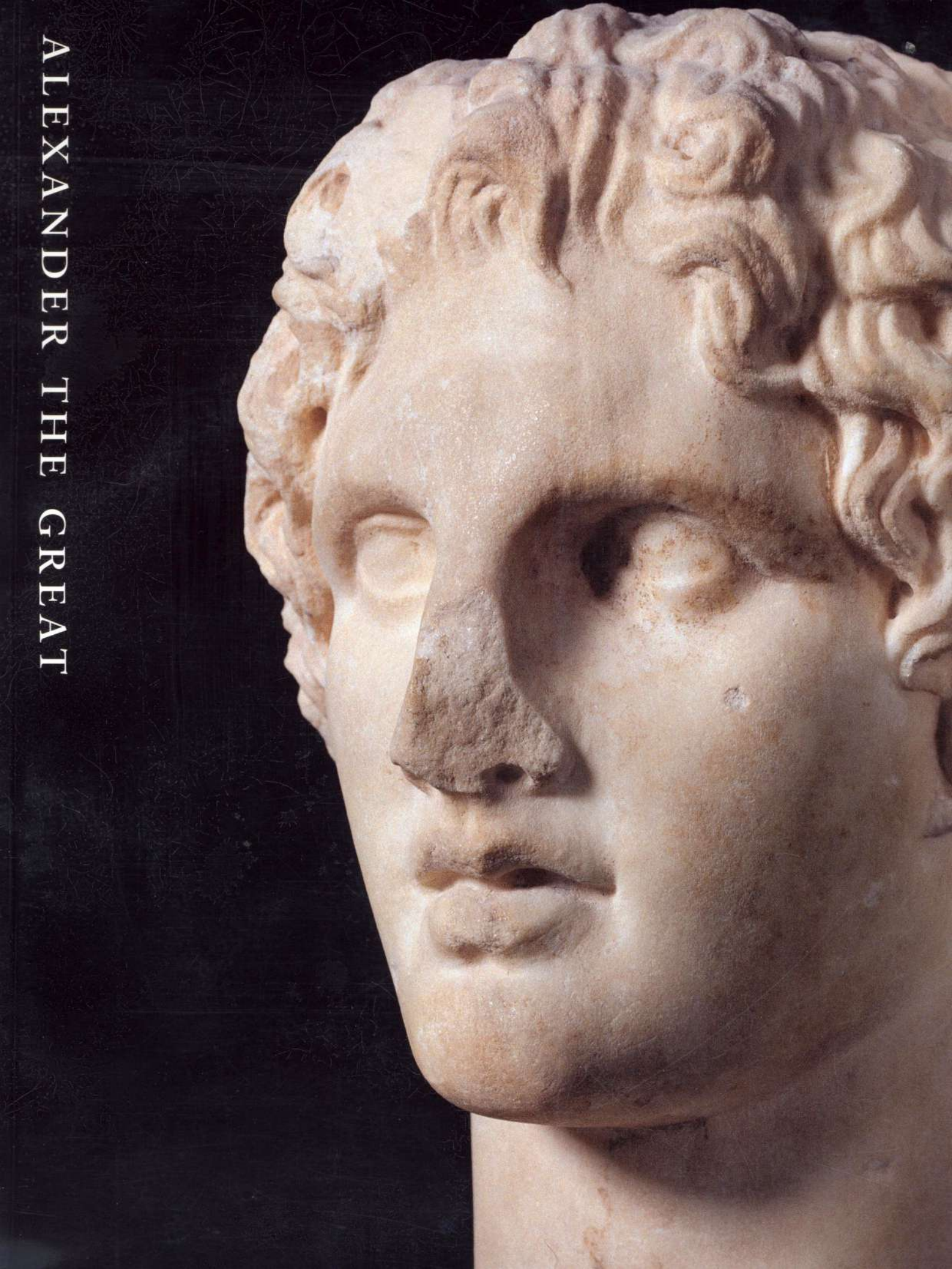
ALEXANDER THE GREAT



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ALEXANDER THE GREAT
TREASURES FROM AN EPIC ERA OF HELLENISM

CONTENTS

THE SYMPOSIUM

Angeliki Kottaridi

Since the very beginning of civilization, participation in the communal eating of the meat of sacrificed animals and drinking of holy beverages has been a virtually inextricable part of every ritual. This essentially "magical" process, which strengthens the bonds between the members of a group and renews their relationship with the divine, is the ground from which the concept of the feast or festival sprung. An indispensable component of every public or private feast or festival and of every convivial assembly was the symposium, the banquet that, as a rule, followed the communal meal and was for the Greeks, from the time of Homer until the end of Antiquity, the essence of social life, irrespective of sociopolitical developments and differences.

The heroes of the Homeric epics take their bath, are rubbed with aromatic oils, put on clean clothes, and sit down together to delight in the pleasures of food and drink. While the cups are kept filled with watered wine, a bard sings of the adventures and feats of men and gods. On special occasions, the entertainment may be varied with the performances of dancers. Outstanding women—queens like Arete and Helen, goddesses such as Circe—may be present at the symposia of men and take an active part in the conversation and discussion. Nevertheless, the fair sex is, as a rule, confined to a servile role.

In the aristocratic societies of the Archaic period, the symposium, which had developed into an arena of critical philosophical as well as political ferment, that would lead to unprecedented changes for the world, acquired its "classic" form: when the evening meal is over, the diners wash and perfume themselves, put on a wreath, and recline, usually in pairs, on couches in order to enjoy imbibing wine, which is always diluted with water in the proportions ordered by the master of the banquet (*symposiarch*) so as to control the time and degree of inebriation.

The symposium always started with libations to the gods and was prolonged for as long as the participants held out. Usually there were desserts—dried fruits and nuts, cheeses, honey cakes, and other sweetmeats—that accompanied the consumption of wine; for a successful symposium, music and, of course, discussion and good company were almost as essential as the wine.

Suitable space for a symposium was the most spacious and presentable room (or rooms for the wealthy) in the house, the andron, and, of course, the areas of assembly in sanctuaries, clubs (*leschai*), and monumental halls. On fine days, of which there are many in Greece, the symposium could be held in the courtyard or a nearby grove, while it appears that men were not adverse to feasts in the countryside, which is why in vase-paintings symposiasts are depicted reveling under vines and trees.

The philosopher Xenophanes (who dies at a ripe old age, ca. 470 B.C.), a restless and pioneering spirit who lived through all the world-shattering changes that led to the consolidation of the democracy, the regime that is the expression par excellence of rational discourse, has left us an eloquent description of the procedure of the symposium:

> For now the floor is clean, and the hands of all
> and the cups are clean, and a slave crowns them with intertwined wreaths
> and another gives them sweet-smelling myrrh from a bowl.
> And the krater has been put in place, full of mirth.
> And more wine has been prepared, which promises never to betray,
> dark red wine in pitchers, which is fragrant as flowers.
> In the middle, incense sends its pure perfume,
> and the water is cool, delicious, clean.
> And beside are spread fair breads, and a table nobly laid,

heavy with cheeses and thick honey,
And the altar, in the middle, bedecked with flowers,
and song and dance fill the house.
The happy men must first hymn the god
with congratulatory myths and chaste words.
And later they must pour libations and pray to always act justly
(that is the easiest of what they must do).
It is no hubris to drink as much as you can take
and to go home propped up by a slave, unless you are an old man.
Praise the man who, even though he has drunk, speaks well,
as long as his memory helps him, and discusses with passion and virtue.

