

Philippus in acie tutior quam in theatro fuit ...
(Curtius 9, 6, 25):
The Macedonian Kings and Greek Theatre*

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Introduction

While recent decades have seen a welcome increase of interest in the expansion of theatre outside of Athens, in Classical and post-Classical periods¹, scholarly focus on ancient Greek theatre still tends to be, overall, more cursory than sustained. Understandably, considerations of the legacy and traditions of the ‘metropolis of theatre’ continue to dominate discussion of ancient drama², and Classical Athens still endures as our primary context for the production of ancient drama³. And although it can be difficult to set ancient theatre activity within even broad cultural frames when we attempt to look beyond Athens, nevertheless we must engage with the full extent of performance among the Greeks if we are to understand this most malleable medium properly.

Indeed, recent research on drama in South Italy and Sicily, in particular, shows the merit of tackling afresh the scattered evidence for non-canonical theatre performance, producing a body of work that considers the dynamic interplay between two different theatrical traditions rather than a restricted, repetitive review of one⁴. Ancient Greek theatre had more ‘historical moments’ worthy of consideration than scholarship has often allowed for⁵.

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¹ On the vitality of Athenian tragedy beyond the fifth century see Xanthakis-Karamanos 1980; both Easterling 1993, 559–569 and Easterling 1997c, 211–227 remain crucial contributions. On the demand for performances outside of Attica see Dearden 1990b; Taplin 1993; Le Guen 1995; Taplin 1999. For a more up-to-date survey see Csapo 2010a, 95–103. One should also note key works on ancient Greek history and politics that push beyond the almost-standard focus on Athens: Brock – Hodkinson 2000; Hansen – Nielsen 2004.

² The phrase is from Wilson 2007b, 7. Csapo – Miller 2007, 7–24 offer a fine review of evi-

dence on the origins of drama in Greece. On the early dates for tragedy at Athens see Connor 1989, 7–32; West 1989, 251–254; Scullion 2002, 81–101.

³ On the issue of the ‘Athenianness’ of Greek tragedy see the discussion in Griffith – Carter 2011, 4–7.

⁴ See Todisco 2002 and the collections edited by Martina 2003 and Bosher 2012. Finally, Part III of Peter Wilson’s edited collection *The Greek Theatre and Festivals* presents an important group of papers that uncover a number of ‘paths beyond Athens’, both to the west (Jordan 2007, 335–350; Wilson 2007d, 351–377) and the east (Ma 2007, 215–245; Le Guen 2007b, 246–278; Rutherford 2007, 279–293; Crowther 2007, 294–334).

⁵ On tragedy’s ‘particular moment’ and setting (Athens, from Solon to Agathon) see the still-influential Vernant 1988, 23–28.

Returning to the mainland, but moving north this time, this chapter draws attention to another cluster of evidence, centred on ancient Macedonia, that also merits a proper (re)evaluation.

Given the extent to which the remarkable military careers and conquests of Philip II and Alexander the Great dominate ancient Macedonian history, one still has to fight against the current somewhat to emphasise the extent to which this kingdom was a key site for the reception and production of the arts⁶. While a well-established narrative does detail the extraordinary fourth-century transformation of Macedon into the great imperial power of the age, that rise to supremacy is often presented as the triumph of a brutish cohort, lacking in refinement. Even in the usually steady Arrian we find the Macedonians presented as a barely-civilised people. In the notable outburst at Opis, Alexander supposedly reminds his men that:

Φίλιππος γὰρ παραλαβὼν ὑμᾶς πλανήτας καὶ ἀπόρους, ἐν διφθέραις τοὺς πολλοὺς νέμοντας ἀνὰ τὰ ὄρη πρόβατα ὀλίγα ... κατήγαγε δὲ ἐκ τῶν ὄρων ἐς τὰ πεδία, ἀξιόμαχους καταστήσας τοῖς προσχώροις τῶν βαρβάρων ... πόλεων τε οἰκίτορας ἀπέφηνε καὶ νόμοις καὶ ἔθεσι χρηστοῖς ἐκόσμησεν.

Philip found you wandering, helpless, most of you still in skins, pasturing a few sheep in the mountains ... He led you down from the hills and onto the plains, making you the equal in battle of your barbarian neighbours ... He made you city-dwellers, and he brought order with good laws and customs⁷.

Of course, even more influential are the colourful barbs of Demosthenes and Theopompus, strident opponents of Philip who, for example, present his royal court as a place where men ... οὐκ ἀριστίνδην ἐξελεγμένοι, ἀλλ' εἴ τις ἦν ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλησιν ἢ τοῖς βαρβάρους λάσταιρος ἢ βδελυρὸς ἢ θρασὺς τὸν τρόπον, οὗτοι σχεδὸν ἅπαντες εἰς Μακεδονίαν ἀθροισθέντες ... (“... were not chosen on merit, but instead if anyone among the Greeks or barbarians was lewd, loathsome, or brazen in manner, nearly all of them were collected together in Macedonia ...”)⁸. Attacks such as this increasingly tended to emanate from Athens as the fourth century developed, abuse that consistently depicted and dismissed Macedonia as a “cultural wasteland”⁹; a kingdom preeminent in power and influence, but lacking in terms of cultural standing. In that area Athens still claimed supremacy; the antithesis of Macedon, Athenians would give greater emphasis to their city’s record of cultural achievement even as, especially, her political power and influence faded. Athens remained, as Plato’s Protagoras claims, the “prytaneion of wisdom” (Prt. 337d), no other site could compare¹⁰.

⁶ As Carney 2010, 157 notes, “History’s Macedonians ... were all about power”; on the different perceptions of the Macedonians through history see Asirvatham 2010, 99–124.

⁷ Arr. An. 7, 9, 2. On the authenticity of this speech see Bosworth 1988a, 101–113.

⁸ Theopomp. Hist. FGrHist 115 F 224; see also the Theopomp. Hist. FGrHist 115 F 225 a-b as well as D. 2, 18–20.

⁹ Spencer 2002, 2.

¹⁰ Thucydides’ Pericles (2, 41) famously offered Athens as “an education for Greece” (τῆς Ἑλλάδος παιδευσιν); Isocrates (4, 50) maintained οἱ ταύτης μαθηταὶ τῶν ἄλλων διδάσκαλοι γεγόνασιν (“[Athens’] pupils have become the teachers of all others”). On Athens as the “self-appointed arbiter of cultural authenticity”, see J. Hall 2002, 202–220; on the enduring importance of Athens’ past cultural glories see Wilson 1996, 310–324; Most 2006, 382–386.

Of course, such statements do not represent any distinct identity in themselves, but were a product of Athenian ideology; so too the presentation of Macedon as a kingdom devoid of culture was also an ideological construction¹¹. As it happens, from the mid-fourth century on the Macedonian royal court did compare (and compete) as a centre for high culture, as the remarkable work of a generation of archaeologists working in the region since the late 1950s has proved¹². The wealth of the material uncovered has slowly exposed the speciousness of some of the old stereotypes in the written sources, and is prompting a significant change in the way in which historians assess the Macedonians and their approach to culture. Not only is it now clear that certainly the elite at court maintained a keen interest in, and appreciation for, the arts, but findings also suggest that the Macedonians had tastes and traditions in architecture and material culture that were truly distinctive¹³. Most notably, evidence from the many burial tombs excavated highlights that local religious practices and burial habits were quite different from those in southern Greece, suggesting that the Macedonians maintained their own peculiarly local tastes and traditions in architecture and material culture¹⁴. Further, it is important to recognise too that the Macedonians themselves were aware of the importance of articulating their own self-fashioning, that they were actively engaged in an ideological contest with other states. All of which might be somewhat basic, but too often some sources and scholars have failed to give the Macedonians even that much credit.

