



# MONUMENTAL ADVENTURES

at the greek unesco monuments



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF AIGAI (VERGINA)

## ► credits

### GENERAL COORDINATION

**Anastasia Lazaridou**, Dr Archaeologist, Emeritus Director of Archaeological Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programmes  
**Nikoletta Saraga**, Archaeologist, Deputy Director of Archaeological Museums, Exhibitions and Educational Programmes

### GENERAL EDITING

**Andromachi Katselaki**, Dr Archaeologist, Head of the Department of Educational Programmes and Communication

### IDEA CONCEPTION

**Andromachi Katselaki**

### PROJECT MANAGER

**Nikitas Georgiopoulos**, Archaeologist, Department of Educational Programmes and Communication

### PROJECT COORDINATION

**Athina Papadaki**, Archaeologist, MSc Cultural Management, Department of Educational Programmes and Communication

### GRAPHIC EDITING

**Spilios Pistas**, Graphic Designer, Department of Educational Programmes and Communication

### EDUCATIONAL ADJUSTMENT

**Eleftheria Vlachou**, Archaeologist–Museologist  
**Athina Papadaki**

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

**Eirini-Margarita Kalomoiri**, Graphic Designer, Museologist  
**Vasilis Dimopoulos**, Graphic Designer, DEPC, DAMEEP  
**Spilios Pistas**, Graphic Designer, DEPC, DAMEEP  
**Eirini Charalampidi**, Graphic Designer, DEPC, DAMEEP

### SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH–AUTHORS OF TEXTS

**Ioannis Vaksevanis**, Archaeologist, Byzantine Post Byzantine Antiquities  
**Eleftheria Vlachou**  
**Ioannis Evrenopoulos**, Dr Archaeologist, Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities  
**Athina Papadaki**

### TEXT EDITING

**Ioannis Vaksevanis**  
**Athina Papadaki**

### SCIENTIFIC REVISION

**Ephorate of Antiquities of Imathia**

### TRANSLATION

**Translix USCS IKE**

### PHOTOS

**Radiant Technologies: Andreas Santrouzos**  
**Spilios Pistas, Eirini Charalampidi**

### PRINTING

**Pressius Arvanitidis**

## ► acknowledgements

**Angeliki Kottaridi**, Dr Archaeologist, Director of Ephorate of Antiquities of Imathia  
**Eva Kontogoulidou**, Archaeologist, Ephorate of Antiquities of Imathia  
**Photo Papargyroudi**, Museum Educator, Ephorate of Antiquities of Imathia

We would like to thank the Aikaterini Laskaridis Foundation for allowing the free use of pictorial material from the website [www.travelogues.gr](http://www.travelogues.gr)

ISBN 978-960-386-607-7

### NOTICE OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture has the copyright on the photographs of antiquities and on the antiquities that comprise the visual content of the photographs. The Organization for the Management and Development of Cultural Funds of Greece (©ΥΠΠΟ-ΟΔΑΠ) receives all fees for the publication of photographs bearing the Ministry's copyright (Law 3028/2002). There are also used images with copyright ©UNESCO, ©Wikimediacommons, ©OUR PLACE The World Heritage Collection. Different image origin is mentioned in the image origin section. The Hellenic Ministry of Culture remains exclusively competent to grant permission to third parties to use the photographs and the antiquities that comprise their visual content.

Copyright © 2023 Ministry of Culture



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
Ministry of Culture

General Directorate of Antiquities  
and Cultural Heritage



Directorate of Archaeological Museums,  
Exhibitions and Educational Programmes  
Department of Educational Programmes and Communication



European Union  
European Social Fund

Operational Programme  
Human Resources Development,  
Education and Lifelong Learning

Co-financed by Greece and the European Union



*The project is co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Operational Programme “Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning”, NSRF 2014-2020.*



# Archaeological Site of Aigai (Vergina)

# Ten steps to...



1

**The first king of the land came from Argos, from the lineage of Heracles.**

Perdiccas I was considered a descendant of Temenos, son of Heracles.

In the Tholos of the Aigai palace, they honored Heracles Patroos, the mythical progenitor of the Temenides.



2

**Before he became king, he was a goatherd for another king.**

The story is told by Herodotus<sup>1</sup>.

# ... Aigai



3

**The city he founded became the capital city of the Macedonian kingdom. Its name refers to goats.**

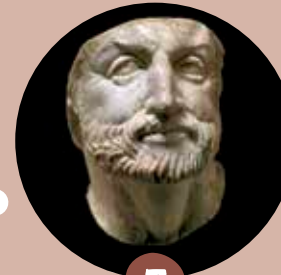
Aigai means “the city of goats”  
Perdiccas I built the capital of his kingdom where the goats led him, according to the oracle of Pythia<sup>2</sup>.



5

**In the theatre of this city Euripides' play “Bacchae” was performed for the first time.**

On leaving Athens, Euripides was hosted in the court of Archelaus.



7

**One of its great kings had seven wives. This unusual tactic was commented on by ancient biographers<sup>3</sup>.**

For political reasons, Philip II “married a woman in every war”. The presence of so many wives seems to have caused unrest in the palace.



9

**Here reigned the most famous commander of ancient Greece.**

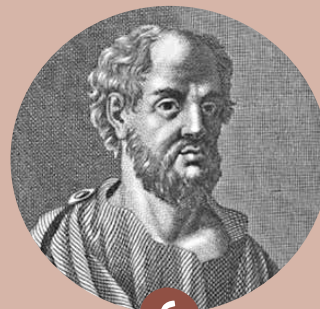
Alexander III, known as Alexander the Great, became King of the Macedonians after the assassination of his father, Philip II, in 336 BC. Until his death 13 years later, he had created a vast empire, which got fragmented by his successors.



4

**The palace of this city hosted significant artists and intellectuals.**

King Archelaus I invited also the great poets Choirilos, Timotheos and Agathon.



6

**Zeuxis, one of the greatest painters of antiquity, had also passed through here.**



8

**Pella succeeded this city as the capital of the kingdom<sup>4</sup>.**

Aigai, however, remained an active centre of Macedonian culture.



10

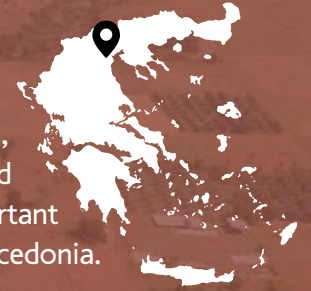
**This is where the archaeologist Manolis Andronikos discovered the monumental tomb of King Philip II.**

# Archaeological site of Aigai

“The Macedonian land”<sup>5</sup>

## WHAT?

- The ancient city and cemetery of Aigai, which is the oldest and one of the most important centres of ancient Macedonia.



## WHERE?

- Regional Unit of Imathia, Region of Central Macedonia.

## WHEN?

- c. 1100 BC: first traces of habitation in the area.
- 6th–4th c. BC: the heyday of the city.


what do the numbers say:

**12,500 sqm**

AREA  
of the palace

  
**2,000+**  
GUESTS

could fit  
in the courtyard  
of the palace

  
**500+**  
TOMBS

in the royal necropolis

**16**  
ANDRONES

(banquet halls)  
in the palace

  
**10–12**  
YEARS

were required  
to build the palace

# ... in the UNESCO List!

The monument was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List based on the following criteria:



## critterion i

The cemetery and the ancient city preserve unique masterpieces of architecture, miniature art, metallurgy and painting of the 4th c. BC.



## critterion iii

Aigai is an excellent testimony to the transition from the classical *city-state* to the city of the Hellenistic and Roman period.

