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The Burial of the Dead (at Vergina)
or
The Unending Controversy
on the Identity of the Occupants of Tomb II

Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats

Next November (2007) we shall be celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the discovery of the royal tombs at Vergina. On such an occasion it is only fitting to attempt an evaluation of the unending controversy about the identity of the occupants of Tomb II. In fact, the recent official publication of the painting of its frieze¹ and of the ceramic vessels found in or around the monument² makes this the appropriate moment for drawing up the balance sheet of the opposing claims, for no other elements liable to identify the dead or to date the tomb are likely to appear in the foreseeable future.³

The big un plundered «Macedonian» tomb of Vergina, henceforth Tomb II, was uncovered by Manolis Andronicos, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Thessalonike, on 11 October and was opened on 7 of November, at the end of the 1977 campaign. It consisted of a chamber containing the cremated remains of a mature man deposited, along with a magnificent golden crown, in a golden casket, a rich panoply of weapons and an assortment of vessels and other metallic artefacts, some bronze but most of them silver. Various other items, including a few ceramic

1. Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, *Βεργίνα. Ὁ τάφος τοῦ Φιλίππου. Ἡ τοιχογραφία μετὰ τὸ κνήγι*, (Athens 2004).

2. Stella Drougou, *Βεργίνα. Τὰ πήλινα ἀγγεῖα τῆς Μεγάλης Τοῦμπας*, (Athens 2005).

3. Neither the metal vessels nor the weapons nor the golden *larnakes* nor the jewels and the beds, due to be published respectively by Stella Drougou, P. Faklaris, Elizabeth Tsigarida and Angeliki Kottaridou respectively, are likely to identify the occupants of the tomb or to provide secure clues for its dating.

goods, were also present, the most notable being a silver gold-plated «diadem» and several miniature ivory human heads and limbs. In the antechamber was discovered another, smaller, golden casket containing the cremated remains of a young woman along with another golden diadem and, propped against the marble door connecting the antechamber with the chamber, a pair of greaves and a *gorytos* (a bowcase *cum* quiver). A gilded pectoral, a golden crown, perfume vases, a couple of pieces of jewelry and other lesser objects were also found scattered on the floor of the antechamber. The frieze on the façade of the tomb was decorated with the painting of a hunt involving a number of hunters and a variety of game. This sensational discovery was officially announced by the excavator at a news conference held in Thessalonike on 24 November 1977, and the first scientific report in Greek and English appeared in volume X (1977) of the Greek Ministry of Culture archaeological review *Ἀρχαιολογικά Ἀνάλεκτα ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν* in 1978.⁴ From the very first announcement the excavator stated his opinion that the cremated remains interred in the chamber of the tomb belonged to the Macedonian king Philip II, assassinated at the age of 45 in the old capital of Aigeai and buried by his heir Alexander III (the Great) in October 336 B.C. He arrived at this tentative conclusion on the following grounds: 1) the various artefacts (pottery, metal vessels, weapons, sculpture etc.) uncovered within and without the tomb belonged to the third quarter of the fourth century B.C.; 2) the presence of the Great Tumulus built in the early third century B.C. to protect the tomb, the size and the unique painted decoration of the tomb itself, the extraordinary luxury of the personal belongings of the dead deposited in the chamber, the alleged presence of a «sceptre» and of the diadem, and, finally, the two small ivory heads, respectively identified as portraits of Alexander the Great and Philip II, indicated that the burial was one of royalty; 3) therefore the tomb necessarily belonged to Philip II, who was the only Macedonian king to die within this period. The burial in the antechamber, if indeed it was that of a woman, might belong to Philip II's last young wife Kleopatra.

Andronicos returned several times to the question of the identity of the

4. P. 70-72. A more succinct report by the excavator in English entitled «Regal Treasures from a Macedonian Tomb» had appeared a little earlier in the July 1978 issue of the *National Geographic* (vol. 154, no 1, p. 54-77). In it Andronicos put forward an additional argument in favour of the identification of the dead with Philip II, who was known to be lame: a pair of greaves of unequal length found in the antechamber. Even earlier, a fairly long article in the *Sunday Times Magazine* of February 5, 1978 (p. 26-36) had apprised the English-speaking public of the discovery itself and of the excavators' main arguments for the identification of the dead with Philip II.

persons buried in the tombs he had discovered,⁵ but the most complete exposition of his arguments for the identification of the male inmate of Tomb II with Philip II is to be found in his book *Vergina. The Royal Tombs* published in Athens in 1984.⁶ These, as we shall see in detail below, were the fact that the occupants of the tomb had been cremated immediately before the interment of their remains, the presence of the *heroon*, the very erection of the Great Tumulus, the anomalies in the construction of the vault and the different quality of the plastering in the chamber and the antechamber, the absence of any trace of the burial of Kynnana, who had been reburied along with Philip III and Eurydice, the age of the occupants of the tomb, the quantity and quality of the armour and the subject of the wall painting. Meanwhile a «cottage industry in Verginana»⁷ had developed, some upholding⁸ but many challenging the excavator's dating and identification.

5. M. Andronicos, «The Royal Tomb of Philip II», *Archaeology* 31 (1978) 33-41; *id.*, «The Tombs of the Great Tumulus of Vergina», *Greece and Italy in the Classical World. Acta of the XIth International Congress of Classical Archaeology*, (London 1979) 39-56; *id.*, «The Finds from the Royal Tombs at Vergina», *Proceedings of the British Academy* 65 (1979) 355-67; *id.*, «The Royal Tombs of Vergina and the Problem of the Dead», *AAA* 13 (1980) 168-78; *id.*, «Η νεκρόπολις τῶν Αἰγῶν», *Φίλιππος βασιλεὺς Μακεδόνων*, (Athens 1980) 220-24; *id.*, «The Royal Tombs at Vergina», *The Search for Alexander the Great: An Exhibition*, (Boston 1980) 35; *id.*, «Βεργίνα: ἀρχαιολογία καὶ ἱστορία», *Φίλια ἔπη εἰς Γεώργιον Ἐ. Μυλωνᾶν* I, (Athens 1986) 19-37; cf. *id.*, «The “Macedonian Tombs”», *Macedonia from Philip II to the Roman Conquest*, (Princeton, N.J. 1993) 166.

6. P. 226-31.

7. The expression belongs to E. N. Borza, «The Macedonian Royal Tombs at Vergina: Some Cautionary Notes», *Archaeological News* 10 (1981) 82.

8. The first to concur with Andronicos' dating and identification was N. G. L. Hammond, «Philip's Tomb in Historical Context», *GRBS* 19 (1978) 331-50. He upheld the same opinion in all his subsequent works (See in particular «The Evidence for the Identity of the Royal Tombs at Vergina», *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*, [Washington 1982] 111-27, and «The Royal Tombs at Vergina: Evolution and Identities», *BSA* 86 [1991] 69-82). The long list of other scholars who promptly shared the excavator's position or/and challenged the arguments of those who rejected the attribution of the tomb to Philip II in favour of Philip III (Arrhidaios) includes R. Lane Fox, *The Search for Alexander*, (Boston 1980) 80-84; P. Green, «The Royal Tombs of Vergina: A Historical Analysis», *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*, (Washington D.C. 1982) (less affirmative), and W. M. Calder III, «Diadem and the Barrel-Vault: a Note», *AJA* 85 (1981) 334-35, *id.*, «“Golden Diadems” again», *AJA* 87 (1983) 102-103, E. A. Fredricksmeier, «Again the So-Called Tomb of Philip II», *AJA* 85 (1981) 330-34, *id.*, «Once More the Diadem and the Barrel-Vault at Vergina», *AJA* 87 (1983) 99-102, *id.*, «Alexander the Great and the Macedonian *kausia*», *TAPhA* 116 (1986) 217-27, and S. M. Burstein, «The Tomb of Philip II and the

The first to express doubts about the royal character, the date, and therefore the identity of the occupant of Tomb II – even about the identification of Modern Vergina with ancient Aigeai – were D. Kanatsoulis, Professor of Ancient History at the University of Thessalonike,⁹ and the well-known Greek archaeologist Ph. Petsas.¹⁰ Such negative reactions can only be understood within the context of the then raging quarrels between factions of university professors and of the long-standing antagonism between Andronicos and Petsas, dating from their student years and subsequently rekindled by their rival excavations of the Vergina «Necropolis of the Mounds».

More seriously argued was a letter to the Athens daily *Ἐλευθεροτυπία* by a certain Emm. Zachos, holder of a doctor's degree from the University of Paris, published on 13 February 1978 and proposing for the first time the alternative identification of the dead with Philip III (Arrhidaios) and his wife Eurydice, both put to death by Olympias in Autumn 317 and (re)buried by Cassander at Aigeai some six months later, which was destined to have a numerous posterity, especially in the United States. The correspondent of the Athenian newspaper was also a pioneer in a quite different field. He was the first to declare that the identification of the dead with Philip II followed a political agenda, namely that of securing the victory of Constantine Karamanlis' New Democracy party at the November 1977 general elections (regardless of the fact that, when Andronicos publicly announced his sensational discovery at the press conference of 24 November, the elections had already taken place, on 20 November).