What we see emerging is a refined picture of a people who, from the Archaic period down until Classical times, adopted, assimilated, and combined diverse cultural elements (from both east and west) in order to create their own non-canonical regional style¹⁵. And this process of absorption and subsequent (re)articulation is one that can also be seen in the appropriation of ancient theatre by the Macedonian elite. Indeed, Argead patrons enticed leading players from the Athenian theatre scene to their court from the end of the fifth century, offering new alternatives and opportunities to Athenian playwrights and performers even before the emergence of this kingdom as a great power. In doing so, the Macedonian patrons would even help shape the future direction and development of ancient Greek drama¹⁶.

¹¹ Paraphrasing Whitmarsh 2010, 8f. on divisions between Greek ‘culture’ and Roman ‘power’ in the imperial period.

¹² Archaeological interest in Macedonia grew after the Pella mosaics were found, and intensified further following the discovery of the royal cemetery at Vergina by Manolis Andronikos and his team; work that produced “a virtual explosion of material from the soil of Macedonia” as Borza 1990, 267 puts it. Although Archibald 2000, 227 notes: “Archaeological investigations in Macedonia have accelerated enormously since M. Andronikos’ spectacular tomb finds at Vergina. But little has been added to our knowledge of pre-Hellenistic settlements”.

¹³ Too many finds to detail here, but valuable reviews can be found in: Barr-Sharrar – Borza 1982; Andronikos 1988; Borza 1990, 253–276; Touratsoglou 1999; Stamatopoulou – Yeroulanou 2002, 75–107; Hatzopoulos 2011, 39–42.

¹⁴ See Barr-Sharrar 1982, 123–139; Miller 1982, 152–169. More recently, Christesen – Murray 2010, 428–445; Mari 2011, 453–465 on Macedonian religion; Hardiman 2010, 505–521 on art.

¹⁵ Borza 1999, 32: “In the formative period of the early Archaic era one looks in vain for the emergence of a material culture that appears to be uniquely ‘Macedonian’ ... In the period in which we might expect the Macedonians to have evolved a characteristic culture of their own, we find that they are like a sponge, absorbing a variety of surrounding cultures”.

¹⁶ This chapter restricts itself to the first half of the fourth century (before Alexander the Great) and the first examples of Macedonian appropriation of ancient Greek theatre. While some of the trends and features noted below blossom in later periods, tracing that development is beyond the scope of this piece.

Archelaus

The culturally-enlightened, philhellenic rule of King Archelaus provides us with our starting point; Archelaus is not perhaps one of the familiar names in Macedonian history, but he was a monarch of ambition and ability nonetheless. This Argead ruled for fifteen-or-so years at the end of the fifth century (414/3–399), managing to revive the fortunes of a weak Macedonian kingdom during difficult times. Archelaus also Hellenised the royal court and acted as patron to a host of distinguished artists from the south¹⁷. The Macedonian managed to persuade luminaries such as the Athenian playwrights Euripides, Agathon, the epic poet Choerilus of Samos, and the musician and dithyrambic poet Timotheus of Miletus to visit his kingdom¹⁸. According to Aristotle, Socrates too was also called to court, but refused to undertake the journey to Macedonia. In *Rhetoric*, we are told of an invitation, which Socrates turned down because ὕβριν γὰρ ἔφη εἶναι τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι ἀμύνασθαι ὁμοίως εὖ παθόντα, ὥσπερ καὶ κακῶς (“he said it was shameful not to be able to return a favour, as well as a slight”; *Rh.* 1398a 24)¹⁹.

It was a significant refusal, for the ‘favours’ of Archelaus were particularly generous, that is if we can set any store in evidence that draws heavily from the poetic *vitae*²⁰. Plutarch tells of a golden cup casually awarded to Euripides as he dined (*Plu. Moralia* 177a, 531d–e), while Athenaeus informs us that Choerilus received pay of four hundred drachmas a day while at court (345d). Aelian too preserves details of Archelaus’ lavish spending, in a passage that also notes quite a degree of resistance to his efforts:

Σωκράτης ἔλεγεν Ἀρχέλαον εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τετρακοσίας μινᾶς ἀναλῶσαι, Ζεῦξιν μισθωσάμενον τὸν Ἡρακλεώτην, ἵνα αὐτὴν καταγράφοι, εἰς ἑαυτὸν δὲ οὐδέν. διὸ πόρρωθεν μὲν ἀφικνεῖσθαι σὺν πολλῇ <τῇ> σπουδῇ τοὺς βουλομένους θεάσθαι τὴν οἰκίαν· δι’ αὐτὸν δὲ Ἀρχέλαον μηδένα εἰς Μακεδόνας στέλλεσθαι, ἔαν μὴ τινα ἀναπέιση χρήμασι καὶ δελεάσῃ, ὑφ’ ὧν οὐκ ἂν αἰρεθῆναι τὸν σπουδαῖον.

Socrates said Archelaus spent four hundred minae on his palace, engaging Zeuxis of Heraclea to paint it. However, he spent nothing on himself. And so people quickly came from far away, eager to see the house; but no one journeyed to Macedonia to visit Archelaus himself. Unless he persuaded and tempted some with money, although no serious person would be taken in by such²¹.

There are hints here of a hostile Greek tradition that presented Archelaus as both the bastard son of a slave who has murdered his way to the throne (*Pl. Grg.* 471a–c), and a bar-

¹⁷ For an outline of Archelaus’ career see Borza 1990, 161–179.

¹⁸ See Borza 1993, 237–244. Daskalakis 1965, 271 n. 9 gives an overly-ambitious catalogue of artists who may have visited Macedonia during Archelaus’ reign; he maintains that all the artists who accepted Macedonian patronage at this time were, crucially, Athenian or had close links with that city. The Macedonian king may also have welcomed Plato the comic writer, while the biographical tradition suggests that Sophocles was also offered a royal invitation but did not accept.

¹⁹ Diogenes tells of Socrates’ contempt for Archelaus of Macedon (among others), refusing to accept any and all offers of patronage (*D. L.* 2, 25).

²⁰ Difficult material that has to be treated with care and consideration, for fine recent examples of how to work effectively with the ancient biographical traditions see Hanink 2008 and Hanink 2010b.

²¹ *Ael. VH* 14, 17.

barian (as in Thrasym. 85 B 2 D–K)²². The efforts at refinement of a man such as this are presented as a boorish pretence that fail to convince; this is a patron who poorly understands the work of his guests. As we see in a quip from the late grammarian, Diomedes:

Tristia namque tragoediae proprium, ideoque Euripides, petente Archelao rege ut de se tragoediam scriberet, abnuuit, ac precatus est ne accideret Archelao aliquid tragoediae proprium, ostendens nihil aliud esse tragoediam quam miseriarum comprehensionem.

That is to say, sadness is proper to tragedy. Hence it was that Euripides, on being asked by King Archelaus to write a tragedy about him, refused, and expressed the hope that Archelaus would never experience anything appropriate to tragedy. He thereby demonstrated that tragedy is nothing more than a presentation of miseries²³.

But, again, we must be wary of the hostility that often colours Greek accounts of events in Macedonia; surely here, for example, we can take it that Archelaus did not need to have the finer points of Greek theatre explained to him? It is not the case that vacuous Macedonians, supposedly without any culture of their own, simply ape what were established practices elsewhere. Furthermore, when Archelaus threw open his court to a motley crew of Greek artists, he did so for purely Macedonian purposes and not as a mere affectation. The example for all Macedonian kings was set by Alexander I, who was keen to restore close ties with the rest of the Greek world in the period of the Persian Wars. Alexander began to assert those family ties with Argos that we find in Herodotus, in addition to dedicating a golden self-portrait at Delphi²⁴. Alexander may have also acted as patron to Pindar and Bacchylides, for certainly we have fragments of encomia written by each in honour of the king²⁵.

Consequently, it was no simple affectation for Archelaus to follow his grandfather's philhellenic example when Macedonian and Greek interests were again contiguous at the other end of the fifth century. One key difference that we should perhaps note is that Archelaus' reign was remarkable for the efforts this king made to establish closer links with Athens in particular – efforts that were very much appreciated by a city struggling in the final years of the Peloponnesian War, a city in desperate need of Macedonian timber in order to rebuild and maintain its naval fleet following the disastrous defeat in Sicily²⁶.

