

## *Who Shot J.R.?* The Assassination of Philip II of Macedonia. A Source Pack

A Lecture Presented by  
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## USEFUL LITERATURE:

E. Badian, [The Death of Philip II](#) (on line article)

N. G. L. Hammond, “The End of Philip,” in *Makedonika I* (Athens 1983), 166-175.

J. R. Fears, Pausanias, “The Assassin of Philip II,” *Athenaeum* 53 (1975), 111-135.

J. R. Ellis, “The Assassination of Philip II,” in *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honor of Charles F. Edson* (Thessaloniki 1981), 99-137.

## The Assassination of Philip II of Macedona, 336 BC

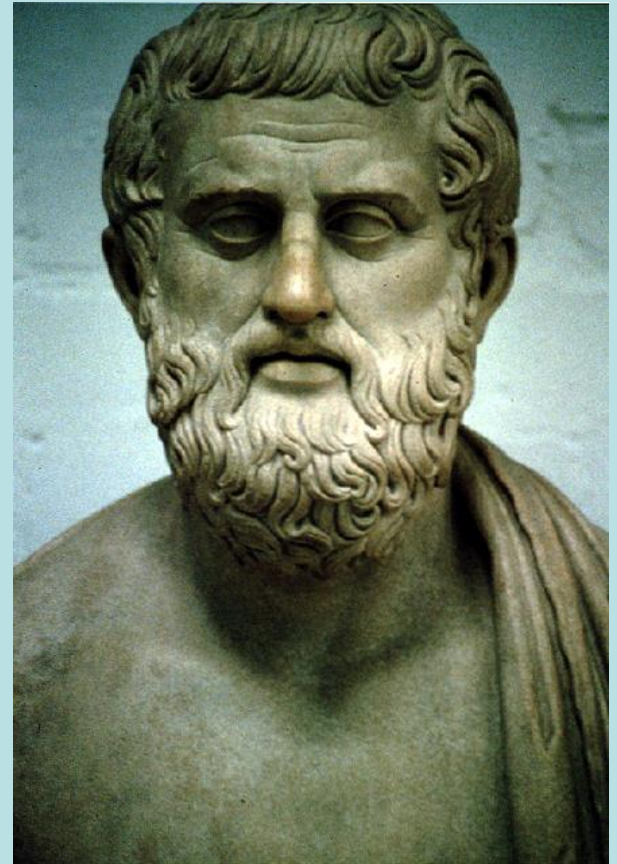
Justin 9.6: *Meanwhile, while auxiliaries were being levied in Greece, the wedding of Cleopatra, Phillip's daughter, and Alexander, whom he made king of Epirus, was celebrated. Because of the importance of the two kings and the fact that they would be joined through daughter and wife (?), the day was a gala occasion. Magnificent games were arranged, at the height of which Philip began to make his appearance without his usual escort of body guards, walking only between the two Alexanders, his son and his son-in-law. Suddenly, Pausanias, a young Macedonian noble, suspected by no one, having waited at the entranceway, slew Philip as he was passing, and turned a day which would otherwise have been filled with the sounds of gladness into one with the sounds of grief.*

Diod. Sic. 16.93-5: *Every seat in the theater was taken when Philip appeared wearing a white cloak, and by his express orders his bodyguard held back and followed at a distance, since he wanted to show publicly that he was protected by the good will of all the Greeks and had no need of a guard of spearmen...but as the praises and congratulations of all rang in his ears, suddenly without warning the plot against the king was revealed...While the guards kept their distance, Pausanias, a bodyguard, seeing that the king was left alone, rushed at him, pierced him through his ribs, and stretched him out dead. He then ran for the gates and the horses which he had prepared for his flight. Immediately one group of the bodyguards hurried to the body of the king while the rest poured out in pursuit of the assassin. Among these last were Leonnatus, Perdiccas and Attalus. Having a good start Pausanias would have mounted his horse before they could catch him had he not caught his foot in a vine and fallen. As he was scrambling to his feet, Perdiccas and the rest came up with him and killed him with their javelins.*

## THE OFFICIAL FINDINGS OF ALEXANDER III'S INVESTIGATION FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION:

**Pausanias acted in conjunction with Heromenes and Arrhabaeus of Aeropus (the Lyncestrians), and Attalus--all three were executed. Demosthenes and Darius III were possibly involved as well. Amyntas, son of Perdiccas, was separately convicted and executed.**

**The contemporary account of Aristotle, Politics, 1311a: *Most angry attackers are keener on vengeance than on supremacy... Pausanias' attack on Philip, for example, was due to the fact that Philip had allowed him to be ill-treated by Attalus' men.***



Aristotle, a bust in the  
Louvre



## Motivation of Pausanias

Plut. Alex. 10 *Not long after {the Pixodarus affair} a Macedonian named Pausanias assassinated the king; he did this because he had been humiliated by Attalus and Cleopatra and could get no redress from Philip. It was Olympias who was chiefly blamed for the assassination, because she was believed to have encouraged the young man and incited him to take his revenge. It was said that when Pausanias met the young prince and complained to him of the injustice he had suffered, Alexander quoted the verse from Euripides' Medea, to which Medea is said to threatened,*

*The father, bride, and bridegroom all at once*

*However this may be, Alexander took care to track down and punish those who were involved in the plot, and he showed his anger against Olympias for the horrible revenge which she took on Cleopatra during his absence.*



Diod. Sic. 16.93-5: *There was a Macedonian Pausanias who came from noble heritage in the district Orestis. He was a bodyguard of the king and was beloved by him because of his beauty. However, when he saw that the king was becoming enamored of another Pausanias (a man of the same name as himself), he addressed the last with abusive language, accusing him of being a hermaphrodite and prompt to accept the amorous advances of any who wished. Unable to endure such an insult, the other kept silent for the time, but after confiding to Attalus, one of his friends, what he proposed to do, he brought about his own death voluntarily and in a spectacular fashion. For a few days after this, as Philip was engaged in battle with Pleurias, king of the Illyrians, Pausanias stepped in front of him and, receiving on his body all the blows directed at the king, so met his death. The incident was widely discussed and Attalus, who was a member of the court circle and influential with the king, invited the first Pausanias to dinner and when he plied him til drunk with unmixed wine, handed his unconscious body over to the muleteers to abuse in drunken licentiousness.*



Diod. Sic. 16.93-5: *When Pausanias presently recovered from his drunken stupor, deeply resenting the outrage to his person, he charged Attalus before the king with the outrage. Philip shared his anger at the barbarity of the act but did not wish to punish Attalus at that time because of their relationship, and because Attalus' services were needed urgently. He was the nephew of the Cleopatra whom the king had just married as a new wife and he had been selected as general to command the advanced force being sent into Asia, for he was a man valiant in battle. For these reasons, the king tried to mollify the righteous anger of Pausanias at his treatment, giving him substantial presents and advancing him in honor among the bodyguards. Pausanias, nevertheless, nursed his wrath implacably and yearned to avenge himself, not only on the one who had done him wrong, but also on the one who failed to avenge him. In this design he was encouraged especially by the sophist Hermocrates. He was his pupil and when asked in the course of his instruction how one might become most famous, the sophist replied that it would be by killing the one who had accomplished most, for just as long as he was remembered, so long his slayer would be remembered.*

## **Justin on Pausanias' Motivation**

5.6. For Pausanias, in his early adolescent years, had been subjected to gross sexual indecency by Attalus. What made this incident particularly grotesque was the fact that Attalus not only lured him to a banquet and got him drunk in order to have his own way with him, but he then handed him over to his fellow banqueters, who roundly subjected him to the most vile possible sexual abuse, sharing him among themselves as if he were a common prostitute. Outraged by this act, Pausanias repeatedly brought charges against Attalus to Philip, and after various delays he was eventually put off by Philip, and not without a laugh. Then to top it off, he saw Philip promote his adversary to the highest rank and distinction. As a result he decided to channel his anger against Philip himself and to exact from this iniquitous judge the vengeance which he could not take from his enemy.

