2018, offering a date for the emergence of an Epirote confederation in earlier times; and CHAPINAL-HERAS 2021, with an overview of the bibliography in this regard.

<sup>108</sup> CAIRNS 2012, 46-47.

<sup>109</sup> Thrasy., Frg. 2 DK/D18 B2 Laks-Most.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. POWNALL 2020, 96.

<sup>111</sup> MÜLLER 2016, 184-186.

<sup>112</sup> Regarding this topic, see DIMITROV 2011.

<sup>113</sup> For example, Teres, the father of Sitalces, was said to descend from Tereus, who married Procne, the daughter of the Attic Pandion (STRONK 1995, 52-54), namely, yet another case of political legitimization through Greek mythical genealogies. For a general comparison between Macedon and Thrace, see GREENWALT 2015.

<sup>114</sup> Thuc. 2.100.

<sup>115</sup> Thuc. 2.101.6.

<sup>116</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 1311b. Cf. MÜLLER 2016, 182-184.

## 6. Archelaos I's plan

Philip II is usually touted as the monarch who made the greatest contribution to developing Macedon, with his son Alexander III continuing his good work and expanding the kingdom way beyond its frontiers in his father's time. Many scholars have focused on Philip's skills, his ability to consolidate his position, and his success in reorganizing and restructuring his realm, to which end he implemented different strategies<sup>117</sup>. He may be regarded as an innovator and a visionary, but a closer look at his procedures shows that many of his initiatives had already been put into practice. Almost one century ago, Geyer held that the assassination of Archelaos I brought the curtain down on the kingdom's momentous reconstruction<sup>118</sup>. Kanatsoulis performed a comprehensive, albeit now somewhat out of date, analysis on Archelaos I's policies and, although he did not allude to a possible central plan, he did single out the king as the first to attempt to improve Macedon's economy, army, and culture<sup>119</sup>.

Emphasis should be placed, however, on the context. The Peloponnesian War transformed the powers competing for control of the resource-rich territories of northern Greece. Archelaos I took advantage of Athens' delicate situation in the wake of the Sicilian disaster and the revenues obtained from timber exports to his southern ally. With the proceeds, he could apply the reforms that Macedon needed to prosper. This state of affairs certainly contrasted strongly with that during the reign of Perdiccas II, not only because of the implementation of a better strategy, but also because the winds of war and other factors allowed Archelaos I more room for maneuver.

This seems like an adequate moment for a brief digression on the agency of kings. In Macedon, as in Thrace, the incumbent monarch undoubtedly provided much of the initiative and capital resources required for urban development<sup>120</sup>. In the case at hand, Macedon's development depended on Archelaos I and his plans. This does not mean to say, however, that all the king's reforms and projects were his brainchild. Unquestionably, he was much in need of assistance and advice. The arrival of intellectuals at his court already in the early years of his reign is clear evidence of his capacity to interact far beyond the frontiers of his kingdom and to attract people who brought with them ideas and knowledge from different parts of the Greek world. Unlike his father, he was also in a strong enough position to put his plans into practice. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Aristotle, when describing exceptional people, highlights the overconfidence of Archelaos I<sup>121</sup>.

On the other hand, it is harder to know for sure whether Archelaos I's reforms were part of a single ambitious project or were introduced piecemeal whenever the need arose during his reign. I am inclined to think that, when he ascended the throne, he was aware of the main shortcomings of his kingdom and already had the basic lines of a program for improvements in mind. The fortification of cities, the building of roads, and the reinforcement of the army all suggest a long-term plan that was surely accomplished over the years. At the same time, Archelaos I would have been able to meet any contingencies.

<sup>117</sup> LANE FOX 2011a.

<sup>118</sup> GEYER 1930, 84-85. Although this scholar interpreted Archelaos I's endeavors as a strategy for turning Macedon into a sort of Greek state, which is wrong.

<sup>119</sup> KANATSOULIS 1948, 58-112, esp. 69 and 88-90.

<sup>120</sup> ARCHIBALD 2000, 229.

<sup>121</sup> Arist. *Pr.* 954b [22-34].

## 7. Conclusions

The premature death of Archelaos I put paid to a potentially brilliant future for Macedon, which was marked instead by instability during the following years. The strategies that he employed were a source of inspiration for Philip II, who was able to consolidate his position and expand the power and influence of Macedon way beyond the expectations of any other previous monarch. For obvious reasons, however, this does not imply that Archelaos I devised all those strategies on his own. He was certainly influenced by different actors and past and present examples. The main point is that his reign coincided with a period during which the geopolitics that had characterized the 5th century changed drastically. Archelaos I did not inherit a weak realm from Perdiccas II, but one that had adapted to the situation at the time. The new king was aware of what his kingdom needed and, at the same time, was fortunate enough to be able, at least partially, to introduce the required reforms<sup>122</sup>.

In this process, it was crucial for Archelaos I to listen to the counsel of others, because all these projects and reforms certainly were not of his own invention. Although there is tendency to attribute successes and failures to leaders, namely, those in charge of decision-making, they were never alone. There is not a shadow of doubt that Archelaos I, as with all monarchs, was the maximum authority in Macedon. But this does not signify that he was an expert in all aspects of the running of his kingdom. His agency was partially the result of the need for ancient authors to summarize the developments and processes in one person representing the territory as a whole, as well as to enhance his importance in order to buttress his position. However, the fact that Archelaos I invited intellectuals to his court is a clear indication of his desire to surround himself with advisors who could create the right atmosphere for designing and introducing reforms. The sources scarcely mention those advisers, but his efforts to attract them from different places was surely for that purpose. We just need to remember for example that Euripides was put in charge of the kingdom's financial administration<sup>123</sup>.

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<sup>122</sup> MÜLLER 2016, 164-165, stresses the importance of Alexander I as the true driving force behind a powerful Macedon, with Perdiccas II and, later on, Archelaos I picking up from where he had left off. As has been seen, however, with his reforms Archelaos I aspired to transform his kingdom, rather than just seeking continuity.

<sup>123</sup> Eur. *TrGF* A 1.6. Cf. LAMARI 2017, 45-46.

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