²² See Borza 1990, 175–177 on Greek hostility. In the Gorgias (471c), Archelaus is identified as μέγιστα ἡδικοκῶς τῶν ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ, ἀθλιώτατος ἔστι πάντων Μακεδόνων (“the greatest criminal in Macedonia, the most wretched of all Macedonians”), both a brutal and corrupt tyrant.

²³ Diom. Ars grammatica 488. Text and translation taken from Kelly 1993, 11, who traces Diomedes' definitions of tragedy here back to Theophrastus (via Suetonius and Varro).

²⁴ For Argead ties to Argos see Hdt. 5, 18–22. 8, 137–9. 9, 45; details of Alexander's dedications can be found in Hdt. 8, 121 and D. 12, 21. Borza 1982, 8 examines the possibility that Herodotus visited Macedon. See Badian 1982, 34 on the timing of Alexander's attempts to re-

establish links with the southern Greeks, which came after the Persian retreat to Asia.

²⁵ Strikingly both fragments appear to tie the Macedonian king to the Homeric Alexander, son of Priam, and not primarily to a Greek pedigree. The short Pindar fragment 120f. is the more explicit: Ὀλβίων ὀμώνυμε Δαρδανιδᾶν παῖ θρασύμηδες Ἀμύντα (“namesake of the blessed son of Dardanus, daring child of Amyntas”). For extensive arguments on Bacchylides fragment 20B, see the excellent analysis by Fearn 2007, 27–86.

²⁶ For Athenian dependence on Macedonian timber see IG I³ 89; D. 19, 265. 49, 26; Th. 4, 108, 1 and X. HG 6, 1, 11. After 413 there were no timber supplies coming to Athens from the west, and with Amphipolis also hostile, the

Athenian dependence on Macedonian natural resources provided Archelaus, in turn, with an important source of revenue, and the brisk trade in timber and pitch helped to fund the king's programme of reforms. (Perhaps appropriately, Greek money funded the development of Archelaus' Hellenic court.) Overall, the lengths Archelaus went to in order to facilitate these trading partners were truly remarkable in the history of relations between the two states. For example, in addition to harmonising the weight standard of his coins to facilitate international trade,²⁷ Archelaus even entertained Athenian traders and ship builders (ναυπηγοί) at Pella. Archelaus accommodated these unusual guests in army quarters and furnished them with all necessary facilities and materials to ensure that the Athenians could rapidly rebuild their fleet in safety²⁸. Finally, according to Xenophon, the Macedonian king also contributed money to the Athenian war effort, even though he was technically neutral²⁹. Obviously such assistance was greatly appreciated by the Athenians, who honoured Archelaus as πρόξενος καὶ εὐεργέτης in 406 in recognition of the support that he had given to the ναυπηγοί³⁰.

The nexus between the two states, for a short and specific period, is striking: as Macedonian resources go south, Athenian merchants and ship builders, money and honours all go north. As do Euripides, Agathon, and those other artists who accepted Archelaus' patronage, all arriving in the same place (Pella presumably), at the same point in time, as political, economic, and cultural interests align. This is the bustle of activity that provides the backdrop for Archelaus' determined and ambitious drive to gain "respectability in the mainstream of Hellenic culture", as Oliver Taplin puts it, and this is the context for the particular production of Euripides' Archelaus³¹.

Among Euripides' final works, composed sometime around 408–407 during a stay in Macedonia, the Archelaus was the commission piece composed for the royal patron noted in the Diomedes passage above³². Although the story of Euripides' 'exile and death' in Macedonia has been challenged recently, that the playwright at least visited Archelaus' court was firmly established in antiquity and should still be accepted³³. While there, presumably, Euripides supervised the performance of the Archelaus, although we can only speculate as to the nature of the production given that it is difficult to establish a satisfying

Athenians had little choice but to turn to Archelaus. In *On His Return* (2, 11) we learn how Andocides, exploiting family connections in Macedonia, persuaded Archelaus to allow him to cut and export timber on behalf of the Athenian fleet at Samos. See Borza 1987, 40–43.

²⁷ Greenwalt 1994, 112–114. It is an interesting feature of these coins, which may have been primarily intended for foreign trade, that their decoration also clearly reflected Argead mythological claims of a Hellenic origin (many depict the head and attributes of Heracles or the goat motif). See Hammond – Griffith 1979, 138; Borza 1990, 173.

²⁸ See Meritt 1936, 248 n. 8; Greenwalt 1994, 117 for the suggestion that these Athenians were received at Pella. Borza 1990, 169 points out that, with both harbour and timber reserves within easy reach, Pella was an ideal location for the on-site construction of a new Athenian fleet. See also Hammond 1972, 132. 153.

²⁹ In 410 Theramenes and his fleet arrived for the battle of Cyzicus, having previously been in Macedonia collecting levies from Archelaus (X. HG 1, 1, 12).

³⁰ IG I³ 117 honours the Macedonian king *ἄριστος* ὄντι ἀνδρὶ ἀγαθῷ [καὶ προθύμοι ποιῆν *ὅτι*] δύναται ἀγαθ[όν] ("because he is noble of nature and eager to do all the good possible"). Meiggs – Lewis 1988, 277–280 for a reconstruction of the decree plus commentary.

³¹ Taplin 1999, 42.

³² On the Archelaus in general see, Harder 1985; Harder 1991, 117–136.

³³ See, most notably, Arist. Pol. 1311b 30–34, also Plu. *Moralia* 177b. Scullion 2003, 389–400 is rightly sceptical of claims that Euripides abandoned Athens, but his arguments dismissing other aspects of the 'Macedonian story' are not as convincing. See Hanink 2008, 116–119 and the comments of Csapo 2010a, 114 n. 135.

reconstruction of the play. Even though a relatively large number of fragments survive from the piece, many of the 37 fragments that remain are without obvious context and tend to be too general to be assigned to particular characters or scenes. However, the most significant theme we can identify was one established right at the very outset of the performance; two lengthy fragments survive from the Archelaus' prologue, an opening preamble that went to great lengths to detail the genealogy of the Macedonian royal family³⁴.

- (ΑΡΧΕΛΑΟΣ) Δαναὸς ὁ πενήκοντα θυγατέρων πατήρ
 Νείλου λιπὼν κάλλιστον †ἐκ γαίας† ὕδωρ,
 [ὃς ἐκ μελαμβρότιοι πληροῦται ῥοὰς
 Αἰθιοπίδος γῆς, ἥνικ' ἂν τακῆι χιῶν
 †τεθριππεύοντος† ἡλίου κατ' αἰθέρα,]
 ἐλθὼν ἐς Ἴαργος ὠίκισ' Ἰνάχου πόλιν·
 Πελασγιάτας δ' ὠνομασμένους τὸ πρὶν
 Δαναοὺς καλεῖσθαι νόμον ἔθηκ' ἂν' Ἑλλάδα (1)
- (Archelaos) Danaus, father of fifty daughters,
 left the most beautiful waters of the Nile †from the earth†
 [which fills its streams from the Ethiopian land
 of dark-skinned people, when the snow melts
 and the sun †drives his chariot† through the sky.] (5)
 He came to the Argolid and founded the city of Inachus,
 and he established the custom throughout Greece
 that those who had been called Pelasgians before
 should now be called Danaans
- οὐκ ἔψαυσε·Λυγκέως
 ἸΑ[β]ίας ἐγένετο· τοῦ δὲ δίπτυχον γένο[ς]
 Προῖτος μανε[ι]σῶν θυγατέρων τρισσῶν πατήρ
 ὃς τ' ἐγκατῆγεν χαλκῆϊ νυμφεύματ[ι]
 Δανάην ... θεῖα ... Ἀκρίσιός ποτε.
 Δανάης δὲ Περσεὺς ἐγένετ' ἐκ χρυσορρῦτων
 σταγόνων, ὃς ἐλθὼν Γοργόνος καρατόμος (10)
 Αἰθίοπ' ἔγημεν Ἀνδρομέδαν τὴν Κηφέως,
 ἢ τριπτύχους ἐγείνατ' ἐκ Περσέως κόρους·
 ἸΑλκαῖον ἠδὲ Σθένηλον, ὃς γ' Ἰαργους πόλιν
 ἔ[σ]χεν Μυκίνας, πατέρα δ' Ἀλκμήνης τρίτον
 Ἰηλεκτρύωνα· Ζ[ε]ὺς δ' ἐς Ἀλκμήνης λέχος (15)
 πε[σ]σὼν τὸ κλει[ὸ]ν Ἡρακλέους σπείρει δέμας.
 Ἰγλλος δὲ τοῦδ[ε], Τήμενος δ' Ἰγλλου πατρός,
 ὃς Ἰαργος ὠίκισ' Ἡρακλέους γεγὼς ἄπο.
 ἄπαιδία δὲ χρώμενος πατήρ ἐμὸς
 Τήμενος ἐς ἀγνῆς ἦλθε Δωδώνης πτύχας (20)
 τέκνων ἔρωτι· τῆς δ' ὁμωνύμου Διὸς
 πρόπολ[ο]ς Διώνης εἶπε Τημένωι τάδε·
 ἸΩ παῖ πεφυκὼς ἐκ γονῶν Ἡρακλέους,