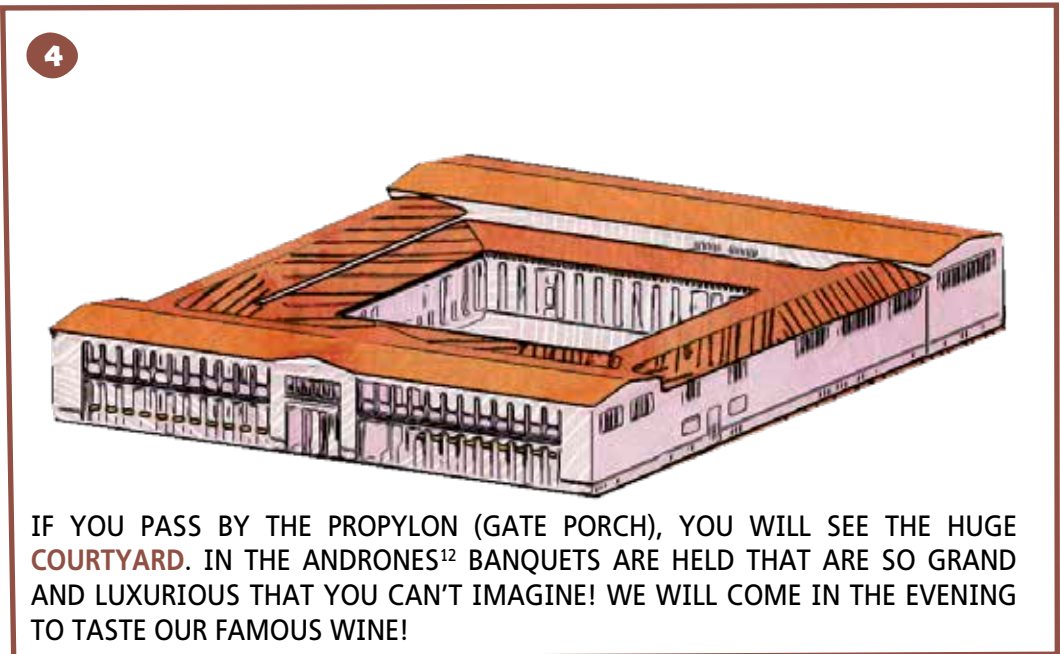
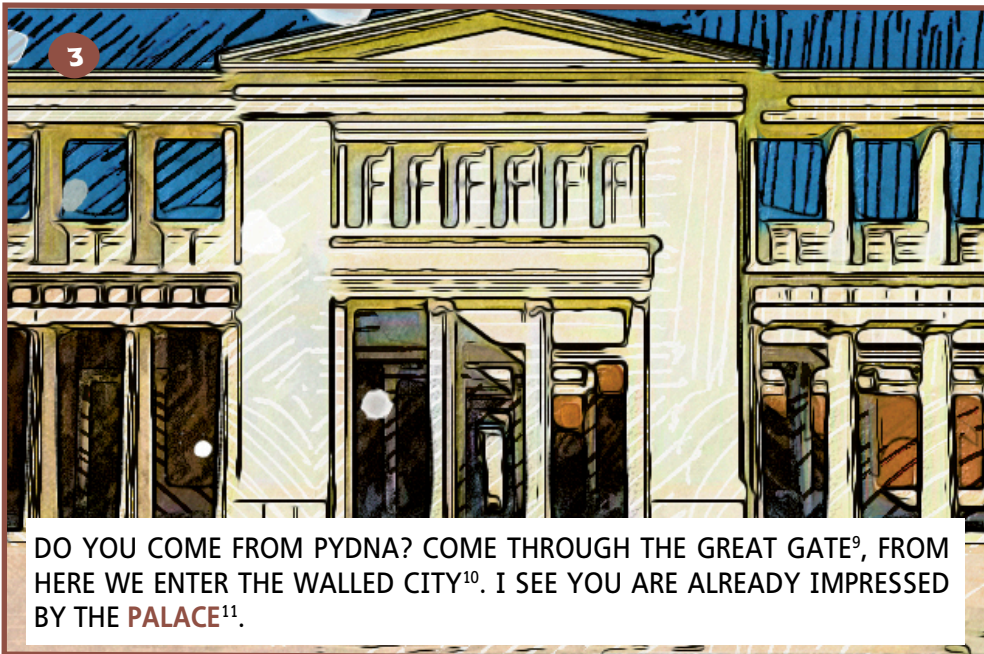
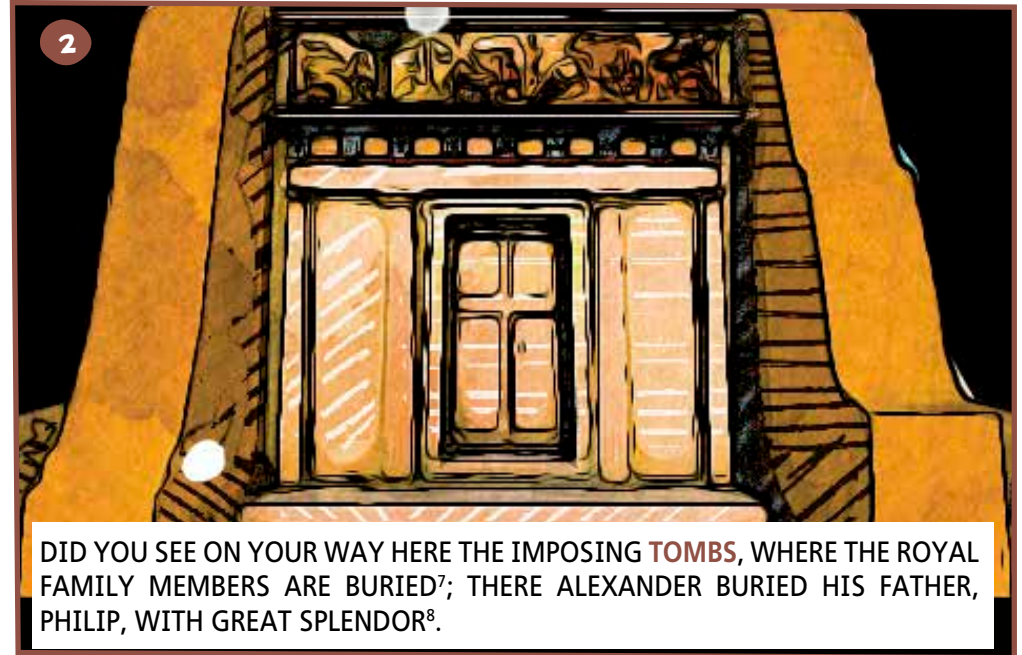
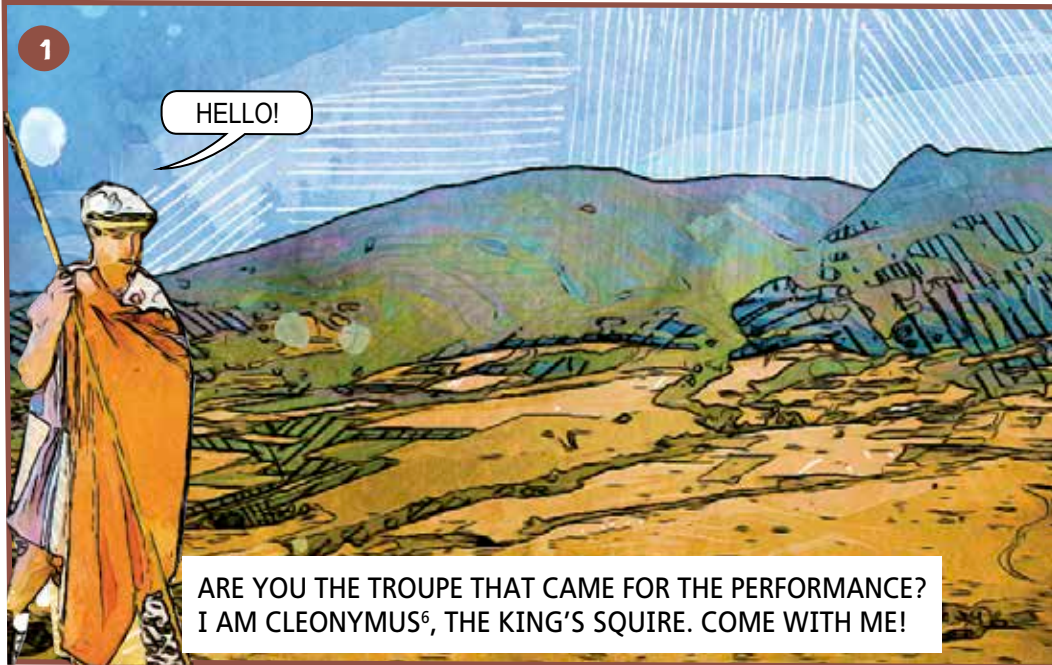