**Summary for Pausanias**--an Oresteian like Perdikkas and Leonnatus. He enjoyed some sort of bond with Alexander the Lyncestrian as well (Q. C. 7.1.5). Justin vs. Diodorus re: Philip II's reaction to his sexual violation at the hands of Attalus. The date of this event is disputed: either 8 years earlier or perhaps after 338; cf. Aristotle Pol. 1211 B2). Allegedly encouragement by Olympias, Alexander, and Hermocrates, the tutor to the pages (Diod. Sic. 16.94). DS 16.94.4: Pausanias was killed by Alexander's close friends, Philip's bodyguards, Leonnatus and Perdikkas.



## Sequence of Events leading to Philip's Assassination

- 337 spring Philip fell in love with and married Cleopatra, niece of Attalus; he formally divorced Olympias at this time
- 337 At the Wedding Party, Attalus insulted Alexander who in turn quarreled with Philip
- 337 spring/summer Alexander and Olympias fled to Epirus; Alexander then found refuge with the King of Illyria; Philip persuaded him to return to Pella
- 337 spring, Death of Pausanias 2 in battle fighting vs. Illyrians, rape of Pausanias 1 by Attalus and his muleteers. Diod. Sic. 16.93-5, indicates that the rape occurred immediately following Philip's marriage with Cleopatra, and at the time that Philip assigned Attalus to the command of the advanced formation in Asia.
- 337 marriages of Attalus to Parmenio's daughter and of Amyntas to Philip's daughter Kynnane
- 336 Spring The Pixodarus Affair, 1 year after the wedding, Alexander's friends, Harpalus, Ptolemy, Nearchus, Erygius and Laomedon, were exiled by Philip for their involvement
- 336 Spring, Attalus and Parmenio led advanced army across the Hellespont.
- 336 summer Cleopatra bore Philip a daughter, Europa (D.S., a few days before Philip's assassination)
- 336 summer Plutarch, not long after the Pixodarus affair, Philip was assassinated by Pausanias because of his failure to punish Attalus for his abuse of the bodyguard.

## Evidence for Conspiracy

Diod. Sic. 16.93-5 cont: *Pausanias posted horses at the gates of the city and came to the entrance of the theater carrying a Celtic dagger under his cloak. When Philip directed his attending friends to precede him into the theater, while the guards kept their distance, he saw that the king was left alone, rushed at him, pierced him through his ribs, and stretched him out dead; then ran for the gates and the horses which he had prepared for his flight. Immediately one group of the bodyguards hurried to the body of the king while the rest poured out in pursuit of the assassin. Among these last were Leonnatus, Perdikkas and Attalus. Having a good start Pausanias would have mounted his horse before they could catch him had he not caught his foot in a vine and fallen. As he was scrambling to his feet, Perdikkas and the rest came up with him and killed him with their javelins.*

JUST.9.6: *Olympias meanwhile attempted to persuade her brother Alexander, the King of Epirus, to declare war on Philip; yet, all this accomplished was the engagement of her own daughter to her brother at the instance of her former husband. Thus, angered by these developments both Olympias and Alexander are believed to have urged Pausanias to do the deed, after he complained to them about the manner in which his violation had gone unpunished. It is certain that Olympias had arranged to have horses waiting for the fleeing assassin.*

## **Scenarios for possible conspiracies can be distilled to four possibilities:**

- 1. Pausanias, acting as “a lone gunman”**
- 2. Olympias, Alexander, and his (father’s) bodyguards (Pausanias, Leonnatus, Perdiccas)**
- 3. Darius III of Persia, Demosthenes, and Attalus the Macedonian General whose niece became Philip’s last wife**
- 4. Amyntas (son of Perdiccas), and the Lyncestrian brothers (Alexander, Heromenes and Arrhabaeus). Amyntas was passed over when the Macedonian army made Philip king in 359 BC The Lyncestrians’ father Aeropus was a leading officer of Philip who was suddenly and inexplicably banished from Macedonia following the Battle of Charonea in 338 BC**

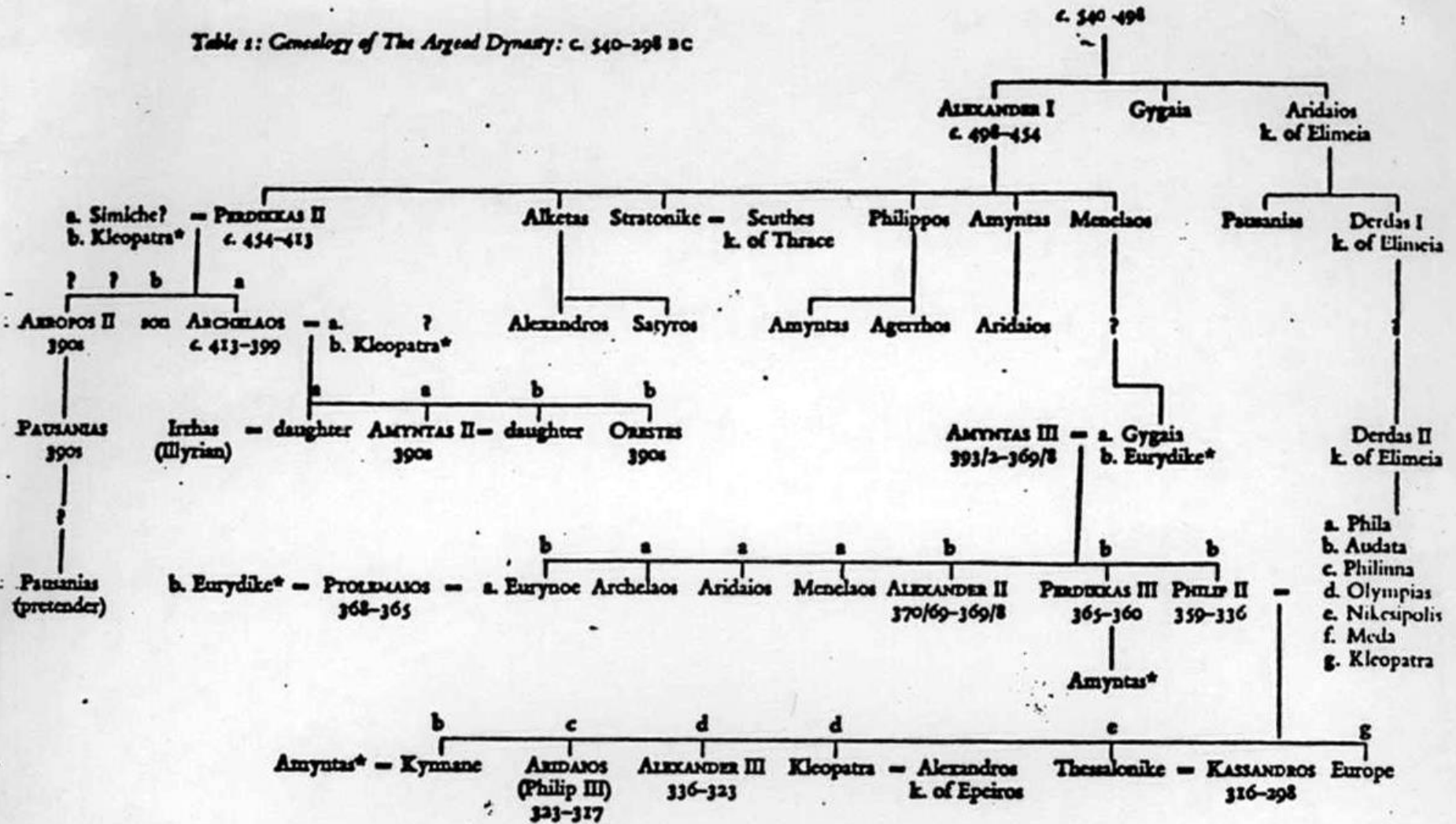
## Conspiracy 2: Olympias, Queen of Macedonia

