

The Rise of Macedonia to Unify the Greeks –

Philip II, the Genius, 394 to 440 AO [382 to 336 BC]

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They say behind a son of prodigious precocity, like **Alexander**, there is a loving and calculating mother, like **Olympiás**, who nurtures confidence and instills ambition in her son, and a panoramic visionary father, a genius like **Philip**, who mentors the son to everlasting **glory**. This is the story of that **trinity**.

Olympiás claims to be a descendant of the greatest war hero of ancient times, **Achilles**, through *Ανδρομαχη*, wife of Hector, the judicious prince of Troy whom Achilles slew. Widowed Andromáche is given to Achilles' son, **Pyrrhos**, the one who executed Priam, the King of Troy. She bore him a son with whom the Peleus-Thetis family lineage is extended 28 generations to Alexander.

Philip is from Vergina [map], 1of 3 sons of King Amyndas, claims to be the descendant of Hercules, the greatest pacific hero. As a teenager, Philip is detained in historic Thebes [map] renowned for pioneering explorer **Jason** the



Argonaut, universal hero **Hercules**, **Oedipus** Rex whose life inspired the great tragedies of Sophocles, national lyric poet **Pindar**, and General Epaminóndas. A precocious student, Philip becomes disciple of Epaminóndas at a critical time for the **hegemony of Greece**.

THEBES CRUSHES SPARTA

The 33-year hegemony of Sparta begins when Admiral **Lysander** struts with swaggering arrogance into Athens in 373 **AO** [404 **BC**] and replaces the democratic government with a military **junta** of tyrants, but that policy is reversed by sage King Agisilaos; Lysander is killed at a land battle. Thebes rises to challenge Sparta. In 406 **AO** [371 **BC**], the **intrepid** ground forces of Sparta suffer their **first**, most humiliating defeat in Leuctra. The adroit victory is achieved not by larger or more powerful forces but by a **new superior battle plan**, the “**EMBOAO**”, “*Oblique Attack*”, that has been conceived by Epaminondas.

PHILIP UNITES GREECE

The innovative battle tactic of Epaminondas is perfected by Philip into the legendary “**Macedonian Phalanx**” with which he crosses Mt **Olympus** [map] and defeats the combined forces of Thebes and Athens 33 years later at the crucial battle of Chaerónea [birthplace of *Plutarch*] where **teenager Alexander** plays a pivotal role in the strenuous victory.

Philip’s political opponent is the fiery orator from Athens **Demosthènes**. In speech after speech, in contrast to pedagogic **Isocrátes**, the sapient father of the craft of oratory, demagogic Demosthènes impugns with vivification the patriotism of Philip and demonizes his efforts to unite the city states against the looming threat from the Middle East. He even petitions King Darius to join enfeebled Athens against Philip. When his outrageous plea is rebuffed, in his hysteria to sabotage Philip, in a spurious address to the Assembly, Demosthènes stigmatizes Philip as “**barbarian**, insinuating Philip is not “**Greek**”.

[2283 years later, Dictator **Tito** of the dissolved former Yugoslavia uses this **political smear** by Demosthènes to change in 1944 the name of his poor province of Vardarska Bojovina to “**Macedonia Republic**”, to lay territorial claims on Macedonia with access to Thessaloniki [map], a historically false and preposterous attempt to **shoplift** part of Greek history. Unfortunately, **Pres. Bush** recognizes in 2005 the name Macedonia for FYROM despite UN objections, thus creating confusion among those who do **not read History**].

Demosthenes is captured at the Chaerónea battle but is released along with all the Athenian prisoners by the sophisticated, magnanimous, instinctive, and cunning **Philip the Greek**. At the Pan-Hellenic convention in Corinth in 336 BC, Philip is elected by all cities except Sparta to lead the **Hellenic League crusade** to avenge the pillaging of Greece by the Persian “*barbarians*” 142 years earlier. Philip extends his reign into the Balkans to the Danube River in the North and to Byzantium in the East, and proceeds with his vision to unite the more than 1000 city states into the **Hellas Commonwealth**. But 2 years later, he is assassinated, on his **46th year!** [Was it at the connivance of the Persians, or Demosthenes, or Olympias?]. Like the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy in the 1960s, [Was it with the connivance of the Soviet Union or was it an internal conspiracy?], we know the assassin, Pausanias, but not who were behind these blasphemous murders.