Refutations of Andronicos' identification of the occupant of Tomb II in

Succession of Alexander the Great», *Echos du Monde Classique/Classical Views* 26 (1982) 141-63. E. N. Borza in his first two contributions on the subject («The Macedonian Royal Tombs at Vergina: Some Cautionary Notes», *Archaeological News* 10 [1080] 73-87, and «Those Vergina Tombs Again», *Archaeological News* 11 [1982] 8-10) supported Andronicos' identification, but from the publication of his 1987 article «The Royal Macedonian Tombs and the Paraphernalia of Alexander the Great», *Phoenix* 41 (1987) 105-21, he radically changed his position and favoured Philip III, whose burial would have supposedly included items belonging to Alexander the Great. For the position of some Greek scholars on this question, see below.

9. D. Kanatsoulis, «Ἡ Βεργίνα ἢ ἡ Ἔδεσσα εἶναι ὁ παλαιὸς χώρος τῶν Αἰγῶν;», in the Thessalonican daily *Ἑλληνικὸς Βορρᾶς* 30/11/1977, p. 3.

10. Ph. Petsas, «Μακεδονικοὶ τάφοι στὴν Βεργίνα καὶ στὰ Παλατίτσια», *Ἑλληνικὸς Βορρᾶς* 4/12/1977, p. 8; *id.*, «Ὁ Φίλιππος καὶ ἡ χύτρα μὲ τὸ χρυσάφι», *Ἑλληνικὸς Βορρᾶς* 11/1/1978; cf. his interview to Nicholas Gage published in the *New York Times Magazine* on 25 December 1977, p. 32.

scholarly publications first appeared in 1980.¹¹ The American historian W. L. Adams from the University of Utah, who, having written his University of Virginia doctoral dissertation on Cassander,¹² was familiar with particulars of Philip III's short reign, put forward the candidacy of this mentally deficient king in an article published in *The Ancient World*.¹³ Arguing that the most important element for the identification was the burial of the woman in the antechamber, whom for historical reasons he would not identify with Olympias, Kleopatra or any other of Philip II's wives, and discarding the evidence of the unequal length of the greaves, the pottery and the ivory heads invoked by the excavator, he highlighted the plausibility that the occupant of the antechamber was Eurydice, the young wife of Philip III, for it was known that she had been (re)buried at Aigeai by Cassander along with her husband and her mother Kynnana and that she had fought in battle – a fact that would explain the presence of the greaves and of the *gorytos* in the antechamber.

The burial of the woman in the antechamber is also the central element in the refutation of Andronicos' dating and identification by the Italian historians Anna Maria Prestiani Giallombardo and B. Tripodi.¹⁴ The presence of weapons and the scarcity of feminine objects clearly indicated a warrior queen, such as Kleopatra, Philip II's wife and Olympias' young rival, by no means was and whom, in any case, Alexander would never have honoured with a royal burial. Therefore it must have belonged to Eurydice, the wife of Philip's mentally deficient son. Moreover, a portrait of Alexander, still alive in 336, would be out of place in a tomb, while the diadem was, as the two Italian scholars argued, unknown in Macedonia before it was borrowed by Alexander from Persia after his victories over Darius III. On the other hand, the three burials in looted Tomb I –decorated with the abduction of Persephone– and in the chamber and antechamber of Tomb II corresponded perfectly to the ancient testimonies regarding the circumstances of the burial of Philip II, Kleo-

11. I omit P. Moreno's suggestion («La pittura in Macedonia», *Storia e civiltà dei Greci* 6 [1979] 703-721), that the tomb belonged to Antipater, since it was made on the basis of very incomplete information.

12. W. L. Adams, *Cassander, Macedonia and the Policy of Coalition*, (Charlottesville 1975).

13. W. L. Adams, «The Royal Macedonian Tomb at Vergina: An Historical Interpretation», *The Ancient World* 3 (1980) 67-72.

14. Anna Maria Prestiani Giallombardo and B. Tripodi, «Le tombe regali di Vergina: Quale Filippo?», *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* 10 (1980) 989-1001; cf. *eid.*, «La tomba e il tesoro di Filippo II di Macedonia: una nuova proposta di attribuzione», *Magna Grecia* 16 (1981) 14-17.

patra and their baby daughter Europe in 336 B.C. and the (re)burial of Kynnana, Philip III and Eurydice by Cassander at Aigeai in early 316 B.C. respectively.

The two Italian historians returned several times to the question of the date of Tomb II and the identity of the dead, attempting various approaches (the diadem,¹⁵ the depiction of the *kausia* on the hunting scene of the frieze¹⁶ and the hunting scene itself¹⁷) in an unremitting search for arguments favouring a post-Alexander dating of the Tomb and the identification of the dead couple with Philip III and Eurydice.

Of a more archaeological nature were the objections to Andronicos' tentative dating and interpretation contemporarily aired by Phyllis Williams Lehmann, widow of Karl Lehmann, the well-known excavator of the Samothrace sanctuary of the Great Gods, where among other things he had discovered and published a dedication of Philip III (Arrhidaios) and Alexander IV.¹⁸ The American archaeologist observed that : 1) the correlation suggested by Andronicos of five miniature ivory heads with Leochares' chryselephantine group of Philip II's family erected in the Philippeion at Olympia was weakened by the discovery of several other similar heads in the chamber of Tomb II; 2) the technique of the barrel-vault used in the construction of the «Macedonian tombs», as D. Boyd had recently argued,¹⁹ was first introduced into Greece from the Near East by Alexander the Great's architects and masons after their return from the eastern campaign; 3) the diadem was used as a symbol of kingship by the Persian kings and was adopted by Alexander the

15. Anna Maria Prestiani Giallombardo, «Il diadema di Vergina e l'iconografia di Filippo II», *Ancient Macedonia IV* (Thessalonike 1986) 497-509; *ead.*, «Riflessioni storiografiche sulla cronologia del Grande Tumulo e delle tombe reali di Vergina (Campagne di scavo 1976-77)», *Πρακτικά τοῦ XII Συνεδρίου Κλασικῆς Ἀρχαιολογίας*, vol. I (Athens 1985) 237-42.

16. Anna Maria Prestiani Giallombardo, «*Kausia diadematophoros* in Macedonia: testimonianze misconosciute e nuove proposte», *Messana I* (1990) 107-126; *ead.*, «Per un lessico greco dell' abbigliamento. Copricapi come segni di potere: la *kausia*», *Atti I Seminario di Studi sui lessici tecnici greci e latini*, (Messina 1990), *AAPel* 66, Suppl. 1 (1991) 165-87; *ead.*, «Recenti testimonianze iconografiche sulla *kausia* in Macedonia e la datazione del fregio della caccia della II tomba reale di Vergina», *DHA* 17 (1991) 257-304.

17. B. Tripodi, «Il fregio della caccia della tomba reale di Vergina e le cacce funerarie d'Oriente», *DHA* 17 (1991) 143-209; *id.*, *Cacce reali macedoni tra Alessandro I e Filippo V* (Messina 1998) 99-109.

18. Phyllis Williams Lehmann, «The So-Called Tomb of Philip II: A Different Interpretation», *AJA* 84 (1980) 527-31.

19. D. Boyd, «The Arch and Vault in Greek Architecture», *AJA* 82 (1978) 83-100.

Great only after his victory over Darius in 330 B.C. She concluded that, therefore, the occupants of Tomb II could not have been Philip II and Kleopatra and that the only other candidates compatible with the archaeological and historical evidence were Philip II's son Arrhidaios, who assumed his father's name when he was proclaimed king in Babylon in 323 B.C., and his martial wife Eurydice.

After her arguments concerning the barrel-vault and the diadem had been answered by W. M. Calder III and E. A. Fredricksmeier,²⁰ Phyllis Lehmann attempted a rebuttal,²¹ which convinced neither of these two scholars, who maintained that there was no valid argument excluding the possibility of the barrel-vaulted tomb and the «diadem» at the ancient Macedonian capital in 336 B.C.²² The question of the barrel-vaulted tombs was exhaustively dealt with by Andronicos in 1987²³ and his arguments in favour of the local Macedonian origin of this technique were deemed convincing by R. A. Tomlinson,²⁴ who had previously shared Pyllis Lehmann's view on their introduction from the East as a result of Alexander's expedition.

Meanwhile two new approaches: forensic medicine and ceramics typology, were introduced into the discussion, which promised to supply a «scientific» and hopefully definitive answer to the problem of the identity of the dead and the date of the burial.

The skeletal remains of the two *larnakes* of Tomb II had been examined soon after their discovery by N. I. Xirotiris and F. Langenscheidt, who had not reported any trace of wounds on the male skeleton found in the chamber.²⁵ They were examined anew by J. H. Musgrave, who in collaboration with A. J. N. W. Prag and R. A. H. Neave produced a paper presented in a condensed version at the Twelfth International Congress of Archaeology held in Athens in September 1983 and then fully in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*.²⁶ Their conclusion, albeit cautious,

20. See n. 5, *supra*.

21. Phyllis Williams Lehmann, «The So-Called Tomb of Philip II: an Addendum», *AJA* 86 (1982) 437-42.

22. E. A. Fredricksmeier, «Once more the Diadem and Barrel-Vault at Vergina», *AJA* 87 (1983) 99-102; W. M. Calder III, «“Golden Diadems” again», *AJA* 87 (1983) 102-103.