—Xenophanes, *Fragment 1* (Athenaios 462e, free rendering)

Moderation and virtue were the philosopher's requisites for the ideal symposium, but the reality was often quite different; drunken revelers who sometimes had to vomit in order to relieve themselves, naked girls and boys playing music and dancing in order to put the participants in a good mood, and amorous advances that quite often turned into true orgies appear again and again in vase-paintings on the subject of the symposium. Such representations, which are particularly abundant during the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., offer an exceptionally vivid, direct, and genuine picture of ancient life. Furthermore, the textual sources have no qualms about mentioning, describing, deriding, and even traducing similar phenomena that are attributed preferably "to others," without, of course, meaning that they did not happen to "themselves" as well.

In the democratic city the symposium was, together with the agora, the paramount venue for generating politics and ideology. Here, free male citizens met with friends and fellows of like mind and enjoyed themselves while discussing issues, exchanging opinions and forming views. Here, intrigues were hatched and conspiracies plotted, and it is by no means fortuitous that crucial and definitive acts, such as the assassination of the tyrants (tyrannicide), the mutilation of the herms, the attack on Megara, and many others are said to have been decided upon during a symposium. Then, too, were conceived the ideas that on the morrow would become laws and decrees, hymns and tragedies, statues, monuments, and philosophies.

Plato's pen eloquently immortalized the ideal symposium of Classical Athens, which is said to have been held in the house of the tragic poet Agathon on the day after the celebrations of his first victory in the competition organized as part of the Dionysia festival: the symposiasts are a choice few, among whom the comeliest of all Athenians is Alcibiades and the wisest is Socrates, who politely dismisses the female flautist since the topic of this gathering is "sober drunkenness." The wine is light and drunk in moderation, and the highest pleasure to which the participants aspire is the pure knowledge that emerges from the dialectical exploration of the essence of love.

Although at the critical climax of the Platonic Symposium Socrates himself makes the sage priestess Diotima an imaginary participant in the discussion, ascribing to her the maternity of the words he himself will defend; free women in the democratic city—the wives, mothers, daughters and sisters of the citizens—had no place at the male feast; the female sex was represented only by slave girls, flute players, and dancers—"good-time girls" whose role was to serve and to satisfy all manner of the symposiasts' desires. The only exception to this rule were the courtesans (*hetairai*), who not only participated in but could also be amphitryones and hostesses of the party.

At once an institution and an obligation, participation in the symposium was, together with war, hunting, and politics, a vital element of a man's social identity. Indeed, this is the

reason why in Dorian societies the gift that accompanied the rite of passage from adolescence to manhood was a wine cup.

A central subject of life, the symposium also left its mark on death: together with his strictly personal paraphernalia, weapons, jewelry, and the unguentaria necessary for the funerary rites, the wine cup was included as part of the essential equipment of the dead on his journey of no return, often together with a jug or pitcher; in exceptional cases, a full set of symposium vessels was placed in the tomb. While those initiated into mystic cults expected eternal life beyond death, the symposium—the most common entertainment in life on earth—became the ultimate promise of the delights of posthumous existence: rid of cares and troubles, the devotees of Bacchus and of Orpheus, cognizant of the secret path to salvation, were not lost in the darkness of Hades but continued to live happily in the eternal symposium of the Blessed, in the jubilant light of the Elysian Fields. And it is not fortuitous that the central figure of the Bacchic and the Orphic mysteries, the dying and the reborn god whose fate presaged that of his devotees, was Dionysos, the god who gave men the gift of wine, the god of intoxication and of ecstasy.

These beliefs, combined with Platonic instruction, were to acquire fervent followers in fourth-century B.C. Macedonia, where the king and his family as well as the noble companions (*hetairoi*) became initiates of Bacchus and had expectations of the eternal bliss of heroes. Since in such a context there were no sumptuary laws restricting the expenses of the funeral, as in the democratic cities, and indeed after the campaign to the East, when money flowed in abundantly, the heroized dead were very often accompanied in the tomb by all of the necessary tableware, which, in addition to the symposium vessels, some more precious than others, even included the compulsory couch.

Even more profound than the role of the symposium in the formation of metaphysics and ideology was the influence that this essential and frequently repeated social event exercised on the formation of the tangible reality that is characterized as material culture. Truly the most extroverted activity of private life, the symposium was the best platform for the conspicuous display of the host's social status, wealth, and power: that is why only the best, the largest, and the most sumptuous room, the andron, was reserved for it as well as the most expensive and luxurious furniture and vessels in the household. (The need for the andron decisively influenced the overall design and organization of spaces throughout the entire house.)

The literary sources, the numerous representations on vases, wall paintings, and reliefs, as well as excavation finds—which, in the region of Macedonia are, for reasons mentioned above, particularly rich—give us a rather complete picture of the spaces and the equipment essential for the symposium.

Sine qua non were the couches (*anaklintra*): large, quite high, and made of wood, these were a cross between a bed and a settee. They were placed one next to the other along the walls of the room, the size of which was determined by the number of couches it accommodated. The least number was three; frequently there were five, seven and sometimes nine or eleven, while even more have been found in the houses of the very wealthy, the palaces, and the banqueting halls of sanctuaries (*hestiatoria*). The width of the couches, which were intended for two reclining symposiasts, was three feet (in ancient measure) while their length was usually seven feet (in ancient measure). On one, or even two, sides there were, as a rule, raised "pillows," and mattresses and cushions with loom-woven and embroidered covers made them more comfortable. The wooden couches were decorated with paintings, reliefs, inlays of materials such as precious woods, ivory, glass, gold, or silver, or even appliqué metal fittings, usually of bronze.

Depending on the form of their legs, the couches are classed in different categories: the most impressive and monumental are those with rectangular legs and volute capitals; along with the similar thrones, these are the Greeks' most important contribution to furniture making. Particularly light and elegant are the couches with lathe-turned legs. In the fourth century B.C.

these acquired an arched "cushion," the lateral support of which, the so-called fulcrum, was often made of bronze and lavishly decorated with reliefs. These couches, of wood or bronze, became particularly popular during the ensuing centuries and were to constitute the most characteristic item of symposium furniture in Hellenistic and Roman times. (See the bronze fulcrum from Pella [cat. no. 27] and the bronze couch fittings from Dion [cat. nos. 23–26]). Placed in front of the couches were small portable tables, usually low and tripod, on which the symposiasts put their cups and the trays of sweetmeats and appetizers.

Set up in the symposium venue was the krater, a large wide-mouthed vase indispensable for the procedure of wine drinking, since wine and water were mixed in it. Made off clay, rarely of bronze, and in exceptional cases of silver, the kraters, which at first resembled cauldrons, acquired elaborate, elegant, and extravagant forms over the years.

