



# Manolis Andronikos: Greece's National Archaeologist

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## About the Author

Arna Elezovic has been a non-matriculated student taking history classes through the University of Washington tuition exemption program since 2002. She intends to apply for post-baccalaureate status and hopes to earn her second Bachelor's degree in History within the next year. Her first BA was in Philosophy with a minor in Mathematics from St. John's College, a small liberal arts school; she attended both college campuses in Maryland and New Mexico. She will apply for graduate studies in History here at the University of Washington. A biomedical bureaucrat by day, working for the UW Human Subjects Division, Arna writes historical fiction and science fiction at night and on weekends, an incurable habit generously tolerated by friends and family. Although a Seattle native, she has lived in the former Yugoslavia (now Croatia), Belgium, and France. She has a cat that enjoys sleeping, napping, eating, and sleeping some more. This is her first publication.

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## Abstract

This paper explores five themes through a close examination of a single individual, Manolis Andronikos, known 'Greece's National Archaeologist.' The five themes explored are: the process of creating a territorial state; the essential role of the outside powers; construction of an infrastructure; combining a monarchy with participatory government; and finally, overcoming regionalism to encourage centralization. The paper is an exploration of identity by examining how Manolis Andronikos's discovery of unlooted tombs at the village of Vergina transformed Greek identity by incorporating Northern Greece, specifically Macedonia, into the national consciousness. Andronikos concluded that the archaeological artifacts in at least one tomb [e.g., human bones in a solid gold *larnax* (box)], belonged to Philip II, father of Alexander the Great, from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. This purpose of the essay is not prove or disprove the validity of the claim; rather, it is to examine the impact of Andronikos's archaeological work and how he, as a person, scientist, and historian, transformed modern Greek identity by interpreting the evidence, and in so doing, linked the modern nation-state of Greece to its ancient and glorious past.

National identity shifts over time. Greece's national identity is a recent development occurring in the past two centuries as opposed to the last three to four millennia, which is the full breadth and scope of "Greek" history. Modern day archaeology has influenced the creation of the Greek nation-state; often times that national identity, supported by archaeological findings, extends into the realm of dream and imagination, in that conclusions are drawn about a distant past when events occurred on a different calendar and the people participating in those events are long dead. Thus a "national historical past" can be either proved or disproved by the discovery of artifacts and treasures, but the proof rests in interpretation. And interpretation requires both the analytical capacity to put the archaeological findings within a known framework, as well as the imagination to understand and identify the large gaps of knowledge in that framework. Regardless of whether or not a site or event can be anchored to a specific date, according to modern calendar conventions, the impact of this "imagined" past—a past that cannot be re-lived but only interpreted—cannot be erased once it has been broadcast.

This re-imagining of the past is exactly what happened to two small 'hamlets' in Macedonia, Koutles and Barbes, on two major occasions. The first was in 1922, when the hamlets were "raised to the status of village with the advent of refuges from the Pontos...It was then that this new settlement acquired the name it has today,"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Manolis Andronikos, *Vergina: The Royal Tombs and the Ancient City* (Ekdotike Athenon S.A.: Athens, 1984), 17. See also, Yannis Hamilakis, *The Nation and its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and*

Vergina. And then Vergina was re-imagined by a Greek archaeologist, Manilos Andronikos, whose stunning discovery of the royal tombs and their contents untouched by robbers captured not only the Greek national imagination, but also the attention of Greece's neighboring countries and the world at large. Since Andronikos's initial discovery in 1977, the archaeological excavation and subsequent monument/museum at Vergina has become a world heritage UNESCO site with an estimated 300,000 visitors per year.<sup>2</sup> More importantly Vergina has become the keystone to a political and ethnic incorporation of Hellenistic Macedonia into the Greek national identity.

With his discoveries at Vergina, Andronikos gave Greece the right to a claim that exceeded Greece's territorial jurisdiction; because of his findings at Vergina, Greece has portrayed Macedonia as "Greek" in language and culture, at least since the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. However, the

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*National Imagination in Greece* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2007), 163, note #35. Hamilakis says that—according to local legend—Vergina was named after a queen who refused to submit to the Ottoman Empire and so threw herself in the river. Hamilakis also explains that when the immigrants from Anatolia came into the region in 1922, Andronikos's family among them, the toponyms of those hamlets were erased by the local bishop, thus proving Hamilakis' later point that renaming is "reclaiming" or making a region one's own. Hamilakis quotes Andronikos, who would later dismiss the hamlets, as saying, "The village had no history."

