

Amphipolis in the Age of Alexander and in the Early Hellenistic Period: A Regional Capital?

Recent discussions on the interpretation of the Tumulus of Kastanas were mainly focused on the monument's meaning and chronology, the identity of the deceased, the possible connection of the monument with Macedonian kingship and, more particularly, with Alexander the Great and his circle. As the archaeological site and remains still wait to be properly published, the present paper will avoid further speculations on their meaning and history. On the other hand, the author will take advantage of the new interest arisen around the history of the city to suggest some remarks on early Hellenistic Amphipolis and, more particularly, on the following aspects:

- 1) the different clues (from literary, epigraphic and numismatic evidence) which suggest that Amphipolis enjoyed a role of 'regional capital' in Hellenistic Macedonia, at least under the last two Antigonid kings, but possibly much earlier;
- 2) the strategic importance of Amphipolis and of the Strymon basin in the preparation and early stages of Alexander's expedition against the Persian empire;
- 3) the long-lasting role of the Strymon as 'Eastern frontier' of Macedonia *stricto sensu*;
- 4) the influence of Amphipolis' past history (as an Athenian colony and later as an independent *polis*) on some interesting features of its history in the Hellenistic period, like the ruler cult and the city's dynamic presence in Panhellenic sanctuaries;
- 5) the biographies of a few known Amphipolitans of Alexander's age, as a prompt for wider reflections on the social and economic history of the city after its annexation to Macedonia in 357 B.C.

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