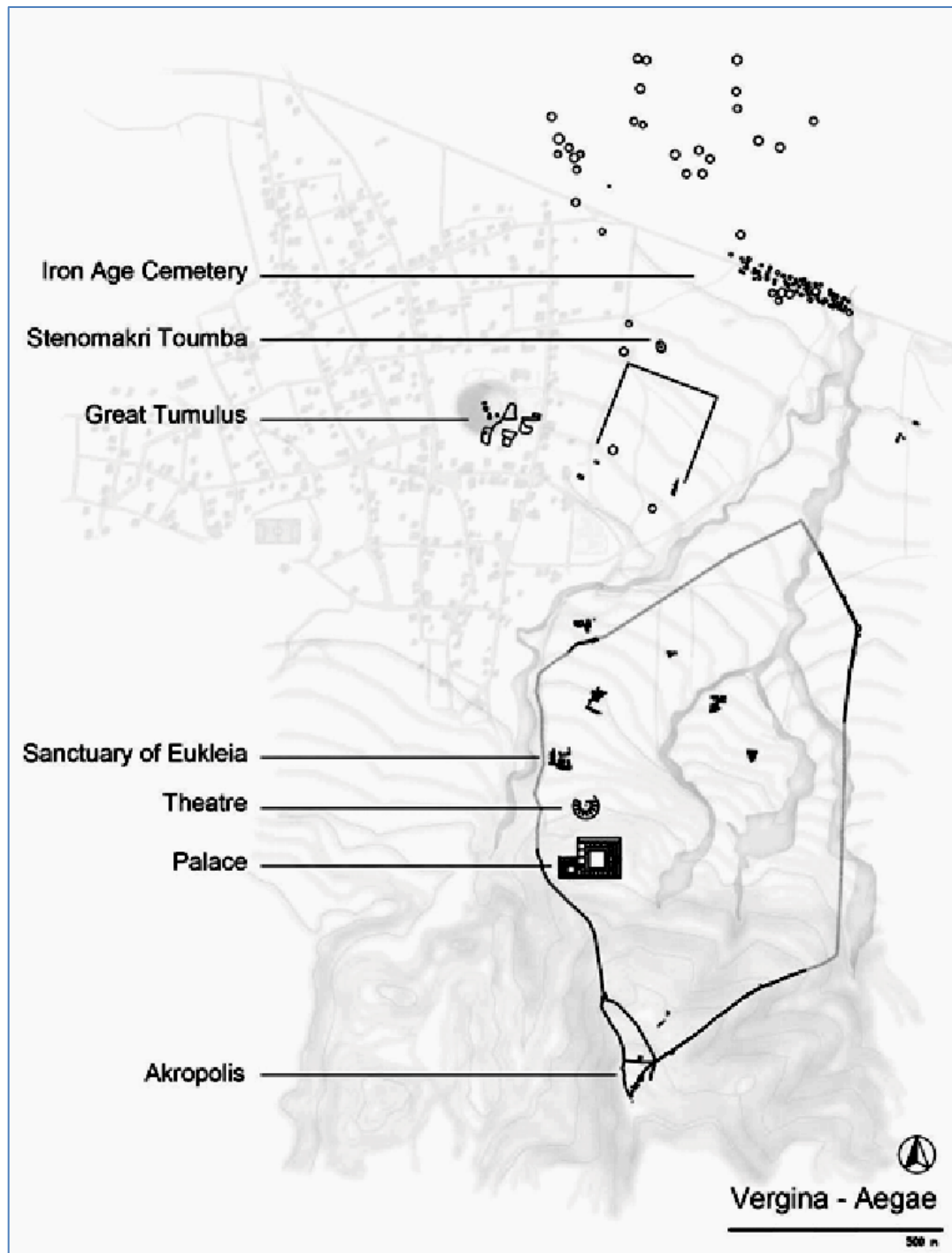




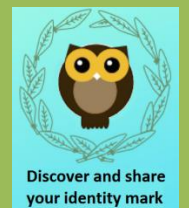
Visit guide Aigai (Vergina)



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The ancient city lying on the north slopes of the Pierian mountains is securely identified as Aigai, the capital of the kingdom of Lower Macedonia. Archaeological evidence proves that the site was continuously inhabited from the Early Bronze Age (3rd millennium BC) while in the Early Iron Age (11th-8th centuries BC) it became an important centre, rich and densely inhabited.

The city reached its highest point of prosperity in the Archaic (7th-6th centuries BC) and Classical periods (5th-4th centuries), when it was the most important urban centre of the area, the seat of the Macedonian kings and the place where all the traditional sanctuaries were established. Moreover, it was already famous in antiquity for the wealth of the royal tombs which were gathered in its extensive necropolis. The finds from the excavations are exhibited in the protective shelter over the royal tombs of Vergina and in the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki.

The first excavations on the site were carried out in the 19th century by the French archaeologist L. Heuzey and were resumed in the 1930's, after the liberation of Macedonia, by K. Rhomaios. After the Second World War, in the 1950's and 1960's, the excavations were directed by M. Andronicos, who investigated the cemetery of the tumuli.

At the same time, the Palace was excavated by the University of Thessaloniki and part of the necropolis by the Archaeological Service of the Ministry of Culture.

In 1977, M. Andronicos brought to light the royal tombs in the Great Tumulus of Vergina (Megale Toumba). The most remarkable of these was the tomb of Philip II (359-336 B.C.) and its discovery is considered to be one of the most important archaeological events of the century. Since then, continuing excavations have revealed a series of significant monuments.

What to see in the Royal Tombs Museum in Vergina

1. **Tomb 2 of King Philip of Macedon**, a very impressive tomb with two chambers.
2. Tomb 3. The Prince's Tomb (**Tomb of the son of Great Alexander**), in which they found a wall painting in the anti-chamber that depicts a **chariot race**. The 13 to 15-year-old boy had been assassinated together with his mother Roxanne.
3. **Tomb 4**. A tomb that was looted and its materials used for other buildings. Nicely reconstructed though with columns and façade.
4. **Tomb 1 with fresco** that depicts the mythological story of the "**abduction of Persephone by Hades**". When you look at the tomb from above you can see a part of the fresco through the opening in the tomb. A copy of the fresco is exhibited in the museum.
5. **The Heroon**, a small temple.
6. **Gold and purple cloth** in which the bones of the dead were wrapped.
7. The **golden myrtle wreath** of one of the wives of King Philip II of Macedon.
8. **Golden larnax** with the bones of a **wife of King Philip II**, probably **princess Meda**.
9. **Golden diadem**.
10. A gilded silver sheet that covered the front and underside of a leather **gorytos** with scenes from the conquest of a city.
11. **Golden larnax** that contained the **bones of King Philip II**, made of 24 -carat gold, 11 kilograms and embossed with the Vergina Sun symbol.
12. **Gold wreath of oak leaves** worn by King Philip II on the pyre.
13. Bronze gilded **funeral wreath** with clay fruits.
14. Iron **spears** and javelins, shields.
15. Pair of gilded bronze **greaves**.
16. Bronze golden plated **cauldron**.
17. **Pots and pans**.
18. Clay **figures**.
19. **Jewelry**.
20. Funerary steles with **inscriptions** of names of the deceased in Greek.