23. M. Andronicos, «Some Reflections on the Macedonian Tombs», *BSA* 82 (1987) 1-16.

24. R. A. Tomlinson, «The Architectural Context of the Macedonian Vaulted Tombs», *BSA* 82 (1987) 305-312.

25. N. I. Xirotiris-F. Langenscheidt, «The Cremation from the Royal Macedonian Tombs of Vergina», *Ephemeris* 1981, 142-60.

26. A. J. N. Prag, J. H. Musgrave, R. A. H. Neave, «The appearance of the Occupant of the Royal Tomb at Vergina», *Πρακτικά τοῦ XII Διεθνoῦς Συνεδροῖου Κλασικῆς Ἀρχαιο-*

was momentous: «If nature rather than fire really was the culprit then the suggestion that the bones belonged to a man known to have lost his right eye and perhaps sustained major injuries to much of the right side of his face 18 years before his death becomes very attractive indeed».

Unfortunately, the evidence from ceramics typology seemed to point in the opposite direction. In 1984 S. I. Rotroff published an article arguing that Tomb II contained salt-cellars of a type also discovered in the Athenian Agora,²⁷ which she dated between 325 and 295, since a bronze coin belonging to a closed deposit including one such vessel could be dated to the very end of the fourth century (307-300 B.C.).²⁸ E. N. Borza invoked this new element as the main reason for a complete about-turn in a paper published in 1987 and in which he made the sensational suggestion that Tomb II contained personal effects of Alexander the Great, such as his cuirass, his helmet, his *gorgeret*, his diadem, his shield and his sceptre, which had been buried there along with the remains of Philip III and Eurydice.²⁹

All this conflicting evidence seemed to require a re-assessment, which was attempted in a special issue of *The Ancient World* in 1991. J. H. Musgrave reiterated and expanded the reasons why he believed that the human remains were not those of Philip III and Eurydice but those of Philip II and Kleopatra.³⁰ Besides the traces of the facial wound, he cited the age of the female body, about 25 years, whereas Eurydice was no more than 20; and the fact that she was cremated soon after her death *with her flesh on*, as he believed was also the case of the male body,³¹ which

λογίας (Athens 1985) 226-31; *eid.*, «The Skull from Tomb II at Vergina: King Philip II of Macedon», *JHS* 104 (1984) 60-78; cf. *eid.*, *Popular Archaeology* 9 (1984) 8-11 (*non vidi*), and A. J. N. W. Prag, «Reconstructing the Skull of Philip of Macedon», *The World of Philip and Alexander: a Symposium on Greek Life and Times* (Philadelphia 1990) 35-36; *id.*, «Reconstructing King Philip II: the Nice Version», *AJA* 94 (1990) 237-47.

27. Susan I. Rotroff, «Spool Saltcellars in the Athenian Agora», *Hesperia* 53 (1984) 343-54. See also now *ead.*, *Hellenistic Pottery. Athenian and Imported Wheelmade Tableware and Related Material*, («Athenian Agora» 29; Princeton, N.J. 1997) 166 and n. 71.

28. Cf. J. H. Kroll, «Nailing Down the Archaeological Chronology of Early Hellenistic Athens», *AJA* 87 (1983) 241-42 [abstracts].

29. E. N. Borza, «The Royal Macedonian Tombs and the Paraphernalia of Alexander the Great», *Phoenix* 41 (1987) 105-121. Cf. *id.*, *In the Shadow of Olympus*, (Princeton, N.J. 1990) 263; *id.*, *Before Alexander: Constructing Early Macedonia*, (Claremont, Cal. 1999) 68-70.

30. J. H. Musgrave, «The Human Remains from Vergina Tombs I, II and III: an Overview», *AncW* 21 (1991) 3-9; cf. *id.*, «Dust and Damn'd Oblivion: a Study of Cremation in Ancient Greece», *BSA* 85 (1990) 271-99.

31. J. H. Musgrave, «The Skull of Philip II of Macedon», in S. J. Lisney-B. Matthews (ed.), *Current Topics in Oral Biology* (Bristol 1985) 1-16

specifically *could only have been cremated in an enclosed chamber or oven*. He rejected the alternative suggestion that Philip II, Kleopatra and their baby daughter Europe might have been buried in the cist Tomb I, because the infant interred there was «only a day or two old, if that», whereas Europe was several months old, at least, at the moment of her death.

Beryl Barr-Sharrar in her evaluation of the objects found in Tomb II considered evidence from the salt-cellars as interesting but by no means decisive³² and challenged M. Pfrommer's attempt to date Tomb II to 316 B.C. on the basis of the shape of the metal vessels.³³

Elizabeth D. Carey avoided committing herself and simply noted that the lesser care shown for the bones of- and the absence of many personal items from the female burial showed that the remains deposited in the antechamber were a mere supplement to the male burial in the main chamber.³⁴

W. L. Adams, in order to lend plausibility to the scenario rejected by Andronicos, to wit that Cassander put on a funeral pyre in early spring 316 the putrescent corpses of Philip III and Eurydice assassinated in autumn 317 B.C., attempted to establish that this was a pattern with Cassander, since in his opinion young Alexander IV was killed and secretly interred by Cassander in 311/10 and then exhumated, cremated and reburied by the same Cassander in Tomb III some time before 306/5. Thus the same tumulus inside the Great Tomba would have covered the remains of the last Temenids: Philip II, Kleopatra and Europe simply interred in Tomb I, Philip III and Eurydice and Alexander IV cremated and reburied months or years after their death respectively in Tombs II and III. The American historian was, however, aware of the difficulty of imagining that the cist Tomb I was reopened months after the interment of Philip II in order to receive the corpses of Kleopatra and Europe.³⁵

E. N. Borza reserved for himself the part of the commentator. He admitted that no conclusion could be drawn from the presence of the «diadem», which might belong either to Philip II or to one of his successors; he declared himself unable to decide on the evidence of the bones, about which contradictory reports had been

32. Beryl Barr-Sharrar, «Vergina Tomb II: Dating the Objects», *AncW* 22 (1991) 11-15.

33. M. Pfrommer, *Untersuchungen zur Chronologie Früh-und Hochhellenistischen Goldschmucks*, (Berlin 1990) 235-36.

34. Elizabeth D. Carey, «The Female Burial in the Antechamber of Tomb II at Vergina», *AncW* 22 (1991) 17-26.

35. W. L. Adams, «Cassander, Alexander IV and the Tombs at Vergina», *AncW* 22 (1991) 27-33.

made by Xirotiris and Langenscheidt on the one hand and Musgrave on the other; he argued that rebuttal of Pfrommer's late dating of the metal vessels by Beryl Barr-Sharrar did not entail that Tomb II was not late; and he considered Adams' hypothesis about Cassander's practice of reburying royals as «a plausible explanation of the discrepancy between our surviving texts and the surviving archaeological monument». He concluded that the frieze on Tomb II's façade, the iconography of the shield, the iron armour, both of which he attributed to Alexander the Great, and above all the salt-cellars, meant Tomb II belonged to the late fourth century.

By coincidence the frieze of Tomb II was made the object of a lengthy analysis by B. Tripodi in the very same year. The Italian historian argued among other things that 1) the representation of the dead as a hunter belonged to an oriental tradition, 2) multiple hunts belonged to satrapic and dynastic iconography, 3) this iconography was elaborated by Greek artists in the service of oriental dynastic ideology, 4) the connection of the Macedonians with the theme of the multiple hunt dates from the reign of Alexander the Great, 5) the aim of the representation is not to figure historical persons or real events but to extol royal power, and 6) in view of the above the ἄπαξ εὐρημένον theme of the frieze can only be later than the reign of Alexander III.³⁶

In the same publication Anna Maria Prestianni Giallombardo in an equally lengthy paper insisted that the presence of clean-shaved persons wearing purple coats and *kausiai halourgeis* is an additional element in favour of a late date for Tomb II, which can only belong to Philip III and Eurydice.³⁷

Practically all B. Tripodi's arguments excluding a date earlier than the reign of Alexander for the frieze of Tomb II were swept away by a thorough and well documented paper by P. Briant, which appeared in the same issue of the same review.³⁸ The French historian concluded «il paraît clair d'abord que, tel qu'il s'exprime à Vergina, le thème de la chasse au lion n'a pas grand-chose à voir avec

36. B. Tripodi, «Il fregio della *caccia* della II tomba reale di Vergina e le cacce funerarie d'Oriente», *DHA* 17 (1991) 143-209. Cf. L. E. Baumer-U. Weber, «Zum Fries des Philipp-Grabes von Vergina», *HASB* 14 (1991) 27-41, and A. Pekridou-Gorecki, «Zum Jagd-fries des sog. Philipp-Grabes in Vergina», *Fremde Zeiten. Festschrift für Borchard* (Vienna 1996) 89-103.

