

# Brill's Companion to Ancient Macedon

Studies in the Archaeology and History of  
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*Edited by*

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## CHAPTER 23

### HELLENISTIC ART

#### *O. Palagia*

This chapter deals with art in Macedonia between the death of Alexander III (“the Great”) in 323 BC and the defeat of Perseus, last king of Macedon, at the battle of Pydna in 168 BC. As a result of Alexander’s conquest of the Persian Empire, a lot of wealth flowed into Macedonia.<sup>1</sup> A large-scale construction programme was initiated soon after Alexander’s death, reinforcing city walls, rebuilding the royal palaces of Pella and Aegae (Vergina) and filling the countryside with monumental tombs. The archaeological record has in fact shown that a lot of construction took place during the rule of Cassander, who succeeded Alexander’s half-brother Philip III Arrhidaios to the throne of Macedon, and was responsible for twenty years of prosperity and stability from 316 to 297 BC. Excavations in Macedonia have revealed very fine wall-paintings, mosaics, and luxury items in ivory, gold, silver, and bronze reflecting the ostentatious elite lifestyle of a regime that was far removed from the practices of democratic city-states, Athens in particular.<sup>2</sup> Whereas in Athens and the rest of Greece art and other treasures were reserved for the gods, in Macedonia they were primarily to be found in palaces, houses, and tombs. With the exception of the sanctuary of the Great Gods of Samothrace which was developed thanks to the generous patronage of Macedonian royalty from Philip II onwards, Macedonian sanctuaries lacked the monumental temples and cult statues by famous masters that were the glory of Athens, Delphi, Olympia, Argos, Epidauros, or Tegea, to name but a few. The most glorious artworks dedicated by the Macedonians in a sacred context were ruler portraits.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. I. Touratsoglou, “Back to the Future,” in A. Burnett, U. Wartenberg, and R. Witschenko, eds., *Coins of Macedonia and Rome: Essays in Honour of Charles Hersch* (London, 1998), pp. 71–101.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the art and architecture of Macedonia, see R. Ginouvès, ed., *Macedonia* (Athens, 1993).

In addition, whereas Alexander had attracted to his court a cast of brilliant Greek artists like Lysippos, Apelles and Pyrgoteles,<sup>3</sup> the majority of the extant artworks in Hellenistic Macedonia are anonymous. The ancient sources record only a handful of famous artists employed by the Successors in Macedonia. Krateros commissioned from Lysippos and Leochares a bronze group of himself and Alexander hunting a lion, for the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi (Pliny, *NH* 34.64; Plut. *Alex.* 40.5).<sup>4</sup> Demetrios Poliorketes had his bronze portrait made by Teisikrates of Sikyon, a pupil of Lysippos (Pliny, *NH* 34.67). Cassander commissioned Philoxenos of Eretria to paint one of the two battles of Alexander against Dareios III (Pliny, *NH* 35.110). The Alexander mosaic from Pompeii is often thought to copy this particular work.<sup>5</sup> In general, however, in the age of the Successors, it is the rulers rather than artists who attracted public attention and became the stars of the moment. Lysippos' pupil Euthykrates created a bronze portrait of Alexander hunting, which was dedicated in Thespiiai after the conqueror's death (Pliny, *NH* 34.66). We do not know the dedicant. A bronze group of Philip, Alexander, Perdikkas, Cassander, "and other kings" was set up in Larissa—again the dedicant is unknown (Lucian, *Adv. Ind. et Libr. Mult. Em.* 21).<sup>6</sup>

Art in Hellenistic Macedonia tends to be eclectic. The new wealth accumulated through Alexander's conquests attracted artists from all over Greece. In addition to artists from the School of Sikyon mentioned above, Athenian sculptors moved to Macedon after the ban on luxurious grave monuments around 317 BC. There are also architectural influences from Athens and the Peloponnese as attested by the Propylon of Ptolemy II on Samothrace which draws on the North Propylon of the sanctuary of

<sup>3</sup> On the artists employed by Alexander, see now C. Mihalopoulos, "The Construction of a New Ideal," in W. Heckel and L. Tritle, eds., *Alexander the Great: A New History* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 275–293.

<sup>4</sup> Inscribed statue base: G. Colin, *FdD* III.4.2, *Épigraphie* (Paris, 1930), no. 137. On the statuary group, see O. Palagia, "Hephaestion's Pyre and the Royal Hunt of Alexander," in A. B. Bosworth and E. J. Baynham, eds., *Alexander the Great in Fact and Fiction* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 184–185; S. Paspalas, "The taurophonos leon and Craterus' Monument at Delphi," in G. R. Tsetskhladze, A. J. N. W. Prag and A. M. Snodgrass, eds., *Periplous, Papers on classical art and archaeology presented to Sir John Boardman* (London, 2000), pp. 211–219.

<sup>5</sup> Naples, Museo Nazionale 10020. Cf. E. Badian, "A Note on the 'Alexander Mosaic,'" in F. B. Titchener and R. F. Moorton Jr., eds., *The Eye Expanded* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1999), pp. 75–92. On the Alexander mosaic, see now W. Ehrhardt, "Das Alexandermosaik oder: wie authentisch muss eine historische Darstellung sein?," *RM* 114 (2008) 215–269; Mihalopoulos (see above, note 3), pp. 287–288.

<sup>6</sup> See Palagia, "Hephaestion's pyre," pp. 201–202 (see above, note 4), where both bronze groups are assigned to Cassander's patronage.

Asklepios in Epidauros;<sup>7</sup> the Houses of Dionysos and of the Rape of Helen in Pella which include Doric capitals reminiscent of the temples of Athena Alea in Tegea and of Zeus in Nemea;<sup>8</sup> and the pavilion of Philip III and Alexander IV on Samothrace which recalls the choregic monument of Nikias in Athens.<sup>9</sup>

### *Painting*

In the last forty years excavations in Macedonian sites like Vergina, Lefkadia, Dion, and Pella have brought to light many important wall-paintings which have revolutionised our perception of the pictorial arts in classical antiquity. They not only offer priceless information on painting materials and techniques but also illuminate the life and religious beliefs of the Macedonians, who introduced new subject matters to Greek art, and funerary art in particular. Greek art was always susceptible to Near Eastern and Egyptian influences, but after Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire, the art created for the new ruling class of Macedon generated a new blend of the old ingredients, produced from the standpoint of the conqueror. Moreover, whereas the funerary art of Athens dealt almost exclusively with mundane affairs and everyday pursuits, Macedonian funerary scenes introduced new themes beyond everyday experience. They depict the afterlife or initiation scenes and reflect the initiates' beliefs in the mystery cult of Demeter and Dionysos. They also show battles between Macedonians and Persians or funeral games or display the funerary paraphernalia of the tomb's owner. A distinct class of scenes depict episodes in the royal court in direct imitation of Persian practice in the satrapal courts of Asia Minor. The hunting frieze on the façade of Vergina Tomb II (fig. 25) is such a scene from the royal court (it is dealt with in another chapter of this book).

