When in 1856 L. Heuzey first saw the ruins of a large ancient building at the hill of Agia Triada, west of the old village of Palatitsia, on the north slopes of the Pieria mountains, no one, not even the French traveller and archaeologist himself, could imagine the fortunes and importance of the place. However, twenty years later, in 1876, when he published that journey to Macedonia together with the architect H. Daumet, he mentions the ruins of Agia Triada with amazement, and he even preserved them with remarkable drawings. All those ruins were, at the time being, referred to as “Palatitsia”.¹

A new village, Vergina, was founded at the same location at the beginning of the twentieth century, with local and refugee Greeks from Asia Minor and Pontus as inhabitants. In 1938, the professor of Archaeology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, K. Rhomaios, with a few students and a small work force, went back to Agia Triada, working in the large classical building of L. Heuzey. By then it was certain that it was a prominent public building, an ancient palace. Now, the ancient ruins of Agia Triada were those of “Vergina”.²

After the end of the Second World War, at the beginning of 1950s, the excavation at Vergina, focused on the palace, was continued by Professors M. Andronikos and G. Bakalakis.

In the years 1970–1976 the excavation went quiet, and only in the summer of 1976 did a very small team of archaeologists, with very few financial resources, through the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and with Professor M. Andronikos in charge return to Vergina. This time the target

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was another area of the site, the great tumulus, almost in the middle of
the village, but also inside the ancient cemetery.\textsuperscript{3} The excavation of the
Great Tumulus in 1976 and 1977/78 brought about a sea-change in clas-
sical archaeology. The finding of two unlooted Macedonian tombs, the
looted but valuable tomb of “Persephone,” the tens of funerary stelai, and
all the other material discoveries started to reveal new images of the land
of the great Macedonian kings and generals.\textsuperscript{4}

M. Andronikos based his arguments on the excavation data and fol-
lowing the English historian N. Hammond and Alexander-historian Robin
Lane Fox, recognized in Vergina the ancient capital of the Macedonians,
Aegae. According to literary tradition, all the Macedonian kings were bur-
ied there, with the exception of Alexander III. In Andronikos’ considered
opinion the unlooted Macedonian tomb with the great wall-painting of
the hunt on its façade had—in his opinion—belonged to the Argead king
Philip II.\textsuperscript{5} After discussion and argument the identification of the site of
Vergina and its ruins with the ancient city of Aegae became accepted as
the years passed, especially as more monuments and other objects of par-
ticular relevance came to light. At the same time complex questions arose
regarding the funerary monuments of the city, especially after they had
been cleaned and conserved by the expert teams on site.\textsuperscript{6}

The most problematic question was that of dating. The first and basic
problem is whether the dating of the ceramic grave goods of the two
unlooted tombs of the Great Tumulus can prove right or wrong the identi-
fication of the deceased with Philip II. There are many gaps in our knowl-
dge of the pottery of the second half of the fourth century BC, while the
fact that our field of research is Macedon weakens the value of possibly
relevant data from the Athenian Agora.\textsuperscript{7} Both the clay lamps and the other

\textsuperscript{3} See above, note 2. See also S. Drougou, “Βεργίνα, Η πόλη των Αιγών,” Εγνατία 7 (2003),
127 ff. L. Heuzey mentions the Great Tumulus in the work mentioned above (see above,
note 1), while M. Andronikos tried in the 1950s to explore the great artificial hill, but the
volume of earth prevented him from continuing his excavation at the time.

\textsuperscript{4} See above, note 2.

\textsuperscript{5} The relevant bibliography is too long and a great number of dialogues, observations
and theories regarding the finds in the Great Tumulus have been written, which are often
not concerned as much with the richness of the finds as with the questions and uncertain-
ties of their writers. The current publication does not allow for full mention of everything
that has been written about Vergina.

\textsuperscript{6} Andronikos, Βεργίνα. Οι βασιλικοί τάφοι, (see above, note 1) p. 218 ff; Ch. Saatsoglou—
Paliadeli, Βεργίνα. Ο τάφος του Φιλίππου. Η τοιχογραφία του κυνηγιού (Athens, 2004) passim;
S. Drougou, Βεργίνα. Τα πήλινα αγγεία της Μεγάλης Τούμας (Athens, 2005) passim.

\textsuperscript{7} For example see the valuable publications of the Athenian Agora, such as B. A. Sparkes
and I. Talcott, Athenian Agora XII (Athens, 1970); S. Rotroff, Athenian Agora XXIX (Athens,