³⁴ TrGF F 228. Text and translation presented here are taken from Collard et al. 2004, 338–341.

Ζεύς σ[οι] δίδωσι παῖδ', ἐγὼ μαντεύομαι
 ὄν' Ἀρχ[έλ]αον χοῆ καλεῖνα.. [] ... [] [] (25)

... did not touch: from Lynceus ...

Abas was born. His offspring was twofold: (5)
 Proetus, father of the three daughters who were driven mad,
 and Acrisius, who once led ...
 ... Danae down into a bronze bridal chamber ...
 Perseus was born of Danae from the golden-flowing
 drops, Having severed the Gorgon's head, he went (10)
 to Ethiopia and married Andromeda daughter of Cepheus.
 She bore Perseus three sons:
 Alcaeus, Sthenelus, who acquired
 Mycenae city of the Argive, and third Electryon
 the father of Alcmena. Zeus entered the bed of Alcmena (15)
 and begat the glorious Heracles.
 His son was Hyllus, and from Hyllus was born Temenus,
 who resumed residence at Argos as a descendant of Heracles.
 Since he was childless, my father Temenus
 went to the fold of holy Dodona (20)
 out of a desire for children, and the priestess of Dione,
 namesake of Zeus, said this to Temenus:
 'Child born of the offspring of Heracles,
 Zeus gives you a child, I prophesy,
 Who must be called Archelaus ... (25)

In this prologue, Euripides establishes a mythical 'Archelaus' as both the founder of the Macedonian royal line and a descendant of Heracles. In doing so, the playwright further develops the link between the royal house, Argos, and the Temenids that was first asserted earlier in the reign of Alexander I. We are guided here through eleven generations of the Macedonian royal line, a review that starts with Danaus and takes in the tales of, among others, Perseus, Alcmena, Heracles, Hyllus, and Temenus. The first section of this long chronology was traditionally accepted prior to the Archelaus, but here Euripides introduces two new elements: he lists Temenus as the son of Hyllus, and then establishes the mythical Archelaus as the son of Temenus – a birth prophesied by the priestess of Dodona at the end of the 25 lines of the second fragment, a birth that completes the early history of the Macedonian royal line.

These are quite remarkable passages; establishing for Archelaus a Hellenic heroic heritage second to none, endorsing the claims of the royal line that they are Temenidai in exile from Argos. Even beyond Argos, the Macedonians can trace their line all the way back to Heracles, the greatest of all the Greek heroes, who is himself mentioned three times in the play's prologue³⁵. Overall, in the Archelaus, Euripides adds another chapter to the tragic

³⁵ Heracles is also evoked in a number of the other surviving fragments that emphasise the ποιοί of our tragic hero and the promised glory that will result from these trials. In TrGF F 233 Archelaus is urged to overcome exile and poverty and rise from lowly social origins just

like his father Temenus and grand-father Hyllus; indeed Archelaus succeeds because of his adversities, he is poor but he is also "clever and energetic" in TrGF F 246. Finally, success comes from adversity in TrGF F 236. 237. 240.

history of this most illustrious heroic family: while the Heracles and Heraclidae detail the rescue of Heracles from despair (and the liberation of his children), and in the Cresphontes, Temenus, and Temenidai the exiles are restored to the Peloponnese, now in the Archelaus the Heracleidai spread to Macedonia³⁶.

Again it must be stressed that all this was no idle flattery. Such foundation myths were especially important to the Macedonians in their external dealings with the rest of the Greek world, but the genealogy of the ruling house of the Argead kings was also a vital concern within the kingdom at the end of the fifth century. Comparisons perhaps can be drawn with the situation at Sparta, where king-lists were established almost as a special kind of “genealogical charter” that served to honour the Agiads and Eurypontids and confirm these families in their leading political positions³⁷. Similarly, given the fierce competition between different branches of the Argeadae, those with rival ambitions for the Macedonian throne sought any grounds upon which they could establish their claim to power. Euripides’ Archelaus is an early example of the tactic of dynastic revision, which would later become a common practice among successive Argead monarchs who sought to make political capital out of such manipulations³⁸. Nor were such attempts at mythic re-definition unusual in the works of Euripides³⁹. Think, particularly, of the reworking of Athenian representations of their own ‘autochthonous’ origins that we find in the *Ion*⁴⁰, or of the emphasis on the barbarian ancestry of the Theban royal house in the *Phoenissae*⁴¹, or, finally, of the affirmation of Molossian mythological credentials that we find in the *Andromache*⁴². At a time when Archelaus’ legitimacy, not only as king but also as a son of Perdic-

³⁶ The mythical Archelaus comes to Thrace and delivers the city from its enemies (see Hyg. Fab. 219, 1–2, and in TrGF F 229 the city is besieged, while TrGF F 242. 243. 244 all seem to belong to some military context), delivers the countryside from the threat of highwaymen (TrGF F 260), and then rescues the city from the tyranny of Kisseus (TrGF F 261).

³⁷ A comparison suggested to me by Paul Cartledge. See also Cartledge 1979, 343f. where it is observed that the Spartan king-lists served “to affirm the superior blue-bloodedness of the Agiads and Eurypontids against the claims of other aristocratic families and to distinguish the aristocracy from the commons”.

³⁸ Hammond – Griffith 1979, 5–11 suggests that Euripides’ tragedy was the prototype in this respect. Greenwalt 1985, 49 points out that in the first half of the fourth century (and especially in the 390s) a rivalry developed between three different branches of the Argead family, each of which seems to have been particularly “concerned with the official record of early Macedonian history. Undoubtedly, this interest derived from a desire to strengthen their claim to authority by appealing to the past. This suggests that individual Argead kings hoped to enhance their status by glorifying their royal heritage as much as possible”.

³⁹ Allan 2000, 10–13 observes, that while we must be careful not to overstate the extent of

Euripides’ radical treatment of the traditions he inherits: “it is vital to bear in mind that the tragedian’s skill in inventing, adapting and reshaping myths is part of a well-examined tradition in Greek poetry”; within this context Euripides “recasts [his] mythical data with especial zest”.

⁴⁰ As E. Hall 1997, 101 notes, a Euripidean tragedy based on “transparently patriotic myths”. See Saxonhouse 1986, 252–273.

⁴¹ As Said 2002, 94 highlights: “This presentation of Theban history in the *Phoenician Women* deserves our attention because of its unusual character. To effect it, Euripides had to distance himself from the more common versions of the legend of Cadmus and make a complete break with the Aeschylean model”. Rawson 1970, 109–127 explores the many links between Thebes and Phoenicia that Euripides highlights, especially in the choral lyrics.

