

The impact of Alexander's conquest

Subjects, conquered and chroniclers

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The impact of Alexander's conquest

Subjects, conquered and chroniclers

M. Mendoza & B. Antela-Bernárdez (eds.)



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INTRODUCTION

Living in a changing world is a challenging task. The events and historical development of the XXth Century, and as far as we can see, their continuity in our own XXIst Century, have driven Humankind to face its hardest age. Nevertheless, History is usually very helpful when we try to look for examples and ideas to confront our own reality. In this way, Antiquity is like a mirror to review our own worries and to find solutions, perspectives, and even some hope in order to gain a critical and deeper understanding of our days.

Alexander the Great has had a great impact from his own times on in the way that any thinker, past and present, has observed the contemporary facts and problems. From the Hellenistic Monarchies, based on Macedonian notions of Royalty, and the Roman Emperors to Christian and Islamic authors to the ages of the Renaissance, the Illustration or even the Colonialist West and Nazi Germany, we can trace the usings and impact of Alexander's conquest and the potential evaluation that every epoch did about his figure and his campaigns. Nevertheless, at least from Western eyes, Alexander had been usually adopted as a precedent of the Western hegemony and rule over the world. Not many voices have critically stressed and challenged this standard view of the young Macedonian king. However, nowadays, research has included this deeper reflection, avoiding celebrating Alexander's harshness and mistreatment of the conquered population. From Eddy's *The King is Dead* (1961) and Bosworth's unapologetic portrait of Alexander to more recent approaches by Pierre Briant, Alexander has been the object of a deep reappraisal. Modern historiography about Alexander, although frequently it still commends his ability and skills as commander and conqueror, seems to be going through a slow change of direction in order to get a better and wide picture of what the Macedonian conquest really meant to many people in Asia and Greece, and how expensive and bitter was the price to be paid for being part of the glorious tale of Alexander.

While writing these lines, we knew about a new book by the brilliant master Waldemar Heckel titled *In the Path of Conquest: Resistance to Alexander the Great* (2020), which pays attention to this range of topics. Good news, indeed, because the very stressed historical character Alexander deserves to be understood not just as a

model or an ancient *exemplum* in the style of those by of Plutarch or Valerius Maximus, or as a gentle ruler and a romantic knight, like Tarn and his enormous amount of unconscious followers still do, but also as a bloodthirsty commander and a brutal leader who imposed his rule by force, in the Macedonian manner (rather than in the Greek one) to almost half the population of the 'known world'.

The following pages are a collection of works from different authors but with a common starting point. In December 2017, answering the open call from the organizer, Borja Antela-Bernárdez, many of the best international researchers on Alexander the Great met in Barcelona, within the classrooms and seminars of the Autonomous University, to face the difficult task of questioning Alexander and discuss the impact of the Macedonian conquest. This book is the result of those nice days of sharing ideas and confronting opinions with critical views. Some of the original participants, like Joseph Roisman, Tim Howe, Olga Palagia, Christian Djurslev, or Stephen Harrison, among others, have not been able to contribute to this book, for different reasons, but they are still part of this book.

These are, nowadays, challenging times for every one of us. But during the darker hours, we like to remember the beautiful moments we all shared, while talks, discussions, or meals took place, and we can still feel the nice atmosphere we all created, and the friendship that arose among many of us. This kind of friendly ties is the best nourishment for research and life itself, in its fullest form. Indeed, we dedicate this collection to all our friends from those days, with the hope that criticism of any kind of imperialism and violence can be discussed, analysed and freely expressed from academia in order to help people around the globe to improve our own world.

The Editors

CONTRIBUTORS

Mario Agudo Villanueva is a journalist and MBA at the University of Deusto and EAE. He has combined his professional career in mass media with research and divulgation works in the field of history, with several publications in specialised magazines, both academic and general (*National Geographic*, *Muy Historia*, *Desperta Ferro*). He has been director of publications such as *ROMÁNICO* and *Mediterráneo Antiguo*, as well as a regular contributor to radio spaces such as *Ser Historia*. He is currently on the editorial board of *Karanos. Bulletin of Ancient Macedonian Studies*. He is the author of the books *Palmira. La ciudad reencontrada* (Confluencias, 2016), *Macedonia. La cuna de Alejandro Magno* (Distoria, 2016), *Atenas. El lejano eco de las piedras* (Confluencias, 2018) y *El bestiario de las catedrales. Animales y seres fantásticos del mundo antiguo al medievo cristiano* (Almuzara, 2019).