Several paintings have survived because they decorated the walls or the funerary furniture of underground house tombs. Painted Macedonian tombs often include monumental façades that do not in fact correspond to the structures behind them but are truly just façades. They are built with inferior materials, soft limestone and plaster, and were

<sup>7</sup> A. Frazer, *Samothrace 10, The Propylon of Ptolemy II* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 143–148.

<sup>8</sup> Ch. Makaronas and E. Giouri, *Οι οικίες Αρπαγής της Ελένης και Διονύσου της Πέλλας* (Athens, 1989), p. 170.

<sup>9</sup> B. D. Wescoat, "Athens and Macedonian Royalty on Samothrace: The Pentelic Connection," in O. Palagia and S. V. Tracy, eds., *The Macedonians in Athens 322–229 B.C.* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 102–116.

preserved because the chambers were covered with mounds of earth. The façades are decorated with half-columns in the Ionic or Doric order, an occasional pediment, and a marble door. They probably imitate propyla, and we know that the royal palaces in Pella and Vergina had elaborate gates which could have served as models. No two façades are alike and the same applies to the paintings. The great care taken to avoid repetition indicates that tomb façades remained visible for generations as several of the tombs contained multiple burials. The owners of such lavishly decorated tombs could afford to be cremated, and remains of pyres have often been found near them.<sup>10</sup>

Painted Macedonian tombs in the Hellenistic period span a period of a century and a half, with the greatest concentration found in the period of Cassander. The chronology of the earlier tombs has been skewed on account of the controversy surrounding the date of Vergina Tomb II. The traditional attribution of this tomb to Philip II is restated and readvocated in the introduction and chapters of this book, in response to challenges by the present author and others in favour of a later date, associating the tomb with Philip III Arrhidaios and Adea Eurydice, who were buried in Aegae in 316.<sup>11</sup> If true, this later date would place Tomb II squarely in the early Hellenistic period and at the beginning of a development of pictorial techniques that seem to have favoured mostly *al secco* painting in successive layers of paint with some outline incision. It would also allow us to interpret the lion and bear hunts painted on the façade as a token of Persian influence, commemorating Oriental hunts that took place during Alexander's campaign.

In the present author's view, the wall-paintings and furniture of several Macedonian tombs, combined with the evidence of the contents of the unlooted royal Tombs II and III in Vergina, recall the contents of the tomb of Cyrus, founder of the Persian Empire, in Pasargadae.<sup>12</sup> His tomb remained accessible, its holdings being related to the ritual investiture of the Persian kings. As such, it was of great interest to Alexander the Great, who visited the tomb.<sup>13</sup> Knowledge of its holdings must have spread, and in my opinion, it can be argued that the contents of the Macedonian tombs

<sup>10</sup> For an overview and catalogue of Macedonian tombs, see now C. Huguenot, *Eretria 19, La tombe aux Erotes et la tombe d'Amarynthos* (Lausanne, 2008), 1, pp. 37–51; 2, pp. 29–38.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. E. N. Borza and O. Palagia, "The Chronology of the Macedonian Royal Tombs at Vergina," *JdI* 122 (2007), pp. 81–125.

<sup>12</sup> J. Boardman, *Persia and the West* (London, 2000), pp. 53–60, figs. 2.31 a, b.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. A. B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 154.

are a hellenised version of this Persian style adopted by the Macedonian elite once they came home from Alexander's campaign:

The tomb of the famous Cyrus was in the royal park in Pasargadae . . . it was a stone chamber with a stone roof and a narrow door leading into it . . . The chamber contained a golden sarcophagus, in which Cyrus' body had been buried, with a couch by its side, which had golden feet. The couch was covered with a Babylonian tapestry, while purple rugs served as a carpet. A kandys (Persian sleeved jacket) and other garments of Babylonian workmanship were placed on the couch . . . Median trousers and garments dyed in various shades of blue lay there, along with necklaces, swords, earrings of stones set in gold. A table also stood adjacent to the sarcophagus containing Cyrus' body (Aristoboulos ap. Arr. 6.29.4–7).

Setting aside Vergina Tombs II and III which are amply discussed elsewhere in this book, a number of Macedonian funerary paintings illustrate the rugs, weapons, gold caskets, and tables that furnished Macedonian tombs, perhaps in imitation of Cyrus' Tomb.

To begin with, the rugs decorating Cyrus' Tomb have remote echoes in a lion frieze imitating hanging textiles on the interior wall of Dion Tomb I, and a palmette ceiling in the ante-chamber of the Tomb of the Palmettes in Lefkadia, imitating a canopy.<sup>14</sup> A painterly technique that can be described as egg tempera was applied in the Palmettes Tomb, which dates from the early third century.<sup>15</sup> The plaster was covered with a uniform layer of cold grey colour, where the artist outlined his composition in darker brush strokes. Successive layers of colour were applied over this undercoating. The pigments used are often found in Macedonian wall-paintings and consist of yellow and red ochre, carbon black, calcium carbonate white, Egyptian blue and a few traces of cinnabar. Pluto and Persephone as judges of the Underworld are represented in the pediment on the façade.<sup>16</sup> Pluto wields a large key, as a symbol of his power to hold the dead perpetually in his realm. The deities face the viewer as they

<sup>14</sup> D. Pandermalis, *Δίον. Η ανακάλυψη* (Athens, 1999), p. 268; Boardman, *Persia and the West*, fig. 588a (see above, note 12); A. M. Guimier-Sorbets, "Mobilier et décor des tombes macédoniennes," in R. Frei-Stolba and K. Gex, eds., *Recherches récentes sur le monde hellénistique* (Bern, 2001), p. 219, p. 223, fig. 2; K. Rhomiopoulou and B. Schmidt-Dounas, *Das Palmettengrab in Lefkadia*, *AM Beih.* 21 (2010), col. pls. 11–14.

<sup>15</sup> On the artistic techniques of this tomb, see H. Brecoulaki, *La peinture funéraire de Macédoine* (Athens, 2006), pp. 173–204.

<sup>16</sup> Rhomiopoulou and Schmidt-Dounas (see above, note 14) col. pls. 9–10; Brecoulaki, *La peinture*, pls. 64–65 (see above, note 15).



would have confronted the soul of the departed, posing their questions about his or her conduct in life.