⁴² See Easterling 1994, 79, and also Allan 2000, 152–155. Of course, the *Andromache* may provide a precedent for Euripides’ activity in Macedonia. Thetis’ prophetic speech (ll. 1243–1250) details the fate that awaits Molossus, son of Neoptolemus and Andromache, who becomes the ancestor of the kings of Molossia. This prophecy establishes for the first time a link between the Molossians and the Hellenic heroic tradition, and a particular association with Achilles. Easterling wonders whether this passage can be connected “with the patronage

cas II, was challenged (if we can accept the historicity of the presentation of the Macedonian in Plato's *Gorgias*), the Archelaus presents a strong statement of a very specific royal pedigree, the point of which was aimed at a domestic Macedonian audience. Euripides' work sought to establish (by association) his patron as the second founder of the Macedonian line. Given the divisions within his kingdom, no doubt the historical Archelaus was delighted with a piece that so strongly re-affirmed the superiority of his 'right to rule' over the claims of any domestic rival.

Philip

Where any such presentation of the Archelaus may have taken place is uncertain⁴³. Different arguments have been proposed in favour of each of the three main cities in the kingdom at the time. Pella, which was the centre for much of Archelaus' Hellenic activity, immediately springs to mind, but no evidence of any theatrical activity has been found in or around Pella⁴⁴. If we are prepared to consider a performance space outside of the theatre for this drama, then Birgitta Bergquist has noted that among the buildings that do remain at Pella there are what appear to be large sympotic spaces⁴⁵. These may have provided the setting for a form of dramatic performance, as they did later with Alexander the Great. But if we insist on an established context for the performance of the Archelaus, then perhaps the city of Aegae is worth considering. The city certainly had not been totally eclipsed in importance by Pella at the time of Euripides' visit, and in Hyginus' account of the myth of Archelaus (*Fabulae* 219), which is probably Euripidean in origin, the hero eventually flees to Macedonia and founds Aegae at Apollo's instruction⁴⁶. If this was originally part of Euripides' treatment of the myth then was it perhaps included in the plot as a compliment to the host city. But an immediate context for the performance of the Archelaus is perhaps missing here, which has led some to consider Dion, the kingdom's religious centre from the fifth century, as the most suitable site.

The patron deity of Dion was Olympian Zeus, venerated along with the Muses, and Karadedos gives details of a fourth century theatre (rebuilt in Hellenistic times) that may have been the setting for the religious festival instituted here by Archelaus⁴⁷. Diodorus tells us how, in the spring of 334, Alexander the Great⁴⁸

of the Molossian king Tharyps, who was probably in Athens in the 420s and was granted Athenian citizenship" – the tentative suggestion being that Euripides accepted here another "encomiastic commission", and attempted to create a favourable context for the reception of this 'foreign' royal. See also Stevens 1971, 19–21.

⁴³ It is generally agreed that, given the play's patron and the subject matter, the place of performance was probably somewhere in Macedonia. See Harder 1985, 126, who notes further that there are no signs that the play was produced in Athens, but "all the relevant lists show gaps about the time when the Archelaus has been dated".

⁴⁴ Plutarch *Moralia* 1098b does mention a theatre in a fourth-century context, but there is little beyond that testimony

⁴⁵ Berquist 1990, 53f.

⁴⁶ See Hammond – Walbank 1988, 481. A site in Aegae itself remains to be found; note that the small court-theatre here is part of a larger complex that was constructed during the last years of Philip's reign. See below n. 72.

⁴⁷ Many thanks to J. Richard Green for his notes on the theatre at Dion. The structure visible still dates to the reign of King Philip V, with construction beginning ca. 200; this building replaced an earlier theatre going back to the late fifth century, although next to nothing of that survives. See Karadedos 1986, 325–340 and Karadedos 2005, 381–390.

⁴⁸ D. S. 17, 16, 3. Just. *Epit.* 24, 2, 8 refers to Dion itself as the most ancient and venerable sanctuary of Macedonia.

... πρὸς τοὺς ἀγῶνας θυσίας μεγαλοπρεπεῖς τοῖς συνετέλεσεν ἐν Δίῳ τῆς Μακεδονίας καὶ σκηνικοὺς ἀγῶνας Διὶ καὶ Μούσαις, οὓς Ἀρχέλαος ὁ προβασιλεύσας πρῶτος κατέδειξε.

... made magnificent sacrifices to the gods at Dion in Macedonia and held the dramatic contests in honour of Zeus and the Muses, which Archelaus, one of his predecessors, first founded.

Archelaus' Macedonian Olympia consisted of five days of athletic, musical, and dramatic competitions⁴⁹, and it was a festival still going strong in the time of Cassander. A decree presented by Miltiades Hatzopoulos, dating to the last quarter of the fourth century, gives us a little more information about this festival:

[... προ]-
 εδρίαν ἐν τοῖς [γυμνικ]-
 οῖς ἀγῶσι καὶ ἐν τοῖς Δι- (4)
 ονυσίοις καὶ τὸ ψήφισ-
 μα τοῦτο ἀναγράψαντας
 εἰστήλην λιθίνην ἀνα- (8)
 θεῖναι πρὸ τοῦ ναοῦ, τῆ-
 ν δὲ εἰκόνα στήσαι ἐν τ-
 ῶι τεμένει τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ
 Ὀλυμπίου,

... prohedria at the gymnastic games and in the Dionysia, and having engraved this decree on a stone stele to expose it before the temple and to erect his statue in the temenos of Olympian Zeus ...⁵⁰.

Unfortunately, the beginning of the inscription is missing, so we cannot tell who received the privilege of prohedria ('front-row seats') at the gymnastic games and in the Dionysia. Between Archelaus and Cassander, Philip II also celebrated the 'national' festival at Dion in 347. Diodorus, again, tells us⁵¹:

μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἄλωσιν τῆς Ὀλύνθου Ὀλύμπια ποιήσας τοῖς θεοῖς ἐπινίκια μεγαλοπρεπεῖς θυσίας συνετέλεσεν· πανήγυριν δὲ μεγάλην συστησάμενος καὶ λαμπροὺς ἀγῶνας ποιήσας πολλοὺς τῶν ἐπιδημούντων ξένων ἐπὶ τὰς ἐστιάσεις παρελάβανε.

After the capture of Olynthus, [Philip] celebrated the Olympian festival for the gods in commemoration of his victory, and offered magnificent sacrifices; and he organised a lavish festive assembly where he held splendid competitions and afterwards invited many of the visiting strangers to his banquets.

⁴⁹ This Macedonian festival was originally held over a five-day period, a format that was later extended to nine days by Alexander the Great, see Bosworth 1988a, 97. In the third century this festival may have been renamed the Basileia in honour of Zeus Basileus, see IG II² 3779 and Errington 1990, 264. Comparable festivals (in terms of the range of events) would perhaps be the Panathenaea and the Pythian Games, competitions from which the Macedo-

nians may or may not have been excluded. Borza 1993, 242 argues that it seems unlikely that any Macedonian king competed in the Olympic festival prior to Philip II. If the Macedonians were excluded in such a way then that would at least explain why Archelaus felt a need to establish his own 'Olympia' at Dion.

⁵⁰ Text and translation from Hatzopoulos 1996, 2. 57.

⁵¹ D. S. 16, 55, 1.

Although none of our sources make particular mention of dramatic performances as part of the festivities here, such contests were a standard part of the programme established by Archelaus. In addition, Demosthenes tells us that Philip “gathered together all types of artists for the religious celebrations and festivals”, and there were certainly actors present at this celebration⁵². For the celebration of this festival provided the occasion for the ‘banquet of Satyros’; a famous symposium for the honoured guests where Philip granted the request of the comic actor Satyros (himself a native of Olynthus) for the restoration of two innocent captives⁵³.