Manuel Albaladejo Vivero studied Laws at the Complutense University of Madrid, and History at the University of Alcalá. He received his PhD in Ancient History at Alcalá in 2003 with a thesis on India and Ethiopia in ancient Greek literature. He has enjoyed two postdoc fellowships at Freiburg University –one of them awarded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. His main fields of research are India in Antiquity, the historical geography of the ancient world, and travels and navigation in the Classical world. Currently, he is Lecturer of Ancient History at the University of Valencia.

Eran Almagor is the author of many studies on Plutarch and other Greek writers of the Roman imperial period (Strabo, Josephus). His interests include Hellenistic history, the history of the Achaemenid Empire and its image in Greek literature (especially in Herodotus and Ctesias), Plutarch's works (mainly the *Lives*), and the modern reception of Antiquity, particularly in popular culture. He is the author of *Plutarch and the Persica* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018), and is co-editor of *Ancient Ethnography: New Approaches* (Bloomsbury, 2013) and *The Reception of Ancient Virtues and Vices in Modern Popular Culture* (Brill, 2017).

Borja Antela-Bernárdez is a Full Lecturer of Ancient Greek History at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (since 2005). From his PhD Thesis about Alex-

ander and the Greeks on (published in 2005), he has written a lot about Alexander the Great, but also on other topics of research, such as Modern Historiography on Alexander and the Hellenistic World, the place of Athens in the First Mithridatic War, Gender and Ancient Greek History (mainly Hellenistic-Late Roman Republic periods), and Classical Reception in Cinema. Lately, he also has been writing about Theory of History and how alternative pedagogy should approach history from imagination and emotions (thoughts published in *Historia Viva*, 2019). Director of the journal *Karanos. Bulletin of Ancient Macedonian Studies*, IP of the Project *History of Conflict in Antiquity* (funded by the Catalan Research Council), and Coordinator of the Master of the Mediterranean Sea (UOC-UAB-UAH), he is in his forties, and he usually says that he strongly believes in a better world.

Chiara Di Serio is a postdoctoral research affiliate of the Center for Religious Studies at the Central European University. She received a long training at the Roman School of History of Religions at the University of Rome *La Sapienza*. In February 2020 she defended her PhD dissertation focused on the apocryphal correspondence between Alexander the Great and Dindimus, head of the Brahmans. Her research interests concern the Graeco-Roman ethnographic literature on Eastern countries and peoples, specifically on India and its inhabitants. She is currently carrying out a research project on the narratives about the Indian «naked philosophers» from Antiquity to the Middle Ages.

Adolfo J. Domínguez Monedero is Professor of Ancient History at the Autonomous University of Madrid. Among the lines of research that he is developing in recent times is the study of the History of Macedonia and Epirus. Results of it are his book *Alejandro, Rey de Macedonia y de Asia* (Sílex, 2013) and the edition of the collective volume *Politics, Territory and Identity in Ancient Epirus* (ETS, 2018). He is a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute and a corresponding Academic of the Royal Academy of History.

Francisco Javier Gómez Espelosín is a Professor of Ancient History at the University of Alcalá. He is a specialist in the ancient Greek world, with particular attention and dedication to subjects related to Greek historiography and geography, to the Greek vision of other peripheral cultures and to the figure of Alexander. His most recent book is *Geografías de los exótico. Los griegos y otras culturas*. He is the author of articles in specialised journals, both Spanish and international, as well as of several chapters in collective works (Síntesis, 2019). He is also the translator of authors such as Apianus, Strabo, the Paradoxographers and Greek travel literature. He has managed research projects as IP funded by the Spanish Research Ministry. With other Spanish and foreign colleagues, he is a Founder Member GAHIA (International Society for the Study of Geography and Historiography in Antiquity) and Corresponding Academic of the Spanish Royal Academy of History.

