

I Macedonian Background

Early History of Macedonia

The details of Macedonian history before the fourth century BC are hazy: we have scattered references in Herodotus to Amyntas I (*regn.?*–498/7) and, although the activities of Alexander I Philhellene (498/7–454) are somewhat better documented, our knowledge of the reign of Perdiccas II (454–413) is also limited. Of the lives of Archelaus (413–399) and the ephemeral kings who intervened between his reign and that of Amyntas III, grandfather of Alexander the Great, we get only glimpses. The highly readable account of Casson (1926) was reprinted in 1968, only to be rendered obsolete by Hammond (1972) – and for the sixth to fourth centuries by Hammond and Griffith (1979). The best syntheses in English of early Macedonian history are those of Errington (1990) and Borza (1990); we have adopted the regnal dates given by the latter.

1(a) *Strabo, Geography 7.11ff. (fragments)*

Present-day Macedonia was earlier called Emathia, and took its name from Macedon, one of its early leaders (there was also a city Emathia, which was close to the sea). This land was inhabited by certain Epirot and Illyrian peoples, but mostly by the Bottiaei and the Thracians, the former being purportedly of Cretan descent and having Botton as their leader. As for the Thracian peoples, the Pierians lived in Pieria and the area around Olympus, and the Paeonians in the lands surrounding the River Axios¹ (a region thus called Amphixitis), while the Edonians and Bisaltae occupied the remainder of the territory as far as the Strymon. With regard to the last-named peoples, the Bisaltae are called simply that, while the Edonians are grouped into Mygdones, Edones, and Sithones.

1 The modern Vardar.

But over all the above-mentioned it was the tribe called the Argeadae who made themselves supreme, as did the Chalcidians in Euboea. In fact, the Chalcidians in Euboea actually invaded the land of the Sithones where they jointly founded some 30 cities (they were subsequently expelled from these, and most of them then came together into a single city, Olynthus) . . .

The River Peneus is the boundary of the southern part of Macedonia, which is towards the sea, dividing it from Thessaly and Magnesia. To the north the Haliacmon – along with the Erigon, Axios and a second system of rivers – forms the boundary with the people of Epirus and of Paeonia . . .

Now from where the Thermaic Gulf indents the coastline at Thessalonica, maritime Macedonia runs south towards Sunium in one direction, east towards the Thracian Chersonnese and in another, thus forming a triangular shape at the point of indentation. Since Macedonia stretches in both these directions, I should begin with the one I mentioned first. The first sector of this, that is that around Sunium, has Attica lying above it along with the land of Megara, as far as the Gulf of Crisa. After this comes the Boeotian coastline that faces Euboea, above which lies the rest of Euboea which runs westwards, parallel to Attica. Strabo also says that the Via Egnatia, coming from the Ionian Gulf, terminates at Thessalonica . . .

The River Peneus flows through Tempe, after rising in the Pindus range . . . and it demarcates Macedonia to the north from Thessaly to the south . . . Olympus lies in Macedonia, and Ossa and Pelion in Thessaly.

There is a city, Dium, at the foot of Olympus, and this has a village, Pimpleia, close by. It was there, they say, that Orpheus the Ciconian lived. He was a wizard who initially eked out a living by his music and prophecy, and from conducting ecstatic rites for the mysteries; but then, thinking he deserved better than that, he acquired a following and personal power. Some men happily embraced his teachings, but others, suspecting him of intrigue for violent ends, joined together and killed him . . .

Beyond Dium is the River Haliacmon which discharges into the Thermaic Gulf. The sector beyond this, that is the northern coastline of the Gulf running as far as the River Axios, is called Pieria, in which is situated Pydna, a city now called Citrum. Then come the cities of Methone and Alorus, and then the rivers Erigon and Loudias. The sailing distance from Loudias to the city of Pella is 120 stades, and Methone is 40 stades from Pydna, and 70 stades from Alorus. Pydna is a city of Pieria, and Alorus is in Bottiaea.

1(b) Justin 7.1–6

Macedonia was formerly called Emathia, after King Emathion, whose primitive heroism lives on to this day in those regions.^[2] In keeping with its modest beginnings its territory was very restricted; ^[3] the inhabitants were called Pelasgians and the country Bottia. ^[4] Later, thanks to the valour of the kings and the enterprise of its people, it subjugated first its neighbours and then other peoples and tribes, extending its empire to the furthest limits of the

East.^[5] Pelegonus, father of Asteropaeus (one of the most distinguished champions in the Trojan War, we are told), is said to have reigned in Paeonia, which is now part of Macedonia.^[6] In another quarter, in Europa, a man called Europus occupied the throne.