**11 kgs**  
WEIGHT

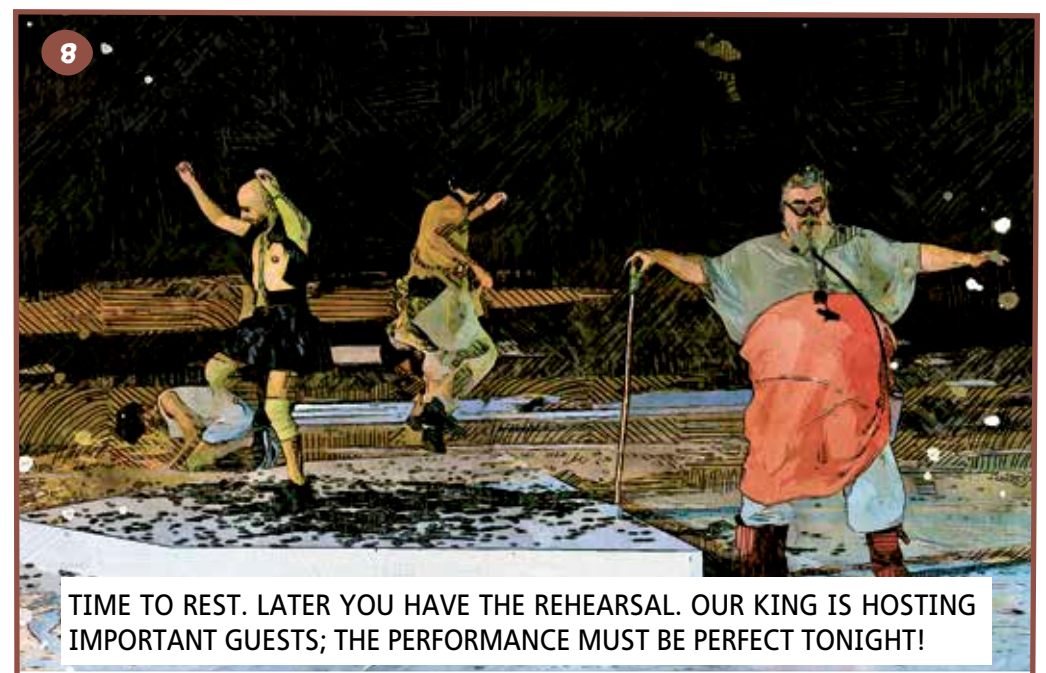
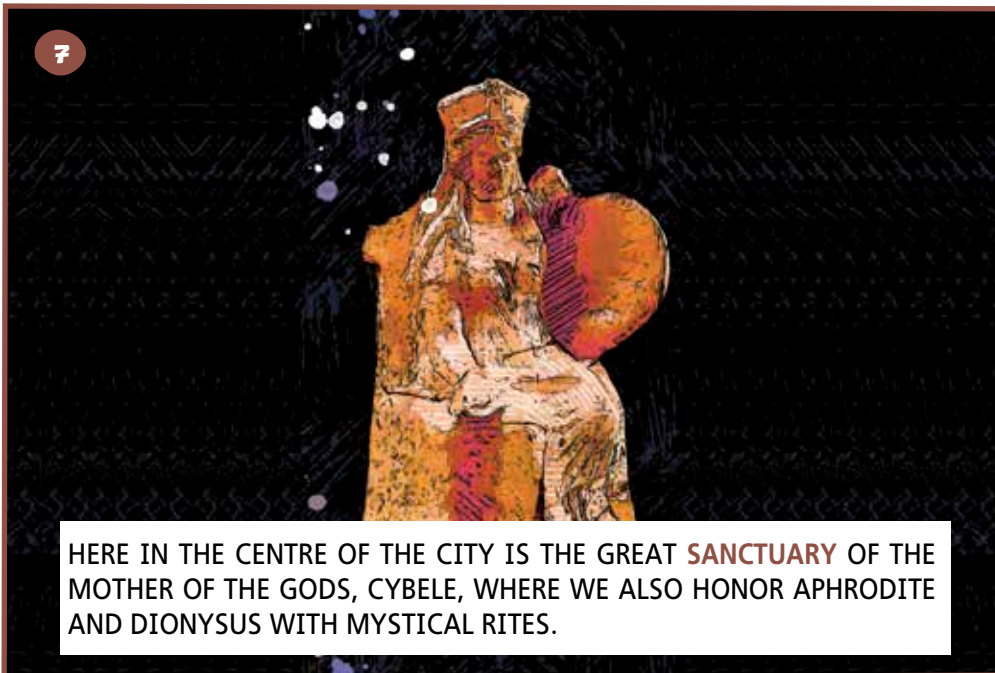
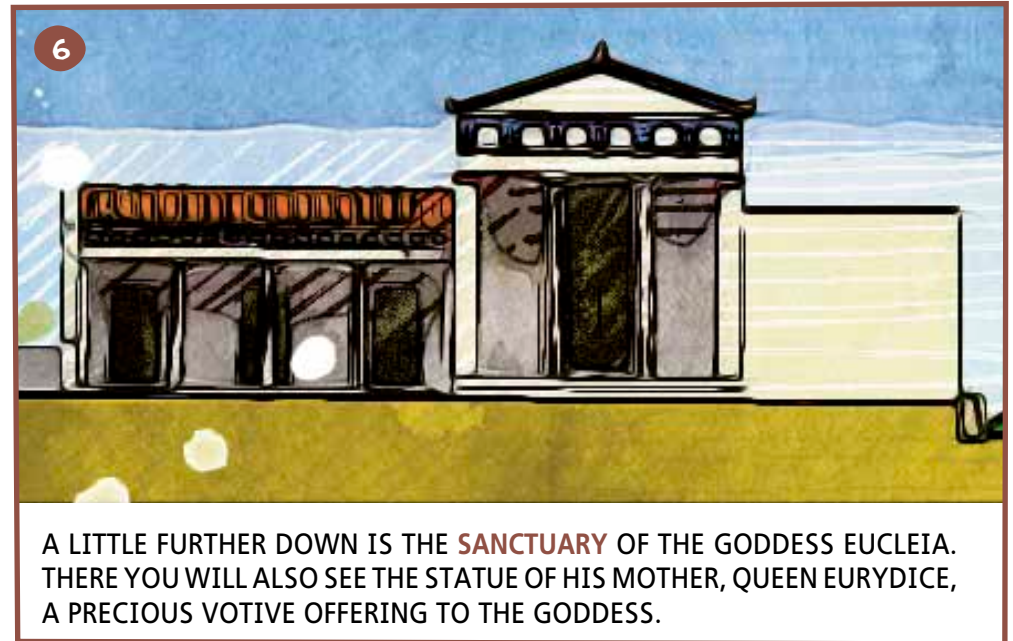
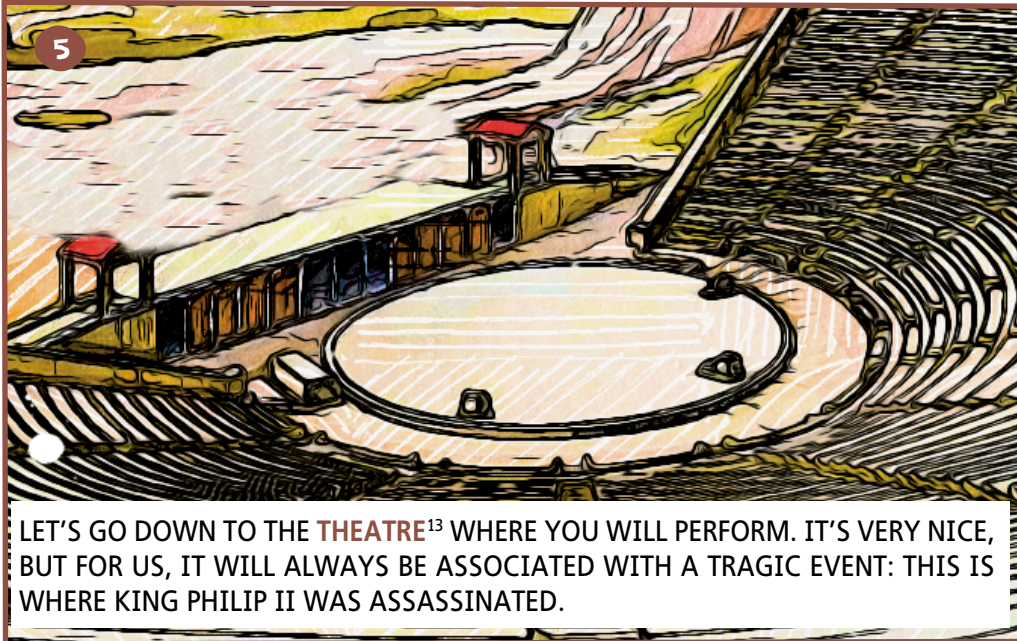
of the golden urn  
in Tomb II (of Philip II)

1. The palace of Aigai and the modern village of Vergina from above.

# Walking around Aigai...



## ... with the squire Cleonymus



# The environment...

“ This river, when the sons of Temenus had crossed it, rose in such flood that the riders could not cross. So the brothers came to another part of Macedonia and settled near the place called the garden of Midas, son of Gordias, where roses grow of themselves, each bearing sixty blossoms and of surpassing fragrance... Above the gardens rises the mountain called Bermius, which none can ascend for the wintry cold. From there, they issued forth when they had won that country and presently subdued the rest of Macedonia.”