The wine was carried in sealed pitchers (*amphorae*). The water, which had to be cool and fresh, was carried in hydrias (see the bronze hydria [cat. no. 9]). Jugs of various shapes (see the silver oinochoe from the tomb of Philip II [cat. no. 1], the bronze oinochoe from Pydna [cat. no. 14], the bronze trefoil amphora [cat. no. 7], and the bronze lagynos [cat. no. 8]) were used to ladle the diluted wine from the krater and to serve it in the participants' cups, which were simple bowls (*skyphoi*) with or without handles (see the glass skyphos from Pydna [cat. no. 20]); kylikes, relatively large cups with shallow body, horizontal handles, and high or low foot (see the silver kylix from the tomb of Philip II [cat. no. 2]); or *kantharoi*, deep cups with impressive handles and characteristic bases (see the silver kantharos [cat. no. 22] and the bronze kantharos from Pydna [cat. no. 18]). The wine was kept cool in *psykters*, vessels filled with ice or snow brought from the mountains.

The symposium set also included jugs and basins for hot water, for the washing of the symposiasts' hands, perfume flasks (see the bronze lekythos from Pydna ["Women in Macedonia," cat. no. 28]), trays for the sweetmeats and appetizers, lamps (single or multiple) and their stands, as well as wine jugs (see the bronze oinochoe from Pydna [cat. no. 13]), bossed bowls, and pateras, large shallow bowls with a long handle, reminiscent of frying pans, that were used for the essential libations to the gods at the start of the symposium (see the bronze patera from Pydna [cat. no. 15]).

If to the items above we add the strident colors of textiles, the heady scent of incense, the fragrance of the aromatic oils and the floral wreaths, the delicious tastes of the sweetmeats and appetizers, and the dulcet strains of the lyre and the flute, we can perhaps come close to appreciating the vibrant and exuberant atmosphere of the symposium.

In the democratic cities, where citizens ought to be—and, above all, to appear—equal, excessive waste aimed at personal promotion was considered dangerously deviant. This applied principally to symposia given in the homes of private citizens as well as of officeholders, who had to be careful not to affront public feeling on equality, either with the luxury of their house or their household goods or with the abundance of drink and delicacies.

Symposia with a large number of participants were held only on the occasion of public festivals and celebrations, while it was not unusual for guests to appear at private gatherings carrying their little basket of tidbits, so that they contributed, very democratically, their share of the expenses. Characteristic of the austerity of the Greek symposia is the surprise expressed by the Spartan King Pausanias at the sumptuousness and luxury of the symposium vessel in the tent of Mardonius.

Even so, if moderation, austerity, and the avoidance of distinction and display were for democratic citizens the highest virtues even in merry-making (with the result that any divergence from this norm was considered not only provocative and morally offensive but also "barbaric"), after the collapse of Athens and of the ideals that this city expressed, as birthplace of democracy, the center of gravity began to shift slowly but surely from the public to the private domain, and the climate had already begun to change by the end of the fifth century B.C.

Despite the complaints of the moralists, comfort and opulence became fashionable and this fashion was followed by whoever was willing and able. So we hear of symposia "on couches with ivory legs and mattresses of purple-dyed cloth."

In the frontier land of Macedonia, which remained outside sociopolitical developments in southern Greece and where the structures of the societies of the Homeric epics continued to exist until the reign of Philip II, over and above his subjects, the Temenid ruler was for them the tangible manifestation of the power and stability of the state, and this image had to be projected to all foreigners, friends and enemies. A symbolic persona, the monarch himself was essentially deprived of private life. His residence, built in a privileged and prominent position, its mass dominating the aspect of the city, was the center of religious, political, military, and even intellectual authority. It was here that the foreign plenipotentiaries and emissaries came. It was here that major decisions on issues of peace and war, life and death, were made. The luxury and the splendor of the royal chattels were enhanced as a barometer of the strength of the economy, an essential element for the prestige of the king and of his kingdom. And the basilikos potoi, the royal drinking party, was always a political event of prime importance.

One of the earliest pieces of information we have on the Macedonian court is Herodotus' description of a symposium given by Amyntas I, in late Archaic times, in honor of the Persian legates of Darius. There we learn from the lips of the Macedonian king himself that, according to Macedonian custom, women of the family did not sit down at the symposia of men. However, the presence in the tombs of high-ranking women, such as the "Lady of Aigai," of objects associated with the procedure of sacrifice and the ensuing meal—iron spits, bossed bowls, oinochoai, and pateras—as well as of the symposium—kylikes, kantharoi, amphorae, couches, and so forth—indicates that in certain special circumstances of festive rites and celebrations, these women must have illumined symposia with their presence, just like the queens in the Homeric epics. And if this were the case with the queen-priestesses of the Archaic period, there is no reason to suppose that it would not obtain for wives, mothers, and sisters of kings, such as Eurydike, Olympias, and Thessalonike, while the Macedonian queens of the Hellenistic oikoumene, with paramount among them Cleopatra the Great, are known not only to have attended symposia but also frequently to have hosted them, sometimes with fateful historical consequences.

However, apart from "royal exceptions," the symposium was for the Macedonians, as indeed for all the Greeks, an entirely male affair and, in fact, in order to attend them as equals, a Macedonian had to have slain a boar, that is he had to have completed successfully the basic initiatory test in the rite of passage from adolescence to manhood.

As the finds from the cluster of queens' tombs, from the reign of Perdikkas II (454–413 B.C.), attest, the household effects of the palace of Aigai included chryselephantine couches and silver wine cups. In the reign of Perdikkas' successor Archelaos (413–399 B.C.), which was a splendid heyday for the kingdom of Macedon, the guests of the king, who was the greatest patron of the arts in his time, were hosted in rooms decorated by the most accomplished and most highly paid painter of the day, Zeuxes, and enjoyed the presence of the cream of Hellenic intelligentsia, since among the sovereign's friends and commensals were none other than Euripides and the tragic poet Agathon, amphitryon of Plato's Symposium.

The wealth and largesse of the Macedonian kings may well have provoked the democrats of the south, who looked upon it as a threat to the overturning of their own world. However, this does not by any means imply that the royal symposia did not meet the aesthetic demands of the intellectuals of the age, which they sometimes even surpassed. At the basilikoi potoi of the young philosopher-king Perdikkas III, brother of Philip II, the climate is known to have been especially strict, since in accordance with the royal host's tenets, entry was barred to those who were not conversant with geometry.

Philip II (359–336 B.C.), who was not only the greatest general of his age but also one of the most intelligent and astute Greek statesmen of all time, attached considerable importance to persuasion and to the victories that could be won at a diplomatic level. In his efforts to win as many friends and supporters as possible, in addition to all manner of gifts, compliments, and privileges he so generously bestowed, the father of Alexander the Great, who, for all the calumnies of his rivals, seems to have been a highly cultivated man, recruited culture. By putting his wealth and power to good use, he enhanced his court as a significant center of arts and learning, a tradition continued and consolidated by his son and by his son's successors, the Diadochoi.

In this context, the court festivals and the symposia of the munificent king, which of course went far beyond the bounds of measure and, like many other aristocratic habits of the Macedonians, were criticized by the censorious democrats, were not merely the order of the day but proved to be extremely effective political weapons. For through these Philip succeeded in impressing even his enemies, who nevertheless lost no opportunity to accuse him of wantonness, drunkenness, and barbarity.

For Demosthenes and his cohorts, who were not just political opponents but also fanatical enemies of Philip II, the squander and conspicuous consumption of the royal drinking parties were the palpable symbols of the barbaric tyranny that subjugation to the monarch's power would mean. However, the finds in the royal tombs and the palace of Aigai confute this impression and give us an unexpectedly full and vivid picture of the royal milieu in which Alexander grew up, in which luxury was harmoniously combined with elegance and wealth, with impeccable good taste.