<sup>2</sup>Hamilakis, *The Nation and its Ruins*, 155. Hamilakis wrote of his own visit to the shelter museum that now exists at Vergina: "The guard, very proud to be there, says that around 300,000 people visit the site every year (in fact, according to the data from the Ministry of Culture the number is much lower than that.)"



claim has not been without argument, given the historical tug of war in the region over the fertile plains and rivers and resources. Macedonia has been part of Greece since the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest, but in this case identity goes beyond borders. The most notable and contested emblem of national identity has been the sixteen-pointed star or sun discovered on the lid of a gold larnax in Tomb II of Vergina. The larynx, a box made of gold weighing 7.790 grams and measuring 0.409 x 0.341 x .017 meters, contained the bones of a deceased person. These bones were burnt and colored a dark blue - especially the skull - from either being washed in wine and/or wrapped in purple cloth.<sup>3</sup> These are the bones that Manilos Andronikos has asserted as belonging to Philip II, King of Macedon, who ruled from 359 to 336 BCE, the same Philip who united Macedonia with the intent to invade Asia, but never achieved his goal because he was assassinated in 336 BCE in a public theater.<sup>4</sup> This left his son

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<sup>3</sup> Andronikos, *Vergina: Royal Tombs and the Ancient City*, 168-170.

<sup>4</sup> Ian Worthington, *Philip II of Macedonia* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2008), 181. Worthington writes that the assassination of Philip II occurred at the marriage celebration between Philip's daughter, Cleopatra (by his wife Olympias), and Cleopatra's uncle, Alexander of Epirus. The day after the marriage, athletic games were scheduled but were preceded by a sunrise procession, in which statues of twelve Olympian Gods followed by a statue of Philip were carried in from a side entrance of the theater. This point is significant because Andronikos excavated not only a theater at Vergina but also a *heroon*, a shrine dedicated to the worship of the dead whether one or more persons. Andronikos concluded that the *heroon* was likely for King Philip (based on the compilation of additional evidence summarized in this paper.)

and heir, Alexander III, to extend the Macedonian territory to create a Hellenistic empire that went as far as India; and for this conquest, Alexander became known simply as "The Great."

The modern conflict between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic Of Macedonia (FYROM) over an emblem (i.e., the star of Vergina) may seem a little absurd if one ignores the historical context of the argument, in both the distant and more recent past. The sixteen-point star is more than a flag; it a symbol. Macedonia—the region and even the name itself—has been contested both as territory and has had a mixed ethnic identity for a long time. Even in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE, Philip II had difficulties consolidating the territories that made up Macedonia; he had to take military action and make multiple political marriages; luckily for him, polygamy was not a problem. In the modern day, there have been three major periods that made Greece sensitive to any claim to Macedonian heritage by FYROM. First, after the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, Macedonia became part of Greece, but after Greece's disastrous campaign against Turkey in 1920-22 and as part of the subsequent population exchange between Greece and Turkey, a total of 1,100,000 Greeks from Asia Minor (Turkey) were resettled in Macedonia, Thrace and other parts of Greece whereas approximately 380,000 Muslims in Greece were sent to live in Turkey. Another 100,000 Greek refugees came to Greece from revolutionary Russia and Bulgaria.<sup>5</sup> They all had long memories of the upheaval, but

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Clogg, *Concise History of Greece* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge UK, 1992), 99.



more importantly, the influx of refugees changed the ethnic composition of the population of Macedonia so that the majority was “Greek.”<sup>6</sup> Second, Macedonia suffered under a brutal occupation during World War II by the Bulgarians. And third, the Greek communists, fleeing the right-wing government during the civil war in 1949 moved north and called for “self-determination for Slav Macedonians” as they went.<sup>7</sup>

If Greece has some historical reasons to be hypersensitive, the Slav-speaking Macedonians have the need of a long-trampled people to have a connection to a glorious past, whether or not is part of one’s own ethnic heritage. This link—to the glory of Philip II’s consolidation of Macedonia and his son’s subsequent conquest and establishment of an empire—is part of the “imagined” past that modern people seek to find in order to achieve a place within the historical framework in which we all live. The argument between Greece and FYROM has been significant because it involves more than territory; it is about identity. Greece made “claim to an international patent for the Vergina star in 1995; in the same year Greece refused to send representatives to commemorate the Holocaust at Auschwitz because at the ceremony there was going to be a FYROM

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<sup>6</sup> Clogg, *Concise History of Greece*, 103: “Greeks who had been in a minority in Greek Macedonia in the immediate aftermath of the Balkan wars now became a clear majority.”