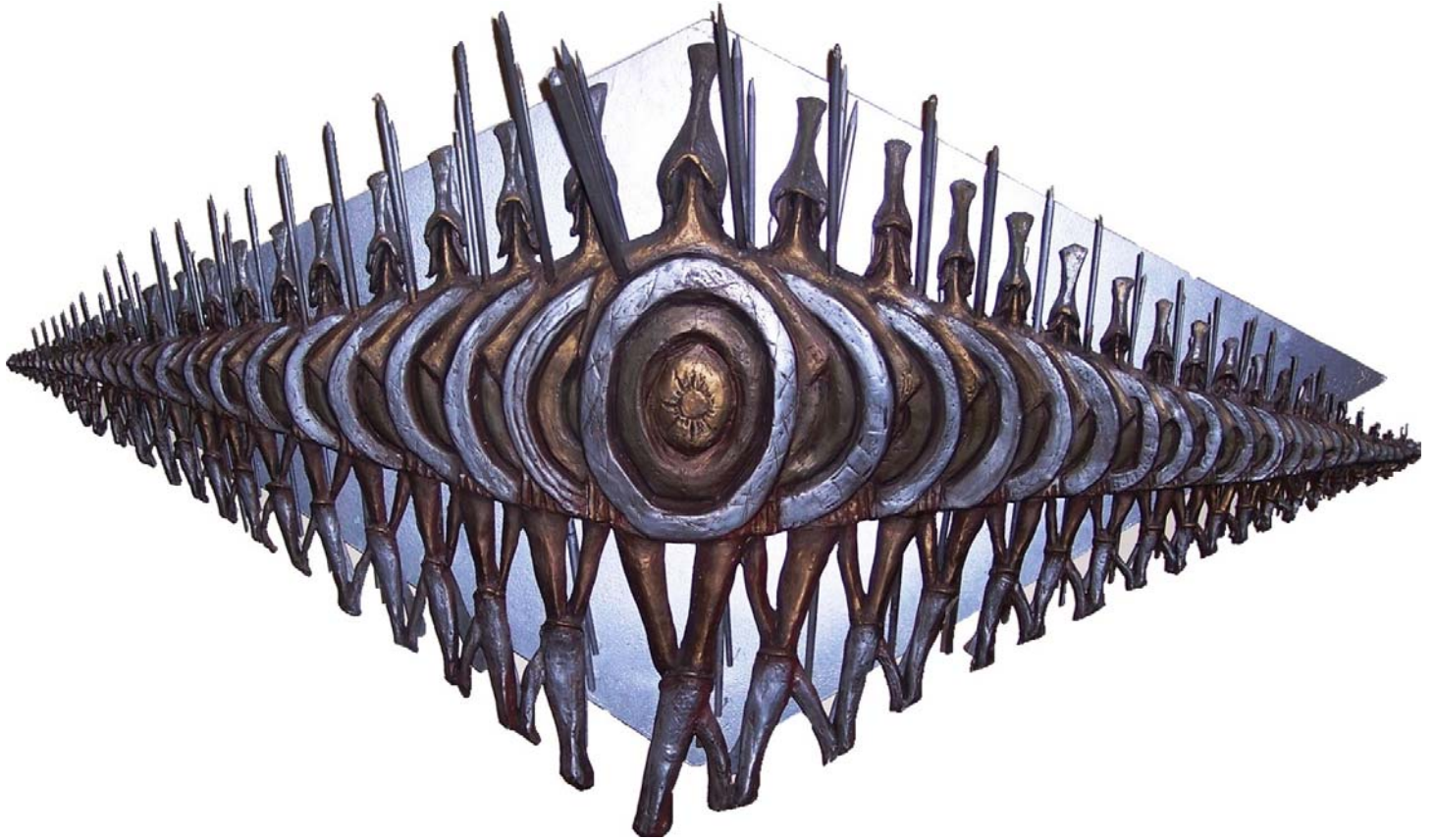
PHILIP’S MACEDONIAN PHALANX

Philip becomes the patron of the arts and culture, sponsoring Olympic/ Pythian Games in **Veria** [map]. The legacy of Philip is in bringing to Macedonia great dramatists like **Euripides** to expose people to the enlightening power of the arts, and philosophers like **Aristotle**, a native of Stageira of Macedonia who was running his own Platonic university in Athens, to educate the **future leaders** of the **Greek Commonwealth**.