The palace of Aigai, located in the same building insula as the theater, was evidently built in the final years of Philip II's reign. It was at once the seat of political authority and the center of cultural creativity, a veritable monument of magnificence, functionalism, and mathematical clarity, which, through the absolute consistency of its geometry, epitomizes the "good life." It is the concrete manifestation of the model of the ideal residence and, as the archetype of the building with peristyle, set its seal on the architecture of the Hellenistic world. It is estimated that in its andrones, which occupied almost the entire ground floor and were equipped with all comforts down to the minutest detail, there was room for 278 couches. Thus, Philip II could hold a symposium for more than 500 guests at once, an unprecedented number by Greek standards, exceeded only by the legendary feasts of Alexander the Great, ruler of the world, and by his successors, who were to become potentates in the East.

Floors with inlaid marbles (*opus sectile*) and wonderful mosaics, heavy bronze-clad, wooden doors, walls with brightly colored stuccoes and adorned with choice paintings, cloth of gold vela, precious furniture, and vessels composed the setting for the royal symposia. The two richly ornamented couches, with inlays of glass and gold and ivory reliefs found in the tomb of Philip II, one of which is revetted with ivory on all sides and is one of the most expensive examples of its kind ever made, allow us to imagine the splendor and sumptuousness of the furnishings of the royal andrones. Hand-crafted by gifted artists, the two couches—on one of which were preserved remarkably expressive portraits of the king, of his son and heir, and of their twelve most important relatives and companions (*hetairoi*)—rightly earn their place among the masterpieces of ancient art.

Of comparable quality and value was the rest of the royal domestic equipment in which gold and silver were the order of the day. The vessels for the bath, some of which (for example, the jug and the basin with handles) could also have been used for washing the hands before the symposium, were of bronze. Also of bronze was the oinochoe with the relief head of Medusa, which, together with the bronze patera, was used for the libations at the commencement of the symposium, as well as the peculiar yet attractive openwork lantern, the lychnouchos.

Silver was used in abundance for the symposium vessels, which are outstanding not only for their luxury but also their superb quality: the spare, clean lines of the forms are combined with graceful detail in an ensemble of unrivalled elegance, harmony, and charm.

Although the Athenians accused Philip II of being an uncontrollable wine drinker, all the vessels for the royal symposium—especially the cups, kantharoi, kalykes, and even the kylikes of Attic inspiration—are much smaller than the cups used in the Athenian symposia and are more like today's wineglasses.

The penchant for small symposium vessels, in contrast to the earlier larger vessels, as well as the use of new, fancier forms and shapes, which is observed initially in the royal equipment and subsequently in all Macedonian households, eventually becoming a fashion of universal appeal, may well denote changes in the procedure of the symposium and the "ceremony" of wine drinking. These had apparently become more complex and sophisticated, with a strong tendency toward refinement that is seen for the first time in the court of Philip II and was consolidated in the reign of Alexander the Great, setting the tone for Hellenistic symposia and following the more general rise in living standards.

In place of the voluminous kraters, the much smaller situlae (see the bronze situlae from Derveni and Thessaloniki [cat. nos. 5, 6]) appear with increasing frequency. These resemble little buckets or pails and were carried easily. Smaller cups became popular. These included the kalyx—a particularly precious and elegant wine cup the size of a cupped hand and recalling the calyx of a flower in shape, from the bottom of which a relief mask usually emerges to the surprise and delight of the drinker (see the silver kalyx [cat. no. 3] and the two clay ones [cat. no. 4] from Aigai)—and the miniature kantharos (see the bronze kantharos [cat. no. 18] and the silver one [cat. no. 22]). Smaller too, as a rule, are the diverse oinochoai and ewers. The small ladles with bird-shaped handles (see the silver ladle [cat. no. 12] and the bronze ones [cat. nos. 10, 11]) and the small intricate strainers (cat. nos. 16, 17])—including the one found in the tomb of Philip II, a veritable masterpiece in miniature that the craftsman proudly signed—decisively became the order of the day.

The sources refer to the bounty of the host who, instead of estimating beforehand, as was the norm, how much wine would go into a krater, so as to keep tabs on the cost of the symposium, gave his guests the opportunity to decide for themselves how much wine (and mixed in what proportion with water) they would like, placing all the necessities on the table of each. This seems to have happened at the royal drinking parties of Philip and of Alexander.

At the royal symposia choice wine came from the cellar, undiluted, in elegant oinochoai, to the table of each important guest, as did the fresh, cool water. Along with it came expensive, rare, heavy wines like today's port or Madeira, which were brought well sealed like precious perfumes in silver flagons, along with honey, myrrh, spices, and condiments of aromatic fruits and flowers—essential ingredients for the royal "cocktail." This wine was mixed, according to the rules of degustation and the desires of the drinker, in a situla and was served with an elegant ladle into cups, first passing through a strainer. Thus the enjoyment of wine become a true ritual, a highly specialized procedure addressed to the refined palate of a real "gourmet," who took pleasure in the taste of the drink as well as in the harmony of the music, the beauty of high art, the stimulation of high philosophy. . . . We should not forget that the symposia of Alexander, and of his father, were renowned not only for the wealth, luxury, and abundance of the vessels, drinks, and food but also for the participation of the leading musicians, actors, poets, and intellectuals of the time. And, of course, the most beautiful and witty courtesans were not absent either.

Inevitably, the new mode spread from the court to the royal companions and from them to the wealthy Macedonians, who, now truly masters of the world, eagerly strove to keep up as best they could with the demands of the day, sometimes verging on excess, such as the Macedonian Karanos—otherwise unknown—who, at his monumental marriage symposium, presented each of his guests with the solid gold cup with which they had drunk at the feast.

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Objects from the Tomb of Philip II

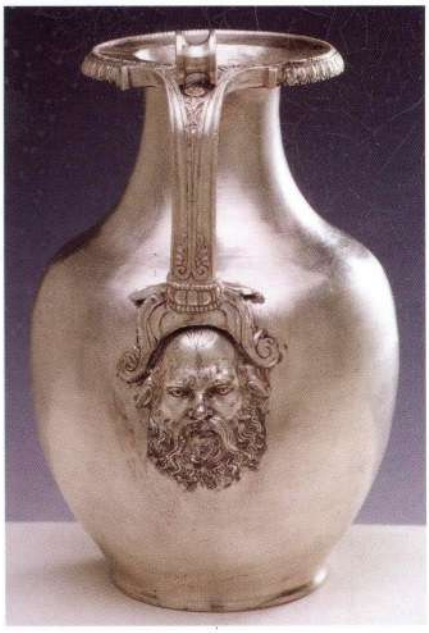
Commander in war, first in battle and in the hunt, guarantor of law and order in time of peace, bearer of divine blessing, person sacred and sacrosanct, the Macedonian king was like the kings of Homer, the *padre padrone* of his subjects. By reversing the existing dynamic, however, Philip II had succeeded in leading his kingdom from the brink of the abyss at Kolophon to triumphal glory. In so doing, he had superseded all these qualities and, at the moment of his unexpected death, was not only the invincible leader of the greatest power in the Hellenic world but also the officially recognized supreme general of all the Greeks. Through conviction and violence, Philip had achieved what had hitherto seemed unattainable: to unite under his authority the ever-truculent Greeks, thereby paving the way to the East.