Herodotus, *The Histories*, 8:138.

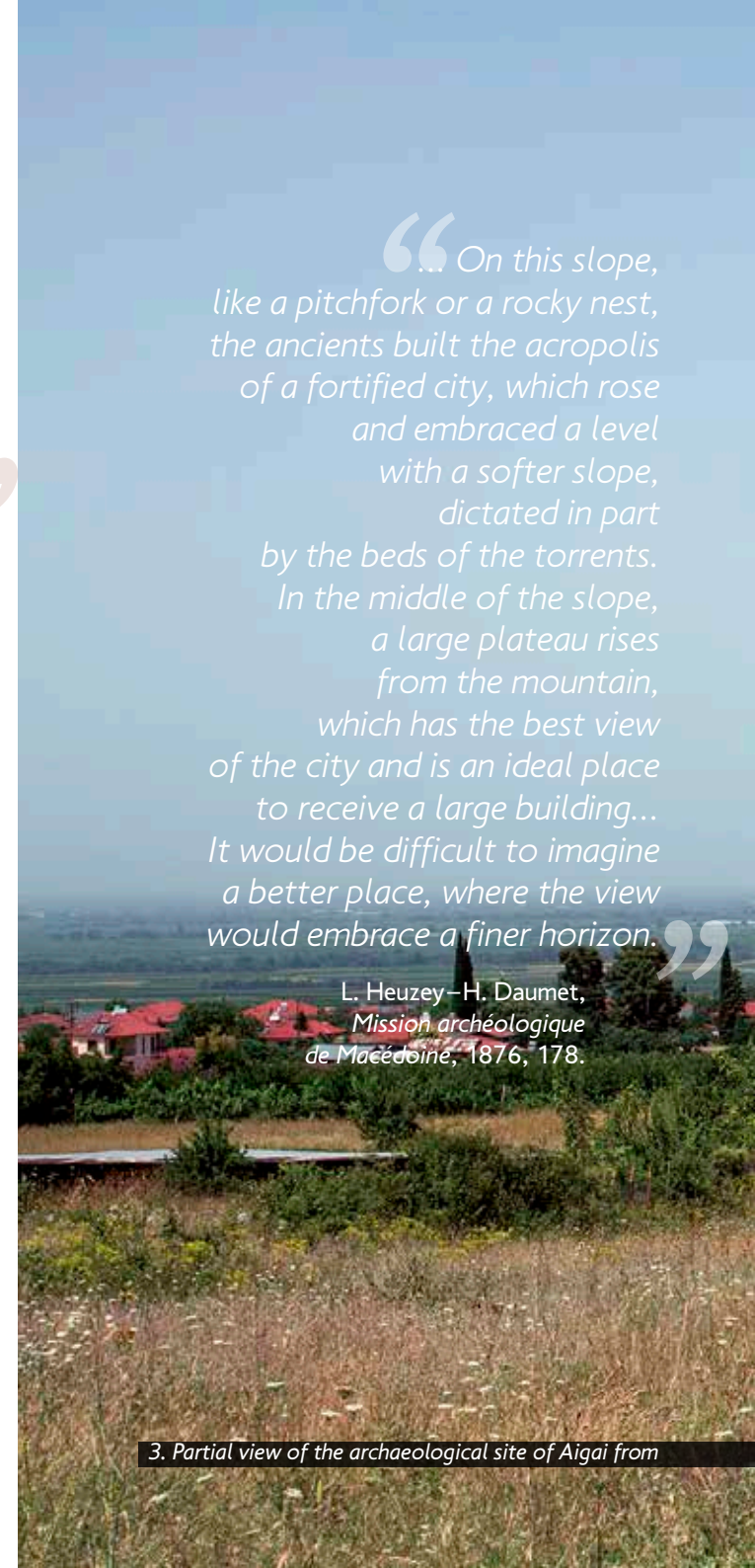
Aigai, “the place with many goats,” is located on the southern edge of the great Macedonian plain, at the foot of Pieria. The first capital of the Macedonians was founded south of the Aliakmon river, in the heart of the region called by Herodotus “Makedonis” (Makedonian land), the cradle of the Macedonians. The precious river protected the city from raids from the north while ensuring communication with the sea, which was closer in antiquity. The city evolved into a hub. It lay at the crossroads of the main roads connecting Macedonia with southern Greece, as well as the Thermaikos Gulf with the interior of the kingdom.



2. The Aliakmon river in the region of Aigai.

“ On this slope, like a pitchfork or a rocky nest, the ancients built the acropolis of a fortified city, which rose and embraced a level with a softer slope, dictated in part by the beds of the torrents. In the middle of the slope, a large plateau rises from the mountain, which has the best view of the city and is an ideal place to receive a large building... It would be difficult to imagine a better place, where the view would embrace a finer horizon.”

L. Heuzey–H. Daumet,  
*Mission archéologique  
de Macédoine*, 1876, 178.



3. Partial view of the archaeological site of Aigai from

# ... and the landscape

- The city was spread out in the hills, organised in seven terraces. In the western part, on a high, prominent point, was built the palace, which dominated the area. Further north, on a slope with a downward slope, stood the theatre and the most important sanctuaries, along with the other public buildings of the city. The city was already walled during the reign of Perdiccas II (454–413 BC).
- Outside the walls, scattered in the low hills and in the surrounding plain, numerous small and large settlements developed, whose number justifies the plural number in the name Aigai. North of the city lay the necropolis of Aigai, where the Macedonian kings were buried.

## Green details

The golden wreath in Tomb II (of Philip II) which consists of 313 leaves and 68 acorns, represents in exquisite detail an oak branch. With weight over 700 grams, it is the heaviest wreath known from antiquity, worthy of the significance and fame of the great Macedonian king.

*the palace.*

# Aigai through time



**6th – 5th c. BC**

Aigai become the undisputed centre of the kingdom of Macedonia.



**413–399 BC**

King Archelaus I transfers the administrative seat of the kingdom to Pella. Aigai remained, however, an important political, religious and artistic centre.



**mid 7th c. BC**

Perdiccas I ascends to the Macedonian throne and extends the Macedonian Rule in the wider area.



**1100–700 BC**

A large settlement is developed in the area.



**359–336 BC**

Philip II implements an ambitious building program: he builds a new magnificent palace, the theatre and reorganises the sanctuary of Eucleia with the royal votive offerings.



**336 BC**

Philip II is assassinated in the theatre of Aigai. His son Alexander buries him in the royal necropolis.



**168 BC**

Aigai is destroyed after the defeat of the last Macedonian king Perseus by the Romans. Over the years, the region is abandoned.



**1856**

The French archaeologist Léon Heuzey visits the site for the first time.



**1861**

L. Heuzey and the architect Honoré Daumet start the first excavations.



**1922**

The modern town of Vergina is founded.



**1937**

Archaeology professor Konstantinos Romaios organises systematic excavation research.



**1923**

After the Treaty of Lausanne, the land is divided among the local inhabitants and families from Bulgaria and Asia Minor.



**1977**

Manolis Andronikos discovers the tomb of Philip II.



**1977–1991**

Systematic excavation, under the direction of Manolis Andronikos and under the auspices of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Archaeological Society at Athens.



**1991 onwards**

The Ephorate of Antiquities of Imathia conducts multi-year excavations at Aigai.



**1996**

Inclusion of the monument in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

# Historical figures through the ages

In the palace of Aigai, the seat of the Macedonian kings, the kings welcomed diplomatic delegations and foreign dignitaries...

... as well as important men of literature and the arts. The courtyard was the headquarters of palace officials and other public officials. The crowded city was a magnet for merchants, craftsmen and artists.



## MIGHTY KINGS...



**Perdiccas I**  
(mid-7th c. BC)

a descendant of the mythical king of Argos Temenos, founded the Macedonian dynasty of the Temenides.



