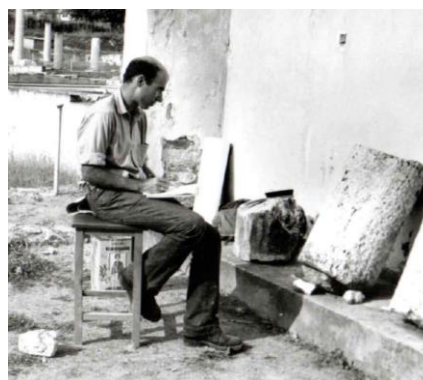


## MILTIADES B. HATZOPOULOS

*KERA*



Interviewed by

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Miltiades V. Hatzopoulos is one of the greatest remaining scholars not only of Alexander the Great, but also of a region of his homeland: Macedonia. This Athenian, born in 1944, is one of the last representatives of a disappearing class of researcher. His commitment to the history of his people is reflected in his articles and books, but also in his own biography. Although he has been deeply influenced by French culture, Hatzopoulos has had no homeland other than Greece. He is a clear exponent of that famous phrase of Giorgos Seferis (1900-1971): “Όπου και να ταξιδέσω η Ελλάδα με πληγώνει” (“Wherever I go Greece stabs me so”). You may or may not agree with the ideas and theories of our interviewee, but no one can deny that Miltiades V. Hatzopoulos is an essential author in our field.

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[Interviewer]: **Professor Hatzopoulos, let me start by thanking you for accepting our invitation. It is a great honor for us.**

**Professor Hatzopoulos, could you start by introducing yourself to our readers, please?**

[Hatzopoulos]: I was born in Athens; in a middle-class family, in 1944. At the age of ten I obtained a scholarship for one of the best private secondary schools, where the curriculum was both in Greek and in English. After my graduation I studied for two years Economics at the Law Faculty of the University of Paris and then Classics at the Sorbonne. My Classics degree offered me the opportunity to pursue post-graduate studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Mycenaean Philology with M. Lejeune, Ancient Society and Religion with J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet), while working as a high-school teacher of French, Latin and Greek. Because of the then

political situation I did not return to Greece, but obtained French citizenship and served as a reserve officer in the French Army. Meanwhile I wrote my thesis on the *Culte des Dioscures et la double royauté à Sparte*. For family reasons I was obliged to return to Greece in 1972, where for several years I worked as editor of the multi-volume *Ιστορία τοῦ ἑλληνικοῦ ἔθνους*. In 1979 I was offered a position at the Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity (KERA) of the National Hellenic Research Foundation, and I remained there during my whole career until my retirement in 2010 (except for one year at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton and two years at the Université Paris X - Nanterre), first as a research fellow and since 1983 as the director of the Centre. I am a foreign fellow of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres (Paris), the British Academy (London) and a member of the Academy of Athens. I have three children, five grand-children and one great-grandchild.

**What would you say were your influences? I mean in terms of teachers and in terms of intellectual schools. Did P. Vidal-Naquet (1930-2006) and N. G. L. Hammond (1907-2001) influence on your research?**

My early research was influenced by J.-P. Vernant and G. Dumézil. Later, the influence of N. G. L. Hammond and Fanoula Papazoglou was paramount in my work on ancient Macedonia.

**Who had a greater influence on you at the time of choosing your career?**

I owe my love for the Classics to poets that I read at school, particularly T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. My Sorbonne professors M. Lejeune, P. Chantraine, J. Humbert introduced me to Greek Philology, and the influence of M. Sakellariou was decisive for my interest in ancient Greek History. I taught myself epigraphy by reading the works of L. Robert.

**If I am right, your stay in Paris during May 1968 must have left its mark on you.**

As a student I was frustrated by unsatisfactory working conditions in French Universities, and I sympathised with the students' demands for reforms. When, however, in May 1968 the student movement took a political turn, I was clearly opposed to a violent overthrow of the government.

**How did you first become interested in ancient Macedonian studies?**

My interest in Spartan institutions induced me to study other monarchical regimes of ancient Greece, one of which was the Macedonian kingdom.

**What, in your opinion, is the most essential quality in a historian of Ancient Macedonia?**

I believe that the essential qualities required from a historian of Ancient Macedonia are a thorough acquaintance with the country and, of course, a good knowledge of Greek.