Philip's son Alexander evidently knew this all too well. Fully aware of the power of ceremony and symbolism, Alexander understood that the moral legitimacy of his own authority and the emotive consolidation of the status quo were conveyed through the honors accorded to the dead ruler, who would thus find his place—literally and metaphorically—in the pantheon of heroes. So he took pains to ensure that his father's burial was the most magnificent funerary ceremony Greece had ever witnessed. This is borne out not only by the testimonies of the ancient sources but also by the finds themselves, which, individually and as a whole, are the most abundant as well as the most delightful artifacts ever found in a mortuary context in Greece after the Mycenaean period.

The mural masterpiece of the royal hunt, the unrivaled ivory-and-gold couches, the ornate silver vases, the unique set of bronze vessels, the precious gold wreaths and jewelry, as well as the gold-embellished weapons of Philip II—the same kind as those worn by his son—permit us to form a vivid picture not only of the wealth and the extravagance, the opulence and the splendor, but also of the outstandingly sophisticated aesthetics of the palace and the milieu in which Alexander the Great was born and raised.

The Symposium Vessels

In addition to the chryselephantine couches placed in the tomb of Philip II was a complete set of silver symposium vessels, provided to ensure that the kingly hero would live on in the blissful light of the Elysian Fields, eating, drinking, and making merry at the eternal banquets of the blessed. Comprising nineteen pieces, this ensemble surpasses, in luxury and quality, anything comparable found to date.



1. WINE JUG (OINOCHOE)
350–336 B.C.
Silver
Max. height 0.244 m, max. diameter 0.154 m, weight 1,196.94 g
From the burial chamber of the tomb of Philip II
Museum of the Royal Tombs of Aigai, Vergina (BM 2442)

Simple clay jugs of this shape, which were used for serving wine, appear to have been common in Classical times, as they have been found at Aigai and elsewhere. This particular silver oinochoe, so essential for serving wine that it accompanied its owner in the tomb, weighs almost 1.2 kilos and constitutes, together with the identical one found with it, the most valuable as well as the most elegant example of its kind to have survived.

However, as was the case with almost all of the royal plate items, the value lies not just in the preciousness of the material but in the classical austerity and clarity of form, which, combined with the highly accomplished craftsmanship and attention to detail, manifests the artist's virtuosity and creative imagination.

The entire body of the vase—base, belly, neck, rim—is fashioned from a single, rather thick sheet of silver formed by hammering and with the aid of a lathe. The cast handle, the small spool soldered to its shoulder, and the relief head of Silenus were worked separately, then soldered to the body of the oinochoe. The pronounced curvature of the body, with its swollen, almost globular belly and narrow neck—the basis for dating the vase about the mid-fourth century B.C.—is balanced by the wide, flat rim with an elegant relief edge. The edge is in the form of an Ionic cymatium, a detail at once functional and decorative, since to it is attached the upper part of the robust, vertical handle which, by extending the rim with its curved back, adds stability and creates a sense of geometric severity and simplicity.

Function and decoration are also beautifully combined in the extremely elegant and well-designed handle, which, in order to embrace the rim, splays upward with a double pair of volutes and ends downward in a sprig of leaves and stems, thus fitting perfectly to the soft curve of the shoulder and forming the arc within which the Silenus head was attached. The spool on the shoulder of the handle seems to be largely decorative, reminiscent of earlier models in which a lid of some sort was affixed.

The care, precision, and skill with which the rich decoration of the handle has been executed in low relief are remarkable. The rows of tiny "beads"; the ring with an astragal rendered in perspective that seems to hold the sprig of leaves and stalks at its base; the fine relief bands; the volutes; the stylized palmettes; and the realistic lily flower on its back are all elements that serve the shape and the function of the vessel.

The artist's surpassing ability, however, is without doubt most striking in his rendering of the face of Silenus, in which we find something of the nobility of the figure of Socrates, as described by Plato in his famous *Symposium*. Manolis Andronikos wrote of the identical figures of Sileni adorning both silver oinochoai.

> I know of no other Silen with such total concentration on the inseparable mixture of beast and human. Socratic introspection and bestial sensuality, reflective man and scarcely suppressed lust after carnal indulgence are rarely to be read so clearly as in the eyes of these two Silen-philosophers.
>
> It is obvious that the roots of these two figures lie deep in the classical tradition and that they have not been tainted by the violent currents of the world which would give birth to the new art—that which would be called Hellenistic.

The superb quality, assiduity, and accuracy of the construction and decoration, in conjunction with a series of stylistic and technical traits found in this oinochoe, its twin, and some of the other silver vessels found in Philip II's tomb, attest that these are the works of a talented toreutics artist, none other than the creator of the impressive bronze krater from Derveni, with its lavishly sculpted decoration of the Dionysias thiasos.

M. Andronikos, *Vergina: the Royal Tombs and the Ancient City* (Athens, 1984), pp. 145 ff.

A.K.

2. CUP (KYLIX)
350–226 B.C.
Silver
Height (excluding handles) 0.036 m,
diameter of rim 0.134 m,
weight 265.71 g
From the burial chamber of the tomb of Philip II
Museum of the Royal Tombs of Aigai, Vergina (BM 2565)

Clay wine cups (*kylikes*) with a high or low foot were one of the most characteristic products of Attic pottery, particularly popular in Aigai, ancient capital of the kingdom of Macedon from the sixth century B.C. The silver kylix presented here is a more precious version of this traditional shape, and was deposited, together with three similar ones from the royal chattels in the palace at Aigai, in the tomb of Philip II. It is impressive not only for its weight and luxurious material but also for its elegance and exquisite finish.

The open, shallow cup was formed from a single, rather thick metal sheet that was hammered with extreme care and turned on a lathe. Zones of concentric circles drawn with a compass decorate the lower surface of the foot of the vase and mark the rim, but the true ornament of this simple vase is the elegant and exceedingly refined horseshoe handles, which, as they open boldly in space and twist, emphasize the pronounced curvature of the body.

Incised on the lower surface of the foot of the cup are the characters ΞΒ=, that is, 62 drachmas and 3 obols. Considering that a lifesize marble statue cost just 200 drachmas, we can appreciate the great value of this small cup. The drachmas used here for calculating the weight and the value of the kylix are Attic ones, but there is nothing strange in the use of the Attic weight standards, since this measurement system was not unknown in Macedonia. Indeed, it is not at all unlikely that these cups with their distinctive Attic shapes were made in a toreutics workshop in Attica and, along with so many other imported products, found purchasers in the royal court of Macedonia. Another possibility is that they were products of a branch of an Athenian workshop, set up in a region of the kingdom with wealthy customers.

M. Andronikos, *Vergina: the Royal Tombs and the Ancient City* (Athens, 1984), pp. 145 ff.

A.K.