<sup>7</sup> Clogg, *Concise History of Greece*, 208. Clogg also notes of the Greek communists (called the Democratic Army), 139: “By 1949 as much as 40 per cent of the rank and file of the Democratic Army was composed of Slav Macedonians, a fact which led the communist party once again to advocate the right of self-determination for Macedonians.”

delegation with their national flag, featuring the same star.”<sup>8</sup>

Such actions are a good way to get snubbed on the international stage and Greece has lost some credibility over their reaction to FYROM. However, this is where Manilos Andronikos stepped in, providing proof of Macedonia’s Hellenism. His dream of finding an unlooted tomb, his intuition born out of long excavating experience with the site, and the financial support of Greek government once the discovery had been made put Manilos Andronikos in the category of superstar archaeologist, a status that few scholars will ever attain. Bringing his dream into reality was an accomplishment at least twenty-five years in the making.<sup>9</sup> Hamilakis, in his book *The Nation and its Ruins*, wrote “if antiquity of Greece operates as a secular national religion, then Andronikos can be seen as a great shaman of that religion.”<sup>10</sup> Thus a brief summary of that life is necessary to set the context for Andronikos’s dream and how he helped change the identity of the Greek nation-state.

Born in modern day Bursa, Turkey, in 1919, Andronikos escaped the ravages of war (e.g., the destruction of Smyrna) with his family, and was resettled in Thessaloniki in 1922. There he lived in the city, in the shadow of landmarks, studying

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<sup>8</sup> Hamilakis, *Nation and its Ruins*, 161, note #30.

Hamilakis cites Brown 1994 on the politics of identity in relation to this national symbol.

<sup>9</sup> Hamilakis, *Nation and its Ruins*, 135. Hamilakis says that Andronikos’s first attempt at uncovering the ‘Secret of the Megali Toumba’ was crucial to implanting the idea that the site had royal tombs. Hamilakis provides Andronikos’s own words: “I was dreaming of it since the moment I did the first test in 1952.”

<sup>10</sup> Hamilakis, *Nation and its Ruins*, 162.



humanities at school with a full curriculum of both ancient and Modern Greek, Latin, archaeology, folklore studies. He went to Vergina for the first time in 1937, studying and working under the tutelage of Konstantinos Romaios, Professor of Archaeology, who had already been excavating at the Vergina site.<sup>11</sup> Then came World War II. Andronikos used an appointment for teaching in Thrace to escape occupied Greece. He joined the resistance fighters in the Middle East, and after the war ended, returned to his country. He took exams for the National Archaeological Service and passed. In 1947, he became curator for the region that included Vergina.<sup>12</sup> He first excavated the 'Megali Toumba' in 1952,<sup>13</sup> but was not successful in his attempt. He then obtained his doctorate and studied for two years in Oxford. He became full Professor at the University of Thessaloniki in 1961, making two more attempts in 1961 and 1962 at the site. Andronikos's publications during the military dictatorship between 1967 and 1947 expressed subtle resistance against the government.<sup>14</sup> After the end of the dictatorship in 1974, he returned to Vergina in 1976, this time with funding from the University of Thessaloniki.

Andronikos said of his 1976 excavation, prior to his discovery of the Royal Tombs, "I began to dream of being lucky enough to find the first un pillaged Macedonian tomb, a stroke of fortune that every archaeologist would wish

to have."<sup>15</sup> His goal in the work at Vergina was "from the very beginning, the tomb for which the Great Tumulus was constructed."<sup>16</sup> The Great Tumulus was a vast mound of earth covering the tombs, which Andronikos excavated. Hamilakis explains that dreaming was an actual part of the process of discovery for Andronikos, whether the dream was his own or those dreams of his workers. Andronikos mentioned in his writings dreaming about the excavation on two particular (and striking) occasions. The first when a foreman drew a tomb with a main chamber and antechamber, prior to its discovery, based on what he had dreamt the night before. Andronikos said that he at the time did not see such a beautiful dream himself but that "it seemed that I was waiting to see it in daylight."<sup>17</sup> He subscribed to the belief that the simple people (e.g., the uneducated non-archaeologist) had a better understanding of the truth, almost as though they were pulling from some sort of inherited genetic cultural memory. A second example of the importance Andronikos placed on dreaming was based on a letter he received from an American woman describing her dream of the discovery as the tomb of Philip II.<sup>18</sup> Andronikos wrote of this