Justin V.8. *Philip began his operations against the Persians by sending Macedonian armies to Asia under three leaders, Parmenio, Amyntas, and Attalus, the last of whose sister Philip had only recently taken as his wife, having divorced Olympias, the mother of Alexander, because of (his) suspicions of (her) adultery.*



# The Macedonian Royal Family

Table 1: Genealogy of The Argead Dynasty: c. 540-398 BC





Athenaeus Deip. 13.557: *Yet Philip always married a new wife with each new war he undertook. In the 22 years of his reign...he married Audata of Illyria and had by her a daughter Kynna; he also married Phila a sister of Derdas and Machatas. Wishing to put a claim to the Thessalian nation as his own besides others, he begot children by two women of Thessaly, one of whom was Nicesipolos of Pherae, who bore to him Thettalonike while the other was Philinna of Larisa, by whom he became the father of Arrhidaeus. Further he acquired also the kingdom of the Molossians by marrying Olympias by whom he had Alexander and Cleopatra. Again when he subjugated Thrace there came over to his side Cothelas the Thracian king who brought with him his daughter Meda and a large dowry. By marrying her also he thus brought home a second wife after Olympias. After all these women he married Cleopatra with whom he had fallen in love, the sister of Hippostratus and the niece of Attalus; and by bringing her home to supplant Olympias, he threw the entire course of his life into utter confusion. Cleopatra, in his turn, bore to Philip a daughter, the one who was called Europa.*

Plut. Alex. 9. *But before long the domestic strife that resulted from Philip's various marriages and love-affairs caused the quarrels which took place in the women's apartments to infect the whole kingdom, and led to bitter clashes and accusations between father and son. This breach was widened by Olympias, a woman of jealous and vindictive temper, who incited Alexander to oppose his father. Their quarrel was brought to a head on the occasion of the wedding of Cleopatra, a girl with whom Philip had fallen in love and whom he had decided to marry, although she was far too young for him. Cleopatra's uncle Attalus, having drunk too much at the wedding banquet, called on the Macedonians to pray to the gods that the union of Philip and Cleopatra might bring forth a legitimate heir to the throne. Alexander flew into a rage at these words, shouted at him, "Villain, do you take me for a bastard, then?" and hurled a drinking cup at his head. At this Philip lurched to his feet and drew his sword against his son, but fortunately for them both he was so overcome with drink and with rage that he tripped and fell headlong. Alexander jeered at him and cried out, 'here is the man who was making ready to cross from Europe to Asia, and who cannot even cross from one table to another without losing his balance,' After this drunken brawl Alexander took Olympias away and settled her in Epirus, while he himself went to live in Illyria.*

*Athenaeus Deip. 13.557: After all these women Philip married Cleopatra with whom he had fallen in love. She was the sister of Hippostratus and the niece of Attalus. By bringing her home to supplant Olympias, he threw the entire course of his life into utter confusion. For immediately during the celebration of the wedding itself Attalus remarked, 'but now I warn you, princes will be born who will be legitimate, and not bastards.' Alexander, on hearing that, threw the goblet which he held in his hand at Attalus and he retaliated on Alexander with his own cup. After this Olympias fled to the country of the Molossians, while Alexander went to Illyrian. Cleopatra, in his turn, bore to Philip a daughter, the one who was called Europa.*

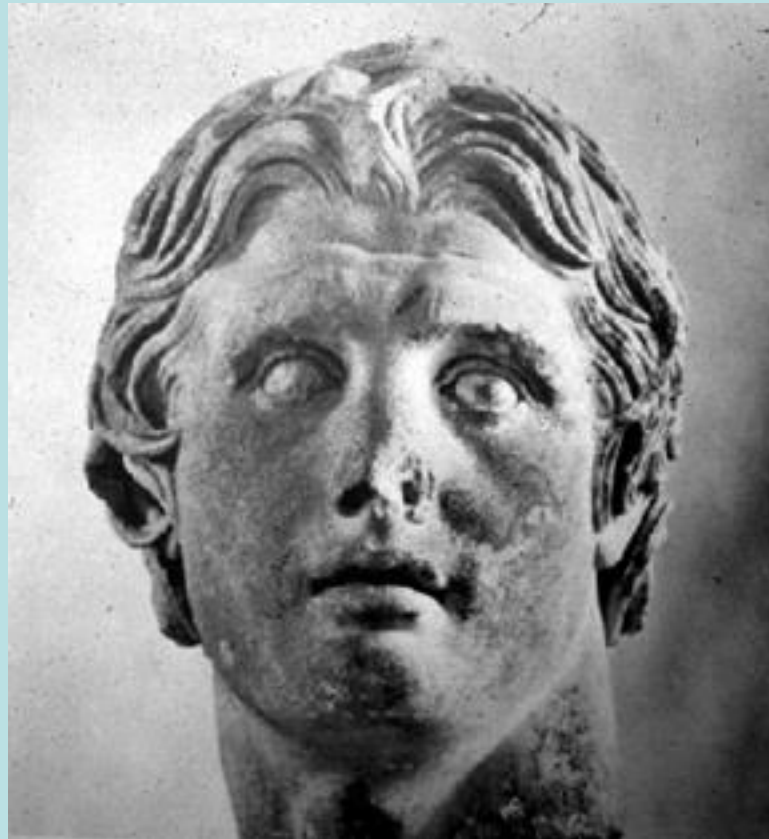
Plut. Alex. 10. ***In the following year {that is, after the wedding of Philip and Cleopatra}***, Pixodarus, the satrap of Caria, tried to form a family union with Philip, hoping by this means to insinuate himself into a military alliance. His plan was to offer the hand of his eldest daughter to Philip's son Arrhidaeus, and he sent Aristocritus to Macedonia to try to negotiate the match. Alexander's mother and his friends sent him a distorted account of this maneuver, making out that Philip was planning to settle the kingdom on Arrhidaeus by arranging a brilliant marriage and treating him as a person of great consequence. Alexander was disturbed by these stories and sent Thessalus, the tragic actor, to Caria to tell Pixodarus that he should pay no attention to Arrhidaeus, who was not only an illegitimate son of Philip's but was weak-minded as well; instead, he should offer his daughter's hand to Alexander. Pixodarus was far more pleased with this suggestion than with his original proposal. When Philip discovered this, he went to Alexander's room, taking him with Philotas the son of Parmenio, one of the prince's companions. There he scolded his son and angrily reproached him for behaving so ignobly and so unworthily of his position as to wish to marry the daughter of a mere Carian, who was no more than the slave of a barbarian king.