**As far I remember very few scholars have studied so many different aspects on Ancient Macedonia as you have done: History, institutions, epigraphy, topography, religion, language, etc. Is there a reason for this or is it by chance?**

Early in my research career I became convinced that a scientific approach to a subject such as Ancient Macedonia had to be holistic and cover all the fields of human activities.

**You have been researcher and director of KERA (Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity), could you tell us something about your experience and role in this institution?**

Since my first steps as research scholar I believed that Athens enjoyed a comparative advantage for becoming an International Centre of Greek studies (familiarity with the language and the country and excellent libraries) and that KERA could –and should– take the lead of such a project. What was needed was a clearly focused scientific programme, a dedicated budget and a team of scholars devoted to team work and ready to compete with their colleagues all over the world. Openness was the key word. Hence the publication of *MEΛETHMATA* in the main European languages, the invitations to foreign colleagues and all sorts of exchanges with similar institutions abroad. Unfortunately, KERA became one of the many victims of the financial crisis. Devoted colleagues are striving against all odds in order to recover the lost ground, and their efforts are fortunately supported by scholars sharing the same interests abroad.

**I did want to ask you about how you thought that the pressures on academics had changed in our field.**

The reduction or even outright suppression of a national budget for research in Greek Studies and the exclusive reliance on random European programs for survival has rendered focused team research extremely difficult if not impossible.

**One of your most significant subjects of study has been the role of the Macedonian assembly in the succession of the Argead kings. Have you changed your view about this topic in the last years?**

In my youthful enthusiasm I was looking for a Macedonian constitution which, among other things, would provide detailed rules for the succession of kings. Little by little I discovered that the Macedonian ‘constitution’, just like the so called ‘Lois fondamentales du royaume’ in France or the English ‘Constitution’, was a work in progress. If there was a precedent, it was invoked and hopefully used, if not, the Macedonians improvised. If the improvisation proved successful, it acquired the status of a rule. In the Hellenistic period the family loyalty of the Antigonids made approval by the Assembly a formality.

**In your opinion, which is more credible and reliable, an epigraphical source or an ancient historian?**

I would always choose an epigraphical source.

**In this issue of *Karanos*, we have the honor of republishing your paper “Artémis Digaia Blaganitis en Macédoine”<sup>1</sup>. Please, tell us what makes this paper significant and relevant in your opinion.**

My *BCH* article was significant because it showed that, contrary to the then current opinion, the casual presence of voiced consonants in words used by Macedonians, which in other Greek dialects would present an unvoiced one, had nothing to do with a supposedly prehistoric evolution of Indo-European mediae aspiratae into simple mediae in a distinct Macedonian language. Actually, it was a relatively recent tendency in the Greek dialect spoken in some parts of Macedonia, since it affected not only consonants deriving from Indo-European mediae aspiratae, but also deriving from simple unvoiced consonants. The Macedonian epithets of Artemis from a sanctuary near Aigeai offer a striking example: Βλαγανίτις < βλαχάν = (‘frog’, with an originally unvoiced aspirate in other Greek dialects) and Διγαία < Δικαία (‘just’, originally with a simple unvoiced stop). They exemplify the tendency of some Macedonians to replace all sorts of unvoiced consonants by voiced ones (cf. Διονύζιος instead of Διονύσιος in an inscription from Amphipolis). It was a phenomenon within the Greek language, which is attested also in some other Greek dialects ancient and modern and had nothing to do with Indo-European prehistory.

**In the final chapter of your last book<sup>2</sup>, you speak about the extended influence of the Macedonian kings even long after the end of Argead and Antigonid dynasties. Why did the people of this kingdom continue to define themselves as “Macedonians” even when there were no more kings?**

The Macedonian state had two components: the kings and the Macedonians. The abolition of kingship by the Romans could not put an end to Macedonian identity, which like the Athenian, Corinthian or the Rhodian ones, had been shaped by citizenship and adhesion to a state, and which endured at least until the fourth century AD.

<sup>1</sup> M. B. HATZOPOULOS (1987): “Artémis Digaia Blaganitis en Macédoine”, *BCH* 111: 397-412.

<sup>2</sup> M. B. HATZOPOULOS (2020): *Ancient Macedonia*, Berlin–Boston: 170-176.