3. WINE CUP (KALYX)
Last quarter of the 4th century B.C.
Silver
Diameter 0.096 m
From a not particularly wealthy burial in the Cemetery of Aigai
Museum of the Royal Tombs of Aigai, Vergina (BM 1626)

The wine cups known as *kalykes,* whose shape seems to have originated in the East, were already much loved in Macedonia by the reign of Philip II and often were made of precious metals. After the campaign in the East and the general rise in living standards that followed, the use of kalykes spread beyond the narrow confines of court circles and the king's companions (*hetairoi*). This is the case with this elegant cup, which closely resembles corresponding finds from Sevasti in Pieria and Derveni, Thessaloniki. It was made by hammering a fairly thin silver sheet and, as was customary, is lavishly decorated with repoussé motifs: a Lesbian cymatium and a guilloche, defined by gilded bands on the shoulder; lanceolate leaves in successive rows all over the body; and a double rosette with gilded center on the base.

As the contents of the cup were consumed, an agreeable figure of young Dionysos wearing an ivy wreath atop his long golden hair gradually came into view, embossed with care and attention in a silver medallion.

A.K.

4. TWO BLACK-GLAZE WINE CUPS
Last third of the 4th century B.C.
Clay
Max. height 0.085 m
From the Cemetery of Aigai
Museum of the Royal Tombs of Aigai, Vergina
(BM 2339, BM 2340)

In order to satisfy the needs of those who were not prepared or could not afford to purchase metal kalykes but wanted to follow the dictates of fashion, there were also clay cups, such as these two from Aigai. The spare decoration on them is confined to a band of tongue pattern on the shoulder and imitates metal models, adapted to the nature of the material from which they were made. A touching detail is the careful, widely spaced inscription on the rim of one of these cups: *ΥΓΙΕΙΑΣ* (health), which brings to mind the universal toast "To your health."

A.K.

5. BASKET-SHAPED SITULA
Last decades of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Height 0.20 m
From Derveni cemetery, tomb B
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki (B 28)

This situla is a symposium vessel for water or wine. Two movable arched handles with finials in the form of a flower bud are affixed in twin suspension loops and attached to the hoop of the rim by an intervening acanthus half-leaf embellished with a palmette. Lower down, repoussé palmettes articulated from double volutes and spiraling stems with rosettes decorate the vessel's incurvate vertical wall. This piece is dated to the last decades of the fourth century B.C., although archaeologists differ on this issue.

Π. Θέμελης and I. Τουράτσογλου, *Οι τάφοι του Δερβενίου* (Athens, 1997), p. 73, pls. 18, 78.

E.T.

6. STAMNOS-LIKE SITULA
Last decades of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Height 0.195 m
From Derveni cemetery, tomb B
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki (B 29)

At the base of the loops for attaching one of the handles of this situla, or bucket, is a spout in the form of a lion head with a jutting lower jaw. On the other handle, the now-broken and eroded hammered lead mask of a male, bearded figure (also in the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki; B 69) must have been attached. Although it is attributed here to the final decades of the fourth century B.C., there are differing views among archaeologists.

Π. Θέμελης and I. Τουράτσογλου, *Οι τάφοι του Δερβενίου* (Athens, 1997), p. 73, pl. 79.

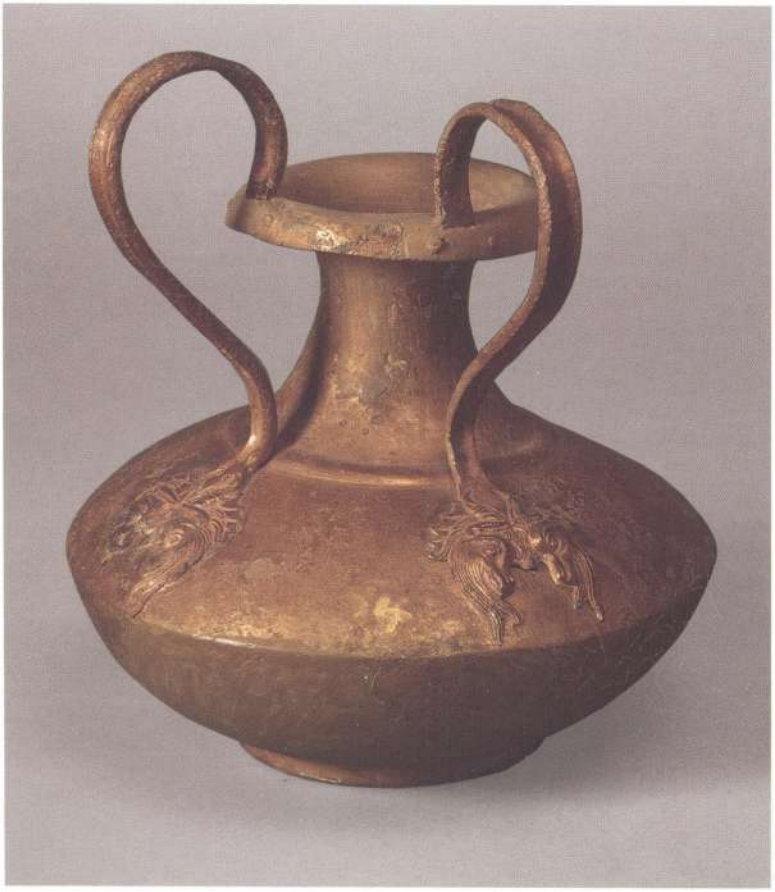
E.T.

7. WINE JUG WITH TREFOIL SPOUT
Last decades of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Height 0.188 m
From Derveni cemetery, tomb B
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki (B 33)

The wide, rolled, everted rim and the vertical high-flung handles in the form of an acanthus stem distinguish this oinochoe, tentatively dated to the final decades of the fourth century B.C. The base of the handle, decorated with acanthus leaves, touches the mask of a youthful Pan.

Π. Θέμελης and I. Τουράτσογλου, *Οι τάφοι του Δερβενίου* (Athens, 1997), p. 75, pl. 84.

E.T.



8. FLASK (LAGENOS)
Last decades of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Height 0.17 m
From Derveni cemetery, tomb B
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki (B 34)

This bronze lagenos has two vertical, high-flung, strap handles attached inside the rim and at the starting point of the biconical body. Developed below the handles is the decorative motif of two confronted goats' heads covered with acanthus half-leaves. It is tentatively dated to the final decades of the fourth century B.C.

Π. Θέμελης and I. Τουράτσογλου, *Οι τάφοι του Δερβενίου* (Athens, 1997), p. 75, pl. 85.

E.T.

9. KALPIS HYDRIA
Ca. 430 B.C.
Bronze
Height 0.425 m
From tumulus I, tomb III, ancient Aeneia
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki (ΜΘ 7552)

This vase was intended for carrying water, essential for mixing with wine. The hoop of the rim is decorated with a repoussé tonguelike pattern and a bead-and-reel design (astragal); vegetal motifs decorate the circular protuberances and the base. On the oval strip of the lower attachment of the handle projects the cutout relief figure of a young Nike stepping on the decorated edge of an acanthus leaf. The interesting winged being, which can be compared with the Nike of Paionios, is also associated with mortuary beliefs. The vase, possibly the product of an Attic workshop, presumably was a family heirloom that had been used as a cinerary urn in a later burial of the third quarter of the fourth century B.C.

I. Βοκοτοπούλου, *Οι ταφικοί τύμβοι της Αίνειας* (Athens, 1990), pp. 53–55, pl. 31*α-β*.

E.T.