Just. V.7. *It is also believed that Pausanias was put to the task by Olympias, the mother of Alexander, and that Alexander himself was not unaware of her plans to kill his father. For Olympias was no less hurt by Philip's repudiation and replacement of her with Cleopatra, than she was by this shameful abuse of Pausanias. And Alexander himself feared the product of a dynastic rival as the result of Philip and Cleopatra's marriage. And there was also the fact that, at a banquet sponsored by Attalus prior to the wedding, Alexander became embroiled in a dispute with his father, a brawl so furious that Philip reportedly chased him with a short sword, and was only prevented from killing his son by the distressed pleas of his friends. After this Alexander removed himself along with his mother to his uncle's realm in Epirus, and from there he withdrew to the King of the Illyrians. Shortly afterward, softened by his father's requests that he return as well as by the prayers of his friends, he relented and returned to Macedonia, though he remained fairly disturbed by the whole affair.*

Just. V.7 : *Hearing of the death of the king, Olympias then hastened to his funeral, supposedly out of respect for the dead. Yet, the same night in which she arrived she put a gold crown on the head of Pausanias who was still hanging publicly, and this was an act which no one could have dared without the approval of the son of Philip (i.e., Alexander) (or no one believed possible, without Alexander's approval). And then a few days afterwards, she took down the body of Pausanias and cremated it over the remains of her husband and made a tumulus for him in the same place and saw to it that annual "hero" sacrifices would be performed to him, in order to strike religious dread into the people. After which she killed the daughter of Cleopatra while hiding in her arms, and then compelled Cleopatra herself to hang herself. And by that abominable spectacle she was finally able to achieve the revenge which she had hastened back to perform. Somewhat later she dedicated the sword which was used to kill the king to Apollo Myrtalis, the name by which she herself had been called as a child. And all of this she did quite openly, almost as if she were afraid that people would otherwise never believe that she had done it.*

*Diod. Sic. 17.2 A possible rival for the throne remained in Attalus who was the brother of Cleopatra, the last wife of Philip, and Alexander determined to kill him. As a matter of fact, Cleopatra had borne a child to Philip a few days before his death. Attalus had been sent on ahead into Asia to share the command of the forces with Parmenio and had acquired great popularity in the army by his readiness to do favors and his easy bearing with the soldiers. Alexander had good reason to fear that he might challenge his rule, making common cause with those of the Greeks who opposed him and selected from among his friends a certain Hecataeus and sent him off to Asia with a number of soldiers, under orders to bring Attalus alive if he could, but if not, to assassinate him as quickly as possible. So he crossed over to Asia, joined Parmenio and Attalus and awaited an opportunity to carry out his mission.*

Pausanias VIII.7: *When Philip died Olympias took his baby son, the child of Attalus' neice Cleopatra, and murdered the child and the mother together by dragging them on to a bronze oven filled with fire.*





## COMMENTARY

**Olympias.** Lived separately from her husband Philip II for years. She left Macedonia for her homeland Epirus at the time of Philip II's marriage to Cleopatra, "niece" of Attalus (Justin 9.5.9; 11.11.3-4--reports formal divorce at that time). She urged her brother Alexander of Epirus to declare war on Philip. Since 342 BC, Alexander had enjoyed his throne due to Philip II's intercession on his behalf, forcing the deposition of his uncle Arybbas. Alexander agreed with Philip to marry Olympias and Philip's daughter Cleopatra at time of the assassination (DS 16.72.1; Just. 8.6.4-8). Olympias was in exile at Epirus at the time, but supposedly encouraged Pausanias and assisted him (Plut. Alex. 9; Just. 9.7.5-20). Olympias returned to Macedonia immediately after the assassination to murder Cleopatra and Europe, to bury Philip, and to perform hero cult rituals for Pausanias. She was reprimanded by Alexander for her excesses.

The question remains, could she have engineered and executed a conspiracy from Epirus and would Macedonian nobles such as Pausanias and Alexander's friends Perdicas and Leonnatus (who possibly killed Pausanias to silence him?) have agreed to conspire with her?

**A Finer Point, the evidence suggests that traffic between the royal courts of Epirus and Macedonia was significant, enabling Olympias to stay in communication with her son and others.**

Plut. Alex. 10 asserts that the Pixodarus affair occurred during the year following Philip's wedding with Cleopatra and the banquet incident, culminating in Alexander's flight to Epirus/Illyria. {Attalus' rape of Pausanias would have occurred during the same window of time.} His mother, Olympias, was in exile in Epirus at the time of the Pixodarus affair. Plutarch says that Alexander's mother and his friends sent him a distorted account of this maneuver making out that Philip was planning to settle the kingdom on Arrhidaeus by arranging a brilliant marriage and by treating him as a person of great consequence. For their complicity in the affair Philip banished Alexander's friends Thessalus, Harpalus, Nearchus, Erygius and Ptolemy. In short, the evidence suggests that Olympias could manipulate the situation from Epirus.

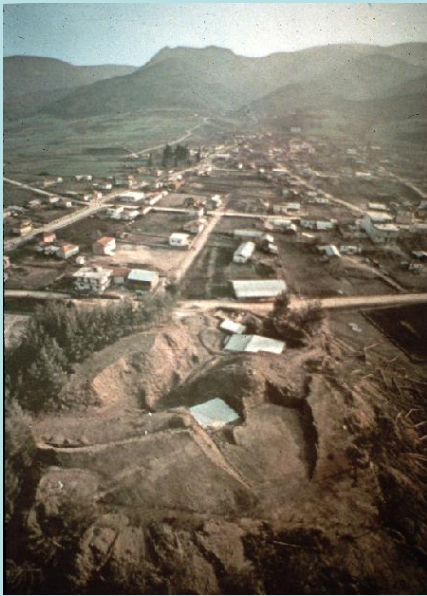
## **Further Proof for the Nature of Royal Correspondence in Macedonia**

Plut. Demetrius 22, the Athenians...having surprised an express sent from King Philip, their enemy, opened all the letters he was charged with, excepting only those directed to Queen Olympias, which they returned with the seal unbroken.