Initiates in mystery cults had to read sacred texts giving the right answers to the Underworld judges, and to lead an exemplary life that guaranteed a blissful existence in the islands of the blessed. A sacred text of this nature was recovered from a papyrus placed on a funerary pyre in Derveni.<sup>17</sup> The pyre dates from ca. 300 BC but the text is a Pre-Socratic commentary on the Theogony of Orpheus, composed ca. 420–400 BC. The initiate was presumably furnished with enough information to answer the questions of the judges. Plato (*Grg.* 523e–524a) says that Rhadamanthys, Aiakos, and Minos were the judges of the Underworld. Rhadamanthys and Minos judged the souls of those who died in Asia, while Aiakos tried those who died in Europe. Homer (*Od.* 4.563–565) and Pindar (*Ol.* 2.82) inform us that the soul's ultimate goal was to reach the realm of Rhadamanthys, who presided over the Elysian Fields. A poem written by Poseidippos, a native of Pella, expresses his wish to have his statue reading from a book roll erected in the agora of Pella after his death, while he would take the initiate's path leading to Rhadamanthys after dying in ripe old age.<sup>18</sup> An epigram by Hegesippos (*Anth. Pal.* 7.545), another Macedonian poet and Poseidippos' contemporary, explains how "the virtuous were led by Hermes to Rhadamanthys, following the road to the right of the pyre." It is interesting that in summing up Alexander's achievement, his biographer Arrian (7.29.3) says that he was no less distinguished a king than Aiakos, Minos, or Rhadamanthys, thus comparing him to the judges of the Underworld, who seemed to have loomed so large in the thoughts of the Macedonians.

A judgement in the Underworld is painted on four panels flanking the entrance to the Judgement Tomb from ca. 300 BC in Lefkadia.<sup>19</sup> This is the largest Macedonian tomb to date and has a Doric façade with metopes and an Ionic frieze, as well as an Ionic upper order topped by a pediment. Reading the panels flanking the entrance from left to right, we see a dead soldier introduced by Hermes, leader of the privileged souls, to the

<sup>17</sup> Thessaloniki Museum. G. Betegh, *The Derveni Papyrus* (Cambridge, 2004); T. Kouremenos, G. M. Parassoglou, and K. Tsantsanoglou, *The Derveni Papyrus* (Florence, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons, eds., *Supplementum Hellenisticum* (Berlin, 1983), no. 705; M. W. Dickie, "Which Posidippus?," *GRBS* 35 (1994), 373–383; id., "The Dionysiac Mysteries in Pella," *ZPE* 109 (1995), 83–84.

<sup>19</sup> On the Judgement Tomb, see Ph. M. Petsas, *Ο τάφος των Λευκαδίων* (Athens, 1966); Ginouvès, *Macedonia*, pp. 178–181, fig. 151 (see above, note 2); Brecoulaki, *La peinture*, pls. 74–76 (see above, note 15).

seated Aiakos, the Underworld judge in charge of deaths in Europe. The standing Rhadamanthys closes the scene, waiting to receive the deceased in Elysium. The significance of all this is that the deceased has secured a blessed afterlife. The judges' names are written over their heads; the deceased is unfortunately not named. The painted metopes above show a battle of Greeks and centaurs, while a battle of Greeks and Persians is represented on a plaster relief frieze higher up. The battle of Greeks and Persians and its mythological equivalent, the centauromachy, suggest that the tomb's owner was one of the veterans of Alexander's army. He had fought in Persia only to die peacefully in Europe and reach the fields of the immortals.

A cist tomb of ca. 300 BC, recently excavated in Pella, is decorated within with five men sitting, reading scrolls, while a sixth man in a red cloak stands pointing his stick at a globe placed in a box on the ground (fig. 54).<sup>20</sup> All the men are wreathed; two of the seated men are bearded, the rest are youthful. The scene has been interpreted as a philosophers' gathering and the beardless man pointing at a globe has been called an astronomer. An alternative interpretation offered here is a reading of sacred texts, perhaps part of an initiation ceremony relating to the after-life which would be more appropriate in a funerary context. A parallel is provided by the left panel of the sculptured frieze of the Hellenistic grave monument of Hieronymos of Tlos, showing a reading of sacred texts.<sup>21</sup> On the new tomb in Pella we see a seated bearded man reading from a book roll similar to his counterpart on the Hieronymos relief. In addition, the gathering of men reading and pointing at a globe is known from later representations, particularly a mosaic from Pompeii, which is thought to reflect an early Hellenistic painting representing either Plato's Academy or the seven sages.<sup>22</sup>

I would like to argue that the painting in Pella is based on a pictorial prototype similar to the mosaic from Pompeii but with an alternative

<sup>20</sup> M. Lilimbaki-Akamati, *Κιθωτιόσχημος τάφος με ζωγραφική διακόσμηση από την Πέλλα, Πέλλης 1* (Thessaloniki, 2007), pp. 33–62.

<sup>21</sup> Berlin, Antikensammlung Sk 1888. O. Palagia, "Initiates in the Underworld," in I. Jenkins and G. B. Waywell, eds., *Sculptors and Sculpture of Caria and the Dodecanese* (London, 1997), p. 70, fig. 92; ead., "Sculptures from Roman Sparta," in A. Alexandri and I. Leventi, eds., *Καλλίστευμα. Μελέτες προς τιμήν της Όλγας Τζάχου-Αλεξανδρή* (Athens, 2001), p. 290, fig. 3; K. Schade and S. Altekamp, eds., *"Zur Hölle!" Eine Reise in die antike Unterwelt* (Berlin, 2007), pp. 68–70, no. 15 (A. Schöll).

<sup>22</sup> Naples, Museo Nazionale 124545. K. Schefold, *Die Bildnisse der antiken Dichter, Redner und Denker* (Basel, 1997), pp. 294–295, fig. 172; C. C. Mattusch, *Pompeii and the Roman Villa* (Washington DC, 2008), pp. 214–215, no. 95.



meaning. The scene on the Pompeii mosaic is nocturnal, as indicated by a row of oil lamps placed on an entablature. The sundial on top of a column nearby is a funerary motif symbolising the passing of time. It is familiar from the iconography of Hellenistic grave altars.<sup>23</sup> The globe in antiquity was not only an astronomical tool but also a mystical map of the world, divided in three parts: heaven was inhabited by the gods, ruled by Zeus, earth was occupied by mankind and the Underworld below, ruled by Pluto, was occupied by the souls of the departed ([Pl.] *Ax.* 371 a–b). It is therefore possible that the “philosophers” in the Pella tomb are simply initiates studying the topography of their future destination.