37. Anna Maria Prestianni Giallombardo, «Recenti testimonianze iconografiche sulla *kausia* in Macedonia e la datazione del fregio della *caccia* della II tomba reale di Vergina», *DHI* 17 (1991) 257-304.

38. P. Briant, «Chasses royales macédoniennes et chasses royales perses: le thème de la chasse au lion sur *la chasse de Vergina*», *DHI* 17 (1991) 211-55.

les représentations connues du Grand Roi ou maître des animaux. ... Or, dans les attitudes des différents personnages de Vergina, rien ne rappelle les représentations de cet art aulique achéménide. On est tenté de conclure que, s'il s'agit bien de Philippe et d'Alexandre, ils sont représentés "à la macédonienne", dans une posture qui rappelle étrangement l'iconographie du "cavalier à la lance" macédonien».

An equally well documented paper by Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli on the *kausia*,³⁹ completed E. Fredricksmeier's earlier argumentation, based mainly on literary sources,⁴⁰ by an exhaustive examination of the archaeological evidence, some of it only recently discovered, and refuted Anna Maria Prestianni Giallombardo's arguments based on the attire of the persons represented on the frieze and allegedly excluding its dating before the reign of Alexander the Great.⁴¹

It was then that a Greek archaeologist who had been for many years a close collaborator of M. Andronicos and had contributed to a collective volume which accepted the latter's dating of Tomb II and his identification of its occupants, explicitly ascribing the weapons of the tomb's chamber to «the third quarter of the 4th century B.C.»,⁴² astonished the scholarly community by contesting not only the identity of the dead, but also the royal character of the burials and the identification of Vergina with Aigeai in an article which was accepted by a prestigious American scientific journal.⁴³

P. Faklaris' arguments in favour of reverting to the outdated – in view of the recent discoveries – identifications of the site of Vergina with shadowy Balla and of the site of Levkadia-Kopanos with Aigeai were duly refuted by a series of scholars, including the present writer,⁴⁴ and have since found only one other defender besides Faklaris himself.⁴⁵

39. Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, «Aspects of Ancient Macedonian Costume», *JHS* 113 (1993) 122-47.

40. E. A. Fredricksmeier, «Alexander the Great and the Macedonian *Kausia*», *TAPA* 116 (1986) 215-27.

41. See also M. B. Hatzopoulos, *Cultes et rites de passage en Macédoine*, («*ΜΕΛΕΤΗΜΑΤΑ*» 19; Athens 1994) 92-101.

42. P. Faklaris in *Vergina: The Great Tumulus*, (Thessalonike 1984) 113.

43. P. Faklaris, «Aegae: Determining the Site of the First Capital of the Macedonians», *AJA* 98 (1994) 609-616.

44. M. B. Hatzopoulos, «Aigéai: la localisation de la première capitale macédonienne», *REG* 109 (1996) 264-69; N. G. L. Hammond, «The Location of Aegae», *JHS* 117 (1997) 177-79; Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, «Aegae: A Reconsideration», *AM* 111 (1996) 225-35.

45. I. S. Touloumakos, *Ιστορικά προβλήματα των τάφων της Βεργίνας*, (Thessalonike 2006).

At this point it seemed that arguments and counterarguments from the respective supporters of Philip II and Philip III had balanced each other out and that, as the French saying goes, «the fight would stop for want of fighters» (or rather for want of ammunition). But it was a precarious equilibrium and from 1997 onwards a series of new developments came to succour the partisans of Philip III.

In 1997 P. G. Themelis and J. P. Touratsoglou presented to the scholarly world the official publication of the famous Derveni tombs discovered in 1962, but until then only partially known. They challenged the early dating of some of their renowned predecessors, such as M. Robertson and K. Schefold, and on the basis of vessel typology, but mainly of numismatic evidence, they dated the burials to the late fourth and early third century B.C. In reaching this conclusion the presence of a quarter-stater and of an eighth-stater, found respectively in two of the earliest tombs (B and Δ) and dated by G. Le Rider to 340-328 or 336-328, played a decisive part. Moreover, the two Greek archaeologists placed the Derveni tombs in the wider context of a whole group of rich sealed grave deposits, dated or not by coins, and containing offerings similar to those at Derveni, which they connected with the return to Europe of Alexander the Great's veterans laden with gold and silver from their Asiatic expedition. Thus, they identified Cassander as the ruler responsible for the regeneration of Macedonia in this period.⁴⁶ Finally, in a passage not often noticed, they questioned the royal character of the burials in Tomb II.⁴⁷

Two years later the civil engineer K. Zampas, who had been entrusted with the restoration of the retaining wall of Tomb II, further weakened Andronicos' argumentation in favour of Philip II by presenting a communication at the annual symposium on archaeological activities in Macedonia and Thrace in which he claimed that, contrary to what Andronicos had maintained, a construction particularity of the vault did not necessarily signify that it had been built in two chronologically distinct phases. Thus, the pertinence of one of the arguments invoked by the Greek archaeologist for identifying the occupants of Tomb II with Philip II and Kleopatra, who, contrary to Philip III and Eurydice, had not been buried simultaneously, was shattered.⁴⁸

However, much worse was in store for the partisans of Philip II. In 2000, in a

46. P. G. Themelis-J. P. Touratsoglou, *Οἱ τάφοι τοῦ Δερβενίου*, (Athens 1997). See particularly the summary in English, p. 220-224.

47. *Op. cit.* 143 and n. 51; cf. 180.

48. K. Zampas, «Ἀποκατάσταση τοῦ ἀναλημματικοῦ τοίχου στὸ προαύλιο τοῦ

much publicised article in the prestigious review *Science*, a Greek anthropologist, A. Bartsiokas, after reexamining the orbital morphology of the skull of the male skeleton of Tomb II and finding no evidence of the eye injury that Philip II is known to have suffered, challenged the conclusions of Prag, Nave and Musgrave, and confidently ascribed the burials to Philip III and Eurydice and some of the artefacts deposited therein to Alexander the Great.⁴⁹

Once «Science» had given its verdict, it would only remain to tidy up some loose ends. Although Bartsiokas' article came out too late to be taken into account, Olga Palagia, took on this task in a paper published in that same year.⁵⁰ Since she considered the date of the burial independently established,⁵¹ she concentrated her efforts on addressing one of the loose ends, the hunting scene on the frieze, which had to be explained in terms of the expected glorification of the dead king Philip III.⁵² She recognised Alexander in the young horseman and Philip III in the

Φιλίππου Β'», *Τὸ ἀρχαιολογικὸ ἔργο στὴ Μακεδονία καὶ Θράκη* 13, 1999 (Thessalonike 2001) 561-63.

49. A. Bartsiokas, «The Eye Injury of King Philip II and the Skeletal Evidence from the Royal Tomb II at Vergina», *Science* 288 (21 April 2000) 511-14.

50. Olga Palagia, «Hephaestion's Pyre and the Royal Hunt of Alexander», *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford 2000) 167-206. An earlier and shorter version of this paper under the title «Alexander as a Lion Hunter» had appeared in *Minerva* 9 (1998) 25-28.

51. O. Palagia deemed it, nevertheless, necessary to mention a series of arguments (p. 178-94), including: 1) the – erroneous – assertion that «no lions were found south of Thrace» with a reference to Herodotus 7.126, who says exactly the opposite, to wit that lions are to be encountered in Greece west of the Nestos and east of the Acheloos (οὐρος δὲ τοῖσι λέουσι ἔστι ὃ τε δι' Ἀβδήρων ῥέων ποταμὸς Νέστος καὶ ὁ δι' Ἀκαρνανίης ῥέων Ἀχελῶος· οὔτε γὰρ τὸ πρὸς τὴν ἡῶ τοῦ Νέστου οὐδαμῶθι πάσης τῆς ἔμπροσθε Εὐρώπης ἴδοι τις ἄν λέοντα, οὔτε πρὸς ἑσπέρας τοῦ Ἀχελῶου ἐν τῇ ἐπιλοιπῶ ἠπειρῶ, ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ μεταξὺ τούτων τῶν ποταμῶν γίνονται), to which other passages from Xenophon (*Cyn.*11), Aristotle (*Hist. an.* 6.31.5), Pliny (*NH* 8.45), Pausanias (6.5.4-5) and Aelian (*NA* 17.36) could be added, 2) the alleged introduction of the *kausia* first by Alexander, invoking a passage of Athenaeus (actually of Onesicretus) which contains no such information, 3) the quantity of gold and silver, supposedly unavailable to Macedonians before Alexander's expedition, 4) the *gorytos* qualified as part of the royal insignia of the Achaemenids, and the unequal greaves, allegedly designed for an archer, both pointing to a warrior queen such as Eurydice, 6) the iconography of the shield representing Achilles, allegedly part of Alexander's armour interred along with Philip III.