**Archelaus I**  
(413–399 BC)

a lover of letters and arts, gathered at his court some of the most important artists and intellectuals of the time, turning Aigai into a centre of culture.

**Philip II**  
(359–336 BC)

applied the tactic of the *Macedonian phalanx* and made Macedonia a Panhellenic power. He was assassinated as he entered the theatre of Aigai by his trusted bodyguard Pausanias, during the celebrations for the marriage of his daughter Cleopatra to Alexander I, king of the Molossians of Epirus.



## ... AND DYNAMIC QUEENS



**Queen Eurydice**  
(4th c. BC)

daughter of Sirtas<sup>14</sup>, was the mother of three kings, Alexander II, Perdiccas III and Philip II and defined the political developments of the kingdom, after the death of her husband Amyntas III.



**The ambitious Olympias**  
(373–316 BC)

from Molossia of Epirus, was the mother of Alexander the Great and the only wife of Philip II to be named queen. She was also a leading priestess in the worship ceremonies of Dionysus.



**Thessalonike**

daughter of Philip II and half-sister of Alexander the Great, was born in 353 BC, the day her father defeated the Phocians in Thessaly, as her name also states (Victory over Thessalians)<sup>15</sup>.

## GREAT CREATORS



**The tragedy poet Euripides**  
(480–406 BC)

left Athens and lived the last years of his life in Macedonia, where he wrote his last two plays, “Archelaus” and “Bacchae,” which premiered at the Aigai theatre in 408/7 BC.

**Zeuxis,** one of the greatest painters of the late 5th c. BC, decorated with frescoes the palace of Archelaus I<sup>16</sup>.



## INSPIRED ARCHAEOLOGISTS



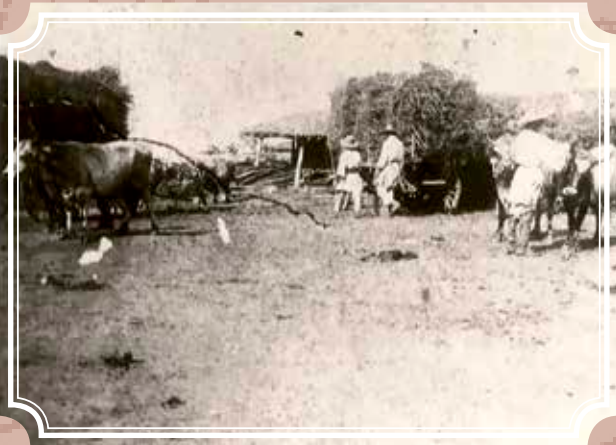
**The important archaeologist and professor Manolis Andronikos**  
(1919–1992)

is fully associated with the excavations at Aigai and the discovery of the tomb II (of Philip II).

# A monument is born

## CENTURIES OF OBLIVION

After the destruction of Aigai by the Romans, even the name of the place ceased to be mentioned.



Thrashing at the Palatitsia in Imathia, early 20th c.

The distant memory of the palace of the Macedonian kings is considered to have survived in the name of the small village Palatitsia, near the archaeological site of Aigai.

## THE FIRST EXCAVATIONS

In 1861, the French archaeologist Léon Heuzey and the French architect Honoré Daumet excavated the eastern side of the palace.



Representation of the palace of Aigai, drawing H. Daumet, 1861.

Some of the finds were transferred to the Louvre Museum.

*"... I wonder if other researchers will succeed us in the same archaeological site and will they want to occupy themselves with uncovering the unseen ruins and searching for the foundations registered in the ground?... Whatever the name of this unknown city, the importance of its ruins makes it something like Pompeii for Macedonia. Some honor will remain to us, for we were the first to persistently draw the attention of travelers and scholars to this spot".*

L. Heuzey, *Mission archéologique de Macédoine*, 1876.

## BUILDING VERGINA

In 1922 the refugee village Vergina is established, west of the ancient city of Aigai, where the two small settlements of Barbes and Koutles lay, 12 km SE of the city of Veroia, to accommodate Greeks from Pontus and Caucasus.



According to tradition, the name of the village was proposed by the then bishop of Veroia, Constantius II, in honor of the legendary queen Vergina. The ancient ruins of the Aigai palace were used as building material for the construction of the new village.

## SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH



The palace of Aigai in the 1930s.

In 1938 the archaeology professor Konstantinos Romaios started the first systematic excavations in the archaeological site of Aigai, which the curator of antiquities Manolis Andronikos continued in 1949. The first results were already impressive!

In 1969 the English historian N. G. L. Hammond put forward the hypothesis that the ancient city that came to light between Vergina and Palatitsia



Megal Toumba, where the royal necropolis was excavated, in the 1950s.

was Aigai. Gradually the majority of scholars came to embrace his view.

On November 8, 1977, the by then professor in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Manolis Andronikos brought to light the unsullied tomb of Philip II, a discovery that provoked global sensation.

Research in the area has continued since then and certainly there will be more surprises in store<sup>17</sup>,



Polycentric Museum of Aigai.

as only a very small part of the area has been excavated (approx. 1/100 of the necropolis, 1/500 of ancient city).

The Ephorate of Antiquities of Imathia with the new Polycentric Museum of Aigai, using the new technologies, presents through virtual reality and internet all the monuments of the archaeological sites of Aigai, but also the history and culture of Macedonians<sup>18</sup>.

# A unique monument...

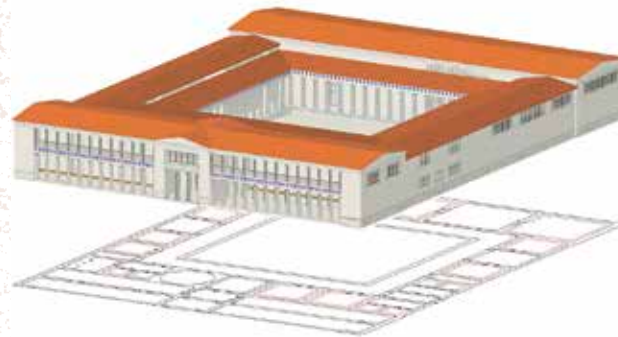
## The Greeks of the North

Aigai is the oldest and most important urban centre of the kingdom of Macedonians, the Greek border tribe, who preserved ancient traditions and transmitted the Greek culture to the borders of the ancient world.

The city developed with a free urban plan, with small and large residential areas, scattered around a central core, which evolved gradually, without a strictly predetermined plan, and was formed at the site with the palace, the sanctuaries and the fortified acropolis as its axis.



4. The palace of Aigai.



The great court<sup>19</sup> was the “heart” of the palace, the centre of the political, social and intellectual life of the kingdom.

“The country on the sea coast, now called Macedonia, was first acquired by Alexander, the father of the king Perdiccas, and his ancestors, Temenides, originally from Argos. And after they drove out the Pierians and the Vottians, they conquered Paionia on both sides of the Axios, from Pella to Strymon, Mygdonia, Eordia and Almopia... All this region is called Macedonia, and its king is Perdiccas, the son of Alexander.”

Thucydides, *Historiae*, II, 99:2.

## The palace of the Macedonian Kings

The palace of Aigai is one of the few surviving palaces of the classical period in Greece and one of the largest buildings of the period. The huge building was visible from the entire basin of Macedonia. The architect of the magnificent palace is believed to be Pythaeus, who is also associated with the construction of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The palace, which is characterized by its monumental dimensions, imposing bearing, precious materials and highly decorative style, will become the seat of the political and religious authority.



5. Mosaic floor from the palace.

# ... with timeless radiance ★ 1

## Cultured rulers

“If philosophers do not become kings in the cities, or those who are now called kings and oppressors do not philosophize genuinely and as much as necessary, in a way that coincides in the same person the power and philosophy... it is impossible, my friend Glaucon, to stop the evil in the cities and in the whole, I think, human race, could not... nor see the light of the sun this state that we have now drawn up its plan.”

Plato, *Republic*, 473d–473e,  
(transl. I. Γρονιάns).



8. Truth with Philosophy and Reason, on the cover of the first volume of the *Encyclopédie* by the French Enlightenment scholar Denis Diderot, 1751.

The Macedonian kings were model rulers for the Hellenistic kingdoms: at the head of a large territory, they gathered all the powers and protected the arts and letters with generous patronage, as an expression of the power and grandeur of their authority.

The palace of Aigai, in which elements of public and private architecture are successfully combined, was the model for many Hellenistic buildings.