**Alexander's bodyguards**--Harpalus, Ptolemy, Nearchus, Erygieus and Laomedon (the last three of whom were non-Macedonians) were exiled by Philip II for their overt show of loyalty to Alexander at the time of the Pixodarus affair (they were not in Macedonia at time of assassination: Plut. 10; Arr. 3.6.5). Other friends of Alexander, Leonnatus, Perdikkas, and Attalus (2) were present at the assassination and slew Pausanias as he fled. Alexander demoted them to the ranks after the assassination (Arr.). Perdikkas and Leonnatus belonged to a collateral line of the royal family. Perdikkas and Leonnatus were Oresteians like Pausanias. Perdikkas was also Attalus the general's brother-in-law. Attalus (2) remained under suspicion by Alexander and was later killed and his family executed according to the law of treason. A plausible argument could be made that the bodyguards were somehow involved in the conspiracy, and either a. backed off when Philip made his unexpected move at the theater, or b. "egged" Pausanias on with promises of support and then killed him to silence him.

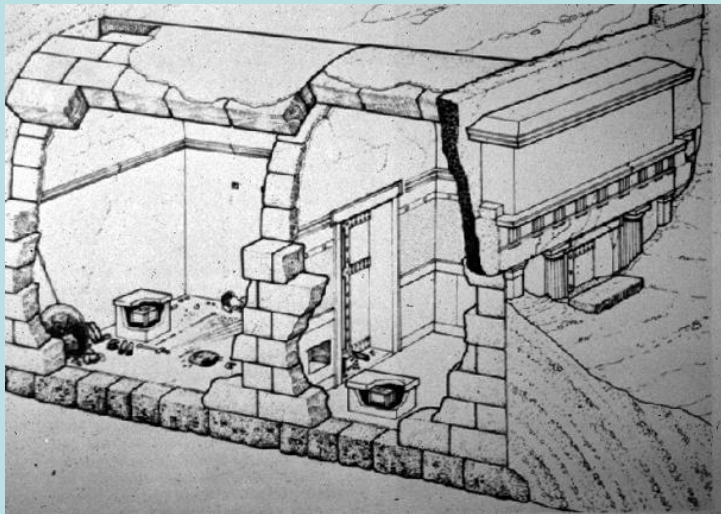
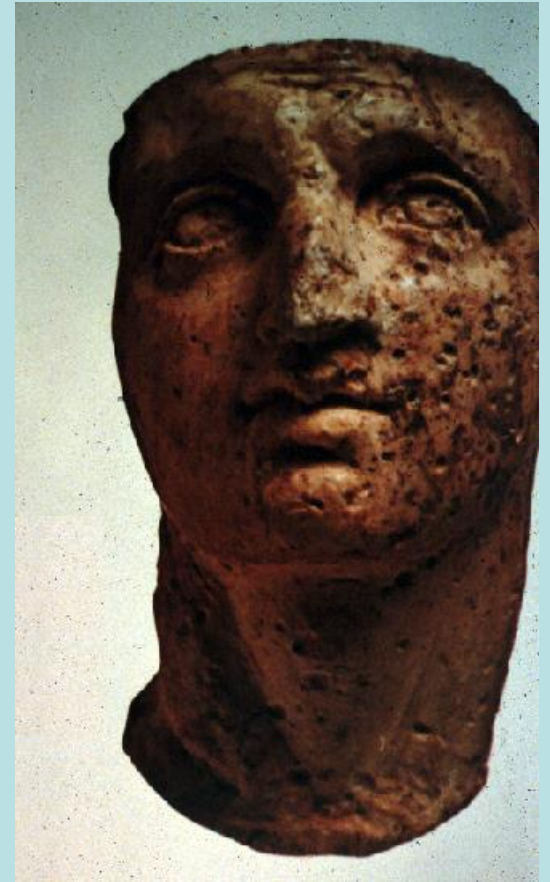
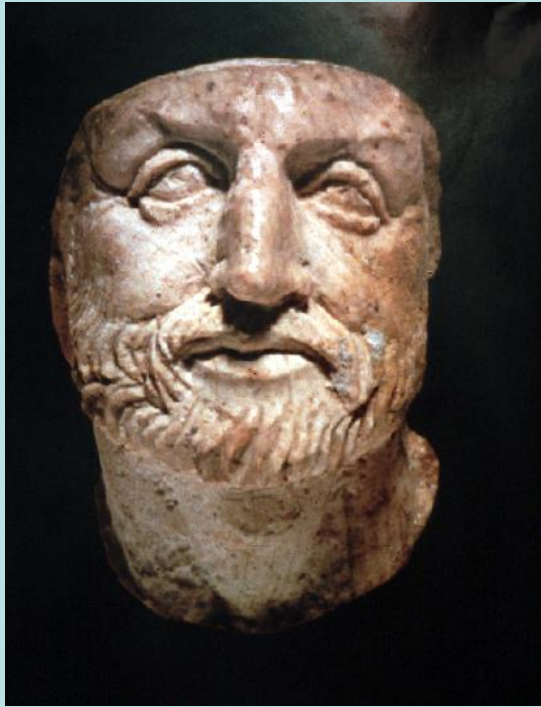
**Alexander**--misunderstanding with Philip II led to the Pixodarus affair and to the exile of his friends. In the previous year, he and Philip had the drinking quarrel at the time of Philip's marriage with Cleopatra, the "niece" of Attalus. Alexander fled to Epirus and to Illyria, but eventually was persuaded by Philip to return to the palace to resume his place as commander of the companion cavalry (Plut. 9; Just. 9.7.5). On the day of the assassination Philip wanted him to walk beside him into theater at Aegae, a position of honor: Just. 9.6.3.

Ultimately the logic of his involvement requires demonstration that Alexander had the most to gain and the least to lose by assassinating his father. This seems unlikely. Were the Macedonian army to learn of his complicity his legitimacy as king would have been diminished, thus, opening the way for others in line to the throne. Despite the anxiety induced by Philip's new relationship with Cleopatra, Alexander would seem to have the most to lose and the least to gain by assassinating his father, unless he determined to eliminate Attalus, Cleopatra and all other pretenders to the throne. This in fact did happen.