52. The author puts forward the allegation (p. 193) that at the time she was writing «only a drawing [of the frieze] prepared for Andronikos' original report has ever been published». She reproduces however, besides this drawing by G. Miltsakakis, photographs of the whole hunting scene and details thereof from Andronicos' book *Vergina*, (Athens 1994).

bearded one. In her need to justify the latter feature, in spite the fact that Alexander after his accession had imposed the fashion of shaving one's chin, she speculated that the half-witted king had not been allowed to use razors because of his mental deficiency or, alternatively, that he was anachronistically depicted as he was after Alexander's death, when he might have cultivated a public image close to Philip II and/or he might have been proclaimed king of Babylon by Alexander. In the hunter represented standing between Alexander and the lion she tentatively recognised Cassander, also unrealistically depicted, since he is wearing a purple garment, with which Alexander, for whom he had a notorious aversion reciprocated by the latter, is very unlikely to have honoured him. Finally, Olga Palagia was tempted to interpret the two nude figures hunting a boar as Iolaos and Philippos, Cassander's younger brothers, although the former of them was suspected of having poisoned Alexander. According to the Greek art historian the whole scene is perhaps a memorial to a royal hunt which took place in a game park in Babylon in spring 323, notwithstanding the distinctly Greek-looking trees and the mountainous ground, which she explained away either as planted (in the case of the trees) by Harpalus or as comparable to Italian Renaissance depictions of the Holy Land based on the Italian countryside.

It was necessary to give a somewhat developed account of Olga Palagia's paper, because it highlights the obstacles that an attempt to down-date Tomb II encounters in the interpretation of the frieze and the lengths scholars are willing to go in order to overcome them.

If we now attempt an evaluation of the arguments and counter-arguments marshalled over a period of nearly thirty years,⁵³ what do we note? Firstly, that evidence has been over-solicited and abusively interrogated. In particular, the excavator hastily put forward interpretations well before the proper restoration and publication of the finds.⁵⁴ Secondly, that other scholars, tempted to cash in on the fame of the discovery, ventured hazardous counter-interpretations despite their very incomplete control of the facts. Thirdly, the controversy took an acrimonious

53. A rather superficial evaluation of this sort was attempted by Geneviève Rives-Gal in 2002 («Quel Philippe? vingt ans après», *Pallas* 60 [2002] 301-314), which omitted Bartsio-kas' contribution.

54. For instance, the much discussed sceptre proved to be non-existent. The connection of the ivory heads with Leochares' *syntagma* in the Philippieion at Olympia was belied by the subsequent discovery of more than five heads. The supposed relevance of the unequal pair of greaves for the identification of the male burial was based on the false assumption that Philip II had been wounded in his shin (and not in his thigh, as was actually the case).

turn, as each side suspected the other of having a hidden, possibly political, agenda. That was particularly clear in M. Andronicos' overreaction to Phyllis Lehmann's challenge of his views and in P. Green's malignant article in the *New York Review of Books*.⁵⁵ Fourthly, the same arguments were recycled and positions hardened over the years as the official publication of the finds was inordinately delayed. Nearly thirty years after the discovery only the paintings of Tomb I⁵⁶ and Tomb II⁵⁷ and the ceramic vessels⁵⁸ have been published.

Andronicos in his 1984 book gave the most developed list of reasons on which he based his identification of the occupants of Tomb II:

The first, «conclusive on its own», was the archaeological evidence, which permits us to define the chronological relationship between the cremation and the interment of the male occupant, to wit that the cremation immediately preceded the burial of the dead bones. His conclusion on that point, which frequently went unheeded or was insufficiently understood by the champions of Philip III, was that the suggestion that a first burial of this king without cremation was followed several months later by a cremation and reburial lay «beyond the grasp of the ordinary brain».

The second reason was that the existence of the *heroon* makes no sense, if we accept that the dead man was Philip III.

The third reason was that it is unreasonable to accept that Antigonos Gonatas expended the effort to build the Great Tumulus for an insignificant king such as Philip III.

The fourth reason was that the chamber and the antechamber of Tomb II were built in two different phases to which a) the anomalies in the construction of the vault and 2) the different quality of the plastering bear witness. Such a deferred construction is readily explained if the occupants were Philip II and Kleopatra, dead several months after her husband, but is incomprehensible on the hypothesis of a reburial of Philip III and Eurydice, who were simultaneously interred.

The fifth reason was that one would expect the remains of Philip III and

55. P. Green, «The Macedonian Connection», *The New York Review of Books* (22 January 1981) 37-42.

56. M. Andronicos, Βεργίνα ΙΙ. Ὁ τάφος τῆς Περσεφόνης, (Ἀθήνα 1994).

57. Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, Βεργίνα. Ὁ τάφος τοῦ Φιλίππου. Ἡ τοιχογραφία μὲ τὸ κινῆγι, (Athens 2004). The same author has also published the funerary monuments from the filling of the Great Tumulus (Ἐπιτάφια μνημεῖα ἀπὸ τῆ Μεγάλῃ Τούμπα τῆς Βεργίνας, [Thessalonike 1984]).

58. Stella Drougou, Βεργίνα. Τὰ πήλινα ἀγγεῖα τῆς Μεγάλῃς Τούμπας, (Athens 2005).

Eurydice and probably also of Kynnana, who were reburied simultaneously, to have been interred in the same chamber.

Andronicos alleged three additional less decisive arguments, which in his opinion corroborated his hypothesis:

The conclusion of the anthropological examination that the male burial belonged to a man aged between forty and fifty years and the female one to a woman aged between twenty-three and twenty-seven corresponds better to Philip II, dead at the age of forty-five, than to Philip III, dead at the age of forty or forty-one, and excludes Eurydice dead at the age of twenty.

The quality of the armour is incompatible with the non-martial Philip III.

The subject of the wall painting is incompatible with the identification of the dead man as Philip III.

The above list is as remarkable for what it contains as for what it omits. The ceramic vessels, which had been confidently dated to the third quarter of the fourth century and invoked by the Greek archaeologist as an argument for ascribing the burial to Philip II are absent from the list. They are indeed mentioned among the drinking vessels,⁵⁹ but without any comment on their date and again in the discussion of the date, but no longer as an argument in favour of Philip II, rather as a rebuttal to their down-dating by Susan Rotroff.⁶⁰

Nor is the unequal pair of greaves from the antechamber mentioned among the arguments used for the identification of the male burial. The old theory that they were to be explained by Philip II's leg wound is watered down to a mere hypothesis cautiously mentioned among others.⁶¹

Equally absent from the arguments for the attribution of the tomb is any reference to the ivory miniature heads, initially identified as members of Philip II's family.

Even more remarkable is the absence of any allusion to the finds of the British team which at the International Congress of Archaeology had presented its sensational «reconstruction» of Philip II's head the year prior to the publication of Andronicos' book on Vergina. One may suspect that the Greek archaeologist had lost faith in some of the arguments hastily marshalled in the preceding years.

What about the arguments that he did invoke? Which of them still retain their validity today?

59. M. Andronicos, *Vergina*, (Athens 1984) 158-59.

60. M. Andronicos, *op. cit.* 222.

61. *Op. cit.* 186-87.

The presence of the *heroon* does not constitute a valid argument, because there is no way to prove that it was exclusively attached to Tomb II. In fact it was erected closer to Tomb I.⁶²

Nor does the argument from the erection of the Great Tumulus by Antigonos Gonatas have any greater pertinence, since it was not exclusively destined for Tomb II.

The argument from the construction of the vault has been weakened by K. Zampas' observation that the particularity noted by Andronicos did not necessarily entail that Tomb II was built in two chronologically distant phases.

One might indeed expect that, since the remains of Philip III, Eurydice and Kynnana were (re)buried simultaneously, they should also have been interred together, but the argument is not decisive, because one can imagine various explanations why it was not so.

Among the additional reasons alleged by Andronicos for his position in favour of Philip II and against Philip III, the one based on the age of the occupants of the Tomb puts too much store on the reliability of the anthropological data. The other two regarding the incompatibility of the quality of the armour and of the wall painting with the non-martial nature of the half-witted Philip III can be easily refuted, for one can argue that the weapons interred with the king are part of the regalia, which are not destined for practical use but have a symbolic value, just like the hunting scene.

We can proceed to a similar evaluation of the arguments invoked in the course of the last three decades in favour of Philip III and against Philip II.

One of the first arguments of Philip III's partisans was that the vault was introduced in Greece only after Alexander's Asiatic expedition. This argument was unconvincing even when it was first used, because it *a priori* excluded all possibility of transmission of techniques between the Near East and Greece in the preceding period; because it ignored the fact that stone vaults, as opposed to brick vaults, were first attested in Greece; and because it arbitrarily rejected literary evidence adduced by Fredricksmeier, Calder, Tomlinson and Andronicos himself that the vault had been known in Greece before the Hellenistic Age. The discovery at Katerini in Pieria of a large flat-roofed double-chambered tomb with a carved connecting door, that is to say of a «Macedonian» tomb in all respects but the roofing, dating from the second quarter of the fourth century, and of «Eurydice's Tomb», a vaulted tomb encased in a protective rectangular block, with an elaborate

62. Cf. W. L. Adams, «Cassander, Alexander IV and the Tombs at Vergina», *AncW* 22 (1991) 32.

Ionic façade, not on the exterior but on the internal back wall of the chamber, left no doubt that the «Macedonian» tomb was not borrowed from the East, but was the result of a local evolution responding to the need to provide adequately resistant roofing for large underground constructions.⁶³

The objection concerning the representation of the lion hunt on the frieze, which was allegedly unknown in Macedonia before Alexander's Asiatic expedition, has been equally put to rest, as we previously saw, by P. Briant. The fact that Macedonians practiced lion hunting on horseback even before the reign of Philip II is attested by a stater of Amyntas III⁶⁴ representing the king (?) charging a lion with his spear.