^[7] Caranus² also came to Emathia with a large band of Greeks, being instructed by an oracle to seek a home in Macedonia. Here, following a herd of goats running from a downpour, he seized the city of Edessa, the inhabitants being taken unawares because of heavy rain and dense fog.^[8] Remembering the oracle's command to follow the lead of goats in his quest for an empire, Caranus established the city as his capital,^[9] and thereafter he made it a solemn observance, wheresoever he took his army, to keep those same goats before his standards in order to have as leaders in his exploits the animals which he had had with him to found the kingdom.^[10] He gave the city of Edessa the name Aegaeae and its people the name Aegeads³ in memory of this service.^[11] Then, after driving out Midas – he, too, ruled part of Macedonia – and other kings, he supplanted them all as sole ruler,^[12] and was the first to unify the tribes of different nations and make a single body of Macedonia, establishing a firm basis on which his expanding kingdom could grow.

2 The king after Caranus was Perdiccas,⁴ who was known both for his illustrious life and for his memorable final instructions, which resembled an oracular utterance.^[2] When on his deathbed, the aged Perdiccas indicated to his son, Argaeus, the place where he wished to be buried, and gave orders that not merely his own bones but also those of his successors to the throne be laid in that spot,^[3] declaring that the throne would stay in their family as long as the remains of their descendants were buried there.^[4] It is on account of this piece of superstition that people believe that the line died out with Alexander, because he changed the place of burial.^[5] Argaeus ruled with restraint and won the affection of the people. He left as his successor his son, Philip, who succumbed to an early death, appointing as his heir Aeropus, who was but an infant.^[6] Now, the Macedonians were continually at war with the Thracians and Illyrians, and with these campaigns for their routine training they became so hardened that they began to alarm their neighbours with their illustrious military reputation.^[7] Accordingly the Illyrians, with disdain for the tender years of the child monarch, launched an attack on the Macedonians.^[8] The latter, defeated in battle, carried forward their king in his cradle, placed him to the rear of their battle line and renewed the fight with greater spirit,^[9] imagining that the reason for their earlier defeat was that they had fought without the auspices of their king.^[10] Now, however, they were going to win because from that superstition they had drawn the determination to do so.^[11] At the same time they were gripped by pity for the child, since defeat would evidently

2 See Greenwalt (1985).

3 Perhaps Justin has misunderstood the origins of the Argeadae, whose capital was Aegae (Vergina) before the establishment of Pella. However, Hammond (Hammond and Griffith 1979: 12) accepts the reading.

4 For Caranus and the Macedonian king-list, see Greenwalt (1985).

make their monarch a prisoner. ^[12] So, once battle was joined, they routed the Illyrians with great slaughter and showed their enemies that what the Macedonians had lacked in the previous encounter was their king, not courage. ^[13] Aeropus was succeeded by Amyntas, who enjoyed particular renown both for his own merits and because of the outstanding character of his son, Alexander, ^[14] who was naturally endowed with all manner of superb abilities, to the extent that he even competed in the Olympic games in a variety of events.⁵

3 In the meantime Darius, king of Persia, after being driven from Scythia in ignominious flight, was concerned that he might be discredited everywhere because of his military losses. He therefore sent Magabasus⁶ with some of his troops to conquer Thrace and the other kingdoms of that area, to which Macedonia would be added as a place of little importance. ^[2] Magabasus quickly executed the order of his king and sent an embassy to Amyntas, king of Macedonia, demanding to be given hostages as a guarantee of peace in the future. ^[3] The ambassadors were given a cordial reception but, becoming the worse for wine during the course of the dinner, they asked Amyntas to add to the magnificence of the feast the privileges of intimate friendship by inviting his daughters and wives to his banquet; for this, they said, was regarded amongst the Persians as a binding pledge of hospitality. ^[4] When the women arrived, the Persians began to fondle them in too familiar a manner, whereupon Amyntas' son, Alexander, asked his father to have regard for his dignity as an older man and leave the banquet, promising that he would moderate the exuberance of the guests. ^[5] When Amyntas left, Alexander also called the women away from the banquet for a short while, ostensibly to have them made up more attractively and bring them back more desirable.

^[6] He put in their place some young men dressed as women and told them to use their swords, which they carried beneath their dress, to curb the forwardness of the ambassadors. ^[7] And so all the Persians were killed. When his embassy failed to return, Magabasus, not knowing what had happened, dispatched Bubares with part of his army to the area on what he thought would be an easy campaign of little significance; ^[8] he did not deign to go in person, for fear of demeaning himself by taking on such a contemptible people in battle. ^[9] Bubares, however, fell in love with Amyntas' daughter before war could commence and abandoned the campaign. He married her and, renouncing hostile intentions, entered into a regular family relationship with Amyntas.⁷

5 In order to compete in the Olympic games, one had to prove one's Greek blood. Hence, Alexander I, subsequently known as Philhellene (*regn.* ca. 498/7–454), established the Hellenism of the Macedonian royal house, tracing its descent through Temenus to Heracles (Hercules).

6 Megabazus (Herodotus 5.14).

7 The story of the murder of the Persian ambassadors (from Herodotus 5.18–21) was probably invented by Alexander Philhellene to deflect charges of collaborating with the Persians. The marriage of Bubares to Alexander's sister, Gygaea, shows that Macedon had entered into an alliance with Persia, albeit as a vassal of Darius I. See Burn (1984: 134).