The Philosophers’ Tomb in Pella includes a secondary painted frieze of a horse race in front of a row of funerary stelai placed on mounds of earth.<sup>24</sup> Funeral games staged in honour of the Macedonian dead are documented by the games organised by Alexander the Great in honour of Hephaistion and then by the Companions for Alexander himself in Babylon in 323 (Arr. 7.14.10), and by Cassander for the burial of King Philip III Arrhidaios and his wife Adea Eurydice in Aegae in 316 (Diod. 19.52.5; Athen. 4.155a). A chariot race painted in the ante-chamber of Tomb III in Vergina must also allude to funeral games.<sup>25</sup> A parallel is offered by the chariot race on a sculptured frieze of the Mausoleum of Halikarnassos, probably alluding to funeral games in honour of Mausolus.<sup>26</sup>

The tomb of Agios Athanasios near Thessaloniki presents an extraordinary repertory of figural scenes.<sup>27</sup> The pigments used here are the same as in the Tomb of the Palmettes with the addition of lead white and a more generous use of cinnabar, which was imported and therefore particularly costly. The technique is a combination of fresco and secco as additional layers of paint were applied on an undercoating which was absorbed by the wet plaster.<sup>28</sup>

Thessalonica was founded by the Macedonian king Cassander in 316 BC, and this tomb dates from around 300, presumably housing the remains of

<sup>23</sup> Cf. grave altar, British Museum 710. Palagia, “Initiates in the Underworld,” p. 70, fig. 87 (see above, note 21).

<sup>24</sup> Lilimbaki-Akamati, *Κιθωτιόσχημος τάφος*, pp. 63–76 (see above, note 20).

<sup>25</sup> M. Andronikos, *Vergina. The Royal Tombs and the Ancient City* (Athens, 1984), pp. 202–206, figs. 166–168.

<sup>26</sup> London, British Museum. B. F. Cook, *Relief Sculpture of the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 100–115.

<sup>27</sup> M. Tsimbidou-Avloniti, *Μακεδονικοί τάφοι στον Φοίνικα και στον Άγιο Αθανάσιο Θεσσαλονίκης* (Athens, 2005), pp. 89–158, pls. 24–41.

<sup>28</sup> On the artistic techniques of this tomb, see Brecolaki, *La peinture*, pp. 266–268 (see above, note 15).

one of the city's founding fathers. Judging by the iconography, he was an intimate, perhaps a relation, of the king. The spectacular façade is crowned by a pediment representing two lion-griffins of Achaemenid type flanking a disc that may be interpreted either as a shield or as the sun-disc.<sup>29</sup> An open-air symposium taking place under the stars forms a frieze above the entrance. The bright blue and red colours of the members of the party are highlighted against the black background of the night sky. The banquet frieze is placed under a Doric frieze of triglyphs and metopes, thus offering a combination of Doric and Ionic elements. A pair of shields is painted as if hanging from the wall under the banquet frieze and above a pair of Macedonians wearing kausias and holding sarissas (fig. 55), who stand guard on either side of the doorway. The shield devices are a gorgoneion and a winged thunderbolt; we will return to them later on.

The frieze opens on the left with a procession of horsemen, followed by boys carrying torches. They approach a party of six men reclining on couches under the stars. A sideboard laden with vessels is placed in front of a cluster of trees, emphasising the outdoor setting. Horsemen and symposiasts are wreathed with leaves. The symposiasts are being entertained by two female musicians, a standing flute-player and a seated singer with a kithara (fig. 56). The composition is closed by a group of soldiers standing guard. About half of them appear to be boys rather than men, perhaps teenagers, of the same age group as the boys with the torches at the other end.

The centre is occupied by the tomb's owner singled out by his attribute: an elaborate drinking horn decorated with a griffin (fig. 56). These vessels, landmarks of Achaemenid art, were usually made of precious metals and can be seen in the hands of the Persian king or his nobles. After the Persian Empire was dissolved by Alexander the Great, they were adopted by the Macedonian elite and seem to have made their way to various parts of Alexander's empire. Several were found in Thrace but none has turned up in Macedonia so far. A good parallel for a sympotic scene with a special guest holding an Achaemenid drinking horn can be found in the banquet represented on one of the sculptured friezes of the Nereid Monument, tomb of a Lycian dynast from Xanthos, from the 370s BC.<sup>30</sup> The Oriental

<sup>29</sup> S. A. Paspalas, "The Achaemenid Lion-Griffin on a Macedonian Tomb Painting and on a Sicyonian Mosaic," in S. M. Reza Darbandi and A. Zournatzi, eds., *Ancient Greece and Ancient Iran. Cross-cultural Encounters* (Athens, 2008), pp. 301–325.

<sup>30</sup> London, British Museum 903. S. Ebbinghaus, "A Banquet at Xanthos: Seven Rhyta on the Northern Cella Frieze of the 'Nereid Monument'," in Tsetsckhladze, Prag, Snodgrass,

drinker pours his wine into a phiale, whereas his Macedonian counterpart (fig. 56) does not use the equipment properly. He appears to drink directly out of the drinking horn.

The Oriental figure in the Nereid Monument banquet frieze is usually interpreted as Arbinas, owner of the tomb, on the evidence of other Lycian tombs decorated with a single symposiast holding a rhyton representing the deceased. The symposiast seated next to the kithara player (fig. 56), who must be a special entertainer, not otherwise attested in Greek symposia, must be an especially distinguished guest, perhaps the king of Macedon.

There is reason to believe that we are dealing with a royal banquet. The presence of bodyguards on the right, and especially of the young boys, who must be royal pages, implies a royal entourage. Royal pages, noble boys in their teens, serving the king in various capacities, also attending royal banquets, were introduced by Philip II of Macedon.<sup>31</sup> They played an important role in Alexander's court and were retained by his Successors, as attested by Plut. *Dem.* 36.3.

The king of Macedon could equally well be the guest leading his horse and attended by riding bodyguards and pages on foot, all coming from the left, and suggesting a royal arrival to a banquet. The presence of torches may indicate a royal entourage since the hand-guard of a torch was found in the royal Macedonian Tomb II in Vergina.<sup>32</sup> This raises the question of whether we are dealing with a sequence of scenes. It is conceivable that the guest on the left does not really arrive in the middle of the banquet but prior to it, and is subsequently shown established in position. If this is not the case, then why is there no provision made for him in the seating arrangements?