6. Palace of Pella.



7. Model of the acropolis of Pergamum in Hellenistic times.

## ... and “enlightened kings”

In the ideal state, power should coexist with philosophy according to the Greeks in the 4th c. B.C. This requirement is adopted by the European monarchs of the 18th and 19th centuries, who, under the influence of the ideas of the Age of Enlightenment, attempt to govern through Reason (*Enlightened Despotism*).

# A unique monument...

## Tombs fit for kings

The necropolis of Aigai includes the tumuli cemetery, tombs of the 6th-3rd c. BC and the so-called “Macedonian tombs”, a new category of burial monuments that appeared in Aigai from the mid-4th c. BC. These are underground, vaulted buildings with one or two chambers, a temple-like façade and a road to their entrance<sup>20</sup>.



The façade of Tomb II (of Philip I), 336 BC.



10. The burial chamber of the so called "Tomb of Queen Eurydice", 344/343 BC.



11. Gold wreath and urn from Tomb II (of Phillip II), Museum of Aigai.

“The Greek nation... experienced many wanderings... they dwelt in Pindos under the name nation of Macedonians. From there, they again changed their place and went to Dryopida, and from Dryopida, they arrived where they are now, namely the Peloponnese, and were called the Doric nation.”

Herodotus, *The Histories*, 1:56.



12. Silver banqueting vessels from Tomb III (of Alexander IV), 310 BC.



13. Dionysus and Maenad. Detail of an ivory bed from Tomb III (of Alexander IV), 310 BC.

## The Macedonian gold

The wealth of finds from the necropolis proves not only the prosperity of the society of Aigai, but also the high technique and art of the metallurgists, who processed gold, silver and copper with ease: weapons, banqueting utensils, precious jewelry and masterpiece gold wreaths accompany the dead in their last residence.

# ... with timeless radiance ★

Their inspired composition, perfect execution and their unique artistic flair was the model for many works of Roman, Renaissance and modern European painting.

## The painting of illusions

The paintings of the Macedonian tombs are the only original works of ancient Greek monumental painting that have reached our days intact.



14. Eu. Delacroix, Lion hunt, 1858.



16. Royal hunt. Fresco on the Tomb II (of Phillip II). 336 BC.



15. Hans von Aachen, The abduction of Persephone, 1587.



17. The abduction of Persephone. Fresco on Tomb I, "tomb of Persephone", 350 BC.

# A unique monument...

## Alexander the Great

The heyday of the Macedonian kingdom in the 4th c. BC is directly linked to one of the most important personalities in the world! Alexander III the Macedonian (356 BC–323 BC), known throughout the world as Alexander the Great, the son of King Philip II and Olympias and student of the great philosopher Aristotle, became king at the age of only 20.



18. Alexander in the royal hunt. Detail of the fresco of Tomb III (of Phillip II).



19. Alexander in deer hunt. Mosaic floor, Palace of Pella, 3rd c. BC.



20. Imaginary illustration of the reknown library of Alexandria in Egypt.

He is often depicted at a young age hunting with his companions, thus highlighting his abilities.

During the 13 years of his reign, he elevated Macedonia from a Panhellenic power to a Mediterranean superpower. The invincible general conquered most of the then-known world from the East to the outskirts of India<sup>21</sup> and was a role model for many subsequent generals and rulers. Over 20 cities bear his name, the first and most famous being Alexandria in Egypt. The troops were followed by geographers, historians and naturalists who explored and recorded everything they met. He died in Babylon, but the location of his tomb is still unknown.

## Era of Conquests

Alexander's conquests mark the beginning of a new historical era, known as the Hellenistic era, which is mainly characterised by the spread of Greek civilization throughout the Mediterranean.

# ... with timeless radiance

## Charismatic general or ruthless conqueror?

The intense personality of Alexander causes contradictory interpretations and controversies. His life and work have engaged the interest of many scholars and have been an inspiration for a large number of artists.



21. The Ascension of Alexander, relief of the 12th c. AD. Fortress Karababa, Chalcis.



22. Iskandar and the Talking Tree, excerpt from the national Persian epic (Shahnameh) in manuscript, c. 1330.



23. Nikos Engonopoulos, Alexander and Bucephalus, 1971.



24. Andy Warhol, Alexander the Great, 1981.



The popular fiction “Romance of Alexander” circulated with illustrated manuscripts through the Byzantine, Western, Persian and Islamic world. The hero was Alexander, named Sikander in Persian and Iskandar in Arabic. He even starred in the Greek folklore shadow puppet theatre Karagiozis play “Megalexandros and the Cursed Serpent.”

## From Sikander to Megalexandros

During his lifetime, he was worshipped as a god in Egypt, but immediately after his death, he became a legendary figure, who, in popular belief, ascended to the sky. He was worshipped as a semi-god by the Romans, while in the folk tradition of many peoples his name was connected with incredible feats<sup>22</sup>.

# Monumental dialogues



GREECE

## Mycenae

The centre of the Mycenaean civilisation, with the imposing walls, the majestic palaces and the monumental tholos tombs, echoes the mythic world of the king Agamemnon of the Atreides dynasty.



GREECE

## Pella

It was founded around 400 BC to become the new capital of the Macedonian kingdom taking the place of Aigai and has since emerged as one of the greatest political, cultural and commercial centres of Macedonia.

EGYPT



## Thebes

The capital for many centuries of ancient Egypt today preserves unique monuments of the Egyptian civilisation, such as the temples of Karnak and Luxor. Here is also the famous Valley of the Kings which houses over 60 tombs of *Pharaohs*.



IN GREECE  
& ALL OVER  
THE WORLD!



MEXICO



## Teotihuacan

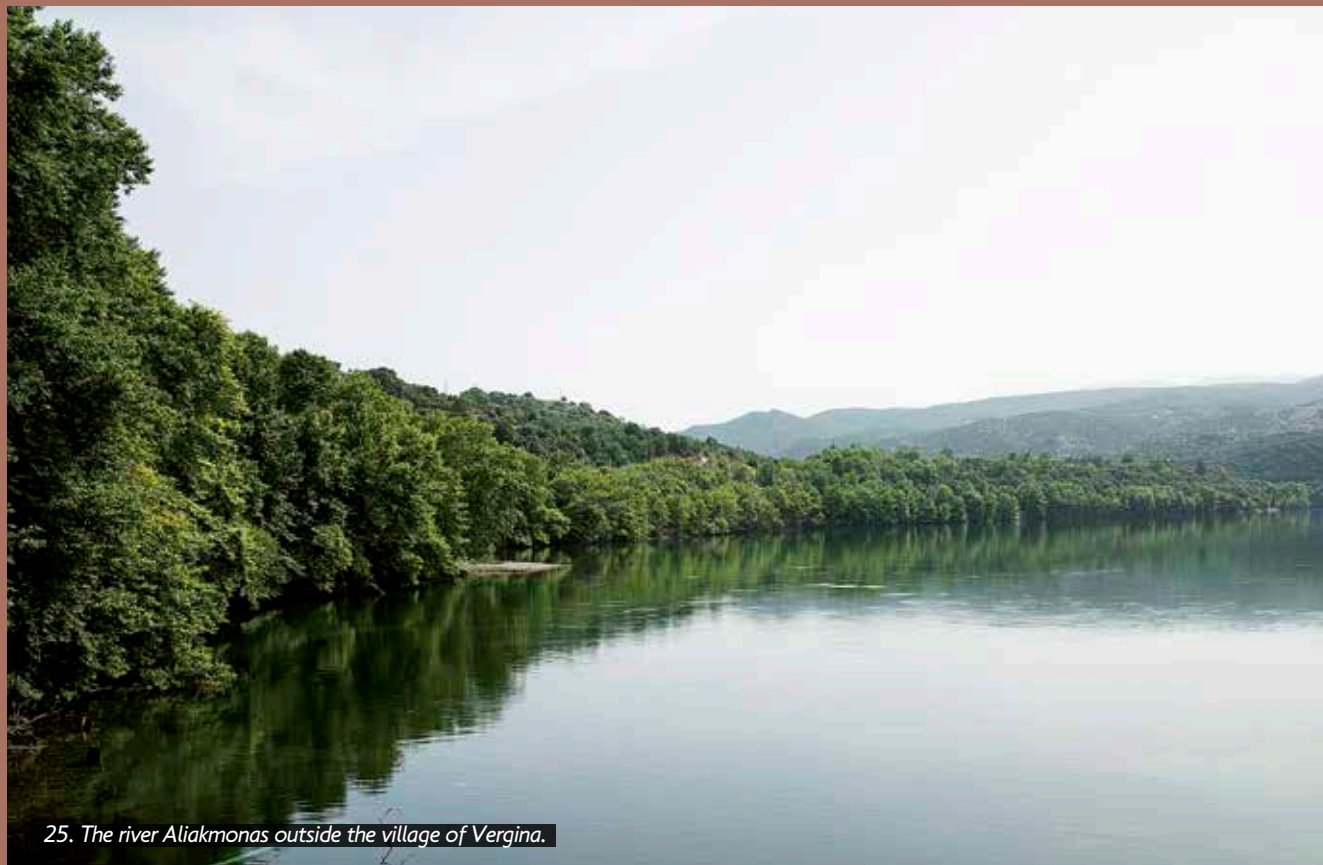
The most important city of the Aztecs, with its millennial history, is characterised by large and imposing buildings, which included stadiums and palaces of the rulers, residences of nobles and priests, temples and large squares.