Beyond this, the sources fail to provide any further clear and unambiguous details of Philip’s involvement with ancient drama; although, it is fair to note that, overall, there is a lack of detailed information on Macedonian cultural life in the period of his reign. Although J. R. Ellis speaks of the “central role of the theatre” during the reign of Philip II⁵⁴, it would be nice to have more concrete examples of productions or performances in the kingdom during this crucial period. Certainly, there is much of the theatrical about the presentation of Philip’s rule, as perhaps one would expect in this period of Greek history where, as Peter Wilson has noted, “the line between theatre and politics became increasingly blurred”⁵⁵. That, of course, owes much to the fact that our picture of the period, and of Philip, is shaped significantly by the accounts of the Athenian orators; accounts that present exchanges between the two states in a distinctly dramatic manner. And we noted above how Philip and the Macedonians tended to be portrayed in those sharp exchanges.

These sharp exchanges and disparaging comments were not limited to the Athenian Assembly, as a fragment from Mnesimachus makes clear⁵⁶:

ἄρ’ οἴσθ’ ὅτι πρὸς ἄνδρας ἐστὶ σοι μάχη,
οἱ τὰ ξίφη δειπνοῦμεν ἠκονημένα,
ὄψον δὲ δαΐδας ἡμένας καταπίνομεν;
ἐντεῦθεν εὐθὺς ἐπιφέρει τραγήματα
ἡμῖν ὁ παῖς μετὰ δειπνον ἀκίδας Κρητικὰς,
ὥσπερ ἐρεβίνθους, δορατίων τε λείψανα
κατεαγόντ’, ἀσπίδας δὲ προσκεφάλαια καὶ
θώρακας ἔχομεν, πρὸς ποδῶν δὲ σφενδόνας
καὶ τόξα, καταπάλταισι δ’ ἐστεφανώμεθα

Don’t you know you fight against men,
that dine on just-sharpened swords,
and who eat up flaming torches as an appetiser?
Straight after that, after dinner a slave
brings on a dessert of Cretan arrows
instead of chickpeas, and broken shards of arrows too;

⁵² D. 19, 192: εἰς δὲ τὴν θυσίαν ταύτην καὶ τὴν πανήγυριν πάντας τοὺς τεχνίτας συνήγαγεν. Hammond – Griffith 1979, 327f. maintain that Philip did engage “the leading actors of the day” to take part in the festival’s dramatic contests.

⁵³ Satyros won at the Lenaea, around 375, and tradition often links him to Demosthenes. Aeschines tells us that Demosthenes praised the

comic actor for securing the release of his friends, who were captives and working in Philip’s vineyards (Aeschin. 2, 156). Demosthenes identifies the captives as two virgin daughters of Apollonphanes of Pydna, see D. 19, 192–195.

⁵⁴ Ellis 1980, 152.

⁵⁵ Wilson 1996, 321.

⁵⁶ Mnesimachus PCG F 7 (Φίλιππος) = Ath. 10, 421b–c.

and we have shields and breastplates as cushions,
with slings and bows at our feet,
and we crown ourselves with catapults.

The picture presented here of life at the Macedonian court is perhaps not as crude as some others we have considered, but it is striking nonetheless⁵⁷. Even more so if the speaker here is, as Webster suggests, Philip himself represented on stage and addressing the Athenians⁵⁸. Whether this was a crude caricature of Philip or not, still we see the court of another Macedonian king condemned. Although the company here is not quite as barbarous as the ἑταῖροι in Theopompus, there is still a ferocity and an intemperance about these Macedonians⁵⁹.

Again we could concede that the Macedonians were aware of the potential impact of these presentations, and further note their considerable efforts to respond to and counter such negative parodies. Philip, like Alexander Philhellene and Archelaus before him, eagerly presented himself the panhellenic patron when required, cultivating an image of the Macedonian king as the Ἑλληνικώτατος of all Greeks, as Demosthenes 19, 308 puts it, as part of a sustained attempt to reconcile the cities to the south to the reality of a changing political situation⁶⁰. Such a desire to court the Greeks was, of course, the point of the grand celebrations at Aegae in 336, where Philip was assassinated in the small theatre attached to the royal palace. There the Macedonian king sought to highlight a common identity with his allies prior to the invasion of Asia⁶¹. Philip used the opportunity that a royal marriage provided to display his newly acquired position as hegemon of the Greek world. Notably, on the night before the main ceremony:

Ἐν γὰρ τῷ βασιλικῷ πότῳ Νεοπτόλεμος ὁ τραγωδός, πρωτεύων τῇ μεγαλοφωνία καὶ τῇ δόξῃ, προστάξαντος αὐτῷ τοῦ Φιλίππου προενέγκασθαι τῶν ἐπιτετευγμένων ποιημάτων καὶ μάλιστα τῶν ἀνηκόντων πρὸς τὴν κατὰ τῶν Περσῶν στρατείαν ...

At the royal banquet, Neoptolemos – preeminent in vocal power and in popularity – was enjoined by Philip to present some successful verses, and particularly any appropriate to the campaign against the Persians ...

According to Diodorus, Philip, delighted (ἡσθεῖς) with Neoptolemos, was swept up in the performance. In due course the fateful procession to the theatre began, which culminated with the Macedonian king stepping out before the assembled audience, dressed in a white

⁵⁷ We should also note that Mnesimachus revives another old standard here; as early as Aristophanes' *Frogs* we see Macedonia(ns) associated with 'feasting and dining'. For example, when Heracles asks Dionysus where Euripides has gone we are told: εἰς μακάρων εὐωχίαν ("to the banquets of the blessed" 85). See Long 1986, 163. 139–142.

⁵⁸ Webster 1953, 64, who also considers that the speaker here may be a Macedonian envoy sent south by Philip.

⁵⁹ See Davidson 1997, 303. See also Mnesimachus' *Φίλιππος*, PCG F 8, where one of the characters is delighted that no one from Pharsalus will be coming to dine; seemingly, the Thessa-

lians are fiercer, and eat even more, than the Macedonians.

⁶⁰ Csapo – Slater 1994, 223 note: "Philip and Alexander's active participation in the promotion of Greek culture went a long way toward reconciling other Greek states to the political hegemony of Macedon".

⁶¹ As Perlman 1976, 5 notes on such tactics: "during the classical period, the Panhellenic ideal served as a tool of propaganda for the hegemonial or imperial rule of a polis; it served to justify the hegemony and mastery of one polis over other states by proposing a common aim, war against the barbarians".

cloak, assuming the role of a latter-day Agamemnon as “theatre and life become metaphors for one another”⁶².

Looking for other, more specific, uses of the theatre and theatre professionals within Macedonia during Philip’s reign, certainly, we can point to the presence of more men like Satyros (mentioned already) in Philip’s entourage. Indeed, if Archelaus’ reign was notable for the eminent playwrights that he managed to attract to Macedonia, then Philip’s was notable for the number of famous actors who visited the royal court. Aeschines tells us that the Macedonian king was “well-disposed” to actors purely because of their “artistry”⁶³. But he was also quick to use members of the profession to play political or diplomatic roles on his behalf. As has been noted by both Brigitte Le Guen and Pat Easterling, Philip seems to have recognised the potential value of keeping these theatre professionals to hand, men who could claim immunity and free passage while touring the Greek world and were ideally equipped to conduct his diplomatic business⁶⁴. Demosthenes, in particular, notes the important part played by Aristodemos of Metapontum and the great Neoptolemos of Scyros in exchanges between Macedon and Athens⁶⁵. Thessalos was another actor heavily involved in Macedonian politics during the reign of Philip⁶⁶; according to Plutarch at least, he was even part of the diplomatic mission negotiating a potential marriage alliance between Pixodarus, a Carian satrap, and the Macedonian royal family⁶⁷.