The banquet on the tomb of Agios Athanasios has been interpreted as a commemoration of a private occasion in the owner's garden. But why choose an outdoor setting for private entertainment? And who needs guards at his symposion unless he is a king? The location may imply a historical occasion. In that case, the scene would belong in a distinct class of

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*Periplous*, pp. 98–109, fig. 2 (see above, note 4); I. Jenkins, *Greek Architecture and its Sculpture in the British Museum* (London, 2006), p. 196, fig. 190.

<sup>31</sup> On royal pages, see E. D. Carney, "The Role of the *Basilikoi Paidēs* at the Argead Court," in T. Howe and J. Reames, eds., *Macedonian Legacies, Studies in Ancient Macedonian History and Culture in Honor of Eugene N. Borza* (Claremont, 2008), pp. 145–157; royal pages were required to attend royal banquets: Curt. 5.1.42.

<sup>32</sup> Andronikos, *Vergina*, fig. 132 (see above, note 25).

funerary art inspired by life at court and celebrating the owner's intimacy with the ruler. If so, could this be a royal banquet staged ad hoc? Macedonian kings were known to have staged open-air banquets on special occasions. Admittedly, Alexander's celebratory banquet in Dion on the eve of his departure for Asia was not an open-air event, for it involved a tent accommodating a hundred guests (Diod. 17.16.4);<sup>33</sup> the Agios Athanasios frieze, on the other hand, is an art work not a photographic documentation of a historic event. The banquet frieze could easily serve the double purpose of honouring Dionysos and commemorating a special event in the life of the deceased.

The pair of noble soldiers guarding the tomb's entrance (fig. 55) wear kausias, short chitons, Macedonian chlamydes and boots, and hold sarrissas; they are in tears. They constitute the finest examples of Macedonian painting found so far; their style can be readily compared to Florentine mannerism. They are reminiscent of royal guards as described in Alexander's banquet in Maracanda which ended in the murder of Kleitos (Plut. *Alex.* 51.8–9; Arr. 4.8.8; Curt. 8.1.43–52; Justin 12.6.3), and may be further indication of the owner's special status in the Macedonian kingdom. It might be risky to read too much into the blazons of the shields painted above the guards, but it is well to remember that a gorgoneion decorated Agamemnon's shield in the *Iliad* (Hom. *Il.* 11.36–37) and that the winged thunderbolt is the attribute of Zeus, king of the gods. We will never know the exact connections of the tomb owner to royalty but there is no doubt that he was close to the seat of power.

The contemporary Tomb of Phoinikas near Thessaloniki offers a completely different iconography.<sup>34</sup> The pedimental painting is heavily damaged but enough can be made out to reconstruct the main outlines of the scene. The centre is occupied by a seated female figure shaking hands with a standing man, followed by two other men. All wear short chitons which characterise them as military men. This episode is closely related to the iconography of Attic grave stelai of the second half of the fourth century with family scenes.<sup>35</sup> It is at the corners of the pediment, however, that we find imagery that is particularly Macedonian, as we seem to

<sup>33</sup> On Macedonian symposia, see now E. Carney, "Symposia and the Macedonian Elite: The Unmixed Life," *Syllecta Classica* 18 (2007), 129–180.

<sup>34</sup> Tsimbidou-Avloniti, *Μακεδονικοί τάφοι*, pp. 21–63, pls. 7–23 (see above, note 27).

<sup>35</sup> Compare the grave relief of Hierokles in Rhamnous: cf. O. Palagia, "The Impact of *Ares Macedon* on Athenian Sculpture," in Palagia, Tracy, *The Macedonians in Athens*, p. 143, fig. 6 (see above, note 9).

have representations of the paraphernalia of the dead warrior buried in the tomb. Behind the seated woman on the left we see a table, probably related to funerary furniture. The object on it cannot be made out. A man with a himation wrapped around his hips reclines to left, leaning on his shield and holding a spear. A half-open box revealing its contents, perhaps a gold funerary wreath and the cremated remains of the deceased, lies at his feet. The right corner of the pediment contains a horse, then an upright shield next to a grave marker, followed by a reclining warrior wearing a corselet who holds up a helmet. The identification of the corner figures remains problematic. Tsimbidou-Avloniti interpreted the pediment as an Underworld scene. It may well be, however, that this is one of the rare cases where Athenian influence seems to have transformed the metaphysical leanings of Macedonian tomb paintings into something more mundane, like a family gathering and an ostentatious display of funerary goods.

The arms and armour of the deceased are also represented as if hanging from the wall in the lunettes of the main chamber of the Tomb of Lyson and Kallikles in Lefkadia, one of the last painted Macedonian tombs dating from the late third and early second centuries.<sup>36</sup>

A pair of painted marble funerary couches from Potidaia (Kassandreia) from the early third century belong in a different league (fig. 57).<sup>37</sup> The background of the couches was painted with lead white tinted with yellow ochre in order to give the impression of ivory in imitation of the ivory couches found in several Macedonian tombs. The horizontal panels between the legs are decorated with figural friezes painted in a linear style. The top panel shows the reclining figures of Aphrodite, Dionysos, Ariadne, and the Dionysiac thiasos, while the bottom panel has an animal frieze. The middle panel is taller and shows pairs of griffins devouring stags alongside rosettes, all painted against a red background, and modelled in bright colours with strong highlights in order to give the illusion of depth. The Dionysiac scene on the top panel depends mainly on outline renderings, with draperies highlighted in strong colours (fig. 57). The setting is dotted with pillars, a fountain house in perspective rendering, a column supporting a cauldron (perhaps a grave marker), and an archaistic

<sup>36</sup> S. G. Miller, *The Tomb of Lyson and Kallikles: A Painted Macedonian Tomb* (Mainz, 1993), pp. 48–58, pls. II–III, 9, 12–13.

<sup>37</sup> Thessaloniki Museum. K. Sismanides, *Κλίνες και κλινοειδείς κατασκευές των Μακεδονικών τάφων* (Athens, 1997), pp. 30–74, pls. 1–7, 10–29; Brecoulaki, *La peinture*, pp. 349–371, pls. 118–123 (see above, note 15).

statue of Artemis. The corpulence of the figures is unusual in Greek art. A silen wearing red boots and holding an Achaemenid-style rhyton with a griffin finial (fig. 57) implies a symposium scene.