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<sup>15</sup> Andronikos, *Vergina: Royal Tombs and the Ancient City*, 56.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>17</sup> Hamilakis, *Nation and its Ruins*, 139.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 140. The woman wrote, in her letter to Andronikos: "When I woke up in the morning, I took the local paper and there I read a short telegram from Athens, which read, 'In northern Greece a tomb was found which is probably that of the King of Macedonia, Philip.' Between my dream and the telegram, there were two differences. In the telegram it said probably whereas in my dream, the man was categorically certain...P.S. Although not part of my

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 137, note #4.



woman's dream in a later publication, noting his surprise that her letter was sent before he made his official announcements and before he found the second skeleton, a fact the woman could not have learned from reading newspapers. Hamilakis says, "Andronikos believed in the ability of 'simple' people...to communicate with the dead more directly, and it seemed to him that perhaps dreaming was one way by which that truth was revealed to them."<sup>19</sup>

Andronikos' descriptions of the finding of the tomb are extraordinary in multiple ways; he published early and for a broad audience. The immediacy with which he draws the reader in and his excitement demonstrates almost a sense of inevitability of the discovery. He tried to restrain the hope of good fortune that lurks behind some of the more technical aspects of his report, but as a reader we have the benefit of knowing the outcome in advance. Andronikos decided that the "vast area covered by the Cemetery of the Tumuli and the vast wealth which accumulated there over a long period was no longer a puzzle,"<sup>20</sup> based on his previous findings of broken stelai found in the Great Tumulus, and the conclusion of N.G.L Hammond's work on *History of Macedonia* that Edessa and Aigai were separate cities. These key points led Andronikos to continue with the digging: Vergina was Aigai, the ancient capital of Macedonia, and therefore he concluded that the Tumulus covered royal tombs.

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dream, I have the sense that in the complex of the same tomb, there is a second, smaller skeleton of a baby or a woman. This is my intuition, not part of my dream."

<sup>19</sup> Hamilakis, *Nation and its Ruins*, 141.

<sup>20</sup> Andronikos, *Vergina: Royal Tombs and the Ancient City*, 62.

The next season, in 1977, Andronikos proved these theories correct. He had been digging several trenches without success when he "opened a new trench from the southwest again...and came upon a strange wall built of bricks."<sup>21</sup> Further excavation led to burnt bones, ashes, vessels for rites honoring the dead, including fish dishes and sauceboats ("salt cellars"), and finally the upper surface of a wall. A second wall was discovered, and then "oblong limestone blocks...covering a rectangular subterranean tomb." Once he and his team unearthed the roof of the tomb, they were thrilled to see that it was covered with a solid coat of stucco.<sup>22</sup> Work continued at a rapid pace: they uncovered three buildings, two of them tombs, the other a *heroon*, a shrine dedicated to the worship of the dead whether one or more persons.<sup>23</sup>

The first tomb they entered had been looted, but on three walls there were a narrow frieze and more astonishingly above the frieze a painting picturing Pluto's Rape of Persephone. They then began work on unearthing the second tomb, and again above the frieze there was a painting, this one Andronikos described as extending over 5.56 m and depicting a hunting scene with men on foot and three men mounted on horses, dogs, and a lion. However, due to potential loss of funding and approaching winter, the season for digging was coming to a close. Andronikos and his team were lucky: the weather held and they kept up an accelerated pace. Above this second tomb they found burnt bricks, two bent iron swords, and iron horse

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.



trappings, which Andronikos wrote, “recalls the funeral of Patroclos, to whom Achilles sacrificed ‘four high-necked horses’ and it obliged us to regard the deceased for whom the tomb had been erected as no ordinary mortal.”<sup>24</sup> His hopes increased because the second tomb had the appearance externally of being for someone very important.