As Eric Csapo has recently noted, there are a number of significant developments in the history of ancient theatre to note in this flurry of ‘dramatic’ activity at Philip’s court. First, this king’s preference for theatre performers over playwrights highlights, and no doubt contributed to, the growing importance of the actor in the fourth century; we see nascent signs here of the increasing, and now international, demand for actors⁶⁸. In addition, and more significantly, “it is in the court of Philip that we first hear of an actor performing an extract from drama in a private context”⁶⁹. Neoptolemos’ recital of those select tragic odes at Philip’s state banquet was a performance within a wholly secular setting, detached from any established religious festival. As such, that performance represents a key break, although it was anticipated somewhat in the games Philip celebrated at Dion in 347 that we noted earlier. For that was an occasion that combined the celebration of a ‘national’ religious festival with the celebration of Philip’s own personal victory (the fall of Olynthus) at the Macedonian Olympia. The new demands that Macedonian patrons made of ancient drama certainly contributed to a change in the way in which performances were produced; from the

⁶² Easterling 1997c, 220. For the full account of events at Aegae see D. S. 16, 91–93.

⁶³ διὰ τὴν γνῶσιν καὶ φιλανθρωπίαν τῆς τέχνης (Aeschin. 2, 15).

⁶⁴ The evidence is collected in Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 286–319, while Ghiron-Bistagne 1976 remains the standard work on this topic. Le Guen 2001 offers the most complete account of the activities of theatre professionals in the Hellenistic period. See also Easterling 1997c, 217–219.

⁶⁵ Aristodemos was also part of an Athenian embassy that visited Thessaly and Magnesia in 343/2 (D. 3, 83). See Hammond – Griffith 1979, 537.

⁶⁶ Thessalos twice celebrated victories at both the Dionysia (in 347 and 340, see IG II² 2318 and 2320), and the Lenaia (for the second time in 347 according to IG II² 2325).

⁶⁷ Plu. Alex. 10. Although the episode did not end well for Thessalos: when Alexander tried to highjack arrangements his father responded severely, Alexander was reprimanded and five companions exiled. On Philip’s instructions, the hapless Thessalos was returned to Macedonia in chains for his part in the affair. See Badian 1963, 245; Hammond – Griffith 1979, 679f.; Bosworth 1988b, 21f.

⁶⁸ See Csapo 2010a, 86f. on these early signs of “a developing star system of Hollywood proportions”.

⁶⁹ Csapo 2010a, 172.

end of Philip's reign, Greek theatre had to prove itself a resilient and adaptable medium if it was to retain a place at multiform celebrations that offered an increasingly diverse content.

Philip's festivities, part religious ritual and part secular celebration, were significant in the history, in the evolution, of ancient theatre; for, as Peter Wilson notes, the Macedonian "practice of establishing Dionysiac-style games principally to celebrate and solemnise their own achievements helped to dislodge drama from its fixed festival moorings"⁷⁰. And it is key to note a continuity here that stretches back even to Archelaus' celebrations at Dion, a link between festivities more than fifty years apart. They remain Macedonian. As Wilson distinguishes, we see Dionysiac-style games here, but the Olympia at Dion was no Dionysia. Even though the Macedonian kings appropriated Athenian dramatists and a variety of Greek performers, they did not appropriate the Athenian performance context. No doubt they were aware of potential options, and even though the Athenian context was so successful, that is not what the Macedonians opted for. These royal patrons established their own context for the performance of theatre, and it was this flexible festival structure that endured. Greek theatre remained a crucial art-form, and a vital part of the celebrations; but beyond Athens, dramatic performances were no longer assured of centre stage. They did not dominate at the Macedonian Olympia, as patrons there offered an eclectic and exuberant mix of performances even alongside their Euripides.

The Macedonian Court

But this Macedonian mix of entertainments was staged for whom? What audience awaited the Greek performers when they visited the royal court? It is worth noting again that the festival, games, and marriage celebrated at Vergina/Aegae in 336 were staged by Philip for a select audience of international guests⁷¹. This was somewhat unusual; typically the critical audience for Macedonian kings up to Alexander the Great remained a domestic one, even as they were drawn into political and military action beyond the borders of their own kingdom. Court concerns were often the most urgent, and it is this close 'court context' for theatre performance that is perhaps the most striking feature of the Macedonian engagement with Greek theatre.

Consider again the small theatre at Aegae; perhaps second to Dion in terms of its significance as a venue, but still a key performance site in the kingdom from the end of Philip's reign⁷². Part of the larger palace complex at Aegae, the king's court theatre was a multi-purpose space designed for performance and religious and political gatherings⁷³.

⁷⁰ Wilson 2000, 288.

⁷¹ Diodorus tells us that the "many people from all over streamed" (πολλῶν πανταχόθεν συρροούντων) to Macedonia, with notables from most of the important cities represented at court. D. S. 16, 92, 1. See also the Philip's celebration at Dion in 347, noted above, where after the festivities the king "invited many of the visiting strangers to his banquets" (D. S. 16, 55, 1).

⁷² On the excavations at Vergina/Aegae see especially Andronikos 1988, 46–49 figs. 21–23. For further reports see: Andronikos 1982, 26–38; Andronikos 1988, 1–16; Andronikos

1990, 83 f.; and more recently Kottaridi 2002, 75–81. On the theatre itself see Drougou 1997, 281–305; Wiles 1997, 38.

⁷³ The theatre at Aegae is remarkable for its small cavea, but unusually large orchestra (28.5 m in diameter). For Borza, formal dramatic performances did not require such a large structure, and so the "evidence suggests that a variety of rituals were held here, that is, the theatre acted as an amphitheatre" (Borza 1990, 255 f.). Not quite the Theatre of Dionysus – "a space designed for the express purpose of honouring the god at his festival", as Wiles 1997, 48 puts it.

Interestingly, in the cavea at Aegae there remains a single row of permanent seats, the front row that runs alongside the orchestra. The absence of more permanent seats is not problematic in itself; constructing stone theatres was an expensive business, and given that Aegae is in an area “rich in timber but poor in stone suitable for building purposes”⁷⁴, presumably the rest of the audience after the first row sat on wooden benches. But Manolis Andronikos, who excavated the site, was somewhat troubled by the uniformity of the row of stone seats that does still survive; noting the absence of thrones or inscriptions marking any other kind of individual seats for dignitaries⁷⁵. In answer, Borza suggests that the whole of the first tier of stone seats was used as *prohedria*, for this “single row of fixed seats could hold about one hundred persons, which was almost exactly the number who may have made up the king’s inner circle”⁷⁶. If this were the case, then the composition of any audience gathered at Aegae may have reflected and represented the social and political hierarchy within the kingdom.

One of the most striking features of that hierarchy was the presence of an influential band of ‘companions’ (*ἑταῖροι*) at the Macedonian court; originally formed to accompany the king on military campaigns, although membership was later extended to include all of the monarch’s close associates⁷⁷. Philip II, in particular, was careful to induct nobles from throughout the extended kingdom (and beyond) as his companions in an attempt to tie them to his rule, and by the 340s numbers may have risen to some eight hundred members⁷⁸. From this greater group, both Philip and Alexander the Great drew their more select company of *ἑταῖροι*⁷⁹. And it is this influential group, always close to the king, who are front and centre at the productions at Aegae (both dramatic and non-dramatic) and elsewhere.

Although some have doubted whether the Macedonian subjects shared the Argead royal family’s fascination with Hellenic culture, the growing number of discoveries at Der-

⁷⁴ Kottaridi 2002, 76.

⁷⁵ Andronikos 1988, 48, who suggests that “portable wooden thrones” were used for the king and his company when they chose to attend performances.

⁷⁶ Borza 1990, 255. The privileged access dignitaries had to seats right at the front of the theatre, *προεδρία*, was a notable feature of theatre production in Athens for example; there distinguished guests from both home (see Isoc. 5, 46f., Ar. Knights 573–576 and Th. 834) and abroad (see Hdt. 1, 54 and D. 18, 28) were honoured with the award of ‘front-seats’ in the Theatre of Dionysus. In addition to these seats, other parts of this theatre were reserved for archons, members of the Boule, ephebes, and generals, while each of the ten tribes may also have had its own block of seats. See Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 269f. for the evidence. Goldhill 1997, 61 observes: “As the audience of the Great Dionysia constitutes ‘the civic gaze’, so the audience is seated in ways which map the constitution of the civic body. The Great Dionysia, ceremonially and spatially, puts the city on display”. For an assessment of the relationship of theatre-seating to the far more hierarchical Roman society see Rawson 1991,

509–545. For the award of *prohedria*, in a Macedonian context, see the inscription from Dion considered above.