### *Mosaic*

The pebble mosaics of early Hellenistic Macedonia illustrate the finest examples of a genre that attained its peak in Pella during the last years of the fourth century.<sup>38</sup> They have a high pictorial quality, no doubt imitating paintings, and decorate the floors of dining rooms in the palatial mansions of Pella and of circular shrines in Pella and the palace of Vergina. They illustrate mostly action scenes, with the figures modelled in great precision, details outlined in lead or terracotta strips (fig. 58), and eyes inlaid in semi-precious stones (now lost). The compositions are light on dark with use of foreshortening and cast shadows. Landscape elements are kept to a minimum or are non-existent and the figures step on ground lines. Hunting scenes reflect the interests of the elite and Alexander himself may be represented in a lion hunt mosaic where the hunters are shown on foot in the Greek manner. The choice of an Athenian myth in the mosaic of the Rape of Helen by Theseus (fig. 58) may be attributed to an Athenian craftsman. The female centaur standing outside a cave holding an animal head rhyton and a ribbed phiale is probably not pouring a libation as has been suggested<sup>39</sup> but imitating the banqueting practices of the Macedonian elite.

The stag hunt of Pella contains the earliest artist's signature in mosaic, that of Gnosis, and is embellished with a magnificent floral border of acanthus leaves, spiralling tendrils and a great variety of flowers (fig. 59). Mosaic floors decorated exclusively with a profusion of floral decoration can be found in the circular shrines within the palace of Vergina<sup>40</sup> and in the sanctuary of Darron in Pella,<sup>41</sup> as well as on a square panel adjacent to the

<sup>38</sup> Makaronas and Giouri, *Οι οικίες*, pp. 164–168, pls. 14–26, (see above, note 8); Ginouvès, *Macedonia*, pp. 117–136, figs. 103–121 (see above, note 2); K. M. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 10–16, figs. 9–14.

<sup>39</sup> M. Lilimbaki-Akamati, "Ένα νέο ψηφιδωτό δάπεδο της Πέλλας", in *Αμνητός, Τιμητικός τόμος για τον καθηγητή Μανόλη Ανδρόνικο*, 1 (Thessaloniki, 1987), pp. 455–469; Ginouvès, *Macedonia*, fig. 117 (see above, note 2); M. Siganiidou and M. Lilimbaki-Akamati, *Πέλλα, πρωτεύουσα των Μακεδόνων* (Athens, 1996), fig. 48.

<sup>40</sup> Andronikos, *Vergina*, figs. 19–20 (see above, note 25).

<sup>41</sup> M. Lilimbaki-Akamati and I. M. Akamatis, eds., *Pella and its Environs* (Athens, 2004), fig. 83.



female centaur panel in another dining room in Pella. The flower designs are comparable to vegetal patterns on the necks of Apulian volute kraters of the late fourth century and on a mosaic floor from Sikyon from the second half of the fourth century. It has been suggested, rather convincingly, that the floral patterns reflect the influence of the famous flower painter Pausias of Sikyon (Pliny, *NH* 35.123).<sup>42</sup>

### *Sculpture*

The monumental bronze statues of Macedonia are all but lost, being known only through a few inscribed statue bases. The inscriptions name the dedicants but there are no sculptors' signatures. The bronze statue dedicated to Zeus in Dion by King Cassander was originally thought to be a portrait of the king himself but the inscribed formula, which gives Cassander's name in the nominative not the accusative, indicates that it was an image of Zeus.<sup>43</sup> Antigonos Gonatas dedicated about twenty bronze ancestor portraits in front of a Stoa that he erected in the sanctuary of Apollo on Delos.<sup>44</sup> A bronze portrait of Philip V was set up by the Macedonians in the sanctuary of the Great Gods on Samothrace.<sup>45</sup> A bronze head of a Macedonian ruler wearing a kausia and diadem was fished out of the sea near Kalymnos and may well be another portrait of Philip V, perhaps originally standing on Kos, though further study is required to establish his identity.<sup>46</sup> The sons of Perseus, last king of Macedon, dedicated bronze portraits of their father in the shrine of Herakles Patroos in the palace of Vergina and in the Serapieion of Thessaloniki.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> M. Robertson, "Early Greek Mosaic," in B. Barr-Sharrar and E. N. Borza, eds., *Macedonia and Greece in Late Classical and Early Hellenistic Times* (Studies in the History of Art) 10 (Washington, 1982), pp. 240–249. Sikyon mosaic: Dunbabin, *Mosaics*, fig. 8 (see above, note 38).

<sup>43</sup> Dion Museum. K. Bringmann and H. von Steuben, *Schenkungen hellenistischer Herrscher an griechische Städte und Heiligtümer* (Berlin, 1995), pp. 181–182, K 113; M. B. Hatzopoulos, *Macedonian Institutions under the Kings*, 2 (Athens, 1996), no. 23, pl. 26a.

<sup>44</sup> Bringmann and von Steuben, *Schenkungen hellenistischer Herrscher*, pp. 191–193, K. 129, fig. 76 (see above, note 43); Ph. Bruneau and J. Ducat, *Οδηγός της Δήλου* (Paris, 2010), p. 207.

<sup>45</sup> Samothrace Museum. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions*, 2, no. 34, pl. 32 (see above, note 43); B. D. Wescoat, "James R. McCredie and Samothracian Architecture," in O. Palagia and B. D. Wescoat, eds., *Samothracian Connections, Essays in Honor of James R. McCredie* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 9–10, fig. 3.5.

<sup>46</sup> Kalymnos Museum. H. E. Tzalas, "Bronze Statues from the Depths of the Sea," in P. Valavanis, ed., *Great Moments in Greek Archaeology* (Los Angeles, 2007), p. 362, fig. 37.

<sup>47</sup> Vergina storehouse and Thessaloniki Museum 984 respectively. Hatzopoulos, *Institutions*, 2, nos. 30 and 31, pls. 30a and 30b (see above, note 43).

Only modest, anonymous sculptured dedications in marble have come down to us, carved in a variety of styles, indicating the existence of both local and immigrant artists operating side by side. A youthful head with flowing hair from Yannitsa near Pella, usually identified with Alexander, may well be a mythological figure or a river god instead;<sup>48</sup> his face is heavily idealised and the hairstyle is an imitation of Alexander, comparable to the head of the charioteer Phorbas from the mosaic of the Rape of Helen in Pella (fig. 58).