When Andronikos realized that the second tomb had not been plundered, he said, “I knew that from that moment on I had to have absolute control over all my actions and that there was no margin for error or carelessness: neither had I any time to spare, since we were already into November.”<sup>25</sup> One has to consider that Andronikos spent forty plus year in the service of “national archaeology” and that he had just achieved the dream of his life. His “unearthing of the tomb” on 8 November 1977 shows his theatrical sensibility but also his understanding of dramatic symbolism,<sup>26</sup> which is a direct feed

to that national imagination. This journey to the underworld of a Macedonian tomb was not an abstract one for him, but the real moment in which he was able to link himself into the past—become a part of the past—by the discovery of material goods.<sup>27</sup> That he considered it of paramount importance to share the discovery shows us just why Andronikos was extraordinary: he was an academic, who struggled with two separate purposes, the need to make a thorough examination of evidence before drawing conclusions and the need to share the past with not only his countrymen but to the world as a whole.

The finds from Tomb II were breathtaking, including the gold larnax, the bones within, silver vessels, a large bronze cover of a shield, a ceremonial shield, greaves, a lamp-stand, iron cuirass with gold bands, remains of sword, a helmet, a gold wreath of oak leaves and acorns, and ivory figurines in the shape of five carved heads. And during this period excavation at Vergina, Greece was experiencing yet another political transition: it was only the second election to be held since the dictatorship fell in 1974.<sup>28</sup> News from Vergina began to leak out.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Andronikos, *Vergina: Royal Tombs and the Ancient City*, 69. Andronikos noted that he planned to open the tomb on 8 November, which was the day the Orthodox Church celebrated the feast of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, lords of the Underworld. Hamilakis (*The Nation and its Ruins*, 142) said about Andronikos’s choice of date: “The staging of the opening to coincide with that date speaks to the deliberate attempt to link the find with the Christian calendar and beliefs: Andronikos’s journey to the underworld merged the national and the religious narratives; the classical past provides plentiful stories of the descent to the world of dead...most famous perhaps...Odysseus.” And on the public nature of the opening of the tomb, Hamilakis (*The Nation and its Ruins*, 150): “The opening was planned for 8 November; a whole range of dignitaries were invited.”

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<sup>27</sup> Andronikos, *Vergina: Royal Tombs and the Ancient City*, 70. Andronikos said of his own discovery: “The long years spent studying burial customs far from dulling his sensibilities had sharpened them to such a degree that he lived through the thrilling, never to be recaptured moment, when it was granted to him to travel back through the millennia and come close to the living truth of the past, as a direct experience.” This quote nicely summarizes the merging of the scientist with the emotional aspect of archaeological work.

<sup>28</sup> Andronikos, *Vergina: Royal Tombs and the Ancient City*, 75. Also Hamilakis, *The Nation and its Ruins*, 152.



Andronikos and his colleagues arranged for a press conference on 24 November 1977, a few short weeks after the initial discovery of the intact Tomb II, even though they had just entered the antechamber on 21 November. When they did so, they again found a sarcophagus, a golden larnax, an amphora, three greaves, and a bundle of bronze arrowheads, to name only a few major items. In the larnax, they found the bones of another dead person—royal like the main tomb—but this time a woman. Andronikos returned to the University in Thessaloniki to make his announcements, but he felt it was his “duty to inform the most senior members of the government, the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister,” of these findings.<sup>29</sup>

Konstantinos Karamanlis, then President of Greece said, “Greece belongs to the West,” whereas his longtime political rival, Andreas Papandreou said, “Greece belongs to Greece.”<sup>30</sup> But when it came to the finds of Vergina, Greece decided that Greece belonged to the world. Andronikos and his team removed the artifacts from Vergina almost immediately to protect them from looters and transferred to the Museum of Thessaloniki. Later the Greek government supported both the continued excavation at Vergina and international exhibitions of the artifacts and treasure, which traveled the world from the early 1980s into the 1990s.<sup>31</sup> Greece had a vested interest in such

publicity; she needed to make Macedonia “Greek” and prove the historical nature of that claim, given the resettlements in 1922, the ongoing border conflicts, and then the turmoil in the Balkans in the 1990s.<sup>32</sup>

Hellenism has been a defining characteristic of Greece’s image and role in the world since the country’s inception as a nation-state, and therefore the finds at Vergina were worth exporting globally. It helped that the artifacts were in solid gold, adding literal and figurative allure to the discoveries. But with publicity came disagreement, intense and multifold. The debate about whether or not Vergina was the ancient capital of Macedonia

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Thessaloniki where the finds of Vergina were housed, but with the support of the Greek government. The exhibitions covered over a period of ten years: “The Search for Alexander” in the early 1980s, “Macedonia: from Mycenaean times to the death of Alexander the Great” in the late 1980s, and “Greek Civilization, Macedonia, and the Kingdom of Alexander the Great” in the early 1990s. Hamilakis says, 146: “That last exhibition’s success was announced in the Greece Press with the title, ‘Alexander the Great, Conqueror of Canada too.’”