**Finds at Vergina,  
possible tomb of Philip II**

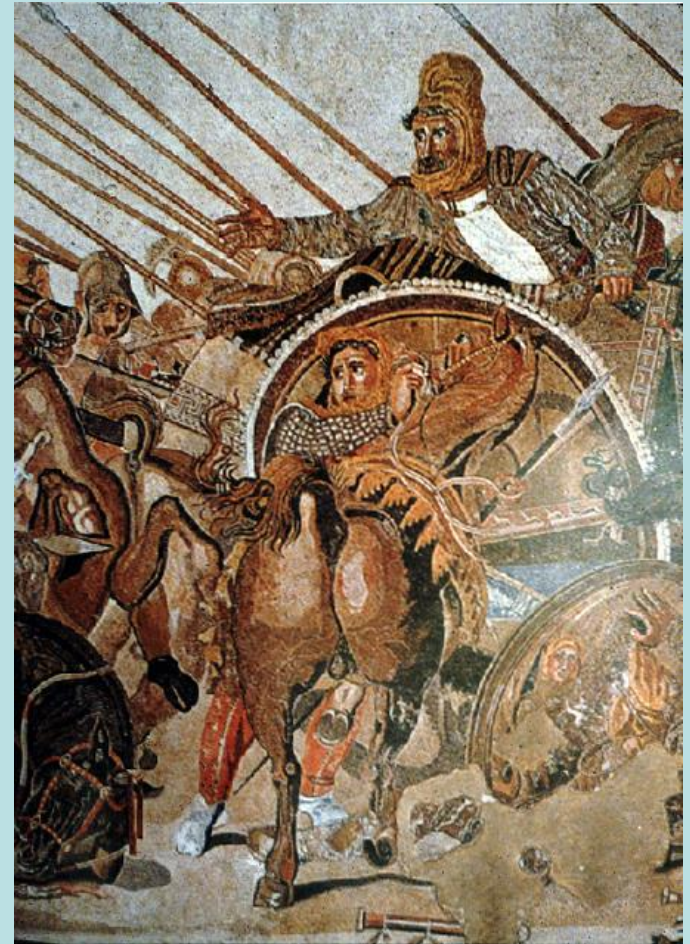




## Conspiracy 3: King Darius III of Persia, Demosthenes, and Attalus

### Evidence against Darius III:

Q. Curtius Rufus, Campaigns of Alexander, IV.12 (Alexander's response to the offer of Darius III following battle of Issos (333 BC). *"Everyone knows that my father, Philip, was murdered by assassins whom your people had seduced with the expectation of a huge Persian reward. ..Just as you, the king of a great army recently wished to hire an assassin to kill me for 1000 talents."*

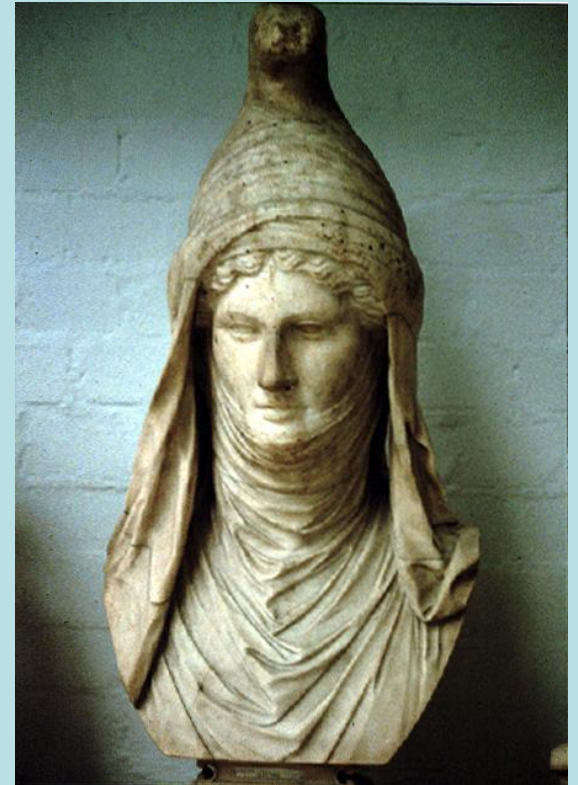


Darius III at the Battle of Issos; The Alexander Mosaic at Pompeii



## **Evidence against Demosthenes:**

Plut. Life of Demosthenes 20. *For the fame of this speaker has traveled even to the Persian king, who had sent letters to the satraps on the coast ordering them to offer money to Demosthenes and to pay more attention to him than to any other Greek... This intelligence was discovered long afterwards by Alexander who found in Sardis letters from Demosthenes and papers belonging to the king's generals and containing details of the sums of money which had been given to him.*



## **Demosthenes cont.**

*Diod. Sic. 17.3. Alexander knew that many of the Greeks were anxious to revolt, and was seriously worried that in Athens, where Demosthenes kept agitating against Macedon, the news of Philip's death was received with rejoicing. The Athenians were not yet ready to concede the leading position among the Greeks to Macedon. They communicated secretly with Attalus and arranged to cooperate with him, and they encouraged many of the cities to strike for their freedom...Demosthenes was generally believed to have received large sums of money from that source in payment for his efforts to check the Macedonians and indeed Aeschines is said to have referred to this in a speech in which he taunted Demosthenes with venality. "At the moment it is true his extravagance has been glutted by the king's gold but even this will not satisfy him; no wealth has ever proved sufficient for a greedy character."*

## **Evidence against Attalus:**

Diod. Sic. 17.5. *Immediately after the death of Philip Attalus actually had set his hand to revolt and had agreed with the Athenians to undertake joint action against Alexander, but later he changed his mind. Preserving letters which had been brought to him from Demosthenes, he sent them off to Alexander and tried by expressions of loyalty to remove from himself any possible suspicion. Hecataeus, however, following the instructions of the king literally, had him killed by treachery and thereafter the Macedonian forces in Asia were free from any incitement to revolution. Attalus was now dead and Parmenio was completely devoted to Alexander.*

## COMMENTARY

**Darius III of Persia.** Had just risen to power. Rumors abounded that he paid assassins to murder Philip II and bribed Greek states to rebel against the League of Corinth--and that he even boasted of it. Documents proving he had bribed Demosthenes of Athens were supposedly uncovered by Alexander at the satrap's headquarters at Sardis (Plut. *Demos.* p. 205-6, 210, 255; QC 4.1.12; Arr. 2.14.5).

**Demosthenes of Athens.** Inveterate foe of Philip. Documents recovered by Alexander at Sardis indicated that he had accepted bribes from Darius III to plot against Philip II. Correspondence with Attalus as well. Dedicated shrine to Pausanias after the assassination (Arrian p. 64).

**Attalus (1)**--Macedonian noble of the highest rank. Philip's latest wife, Cleopatra "Eurydice" was his "niece". The ugly wedding scene in 338 (Plut. 9.7; Just. 9.7.5; Athenaeus--from Satyros, a 3rd Cent. BC source) Parmenio was his father-in-law and Perdiccas, who slew Pausanias, was his brother-in-law. Rumor was that Cleopatra was pregnant with a male child at the time of the assassination, her first child having been female. Evidence of correspondence with Demosthenes. Commander of the "advanced column" of Philip's army in Asia at the time of the assassination. Very popular with the troops (DS 17.5; Arrian 1.25). Executed by Alexander following the assassination, allegedly for conspiring with the Athenians (DS 17.5.1-2). Just. 11.2.3 indicates Alexander also killed Attalus' brother Caranus.