Of special interest are two reliefs dedicated to humans that were awarded heroic status after death, a distinct category of votives in the Hellenistic age. A relief dedicated by Diogenes to the hero Hephaistion (fig. 60), found in Pella, shows Alexander's favourite standing by his horse, holding out a libation phiale to be filled with wine by a woman.<sup>49</sup> The rocky background indicates a rural setting. The head of Hephaistion is not a portrait and the iconography of the relief is standard for hero reliefs in late-fourth- and early-third-century Greece. The posthumous heroisation of Hephaistion was authorised by Ammon's oracle (*Hyp. Epitaph.* 21; *Arr.* 7.14.7; 7.23.6; *Plut. Alex.* 72.3). Alexander instructed his deputy in Egypt, Kleomenes, to establish two hero cults of Hephaistion in Alexandria (*Arr.* 7.23.6–7). Hypereides (*Epitaph.* 21) also reports that a hero cult of Hephaistion was established in Athens at Alexander's instigation. We may assume that Alexander gave similar instructions to Antipater, directing him to establish a heroon of Hephaistion in Pella. The date of the relief can be placed in the last decades of the fourth century for stylistic reasons. By contrast, a third-century relief dedicated to the hero Hippalkmos, found in Thessaloniki, seems to celebrate a local hero with a very particular iconography, for he is depicted hunting a bull on horseback.<sup>50</sup> Bull hunts in Macedonia are attested by epigrams, mostly celebrating the hunting exploits of Philip V (*Anth. Pal.* 6.114–116; 9.300).

<sup>48</sup> Pella Museum ΓΛ 15. A. Stewart, *Faces of Power* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford, 1993), pp. 430–431, fig. 97. The identification with Alexander was challenged by Th. Stefanidou-Tiveriou, "Δέκα αιώνες πλαστικής στη Μακεδονία," *AErgMak* 20 (2006), p. 345.

<sup>49</sup> Thessaloniki Museum 1084. E. Voutiras, "Ἡφαιστίων ἥρωος," *Egnatia* 2 (1990), pp. 123–173; G. Despini, Th. Stefanidou-Tiveriou and E. Voutiras, *Katálogoς γλυπτῶν του Αρχαιολογικού Μουσείου Θεσσαλονίκης*, 1 (Thessaloniki, 1997), no. 23, fig. 44. On Hephaistion's heroisation: G. L. Cawkwell, "The Deification of Alexander the Great," in I. Worthington, ed., *Ventures into Greek History* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 297–300; E. Badian, "Alexander the Great Between Two Thrones and Heaven," in A. Small, ed., *Subject and Ruler: The Cult of the Ruling Power in Classical Antiquity*, *JRA Supplement* 17 (1996), 25; B. Dreyer, "Heroes, Cults, and Divinity," in Heckel and Tritle, *Alexander the Great: A New History*, pp. 230–231 (see above, note 3).

<sup>50</sup> Thessaloniki Museum 888, from Thessaloniki. Despini, Stefanidou-Tiveriou, Voutiras, *Katálogoς*, pp. 91–93, fig. 151 (see above, note 49).

The new cult of Isis and Sarapis introduced into Macedonia in the early Hellenistic period<sup>51</sup> generated a number of marble dedications, the most interesting being a relief from Dion, dedicated to Sarapis, Isis, and Anoubis and probably dating from the second century.<sup>52</sup> It shows a bust of Isis as an agrarian deity wearing a wide-brimmed hat topped by a globe and holding a sceptre and ears of corn.

The earliest Hellenistic grave reliefs from Macedonia, dating to the last years of the fourth century, are on a monumental scale and were produced in Pella by immigrant Athenian sculptors who were seeking employment elsewhere after Demetrios Phalereus' ban on luxurious grave monuments in Athens (ca. 317–307 BC). The remains of large funerary naiskoi with relief figures showing combats of Macedonians and Persians and inspired by Athenian prototypes have come to light in Pella.<sup>53</sup> A few funerary crouching lions from Pella are also attributed to Athenian influence. The colossal sitting lion of Amphipolis, a virtual twin of the lion on the tomb of the Thebans in Chaironia, probably dates from the time of Cassander and served as the grave marker of a prominent Macedonian.<sup>54</sup>

An early Hellenistic grave relief found in Beroia exhibits an unusual iconography, probably inspired by funerary paintings which were divided into panels. The stele of Adea, infant daughter of Cassander and Kynnana, consists of two separate scenes on different scales.<sup>55</sup> The scene on the left shows a female personification holding a sceptre and a trident, probably Macedonia, attended by a slave girl with a parasol, while the scene on the right shows an infant girl holding a scroll, who is conveyed to the Underworld by Hermes. The gates of the Underworld are symbolised by a herm. The girl's personal objects hang under the architrave. The relief carries two inscriptions, an epigram about the deceased and an invocation to Underworld Hermes. Both text and image of this relief are rich in symbolism. Its style and iconography anticipate developments in the funerary art of the islands of the Aegean and East Greece in the late third and second centuries. It was recently suggested by the present author that the relief

<sup>51</sup> L. Bricault, *Atlas de diffusion des cultes isiaques* (Paris, 2001), p. 22.

<sup>52</sup> Pandermalis, *Δίον*, fig. on p. 89 (see above, note 14).

<sup>53</sup> P. Chrysostomou, "Ο Μακεδονικός τάφος Στ' με τις σαρκοφάγους της Πέλλας," *Ancient Macedonia* 6, 1 (Thessaloniki, 1999), pp. 281–306.

<sup>54</sup> Ginouvès, *Macedonia*, fig. 94 (see above, note 2); D. Lazarides, *Αμφίπολις* (Athens, 1997), pp. 74–75, fig. 41.

<sup>55</sup> Beroia Archaeological Museum 160. O. Palagia, "The Grave Relief of Adea, Daughter of Cassander and Cynnana," in Howe, Reames, *Macedonian Legacies*, pp. 195–214 (with earlier references) (see above, note 31).

marked the grave of an otherwise unknown daughter of Cassander, who died before he assumed the title of king in 305.

The most important marble sculptures in a sacred context on Macedonian soil come from the sanctuary of the Great Gods of Samothrace. They demonstrate the disparate origins of the sculptors who were employed in Hellenistic Macedonia. The early Hellenistic Doric temple known as the Hieron carried sculptured ceiling coffer lids in the porch and pronaos, as well as a pediment with under-life-size figures in the north façade, which is among the last sculptured pediments of the Greek world.<sup>56</sup> The iconography of the pediment is hard to interpret. There is no action: there are standing figures in the centre, seated ones on the sides, and reclining figures at the corners. The corpulent physique of the reclining figures (fig. 61) is unusual in Greek art and recalls the physical ideals promoted by the Ptolemaic court and embodied in the portraits of the Ptolemies. Its closest parallels in Macedonia can be found in the reclining figures of the couches from Potidaia (fig. 57). The style of this pediment is unique in Macedonia and may well be associated with a distant artistic centre, possibly Ptolemaic Alexandria. The spectacular Victories that served as the southern acroteria of the "Hieron" postdate the Roman conquest even though their style is late Hellenistic.<sup>57</sup> They provide evidence that Samothrace attracted generous patronage even after the Roman conquest. Finally, the finest sculpture ever found on Macedonian soil, the Parian marble Victory of Samothrace of the first half of the second century, is attributed to a Pergamene workshop. Its exact date is controversial and it is now thought to postdate the battle of Pydna.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> The architectural sculptures of the so-called Hieron of Samothrace are divided between the Samothrace Museum and the Ephesos Museum in Vienna. See P. W. Lehmann, *Samothrace 3, The Hieron*, 1 (Princeton, 1969), pp. 237–387; P. A. Webb, *Hellenistic Architectural Sculpture* (Madison, 1996), pp. 144–147; O. Palagia, Y. Maniatis, E. Dotsika, and D. Kavoussanaki, "New Investigations on the Pedimental Sculptures of the 'Hieron' of Samothrace," in Y. Maniatis, ed., *ASMOSIA VII (BCH Supplement 51)* (Athens, 2009), pp. 113–132; A. A. Sowder, "A New Ceiling for the Hieron in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods on Samothrace," in Palagia, Wescoat, *Samothracian Connections*, pp. 137–154 (see above, note 45).