4 After Bubares left Macedonia King Amyntas died. The family ties which his son and successor, Alexander, enjoyed with Bubares not only ensured him peace in the time of Darius but also put him on such good terms with Xerxes that when the latter swept through Greece like a whirlwind he granted Alexander authority over all the territory between Mt Olympus and Mt Haemus.^[2] But Alexander extended his kingdom as much through his own valour as through Persian generosity.

^[3] The throne of Macedonia then came by order of succession to Amyntas, son of Alexander's brother Menelaus.⁸ ^[4] He, too, was remarkable for his energy and was possessed of all the qualities befitting a general.^[5] He had three sons by Eurydice – Alexander, Perdiccas, and Philip, the father of Alexander the Great of Macedon – as well as a daughter, Eurynoë.⁹ By Gygaea he had Archelaus, Arrhidaeus and Menelaus.¹⁰ ^[6] Amyntas undertook difficult campaigns against the Illyrians and the Olynthians.^[7] Moreover, Amyntas would have fallen victim to the treachery of his wife Eurydice (she had made a pact to marry her son-in-law,¹¹ undertaking to kill her husband and hand the crown to her lover) had their daughter not divulged her mother's liaison and criminal intentions.^[8] After surviving all these dangers Amyntas died an old man, passing on the throne to his eldest son, Alexander.

5 Right at the start of his reign, Alexander averted further war with the Illyrians by agreeing to pay them tribute and giving them his brother, Philip, as a hostage.^[2] Some time later he again used Philip as a hostage to re-establish peace with the Thebans, and it was this that most served to develop Philip's exceptional genius.^[3] Kept as a hostage at Thebes for three years, Philip spent the earliest stages of his boyhood in a city characterized by old-fashioned austerity and in the home of Epaminondas, the great philosopher and general.¹² ^[4] Shortly afterwards, Alexander succumbed to the treachery of his mother Eurydice.^[5] Although Eurydice had been caught red-handed, Amyntas had nevertheless spared her life for the sake of the children they had in common, unaware that she would one day prove their undoing.^[6] Alexander's brother, Perdiccas, likewise became the victim of a treacherous

8 Justin, in the process of abbreviating the work of Pompeius Trogus (see introduction, p. xxii), has omitted some sixty years of Macedonian history. After the death of Alexander Philhellene, the kingship passed to his son Perdiccas II (452–413); Perdiccas was in turn succeeded by Archelaus (413–399). Archelaus was assassinated and a period of turmoil ensued, resulting in the accession of Amyntas III in 392. Although he was briefly driven out by the Illyrians, he endured in the kingship until his death in 369.

9 The MSS have Euryone, but Eurynoë is more likely to be correct.

10 For their role in the events that followed the death of Perdiccas III, see Ellis (1973).

11 Ptolemy of Alorus, who served as regent for Perdiccas III (368–365).

12 Epaminondas and Pelopidas were the greatest of the Thebans. Plutarch wrote lives of both of them, but only that of Pelopidas has survived. We do, however, have a brief life of Epaminondas by Cornelius Nepos, which is all the more valuable because the major surviving (contemporary) source for the early fourth century BC, Xenophon, was hostile to Thebes and tended to omit or downplay the achievements of her generals.

plot on her part.¹³ [7] It was indeed a cruel blow that these children should have been murdered by their mother and sacrificed to her lust when it was consideration of these same children which had once rescued her from punishment for her crimes. [8] The murder of Perdiccas seemed all the more scandalous in that the mother's pity was not stirred even by the fact that he had an infant son. [9] So it was that for a long period Philip was guardian for the minor rather than king himself but, [10] facing the threat of more serious wars, and at a time when any assistance to be expected from the infant was too far in the future, he was constrained by the people to take the throne.

6 When he assumed power, everybody had great expectations of him both because of his natural ability, which held out promise of a great man, and because of the old prophecies concerning Macedonia [2] which had predicted that "Macedonia would enjoy great prosperity in the reign of one of Amyntas' sons." The wickedness of Philip's mother had left only Philip to realize that hope. [3] At the start of his reign the green youth of the novice was plagued by trouble: the murder of his brothers, so cruelly done away with; the large number of his enemies; the fear of treason; the poverty his kingdom suffered, exhausted by interminable warfare. [4] Then, too, there were wars brewing simultaneously in different quarters, as if many nations were conspiring to crush Macedonia. Philip could not take on these wars all at once, [5] and he decided they should be dealt with separately. Some he settled by negotiation and others by paying out money, while he attacked all the enemies who were easiest to conquer, so that by victory over these he might both strengthen his men's wavering resolve and also remove his enemies' disdain for him. [6] His first fight was with a contingent of Athenians; he defeated them in an ambush and, although he could have annihilated them, fear of a more serious conflict prompted him to let them go unharmed and without ransom. [7] After the Athenians, Philip shifted his attack to the Illyrians, killing many thousands of the enemy. [8] He next took Thessaly, where war was the last thing anyone expected, by a surprise attack, not because he wanted plunder but because he was eager to add the strength of the Thessalian cavalry to his own army. [9] He then amalgamated the cavalry and infantry to create an invincible army. He also captured the famous city of Larissa. [10] While these matters were proceeding successfully, he married Olympias, daughter of Neoptolemus, king of the Molossians; [11] the match was arranged by Arybbas, king of the Molossians, who was the girl's cousin and guardian and was married to her sister, Troas. This was the cause of Arybbas' downfall and of all his troubles. [12] For, while he was hoping to