Marc Mendoza completed his PhD with a dissertation focused on cases of irreligious behaviour during Alexander's reign. His main research fields so far have been Alexander the Great, the Diadochi and early Hellenistic Central Asia, but he has also published papers on Achaemenid deportations, modern reception and Catalan historiography. He is the secretary of *Karanos: Bulletin of Ancient Macedonian Studies* and, in the recent years, has published books like *La irreligiosidad de Alejandro* (Universidad de Alcalá, 2019) and edited collective volumes such as *Stranger Things. Fantasy in Antiquity* (Projekt Verlag, 2021). He is currently an Associate Lecturer at the University of Lleida.

Antonio Ignacio Molina Marín is a Doctor in Ancient History for the University of Murcia and an honorary researcher at the University of Alcalá de Henares. He has made stays as a visiting professor at the Universities of Exeter (England) and Santa Clara (USA). He is currently a member of the editorial board of the journal *Karanos: Bulletin of Ancient Macedonian Studies*. Among his most important publications are *Geographica: ciencia del espacio y tradición narrativa de Homero a Cosmas Indicopleustes* (University of Murcia, 2011), *Alejandro Magno: Apotheosis y paideia* (Editorial Académica Española, 2012) and *Alejandro Magno (1916-2015): Un siglo de estudios sobre Macedonia antigua* (Pórtico, 2018). His main lines of research are Macedonia, Alexander the Great, the ruler cult, and the Greco-Roman geographical thought.

Jaakkojuhani Peltonen is a researcher at Tampere University. After defending his thesis, Peltonen has been as a visiting fellow at King's College London (2018-2020). In 2019 Routledge published his book *Alexander the Great in the Roman Empire, 150 BC to AD 600*. He has also been co-editor of a volume on the justification of war in history. Peltonen has contributed to *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Alexander the Great* and *Gender and Memory, and Identity in the Roman World*. His special interests include reception of Alexander the Great, conceptions of masculinity and ideology of war in ancient Rome.

Guendalina D. M. Taietti has a Bachelor in Classical Philology and a Masters in Ancient History from the University of Pavia (Italy), and a PhD in Classics from the University of Liverpool (UK). Her research focusses on ancient Macedon, the Hellenistic period, animals across Eastern and Western Classics, and the Greek Alexander Receptions. Taietti is passionate about teaching and getting to know new cultures; as a result, she has taught Classics in several countries, such as Greece, the UK, and China.



ONE KING
TO RULE THEM ALL

ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE MACEDONIAN KINGSHIP

GUENDALINA D. M. TAIETTI
(*University of Liverpool*)

The paper addresses the big theme of the nature of Macedonian kingship specifically through three exhibits: the Philippi decree,¹ the Kalindoia dedication² and the Opis mutiny. I will consider Alexander the Great's role and actions as an Argead king and seek to assess to what extent Alexander followed the path drawn by his predecessors for issues concerning domestic and foreign policy, and how he altered Macedonian monarchy in the wake of his father Philip II's reforms. Finally, with this paper, I also aim at evaluating the impact that the Persian campaign had on the kingdom of Macedon from both a social and an institutional perspective.

EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE

The examination of the epigraphical evidence needs to start with a clarification about the identity of the man named Ἀλέξανδρος in the two inscriptions. His identification will allow us to determine the chronology of the two documents:

a) The decree of Philippoi displays the name *Alexandros* three times (A. 3, B. 5, ll. 11-12), *Philippos* twice (A. 9, B. 10), and *Philotas* and *Leonnatos* once (A. 7).³ Since Alexander's father, Philip II, founded the Macedonian colony of Philippoi in 356 BC,⁴

¹ Museum of Philippoi, inventory num. Α 37; *SEG* XXXIV 664; Hatzopoulos 1996 II n°. 6.

² Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, inventory n°. 9229; Vokotopoulou 1986: 87-114; Hatzopoulos 1996 II n°. 62.

³ Cf. *SEG* XXXIV 664.

⁴ App. *BC*. IV. 105.

and Philotas⁵ and Leonnatus⁶ are well attested among Alexander's Companions, it is safe to identify the *Alexandros* of this inscription with the great conqueror.

b) After the destruction of Olynthus and, consequently, the dissolution of the Chalcidian league by Philip II in 348 BC, Kalindoia became part of the Macedonian kingdom as βασιλική γῆ (royal land).⁷ Thus, Alexander III was entitled to establish a Macedonian colony and to dispose of the land around it, as suggested in the dedication of Agathanor. Moreover, Vokotopoulou has pointed out that the calligraphy suits the period *ca.* 330-300 BC.⁸

Both documents show Alexander III making decisions about royal land⁹ and its utilization by people living in Macedonian territories; in the first, he also receives an embassy. Were his actions in line with the Argead royal policy? How can we define the boundaries of the Argead king's power?