In addition, at the time of Andronikos’ discovery in 1977, the government not only funded the continued excavation at Vergina but, although the laws of Greece prevented the removal of antiquities from Greece, then Prime Minister Karamanlis personally lobbied to have those laws changed in order to allow the artifacts to leave the country.

<sup>32</sup> Author comment: Small countries of the Balkans did (or still do) have the tendency to cling to their national identity in a way that larger countries do not, which is perhaps due not only to their size and their lack of independence, but also because of the legacy of Ottoman Empire’s rule in the Balkans. Also, most Balkans countries have served as the literal crossroads of war, seeing every major invasion in Europe throughout recorded history.

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<sup>29</sup> Andronikos, *Vergina: Royal Tombs and the Ancient City*, 79.

<sup>30</sup> Clogg, *Concise History of Greece*, 176.

<sup>31</sup> Hamilakis, *Nation and its Ruins*, 145 and note #12 on same page. The student assumes that traveling exhibitions with the Vergina artifacts were arranged by Andronikos and his colleagues at the Museum of



and to whom the bones actually belonged would have normally been restricted to scholarly articles. However, the debate morphed over time into an argument about political identity, and in so doing, now shows us how active archaeology is in the national imagination of Greece and beyond.

What was being debated was not only the evidence in the ground (e.g., the development of arches, when the arch was first used in Greece, would prove when the tomb was constructed before or after Philip II), but the imaginary Greece that never truly existed for a modern person. Hamilakis says of the earlier effort of Greek Hellenism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century CE, “the sacred sites of the European imagination, much adored by the western travelers (which had also now become the sacred sites of the Hellenic national imagination), had to be rebuilt in their idealized form, to become a past that never was. These practices, which resulted in a sanitized classical material past, were quite convenient for the new industry of visual commodities, photography.”<sup>33</sup> This is why an unlooted tomb is so extraordinary; the tombs at Vergina were intact and did not have layers of Byzantine and Ottoman history upon the artifacts. This is “pure” Greek history in the sense of a cultural ideal. Andronikos had made it more real for both his colleagues and the general public by publicizing the material wealth of the past early in his excavation and in so doing, sharing some of the “glory that was Greece” with the world. That the tomb was found in a contentious northern zone of the country made it all the more meaningful to country in its quest for “Hellenic heritage.”

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<sup>33</sup> Hamilakis, *Nation and its Ruins*, 96.

Andronikos believed that the tomb at Vergina belonged to Philip for multiple reasons: he dated Tomb II between 350 – 310 BCE, and only three Macedonian Kings were known at that time. The burned bones and remnants of sacrifice above the tomb and the *heroon* meant that the tomb was of someone important; the armor and the richness of the contents indicated that the person was a royal male. What Andronikos called “anomalies in construction,” namely the haste with which the tomb was plastered and the presence of the antechamber built later and containing the bones of the woman, could lead one to a logical assumption that Alexander’s need to regain control of Macedonia after the assassination of his father Philip hurried the building of Tomb II, explaining the different rates of construction in the antechamber for one of Philip’s wives. Further, an examination of the skull by forensic scientists determined that the deceased suffered an injury in the right eye (Philip was blinded in battle).<sup>34</sup> All these points are not meant to serve as a comprehensive set of reasons why the tomb must have been built for Philip II, but rather, the list is meant to show the way in which Andronikos handled his discoveries and walked the fine line between deduction based on the evidence and imagining what *might have been*, using his imagination to invent not what was before him, but what he could not find: reasons for the looted first tomb (Tomb I), motivations for hasty construction of Tomb II, and who the woman might be in the

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<sup>34</sup> A.J.N.W. Prag, “Reconstructing King Philip II: The ‘Nice’ Version,” *American Journal of Archaeology* vol. 94, no. 2 (April 1990): 239.



antechamber of Tomb II and why the rates of construction might have been different.<sup>35</sup>