13 This is untrue. Perdiccas died fighting the Illyrians in 360/59. Trogus' account may be based (directly or indirectly) on a source that was hostile to Eurydice, perhaps Theopompus of Chios; cf. *FGH* 115 F 289. Flower (1994: 5–6), however, argues against Trogus' use of Theopompus. The inconsistencies that Flower sees may be explained by Trogus' possible use of Timagenes of Alexandria as an intermediary source.

increase his kingdom through his family ties with Philip, he was stripped of his own kingdom by the latter and grew old in exile.¹⁴

^[13] After these achievements Philip was no longer satisfied with defensive campaigns but even went on the offensive against peaceful nations. ^[14] He was engaged in an attack on the city of Methone and was passing before its walls when an arrow fired from the defences struck out the king's right eye, ^[15] but the injury did not make him any the less effective in combat or more savage in his treatment of his enemies. ^[16] On the contrary, when, a few days later, the enemy sued for peace, he granted it, and showed not merely restraint but leniency in dealing with the defeated enemy.

Macedonians and Greeks: Language, Culture, Attitudes

It is clear from the extant Alexander historians that the lost sources made a clear distinction between Greeks and Macedonians – ethnically, culturally, and linguistically – and this must be an accurate reflection of contemporary attitudes. Alexander himself appears to have appreciated Greek culture and to have been conscious of Macedonian cultural inferiority, as is clear from §1.2a, below.

The vexed question of the ethnic background of the Macedonians has produced numerous discussions, many of them not entirely free of political bias; for the arguments concerning the ancient Greeks and Macedonians have been used to serve the nationalistic pretensions of contemporary politicians. The mere fact that Vlasidis and Karakostanoglou (1995) was distributed to all delegates at the *Sixth International Conference on Ancient Macedonia* in 1996 attests to modern concerns with the views of ancient historians; see also Tritle (1998) and Danforth (1995) for the contemporary issues; cf. Borza (1990: 90ff.). For the Macedonian language, see Hoffmann (1906), Hammond (1994b), and Badian (1982).

The Macedonian language

2(a) Plutarch, Alexander 51.3–6

Cleitus had spoken too freely. Alexander's companions stood up to face him and proceeded to shower him with abuse, while the older men attempted to calm the disturbance. ^[4] Turning then to Xenodochus of Cardia and Artemius of Colophon, Alexander said: "Don't you think Greeks walking amongst Macedonians are like demi-gods walking amongst wild animals?" . . .

^[5] No longer able to control his temper, Alexander threw one of the apples within his reach at Cleitus and hit him, after which he looked round for his

14 There is considerable debate concerning when Philip deposed Arybbas and when Arybbas actually died. See Errington (1975) and Heskell (1988). The supporters of "Aryptaesus" who fought against Macedon in the Lamian War in 323/2 (Diodorus Siculus 18.11.1) may have been followers of the exiled Arybbas.

sword.¹⁶ But Aristophanes, one of his bodyguards, got to it first and removed it. The others surrounded the king and begged him to stop, but he jumped to his feet and summoned his guards, loudly shouting *in the Macedonian tongue*,¹⁵ which indicated that there was a serious crisis.¹⁶

2(b) *Quintus Curtius Rufus 6.9.34–6*

Alexander fixed his gaze on [Philotas]. “The Macedonians are going to judge your case,” he said. “Please state whether you will use *your native language* before them.”

^[35] “Besides the Macedonians”, replied Philotas, “there are many present who, I think, will find what I am going to say easier to understand if I use the language you yourself have been using, your purpose, I believe, being simply to enable more people to understand you.”

^[36] Then the king said: “Do you see how offensive Philotas finds even his native language? He alone feels an aversion to learning it. But let him speak as he pleases – only remember that he is as contemptuous of our way of life as he is of our language.”

2(c) *Plutarch, Eumenes 14.10–11*

When Eumenes heard this he came post-haste, hurrying on the men who were carrying him and, drawing back the curtains on both sides of the litter, he waved his hand in delight.¹¹¹ When the men saw him, they immediately saluted him in the Macedonian tongue. They then took up their shields, struck them with their sarissas, and let out a loud war cry to challenge their enemies – for now their leader was with them.