10. LADLE
Second half of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Length 0.265 m, max. width 0.07 m
From Makryyalos, field no. 951, tomb 187, north cemetery of Pydna
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Pydna excavation (Πυ 10809)

This utensil is cast. From the shallow bowl arises the vertical strap handle, the lower part of which is rendered in the form of a branch. On the lowest part of the base are two hooklike protuberances; its upper part has a cylindrical shape that curves and terminates in a swan's head. Ladles are frequently found in sets of symposium vases and were used for drawing wine from vessels.

M.B.

11. LADLE
Second half of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Length 0.248 m, max. width 0.063 m
From Alykes Kitrous, field of K. Chrysochoidis, tomb 20, cist grave in the form of a *theke*, south cemetery of Pydna
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Pydna excavation (Πυ 886)

The vertical strap handle of the rectangular section of this cast-bronze vase rises from the shallow bowl and acquires cylindrical form toward the top, where it curves and ends in a swan's-head finial. At the point where the handle joins the body are two acanthus-shaped knobs. The ladle was used for drawing wine.

M. Μπέσιος and M. Παππά, *Πύδνα* (Thessaloniki, 1995), pl. 86Δ.

M.B.

12. LADLE
Third quarter of the 4th century B.C.
Silver
Height 0.27 m
From Aghios Mamas cemetery, tomb 3
Archaeological Museum of Polygyros (ΜΘ 17099)

The strap handle of this silver ladle, with two hooklike knobs at its base, tapers upward to form a cylindrical shaft that curves and ends in a goose's-head finial modeled in the round.

Σ. Μοσχονησιώτου, "Νεκροταφείο στον Αγ. Μάμαντα," *Το Αρχαιολογικό Έργο στη Μακεδονία και Θράκη* 3 (1989), p. 353, figs. 5, 6.

E.T.

13. WINE JUG (OINOCHOE)
Second half of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Height 0.229 m, diameter of base 0.099 m
From Alykes Kitrous, field of K. Chrysochoidis, tomb 35, cist grave, south cemetery of Pydna
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Pydna excavation (Πυ 893)

The jug comprises a cylindrical body, conical shoulder, and neck ending in a trefoil rim. The vertical, S-shaped handle is attached to the shoulder with a metal sheet in the form of a floral ornament. The lower half of the handle is shaped as a stem; the upper is decorated with a tonguelike pattern. The handle's upper finial is rendered as a thumb. Preserved on the body beneath the handle are traces of a now-lost palmette. The outside of the base is decorated with relief rings.

M. Μπέσιος and M. Παππά, *Πύδνα* (Thessaloniki, 1995), pl. 86Γ.

M.B.

14. WINE JUG (OINOCHOE)
Second half of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Height 0.168 m, diameter of base 0.048 m
From Alykes Kitrous field of K. Chrysochoidis, tomb 20, cist grave in the form of a *theke*, south cemetery of Pydna
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Pydna excavation (Πυ 885)

The vase has a piriform body that ends in a trefoil spout with a beveled rim and is set askew on its low base. There are two symmetrical depressions on the outline of the rim. The vertical arched handle consists of a twisted piece attached to the rim with a square sheet of metal. On the upper part of the same finial, higher than the rim, is a spool-shaped metal sheet. The handle's lower finial, which attaches the handle to the body, is leaf-shaped.

M. Μπέσιος and M. Παππά, *Πύδνα* (Thessaloniki, 1995), pl. 86Δ.

M.B.

15. VESSEL IN THE FORM OF A FRYING PAN
Second half of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Length (including handle) 0.397 m,
diameter of rim 0.254 m, height 0.048 m
From Alykes Kitrous, field of K. Chrysochoidis, tomb 35,
cist grave, south cemetery of Pydna
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Pydna excavation
(Πυ 892)

This symposium vessel for carrying food or hot water for washing one's hands has a shallow body with flaring walls and a flat, wide rim projecting beyond the body. At center on the bottom are two incised double circles. The tubular handle has transverse rings and a ram's-head finial, and is attached to the body with a metal sheet—semicircular below the body and bird-shaped on the rim.

M. Μπέσιος and M. Παππά, *Πύδνα* (Thessaloniki, 1995), pl. 86Δ.

M.B.

16. STRAINER
Second half of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Length (including handle) 0.19 m, diameter of rim 0.09 m
From Makryyalos, field no. 951, tomb 187,
north cemetery of Pydna
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Pydna excavation
(Πυ 7784)

Strainers were an essential vessel at symposia, for retaining the lees when wine was poured into cups of various shapes (*ekpomata*). This example has a shallow, hemispherical body. On its pierced bottom is a decorative rosette with twelve lanceolate petals. On the rim is horizontal strap handle with a swan's-head finial.

M.B.

17. STRAINER
Second half of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Max. length 0.164 m, diameter of rim 0.11 m
From Alykes Kitrous, field of K. Chrysochoidis, tomb 20,
cist grave in the form of a *theke*, south cemetery of Pydna
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Pydna excavation
(Πυ 887)

The central part of the bottom of this strainer is decorated with a swirl of tiny holes surrounded by three circles with holes. The shallow, bowl-shaped body has a flat rim, from which rise two handles. One handle is a plaque with incurving sides and small volute knobs ending in a swan head. All that remains of the other handle is part of the bar of the square section, with volute knob.

M. Μπέσιος and M. Παππά, *Πύδνα* (Thessaloniki, 1995), pl. 86Δ.

M.B.

18. CUP WITH TWO HANDLES (KANTHAROS)
Second half of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Diameter (including handles) 0.13 m, height 0.08 m
From Makryyalos, field no. 951, tomb 187, north cemetery of Pydna
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Pydna excavation (Πυ 7785)

The handles and foot of this kantharos are cast. The double handles are attached to the calyx-shaped body of the goblet by their leaf-shaped finials. The high foot has a flaring base and a modeled ring at its midpoint. Cups of this type are particularly common among sets of symposium vases in Macedonian tombs of the second half of the fourth century B.C.

M.B.

19. KRATER
Second half of the 4th century B.C.
Bronze
Diameter of rim 0.167 m, diameter of base 0.06 m, height 0.084 m
From Alykes Kitrous, field of K. Chrysochoidis, tomb 20, cist grave in the form of a *theke*, south cemetery of Pydna
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Pydna excavation (Πυ 884)

A deep bowl with hemispherical body, low base, and two movable handles characterize this krater, a vessel used for mixing water and wine. The rim, which is cast, is encircled by a fine relief band. Its base and its handles—which are attached to the upper part of the body by horizontal cylindrical bars, thicker in the middle and with flattened ends—are also cast. Its function also explains why it is often found in ensembles of symposium vases in richly furnished Macedonian tombs of the second half of the fourth century B.C.

M. Μπέσιος and M. Παππά, *Πύδνα* (Thessaloniki, 1995), pl. 86Δ.

M.B.

20. CUP (SKYPHOS)
Early 3rd century B.C.
Glass
Height 0.075 m, diameter of rim 0.099 m
From Alykes Kitrous, field of K. Chrysochoidis, Macedonian tomb, south cemetery of Pydna
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Pydna excavation (Πυ 404)

Although extensively cracked, this rare example of a half-section glass skyphos—a cup of colorless transparent glass that was cast using the lost-wax technique—is intact. On the exterior is a horizontal ridge below the rim, and three relief cockleshells embellish the lower part of the bowl. The interior is undecorated.