The argument from the tubular round headgear discovered in the chamber, variously interpreted as diadem or *stephanos*, and adduced from the very beginning against Philip II with the argument that the diadem was borrowed from the Achae-menids by Alexander, has, as we have seen, long since been adequately answered by a series of scholars including Fredricksmeier, Calder and Andronicos himself, showing that it figures on portraits of Philip II, but also on portraits of other Greek kings well before Alexander, such as Archidamos III of Lakedaimon.⁶⁵ Anna Maria Prestianni Giallombardo was one of the last to believe in the relevance of that argument and to try to resurrect it with the help of the *kausia*, allegedly borrowed by Alexander from the ancient inhabitants of Afghanistan.⁶⁶ But Chrysoula Saatsoglou's article on the subject has definitively put this ghost too to rest.⁶⁷

What remains of the arguments favouring Philip III? The most prominent

63. Cf. M. Andronicos, «The "Macedonian Tombs"», *Macedonia from Philip II to the Roman Conquest*, (Athens-Princeton, N.J. 1993) 148-49 and 154-55; Stella Miller, *The Tomb of Lyson and Kallikles: a Painted Macedonian Tomb*, (Mainz am Rhein 1993) 101-102; Anne-Marie Guimier-Sorbets, «Architecture funéraire monumentale à l'époque hellénistique: des modèles macédoniens aux nécropoles alexandrines», *L'architecture funéraire monumentale: La Gaule dans l'Empire Romain* (Paris 2006) 191-203.

64. Cf. also N. G. L. Hammond, «Arms and the King: the Insignia of Alexander the Great», *Phoenix* 47 (1989) 224, n. 30 (= *Collected Studies* III 190, n. 30); W. Greenwalt, «Amyntas III and the Political Stability of Argead Macedonia», *AncW* 18 (1988) 39-41.

65. Cf. M. Andronicos, «The Royal Tomb at Vergina and the Problem of the Dead», *AAA* 13 (1980) 178.

66. Cf. Anna Maria Prestianni Giallombardo, «Recenti testimonianze iconografiche sulla *kausia* in Macedonia e la datazione del fregio della *caccia* della II tomba di Vergina», *DHI* 17 (1991) 286.

67. Chrysoula Saatsoglou Paliadeli, «Aspects of Ancient Macedonian Costume», *JHS* 113 (1993) 122-47.

exponent of the «revisionist» school invokes three in his most recent contribution to the subject: the demonstration by Olga Palagia, that the painted frieze of Tomb II dates from the reign of Cassander, J. Touratsoglou's and P. Themelis' dating of the Derveni graves, which contained pottery similar to that of the Vergina tombs, to the last quarter of the fourth century, and, once again, Susan Rotroff's dating of the Athenian and the Vergina spool salt-cellars to the later fourth century.⁶⁸ To these E. N. Borza would have been glad to add the evidence from the re-examination of the male occupant's skeletal remains, had Bartsiokas' article in *Nature* been published and known to him, when he was writing his book on Macedonia before Alexander.

Of the four above-mentioned arguments three might claim the qualification of «scientific», as opposed to merely historical, since they are based on supposedly exact sciences, such as forensic medicine, ceramics typology and numismatics. A closer examination, however, raises the suspicion that «science» may mask – and at the same time justify – assumptions of an historical nature.

The summary of A. Bartsiokas' article announces that «the tomb [Tomb II] may well contain some of the paraphernalia of Alexander the Great». Such an assertion goes well beyond the scope of a paper on the skeletal evidence from the tomb and also beyond the competence of a forensic anthropologist, which is the field of expertise of the author; moreover, in its very vocabulary it betrays the direct and decisive influence of the author of the article entitled «The Royal Macedonian Tombs and the Paraphernalia of Alexander the Great»,⁶⁹ notwithstanding the fact that his extravagant claim has been thoroughly discussed and refuted.⁷⁰ But there is more. A. Bartsiokas states as a premiss to his «palaeopathological» endeavour that «mounting archaeological evidence that points to a date around 317 B.C. suggests that the tomb belongs to King Philip III Arrhidaeus, son of Philip II and half-brother of Alexander the Great».⁷¹ It is important to note that no archaeological evidence does or can point to a date as precise as «317 B.C.» and that it is the preliminary identification of the dead as Philip III, who is known to have been killed in 317 and (re)buried in 316 B.C., which sets the above date. It is even more interesting to note that the references on which the Greek anthropologist bases his

68. E. N. Borza, *Before Alexander: Constructing Early Macedonia*, (Claremont, Cal. 1999) 69-70.

69. E. N. Borza in *Phoenix* 41 (1987) 105-121.

70. N. G. L. Hammond, «Arms and the King: the Insignia of Alexander the Great», *Phoenix* 47 (1989) 217-24 (= *Collected Studies* III 177-90).

71. A. Bartsiokas, «The Eye Injury of King Philip II and the Skeletal Evidence from the Royal Tomb II at Vergina», *Science* 288 (21 April 2000) 511.

assumption are to E. N. Borza's previously mentioned article on «Alexander's paraphernalia» and to the book by the same author on the emergence of Macedon, to P. Themelis and J. Touratsoglou's publication of the Derveni graves and to the previously cited article of Olga Palagia, that is to say that, with the exception of one inevitable reference to Andronicos' book on Vergina, Bartsiokas' historical and archaeological references belonged exclusively to the «revisionist» school. The important question is: could this one-sided historical and archaeological schooling have affected his judgment in his own field? An historian, such as the writer of the present paper, cannot choose between conflicting verdicts by forensic anthropologists concerning the evidence of an arrow wound in the dead man's right orbit. Such a wound might or might not leave a trace on the orbital bone. Undoubtedly aware of this fact, Bartsiokas rightly states that «the critical question that would determine the identity of the remains is whether there is any way of determining from the bones themselves whether they were cremated with flesh around them or cremated (degreased) after the flesh had been decomposed by burial».⁷² He states confidently that forensic anthropology can give the answer, while according to him the good preservation of the bones of the male skeleton «shows that most of the bones were dry when cremated; that is they were buried for some time before they were cremated»,⁷³ as he believes was the case with Philip III killed in autumn 317 and (re)buried in spring 316 B.C. That in his opinion clinches the matter. J. H. Musgrave admittedly had also underlined the good preservation of the bones, but had reported that they were sufficiently warped to have been burned fleshed.⁷⁴ Long before the funeral pyre of the male burial had been studied and restored, he had explained that apparently contradictory condition by suggesting that the cremation had taken place in an oven-like closed space.⁷⁵ This intuition was subsequently verified unbeknown to Bartsiokas, whose readings were based on a very limited syllabus. The male dead had indeed been cremated in a plinth and wood structure complete with door and knocker.⁷⁶ Bartsiokas, because of his very selective readings had also failed to notice the fact that the condition of the female

72. A. Bartsiokas, *op. cit.* 513.

73. A. Bartsiokas, *op. cit.* 514.

74. J. H. Musgrave, «The Skull of Philip II of Macedon», *Current Topics in Oral Biology* (Bristol 1985) 1-16.

75. A. J. N. W. Prag, J. H. Musgrave, R. A. H. Neave, «The Skull from Tomb II at Vergina: King Philip II of Macedon», *JHS* 104 (1984) 77-78.

76. A. Kottaridou, «Βασιλικές πυρές στην νεκρόπολη των Αιγών», *Ancient Macedonia* VI, (Thessalonike 1999) 631-42; cf. Anne-Marie Guimier-Sorbets - Yvette Morizot,

skeleton had been cremated «soon after her death, i.e., with her flesh on»,⁷⁷ a condition that was definitely not that of Eurydice half a year after her death, whatever one might believe about the male skeleton. Thus, Bartsiokas' confident conclusion that «the skeletal evidence that shows a dry bone cremation leaves no room for doubt that royal tomb II belongs to Philip III Arrhidaeus»⁷⁸ is unwarranted and only reflects the author's incomplete and partial documentation.

As far as the notorious spool salt-cellars are concerned, only the naive faith of some historians in allegedly «scientific» proofs provided by archaeology can explain the reputation they have earned or the weight they have acquired in the discussion. N. G. L. Hammond had already in 1989 made a commonsensical observation, to wit that the discarded salt-cellars found in a well in the Agora «were not necessarily or even probably the earliest such salt-cellars to appear in Athens, let alone Macedonia».⁷⁹ Unknown to him similar objects had been discovered in northern Greece – Kozani and «Stryme» respectively – and dated by experienced excavators, such as Ph. Petsas and G. Bakalakis, to the fourth or indeed to the end of the fifth century.⁸⁰ Now, Stryme is a particularly interesting case, because we know that the settlement was abandoned in the middle of the fourth century B.C.⁸¹ If we take into consideration the other ceramic items found inside the tomb: the lamp, the red figured askos, the black-glazed oenochoe and the Cypriot amphorae, the first two of which are usually dated to the third quarter of the fourth century, while the other two cannot be as precisely dated, there does not seem to be any constraining reason to chose 316 rather than 336 as the date of interment of these objects, as is now convincingly argued in the official publication of the ceramic wares of the Great Tumulus.⁸² In conclusion, it is illusory to believe that ceramics

«Des bûchers de Vergina aux hydries de Hadra, découvertes récentes sur la crémation en Macédoine et à Alexandrie», *Ktéma* 30 (2005) 140-42.