Was the Macedonian conquest a source of pride to all Greeks?

Plutarch, in two different *Lives*, discusses the effect on the Greeks of Alexander the Great seating himself on the Persian throne. In the first passage, from the *Alexander*, he records the words of Demaratus of Corinth, a pro-Macedonian and functionary of the League of Corinth. In the second passage, from the *Agesilaus*, Plutarch expresses his own views and what he regards as the views of most Greeks who were contemporary with these events. Alexander’s delicate relations with the Greeks in this and other matters are discussed by Badian (1996).

15 PSI XII 1284, a fragment of Arrian’s *History of the Successors*, mentions a certain Xenias, who is described as a “Macedonian-speaker.”

16 For the significance of this passage see Hammond (1995a) and Bosworth (1996b). For Curtius’ full account of the Cleitus episode, see §X.4c below.

2(d) *Plutarch, Alexander 37.6–7*

Alexander wanted to reinvigorate his men, it now being wintertime, and remained there at Persepolis for four months.¹⁷ It is said that, when the king first seated himself on the royal throne under the golden awning, the Corinthian Demaratus – a kindly man who had been a friend of Alexander’s father – burst into tears, as old men do. Those Greeks had been deprived of a very pleasurable experience, he reportedly said, who had died before seeing Alexander seated on Darius’ throne.

2(e) *Plutarch, Agesilaus 15.4*

For, personally, I am not in agreement with the Corinthian Demaratus who claimed that the Greeks missed a very pleasurable experience in not seeing Alexander seated on Darius’ throne. Actually, I think they might have had more reason to shed tears at the realization that the men who left this honour to Alexander were those who sacrificed the armies¹⁷ of the Greeks at Leuctra, Coronea, and Corinth and in Arcadia.

*The contest between Corrhagus the Macedonian and
the Greek athlete, Dioxippus*

The accounts of the duel between the Greek athlete Dioxippus and the Macedonian soldier Corrhagus (the text of Diodorus has Coragus; Horratas in Curtius) reveal the ethnic tension between Greeks and Macedonians, as well as the common disdain of soldiers for professional athletes. Diodorus’ version places greater emphasis on the relationship between Macedonians and Greeks, and on Alexander’s unsavory role in the “framing” of Dioxippus. In the brief account given by Aelian (*Varia Historia* 10.22), Dioxippus actually kills the Macedonian. See also Brown (1977).

2(f) *Diodorus Siculus 17.100.1–101.6*

After recovering from his wound and sacrificing to thank the gods for his return to health, Alexander put on great banquets for his friends. During the drinking sessions there was one odd occurrence that is worth recording.

^[2] There was a certain Macedonian called Coragus who had been accepted as one of the *philoï*. He was possessed of remarkable physical strength and

17 Or “generals.” The places named here all witnessed battles in which the supremacy of Sparta was challenged in the decades after the Peloponnesian War; Leuctra (371) was the most famous and most devastating for Sparta.

had frequently performed courageous acts in battle. Under the influence of drink, Coragus challenged Dioxippus the Athenian, an athlete who had won the garland for the most prestigious victories in the games, to face him in single combat. ^[3] The other guests at the party spurred on the men's rivalry, as one might expect; Dioxippus accepted the challenge and the king fixed a date for the match. When the time for the contest arrived, men assembled in their tens of thousands to watch. ^[4] Being of the same race, the Macedonians and the king strongly supported Coragus, while the Greeks were behind Dioxippus. As the men came forward to the event, the Macedonian was equipped with splendid weapons; ^[5] the Athenian was naked and smeared with oil, and he carried an appropriately-sized club.

The physical strength and superb prowess of the two men provoked general admiration, and it was as though what was expected to take place was a contest between gods. The Macedonian aroused sheer amazement for his physical condition and dazzling arms, and some resemblance to Ares was noticed in him. Dioxippus, on the other hand, had the look of Heracles, being the superior of the two in strength and also because of his athletic training – and still more because of the identifying characteristic of the club.

^[6] As they advanced on each other, the Macedonian, at an appropriate remove, hurled his javelin, but the other man swerved slightly and avoided the blow that was aimed at him. Then Coragus went forward holding his Macedonian *sarissa* before him but, as he approached, Dioxippus struck the *sarissa* with his club and broke it. ^[7] Having thus encountered two set-backs, the Macedonian was now reduced to fighting with the sword; but just as he was about to draw the weapon Dioxippus moved first and jumped at him. As Coragus was drawing the blade, Dioxippus grabbed his sword-hand with his own left hand and with the other pulled his rival off balance and made him trip over. ^[8] His antagonist thrown to earth, the Greek set his foot on the man's neck, held up his club, and turned his gaze to the spectators.

101 The crowd was in uproar over this unexpected turn of events and display of extraordinary bravado. The king ordered the man's release, terminated the spectacle and left, furious at the Macedonian's defeat. ^[2] Releasing his fallen antagonist, Dioxippus went off with a notable victory, and with a garland presented to him by his countrymen for having brought to the Greeks a glory that they all shared. But Fate did not permit the man to pride himself on his victory for long.