His military genius is in replacing armies of mercenaries with units of professional soldiers from Macedonia whom he trains himself year-round into the most disciplined elite units, which are relied upon in crucial times to clinch a victory. Philip pays his phalanx hoplites well after capturing the precious metal mines of the **Pangaion Mountain** [map] where he founds the city of Philippi [map] to the east of his parsimonious palace in his new capital **Pella** [map].

They say that those who faced the **Macedonian Phalanx** of Philip the Great were terrorized at the sight. The main weapon of the 8-deep phalangites is the 18-foot sarissa, [double-edged pole, a wall of pikes]; 5 beaks [nose, spear-sharp heads] of the sarissas of the first 5 phalangites project in front of the first row, creating an aura of terror. The Macedonian Phalanx advances against the strongest array of the foe [a clever deviation from traditional battle strategies] and only after the initial skirmishes and **oblique penetrations** by the cavalry. Imagine looking at such an impenetrable sight while holding a short spear. It would be as if you were looking at the **nebs of thousands of screws** slowly but surely advancing towards you just like screws do into soft wood.

Anna Christoforidis, our Macedonian Greek local artist, captures, in a wall sculpture, the ferocious look, and invincibility of the Macedonian Phalanx [pic].



ALEXANDER REALIZES PHILIP'S DREAM

His son Alexander inherits Philip's political and battle savvy and carries out Philip's dream of humbling the Persian kings for interfering in Greek affairs for 3 centuries. As commander in chief of the Hellenes, Alexander adapts *Philip's Oblique* tactics into his cavalry attacks, which he leads himself riding for 20 years his olympian horse *Boukephalas* [Ox-head], to **conquer** in 8 years and, through sagacious appointments, **control** for centuries, the Persian Empire from Pontos to Egypt to Mesopotamia [Iraq] and Persia [Iran] to Afghanistan and Uzbekistan all the way to Pakistan, in **record time**; a unique achievement that the Roman emperors could not accomplish in 300 years nor Byzantines in 1,100 nor the Papal Crusaders, nor the British monarchs, and, despite the possession of a panoply of pernicious weapons and warfare technologies, superpower USA, nuclear Israel, nor the **UN** are able to stabilize the polemic dwellers of this obstreperous part of the world!

Alexander's Macedonian oblique cavalry attack tactic **revolutionizes warfare!** General Hindenburg of Germany applies it in World War I; it is used in tank formations in WWII and in the **Iraq wars**, especially in the classical case of the massacre of Hussein's tank regiments in the Arabian Desert in 1991.

Queen **Olympiás** without ever doubting the heavenly inception of her son Alexander is devastated, however, by his death in Babylon and of her daughter's husband **Pyrrhos**, the King of Epirus, at a battle in Italy. She remains nevertheless a paragon of action and intrigue; stalks *hetaeras* of Philip eliminating pretenders to the Macedonian throne, but is put to prison and to death in 316 BC along with the **son of her son**.

Alexander the Magnificent with the magnetism of his persona, his phenomenal tenacity, and exceptional motivational and executive powers, as mentored by the military and political brilliance of **Philip the Genius**, and prodded in no small measure by the dreams of compulsive **Olympiás**, unified the thousands Greek city states into the illustrious **Commonwealth of HELLAS** extending Greek cultural hegemony from Marseilles of western Europe to Memphis in Africa, from the lowest points on earth in the Dead Sea in the Middle East to the high peaks in the Hindu Kush of the Himalayas in inner Asia where remnants of his expedition, the isolated *Kalash* tribe, still speaks the Hellenistic language; the thrilling legacy of the **enigmatic** Macedonia **troika family**, whose life and achievements one can admire and embrace, as we do, but also disdain, as the Persians do!