Modern scholarship has not reached an agreement about the nature of Macedonian kingship and, *grosso modo*, it is possible to differentiate between two main viewpoints: a) the so-called *constitutional interpretation* and b) the *autocratic/absolutist interpretation*.¹⁰ The first underlines the constitutional character of the Macedonian monarchy, since the Argead king ruled aided by a council of Companions, called ἑταῖροι (*hetairoi*),¹¹ and his power was limited by the army in assembly, variously described as οἱ Μακεδόνες, τὸ κοινὸν τῶν Μακεδόνων, or ἡ ἐκκλησία τῶν Μακεδόνων. The assembly was normally convened by the king or—if the king was a minor or abroad—by one of his representatives, and it ratified the succession to the Argead throne.¹² Its members were granted freedom of speech (παρρησία), decided about matters of war, and adjudicated trials for high treason.¹³

⁵ Berve 1926 II: 393-397, n^o. 802; Heckel 2006: 147-151, n^o. 2.

⁶ Berve 1926 II: 232-235, n^o. 466; Heckel 2006: 216-219, n^o. 4.

⁷ Errington, *Brill's NP II* (2003: 957), s.v. 'Calindoea (Καλίνδοια; Kalindoia)'; Hatzopoulos / Loukopoulou 1992: 71-74.

⁸ Vokotopoulou 1986: 93-95.

⁹ Cf. Plu. *Alex.* 15.2-3 about the allotment of the crown property. See Hamilton 1969: 37.

¹⁰ For the scholarly discussion, see, *inter alia*, Lindsay Adams 1986: 43-45; Borza 1990: 232-235; Greenwalt 2010: 151-163; Roisman 2012b: 144; Carney 2015: 265-266.

¹¹ Companions (ἑταῖροι) were also called φίλοι, or πρότοι; cf. Hamilton 1969: 37. All these terms applied to the Macedonian court elite «carry distinct connotations of proximity to, familiarity with, and dependence from the king» (P. Paschides, paper read at the 8th International Symposium on Ancient Macedon entitled *Η Μακεδονία από τον θάνατο του Φιλίππου Β' έως την άνοδο του Αυγύστου στην εξουσία*, Thessaloniki, November 21-24, 2017). Engels 2010: 92: «[the] feudal character and strong personal relationship between the Macedonian kings and their aristocracy was also a social custom and institution which distinguished Macedonian identity from most southern Greek cities».

¹² Hatzopoulos 1986: 291. For a discussion about the role of the Macedonian Assembly under the Temeuids, see Hatzopoulos 1996 I: 261-298.

¹³ For the constitutional interpretation, see Droysen 1880: 4, 221-225; Paribeni 1947: 24; Kanatsoules 1964: 79-81; 1976: 15-19; Hammond 1989: 54-65; 2000: 142.

The absolutist viewpoint sees the Argead state as a reflection of the king, interpreted as a dominant ruling figure, an autocrat with unlimited powers. The king was the high priest, the military chief-commander and the supreme judge.¹⁴ There are two main arguments in favour of this interpretation: i) there is no evidence of a regular assembly since the sources attest decisions taken by the Μακεδόνες only on very extraordinary occasions—as during the trial of Philotas or the meeting in Babylon following Alexander's death;¹⁵ ii) foreign policy was totally controlled by the king, for he received the embassies and personally took decisions about treaties and alliances, without involving representatives of the Macedonians in the process.¹⁶