# A message today...

## A thriving society

Aigai, “the place with many goats,” indicates that a great part of the region’s economy was based on animal husbandry. The forest and the river Aliakmonas provided game from hunting and fishing, as well as abundant timber, easily transported via the river, thus complementing the area’s natural wealth. The surrounding hills were ideal for viticulture and tree cultivation, ensuring the self-sufficiency of the inhabitants in raw materials and foodstuffs. At the same time, the city’s central position in relation to the main roads to the north and south contributed to the general prosperity of the inhabitants. Today, agriculture and livestock farming maintain their important role in the local economy and are carried out in environmentally friendly and monument-friendly practices.



25. The river Aliakmonas outside the village of Vergina.

## ... for a better tomorrow!

Goals 2030 >



2 ZERO HUNGER



Ending hunger, improving nutrition, promoting sustainable agriculture.

1. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 8:137–138: “Three brothers of the lineage of Temenus came as banished men from Argos to Illyria, Gauanes and Aeropus and Perdiccas; and from Illyria, they crossed over into the highlands of Macedonia till they came to the town Lebaea. There they served for wages as thetes in the king’s household, one tending horses and another oxen. Perdiccas, who was the youngest, tended the lesser flocks. One day they decided to leave, and the king refused to pay them. Seeing the sun shining through the opening in the roof of his house, he replied ironically, “Here’s the salary you deserve.” And pointed to the sun. Then Perdiccas drew his knife and carved out the part of the floor where the sun was shining. And having carved a circle, he cupped the light, as if it were water, three times and laid it on his chest and answered the king, “We accept what you give us.” After they had left, the king was troubled, and at the bidding of those around him, he sent in pursuit, but a river, which the three brothers had managed to cross, suddenly flooded, preventing their pursuers from reaching them. Safe now, Gauanes, Aeropus and Perdiccas continued their journey, arrived near the gardens of Midas, founded their capital (Aigai) and then conquered the rest of Macedonia from there”.

2. In a variation of the above story, Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca Historica*, 7:16) writes that the oracle given to Perdiccas I asked him to sacrifice to the thrice-blessed gods and build a city at the area he would see snow-white goats with glowing horns sleeping.

3. See the comments of the author Athenaeus (2nd c. AD), in his work *Deipnosophistae*, *On Women*, 13:5. Also, the reference of the historian of the 2nd c. AD Plutarch, in his work *Alexander*, 9:5.

4. This view has prevailed among scholars, but is not supported either by the evidence of written sources or by archaeological findings. In the turbulent period following King Archelaus’s assassination, Amyntas III (393/2–388/7 BC and 387/7–370 BC) was probably the first king to build a palace in Pella so as to reside at the most important port on the northern coast of Thermaikos Gulf and face the threat of various enemies invading from all directions. Aigai, the last refuge of defense, continued to be the heart of the kingdom and until the end of the Temenides dynasty (end of the 4th c. BC) retained its symbolic value, as it was the place where all the rituals and political events of great historical importance took place.

5. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 7:12.

6. The guide’s name on the tour is inspired by the tombstone (stele) of Cleonymus (330 BC). It was found in Megali Toumba, Vergina. The stele, which would mark the family tomb of Cleonymus, refers to him and three more members of his family. The painted depiction of two male figures is fairly well preserved and allow us to identify the characteristic type of garments of the Macedonians.

7. The tomb cluster of the queens includes cist and pit tombs from the time of the Persian wars, two of which probably belong to the mother and wife of Alexander I. In the same cluster was later buried the mother of Philip II, Eurydice, while the so-called “Ionic Tomb” or “Roman Tomb”, an elegant Macedonian tomb with a throne inside, probably belonged to Thessalonike, half-sister of Alexander the Great.

8. Tomb II was constructed entirely of limestone except for two marble doors and door frames. White mortars of very good quality, giving the impression of marble, cover the façade. The portraits of king Philip II and his son Alexander are depicted on the fresco of the royal hunting scene on the façade of the tomb, as well as on the gold and ivory inlays of the of the chamber. Along with Philip, his Thracian wife, Meda, was buried in the antechamber.

9. A carriage road from the seaside city of Pydna (modern Pieria) led to the magnificent east gate of the fortifications.

10. The city of Aigai was already walled with strong walls by the time of Perdiccas II (454–413 BC). A gate and traces of the 5th c. BC wall have been found northwest of the city. At the beginning of the reign of Philip II (359–336 BC) the fortification of Aigai was rebuilt, with the new wall surrounding the slope, where the city centre was located. The fortification also surrounded the two hills south of the palace, where the citadel was located.

11. The palace of Aigai was the centre of the great building program of Philip II. It was probably completed before 336 BC, when the king celebrated in Aigai the marriage of his daughter to Alexander of Epirus. The building is larger than later Hellenistic palaces. Access was from the east side, where there was a monumental propylon in the centre of an impressive Doric colonnade. Passing through the propylon, one reached the main courtyard, around which the rooms and functions of the palace extended. In the galleries, there were benches for at least 120 people.

12. The andrones were spacious and richly decorated banquet halls. The 16 andrones of the Aigai palace were arranged in three-part complexes with antechambers and could accommodate at least 224 recliners and more than 450 guests at a time.

13. The theatre, built in the second half of 4th c. BC, was located a little lower than the palace and next to the market. There were theatrical performances held, as well as events of all kinds, even of a political nature.

14. The queens of Macedonia were treated with special respect, as can be seen from the fact that they defined themselves by their father’s name and not their husband’s, contrary to what was the case at the time.

15. The husband of Thessalonike, King Cassander, gave her name to the homonymous city he founded around 315 BC. According to a popular legend, Thessalonike accidentally destroyed the “water of immortality” that

her brother Alexander the Great had found, and in her grief, she fell into the sea, where she was transformed into a mermaid who since asks the sailors if her brother is alive.

16. Zeuxis was famous for his realistic and expressive painting, but none of his works survive. Many writers describe his works, as well as entertaining episodes from his life. Pliny mentions that during a competition, he painted a bunch of grapes so perfectly, that the birds bumped into the painting trying to eat the grapes. It is also said that he literally died of laughter, when an elderly woman asked him to paint her as Aphrodite.

17. The Ephorate of Antiquities of Imathia has identified sanctuaries, forts, farmhouses, settlements, roads and cemeteries. At the same time, the findings are documented, research and important conservation and restoration works are carried out, clarifying the city’s history and form.

18. At the Polycentric Museum of Aigai, a new “holistic” and dynamic approach to the relationship between archaeological site-museum-visitor is attempted. The multi-faceted, versatile, flexible and constantly evolving Museum, with modules scattered in the real-geographic space, integrates the entire archaeological site and will expand with the help of technology into the transcendental world of virtual reality and the internet.

19. The great peristyle of the Aigai palace, which can hold at least 8,000 people, was the place of assembly of the city’s inhabitants, functioning as a political-religious agora (market), according to Aristotle’s definition.

20. Above the tomb, a large fire burned the wooden deathbed or burial chamber with the deceased. The ashes were kept in a precious urn inside the tomb. The “Macedonian tombs” and in general the tombs of the necropolis of Aigai, are organised in clusters, which probably corresponded to families and genera and are covered with a conical mound, a tumulus called “tumba”, i.e., an artificial hill of earth.