**However, the logic of the situation prompts the following questions :**

- 1. Could Darius and/or Demosthenes actually have accomplished such an assassination from their distant locations? Apart from communications with Attalus, there is no evidence that they communicated directly with the assassin, Pausanias. We have to infer that somehow they managed to get to him.**
- 2. Since Attalus purportedly raped Pausanias, how would he have succeeded at convincing the latter to assassinate Philip II on his behalf? The possibility that he instigated Pausanias by means of an intermediary such as his son-in-law, Perdiccas, seems tenuous.**
- 3. Was it in Attalus' best interest at this juncture to plot such an assassination, unless it entailed the elimination of both Philip and Alexander? Commanding the advanced guard, having leaped ahead of Antipater and Parmenio in the chain of command, a waiting game would seem to make more sense, since his "niece" Cleopatra, was in prime child-bearing years and could be counted on to provide a new male heir to the throne.**

## Conspiracy 4: The Macedonian Aristocracy

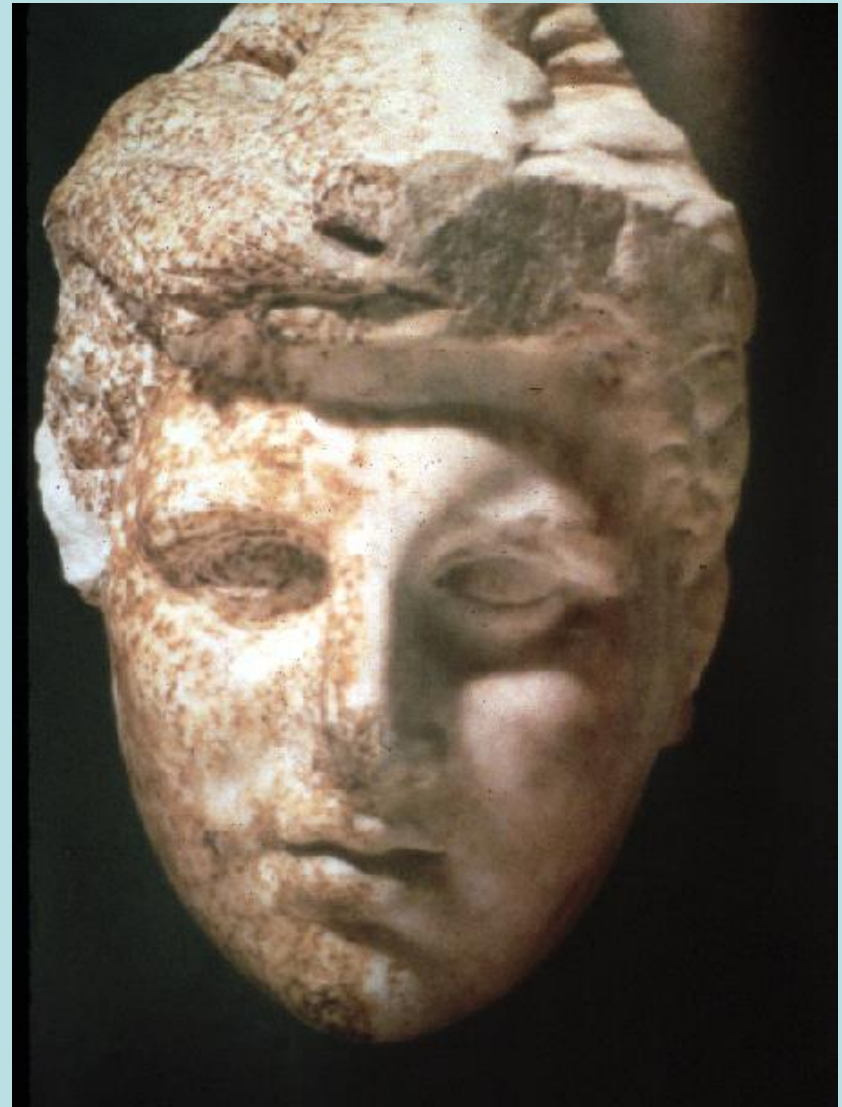
Plut. Alex. 11. *Alexander was only twenty years old when he inherited his kingdom, which at that moment was beset by formidable jealousies and feuds and external dangers on every side... Alexander's Macedonian advisers feared that a crisis was at hand and urged the young king to leave the Greek states to their own devices and refrain from using any force against them. As for the barbarian tribes, they considered that he should try to win them back to their allegiance by using milder methods, and forestall the first signs of revolt by offering them concessions.*



Parmenio as portrayed in the Alexander Sarcophagus

Plut. Moralia 327 C: ***Macedonia was festering with revolt and looking toward Amyntas and the children of Aeropus...***

***[Amyntas was the son of King Perdiccas, passed over in line when the army made Philip king in 359 B ; the sons of Aeropus were the three Lyncestrian brothers.]***