^[3] The king's attitude towards Dioxippus became increasingly hostile, and the *philoï*¹⁸ of Alexander, and all the Macedonians attached to the court, resented his fine qualities. They therefore persuaded the man in charge of the king's domestic arrangements to slip a golden cup under Dioxippus' pillow. At the next drinking-party they accused him of theft and pretended to have found the cup, and thus brought him into discredit and disgrace. ^[4] Dioxippus could see he had a cabal of Macedonians against him. He there-

18 *Philoï* = *hetairoi*. See glossary s.v. *asthetairoi* and *pezhetairoi*.

fore left the party, and on entering his own quarters a little later he wrote Alexander a letter about the plot hatched against him, entrusted the letter to his own people for delivery to the king, and committed suicide. He had acted unwisely in accepting the challenge to single combat, but far more foolishly in putting an end to his life,^[5] and so, many of his critics, rebuking him for his stupidity, said that it was a cruel thing to have great physical strength and little intelligence.

^[6] After reading the letter the king was very upset at Dioxippus' death and often regretted the loss of his good qualities. He had not used his services when they were available to him, and now he felt sorry when they were gone; and from the malice of his detractors he came to recognise, when it served no purpose, the good and noble character of the man.

2(g) *Quintus Curtius Rufus 9.7.16–26*

One person present at the banquet was the Athenian Dioxippus, a former boxer whose superlative strength had made him well known and well liked by Alexander. Jealous and spiteful men would make cutting remarks about him, partly in jest, partly in earnest, saying that they had along with them a useless, bloated animal and that, while they went into battle, he was dripping with oil and preparing his belly for a banquet.^[17] Now at this feast the Macedonian Horratas, who was already drunk, began to make the same type of insulting comment to Dioxippus and to challenge him, if he were a man, to fight a duel with him with swords the next day. Only then, said Horratas, would Alexander be able to decide whether *he* was reckless or Dioxippus a coward.^[18] Dioxippus accepted the challenge, contemptuously scoffing at the soldier's bravado. The next day the two men were even more insistent in their demands for the contest and, since Alexander could not deter them, he allowed them to carry out their plan.^[19] A huge crowd of soldiers, including the Greeks, supported Dioxippus. The Macedonian had equipped himself with regular weapons: he held a bronze shield and a spear, which they call a *sarissa*, in his left hand and a javelin in his right, while he also had a sword at his side – as if he were going to fight a number of men simultaneously.^[20] Glistening with oil and wearing a garland, Dioxippus grasped a purple cloak in his left hand and a stout, knotty club in his right. The equipment itself generated tense expectation in the whole crowd, for it appeared sheer lunacy rather than recklessness for a naked man to take on one in armour.

^[21] The Macedonian hurled his javelin, certain his adversary could be killed at a distance. Dioxippus avoided it by leaning slightly to the side and, before Horratas could transfer the spear to his right hand, he sprang at him and broke the weapon in two with his club.^[22] With both missiles gone, the Macedonian had now started to draw his sword, but Dioxippus caught him in a bear-hug, quickly kicked his feet from beneath him and smashed him to the ground. Then, grabbing the sword, he set his foot on the neck of the prone

Macedonian and, lifting his club, would have battered his defeated foe to death had he not been stopped by the king.

^[23] The outcome of the show dismayed Alexander, as well as the Macedonian soldiers, especially since the barbarians were present, for he feared that a mockery had been made of the celebrated Macedonian valour. ^[24] So it was that the king's ears were opened to accusations made by envious men. A few days later a golden cup was deliberately set aside during a banquet and the servants came to the king pretending to have lost what they had, in fact, themselves removed. ^[25] Often one shows less presence of mind in an embarrassing situation than when really guilty. Dioxippus could not bear the eyes that all turned on him and marked him out as the thief. On leaving the banquet he wrote a letter which was to be delivered to the king and then fell on his sword. ^[26] Alexander was pained by his death, which he thought indicated resentment rather than remorse on Dioxippus' part, especially when the excessive jubilation of the men jealous of him revealed the falseness of the accusation against him.

The King, Aristocracy, and Macedonian Institutions

Macedonian veneration of the king

The Macedonian state was ruled by a king from a royal house known as the Argeadae, which claimed descent from the legendary Hercules through Temenus of Argos. Alexander I Philhellene (*regn.* ca. 498/7–454) evinced his Greek ancestry and thus gained admission to the Olympic games. Although the kingship was restricted to the Argead house, the king was nevertheless regarded as first among equals, his powers curtailed considerably by a body of aristocrats known as the *hetairoi*, or "Companions." From their numbers, the king drew his military commanders and advisers. Many of the regional troops, especially the infantry from Upper Macedonia, were commanded by members of the princely families of the various cantons. By the time of Philip II the position of the king *vis-à-vis* the aristocracy had been strengthened, and Alexander the Great established a far more autocratic form of rule than the Macedonians had been used to.