Greece had a historical need to establish Greek heritage at its Northern borders and the country's claim to the Macedonian region as longstanding Hellenic territory expanded the national identity to include the point at which Greece was at its greatest territory under Alexander the Great. Thus Andronikos had to be accurate with the evidence at Vergina, but at the same time disseminate the news of his discoveries as widely as possible. Still, Andronikos's conclusions were not made out of context. He addressed the need for context when in a publication from 1987 he described how the discovery of more Macedonian tombs changed long-held perceptions about dating architecture in the region. He said, "the presence of the vault in Philip's tomb seems not to represent an experimental stage, but bears all the signs of an experienced constructor and suggests that this solution had already been tried out a good many years earlier."<sup>36</sup> The

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<sup>35</sup> N.G.L. Hammond, "The Royal Tombs at Vergina: Evolution and Identities," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* vol. 86 (1991): 77-79. Hammond proposed the theory that the woman may have been one of Philip's wives. Because the bones found in Tomb II were of a woman of a certain age range, there were only three choices of wives: Cleopatra, Meda who was the daughter of a Getic king, or finally the daughter of a Scythian king. In this 1991 article, Hammond reversed his previous opinion from 1978 because Tomb III had not been found yet, and at the time, Tomb II seemed to be unique.

<sup>36</sup> Manolis Andronikos, "Some Reflections on the Macedonian Tombs," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* vol. 82 (1987): 12. This article shows that the conclusions drawn about the development of architecture in Macedonia had to be revised based on the evidence at Vergina and other

conclusions of about the chronology of the development of Macedonian architecture have changed now that we have a more complete picture of evidence; it has been only after the discovery of more Macedonian tombs with the vaulted arches that scholars began to accept the notion that Macedonia had been using the arch prior to Alexander the Great's conquest of the East.

This is why Andronikos—Greece's national archaeologist—still has stature, authority and presence even though he has since died. He tried to fuse genuine scholarship and an examination of the evidence with the emotional impact of such discoveries, and in so doing created a new placeholder in the national imagination: he

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tomb locations during the 1980s. After Andronikos's initial discovery of Tomb II in 1978, many scholars, such as E.N. Borza and Phyllis Williams Lehmann (cited below), believed that the tomb at Vergina could not be Philip's because the vault was not used in the construction of tombs in Macedonia until *after* Alexander the Great was exposed to vaulted architecture in Asia.

E.N. Borza, "The Royal Macedonian Tombs and the Paraphernalia of Alexander the Great," *Phoenix* Vol. 41, No. 2 (Summer 1987): 108 and 119. Borza used the "barrel vault" argument in his article to try to prove that the tomb was in fact belonging to Philip III Arrhidaeus and his wife. Borza's hypothesis was that those warlike artifacts (i.e., the sword and helmet found in the Tomb II) belonged to Alexander the Great because Arrhidaeus was not a fighter. This explanation, although plausible, seems a little too convenient.

Phyllis Williams Lehmann, "The So-Called Tomb of Philip II: A Different Interpretation," *American Journal of Archaeology* vol. 84, no. 4 (October 1980): 528-529. Lehmann also used the argument of the barrel vault construction for dating the tomb *after* Philip II, but archeological finds in the later 1980s disproved her point.



brought Northern Greece into the national consciousness. Hamilakis' book, *The Nation and its Ruins*, makes this point eloquently, the further point can be made that our examination of the past via archaeology, as well as the ensuing scholarly debate, does not arrive at the immediacy of the past. Understanding and examining the past *requires* imagination, and yet at the same time, it must be a tangible experience, empirical and based on evidence. In Andronikos's own words, "the archaeologist sees and touches the content of history; this means that he perceives in a sensory many the metaphysical truth of historical time." Whether or not Andronikos perceived a metaphysical truth of time, cannot be known for certain because metaphysical truths are beyond evidence. He did, at the very least, provide a new national Greek narrative based on what he found buried in the earth at Vergina and he globalized that story. Manilos Andronikos achieved what he wrote in 1988, four years before his own death:

If...at some moment, we could rid ourselves from these scholarly obligations and approach in a humane way, I would say poetically, some monuments of the past, if instead of framing them within the cold schemata of our conceptual construction, we see or read them as images and voices of a human being who sees and talks to us from the depth of time, we could perhaps gain much more, and thus help the present-day people, ourselves, so that we would not feel lonely and lost in the chaos of centuries

and non-stopping flow of countless human beings.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Hamilakis, *Nation and its Ruins*, 147

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