77. J. H. Musgrave, «The Human Remains from Vergina Tombs I, II and III: an Overview», *AncW* 22 (1991) 4-5.

78. A. Bartsiokas, *op. cit.* 514.

79. N. G. L. Hammond, «The Insignia of Alexander the Great», *Phoenix* 43 (1989) 224, n. 30 (= *Collected Studies* 190, n. 30).

80. «Chronique des fouilles 1960», *BCH* 85 (1961) 782, no 7, fig. 16; G. Bakalakis, *Ἡ ἀνασκαφή τῆς Στυμῆς* (Athens 1967) 105, 45 and fig. 61,2.

81. For a very recent discussion of the history and the identity of the site, see *Ἐπιγραφές τῆς Θράκης τοῦ Αἰγυίου*, (Athens 2005) 287-8 (Louisa Loukopoulou and Selene Psoma).

82. Stella Drougou, *Βεργίνα. Τὰ πήλινα ἀγγεῖα τῆς Μεγάλης Τοῦμπας*, (Athens 2005) 28-61.

can provide the answer to the question of the identity of the dead. The lapse of twenty years between the burial of Philip II and the (re)burial of Philip III is much too short for the kind of precision attainable by ceramic typology, the more so when this difficulty is further compounded by our ignorance of the part played in the formation of the type by the corresponding metallic wares, and by the fact that the Athenian specimens are not strictly identical to the Vergina ones.

A simple reader cannot readily understand why the down-dating of the Derveni graves by P. Themelis and J. Touratsoglou was hailed by E. N. Borza as a confirmation of «Rotroff's dating of the spool salt cellars found inside Tomb II to the later fourth century» and of Borza's own earlier arguments.⁸³ These items from Derveni, ceramics in Tomb A and silver in tomb B, are of a different shape than those of Vergina Tomb II and find their parallel in Tomb III (ascribed to Alexander IV),⁸⁴ which is admittedly later and is usually dated to the last decade of the fourth century. As to the argument of the two Greek archaeologists that the presence of grave goods made out of precious metal found in fourth-century Macedonian tombs can be understood only in the context of the return of Alexander's veterans, it has been thoroughly contested by one of the most reputed specialists in Macedonian metal-ware, Beryl Barr-Sharrar.⁸⁵

As Stella Drougou has pointed out in her discussion of the comparisons attempted by Themelis and Touratsoglou between the Derveni cist tombs and the royal tombs of Vergina, numismatics play in the dating of the former a role as important as the evaluation of closed deposits, and she justifiably wonders how the quarter and eighth stater gold coins found respectively in Derveni graves B and Δ and dated by G. Le Rider to 340 (or 336) -328 and by M. J. Price to before 323 could determine 323 as the *terminus post quem* of these burials.⁸⁶ However, even these dates, so precisely defined, are uncertain. The date of group II of Philip II's

83. E. N. Borza, *Before Alexander: Constructing Early Macedonia*, (Claremont, Cal. 1999) 70.

84. P. G. Themelis-J. P. Touratsoglou, *Οί τάφοι τοῦ Δερβενίου*, (Athens 1997) 38; 67-68.

85. Beryl Barr-Sharrar, «Macedonian Metal Ware: an Update», *International Congress Alexander the Great: From Macedonia to the Oikoumene*. Veria 27-31/5/1998 (Veria 1999) 97-112; *ead.* «Metalwork in Macedonia before and during the Reign of Philip II», *Ancient Macedonia VII* (Thessalonike 2007) 485; *ead.*, *The Derveni Krater*, (Princeton, N.J. 2008) 44-45.

86. Stella Drougou, *Βεργίνα. Τὰ πήλινα ἀγγεῖα τῆς Μεγάλης Τούμπας*, (Athens 2005) 158-59.

gold issues, to which the specimens of the Derveni graves belong, has been mainly determined on the evidence provided by the Corinth hoard, which contained 41 staters in the name of Philip and 10 in the name of Alexander and was accordingly dated by Dorothy Thompson to 329/8.⁸⁷ Even admitting that such a precise dating is realistic, it is illusory to think that one can deduce from it the date of the inception of the minting of this group on the basis of the greater or lesser wear of the coins and of the identity of the dies, for it is well known that there is nothing unusual for coins of great value, such as golden staters, to be hoarded as they come out of the mint. In fact, the whole theory that Alexander continued to mint gold, of identical weight and value to his own gold, in the name of his father is difficult to understand and perhaps unwarranted. It is significant that M. J. Price has three times changed his mind on its validity⁸⁸ and, even when he finally accepted it, he had to imagine a far from convincing justification – Alexander’s alleged need to pay his father’s debts in a particular type of coinage – and did not avoid qualifying it as «strange».⁸⁹ If the dating of the coinage itself is so precariously determined, one is justified in harbouring severest doubts about the dating of grave goods based on it. This does not necessarily mean that most of the Derveni graves — or even all of them — may not post-date Alexander’s Asiatic expedition. But an observation by P. Themelis, to wit that the Derveni Tomb B contained as many silver and more bronze vessels than the Vergina Tomb II, far from undermining the royal character of the latter, as he implies, can equally be construed as evidence for dating it before that event, for it may as well show that under the reign of Alexander his Companions, such as those buried at Derveni, had attained a degree of wealth previously accessible only to royalty.⁹⁰

Should we then conclude with a *non liquet*, since, as P. Green had very sensibly pointed out a quarter of a century ago, «Between 336, the date of Philip II’s murder, and 317/6, when Cassander gave Philip III and Eurydice a royal burial

87. See G. Le Rider, *Le monnayage d’argent et d’or de Philippe II*, (Paris 1977) 429-32.

88. See G. Le Rider, *Monnayage et finances de Philippe II. Un état de la question*, («ΜΕΛΕΤΗΜΑΤΑ» 23; Athens 1996) 106.

89. M. J. Price, *The Coinage in the name of Alexander the Great and Philip Arrhidaeus*, vol. I, (Zurich-London 1991) 106.

90. Themelis-Touratsoglou, *op. cit.* 160. Cf. Plut., *Alex.* 39.7: «Περὶ δὲ τῶν τοῖς φίλοις καὶ τοῖς σωματοφύλαξι νεμομένων πλοούτων, ἡλικὸν εἶχον ὄγκον ἐμφαίνει δι’ ἐπιστολῆς ἡ Ὀλυμπιάς, ἣν ἔγραψε πρὸς αὐτόν. “Ἄλλως”, φησὶν, “εὖ ποίει τοὺς φίλους καὶ ἐνδόξους ἄγε· νῦν δ’ ἰσοβασιλέας πάντας ποιεῖς καὶ πολυφιλίας παρασκευάζεις αὐτοῖς, ἑαυτὸν δ’ ἐρημοῖς”».

at Aegae, is only twenty years, far too short a period to get a decisive verdict from the scanty pottery or the style of the silver vessels found in the tomb»⁹¹? I do not think so, for besides these elusive «scientific arguments» for or against identification with either Philip (Philip II or Philip III), there still remain to be examined two arguments of simple historical common sense. The first one regards the painting on the frieze. This has been exhaustively discussed by Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli in her recent publication of the hunting scene.⁹² Not being an art historian, I am not competent to debate the Greek archaeologist's identification of the painter or to infer from it the date of the painting itself.⁹³ On the other hand, one can hardly dispute her conclusions regarding the character of the painted scene, to wit that the hunt takes place in a European landscape and – judging from the game depicted – more specifically in Macedonia, and that it represents an actually or ideally historical hunt, in the sense that its participants (or at least the protagonists) are historical persons.⁹⁴ Pursuing this line of thought, she adopts Agnès Rouveret's sensible proposition that the date of the painting and of the tomb itself can be deduced from the identification of the two mounted protagonists: the beardless young rider charging in the centre of the scene and the mature and bearded rider who is actually spearing the lion.⁹⁵ All attempts to circumvent the obvious identification of these two figures with Alexander the Great and Philip II respectively have been unsuccessful, if not absurd. Thus, B. Tripodi has repeatedly suggested that they might as well represent Alexander IV and Philip III hunting together, notwithstanding that the former was no more than six years old at the time of Philip III's death, whereas the beardless rider is a youth in his late tens or very early twenties.⁹⁶ The justification submitted by the Italian historian, to wit that such is the nature of all «raffigurazioni», is hardly convincing. No less unfortunate is Olga Palagia's proposition that the bearded rider hunting with Alexander the Great is Philip III. The great

91. P. Green, «The Macedonian Connection», *New York Review of Books* 22/1/1981, p. 41.

92. Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, *Βεργίνα. Ὁ τάφος τοῦ Φιλίππου. Ἡ τοιχογραφία μὲ τὸ κνηγεῖο*, (Athens 2004).

93. Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, *op. cit.* 156-58 and 170-76.

94. Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, *op. cit.* 150-52.

95. Chrysoula Saatsoglou-Paliadeli, *op. cit.* 153-56; Agnès Rouveret, *Histoire imaginaire de la peinture ancienne*, (Paris 1989) 242-43.

96. B. Tripodi, «Il fregio della caccia della II tomba reale di Vergina e le cacce funerarie d'Oriente», *DHA* 17 (1991) 146-48 (= *Cacce reali macedoni tra Alessandro I e Filippo V* [Messina 1998] 56-62); *id.*, in the volume just mentioned 106-108.

difference of age between the two protagonists depicted in the scene – whereas Alexander was only one or two years younger than his elder brother – is explained away by the hypotheis that (Philip III) Arrhidaios «was not allowed to use razors being half-witted,⁹⁷ or his appearance in the fresco reflects his actual appearance at the time of his death». There is no need to insist on the weakness of such arguments. At the same time it is evident that the presence of the two protagonists on the frieze cannot be dissociated from the occupants of the tomb which the painting decorates. B. Tripodi's desperate attempt to justify it by the wish of Cassander to underline the dynastic ties of Philip III with his father and his younger brother sorely tries the imagination even of the best disposed readers.⁹⁸ Since there is no doubt that Alexander was buried in Egypt, simple logic should suggest that the man buried in the chamber is none other than Philip II.

The second and last argument, which pertains to the historical conditions of the burial, has repeatedly been adduced by M. Andronicos but, because it appeared so obvious to him, it was neither sufficiently developed nor made adequately explicit by him. The Greek archaeologist justifiably considered the burials of Tomb II perfectly compatible with what we know about the burials of Philip II and Kleopatra. It is known that the former was buried by Alexander immediately after his assassination,⁹⁹ and indeed the occupant of the chamber of Tomb II was cremated very soon after his death on an oven-like pyre, the remains of which were disposed above the tomb. In particular the golden crown discovered in the *larnax* bore traces of having been exposed to very high temperatures and parts of it were found among the remains of the pyre outside the tomb. It is also known that Kleopatra died (murdered by Olympias?) a few months later. The separate female burial in the antechamber, the plastering of which, as opposed to that of the chamber, was properly finished, corresponds to the expected conditions of the burial of Kleopatra as opposed to the hasty burial of her husband. If we now put the hypothesis of Philip III and Eurydice's burials to the same test, we fail to match the historical circumstances of their deaths and (re)burials with the finds of Tomb II. As we saw at the beginning of this study, they were both killed at the instigation of Olympias at Pydna in Autumn 317. We do not know what happened to their bodies, but only three possibilities can be envisaged. They may have been left without burial – the same fate that Cassander later reserved,

97. As though barbers were not available at the Macedonian court.

98. B. Tripodi, *DHA* 17 (1991) 146-47 (= *Cacce reali macedoni tra Alessandro I e Filippo V* [Messina 1998] 58), and by the same author in the volume just mentioned, p. 107.

99. Cf. Diod. 17.2.1; Just. 11.2.1; *P. Oxy.* XV 1798; Pseudo-Callisthenes 1.24.11.

as vengeance, for Olympias; they may have been interred; they may have been cremated. *Quartum non datur*. In the first case they would have become prey to kites and dogs, and Cassander would have been left with hardly anything to show at the *πρόθεσις* and to bury, and Tomb II should have practically been a cenotaph,¹⁰⁰ which obviously is not the case, as the completeness of the male skeleton shows. In the second case we should have to imagine that six months after the demise of the royal couple, in Spring 316, Cassander would have disinterred two partly decomposed corpses, would have transported them to Aigeai and in a public ceremony would have put them on the pyre, and would even have put a crown on the putrescent head of the male corpse. One has to be completely ignorant of Greek attitudes to the dead in order to envisage such a scenario. For the Greeks the dead body is *miasma*, pollution, defilement, and must either as soon as possible be put under earth or be cleansed by fire.¹⁰¹ No Greek would have touched such an abomination as a six month old corpse. That leaves us with the last possibility. The bodies of the royal couple were probably unceremoniously cremated soon after their deaths and their cremated remains reburied with royal pomp and circumstance by Cassander six months later. Nobody has yet suggested the absurd scenario of a second cremation at Aigeai, as the Greeks naturally never put on the pyre already cremated bones, since the aim of cremation was precisely to do away with the flesh in order to bypass the defilement of decomposition, and that process had already been accomplished. However, the likely hypothesis described above does not correspond to the finds of Tomb II, since it is certain that at least the occupant of its chamber was cremated on the spot soon after his death.

If there is a lesson to be drawn from this return to the enigma of Tomb II of Vergina, it is a moderately optimistic one. A consensus on the identity of its occu-

100. Cf. the funeral of Ptolemy IV Philopator and Arsinoe III, in which at the *prothesis* the silver urn supposedly containing the queen's ashes was in fact filled with spices (Pol. 15.25.7; cf. Ivana Savalli-Lestrade, «Rumeurs et silence autour de la mort des rois hellénistiques», *La mort du souverain entre Antiquité et Moyen Age* [Paris 2003] 76-77).

101. It is difficult to understand how so many reputed scholars implicitly admitted such a possibility or –even worse – considered its practical implementation (cf. W. L. Adams, «Cassander, Alexander IV and the Tombs at Vergina», *AncW* 22 [1991] 30). A reading of Sophocles' *Antigone* (in particular v.998-10047) might have proved salutary. For Greek attitude to corpses, see J. P. Vernant, «Inde, Mésopotamie; Grèce: trois idéologies de la mort», *L'individu, la mort, l'amour* (Paris 1989) 103-115. The remains of the dead can be touched by the living in certain circumstances and only after the process of decomposition has either been completed after years of internment or circumvented by means of cremation.

pants will probably never be reached, because on the one hand the question has been compromised by ulterior motives and other extraneous considerations and, on the other, because no single element of the puzzle is likely to be universally accepted as an incontrovertible proof. However, the balance sheet previously drawn up shows that the hypothesis favouring Philip III face insurmountable obstacles in providing adequate historical explanation for the scene depicted on the frieze and for the conditions of the burial itself. Conversely, the attribution of Tomb II to Philip II, offers the proper setting for these two elements and encounters no overwhelming impediment, since neither the vault, nor the diadem, nor the representation of the *kausia*, nor the lion hunt, nor the pottery, nor the cremated remains are incompatible with it. On the contrary, some additional details, such as the separate burials in the chamber and the antechamber and the difference in the quality of the plastering between these two rooms find a better explanation, if the occupants of Tomb II are Philip II and his last wife.

In conclusion, I would stress the methodological interest of this long and, in a sense tiresome controversy. As I wrote a couple of years ago in an entirely different context,¹⁰² «when arguments stemming from formal considerations clash with others based on historical similitude, it is unwise to give preference to the former, be they letter-forms of an inscription or salt-cellars in a Macedonian grave».

PS. (2008). D. W. J. Gill thought that he could contribute a new argument in favour of the attribution of Tomb II to Philip III Arrhidaios and Eurydice. In a 24-page article (“Inscribed Silver Plate from Tomb II at Vergina”, *Hesperia* 77 [2008] 335-58) he concludes that, since some of the plates interred in that tomb used the Attic weight standard of ca 4.2 g “which was not used in Macedonia during the reign of Philip II”, but “which was only introduced into Macedonia during the reign of Alexander the Great”, “tomb II cannot belong to Philip II”. Apparently the author has failed to notice that the Attic weight standard was widely used in Northern Greece during the reign of Philip II, whose golden coinage in particular was struck according to that standard (cf. G. Le Rider, *Le monnayage d’argent et d’or de Philippe II* [Paris 1977] 407).

102. M.B. Hatzopoulos, «The Aphytis Fragments», *The Attic Decree on Coinage, Weights and Measures*, (Oxford, forthcoming).

Summary

Few people would disagree that the discoveries made by Professor Manolis Andronikos at Vergina some thirty years ago constituted the most sensational archaeological event of the second half of the twentieth century. Curiously, though, scholars have been singularly reluctant to make use of these extraordinarily rich finds in order to propose new approaches to significant historical riddles, such as the nature of the Macedonian state and society or of the origins of Hellenistic civilisation. The reason is the persistent disagreement among archaeologists concerning the date of the most important of these finds, Tomb II of the Great Tumulus. Thus, instead of using this unique sealed collection of new and diverse material (jewels, furniture, weapons, pottery, painting, sculpture, architecture etc.) in order to reconsider the chronology of the late fourth century, we are still trying to date the tomb on the basis of not always pertinent comparanda. It is true that the issue has been obscured by precipitate announcements, the quest for publicity, political agendas and petty rivalries, which have led to an inconclusive series of down-datings and up-datings, finally disqualifying all the «scientific» criteria—including forensic medicine—invoked. Nevertheless I believe that, though no publication of significant new material is to be expected, reasonable certainty can be attained if the published material is examined in historical context and, above all, is submitted to ordeal by simple common sense.