The interpretation of the nature of Macedonian kingship has divided scholarship for decades because the evidence is lacunose. However, I argue that the literary and epigraphical sources leave room for a 'situational constitutional kinship'.¹⁷ In fact, as Hammond has underlined, even if the evidence does not suffice to show whether a council with constitutional powers and an assembly in Macedon were *formal or regular* or not, it is undeniable that Macedon had a council and an assembly *sui generis*,¹⁸ which took the lead in *certain circumstances*. Surely, the king had complete control of the Companions, since he was able to choose them, to bestow upon them, or deprive them of, powers; nevertheless, in many respects, he associated with the Companions as *primus inter pares*,¹⁹ and they were his important advisers and loyal commanders.²⁰ To put it in Plutarch's words, the Macedonians were *philobasileis*, fond of their king;²¹ this suggests that, although hierarchy and benefits in the Argead court depended upon the king, the *hetairoi* and the Macedonians in army felt that they could influence and actively contribute to their leader's decisions.²²

¹⁴ Errington 1986: 196-199: absolute monarchy centered on the king. See also Errington 1974: 37; Anson 1985: 303-305.

¹⁵ Anson 1985: 305.

¹⁶ Anson 1985: 304.

¹⁷ See, e.g., D.S. XVII.16.1-4 (autumn 335): Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ὁ μὲν βασιλεὺς ἐπανελθὼν μετὰ τῆς δυνάμεως εἰς τὴν Μακεδονίαν συνήγαγε τοὺς ἡγεμόνας τῶν στρατιωτῶν καὶ τοὺς ἀξιολογωτάτους τῶν φίλων καὶ προέθηκε βουλὴν περὶ τῆς εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν διαβάσεως. Furthermore, the Council's decisions from Alexander the Great's reign onwards are described in constitutional terminology (cf. δοκεῖ, κελεύω in Arr. *An.* 1.25.5; II.6) even by hostile sources (e.g. *decerno, placeo* in Curt. VI.8.15, 11.10). Cf. Edson 1970: 32: «The kingdom of the Macedonians was most definitively not despotism but a semi-constitutional monarchy based on traditional usage, custom and established precedent»; *contra* Errington 1983: 101: there is no legalised ancient set of customs for the Macedonian state; legalised systems are a product of the modern era.

¹⁸ Hammond 2000: 141.

¹⁹ Alexander is perceived as a Homeric type of leader in second century AD literature: Plu. *Mor.* 331c, 343b.

²⁰ Hammond 1989: 57.

²¹ Plu. *Alex.* 47.5: Κρατερόν φιλοβασιλεία; Plu. *Aem.* 24.1: ἀεὶ μὲν οὖν λέγονται φιλοβασιλεῖς οἱ Μακεδόνες.

²² Lindsay Adams 1986: 45.

Furthermore, in foreign policy, it seems that the Argead king dealt with embassies, treaties and alliances *as the representative of the Macedonians*. For example, after the capture of Tyre, Alexander received Darius III's second letter, which offered him the lands up to the river Halys. As Alexander wanted to reject it, he lied about the content of the letter to his Companions, meaning that he was *not completely* free to decide about war and foreign policy, but was subject to his Companions' approval.²³

THE DECREE OF PHILIPPOI

Found in 1936 during French excavations in the area,²⁴ the decree for the lands around Philippoi was engraved in two columns on a marble orthostate.²⁵ Unfortunately, the first lines of both of the columns were lost in World War II and today we possess only five fragments of the decree.²⁶



PICTURE 1: PHILIPPOI

²³ D.S. XVII. 39.2: ὁ δ' Ἀλέξανδρος συναγαγὼν τοὺς φίλους καὶ τὴν μὲν ἀληθινὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἀποκρυψάμενος, ἑτέραν δὲ γράφας ῥέπουσαν πρὸς τὸ ἑαυτῷ συμφέρον προσήνεγκε τοῖς συνέδροις καὶ τοὺς πρέσβεις ἀπράκτους ἐξαπέστειλεν. Cf. Lindsay Adams 1986: 52.

²⁴ Hatzopoulos 1987: 437, n°. 714.

²⁵ Orthostates are rectangular stone blocks with little depth that are usually incorporated in a wall.

²⁶ See Picture 1. Cf. also *SEG* XXXIV 664: 181; Hatzopoulos 1996 II: 25-26, n°. 6.

Col. A:

SEG XXXIV 664: Philippoi 335 BC.