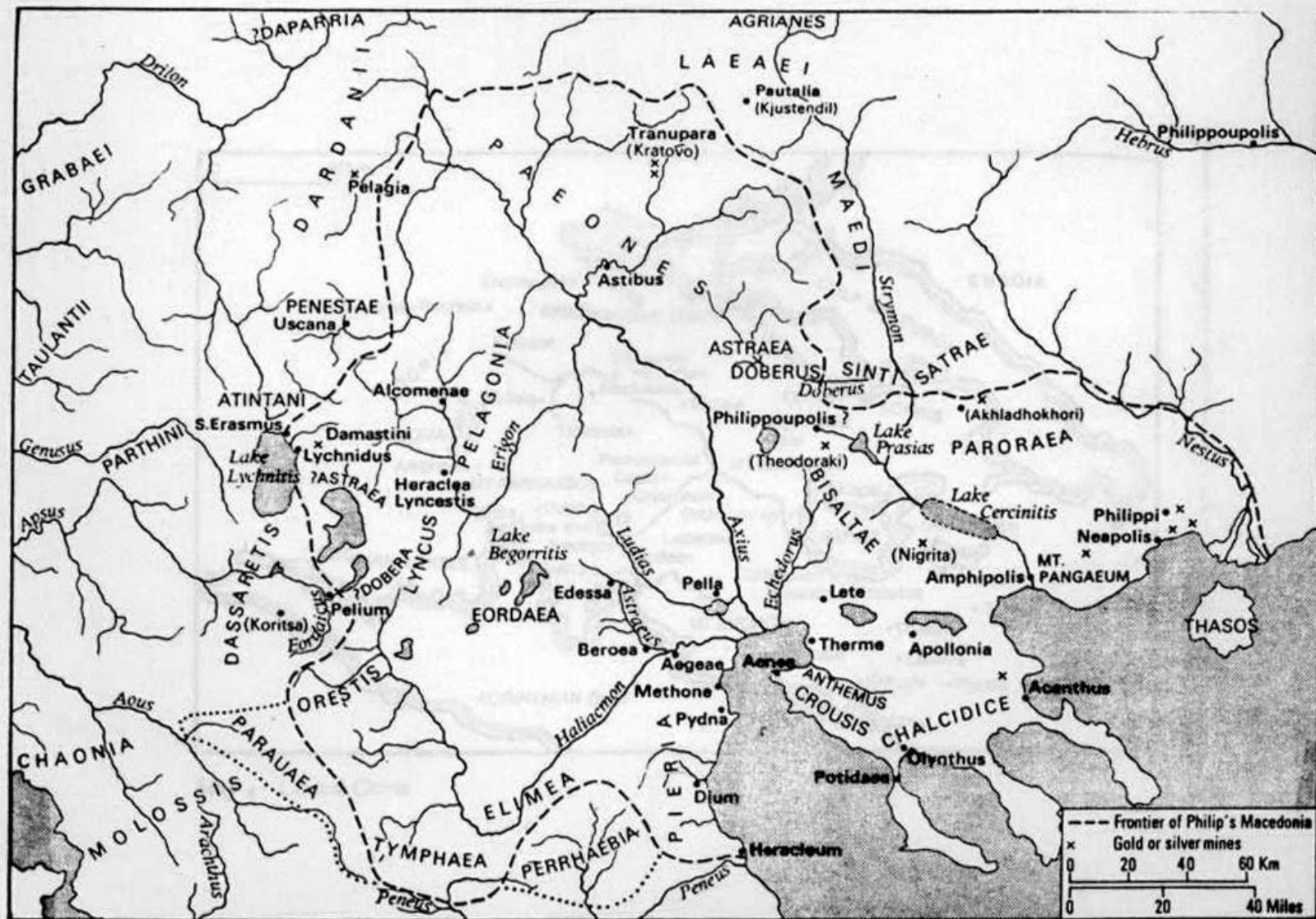


Bust of Alexander possibly by his contemporary, Lysippus

Arrian I.25 At Phaselis (334 BC), a report reached Alexander of the intended treachery of Alexander, son of Aeropus. This man was one of his Companions, in close contact with the king and also, at the time, in command of the Thessalian cavalry. He was also a brother of Heromenes and Arrabaeus, both of whom had been involved in the murder of Philip. On the occasion of his father's murder, Alexander, despite the fact that the evidence against the son of Aeropus looked black, did not prosecute the charge, because the latter had been among the first to support him on Philip's death, accompanying him into the palace armed like his master. Subsequently Alexander had given him an honorable position in his personal suite, sent him to direct operations in Thrace, and finally appointed him to the command of the Thessalian cavalry...

*Curt. Ruf. VII.5-7 It was though certain that the Lyncestrian had also conspired with Pausanias to murder Philip, but the fact that that he had been the first to salute Alexander as king had gained him a reprieve, though not an acquittal...7. Moreover the pleas of Lyncestes' father in law, Antipater, also served to reduce the king's warranted anger.*





MAP 9. THE FRONTIERS AND THE GOLD AND SILVER MINES OF PHILIP II'S KINGDOM

## COMMENTARY

**Amyntas 1** (son of late King Perdiccas II) and his close friend **Amyntas 2** (a noble, son of Antiochus). Philip II became regent to Amyntas, still only a child in 359 BC. After achieving military successes in that year the Macedonian army elevated Philip to the throne in Amyntas' place. Philip II married Amyntas 1 to his own daughter Kynna, perhaps near the time of the assassination. Plutarch, *Moralia* 327C, "Macedonia was festering, and looked to Amyntas and the sons of Aeropos (the Lyncestrian brothers)." Amyntas 1 was executed by Alexander after the assassination. Amyntas 2 fled to Persia together with another noble, Aristomedes of Pherae, and was later discovered at Alexander's camp bearing treasonous correspondence between Alexander the Lyncestrian and Darius III of Persia (Plut. 20, Arr. 1.24.3, 2.6.3, 2.13.2; QC 3.8.2, 3.9.3).

**Alexander the Lyncestrian and his brothers (Heromenes and Arrabaeus).** Their father Aeropos, was a member of a collateral royal line. He had been exiled by Philip II (Polyaen. 4.2.3). Alexander was the son-in-law of Antipater. His brothers were accused of complicity with Pausanias and Darius III to kill Philip (QC 4.1.12; 7.1.5-7; Arr. 2.14). Plutarch's "Macedonia was festering..." remark. His brothers were executed (Arr. 1.25.1), but Alexander quickly performed homage to Alexander, and was described by Arrian as the latter's friend (Arr. 1.25). He went on to hold position of responsibility in the army. Later suspected of conspiring with Darius III and executed (Arr. 1.25 and other sources).

**Parmenio and Antipater.** Philip II's closest advisers. Parmenio was Philip II's most reliable general and foremost friend (QC 7.1.3). Antipater was Philip's close friend from youth (Plut. Mor. 1789B; Athen. 10.435d; Just. 9.4.5). Philip's intention possibly was to leave Antipater as Alexander's advisor during the latter's regency of Macedonia in Philip's absence. Parmenio was Attalus' father-in-law (QC 6.9.18). However, ancient sources indicate that he was devoted to Alexander and there is no evidence that he opposed his accession to the throne (DS 17.5.2; QC 7.1.1-5). Antipater was Alexander the Lyncestrian's father-in-law (QC 7.1.7). After the assassination Antipater hastily arranged Alexander's accession and acceptance of Alexander the Lyncestrian's loyalty, even as he executed his brothers (Arr. 1.25). Parmenio and Antipater allegedly urged Alexander to "go slow." A high likelihood that they felt threatened by the sudden promotion of Attalus to the independent command in Asia, particularly when his advancement was based on Philip's love affair with his "niece" Cleopatra.

In any event a modicum of evidence suggests that the aristocracy was uneasy with the pace of Philip's "reforms" in Macedonia and more particularly with his elevation of non-Macedonian nobles to high rank. Hence, "Macedonia was festering..."

Many of the last acts of Philip II point to his expectation of having to be away from Macedonia for a long period of time, campaigning in Asia Minor. He needed to settle Macedonian affairs effectively to insure that the kingdom would remain calm in his absence, despite the potentially destabilizing influences of Olympias and others. He effectively neutralized her threat by offering their daughter's hand in marriage to her brother Alexander, King of Molossia. He perhaps satisfied Antipater's ambitions (having been passed over by Attalus?) by leaving him as regent. Attalus and Parmenio now commanded the advanced columns of the army in Asia. Amyntas 1 was married off to Philip's daughter Kynna; Pixodarus of Caria (nearly) to Philip Arrhidaeus. Apart from the wedding outburst, there is little evidence to show that he feared or hated his son, Alexander, and abundant evidence to the contrary, including his anger during the Pixodarus affair. Nevertheless, he appears to have brought no one, not even Alexander, into the secrets of his strategy for survival. By indulging in his sexual attraction for Cleopatra he alarmed his son, his ex-wife Olympias, and possibly Parmenio and Antipater as well. His use of meritocracy to recruit the "best and brightest" warriors from throughout the Greek world (witness the non Macedonian origin of most of Alexander's friends), was causing the traditional Macedonian nobility to "fester." All in all, the tactics that worked to his advantage while dividing and conquering his adversaries were proving disastrous when applied to his relations with his family.

## **A DAY IN THE LIFE AT PELLA**

**Moreover, the fact remains that of nine previous kings to rule Macedonia only two had died a natural death.**

King Archelaus (413-399 BC), illegitimate son of Perdiccas II attained the throne by murdering his uncle, his cousin, and his half brother. He married his father's widow and was himself murdered as a result of his homosexual intrigues.

Amyntas II (392-370) was murdered by his wife and his son-in-law, Ptolemy of Alonis, whom he caught together in bed. Ptolemy then had Amyntas' eldest son, Alexander II, assassinated, and declared himself regent (368-365) to Perdiccas III (365-360).

When Philip II became regent of Macedonia in 359, he had to contend with two royal cousins, Paeus and Argaeus, three half brothers Archelaus, Arrhidaeus, and Menelaus. He survived only by eliminating all three.

**The detail furnished for the assassination of Philip II offers, therefore, a glimpse of what was most probably a normal state of affairs at the royal court of Macedonia. Life expectancy for a royal pretender was short and dynasts had to contend with a constant threat of intrigue from within and without. The story of Philip's assassination serves as a snapshot of centuries' long patterns of behavior.**