⁷⁷ Most of the information on the Macedonian *ἑταῖροι* comes from the reign of Alexander the Great, so we must treat the evidence carefully. Errington 1990, 243f. argues that the small band of king’s companions (originally only Macedonian) was extended to include all of the monarch’s close associates. Anaximenes (FGrHist 72 F 4) maintains that both the Macedonian *hetairoi* (cavalry companions) and *pezetairoi* (infantry companions) were instituted during the reign of Alexander I, but Hammond – Griffith 1979, 158–160 argue that the latter was formed during the rule of Alexander II (i. e. 369–368).

⁷⁸ A figure (perhaps exaggerated) proposed by Theopompus, see Theopomp. Hist. FGrHist 115 F 225b.

⁷⁹ As mentioned, this ‘select’ circle of *ἑταῖροι* seems to have been almost exactly 100 in number. Between 65 and 70 individual *hetairoi* are identified as Alexander’s *Philo*i in Berve 1926, 31. Hamilton 1969, 37 adds another name to the list. Undoubtedly, there are several others as yet unknown to us.

veni, Lefkadia, and Vergina do indicate that members of both the wider monarchy, and an extended aristocracy beyond that group, also delighted in the same cultural imports⁸⁰. Indeed, one way in which Macedonian kings seem to have fostered a united ethos among the ruling elite – among the aristocratic group around the ruling dynasty – was to exploit this shared interest in appropriated forms of Greek culture. As we have noted already, even the curt pictures of the courts of Archelaus and Philip in the literary sources presents kings and their entourages delighting in the theatrical: this was an elite that accepted Euripides into its ranks, that made a number of theatre performers welcome in Pella, and (if we can believe accounts of the campaigns of Alexander the Great) was even in the habit of trading tragic barbs amongst each other⁸¹. Such ‘play’ in the Macedonian court was far from frivolous, but tended to mark and maintain key divisions within this highly-stratified society; social and political divisions that were also manifest in arrangements at Aegae, where performances in the royal theatre were staged primarily by, and for, the benefit of an elite audience; an audience that considered it advantageous to promote a distinct cultured identity for itself as a select, but dominant, ruling elite. A love for, and performances of, Greek theatre became a key part of the elite’s ‘culture of exclusivity’ (or ‘culture of reinforcement’), helping to define significant social and political divisions within the kingdom⁸².

While we are dealing with a very different setting, beyond the more-established performance centres, that the makeup of theatre audiences in Macedonia might also physically reflect and represent hierarchies within the kingdom is not such a radical proposal in itself. But some caution is still necessary, and given the poor nature of the surviving material one must avoid being too dogmatic on these points. Trying to establish what the degree of cultural separation between the Macedonian elite and non-elite may have been is difficult, for we lack clear archaeological evidence for the sections of Macedonian society outside of the leading dynastic and aristocratic groups. In particular, we must not deduce from the lack of cultural material that those outside the Macedonian elite were uninterested in such matters, a conclusion that would simply be a slight variation on the old uncultured Macedonians theme. Certainly, our sources tell us that the great celebrations of the Olympia at Dion were widely popular; numbers are hard to come by, but we could note that when Alexander dismissed his Macedonian veterans from the Persian campaign

⁸⁰ For Badian 1982, 37, although Macedonian kings may have been devoted to Greek culture, there was little indication that this interest permeated through the rest of the kingdom. However, as Borza 1990, 253–276 details, archaeological finds are now revealing to us the lives of the wealthy Macedonian elite, and the tastes they also developed for Greek artefacts and culture.

⁸¹ It is absolutely the case that the historical accounts of the Macedonian kings are laced with tragic quotations and theatrical anecdotes. In and of itself, this tends to tell us more about the stylistic techniques of our sources than the place of theatre in Macedonia, see Mossman 1988, 83–93. However, if successive Macedonian kings were positioned at the heart of such cultured groups in the kingdom, then this was an elite that could indeed operate on a ‘learned’ level. See Carney 2003, 61–63.

⁸² See Archibald 2000, 231. Hammond – Griffith 1979, 152 maintain that the Argeads asserted a Hellenic ancestry to distinguish themselves from other noble families, and that the success of the clan owed much to this particular ethnic identity: the members of the ‘Greek’ ‘royal family were held in reverence by the ordinary Macedonians, and the cohesion of the state resulted from this reverence’. J. Hall 2001, 169 also argues that “conceiving of their subjects as non-Hellenic offered distinct advantages to the ruling house of Macedon in justifying its right to rule”. Though we can accept the general principle here, it must be pointed out that these Hellenic ties were neither ‘natural’ nor exclusive to the Argead group. Consequently, we can suppose that these same cultural criteria were also employed by the wider nobility to exclude inferiors.

in 324 he awarded the privilege of *prohedria*, at “all public contests and in the theatres”, to some ten thousand troops⁸³. However, more evidence is needed to continue with any ‘bottom up’ review of the cultural interests of the greater Macedonian group.

But even if large numbers were present at, and partaking in, such celebrations, we would still see public spectacle used to affirm local political and social hierarchies; with these festive occasions serving as a means to reinforce the relationship between king and court and helping to establish and maintain bonds between the wider nobility and the Argead royal family⁸⁴. It would still be the case that upon each occasion when the court staged and attended performances of theatre at Dion or Aegae, it was apparent to all in the audience exactly who was included in the king’s clique of selected *ἑταῖροι*. Far from being barbaric brutes, with little concern, feel, or time for such matters, for the Macedonian ruling elite (at least), culture was key at court; it represented one of the criteria by which social prestige and position was determined among the king’s company.

Conclusion

Outside of Athens, and on into the fourth century, theatre remained a hugely important medium, prized and valued by an ever-growing audience. If many do now accept that theatre was a cultural product that had appeal all over the Hellenic world, there is still much work to be done to establish how the medium may have worked in its different settings. And while scholars may not need to drastically redefine ideas on the central place and continued importance of Greek theatre, we do need to add nuance to that understanding⁸⁵. Crucially, in the supposed wilds of the northern kingdom of Macedonia we find traces of a significant, and very different, context for the production of ancient drama.

Even if theatre went on to develop into one of the “defining indicators of Greekness”⁸⁶, that general process is not the key background against which to consider the Macedonian engagement with the medium. Instead different values, different structures, different traditions must apply: Macedonian kings sponsored Greek theatre, for Macedonian reasons⁸⁷. The elite there were enthusiasts and committed patrons of ancient drama, but they did insist on their own performance contexts and settings. Kings such as Archelaus and Philip II sponsored dramatic productions, entertained playwrights and actors because the form could facilitate their rule in different ways. Ultimately, a review of how Macedon’s royal sponsors worked with Greek theatre again proves the enduring truth of Richard Green’s observation that “the uses to which theatre were put were never static”⁸⁸. It is because the medium could be so variously exploited, and adapted, to meet such different needs, that it lived so very well beyond classical Athens.

⁸³ See Plu. *Alex.* 71; *Arr. An.* 7, 12, 1; and *D. S.* 17, 109, 1.

⁸⁴ Following Borza 1983, 44–55.

⁸⁵ Ceccarelli 2010, 100: “Needless to say, tragedy abroad became part of the contexts that differed from each other just as much as the various traditions, cults, rituals, and political and administrative cultures of the individual poleis did – changes in context surely also influenced how the genre was perceived (and performed)”. See also Wilson 2007b, 2f., introducing a vol-

ume that “advocates the recognition of the specificity and complexity of the material conditions of dramatic production as they varied over time and place”.

⁸⁶ Goldhill 1999, 23.

⁸⁷ See Borza 1990, 172 (following Hammond): “The significance of the Greek-Macedonian cultural conjunction was that the Macedonians adapted and exploited philhellenism for purposes that were uniquely Macedonian”.

⁸⁸ Green 1994, 12.