21. The total extent of his empire included territories from 26 present-day countries: Greece, Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Cyprus, Egypt, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Israel, India, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

22. Invincible warrior and inspired visionary, Alexander proves himself ready to respect and accept diversity, even if it scandalises his “own”. By sacrificing to their gods, respecting their morals, honoring their traditions and making their lives better in every way, he becomes the hero of the people of the world. Thanks to him and his successors, the Greek civilization reached the Far East and the “Hellenistic koine” (the common Greek language) became the reference point and connecting link of the peoples from Europe to Egypt and India. See also, <https://www.tovima.gr/2014/09/26/vimagazino/anazitwntas-ton-mega-aleksandro/>

## bibliography

Ανδρόνικος Μ., *Βεργίνα. Οι βασιλικοί τάφοι*, Αθήνα 1984.

Ανδρόνικος Μ., *Ανασκαφή στη Μεγάλη Τούμπα της Βεργίνας, Αρχαιολογικά Ανάλεκτα Αθηνών* 9 (1976), 127–129.

Ανδρόνικος Μ., *Βεργίνα I: Το Νεκροταφείον των Τύμβων, Βιβλιοθήκη της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* 62, Αθήνα 1969.

Κοτταρίδη Α., *Αιγές: η βασιλική μητρόπολη των Μακεδόνων*, Αθήνα 2013

Κοτταρίδη Α., *Αρχαιολογικός χώρος Αιγών, Ελλάδα: Μνημεία και χώροι παγκόσμιας κληρονομιάς*, Αθήνα 2009, σ. 126–137.

Κοτταρίδη Α., *Η έρευνα στις Αιγές, μια πόλη κατά κόμας, Αρχαιολογικό Έργο Μακεδονίας Θράκης* 20, Θεσσαλονίκη 2008, σ. 773–781.

Κοτταρίδη Α., *Ημερολόγιο 2007, 30 Χρόνια Ανασκαφή, Βεργίνα*, ΥΠΠΟ, Αθήνα 2007.

Σατσόγλου-Παλιαδέλη Χρ., *Αιγαί, Μακεδόνες, οι Έλληνες του Βορρά*, Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού, Αθήνα 1994, σ. 36–38.

Σατσόγλου-Παλιαδέλη Χρ.–Κυριάκου Α.–Μητσοπούλου Ε.–Τούρτας Α., *Πολύτιμα ταφικά σύνολα από την αγορά των Αιγών. I. Η αρχαιολογική εικόνα και η ιστορική ερμηνεία της, Αρχαιολογικό Έργο Μακεδονίας Θράκης* 23, Θεσσαλονίκη 2009.

Φάκλαρης Π., *Αιγαί: Ο προσδιορισμός της θέσης της πρώτης πρωτεύουσας των Μακεδόνων, American Journal of Archaeology* 98 (1994) 609–616.

Κοτταρίδη Α., *Aegae: the Macedonian metropolis, Heracles to Alexander the Great, Treasures from the Royal Capital of Macedon, a Hellenic Kingdom in the Age of Democracy*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 2011, σ. 153–167.

Kottaridi A., *Burial customs and beliefs in the royal necropolis of Aegae, Heracles to Alexander the Great, Treasures from the Royal Capital of Macedon, a Hellenic Kingdom in the Age of Democracy*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 2011, σ. 131–153.

Saatsoglou-Paliadeli Ch., *Aegae: A reconsideration, Athenische Mitteilungen* 116, 1996, 225–236.

### Internet sources:

<https://archaeologicalmuseums.gr>

[http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/gh351.jsp?obj\\_id=2362](http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/gh351.jsp?obj_id=2362)

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/780/>

<https://www.aigai.gr/>

Digital tour: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPSG--hnOuw>

The theatre of Aigai: <https://en.calameo.com/read/00447008378444023e86f?authid=ZGVL4wvS9L7p>

Οι ανασκαφές του Αριστοτέλειου Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης στη Βεργίνα <http://vergina.web.auth.gr/>

Excerpts from the illustrated Byzantine manuscript "Romance of Alexander", 14th c. AD. Codex 5, Hellenic Institute of Venice

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Byzantine\\_Alexander\\_Romance,\\_Venice](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Byzantine_Alexander_Romance,_Venice)

## origin of pictures

Cover: HMC/DAMEEP

1. HMC/DAMEEP

2. HMC/DAMEEP

3. HMC/DAMEEP

4. HMC/DAMEEP

5. Κοτταρίδη Α., 2013, p. 231.

6. [http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/gh3562.jsp?obj\\_id=24785&mm\\_id=23440](http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/gh3562.jsp?obj_id=24785&mm_id=23440)

7. <https://www.anasynthesis.co.uk/index.php/pergamon>

8. [https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/Διαφωτισμός#/media/Αρχείο:Encyclopedie\\_frontispice\\_full.jpg](https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/Διαφωτισμός#/media/Αρχείο:Encyclopedie_frontispice_full.jpg)

9. HMC/DAMEEP

10. Κοτταρίδη Α., 2013, p. 140.

11. HMC/DAMEEP

12. Κοτταρίδη Α., 2013, p. 245.

13. Κοτταρίδη Α., 2013, p. 315.

14. Hans Thorwid / Stockholm Nationalmuseum [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Paintings\\_by\\_Eug%C3%A8ne\\_Delacroix#/media/File:The\\_Lion\\_Hunt\\_\(Eug%C3%A8ne\\_Delacroix\)\\_-\\_Nationalmuseum\\_-\\_23399.tif](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Paintings_by_Eug%C3%A8ne_Delacroix#/media/File:The_Lion_Hunt_(Eug%C3%A8ne_Delacroix)_-_Nationalmuseum_-_23399.tif)

15. Brukenthal National Museum. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Hans\\_von\\_Aachen#/media/File:Hans\\_von\\_Aachen\\_-\\_Raub\\_von\\_Proserpina.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Hans_von_Aachen#/media/File:Hans_von_Aachen_-_Raub_von_Proserpina.jpg)

16. <https://www.aigai.gr/polykentriko-moyseio-aigon-basilikoi-tafoi-ekthesh-thhsayron/gallery#images-14>

17. <https://www.aigai.gr/polykentriko-moyseio-aigon-basilikoi-tafoi-ekthesh-thhsayron/gallery#images-6>

18. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Detail\\_of\\_fresco\\_depicting\\_Alexander\\_the\\_Great.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Detail_of_fresco_depicting_Alexander_the_Great.jpg)

19. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stag\\_Hunt\\_Mosaic#/media/File:Deer\\_hunt\\_mosaic\\_from\\_Pella.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stag_Hunt_Mosaic#/media/File:Deer_hunt_mosaic_from_Pella.jpg)[https://www.eccd.gr/el/fakelos-syllogon/antikeimena/3742\\_el/](https://www.eccd.gr/el/fakelos-syllogon/antikeimena/3742_el/)

20. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library\\_of\\_Alexandria#/media/File:Ancientlibraryalex.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Alexandria#/media/File:Ancientlibraryalex.jpg)

21. HMC/Ephorate of Antiquities of Euboea. Fortress Karababa. See Drandaki A.-Papanikola Bakirtzi D.-Tourta A. (επιμ), *Heaven and Earth. Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections*, Αθήνα 2013, p. 199, pic. 96.

22. [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/13/Iskandar\\_\(Alexander\)\\_and\\_the\\_Talking\\_Tree%2C\\_Folio\\_from\\_a\\_Great\\_Mongol\\_Shahnameh.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/13/Iskandar_(Alexander)_and_the_Talking_Tree%2C_Folio_from_a_Great_Mongol_Shahnameh.jpg)

23. Archive of Lena Engonopoulou. [http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2244/Archaia-Elliniki-Glossa\\_A-Gymnasiou\\_html-empl/index11.html](http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2244/Archaia-Elliniki-Glossa_A-Gymnasiou_html-empl/index11.html)

24. The Baltimore Museum of Art, gift of Sylvia de Cuevas, New York, in memory of her uncle, Alexandros Iolas. The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photography by Mitro Hood.

25. HMC/DAMEEP

MONUMENTAL ADVENTURES  
at the greek unesco monuments



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
Ministry of Culture

General Directorate of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage



- Directorate of Archaeological Museums,
- Exhibitions and Educational Programmes
- Department of Educational Programmes and Communication



European Union  
European Social Fund

Operational Programme  
Human Resources Development,  
Education and Lifelong Learning

Co-financed by Greece and the European Union



ISBN 978-960-386-607-7