3(a) Quintus Curtius Rufus 3.6.17–20

The Macedonians have a natural tendency to venerate their royalty, but even if one takes that into account, the extent of their admiration, or their burning affection, for this particular king is difficult to describe. ^[18] First of all, they thought his every enterprise had divine aid. Fortune was with him at every turn and so even his rashness had produced glorious results. ^[19] His age gave added lustre to all his achievements for, though hardly old enough for under-

takings of such magnitude, he was well up to them. Then there are the things generally regarded as rather unimportant but which tend to find greater approval among the soldiers: the fact that he exercised with his men, that he made his appearance and dress little different from an ordinary citizen's, that he had the energy of a soldier.^[20] These characteristics, whether they were natural or consciously cultivated, made him in the eyes of his men as much an object of affection as of awe.

3(b) *Quintus Curtius Rufus 10.3.1–4*

Who would have believed that a gathering fiercely hostile moments before could be paralysed with sudden panic^[2] at the sight of men being dragged off for punishment whose actions had been no worse than the others?^[3] They were terror-stricken, whether from respect for the title of king, for which people living in a monarchy have a divine reverence, or from respect for Alexander personally; or perhaps it was because of the confidence with which he so forcefully exerted his authority.^[4] At all events they were the very model of submissiveness: when, towards evening, they learned of their comrades' execution, so far from being infuriated at the punishment, they did everything to express individually their increased loyalty and devotion.¹⁹

The royal pages

The sons of Macedonian nobles were educated at Pella along with the crown prince and his brothers. Thus they came to be known as *syntrophoi*, or "foster brothers," of the king's sons. At the court they also served the king, protecting him while he slept, and accompanying him on the hunt. Like the youths at the Persian court, they learned "both how to rule and to be ruled" (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 1.9), and at the same time they served as hostages for the good behaviour of their fathers and elder kinsmen. But their early associations with the crown prince often paid important dividends later in their careers. See Heckel (1986; 1992a: 237ff.) and Hammond (1989a: 53–8; 1990); cf. Kienast (1973).

3(c) *Quintus Curtius Rufus 5.1.42*

Amyntas brought²⁰ also fifty grown-up sons of Macedonian noblemen to serve as a bodyguard. These act as the king's servants at dinner, bring him his horses

19 For the historical context of this passage see §X.8a–b.

20 To Alexander, who in 331 was in Mesopotamia.

when he goes into battle, attend him on the hunt and take their turn on guard before his bedroom door. Such was the upbringing and training of those who were to be great generals and leaders.

3(d) *Diodorus Siculus 17.65.1*

And from Macedonia there came 50 sons of the king's *philoï*. These had been sent by their fathers to serve as the king's bodyguard.

3(e) *Quintus Curtius Rufus 8.6.2–6*

As was observed above [see I.3.c], it was customary for the Macedonian nobility to deliver their grown-up sons to their kings for the performance of duties which differed little from the tasks of slaves.^[3] They would take turns spending the night on guard at the door of the king's bedchamber, and it was they who brought in his women by an entrance other than that watched by the armed guards.^[4] They would also take his horses from the grooms and bring them for him to mount; they were his attendants both on the hunt and in battle, and were highly educated in all the liberal arts.^{21 [5]} It was thought a special honour that they were allowed to sit and eat with the king. No one had the authority to flog them apart from the king himself.^[6] This company served the Macedonians as a kind of seminary for their officers and generals, and from it subsequently came the kings whose descendants were many generations later stripped of their power by the Romans.

3(f) *Arrian 4.13.1*

From Philip's time it was customary for the sons of high-ranking Macedonians to be assigned to attend the king when they were reaching puberty. These were given the responsibility of generally seeing to the king's personal needs and also guarding him while he slept. And whenever the king went riding they would receive the horses from his grooms and bring them to him. They would then help him mount in the Persian manner²² and join the king in the competition of the hunt.

21 At this time (in 328/7) the pages would have been educated by Callisthenes, just as many of Philip's pages in the 340s received instruction, along with Alexander, from Aristotle.

22 Possibly the institution of the pages was itself modelled on Persian practice: see Kienast (1973).

The Somatophylakes and Hetairoi

The *hetairoi* have already been mentioned. If they did not command individual units, they served in most cases in the Macedonian “Companion Cavalry” and/or as members of the king’s council. The closest of the king’s *hetairoi* dined with him and were, in theory, permitted to voice their opinions freely. The *Somatophylakes* were a select body of seven, whose function it was to protect the king on and off the battlefield. Membership in this body may originally have been restricted to certain families or have had some sort of geographic representation. But this too appears to have changed as Alexander’s power grew. Our knowledge concerning the unit is enhanced by the fact that the historian (and later king of Egypt) Ptolemy son of Lagus was a member of that body. For full discussion, see Heckel (1992a: 237ff.) and Hammond (1989a: 53–8).