- 1 [.....c.27-30....]ρσιδ[...]
 [.....c.18.....]ης [.. ἐπ]ρέσβευσαν
 [πρὸς βασιλέα Ἀλέ]ξα[νδ]ρον καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος
 [...c.11....]ν τὴν ἀργὸν ἐργάζεσθαι [....]π
 5 [...c.10....]ιν χώρα καὶ προστελοῦσ[ι ...]
 [...c.13..... τ]ὴν ἀργόν· ὀρίσαι δὲ τὴν [χώραν]²⁷
 [...c.12....]ς Φιλώταν καὶ Λεονν[ᾶτον]]
 [...c.9... ἐπεισβε]βήκασιν τῆς χώ[ρας ..5..]
 [.c.7.. ἦν Φιλίπ]ποις ἔδωκεν Φίλ[ιππος] ...]
 10 [...c.13-14.... κα]ὶ ἐπισκέψα[σθαι ...7...]
 [...c.13.....]ασιν τοῦ [....c.13.....]
 [...c.12.... ἐ]πεισβεβήκ[ασινc.13.....]
 [...c.12....] ἐξελεῖν δ[ὲc.16.....]
 [...c.12....] πλέθρα δισχ[ίλια ...c.10...]
 15 [...c.12....] Δάτου χώρα [.....c.14.....]
 Vacat

Cf. Hatzopoulos 1996 II n°. 6: Philippoi 330 BC

- 1 [ὡς ἐπέστειλαν οἱ πρεσβευταὶ ἐκ Πε]ρσιδ[ος]
 [οἱ ὑπὲρ Φιλίππων καὶ τ]ῆς [γῆς π]ρεσβεύσαν-
 [τες ὡς βασιλέα Ἀλέ]ξα[νδ]ρον καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος
 [περὶ αὐτῶν ἔκρινε]ν· τὴν ἀργὸν ἐργάζεσθαι Φιλίπ-²⁸
 5 [πους ἢ αὐτοῦ ἐστ]ιν χώρα, καὶ προστελοῦσ[ι φό]-
 [ρον εἶναι αὐτοῖς τ]ὴν ἀργόν· ὀρίσαι δὲ τὴν [ἀρ]-
 [γὸν χώραν αὐτοῖς]ς Φιλώταν καὶ Λεονν[ᾶτον] ὅσοι
 [δὲ Θραικῶν ἐπεισβε]βήκασιν τῆς χώ[ρας τῆς ἀρ]-
 [χαίας ἦν τοῖς Φιλίπ]ποις ἔδωκεν Φί[λιππος, Φιλώ]-
 10 [ταν καὶ Λεοννᾶτον] ἐπισκέψα[σθαι εἰ πρότε]-
 [ρον ἐπεισβεβήκ]ασιν τοῦ [διαγράμματος τοῦ Φιλίπ]-
 [που ἢ ὕστερον ἐ]πεισβεβήκ[ασιν· εἰ δὲ ὕστερον ἐκ]-
 [χωρεῖν αὐτούς]· ἐξελεῖν δ[ὲ Φιλώταν καὶ Λεοννᾶ]-
 [τον ἐκ τῆς ἀργοῦ] πλέθρα δισχ[ίλια ...c.12-15....]
 15 [.c.8... τῆς] Δάτου χώρα[ςc.16-19.....]
 Vacat

²⁷ Or [ἀργόν]?²⁸ Now only π is visible, but Hatzopoulos' text is based on Edson's unpublished notes, squeezes and photographs; it is possible that when Edson studied the inscription more letters were visible.

TRANSLATION

«... served as ambassadors to the king Alexander and Alexander ... (established that the Philippians) work the untilled land ... the land and they pay tribute ... the untilled land; that Philotas and Leonnatos divide the boundaries ... (The Thracians) have gone into the land ... which Philip gave to Philippoi ... that they inspect ... (the Thracians) have gone into ... that they set apart ... 2000 *plethra* ... land of Daton».