<sup>57</sup> Samothrace Museum. O. Palagia, "The Victory of Samothrace and the Aftermath of the Battle of Pydna," in Palagia and Wescoat, *Samothracian Connections*, p. 163, figs. 10.14–10.15 (see above, note 45).

<sup>58</sup> Paris, Louvre Ma 2369. H. Knell, *Die Nike von Samothrake* (Darmstadt, 1995); M. Hamiaux, *La Victoire de Samothrace* (Paris, 2007); Palagia, "The Victory of Samothrace," pp. 155–65 (dated after the battle of Pydna) (see above, note 57).





Fig. 54. Man pointing at a globe. Pella, Tomb of the Philosophers. Photo after M. Lilimbaki-Akamati, *Κιθωτιόσχημος τάφος με ζωγραφική διακόσμηση από την Πέλλα* (Thessaloniki, 2007), pl. 33.



[O. PALAGIA]



Fig. 55. Macedonian soldier guarding the entrance to the Tomb of Agios Athanasios. Photo after M. Tsimbidou-Avloniti, *Μακεδονικοί τάφοι στον Φοίνικα και στον Άγιο Αθανάσιο Θεσσαλονίκης* (Athens, 2005), pl. 39.





Fig. 56. Central of banqueting frieze. Tomb of Agios Athanasios. Photo after M. Tsimbidou-Avloniti, *Μακεδονικοί τάφοι στον Φοίνικα και στον Άγιο Αθανάσιο Θεσσαλονίκης* (Athens, 2005), pl. 34a.

[O. PALAGIA]



Fig. 57. Detail of a painted funerary couch from Potidaia (early 3rd century BC).





Fig. 58. Phorbas, Theseus' charioteer, from the mosaic of the Rape of Helen, House of the Rape of Helen, Pella. Photo after Ch. Makaronas and E. Giouri, *Οι οικίες Αρπαγής της Ελένης και Διονύσου της Πέλλας* (Athens, 1996), p. 16.



[O. PALAGIA]



Fig. 59. Floral border of stag hunt mosaic. Pella Museum. Photo after M. Siganiidou and M. Lilimbaki-Akamati, *Πέλλα* (Athens, 1996), p. 4.

[O. PALAGIA]



Fig. 60. Relief dedicated to the heroised Hephaestion. From Pella. Thessaloniki Museum 1084.  
· Photo O. Palagia.



[O. PALAGIA]

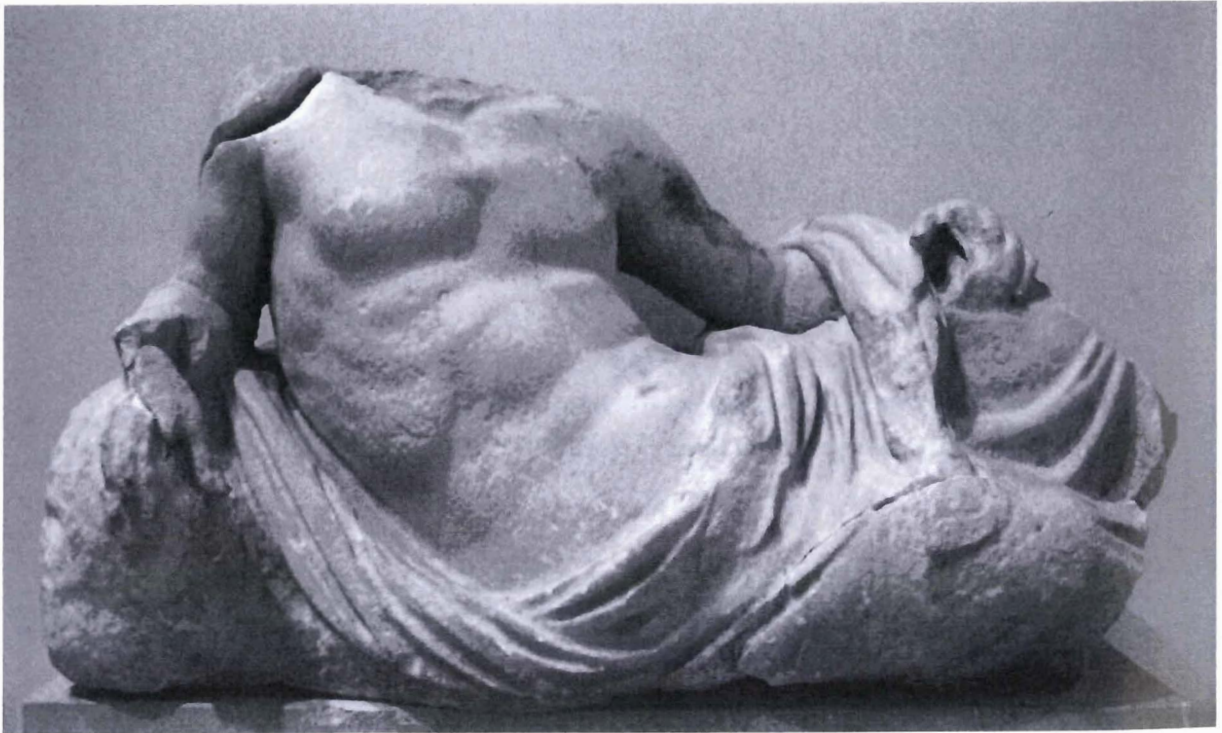


Fig. 61. Reclining river god from the north pediment of the so-called Hieron of Samothrace. Vienna, Ephesos Museum I 343. Photo O. Palagia.