3(g) *Arrian 6.28.3–4*

He enrolled Peucestas as an additional Somatophylax; ^[4] . . . up to this time Alexander’s bodyguards numbered seven: Leonnatus son of Anteus, Hephaestion son of Amyntor, Lysimachus son of Agathocles, Aristonous son of Piseus, all from Pella, Perdikkas son of Orontes from Orestis, Ptolemy son of Lagus and Pithon son of Crateuas from Eordaea. Now an eighth was added, Peucestas, who had given Alexander protection with his shield.²³

3(h) *Quintus Curtius Rufus 9.6.4*

It was customary for Alexander’s principal friends and his bodyguards to keep watch before the king’s quarters whenever he had fallen ill.

The army assembly

Granier (1931) is the seminal work on the question of whether the Macedonian army acted as an assembly that had to be consulted by the king on important matters (for example, kingship, treason) and as a lawcourt. Recently Granier’s conclusions have been challenged by Errington (1978), Lock (1977a), and Anson (1985, 1991); cf. Hammond (1989a: 60ff.) and Polo (1993).

23 In the Mallian campaign. See §III.6d (where Peucestas’ role is curiously omitted).

3(i) *Quintus Curtius Rufus 6.8.25*

In capital cases, it was a long-established Macedonian practice for the king to conduct the trial while the army (or the commons in peace-time) acted as jury, and the position of the king counted for nothing unless his influence had been substantial prior to the trial.

3(j) *Justin 11.1.7–10*

Alexander's arrival remedied the situation: ^[8] he addressed the entire host in an assembly, offering them such timely consolation and encouragement as to eliminate the anxiety of the fearful and inspire hope in them all. ^[9] He was twenty years old, at which age he demonstrated great promise, but he did so with such restraint that he seemed to have still more in reserve than was then apparent. ^[10] He exempted the Macedonians from all obligations except military service, and this won him the unanimous support of the people, so much so that they said they had exchanged their king's identity, not his merits.

The traditional form of execution

The Macedonian method of public execution was stoning, but it is noteworthy that where crimes against Persian symbols of power were concerned – Bessus' murder of Darius III (see §IV.3a–j) and assumption of the royal title; the Macedonian Poulamachus' desecration of the tomb of Cyrus the Great – Alexander resorted to crucifixion or impalement.

3(k) *Quintus Curtius Rufus 6.11.10*

The general feeling was that Philotas should be stoned to death according to Macedonian custom . . . [cf. Curtius 6.11.38].

3(l) *Arrian 4.14.3*

[According to some authors] Hermolaus and the men arrested with him were then stoned to death by those present.

3(m) *Quintus Curtius Rufus 7.2.1*

While Amyntas was making this speech, there chanced to arrive men bringing back in chains his fugitive brother Polemon . . . whom they had over-

taken. The assembly was in an ugly mood and could barely be restrained from stoning Polemon immediately, after their usual custom . . .

A law concerning treason?

Tarn (1948, II: 270–2) is probably right in suggesting that what Curtius presents as a law (*lex*) must have been no more than customary practice (*mos*) and that the alleged existence of such a law does not excuse Alexander's murder of Parmenion, as some modern scholars have tried to argue. In fact, the very nature of the Macedonian aristocracy was such that, because of the extensive network of intermarriages, a complete purge of the relatives of convicted traitors would lead to the virtual annihilation of the ruling class.

3(n) *Quintus Curtius Rufus 6.11.20*

In the meantime word of the torture of Philotas had got around, and this spread panic among the cavalry, the men from the best families and especially those closely related to Parmenion. What they feared was *the Macedonian law which provided the death penalty also for the relatives of people who had plotted against the king*. Some, therefore, committed suicide and others fled into remote mountains and desert wastes as sheer terror spread throughout the camp. Finally the king learned of the consternation and proclaimed that he was suspending the law relating to the punishment of relatives of the guilty.

Macedonian marriage custom

Renard and Servais (1955) demonstrate that the marriage of Alexander and Roxane, as described by Curtius (below), follows Macedonian rather than Persian practice. The wedding was commemorated in a painting by Aëtion (described by Lucian, §VIII.6e); the original is lost, but the description inspired the painting in the Villa Farnesina in Rome by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, "Il Sodoma."

3(o) *Quintus Curtius Rufus 8.4.27–9*

Roxane's father was transported with unexpected delight when he heard Alexander's words, and the king, in the heat of passion, ordered bread to be brought, in accordance with their traditions, for this was the most sacred symbol of betrothal among the Macedonians. The bread was cut with a sword and both men tasted it. ^[28] I presume that those responsible for establishing the conventions of their society used this modest and readily available

food because they wanted to demonstrate to people uniting their resources how little should be enough to content them. ^[29] Thus the ruler of Asia and Europe married a woman who had been introduced to him as part of the entertainment at dinner – to produce from a captive a son to rule over her conquerors.