M. Μπέσιος, *ΑΔ* 39 (1984): Χρονικά, p. 221: Macedonian tomb sarcophagus 1; M. Μπέσιος and M. Παππά, *Πύδνα* (Thessaloniki, 1995), pl. 88A. See the fragments of a comparable skyphos from tomb A at Derveni (Π. Θέμελης and I. Τουράτσογλου, *Οι τάφοι του Δερβενίου* [Athens, 1997], pp. 41, 42).

M.B.

21. VASE IN THE FORM OF A PHALLUS
First half of the 2nd century B.C.
Clay
Height after restoration 0.45 m, diameter 0.16 m
From the Roman Agora, Thessaloniki
Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki (PA 4888)

The vase has been mended and restored from numerous sherds. Most of the body, neck, and rim as well as the finial of the glans penis are preserved. The dominant figure depicted on the body is Dionysos at a mature age. Ivy shoots arising from the god's head encircle the vase, simultaneously creating the "ribs" of the phallus. Visible on the neck is vegetal decoration in "West Slope" style, with silvering on the olive leaves. Traces of white pigment are found on the rest of the vase. The fine fabric of the clay and the elegant decoration suggest this is the product of an East Aegean workshop. Perhaps the vessel was intended for use at symposia or in cult observances.

Π. Αδάμ Βελένη, et al., "Κλειστά χρονολογημένα σύνολα από την αγορά της Θεσσαλονίκης," in *Πρακτικά Ε' Συνάντησης για την Ελληνιστική Κεραμεική* (Athens, 2000), p. 294, no. 191, fig. 146*β*.

P.A.-V.

22. CUP WITH TWO HANDLES (KANTHAROS)
Third quarter of the 4th century B.C.
Silver
Height 0.10 m, diameter 0.086 m
From Aghios Mamas cemetery, tomb 3
Archaeological Museum of Polygyros (ΜΘ 17098)

This kantharos has a calyx-shaped body and a low, columnar foot with banded base and modeled rings around its midpoint. The curving part of each of the double-attached handles is in the form of a schematic leaf; the finials on the body are of lanceolate leaves.

Σ. Μοσχονησιώτου, "Νεκροταφείο στον Αγ. Μαμάντα," *Το Αρχαιολογικὸ Ἔργο στη Μακεδονία και Θράκη* 3 (1989), p. 353, figs. 5, 6.

E.T.

23. PROTOME OF A HORSE FROM A FULCRUM FACING LEFT
Late 2nd century B.C.
Bronze
Height 0.175 m
From the banqueting hall at the Villa of Dionysos, Dion
Archaeological Museum of Dion (MΔ 7480)

This horse protome is the second crowning member of a fulcrum found in the same location. There are many similarities in the quality of work with a related protome faces the right, so it is likely they belonged to the same *kline*, or couch. They differ, however, in the proportions of the head and in the presentation of the horse mane. The difference might be simply a matter of gender; that is, perhaps this is a stallion and the other a mare. Here, the locks of the mane are particularly emphasized as individual details, with heightened curves and corkscrewlike design. A similar mane is seen on a protome of a horse (Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence) that dates about 100 B.C.

D. Pandermalis, *Discovering Dion* (Athens, 2000), pp. 184–85. For the Providence protome of a horse, see S. Faust, *Fulcra: figürlicher und ornamentaler Schmuck an antiken Betten* (Mainz, 1989), pp. 74–75, pl. 41.

D.P.

24. PROTOME OF A HORSE FROM A FULCRUM FACING RIGHT
Late 2nd century B.C.
Bronze
Height 0.17 m
From the banqueting hall at the Villa of Dionysos, Dion
Archaeological Museum of Dion (MΔ 7481)

This horse protome is the crowning member of the fulcrum of a couch (*kline*). As commonly seen in fulcrums of this type, there is strong movement in the head and neck; the horse's mouth is open and its mane is well tended. A similar mane is on a protome from Priene (now in the Antikenmuseum, Berlin), dated to the late second century B.C. The work on the fulcrum from Dion shows particular care in the details of the mane and the eyes, which are incised. A leopard skin is tied at the front of the horse's neck.

D. Pandermalis, *Discovering Dion* (Athens, 2000), pp. 184–85. For the Berlin protome of a horse, see S. Faust, *Fulcra: figürlicher und ornamentaler Schmuck an antiken Betten* (Mainz, 1989), p. 148, pls. 13, 1 and 38.1.

D.P.

25. BUST OF HERAKLES AS A DECORATIVE APPLIQUÉ OF A FULCRUM
Late 2nd century B.C.
Bronze
Height 0.13 m
From the banqueting hall at the Villa of Dionysos, Dion
Archaeological Museum of Dion (MΔ 7482)

This unusual item, found next to the protome of the horse that faces right (cat. no. 24), represents Herakles as Queen Omphale—with a headband and wearing a woman's sleeveless chiton, in dramatic contrast to his full beard and broad shoulders. His strong hands are poised to spin wool; in his right hand he held a spindle and in the left a distaff, now lost. The hole beneath his belt tie most likely was used to attach the appliqué to the fulcrum or perhaps to support the spindle.

D. Pandermalis, *Discovering Dion* (Athens 2000), pp. 184–85.

D.P.

26. BUST OF A YOUNG SATYR AS A DECORATIVE APPLIQUÉ OF A FULCRUM
Late 2nd century B.C.
Bronze
Height 0.15 m
From the banqueting hall at the villa of Dionysos, Dion
Archaeological Museum of Dion (MΔ 7483)

Found next to the protome of the horse that faces left (cat. no. 23), this example represents a young Satyr with an ivy wreath. He wears a deerskin tied on his right shoulder. He has pointed ears, and two small holes at his hairline indicate where horns were once attached. At the bottom of his chin is preserved one of the two typical goatee tufts. Satyrs were popular themes for the decoration of symposia couches. This decorative appliqué invites comparison with a similar protome from the Mahdia shipwreck (Tunisia).

D. Pandermalis, *Discovering Dion* (Athens, 2000), pp. 184–85. For the protome from Mahdia, see S. Faust, *Fulcra: figürlicher und ornamentaler Schmuck an antiken Betten* (Mainz, 1989), pp. 107–8.

D.P.

27. FITTING OF A SYMPOSIUM COUCH (FULCRUM)
Second half of 2nd century B.C.
Bronze
Height 0.325 m, length 0.455 m
From a public building in insula 3 of sector A at Pella
Archaeological Museum of Pella (Δ 311A)

The fulcrum terminates above in the head of an ass adorned with vine leaves and bunches of grapes and below with a protome of Dionysos. The god wears a himation, leaving his right shoulder bare, and an ivy wreath atop his long hair, which falls onto his shoulders. He holds a wine cup (*kantharos*) in his left hand and raises his right arm behind his head.

The decoration of symposium couches with separate curved bronze fittings as headrests was common from the second half of the fifth century B.C. until the end of the first century A.D. The ornaments are inspired by the world of mythology, particularly the Dionysiac cycle: the upper ends frequently are decorated with protomes of animals, mainly asses and horses, and the lower with relief protomes, usually of Dionysos, Satyrs, maenads, Eros figures, Artemis, and so on.

The discovery of three similar fittings at Pella indicates that symposium couches decorated in this manner were common in the city. In conjunction with other metal objects and by-products of metalworking found at the site, these point to the existence of metalsmith workshops in the Macedonian capital, with significant output in terms of both quantity and quality.

M.L.-A.