Col. B:

SEG XXXIV 664

- 1 [.....c.16..... πρ]οσλα[β]ε[ῖν] ἀπὸ [..c.7..]
 μ[...c.11.... στ]αδίους· τ[ῆ]ν μὲν ἄ[λλην]
 ν[.....c.15.....]ς· ὅσα δὲ τοῖς Θραιξί[ν]
 [.....c.18.....]ται καρπίζεσθαι τοὺς Θρ[ά]-
 5 [ίκας καθάπερ Ἀλέξαν]δρος περὶ αὐτῶν δια-
 [τέταχεν· Φιλίππου]ς δὲ ἔχειν τὴν χώραν τὴν
 [.....c.14..... ὥ]ς οἱ λόφοι ἐκατέρωθεν ἔχου-
 [σιν ...c.9...]η[.c.6..]ρισειραϊκὴν γῆν καὶ
 Δαΐνηρον νέμεσθ[αι Φι]λίππους καθάπερ ἔδω-
 10 κε Φίλιππος· τὴν δὲ {γ}ῆν [ῦλην?]²⁹ τὴν ἐν Δυ[....]ι μη-
 θένα πωλεῖν τέως ἢ πρεσβεία πα[ρὰ τοῦ Ἀλε]-
 ξάνδρου ἐπανέλθῃ· τὰ δὲ ἔλη εἶναι τῶν]
 Φιλίππων ἕως γεφύρας. vacat
 Vacat

Cf. Hatzopoulos 1996 II n°. 6.

- 1 [.....c.15..... πρ]οσλαβε[ῖν] ἀπὸ [ταύτης]
 μ[ετρήσαντας δύο στ]αδίους· τὴν μὲν ἄ[λλην]
 ν[έμεσθαι Φιλίππου]ς, ὅσα δὲ τοῖς Θραιξί[ν] [πα]-
 [ρὰ τοῦ Φιλίππου δέδο]ται καρπίζεσθαι τοὺς Θρ[άι]-
 5 [κας καθάπερ καὶ Ἀλέξαν]δρος περὶ αὐτῶν δια-
 [τέθηκεν· Φιλίππου]ς δὲ ἔχειν τὴν χώραν τὴν
 [.....c.14..... ὥ]ς οἱ λόφοι ἐκατέρωθεν ἔχου-
 [σιν ..c.7.. ὅ]ς[η] [δ' ἔστι πε]ρὶ Σειραϊκὴν γῆν καὶ
 Δαΐνηρον νέμεσθ[αι Φι]λίππους καθάπερ ἔδω-

²⁹ Only -ην is visible. *Vidi* in the Museum of Philippoi.

10 κε Φίλιππος, τὴν δὲ [ὑλ]ην τὴν ἐν Δυ[σώρ]φι μη-
 θένα πωλεῖν τέω[ς] ἢ πρεσβεία {ή}³⁰ πα[ρὰ τοῦ Ἀλε]-
 ξάνδρου ἐπανέλθῃ, τὰ δὲ ἔλη εἶ[ναι τῶν]
 Φιλίππων ἕως Γεφύρας. vacat

TRANSLATION

«That (the Philippians) receive in addition from ... stades ... the other (land) ...; to the Thracians as much ... that the Thracians enjoy the fruits (have usufruct), just as Alexander has disposed about them; that the Philippians possess the land that ... where the hills on each side have ... that the Philippians cultivate the land around Seiraike (?) and Daineros just as Philip granted; that nobody sells the land in Dy(soron) until the embassy (sent) by Alexander returns; that the marshes belong to the Philippians until Gephyra».

COMMENTARY

The inscription presents Alexander's decision about the Philippians' right to possess the land of Philippoi and to cultivate the untilled royal land, against payment of tribute. Alexander revises his father's disposition of the estate and grants the Philippians the right to cultivate more land and the Thracians the usufruct of his land.

COL. A

Ll. 1-4: introduction with a mention of the embassy from the city of Philippoi to Alexander III.

L. 1: line probably containing the dating of the documents.³¹ Scholars have interpreted this document either as an edict or a royal letter.³² I consider it an edict, a διάγραμμα,³³ because it contains the king's decision, to be generally imposed both on the Philippians and on the Thracians: cf. col. B. 5-6: δια[τέταχεν] (Hatzopoulos: δια[τέθηκεν]). By contrast, a letter is usually composed of a preamble (προοίμιον), with the greeting formula x to y χαίρειν, followed by the topic (θέμα), and an epi-

³⁰ *Emendavi*: Not on the stone.

³¹ Hammond 1993b: 386.

³² Hatzopoulos 1987: 439, n°. 714; Badian 1989: 64 n. 13.

³³ Hatzopoulos 1996 II: 27 (n°. 6) has pointed out that διάγραμμα is the term used in Macedonian inscriptions to describe διατάγματα (royal decrees).